## Remarks Of Interior Secretary Hodel At White House Ceremony Honoring Elie Wiesel

At today's ceremony at the White House at which President Reagan presented the Congressional Gold Medal to Elie Wiesel. Secretary of the Interior Don Hodel delivered the following remarks in tribute to Professor Wiesel:

"I stood in the rotunda of the Capitol yesterday. It was part of this Nation's somber observance of the Days of Remembrance. Speaker after speaker, regardless of his faith, implored us to remember the Holocaust.

"We free people of the world do remember -in many ways.,

"In Israel, there is Yad Vashem. I was there not quite a year and a half ago, and was privileged to lay a wreath at the flame which will flicker eternally in that dark and stone-cold room. It was a gripping, moving experience. No civilized man or woman could fail to be moved.

"In the United States, we have the Days of Remembrance Commemoration. And, thanks to the efforts of many men and women -- from all walks of life and of many religious faiths -- this country will have its own Holocaust Memorial and Museum.

"As you well know, Elie Wiesel, the man honored today by this Nation, has honored all of

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us -- not to mention the 6 million Jews who died in Europe -- by his prodigious efforts as Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. There is a working relationship between the Council and the Department of the Interior. Professor Wiesel, I want to assure you I personally am committed to seeing to it that such a relationship will be strong and vibrant so we can achieve the goal to which you have given so much of yourself.

"But, you ask, why do we have need for these museums and memorials? Why do we seek to remember such a painful episode in history? The short answer is that if we dare let ourselves forget, we may not be sufficiently vigilant when other Hitlers take those first, almost unnoticeable steps toward tyranny.

"We must be vigilant to incipient tyranny wherever it occurs, because, as it is etched on front of our National Archives, "Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty." But that merely is a political or societal reason for remembering the Holocaust.

"I submit, however, that there is an even more important reason for remembering: We serve God by remembering.

"If remembering the Holocaust can help us -or our brothers and sisters in the world -- avoid the physical and emotional pain of terror and barbarism, we and they are obviously better off for it. But, crucial as that is to our general wellbeing, I am more concerned about the well-being of our souls.

"When Hitler destroyed men, women and children, he sinned against them; but he quite surely also sinned against God. And when the rest of mankind tolerates that happening, we just as surely sin against God. I firmly believe the Lord did not put man and woman on earth with indifference as to how they treated each other.

"I have faith that we are commanded by God not merely to be kind to one another; but to stand tall and to take those steps that are within our God-given abilities when we sense that evil has

reared its ugly head.

"We therefore must remember the Holocaust - now and forever -- if we are to remain able as vigilant children of God to serve him. If I am correct in this respect, then let it be said. Professor Wiesel, that you truly are doing the work of the Lord."

## **Torah Sessions In Capitol** For Jewish Representatives

WASHINGTON (WNS) For the past yearand-a-half, Jewish Democratic and Republican Representatives have been meeting twice a month in the Capitol to 

discuss Jewish life. tradition and literature, according to the program's sponsor, Rep. Charles Schumer (D. N.Y.).

Schumer said that Christian legislators have sponsored prayer breakfasts in Capitol for years. He added the Torah sessions have given Represen-Jewish tatives "a chance to take advantage of a unique opportunity to share their common heritage and explore how the lessons of the Torah can be applied to our work here in Congress." The sessions are led by Rabbi Jay Marcus of the Young Israel of Staten Island.

A kosher meal is served and then Marcus leads the legislators in a discussion of the Torah portion of the week and how it relates to Congressional activities.

In addition to Schumer, eight other House members attend the classes regularly. They are Gary Ackerman (D. N.Y.); Phillip Burton (D. Cal.); Sam Gejdenson (D. Conn.); Benjamin Gilman (R. N.Y.); Mel Levine (D. Cal.); John Miller (R. Wash.); Henry Waxman (D. Cal.); and Theodore Weiss (D. N.Y.). The classes are also attended by many Jewish House staff members, Schumer said. Schumer declared \*hat providing us a chance to explore issues in depth, and a chance to reflect -- something Members of Congress rarely have time for."



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