

which he reclaimed as a condition of his release in 1993, are published in "The Courage To Stand Alone: Letters From Prison and Other Writings," to be released today. It is my hope that these words will continue to echo throughout the world, and help to bring freedom and democracy to the people of China.

Thinking of Mr. Wei, I am reminded of the words of another man imprisoned for his uncompromising beliefs. As he wrote from his cell:

Only one thing has remained: the chance to prove—to myself, to those around me and to God—that . . . I stand behind what I do, that I mean it seriously and that I can take the consequences.

Today I will meet the writer of those words, President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic. I am filled with hope as I think of President Havel's extraordinary life and his path from political prisoner to president. I know that Mr. Wei shares President Havel's determination to stand behind his beliefs. It is my hope that one day he also will be free to travel to Washington and that this day will come soon. Mr. Wei's unjust imprisonment must end, and I appeal to the Government of China to release him immediately.

CALLING FOR RELEASE OF CHINESE DISSIDENT WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, today marks the publication date of a remarkable compilation of letters from a remarkable man, imprisoned Chinese political dissident Wei Jingsheng. His book, "The Courage To Stand Alone: Letters From Prison and Other Writings," should be required reading for anyone who takes for granted the freedoms enshrined in our Constitution and Bill of Rights. Wei is currently serving 14 years for the crime of advocating democracy in a country where freedom of speech does not extend to criticism of government authorities.

An electrician by training, Wei lacks the formal education of some other famous 20th century champions of democracy and civil rights—Vaclav Havel, Andrei Sakharov, or Martin Luther King—but whatever he may lack in sophistication, he more than makes up for with his blunt eloquence.

Just days before the Chinese crack-down against pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square, Wei offered some candid advice for China's top leaders from his prison cell, urging them to "take great strides to implement a democratic government as quickly as possible." A great tragedy might have been avoided if Beijing's gerontocracy had heeded Wei's call.

Wei was first imprisoned from 1979 to 1993 on charges of "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement," the result of his participation in the Democracy Wall Movement. During this brief flowering of officially authorized political dissent in China, Wei had the nerve to argue that China's moderniza-

tion goals could not be met without democratic reform. For this affront, he was severely punished.

In 1993, on the eve of the International Olympic Committee's decision about whether to award the 2000 Olympics to Beijing, China briefly released Wei in an effort to strengthen its Olympic bid. On April 1, 1994, just days after meeting with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, John Shattuck, Wei was detained once more.

He was subsequently sentenced to 14 years for trying to "overthrow the Chinese Government." The actions cited as proof of Wei's "counter-revolutionary" intent included publishing articles critical of the government and raising funds for the victims of political persecution in China.

Wei has spent most of his last 18 years in solitary confinement, enduring a variety of physical and psychological hardships. He is now widely reported to be in very poor health, suffering from heart and back ailments that require urgent medical attention. Attention he is currently denied.

Today, I join with my colleagues to urge the Chinese Government to take all necessary steps to release Wei Jingsheng from prison on humanitarian grounds. Chinese authorities should ensure that Wei immediately receives the medical care he requires. Wei's imprisonment comes as a result of his peaceful advocacy of democracy and basic human rights. His words warrant our admiration, not a death sentence.

WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, today is the publication date of a book of prison letters by Wei Jingsheng, "The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters From Prison and Other Writings." Wei's book is the subject of a May 5 editorial in the New York Times; I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, Wei is China's most prominent dissident. Perhaps I should say that he is China's most prominent dissident in jail. In any event, there are no active dissidents in China, according to this year's State Department human rights report—they are all in jail, or silent.

Wei became famous for his powerful, articulate statements during the Democracy Wall movement. After his release in 1993, he returned his advocacy of democratic reform. After 6 months, he was rearrested and held incommunicado for almost 2 years before being sentenced to another 14-year prison term in 1996.

Wei shows no concern for himself. His health is poor, threatened by heart problems. Yet he continues to stand up to the Chinese Government, demanding freedom and democracy for the people of China.

Wei's letters reveal courage in the face of a brutal and immoral regime. His example is bound to humble any one who dares take for granted the freedoms enjoyed by the American people.

