

being in prison, which so often happens in these countries headed by repressive governments, I do not think I could find the courage to speak up.

I think it is time all of us in the U.S. Congress speak up for men and women like Wei Jingsheng who have had the courage to stand alone. I think it is extremely important that we do everything we can to call on the Chinese Government and to make it crystal clear to the Chinese Government that they ought to release this courageous man from prison, and other prisoners of conscience as well. If they do not do that, then I think all of us ought to look at trade relations and other relations with China and other countries that violate the basic human rights of their citizens. We need to exert leadership and we need to make a difference. I yield the floor.

FREEDOM FOR CHINESE DISSIDENT WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today to call for justice for Wei Jingsheng. Mr. Wei is a Chinese citizen who has devoted his life to the cause of democracy and tolerance in the People's Republic of China. In exchange for his selfless effort, Mr. Wei has spent almost 20 years in prison. We must, as a Senate and as a country, call upon Chinese leaders to recognize Mr. Wei's genuine love of his country, to respect his right to dissent, and to set him free to live his life in peace.

I have chosen to make this statement today because today we celebrate the publication of Mr. Wei's book, "The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters from Prison and Other Writings." In these unadorned yet powerful reflections, Mr. Wei provides insight into the tortures he has suffered in prisons and labor camps, as well as the passion and commitment which have maintained his fighting spirit. His straightforward missives on the obvious need for democracy remind us all of our fundamental civic values.

Wei Jingsheng is a hero. With a background as an electrician, and with the weight of the Communist leadership against him, he became what the New York Times called the strongest voice of China's democracy movement. It is with awe and sadness that I note Mr. Wei's ability to persevere these many years despite his and other Chinese dissidents' virtual invisibility on the international scene.

We can not allow Mr. Wei to be invisible. As Americans we have always supported the cause of democracy and tolerance. In our own country we are lucky. Democracy as law and tolerance, though we must always be vigilant for transgressions against it, is an integral part of our social fabric. In other parts of the world, including the People's Republic of China, democracy and tolerance remain elusive. Mr. Wei is a hero because he fights against the tide. The leaders of China will be heroes when they realize that men and

women like Wei Jingsheng can strengthen and enrich their country—if only they are set free.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I join with other Senators today in calling for the immediate release of Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng. Wei Jingsheng exemplifies China's best aspirations for democracy, and his imprisonment exemplifies the worst of the Communist cadre that stands in the way of freedom for a nation of over one billion people. Wei's imprisonment is only one story in the broader tragedy of brutal political repression that has silenced all voices of dissent in China. In a world that is increasingly open to the benefits of freedom and the potential of free markets, the great hope is that the growth of capitalism in China will undermine Beijing's tyranny. The growth of free markets alone, however, will never replace individual acts of courage and conviction by people who defy China's Communist leadership. People willing to spend their lives for the freedom of their countrymen are mankind's true heroes.

Mr. President, Wei Jingsheng was first imprisoned in 1979 after criticizing the Government's suppression of the Democracy Wall movement in China. Since that time, he has spent all but 6 months of the last 18 years in prison. Inside China's prison system, Wei has been a constant target for harassment and reeducation by China's prison guards. Wei has fought the daily battle to maintain his integrity, the strength of his principles, and the conviction of his beliefs. After 14 years in prison, Wei was released in 1993 and promptly began condemning the Government's horrific record of political repression. He was imprisoned again for his courage and remains in a Chinese prison today suffering from a life-threatening heart condition.

Wei's love for his country is most clearly seen in the personal sacrifice associated with his forthright and constant stand against political tyranny. The Clinton administration could learn a lesson from Mr. Wei. In the long run, honesty is the best policy, and a forthright discussion of the atrocities being committed by Beijing will do more for a stable United States-China relationship than repeated acts of appeasement. True constructive engagement means that China is required to honor the trading agreements it signs, to avoid proliferating weapons of mass destruction, and to respect international norms for human rights. We in America need to realize what Wei recognized long ago—that the forces of justice and liberty are at work in the Chinese people just as they have been at work with such stunning effect in other nations around the world.

