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THE CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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REMARKS BY MAYOR DAVID N. DINKINS  
APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION ANNUAL AWARD DINNER  
THE PIERRE HOTEL, GRAND BALLROOM

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On behalf of the people of the City of New York, I am delighted to welcome all of you to the Appeal of Conscience Foundation's Annual Award Dinner.

There is no question that, at a time of unprecedented change throughout the world, the United States stands as a shining example of unity amid extraordinary diversity; of tolerance of different peoples and ideas; and above all, of freedom.

And, at the risk of seeming biased by my occupation, I believe that New York City epitomizes this spirit of unity, tolerance, and freedom. More than 125 different ethnic groups live side-by-side in this town, a gorgeous mosaic of people who compose each of these varied tiles.

Our tolerance and mutual understanding is great. Indeed, when those rare occasions of friction do occur -- as in recent months in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn -- such an incident makes international headlines, instantly recognized for the tragedy that it is.

Sadly, there are some in this city, and in our society at large, who seek to promote and exploit such friction. But there

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are many, many more who try to build bridges, and dedicate themselves to the ideals of unity and freedom.

We must remember that for every African American in Crown Heights who participated in an act of racial violence, there were 10,000 who did not. For every Hasid who hurled a stone or an epithet, there were 10,000 who did not.

And I know that similar stories exist in so many of the nations that are now torn by division and ethnic and social strife.

That's why it is so important that we all work together, and do our share to encourage and to recognize not those who spread darkness and division in our society, but those who spread unity and light.

One such individual is Rabbi Arthur Schneier, who created the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, and has inspired so many of us to think beyond our own borders, cultures, and political systems.

And this evening, the foundation is honoring three other individuals who have dedicated themselves to the highest ideals of freedom and of human rights -- still the most powerful idea in human history.

Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Deputy Federal Chancellor and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, has played a critical role in the formation of one Germany, and in the development of a post-Cold War Europe. His vision of a united Germany, and his strong faith in cooperation among nations, make him most deserving of this award.

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The second honoree is United States Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, who has contributed to the remarkable changes that have occurred in the past few years, on all parts of the globe, and has done so with dignity, intelligence, and courage.

Finally, the foundation is honoring Kay Whitmore, President, Chairman, and C.E.O. of Eastman-Kodak. One of the brightest stars in the business community, he has given freely of his time and talent to improve the education of our nation's precious children.

On behalf of all New Yorkers. I congratulate these individuals, and I congratulate Rabbi Schneier on 26 years of achievement and progress.

Keep up the good work -- and keep the faith.

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