

fThe Anatomy of Hate"

Sunday 26 August 1990'

Excerpts from The Opening Statement by Elie Wiesel

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It is with a deep sense of privilege that I welcome you to this conference. You have responded to our invitation for the same reasons that motivated those who issued it: to confront hate -- a phenomenon that jeopardizes our noblest aspirations and triumphs.

We are all conscious of the perils inherent in humankind's capacity for hate -- and of the urgent need and obligation to oppose and vanquish it.

Hate, as we all know, wears many masks and pervades many areas. We must face racial hate, religious hate, ethnic hate, chauvinism, fanaticism, bigotry, prejudice and discrimination.

What do they all have in common? They make us see the other as a stranger, an enemy, an object of suspicion and disdain.

Thus -- hate distorts the other's humanity and reduces it to a subhuman status, ultimately inviting humiliation, persecution and death.

As we open our proceedings, our thoughts go to the most recent victims and prisoners of hate -- those who are being used and manipulated in Kuwait and Iraq. Their fate fills us with fear for their freedom and their lives. In the name of humanity, we appeal for their unconditional release. Hate means to deny the humanity of human beings -- it means reducing them to shields, hostages, or instruments. Human beings are none of these. A human being is both beginning and end, goal and aspiration to that goal.

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Once again, world peace is threatened. Thousands of men and women, at the slightest provocation, may be called upon to kill and/or be killed. Should that occur, it would mean that hate -- and death -- are stronger than life and the human quest for life. But then, this conference will show that while hate cannot be eradicated, it can be disarmed, it must be disarmed. It will show that when men and women are determined to confront their common challenges, death itself recedes -- however briefly.