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Member of the Canadian Parliament  
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Thank you for those very kind words of introduction. I'm delighted to be able to be here and to participate in the common cause which brings us together: to celebrate the 70th birthday of Per Ahlmark—who has been for me – as he has for the family in this room – a friend, a colleague, a mentor, an inspiration, and a role model for courage. A person who has shown, like another Swedish predecessor, Raoul Wallenberg, that a person who has the courage to care and the commitment to act can confront evil and transform history. So, Per, we are delighted to be here with you, sharing the celebration of the great role model that you are—an inspiration for all of us.

And as it happens, we meet, one might say, at an important moment of remembrance and reminder. We meet in the immediate aftermath of the 60th anniversary of the Genocide Convention, sometimes referred to as the “Never Again” convention, but which has been violated again and again, and perhaps can be called the “yet again” convention. We meet in the immediate aftermath of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—which is spoken of as the Magna Carta of humankind but which, too, has been violated in every one of its particulars. And we meet on the eve – two days from now – of the 62nd anniversary of the disappearance of Raoul Wallenberg, that just saint of the nations who confronted evil and prevailed.

Accordingly, 60 years later, it might be appropriate to ask ourselves, “What have we learned?” and, “What must we do?” Now, as Kirkegaard once said, “Life must be lived forwards, but sometimes it can only be understood backwards.” And so what I would like to do with you today is share briefly four great lessons of the last 60 years and the particular role that Per Ahlmark played, at least for me, in understanding these lessons—because he articulated the narrative and the importance of acting on these lessons; that is what Per did.

Let me begin with the first lesson, the danger of the state-sanctioned incitement to genocide: the responsibility to prevent. The enduring lesson of the Holocaust and the genocides that followed – in the Balkans, in Rwanda, in Darfur – is that these genocides occurred not simply because of the machinery of death, but because of the state-sanctioned incitement to hatred and genocide. As the Supreme Court of Canada itself recognized, the Holocaust did not begin with the gas chambers; it began with words. These, as the court put it, are the chilling facts of history, the catastrophic effects of racism.

Today there's nothing one can do about these past genocides. We can lament, but we cannot bring back the dead. But there is one situation today where we can act—in what might be called Ahmadinejad's Iran. And I use the term “Ahmadinejad's Iran” because I want to distinguish this from the people and publics of Iran who otherwise themselves are the target of this state-sanctioned repression of human rights. And what we are witnessing in Ahmadinejad's Iran today is what might be called a genocide foretold. I say that because what we see today in Iran is the toxic convergence of the audacity, the most horrific of crimes, the crime whose name we should even shudder to mention, namely genocide, embedded in the most virulent of hatreds, namely

anti-Semitism—the whole propelled by an intention to acquire nuclear weapons, ostensibly. And this would be proper for peaceful and civil purposes, but when linked to the genocidal, has that sense of foreboding about it—with the warning to Muslims that if they recognize Israel they will "burn in the *umma* of Islam," and with the denial of the Nazi Holocaust as a new one is incited.

And one of the more disturbing phenomena here as well is the manner in which this state-sanctioned incitement to genocide has been underpinned by epidemiological metaphors reminiscent of another, darker past. I never make any comparisons with the Holocaust, as Prof. Elie Wiesel always reminds us. But the use of these epidemiological metaphors – the reference to Israel and Jews as bacteria, as germs, as a cancerous tumor to be excised, as defilers of Islam, and I can go on – is yet another disturbing manifestation of the nature and intensity of this incitement. Indeed I can tell you – as one who, while Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, prosecuted Rwandans in Canada for incitement to genocide – that the aggregates of the precursors to genocide in Ahmadinejad's Iran measure up to, if indeed they do not exceed, that which was present in Rwanda.

