

across any such report in the regional media over the past two years. This contrast sharply with the Chinese provinces, where local newspapers and other media have often reported cases in which police officials have been prosecuted for torture. The absence of such reports in the XUAR suggests that the authorities either ignore or cover up the widespread practice of torture in the region, or may even sanction its use in the context of repression.

ARBITRARY AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS

The XUR is the only region of the People's Republic of China where political prisoners are known to have been executed in recent years. As elsewhere in the PRC, the death penalty is also applicable for a very wide range of offenses, including many non violent offenses such as theft, economic and drug related crime.

Since January 1997, Amnesty International has recorded at least 210 death sentences in the region, of which 190 were executed shortly after sentencing—the real figures are believed to be higher. Almost two thirds of the cases recorded were publicly reported by Chinese official sources. The vast majority of those sentenced to death and executed were Uighurs.

These figures indicate that the ratio of death sentences to the population is several times higher in the XUAR than elsewhere in China. The execution rate vis a vis the number of death sentences appears also to be higher.

Most of those sentenced to death and executed in the region are political prisoners. They have been accused of offenses related to clandestine opposition activities, street protests, violent clashes with the security forces, or terrorist incidents. Some of these cases have been publicly reported by the Chinese authorities, but others have not. When they are reported, official sources merely list the accusations against the defendants and do not provide any detail about the evidence against them or the trial proceedings.

Political prisoners charged with such offenses are often tried in secret, under procedures which are reported to be summary. Trials are a mere formality, with the verdict usually decided by the authorities before the trial. Convictions are frequently based on forced confessions and statements extracted under torture. The families are often excluded from the trials and few defendants are known to have had the assistance of defense lawyers. Defendants who appeal against the verdict invariably see their appeal rejected.

In many cases, the authorities have staged "public sentencing rallies" to publicly "pronounce" sentences imposed on alleged offenders. The defendants taken to such rallies have usually been tried behind closed doors beforehand, though in some cases it is unclear whether they have actually gone through any prior formal trial process. Official reports about such rallies show that the judicial process is a mere formality tailored for the purpose of these show trials. They also usually make clear that justice is dictated by political considerations.

Defendants who are taken to public sentencing rallies are made to stand facing the audience with their hands tied behind their back and wearing a placard on their chest, on which their name and crime are written. They are usually forced to keep their head bowed by soldiers escorting them. In some cases, their feet are also chained and their mouth is gagged with a rope or wire tied tightly at their back to prevent them from speaking or shouting. These practices violate international standards on the treatment of prisoners, by which China has agreed to abide, and unnecessary add to the inherent cruelty of the death penalty. Prisoners sentenced to death at such rallies are invariably executed immediately after the rallies.

There have been reports that some prisoners have been executed in public, notably in villages of Ili Prefecture in the west of the XUAR. It has also been reported that the authorities have refused to return the bodies of some executed prisoners to their family, thus preventing the families from burying their dead according to Muslim customs. This increases concern about reports that the prisoners were tortured to extract forced confessions. Often, the families of those sentenced to death have not been informed until the last minute about the fate of their imprisoned relatives. For example, the parents of 23 year-old Jappar Talet, one of those executed after a sentencing rally in Gulja on 22 July 1997, were reportedly informed of his execution just a few hours before it was carried out. They had no prior warning of what awaited their son. After his execution, they requested his body in order to give him a proper burial, but the authorities refused to return the body.

Amnesty International is also concerned about reports alleging that civilians and, in some cases, prisoners have been killed by the security forces or prison guards in the XUAR in circumstances which appear to constitute extrajudicial executions: deliberate and arbitrary killings by government forces acting outside the limits of the law. The Amnesty International reports describes incidents in which such killings allegedly occurred. International law provides that lethal force should only be used when absolutely necessary and in direct proportion to the legitimate objective it is intended to achieve.

Amnesty International is calling on the Chinese government to take immediate measures to curb the gross violations of human rights occurring in the region, in particular executions and torture. These measures are described in the concluding section of the report. Amnesty International is also calling on the government to institute an impartial commission of enquiry to investigate reports of human rights violations in the region and provide a forum for individuals and groups to voice their grievances. Amnesty International believes this should be accompanied by a comprehensive assessment of the needs in education, health and the economic disparities in the region, particularly given China's signature of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1997.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN R. KASICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

Mr. KASICH. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, April 20, 1999, I was unable to record a vote by electronic device on rollcall No. 93, condemning the murder of human rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson and calling for the protection of defense attorneys in Northern Ireland. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 93.

HONORING BILL COORS AND THE ALUMINUM BEVERAGE CAN

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to note an important event taking place forty years ago in the State of Colorado. An occur-

rence so remarkable, it forever changed industry and society worldwide. In 1959 the Coors Brewing Company, with the initiative of Bill Coors, began distributing its beer in seven-ounce aluminum cans.