In the battle between liberty and tyranny in China, I am placing my wager on the side of freedom. As Ronald

Reagan said, "Democracy is not a fragile flower. Still, it needs cultivating. If the rest of this century is to witness the gradual growth of freedom and democratic ideals, we must take actions to assist the campaign for democracy."

Mr. President, we must ask ourselves if we are taking those actions to cultivate the flower of liberty in China. Has our commitment to human rights and civil liberties been constant? Have we defended international norms against weapons proliferation that the free people of the world have embraced for their mutual protection? One need only look at the record of political repression in China and China's arming of Iran to see that the Clinton administration is failing to press our concern for international human rights and protect our own long-term national security interests.

American foreign policy needs to return to its most enduring and noble aspect: our willingness as a nation to sacrifice in order to help other peoples achieve the individual liberties we enjoy. When the Chinese people eventually rid themselves of tyrannical leadership and establish a democracy—and they will just as the South Koreans, the Japanese, and the Taiwanese have done before them—I hope they will be able to say that America stood by them in their darkest hours. For the Chinese people, the torch lit in Tiananmen Square is flickering. The American people want to stand by the Chinese. The Clinton administration has been less clear. The administration can stand up for America and the Chinese people by insisting that Wei Jingsheng be released.

THE COURAGE TO STAND ALONE

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues the publication of "The Courage to Stand Alone," the letters of Wei Jingsheng, a fearless and outspoken dissident currently imprisoned by the People's Republic of China. For two decades Wei Jingsheng has been a leader in the struggle for democracy in China, as well as a passionate advocate of human rights for the people of Tibet.

Among the many crimes for which Wei has spent the last 18 years in prison, perhaps none is so onerous to his persecutors as his presumption to hold the totalitarian regime of the People's Republic of China to its own standard of law. As Andrew J. Nathan writes in his Foreword:

Wei's powerful statement of self-defense [at his 1979 trial] exposes how little difference there is between the new legal system and the old absence of a legal system. The prosecutors and judges search for a crime and find none, but they obey orders. They sentence Wei to fifteen years.

The outside world is outraged, but most Chinese at the time are wiser. They see Wei as the victim of his own naivete. He failed to appreciate the unwritten limits to free speech and legal reform. He committed the greatest offense in a dictatorship: taking words at face value.

The Courage to Stand Alone serves as a testament of resistance to the totalitarian phenomenon so brilliantly dissected in our century by the likes of Hannah Arendt and George Orwell. Wei's letters stand as the literary equivalent of the famous photograph of the lone Chinese individual confronting a column of tanks during the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

In his letter of June 15, 1991 Wei writes:

It is precisely because human rights are independent of the will of the government, and even independent of the will of all mankind, that people fight for the realization and expansion of human rights as a natural and unprovoked matter of course. They gradually come to the realization that the more widespread and reliable the protection of human rights is, the more their own human rights are protected. Just as man's understanding of objective truths and objective laws is a gradual process, man's understanding and comprehension of human rights is a gradual process. Just as man's grasp and utilization of objective laws is a progressive process, man's protection of the theory and practice of human rights is a progressive process.

Wei Jingsheng—by his words and conduct—has done much to advance our understanding of human rights in China and throughout the world. I commend "The Courage to Stand Alone" to all Senators, and I look forward to the day when Wei Jingsheng will again be free to stand together with other Chinese dissidents who struggle to bring a measure of democracy to their ancient and long-suffering homeland.

WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, there are some individuals whose personal courage is almost impossible to fathom, who will be long remembered for the example they set in standing up for what they believed for the sake of all of us. Wei Jingsheng, who is perhaps China's most famous political prisoner, is one such individual. Today I join Senators MOYNIHAN, HELMS, WELLSTONE and KENNEDY in recognizing today's publication of Mr. Wei's collection of letters to Chinese leaders and members of his family, and essays about democracy, "The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters from Prison and Other Writings."

Known as the intellectual leader of the Democracy Wall movement, China's first prodemocracy protest, Mr. Wei has spent nearly all of the last 18 years in prison for his outspoken, unrelenting criticism of China's political leaders and his thoughtful and inspiring writings about the need for democratic change and the rule of law in China. In one essay, Mr. Wei describes the law in China as, "merely a 'legal weapon' that anyone in power can wield against his enemies."