So the question is: what then do we do? It is important that I suggest to you that we pay heed to these precursors of genocide. Let there be no mistake about it: Iran has already committed the crime of incitement to genocide, a crime prohibited in Article 3 of the Genocide Convention (which prohibits direct and public incitement to genocide). And so it is important that state parties to the Genocide Convention act so as to prevent us from going down the road to genocide itself. As former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour put it, the responsibility to prevent in the Genocide Convention – including the prevention of incitement to genocide – is a matter of *jus cogens*, an overriding responsibility in international law. Accordingly, with the support of some 35 distinguished legal scholars, genocide experts and human rights advocates, I have released a petition called *The Danger of a Genocidal and Nuclear Iran: The Responsibility to Prevent*.

The petition is organized around two parts. The first part provides one of the most comprehensive and authoritative evidentiary exposures of the nature and extent of the state-sanctioned incitement to genocide in Ahmadinejad's Iran ever assembled. It draws upon only original sources, so let it not be said that we dealt with journalistic imputations and the like. And if one reads it, I think after one goes through it, the aggregate precursors to genocide are chilling.

The second part of the petition reminds state parties to the Genocide Convention – like my country, Canada, and Sweden – that they have a responsibility to act to prevent genocide. I regret, however that as I am speaking before you today, not one state has come forward to undertake its responsibility to prevent.

So we have launched a campaign now, and we are identifying 13 states that for one reason or another have a particular nexus to the state-sanctioned incitement to genocide in Ahmadinejad's

Iran. We do so in the hope that one or more of these states will undertake its responsibility to prevent through initiatives we suggest—for instance, just the modest initiative under article 8 of the Genocide Convention to simply refer the matter – just refer it – to the United Nations Security Council for discussion and debate. It’s astonishing that not one such reference has yet been made. Yes there have been sanctions and proposed sanctions resulting from UN Security Council resolutions in the matter of enriched uranium. But what makes the process of enriching uranium so serious is its connection and its anchorage in the context of a genocidal entity.

I am pleased to be able to say, and after having met a number of liberals here today, that my own party, the Liberal Party of Canada, has endorsed this petition. I’m going to be meeting shortly with the Prime Minister of Canada, a Conservative Prime Minister – because these things are not matters of partisan politics – in the hope that Canada may become amongst the first or the first nation to make such an initiative. I would like to think that Sweden – which will soon occupy the presidency of the European Union, this country with its own humanistic heritage as exemplified by Per Ahlmark – might also join this type of coalition. Surely someone like Per – with his moral voice, who has spoken so eloquently and acted so compellingly against the state-sanctioned incitement to genocide wherever it has reared its ugly head – his voice will be a very compelling one in this struggle.

The second lesson is the danger of indifference and inaction. Again, the Holocaust and the genocides that followed did not occur because of the machinery of death or even because of the state-sanctioned incitement to genocide alone; they occurred because of indifference and inaction in the face of such incitement. Or indifference and inaction in the face of mass atrocity. Indeed, even in our own day we have seen conspiracies of silence and crimes of indifference. One only has to think of the unthinkable – the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans – or the unspeakable – the genocide in Rwanda—and I say “unspeakable” because nobody can say that we did not know.

We knew but we did not act, just as nobody can say today that we do not know what is happening in Darfur. We know, but we are not acting sufficiently. Again, as we meet here and as the recent statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Luis Moreno-Ocampo underscored, the genocide in Darfur is continuing. And as we meet some 450,000 have already died, 2.7 million have been internally displaced, some four million people are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance—and I don’t even like to use statistics because we have to always remember that behind each statistic is a human being with a name, with an identity, with a family, with a community. But regrettably, while the international community has continued to dither, Darfurians continue to die.

I would hope that we would exercise what Per spoke of before – and the United Nations Security Council affirmed this doctrine two-and-a-half years ago – the responsibility to protect. Indeed, Per was speaking about the responsibility to protect – and within that, in particular, the responsibility to prevent – even before the United Nations ever asserted this doctrine. That, too, is

something that we need to act upon and take Per as an inspiration—like those who have spoken before me here today, each and all of whom are exemplars, are role models, of that kind of action.

