

**Remarks Presented by Rachel D. York at the Institute on Global Conflict & Cooperation 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Herb York Memorial Lecture, Featuring Former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni  
November 11, 2019**

My 95-year old mother, Sybil, sister Cynthia, and daughter Sophie are so delighted to welcome Tzipi Livni to this year's Herb York Memorial Lecture.

I'd like to speak a bit about my father, Herb York – and his 60 years in public service as first, a weapons maker, and second, a major and effective voice for arms control and non-proliferation. What he sometimes called his journey from Hiroshima to Geneva.

Many of you here will remember Dad at UCSD. In later years he was the Grand Old Man on Campus. But imagine him as the Boy Wonder he truly was...

- The 21-year-old working on the Manhattan Project in Berkeley under Lawrence, and then at Oak Ridge, Tennessee – as an aside, Mom and Dad's very first date was a Saint Patrick's Day party at the Oppenheimer's home.



- Imagine the 31-year-old who was the founding Director of the Livermore Lab in 1952, focusing on "big science" and nuclear weapons design.

- The 36-year-old who Eisenhower brought to Washington to fix the "Sputnik Problem", where he was known as "The Missile Czar", became the first Director of Defense Research and Engineering in the Pentagon, and the first Chief Scientist of ARPA, now DARPA, and was, briefly, the Secretary of Defense.

For four years, Dad visited the WH about once a week, and was the *de facto* link between Eisenhower's White House and three Secretaries of Defense, including Robert McNamara. We had a hot line in his bedroom to the war room that I got in hot water for playing with.

He was responsible for *everything* going on in the defense establishment that involved research, development, tests, and evaluation. That meant strategic warfare, tactical warfare, air defense, naval systems and intelligence. One of his signal achievements while in the Pentagon was to wrestle outer space (and Werner von Braun) away from the military, and establish NASA as a civilian endeavor. For that, he was excoriated by a furious Secretary of the Army in an article in the *Washington Post* as a too-young intellectual and worse, a 'known Democrat'.

- In 1959, at the age of 38, Dad had a major heart attack, and Eisenhower put him in the President's own suite at Walter Reed. The next-door patient was Vice President Richard Nixon. Dad wangled an invitation into his suite, with Pat Nixon and their two girls, so crowded that I ended up sitting on Nixon's bed, with him in it!

Meanwhile, we shared a milkman with Gerry and Betty Ford, and this milkman took news about Dad back and forth between Mom and Betty. This heart attack was a motivator in accepting Clark Kerr's offer to start UCSD in 1961, although President Kennedy asked him twice to stay on in Washington.

- And so finally, at only 39 - Dad came to San Diego as the founding Chancellor of UCSD. We are proud to say that with his initial leadership and vision, UCSD, by most formal measures, became the most successful of the new universities founded after WWII.

- While Dad was Chancellor, he also served on LBJ's President Scientific Advisory Committee - PSAC. In fact, when LBJ returned to the White House from that horrible day in Dallas Texas, he found the order to add Dad to the Committee on JFK's desk, awaiting his signature.

After he resigned as Chancellor in 1972, Dad focused his energies within the university on precisely the topic that had long constituted his major intellectual interest - the nuclear arms race. He testified Ballistic Missiles, and we suspect that that was what earned him a proud place on Nixon's Enemies List.

Under Carter, he became the US Ambassador to the CTBT – the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty talks in Geneva, negotiating with the British and the Russians until Reagan's inauguration in 1981.

That same year, coming from opposite philosophies, Gov. Jerry Brown, and David Saxon, president of UC, decided that if UC was going to continue its responsibility for managing the Livermore and Los Alamos nuclear labs, then UC **also** needed to expand our involvement in peace and security affairs.

The result was IGCC, the system-wide Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, with Dad as its first director. IGCC has expanded beyond nuclear proliferation, to become a major source for analysis, and action, on other crucial national security topics.

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I'd like to touch briefly on the core of Dad's philosophy, and his involvement with IGCC.

Dad came to the conclusion that:

- 1) defense of the population is impossible in the nuclear era,
- 2) our national security dilemma has no technical solution, and

3) our only real hope for the long run lies in working out a political solution.

Since the Livermore days, he worked on both sides of the national security equation ... The title of his autobiography says it all – *Making Weapons, Talking Peace*. As an aside, I would like to say, though, that Dad was a favorite of Japanese TV and documentary makers, who felt his analysis of The War, and The Bomb, was particularly thoughtful and helpful.

People often ask me about Dad's evolution from making weapons to negotiating for peace. In fact, there was no *St. Paul on the Road to Damascus* moment for Dad.

Instead, it was a slow and early evolution – informed by intimate knowledge of our capabilities, Russia's capabilities, and the unthinkable MAD – Mutual Assured Destruction. Now we are in more perilous times, as ownership of nuclear weapons has spread. As he said, "This has been, and remains, our mutual and fundamental security dilemma.

His words ring with even more urgency now – irrational leaders, and political turmoil are crescendoing. I thank institutions like IGCC who can make sense of it all and influence policy ...

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the human side of Dad. He came from a very poor family in Rochester NY. My grandfather and great-grandfather were both train guards on the Buffalo/New York line. No one in his family had graduated from high school, and they were so poor they paid the doctor's bill by sending Dad to his office with a nickel every week.

His interest in science was piqued when an eccentric uncle gave him a library book called *Astronomie pour les Dames*. He memorized all the huge numbers about outer space, and dreamed of going there some day.

He was threatened with expulsion from high school more than once, and had mostly C's, D's and F's until he, with the rest of his class, took the 1930's version of the SAT. The rest was history – University of Rochester to major in physics, then Lawrence and Oppenheimer, Fermi and Segre at Berkeley at age 21.

He was keenly interested in EVERYTHING! Loved nature, loved Yosemite, even though he was profoundly color blind, and taught himself Greek, Latin, Russian, French, and Chinese for fun. He could write Inter Continental Ballistic Missile in Chinese in his inimitable calligraphy.

His concerns included non-scientific affairs - When we came to La Jolla in 1961, for example, he decided that he should work on creating a better relationship between San Diego and Tijuana – all four of us learned Spanish by watching Mexican soap operas every evening, yelling at the TV as the suspense mounted.

Mom became a member of a women's social club in Tijuana, and I was inevitably a *princesa* in all the Club's fashion shows and at the Tijuana Debutante Ball.

Dad also worked on establishing relations with universities in Mexico and South America, where his biggest adventure was having dinner with the Chancellor of the University of Peru, and a man he described when he came home as “the angriest man I ever met”. That professor turned out to be Abimael Guzmán, who soon founded the Shining Path.

Dad would be so pleased to be remembered through this lecture series, and would have been so delighted to have Tzipi Livni as the guest speaker at the Herb York Memorial Lecture.

With that - thank you – I will hand the mike back to Eli.