

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

that China enjoys the self-confidence to change.

I join with my colleagues in the hope that Wei Jingsheng will be released from prison in the very near future.

Thank you.

URGING THE GOVERNMENT OF CHINA TO RELEASE WEI JINGSHENG—A POLITICAL PRISONER

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today with a simple message, a message to the Government of China to release Wei Jingsheng. Who is Wei Jingsheng? Born in China, Wei Jingsheng is a dreamer, a political activist, a writer, a silenced leader, an inspiration, a nurturing older brother, and one who possesses an unparalleled faith in democracy and its place in modern China. He is the kind of man who if living in America would undoubtedly grace these Halls. But Wei Jingsheng does not live in the United States, he lives in China, where the courage of his convictions have not been appreciated, in fact quite the opposite, Wei Jingsheng has been severely punished.

In speaking out for democracy and reform, Wei Jingsheng has suffered great consequences—consequences including nearly 18 years of solitary confinement, torturous treatment, the lack of medical attention, and numerous other methods known to squelch a man's spirits and weaken his convictions.

Now that we know about his punishment, let us consider Wei Jingsheng's crimes: numerous writings on democracy, a series of letters to China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping before his death, communicating with foreign journalists, participating in the 1979 Democracy Wall movement, and most recently meeting with John Shattuck, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in 1994. Frankly, these do not strike me as crimes, or actions that warrant any sanctions by the state, and most certainly are not at all commensurate with the punishment Wei Jingsheng has endured.

Respect for human rights is an international concept. We only need look to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to see a sample of the international consensus on human rights. While China may resent United States scrutiny on this topic, we do in fact have a legitimate right, as well as a moral obligation, to call for improved conditions. We can and should have a human rights dialog with Chinese leaders, and I encourage the administration to make more opportunities for such high level discussions to take place.

Wei Jingsheng is reported to be near the end of his life—a life of struggle and hardship. His recently published book "The Courage To Stand Alone: Letters From Prison and Other Writings" underscore Wei Jingsheng's struggle to promote democracy in

China. I stand with my other colleagues in the Senate today to encourage the Government of China to immediately release Wei Jingsheng.

WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join today with my colleagues in solidarity with a courageous Chinese advocate of human rights, Wei Jingsheng.

Each year, the family and friends of Robert F. Kennedy, and those who honor his legacy present a human rights award in my brothers name. In 1994, Wei Jingsheng won that award.

Except for a brief period in late 1993 and early 1994, Wei has been imprisoned since 1979 because he dared to call for democracy and freedom of expression in his country.

Wei never feared to tell the story of the abysmal conditions imposed on those who dare to speak for human rights, democracy, and freedom of expression in China.

He was an electrician at the Beijing Zoo in 1979, when he earned international praise during the Democracy Wall movement for his courageous essays criticizing the Chinese leadership and calling for democratic reforms.

In his 1978 journal, "Explorations," he publicly exposed the torture of political prisoners. He later wrote one of the most famous essays of the democracy movement, arguing eloquently and powerfully that democracy and free speech were preconditions for China's economic and social growth. In another essay, he challenged China's leader at the time, Deng Xiaoping, saying: "We cannot help asking Deng what his idea of democracy is. If the people have no right to express freely their opinions or to enjoy freedom of speech and criticism, then how can one talk of democracy? * * * Only a genuine general election can create a government and leaders ready to serve the interests of the electorate."

For his refusal to remain quiet, he was arrested in 1979, tried secretly, and sentenced to 15 years in prison—most of which he spent in solitary confinement. He was repeatedly tortured.

In September 1993, Wei was released as part of China's public relations attempt to win the opportunity to host the Olympic Games in the year 2000. Upon leaving prison, Wei immediately resumed his leading role in the democracy movement.

On April 1, 1994, after Wei met with Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, John Shattuck, he was arrested again and held incommunicado for 20 months. He was formally charged in November 1995 and, after a 1 day trial, was convicted of "engaging in activities in an attempt to overthrow the Chinese Government."

Wei is now in a prison cell serving a 14-year sentence. His health is poor, his conditions are deplorable, and he is repeatedly tortured.

Today we celebrate the latest publication of his writings, "The Courage to

Stand Alone." Wei has often stood alone against the Chinese Government. But he does not stand alone, and he will not stand alone in the wider world. He will never stand alone, as long as there are those who care about human rights and who are willing to speak out on his behalf. We will go on doing so until Wei is released, all political prisoners in China are released, and the basic human rights he so bravely fights for are enjoyed by all the people of China.

MR. WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. KEMPTHORNE. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the important issue of political prisoners in China. I want to thank Senators HELMS, MOYNIHAN, KENNEDY, and WELLSTONE for focusing the Senate's attention on this topic.

As we consider United States-China relations, respect for human rights must be at the top of our Nation's agenda. In that regard, today I call on the Government of China to release Mr. Wei Jingsheng from prison so that he may receive the immediate medical care he desperately needs.

Further, I call upon President Clinton to make the release of Mr. Wei Jingsheng, and all Chinese political prisoners, such as the Tibetan prisoners of conscience, a top priority as our Nation discusses our relationship with China.

The first amendment of our Constitution guarantees citizens of the United States freedom of speech, the right of people to peaceably assemble and the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances. Mr. Jingsheng does not have these rights, and so I join my colleagues asking for his freedom.

In the United States of America "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

That all men are created equal. This is one of our Nation's unswerving principles and we have never and should never be willing to, as President John F. Kennedy stated in his inaugural address, "permit the slow undoing of human rights to which this nation has always been committed." And, as my colleagues know, there is a tragic lack of respect for human rights in China, which is why we are making these statements today.

Mr. Wei Jingsheng's courage and conviction should be a beacon to all of us. He has received the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award and I would like to quote Senator Robert F. Kennedy:

Some men see things as they are and say "why?"

I dream things that never were and say "why not?"

Mr. Jingsheng has that courage to ask "why not." So today, Mr. President, I rise and ask the Government of