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To Elie - I wish my words below could more accurately
Senate capture my true feelings
for you
my friend

ELIE WIESEL, RECIPIENT OF 1986 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, it gives me great joy that my good friend Elie Wiesel has been honored this week with the Nobel Peace Prize. This is, Mr. President, a rare moment. It is a moment of understanding, of acceptance, of comprehension. It is a moment of vision. It is a moment of epiphany when humankind grows.

This week, human awareness inched closer to truth. In honoring the work of Elie Wiesel, we have taken a responsible step toward a fuller understanding of our world. Wiesel's writing, teaching, and personal testimony have borne witness to an era in modern history few even spoke of for decades after its passing. It was a time when the fields where children played were transformed into a stage where evil reigned and all life was horror. A time when suffering poured into the Earth, death suffused fetid air, and the desperate cry of an entire people rang unheard into the tumult of a world at war.

Elie Wiesel bears witness to this evil. His contribution is monumental. Apart from his own work, his eloquence and his pleas have encouraged thousands of survivors of Hitler's final solution to tell their story and make known to the world the reality of the concentration camps. When none would speak, either because their mind refused to conjure what their eyes had seen, or because the horror was impossible to articulate, or because no one, they felt would believe them, Elie Wiesel could not remain silent, and he inspired the kind of testimony the world may no longer ignore.

Dr. Wiesel might well have been honored with a prize for literature. His books and essays, starting with his first on the concentration camp experience, "Night," comprise a diverse body of writings that deal not only with the destruction of the Jewish people, but of the repression of Soviet Jews, the plight of the Palestinian people, and modern politics in Germany. Realizing that suffering, genocide, and other products of human insanity are not locked away in a historical moment but thrive in all corners of the globe, he has often seen and written of Cambodians and the Miskito Indians in Central America, of Lebanon and Northern Ireland, and of Biafra and Vietnam.

Yet still his most compelling work is that which relates to his days as a prisoner of the German death ma-

chine. In testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee last year, not an eye in the room blinked as he transfixed us with his words. "Mr. Chairman," he said,

I have seen the flames. I have seen the flames rising to nocturnal heavens; I have seen parents and children, teachers and their disciples, dreamers and their dreams, and woe unto me. I have seen children thrown alive in flames. I have seen all of them vanish in the night as part of a plan, of a program conceived and executed by criminal minds that have corrupted the law and poisoned the hearts in their own land and the lands that they had criminally occupied.

Mr. President, it has been asked: why must we revisit this event with such intensity? Why must we affirm our effort to understand and acknowledge it with such fervor? Perhaps, it may even be asked, why honor the life and work of Elie Wiesel?

It is because even today, when the gas chambers and ovens stand as monuments, and the tales of survivors are read in scores of languages, there are still those disturbed and spiteful minds who dare to claim that the destruction of the Jewish people was not undertaken, that 6 million did not die in gas chambers.

That such individuals are fewer and fewer is, Mr. President, Elie Wiesel's great triumph. It is, in large part, on account of his work that the sound of names like Dachau, Treblinka, Buchenwald, Bergen Belsen, and Auschwitz shake our souls like a death-knell tolling for humanity. Elie remembers, and we remember.

We must remember, because his story is a story which transcends time and place and individuals. His responsibility is a responsibility not only to the 6 million murdered Jews, but to all forgetful men who will be condemned to relive a history they do not know. And it is a responsibility to the yet unborn. "The fear of forgetting," Wiesel has written, "remains the main obsession of all those who have passed through the universe of the damned." He understands more deeply than anyone that that fear ought be the fear of all men, in all places.

Of his imprisoned comrades he writes:

We had all taken an oath. "If by some miracle, I emerge alive, I will devote my life to testifying on behalf of those whose shadow will fall on mine forever and ever."

This is the burden Elie Wiesel has taken on for all humanity. He deserves our most solemn honor and profound gratitude. His award enriches the tradition of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Love
always
Chris