By eliminating the use of steel cans and replacing them with aluminum, Coors Brewing Company led industry and the populace into a world of recycling. Consequently, they saved natural resources, conserved energy, reduced municipal solid waste, and established the infrastructure for today's curbside recycling programs. Highways and landfills once littered with single-use steel cans are becoming a thing of the past. Today, more than 70 percent of aluminum cans are recycled and placed back into the consumer's hands.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to pay tribute to Mr. Coors and the anniversary of his invention. His passion for environmentally-conscious business continues to set a worldwide example.

GIFTS FROM TWO FATHERS

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, some of the finest and most patriotic people that we have in this Nation today are naturalized citizens who came from other countries.

This is true in Knoxville, TN where we have many leading citizens who have come from other nations.

We have an exceptional strong Greek Community and one of the finest of that group is a man named George Consin.

He and other members of the Knoxville Greek Community have contributed in too many ways to list at this time, however, the Knoxville News Sentinel recently published an article telling the story of how Mr. Consin and his wife, Mary, adopted a small boy from Greece many years ago.

This is a touching human interest story that I would like to call to the attention of my fellow Members and other readers of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the Knoxville News-Sentinel, Apr. 11, 1999]

GIFTS FROM TWO FATHERS

(By Kristi L. Nelson)

In 1958, in the small town of Volos, Greece, the young wife of 27-year-old Soterios Kalliakoudas gave birth to a boy, their first child. The mother died of complications a few weeks after the birth, and Kalliakoudas, a shepherd and himself the oldest of six children, didn't feel he could raise the boy himself or burden his parents with another child. After the baby was christened—the mother's dying wish—he was placed with a foster family in Greece and put up for adoption.

About a year later, Kalliakoudas married his second wife, Meropi.

After learning her husband had a son, she told him, "You go and find that baby. I will raise him as my own." The family gathered at the Kalliakoudas' home to welcome George, who was named, in the Greek tradition, after his paternal grandfather.

But Kalliakoudas returned home empty-handed to face the disappointed family. Upon arriving at the foster home, he was told George had already been adopted and taken

to America. Afterward he always spoke with regret of losing his first son and told people he had four children, including the son who had gone to America.

Soterios and Meropi had two sons—the first again named George in Greek tradition and the second named Dimitri—and a daughter, Viriana. As they grew, they would see men in town who resembled them and wonder if the mystery brother might not be in America after all. As adults, they made an unsuccessful attempt to locate George in America.

"They knew I was in the United States, but the United States is a very big place," Consin Jr. said. "They didn't know where to look."

George and Mary Consin Sr. were born in Greece but met in America. George Sr. came to America with his family in 1933. Mary came to America in 1946, after World War II. After marrying, the couple tried for a decade—without success—to bear a child.

A relative who was a congressman in Athens, Greece, arranged for the Consins to adopt 20-month-old George. Although American adoption agencies considered George Sr. and Mary old to be adoptive parents, Greek adoption agencies preferred older couples, whom they considered more stable.

The Consins were thrilled, but a trip to Greece would be expensive. They asked for help from longtime family friends Jim and Jenny Peroulas, who were planning a family vacation to Greece with their children, Maria and Johnny.

"They were very close friends," said Jim Peroulas, former owner of a Market Square restaurant and now a bailiff for Sessions Judge Brenda Waggoner. "They were depending on us to bring the baby up here."

The Peroulases picked up the boy and kept him with them in Greece for a few weeks before boarding a 12 hour flight to the United States. The Peroulases then stayed with the Consins for a few days, until George Jr. was used to his new home.

"He was a very nice boy," Jim Peroulas said. "They took care of the boy and brought him up right. They told him that and was involved in (the adoption), and George asked me several times to tell him those tales."

George Jr. grew up in Knoxville, fully aware that he was adopted. "It was never an issue or a secret," he said. Being an only child, he was "spoiled rotten," he said.

His parents, like many other Greeks, emphasized the importance of family, hospitality and church. George Jr. grew up close to aunts, uncles and cousins as well as the extended "family" of St. George Greek Orthodox Church, where he was an altar boy and attended church school. In public school, he learned English.

As a child, George Jr. was regaled with his father's stories of a childhood in Greece and his mother's stories of Greece during the war. Though he was interested in the Greek culture, growing up in America suited George Jr. fine.

"I'm sure that I was afforded opportunities I wouldn't have had there," he said.

When he was 20, George Jr. met 17-year-old Angela Barkas on a vacation in Myrtle Beach, where her father owned a restaurant. Twelve years ago—after his graduation from the University of Tennessee and her graduation from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro—they were married. Now George Jr. is vice president of retail sales at First American National Bank and Angela's an interior designer. They have two sons—Alex, 8, and Nicholas, 6.

George Jr.'s parents told Angela of his background, and from time to time the couple would discuss the possibility of finding his birth father.

"Because he was adopted in Greece, it wasn't like we ever thought a reunion would

be possible." Angela said "It's so far away, and there's the language barrier. * * * We never thought it would happen."

