

**Ambassador Feinstein's Remarks for the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous Luncheon  
July 15, 2012, Marriot Grand Ballroom, 14:00**

Minister Bartoszewski, Mr. Ambassador, Rabbi Schudrich, Mr. Turski, Distinguished Guests. It is truly a privilege for me to speak to you today.

It is an honor to have the opportunity to speak to you, the righteous, whose bravery inspires us and reminds us of our sacred duty to remember and to confront evil in our own time.

I would like to thank the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous for helping to bring the stories of your courage to light, not just to express our gratitude, but also to share your stories with others. Your stories lead all of us to do our part, to ensure that “Never Again”, “Nigdy Wiencej” becomes a reality.

The Foundation's European Study Program, which allows a group of outstanding teachers to visit Holocaust sites of memory and to speak first-hand with survivors and rescuers, is especially important because it will help teachers convey to younger generations the unprecedented and unparalleled evil of the Holocaust. Monuments, museums, statistics, and even photographs, as shocking as they are, cannot capture the full horror of the Shoah.

Preserving the stories, the first-hand accounts of survivors and rescuers, is essential if one is to grasp the inhumanity of the Holocaust and the humanity of those who acted to stop it. Only in this way can we truly understand our own sacred duty to remember and to act.

Stories of your goodness and generosity remind us that, while war and suffering can bring out the worst in people, they can also bring out our most noble qualities. Your stories remind us that we, too, have the potential for incredible courage and compassion, if we are willing to do what is right and to stand up against what we know is wrong.

It is a real honor to join you today - people who have performed deeds more noble and courageous than most of us could even imagine. Every one of you, who could have closed your doors and shut your eyes and ears to the tremendous suffering of others, chose selflessness and compassion over comfort and security. No one ordered you to risk your life to save another, and yet you all chose to do so.

As someone who has been active in international human rights law, I know that one thing we cannot do when confronted with evil is to simply to ignore it. As Richard von Weizsaecker once said, "There were many ways of not burdening one's conscience, of shunning responsibility, looking away, keeping mum. When the unspeakable truth of the Holocaust then became known at the end of the war, all too many of us claimed that they had not known anything about it or even suspected anything." We are therefore gathered here today to honor your courage in helping those who had nowhere else to turn; you refused to look the other way and claim not to know.

But the second part of making sure that “Never Again” truly is engrained into our lives and those of our children and grandchildren, we have to let the world know that every person can make and does make a difference. Every life you helped to save is felt through the generations, seen in the photos of children and grandchildren, of family celebrations, of thousands of people who are on this earth because of your own dedication to doing what was right instead of what was easy. It is this lesson that we must pass on to our children- that organizations such as the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous help pass on to the next generation.

And finally, it is of vital importance that we remember that what we seek – namely making sure the slaughter of our fellow human beings never happens again – is possible! It can, and indeed it must, come to pass that the Holocaust shall never be repeated. To this again, we look to the heroic example that you have set for us. Through your actions, you have set a high bar for us to reach. However, I am confident that we can and we will show the same kind of courage and steadfastness against murder, hate, and ignorance that you showed all of us some seventy odd years ago.

It is no surprise that there are more Poles among the righteous than any other nation. Today, Poland's thriving democracy and flourishing civil society is based on Poles' deep and abiding commitment to promote democratic values and human rights around the world. Poles know that they are not truly free as long as others languish in poverty and oppression.

Your courage reminds us – Poles and Americans alike – that we have the capacity and the duty to do good in the world, even if that means taking risks and making sacrifices to promote and uphold the principles and values we believe in. While few of us will be called upon to accept the grave risks you did, we are all grateful for your inspiration. Thank you.