

Bloomberg

**President Katsav;
Prime Minister Sharon;
Ministers Shalom and Livnat;
Mr. Shalev; and other distinguished guests...**

As the mayor of New York City – home to one of the largest populations of Holocaust survivors outside of Israel – I'm honored to be at this inauguration on behalf of President Bush and the American people.

This is the fourth trip I've made to Israel since I was elected mayor in 2001.

I've come for happy occasions – like the dedication of a new wing at Hadassah Hospital in honor of my mother's 95th birthday. And I've come to mourn with you after a terrible bus bombing in August 2003.

This visit, however – for the opening of Yad Vashem's new Holocaust History Museum – speaks to one of the darkest chapters in Jewish history – in human history, in fact.

It has been nearly 60 years since the end of the Shoah, yet the atrocities committed during that period remain a powerful warning of what can result from the most extreme acts of hatred, and they remind us why the State of Israel must always endure.

Preserving a faithful record of that tragedy, however, is becoming more and more difficult. Survivors of the Holocaust are now passing away at the rate of about 10% each year.

In a decade or so, we will not have a single remaining first-hand witness to one of the greatest horrors the world has ever known.

Let us not underestimate the ramifications: Without the testimony of survivors, it will be easier for the deniers and revisionists to spread their horrible lies. We cannot allow this to happen.

Like the eternal flame, we must ensure that the memory of the Holocaust burns brightly forever. We must never forget. We

must collect and preserve the stories – stamp them into our own hearts – and then sear them permanently into the consciousness of the world.

Yad Va-shem's new Holocaust History Museum is a stirring monument to the souls of the victims, to the courage of the survivors, and to the humanity of those who aided them at the risk of their own lives.

It dutifully honors their memory... it boldly confronts the shames of our past... and it teaches one of the most important – if not the most important – lesson human beings can learn: Tolerance.

It's my hope that tolerance will one day become the standard around the world, not the exception. Until then, the strongest rebuke to prejudice and terror comes from carrying on with our lives in spite of the constant threats.

That is something that has inspired me on each of my trips to Israel: the resilient spirit of your people:

In restaurants and bazaars, on the bus, in the streets, everywhere... Israelis are determined not only to defend their lives, but to live them to the fullest.

I don't think any city appreciates such strength more than New York, the most important urban center of Jewish communal life outside Israel.

After 9/11, many predicted the worst for New York. But we picked ourselves up and vowed to forge a city that was stronger, safer, and more exciting than ever before.

The world came together to aid us during those challenging times, and we are forever grateful.

This year, the world is coming together again, and uniting to pay its respects to the victims of the Holocaust.

In January, ceremonies in Poland commemorated the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and other Nazi death camps. The United Nations convened a special session of the General Assembly to hold a similar ceremony.

Last month, Condeleezza Rice visited Yad Vashem on her first overseas trip as Secretary of State. She wrote in the guest

book that: “This is a place that causes all to remember those who perished and to accept that it must never happen again that good men and women do not act.”

Earlier today/just now, I went through this museum.

I read the names of towns that were decimated throughout Europe –including villages near Grodno in present-day Belarus and near Kovna and Vilna in Lithuania where my ancestors originated. I realized that, had they not come to America, they would have perished.

So today, I’m humbled to join with world leaders and Holocaust survivors not only to re-dedicate Yad Vashem, but also to re-dedicate our efforts to stamp out racism and hatred, and stem the recent resurgence of anti-Semitism.

Working together – through education, anti-hate legislation, and effective law enforcement – we can foster respect and compassion for all.

**Because the world turns on the hope and perseverance of the good...
not the tyranny of evil.**

That’s a message encapsulated in this new museum, embodied by the people of Israel, and shared by your brothers and sisters in the United States.

On behalf of President Bush and my fellow delegates, I want to thank the Israeli people for your warm hospitality. I wish you all the best.