I hope that, somehow, Wei will learn of the enormous respect and support he has from the American people. I urge Senators to join in calling upon the Chinese Government to release Wei and immediately provide him with the medical treatment he so badly needs.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the New York Times, Monday, May 5, 1997]

LETTERS FROM A CHINESE JAIL—THE BLUNT DEMANDS OF WEI JINGSHENG

(By Tina Rosenberg)

For nearly 20 years, the Chinese government has sought to silence one of the world's most important political prisoners, Wei Jingsheng. Once an electrician in the Beijing Zoo, Mr. Wei is the strongest voice of China's democracy movement. He has spent all but six months of the last 18 years in prisons and labor camps, most in solitary confinement in conditions that would have killed a less stubborn man long ago and may soon kill Mr. Wei, who is 46 and very ill.

Now serving a second long sentence, he is watched around the clock by non-political criminal prisoners who insure he does not put pen to paper. But during his first imprisonment he was permitted to write letters on certain topics to his family, prison authorities and China's leaders. Most were never sent. But they have now been translated and published. They form a remarkable body of Chinese political writing.

The book, "The Courage to Stand Alone," is published by Viking. It shows why the Chinese Government is so afraid of Mr. Wei. His weapon is simplicity. Unlike other Chinese activists, Mr. Wei does not worry about tailoring his argument to his audience and does not indulge in the Chinese intellectual tradition of flattering the powerful. He does not worry about being seen as pro-Western, or a traitor to China. He writes as if what is obvious to him—that China needs democratic freedoms—should be clear to anyone.

"Dear Li Peng: When you've finished reading this letter, please pass it on to Zhao Ziyang and Deng Xiaoping," begins one typical letter to three top Chinese leaders. "I would like to offer several concrete suggestions." The first suggestion: "take great strides to implement a democratic government as quickly as possible."

He wrote this letter on May 4, 1989, one month before the massacre in Tiananmen Square, ordered by Li Peng and Deng Xiaoping.

Although he was not allowed to write of his worst mistreatment, his letters describe his health and request books, a heater, medicine or a hutch to breed rabbits when he is in a labor camp. The Government expected Mr. Wei to show he was being "re-educated." Instead, he wrote essays on democratic restructuring of the Government.

Mr. Wei has always been uncompromising. In 1978, Mr. Deng was fighting for control of the leadership and encouraged reformist thinking. The activists created a Democracy Wall along a highway outside Beijing, where writers put up posters with their thoughts. Mr. Wei wrote the boldest poster, a tract arguing for real democracy and criticizing Mr. Deng, who was then revered by the activists. Mr. Wei then founded an independent magazine. He was arrested in March 1979, given a show trial and sentenced to 15 years.

He was released six months before completing his sentence, as part of China's bid to

win the Olympics in 2000. He refused to leave before getting back letters the prison authorities had confiscated. Once free, he immediately resumed his work for democracy. He was rearrested, and after a 20-month incommunicado imprisonment he was sentenced to another 14 years.

Although censorship insured that few Chinese heard of Mr. Wei after 1979, he has remained a touchstone of the democracy movement. In January 1989, Fang Lizhi, the astrophysicist, wrote a public letter to Mr. Deng asking for amnesty for political prisoners, mentioning only Mr. Wei by name. That letter touched off more letters and petitions and was one of the sparks of the student movement and the occupation of Tiananmen Square.

There is no visible dissent in China today. Some of the activists went into exile, many were arrested, others gave up politics and turned their talents to commerce.

The moral force of Mr. Wei's writing recalls the prison letters of other famous dissidents, such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter From the Birmingham Jail," Adam Michnik's "Letters From Prison" and Vaclav Havel's "Letters to Olga." Mr. Wei's letters are less eloquent, however. He is not a man of words, and he was probably not writing with an eye to publication.

But the most important thing the others had that Mr. Wei does not is widespread international support. Mr. King, Mr. Michnik and Mr. Havel knew that people all over the world were looking out for them and their governments were under pressure to free them, treat them well and heed their cause.

This security is as important to a political prisoner's survival as food and water, and Mr. Wei and his fellow Chinese dissidents do not have it. Their names are not widely known. While some American and other officials have brought them up during talks with Chinese leaders, in general the outside world treats Beijing officials with the deference due business partners.

Today Mr. Wei suffers from life-threatening heart disease. Because of a neck problem, he cannot lift his head. All indications are that he has not seen a doctor in more than a year. He is due to be released in 2009—if he lives that long.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, HIS EXCELLENCY VACLAV HAVEL

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I am proud to present the President of the Czech Republic, His Excellency, Mr. Vaclav Havel. He is here on the floor.

RECESS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess for 7 minutes, so the Senate may greet him.

