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TALKING POINTS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT, B'NAI B'RITH, SEPTEMBER 3, 1980

Only last month I had the honor of receiving this Aleph Zadick Aleph Award and meeting and visiting with the B'Nai B'rith youth leaders from around the world.

Regardless of where they were from, two attributes shone through the young people I met:

\* First, each was truly a leader, infused with a sense of purpose, of high ideals, of commitment and service.

\* And second, each felt something special about America--whether they were visitors for the first time or had lived here all their lives.

I found in those young people and in that experience a model for the very special relationship that exists between Jews and America, between America and Jews.

First, as a distinct and vulnerable minority, we have always felt a sense of giving--that we give something of ourselves to this country, to our communities. As a people, we have tried to embody Maimonides' description of the highest rung on the ladder of charity:

"Anticipate charity by preventing poverty: assist the reduced fellowman, either by a considerable gift, or a sum of money, or by teaching him a trade, or by putting him in the way of business, so that he may earn an honest livelihood, and not be forced to the dreadful alternative of holding out his hand for charity. This is the highest step and the summit of charity's golden ladder."

We have assumed positions of responsibility in our nation and in our communities.

We have tried to represent the lofty ideals and bedrock values that are our heritage as Jews and as Americans:

- \* Of equal opportunity and equal justice
- \* Of the value of education and the requisite of hard work
- \* Of the fundamental promise of more choices for more of our people.

And as we have held these values and tried to live them, we have, as Jews, been willing to take on the role of the conscience of our country--unflinchingly though sometimes painfully calling out not only the greatness of America, but also her failings. For we have always believed in America, and believed as well that courage and truthfulness would ultimately triumph over the dark night of cynicism and hate.

Now we have entered a time when our values as a people and as a nation are being put to a test. In the past decade, our country and the world have witnessed and participated in more change than at any time in our history--change that has altered old political, economic, and social assumptions here and around the world:

- \* A peace treaty between Egypt and Israel
- \* The need to re-think our energy reality
- \* The question of economic justice during world-wide inflation and recession.

Change is always fearsome; today is no different. These challenges have inspired the usual response by the hate-groups and fear-mongers. There is no real danger. I think that these groups will ever shed their bed-sheets long enough to be taken seriously by our fellow countrymen.

But there is a danger, in some ways even greater:

- \* A danger that our idealism will give way to doubt and cynicism
- \* That our sense of purpose will be clouded over by frustration and anger
- \* That we will cease to listen to our best instincts and taste defeat the only way we ever can--by inflicting it upon ourselves.

If we do this, we do harm here and to the larger cause of world peace.

Does anyone believe that America can be an effective force for peace in the world by turning its back on its people at home? By ignoring the needs of the cities, or trying to roll back the advances made by our working men and women?