The third lesson is the danger of a culture of impunity. Simply put, if the 20th century was the age of atrocity, it was also the age of impunity. Few of the perpetrators that took part in the killing fields of the Balkans, the agony of Rwanda, the killing in Sierra Leone, were brought to justice. International criminal tribunals were created, and we meet also just after the 10th anniversary of the International Criminal Court—the establishment of which was the most dramatic development in international criminal law since Nuremburg. And yet regrettably, one has to still say, that notwithstanding that fact – and we should celebrate that there has been a revolution in international criminal law on a declaratory level and an institutional level – the violations continue unabated.

And even with respect to the institutions, as I speak to you now not one trial has yet begun before the International Criminal Court. The people in Rwanda sometimes feel disconnected from what is going on with respect to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. One of the most disturbing phenomena with regard to this culture of impunity is that after the International Criminal Court – to its credit – issued arrest warrants, for example, for one Ahmed Haroun – the minister of the interior in the Sudanese government – he was promoted by the Sudanese government to be the minister of humanitarian affairs. As such, he became responsible for hearing human rights complaints from the very people whose genocide he had in fact planned and participated in perpetrating. Again we need to hear the voice and the vision of Per, who spoke here too about bringing war criminals to justice before the international community even started along its path of creating institutions for that purpose.

And the final lesson – and it is one that came through so compellingly in what we heard earlier – has been what I would call the danger of the laundering of injustice under the cover of the United Nations and the rule of law. You cannot have a more Orwellian inversion of law, language and morality, than when on the one hand you single out a member state – in this instance Israel – for differential and discriminatory treatment, and on the other hand you provide the major human rights violators – like Sudan – with exculpatory immunity. I'll give you an example – which is a contemporary one because of what is now happening with Israel and Hamas – to illustrate this last point.

A little over two years ago, I was called by the then-United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, who asked me if I would join a two-person fact-finding commission of inquiry. One of the persons was to be Archbishop Desmond Tutu and I was to be the second. The inquiry was going to look into what happened in Beit Hanoun; you may recall the tragedy there, as some 19 Palestinians were killed by an errant Israeli artillery shell that was fired after consistent rocket attacks on Sderot, Israel, at the time. I asked Louise Arbour if this

fact-finding commission of inquiry was going to Sderot; she said no, that we would only be going to Gaza—from where the rockets had been fired to begin with. I asked: don't you think it should also go to the place that had been targeted by the rockets, so one could understand, from a fact-finding point of view, the context in which all these things took place? She replied that if I joined the commission, I would be able to offer my perspective. I said: Louise, I looked at the resolution that established this fact-finding commission of inquiry, and the resolution states – even before this commission of inquiry has embarked on its fact-finding mission – that Israel deliberately killed women and children. So what is there to investigate, if you've already established the findings of fact and the conclusions of law before the investigation begins?

And that's why I say that it is not just a matter of being prejudicial to Israel. The reason why this process should be of such concern to everyone here is because it undermines the integrity of the United Nations under whose protective cover it takes place. It erodes the authority of international law in whose name these resolutions are being passed. It undermines the struggle for human rights under whose banner much of this is being proclaimed.

So let me close where I began. I mentioned that it's the 62nd anniversary, in two days, of the disappearance of Raoul Wallenberg—of this saint of the nations who showed, as Per shows, that if a person has the courage to care and the commitment to act, that you confront evil and you can transform history. I am delighted to be able to have an opportunity to say here what I've said elsewhere. Per – as I have said – has been an inspiration for me in so many ways—he has articulated the narrative of which I've spoken and acted upon. I've always regarded Per – and I've said this elsewhere but it is particularly appropriate to say it in Sweden – as the embodiment of the best of what Sweden is all about—as the embodiment of the struggle against the great evils in our day, and as the embodiment of the struggle for freedom, democracy, human rights, and human dignity in our time.

Per, your own mentor, if he had been here, would have been the first to salute you on your 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and to share in this celebration of freedom which you have inspired for all of us.

Thank you