

DR. HENRY KISSINGER

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen.

Rabbi Schneier is such a generous man that he made a number of observations which I must slightly modify. First of all, in order to prevent panic among the Latin American ambassadors, I want to make clear that what limited jurisdiction I possess is confined to Central America. I'm not sure you should applaud that. Secondly, for the peace of mind of any foreign service personnel that may be here, I want to make clear that I have been Secretary of State only once, though I'm sure it seemed longer to my associates. But I have played with the idea of being born again and perhaps maybe then your prediction will come through. Third, I have not prepared any formal remarks for many reasons, including the fact that two former associates of mine who used to help me with my speeches are here. They have since been demoted to being President of the Council on Foreign Relations and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, but I know very well that they would start editing any coherent sentence that I might utter into the marvelous prose which you used to associate with me. Then I would like to thank the organizers of this dinner for their thoughtfulness in inviting the foreign ministers of Austria and Hungary to attend this dinner. As some of you may know, it is alleged that I celebrate Metternich's birthday every year. The days of the old Austrian-Hungarian Empire are very close to my heart, and why not resurrect them in this environment? But I would like before presenting the award to Guy de Rothschild to make

just a few observations about an aspect of foreign policy that has to be of considerable concern to all of us.

[end of Tape 1]

... because when I see my former associates here I thought for a moment they were here to protest the practice of human rights and the State Department under my stewardship. But I'd like to make just a few observations about the relationship between morality and foreign policy.

This country has had a very unique experience in foreign policy. For the greater part of our history until the end of World War II, we were secure behind two great oceans. The ambiguities, uncertainties and complexities of the normal exercise of foreign policy did not occur to us. European nations had a relatively narrow margin of survival. They could not wait for a threat to become unambiguous because by the time a threat was unambiguous, it was too late to do something about it. They had to conduct a precautionary foreign policy and the potentiality of danger acting on the basis of assumptions they could not prove true when they made them. Americans could wait until the danger was clearly upon us. In our folklore the two World Wars appear as struggles to prevent world domination. We forget that if the safety of the world, either in

1914 or in 1939, had depended upon the American understanding of the danger the aggressive forces would have prevailed in both circumstances. We engaged ourselves very late in the conflict which meant that there were other nations that took upon their shoulders the ambiguities of choice at an earlier stage. This is what created the illusion in America, that we could require perfection as the price of our action and it led to the peculiar American isolationism, which in the 1920s caused us to withdraw from the world because we thought we were too good for it, and in the 1970s reemerged in the form that we were not yet good enough for it. In either case, there is a danger that a kind of abstract perfectionism can lead to an abdication because foreign policy has been called the heart of the possible, the science of the relative. Profits reflect timeless truths. Statesmen must approach their goal in stages, each of which is likely to be imperfect. Analysts can select their problems. Statesmen are overwhelmed by more problems than they can handle at any one moment, and must therefore choose. There are some experiments that they cannot try no matter how desirable because the consequences of failure are too great.

I mention all of this because we live in a time whose inherent attribute for policymakers must be ambiguity. We are confronted in the United States by ideological adversaries. But we are also condemned to coexistence by nuclear weapons, by the danger of universal catastrophe and by the thrust of human aspirations. There is no higher goal for any

statesman than the achievement of peace. But it is also true that if peace becomes the only objective it will lead to a policy of abdication and to turning the world over to the most ruthless. There has to be, sooner or later, a serious dialogue between the super powers and sooner, rather than later. But if it is not conducted on the basis of reciprocity, if it becomes on either side a tool of political warfare, then the desire for peace cannot prevail. So those who demonstrate must keep in mind that at some point their aspiration must be reduced to concrete specific obtainable objectives. And those countries that use some of this dialogue for a new form of political warfare are to understand that in the nuclear age nobody will be defeated without noticing it and therefore the risks are much too great.

So I salute this organization for keeping before us the importance of philosophical and human values, and for practicing it across the dividing lines of the contemporary world without illusions, without extravagant claims, but at the same time with dedication and devotion and idealism. Rabbi Schneier referred to my suggestion of Baron de Rothschild for this award. This reflects my dedication for finding unknown talent and bringing them to the attention of the public. I would like to say that it is for me a great honor and personal pleasure to present this award to my friend, Guy de Rothschild. I'm only slightly annoyed with him for having written a bestseller composed of only 200 pages, when I had to struggle through over 1,000 to achieve the same, only partial, objective. Of course, he was raised in the French language in which it is possible to place a verb in less than two

chapters. Guy de Rothschild had a distinguished career in the French army, where he received the Croix de Guerre for his actions as squadron commander during the battle of Dunkirk and Belgium. He has been an officer of the French Legion of Honor. He has been a major figure in the life of the Jewish community of France, and he has recently honored this city by moving many of his activities here. But those of us who know Guy de Rothschild do not prize him for his achievements which are well known. We respect him and his wife for their interest in talents, for their contribution to civilized life, for their dedication to human values. And so it is my great privilege to present to Baron Guy de`Rothschild this award for distinguished humanitarian service. His leadership and vision have advanced the cause of human rights and international cooperation. Congratulations.