

GIOVANNI AGNELLI

I am supposed to introduce somebody now that I think it would be absurd to introduce anywhere in the world, and most of all, New York--Dr. Kissinger. (Applause)

DR. HENRY KISSINGER

Johnny, Rabbi Schneier, Cardinal Casaroli, Jay Pritzker, Peter Grace, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great privilege for me to have this opportunity to be here, to congratulate first of all, Rabbi Schneier, on the tremendous achievement of the twenty-five years of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation. And also, to extend my warm wishes to Jay Pritzker, whose humanitarian devotion I have admired for many decades. And, to pay tribute to Cardinal Casaroli, an old friend of many decades.

If we think back a year, and ask ourselves what we would have said about international affairs at this time last year, none of us would have imagined what has occurred in the meantime. Who would have thought it possible that the monolithic dictatorial regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union that, for decades, had a monopoly on education, patronage, power, police, media--could disintegrate within months. And that, in the Soviet Union, the paramount question now is not the triumph of its ideology, but the legitimacy of its rule--and the structure of an empire accumulated over three hundred years of expansion.

I took the liberty of asking Cardinal Casaroli whether the disintegration of the Soviet Union would be good for the world, desirable, or not. I know better than to expect a very quick answer to so fundamental a question. I have not yet heard the answer. But, the mere fact that the question can be asked, and can be asked without anyone wishing this evolution necessarily--but simply analyzing something that is, in a way, out of our control, in terms of its impact on our future shows how far we have come.

Several decades ago, I had the privilege of meeting then Archbishop Casaroli, and I had a formidable list of extraordinarily (it seemed to me) intelligent, practical questions I wanted to put to him. And, he listened to me and he said, "You know, we here in the Vatican have to take a somewhat longer term perspective." (Laughter) And, it was a very important lesson, because you can not answer the practical questions without having a philosophical direction. All of the great things that we have seen in the last year were somebody's dream and had to be somebody's dream before they became a reality.

The great contribution that has been made by Cardinal Casaroli is to ask a question that, once it was raised, provided its own momentum into the nature of justice of the political systems of Eastern Europe--and the obligations of the human spirit.

And so, today, the question that goes beyond the economic debacle that the centrally-planned economies have brought

about. The question that is prior to that is the one that has preoccupied religions and philosophers throughout the ages: What is the nature of justice? And, what is the essence of peace? That we can ask those questions is the achievement of our period.

Now we in this country have a tendency to believe that all of history moves towards a culmination in which the whole world will be at peace, all societies will be democratic, and all arrangements will be just and appropriate. I do not believe that any generation will be able to live in a period that is a terminal point. Every generation is in transition. And we in this country are now faced with a particular difficulty--because through the greater part of our history, we were physically isolated. Through the next part, until just a few years ago, we were materially so dominant that we were, in effect, isolated. Now, at the moment of the success of our ideas, we have to think of such things as equilibrium, emerging states, new arrangements, multicolored worlds, different notions of security and of progress than we have had in the last forty-five years. That we could come to such a point is a great achievement. And, one of the architects of this achievement is Cardinal Casaroli, who had a vision before it seemed even remotely practical.

If the Cardinal will forgive me, I remember that he was first described to me as a man with some left-wing sympathies because he was preoccupied with the Communist societies. We

now know that he then understood the central weaknesses of these societies--and had great confidence in the permanence of what he stood for.

So, Rabbi Schneier, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here--to congratulate Jay Pritzker and Cardinal Casaroli at a moment when the values they represent have had a great success. And, we need to be reminded that they have produced a new set of challenges, a new set of duties, in which I hope their guidance will still be available to us. Thank you. (Applause)