In an effort to convince the International Olympic Committee to award China the 2000 Olympic Games, the Chinese Government released Mr. Wei in

late 1993. The cynicism of that decision was exposed just 6 months later, when he was rearrested and held incommunicado for 20 months, in part for meeting with Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck. He is currently serving a 14-year sentence.

In addition to the egregious violations of the rights to freedom of expression, due process, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, I am very concerned about Mr. Wei's health. He is suffering from high blood pressure and a heart condition, and has not received the medical attention he needs. He is not permitted to go outside, nor is he allowed physical exercise. I am told that prison authorities have moved other prisoners into Mr. Wei's cell to monitor and limit his political writing. If Mr. Wei serves all of his current 14-year prison sentence, he will be 60 years old when he is released. His health is so fragile it is uncertain whether he will ever get out alive.

Mr. President, Mr. Wei is one of thousands of courageous people who have been thrown in prison, tortured or otherwise silenced in order to squelch any expression for democratic change in China. Despite repeated attempts by our administration to discuss human rights with Chinese authorities, the Chinese Government has continued to insist that internationally recognized human rights are an internal matter. The situation has gotten worse, not better.

I urge all Senators read "The Courage to Stand Alone," and to remember Wei Jingsheng and the thousands of other Chinese citizens who have remained steadfast in support of democracy and human rights, in the face of repression.

RELEASE OF WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I join my colleagues urging the release of Wei Jingsheng, currently imprisoned in China for his efforts to promote democracy in China. Serving his second long-term sentence, Mr. Wei is seriously ill without access to proper medical care. He has served nearly 18 years in various prisons and labor camps and will not be released until 2009. It is doubtful he will last that long without medical attention.

I hope the leaders of China will grant Mr. Wei's release as an humanitarian gesture that would show the world that China has a commitment to improve the human rights of its citizens.

TRIBUTE TO WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in urging the authorities in Beijing to provide immediate medical care to Wei Jingsheng and to end his prolonged incarceration in Chinese prison. Granting these requests would not only be an act of official compassion but it would also signal to others that the introduction of economic liberalism—and the re-

markable economic advancements that it spawned—is leading to improvements in internal freedom, human rights practices, and the quality of life in the People's Republic of China.

Responding to our modest requests would be a positive sign that China, as it seeks to be more fully integrated into the global system, is increasingly self-confident about itself, about the image it projects to the rest of the world and about the role it intends to play in the world.

Wei Jingsheng has spent the better part of his adult life in detention, in jail, and in labor camps. Most of his past 18 years have been spent in solitary confinement in unusually harsh conditions. His health has deteriorated badly and he is deprived of most normal privileges available to political prisoners. Those conditions and these deprivations would have broken the spirit of defiance in most human beings. Not so for Wei Jingsheng.

Wei Jingsheng's remarkable prison letters to the Chinese leadership will be published today, May 13. His book, "The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters from Prison and Other Writings," is a splendid testament to the yearning for democracy by a political dissident who has never experienced true freedom in a land and country that has never experienced true democracy or anything approximating an open society. His writings speak to us about the need for democratic reform at a time when China exhibits little internal visible dissent. There is now no visible political dissent in China because political dissidents have either gone into exile, are in prison, or have redirected their energies in new-found entrepreneurial enterprises.

Mr. President, we are here today not only to laud the publication of Wei Jingsheng's book of letters or to urge Beijing to discard its harsh treatment of its leading political dissident, we are here to honor a true democrat. We should honor true democrats and democracy anywhere, and under any circumstances. We can and should promote human rights practices and democracy abroad just as we pursue other important national interests.

Our foreign policy must express both our values and our interests. That is why we must continue to support the development of political and economic reforms abroad while endorsing those democracy-promoting programs undertaken by such non-government organizations as the National Endowment for Democracy [NED] and the Center for Democracy.

Wei Jingsheng's current prison term expires in the year 2009 but his health is reportedly so poor that he may not survive until then. Keeping Wei Jingsheng in prison under such difficult conditions would be a permanent stain on China's claim that it is misunderstood by the rest of the world. To release this man and other prisoners of conscience would bring good will to China and assure the outside world