In April 1997, a Greek delegation from Larissa, Greece—about 45 minutes from George Jr.'s birthplace in Volos—visited Knoxville. After reading about the delegation's journey in the News-Sentinel, George Sr. approached someone in the group about trying to locate George Jr.'s birth father, whose last name and first initial he had on a document. George Sr. wasn't sure the other man still lived in Volos, or whether he was even still living, but an attorney in Greece helped him locate the Kalliakoudas family.

In October 1997, George Sr. made a phone call to Volos and spoke with Meropi, who told him Soterios had his vocal cords removed as a result of throat cancer and could not speak on the phone. Meropi and Soterios immediately sent letters to George Sr., while George, Dimitri and Viriana each sent family photograph with information written on the back.

They were overjoyed to have finally found the "other brother."

George Jr. was at work one day when he got a phone call from George Sr., now, 78 and working in the 78 and working in the Knox County property assessors office. "I've got something for you" he told him. "Can you come down to my office?"

The elder Consin presented his son the envelope of letters and photographs. "He wanted to give me this opportunity while he was still alive," George Jr. said. "He was waiting for the right time."

He took the envelope home to Angela. Together they pored over the first letter which took George Jr. two hours to read because his knowledge of the Greek language was rusty. That weekend, apprehensive of the language barrier, they placed a long-distance call to Viriana.

"We didn't want to shock his father, and we knew he couldn't speak," Angela said.

The phone call cost \$80—and countless tears of joy.

"We started getting calls from Greece almost immediately—aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings," said George Jr., who said Soterios at first was afraid his son would be angry at him for giving him up. George Jr. quickly made it clear that wasn't the case and now talks to his Greek relatives at least twice a month.

The Consins had been saving money for living room furniture and a family trip to Disney World. "George came in and said, 'Forget the furniture! Forget Disney! We're going to Greece!'" Angela said.

In May 1998, the couple went, taking along their sons to meet a "new" grandfather. About 30 relatives met them at the airport. "We were all crying," Angela said. "It was very exciting."

The Consins stayed in Greece for three weeks. "It was very comfortable," George said. "It was like we had known them all our lives."

Because both George Jr. and Angela had grown up only children, their sons met their only first cousins. Four of Soterios' five brothers as well as all their children and their families lived within three blocks of Soterios and Meropi. "My children didn't speak Greek, and the cousins didn't speak English, but they played together all the time," Angela said.

Nor did his inability to speak English keep Soterios from bonding with his new grandsons. "He spent a lot of time with (Alex and Nicholas), taking them for walks and out for ice cream," George Jr. said. "If they were doing something wrong, he'd whistle to let them know."

George Jr. got to meet his own paternal grandparents, now in their 90s, as well as his

godfather—who was present at his christening—and countless other relatives. "We probably met 100 people while we were there," Angela said.

Moreover, Meropi tracked down the family of George's biological mother—of whom she was a friend—and invited them over for a meal, an unselfish gesture that stunned the Consins.

"Here she was, the second wife, having to deal with the first wife's child," Angela said, "and she invited the first wife's sister over for lunch, having her there in the house crying over the dead wife's picture. She was so gracious."

This meeting with the mother's sister led to a trip to her house in Trikala, an hour-and-a-half drive from Volos. Three of George Jr.'s mother's four sisters and their families—about 30 people in all—attended a luncheon to welcome the newfound relatives. Again, the Consins were overwhelmed by hospitality.

"They slaughtered a pig for us," Angela said. "They even made their own feta cheese—they even made their own wine! Even the salad we ate was from their own garden."

The Consins were "treated like kings and queens" throughout their stay, they said. They would admire an object in town, only to find it on their bed the next day. They had to buy two extra suitcases in Greece to bring home all their gifts.

The Consins also brought American gifts for their new Greek family—perfume for the women, jewelry for the girls, Beanie Babies and Legos for the children. But it was a gift sent the previous Christmas that was most precious to Soterios and Meropi.

Angela had made the Kalliakoudases a photo album of George growing up, using two photographs from each year of his life, and had a friend fluent in Greek write captions underneath. She ended the photo album with photos of Alex and Nicholas and left blank pages for future pictures of the family's times together.

"When we went to visit, that album was on their coffee table with the photo albums of the other children," Angela said. "Meropi said (Soterios) showed it to everyone who came over."

They hope to fill the album to overflowing. George Jr. will leave for another trip to Greece later this month—Angela and the children will join him for another trip next year—and the Consins hope their Greek relatives will be able to visit them in America.

George Jr. said his adoptive parents and newfound biological parents get along well. Meropi calls George and Mary Consin, he said, and the Kalliakoudases always ask about the Consins and refer to them to George Jr. as "your parents."

And they all realize their debt to George Consin Sr., who gave his son a second father—and Soterios back his son.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PLANT PROTECTION ACT OF 1999

HON. CHARLES T. CANADY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Plant Protection Act of 1999. Our nation's farmlands, wilderness, and public lands are facing a serious threat from invasive plants and plant pests that can destroy valuable crops and other natural resources. The United States loses thousands of