

"Could There Be A Day That Better Represents America?"

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"Could This Be That Dream?"

Ambassador Howard Gutman

UGC De Brouckere

Good evening.

Good evening.

Along with my good friend and colleague, Ambassador William Kennard, it is an honor to welcome you to preview of the movie "Lincoln," hosted by both the U.S. Embassy Brussels and the U.S. Mission to the EU in honor and in celebration of Black History Month.

I thought I needed to focus my remarks this evening on an apology. You see, I need to leave tonight in the middle of the movie to take part also in the International Holocaust Remembrance Day celebration being held this very night at the European Jewish Congress. I originally felt bad about having to leave.

And then, as I considered the problem, a little smile darted across my lips. I realized the truth. I asked myself: "Could there be a day that better represents America?" Could there be a day that better represents America than a day in honor of Black History Month, that is also the day after Martin Luther King Day, that is also the day after the first Black President was inaugurated for the second time as President of the United States, that is also International Holocaust Remembrance Day . . . a day when a black United States Ambassador, the great grandson of a slave, and a Jewish United States ambassador, the son of a Holocaust survivor who entered America as an illegal immigrant, stand together on a stage in Brussels, in the heart of Europe, proudly representing their country and introducing a film about Abraham Lincoln.

I asked myself: "Could this – could tonight – be that dream?" We all know Martin Luther King had a dream. He had that dream. And I suppose that Abe Lincoln had that same dream at Gettysburg. And of course, whether it was in plantation fields or in a plantation house as she considered what life would be like if she was considered a person and not property, Bill's great grandmother had that dream. And I know for damn sure that as he hid in the woods of Poland for 27 months, digging out graves for a safe place to sleep at night, as he endured three Polish winters outside unable to make a fire knowing it would mean his detection and death, my father too must have had that dream.

Could this night be that dream?

How could it not be?

Enjoy the evening.

Enjoy the dream.