There being no objection, at 5:35 p.m., the Senate recessed until 5:43 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. SMITH of Oregon].

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Arkansas.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:15

a.m. on Wednesday, the Senate resume consideration of S. 717 and Senator GREGG be recognized for up to 10 minutes in order to withdraw his amendment, and there be, then, 20 minutes of debate equally divided between Senators GORTON and JEFFORDS; and immediately following that debate, the Senate proceed to a vote on or in relation to the Gorton amendment No. 243, to be followed by a vote on or in relation to the Smith amendment No. 245; immediately following that vote, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of H.R. 5, the House companion measure, if it is received from the House and if the Senate language is identical to the House bill. I further ask consent that there be 4 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form prior to the second vote and 4 minutes equally divided between the chairman and ranking member prior to the third vote and, additionally, the second and third votes be limited to 10 minutes in length; and, finally, immediately following those votes, Senator STEVENS be recognized to speak in morning business for not to exceed 45 minutes, to be followed by Senator LEAHY for not to exceed 45 minutes, and further, following that time, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 31, H.R. 1122, a bill to ban partial-birth abortions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, most of the time when I stand on this floor following Senator WELLSTONE, I will be on the opposite side of Senator WELLSTONE's comments. This evening, I would like to associate myself with the comments that Senator WELLSTONE made. I think between the two of us, we pretty well cover the political spectrum as we stand today on the floor of the United States Senate and call for the immediate release of Wei Jingsheng, China's most prominent political prisoner.

Because of his courageous stand as a voice for democracy and human rights, Wei Jingsheng was sentenced in 1979 to 15 years in prison. He served 14½ years of his term and was released in September 1993 as part of China's bid to host the Olympic Games in the year 2000. Wei continued to speak out for human rights and was detained, again, by the Chinese Government less than 6 months after his release.

Wei Jingsheng was first jailed in 1979 because of his peaceful activities and writings during China's democracy wall movement, notably his famous essay, "The Fifth Modernization—Democracy." Following his release from prison in September 1993, he met with journalists and diplomats, wrote articles for publications abroad and continued to assert the rights and aspirations of the Chinese people.

Mr. President, on December 13, 1995, Wei Jingsheng was tried and convicted

of the totally unfounded charge of conspiring to subvert the Chinese Government. He was sentenced to 14 years in prison and 3 years deprivation of his political rights.

Human rights organizations and governments around the world have condemned the trial and severe sentence. We, the Congress, have unanimously adopted resolutions calling for Wei's immediate and unconditional release. The European Parliament has also called for his release, declaring that Wei had been "persecuted because he was demanding democratic rights for Chinese people."

Mr. President, it is my understanding that Wei's family has appealed to the United Nations for help, increasingly concerned about his failing health, which has further deteriorated. Though he is no longer in solitary confinement, Wei is under constant surveillance from other inmates while cell lights are on 24 hours a day, visits by his family are restricted, and he has no access to outside medical care.

Wei Jingsheng remains a symbol of hope in China for those within China who are voiceless. They have steadfastly refused to give up their beliefs, their principles and their commitment to democratic reforms, despite the suffering and punishment that they have endured.

I believe that by honoring Wei for his courageous commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, we will draw attention to the ongoing struggle for fundamental human rights in the People's Republic of China at a crucial time in that nation's history. Calling for the immediate release of Wei sends a strong message to China on behalf of the entire international community.

On Friday of last week, I joined a bipartisan and bicameral effort in honoring Dr. Nguyen Dan Que, along with Mr. Harry Wu, at the third anniversary of the Vietnam Human Rights Day. As I speak today, Dr. Que still remains in prison unable to leave Vietnam to seek medical attention and unable to speak freely about the abuses he has suffered at the hands of the Vietnamese Government. Of course, Mr. Wu, who fought for representative government and human rights in China for many years, was persecuted and held as a prisoner of conscience by China's Communist dictatorship. He was eventually allowed to emigrate to the United States where he has, thankfully, continued his efforts to help the Chinese people gain liberty and human dignity.

On August 25, 1995, Mr. Wu was expelled from China and returned safely to San Francisco. While this case was notable because Mr. Wu is a naturalized American citizen, the Chinese Government holds many thousands of prisoners who, like Mr. Wu and Wei Jingsheng, are guilty of nothing more than speaking out in defense of human liberty.

While the cases of Mr. Wu, Wei Jingsheng and Dr. Nguyen Dan Que