

Espinosa Chepe. Indeed, up to this point, there have been 57 convictions, with sentences ranging from 6 to 28 years.

And, I must say that after examining these tragic cases, it comes as no surprise that although Mr. Paya has not yet been arrested, 42 of the 74 people arrested in these crackdowns are participants in the Varela Project.

Even more troubling is that these trials have been and are continuing to be conducted in a Havana courtroom closed to international diplomats and foreign journalists. I strongly believe that this atmosphere of authoritarianism is indicative not only of the lack of substantial evidence against these individuals, but these trials' lack of domestic and international legitimacy.

For many years, I have strongly supported United States engagement of Cuba. I have worked to dismantle the myriad of restrictions on American interaction with that nation, including those on trade and travel. Once again, let me state for the record my belief that our 40-year long isolationist policy towards Cuba has played, unfortunately, a major role I believe in keeping the government of Fidel Castro in power. It has allowed the Castro regime to blame U.S. policies for the lack of food and medicine in Cuba and has created a siege mentality which has allowed repression to flourish under the guise of national sovereignty. For those reasons I continue to believe that U.S. policy needs to change to some degree.

However, my support for United States engagement of Cuba should not be mistaken for support of the Castro Government or for the reprehensible tactics it resorts to in order to suppress popular dissent with its policies.

It is a curious thing, indeed, that prior to these recent actions by Cuban authorities, there was growing support in the Congress and in the Cuban American community in particular for more engagement with Cuba. It leads me to speculate whether President Castro's recent persecution of prodemocracy and human rights activists is not designed to chill efforts in the United States to engage more actively with the island.

I call upon the Castro Government to take immediate steps for the release of its political prisoners, to stop the persecution of Cuban dissidents, and to show respect for and abide by the Cuban Constitution and the will of the Cuban people. Fidel Castro has always said that the Cuban Revolution liberated the Cuban people from tyranny and oppression. The events of the last few weeks would indicate just the opposite. Many of the actions that the Castro regime has taken in recent months, particularly against democratic activists and independent journalists make it crystal clear that tyranny is still the order of the day in Havana under Fidel Castro. It is time for Cuban authorities to drastically re-

verse course and allow the Cuban people to have a voice in their governance. Then and only then will the Cuban people be truly liberated from tyranny.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ROD PAIGE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we recently heard a wonderful address by Senator BYRD when he talked about Easter and expressed his views about it. He did so as a believer. This is a great and wonderful free country, and we are able to express our views.

I wish to take a few moments to comment on some of the attacks from the left on a comment recently made by Secretary of Education Rod Paige.

Secretary Paige is a great educator, a great man. I am so impressed with him. When he took over the Houston County school system in Texas, only 37 percent of the students were passing the basic Texas test. In 5 years, by bringing on discipline, accountability, a rigorous testing program, not accepting failing schools and being intolerant of them, and being intolerant of educators who were not performing, he doubled the number of students passing that test. As he told me, in the fourth or fifth year, he got a little extra money, but basically he achieved those results without extra money in the Texas State school system.

I believe he is a tremendous man. He loves those children. He loves the children more than he does the bureaucrats and the educators. He wants to know if they are learning, and he cares about them. He cares about their values. He cares about whether or not they are becoming better children, not just smarter children.

The complaints arose from a story published in the Washington Post which misquoted the Secretary. This is what the quote was in the Washington Post, quoting Secretary Paige:

All things equal, I would prefer to have a child in a school that has a strong appreciation for the values of the Christian community, where a child is taught to have a strong faith.

First of all, a lot of Americans believe that. Lots of Americans believe that. I submit a majority of Americans believe that. But, this is what a tape recording of his question-and-answer interview demonstrates that he actually said:

Question:

One final question, Mr. Secretary. We're hearing a lot in Christian colleges and universities about Christian world view edu-

cation. Do you have any comment on that? What do you think about that?

Answer:

No, I have not heard enough about that to formulate a view. So I'll probably need to pass on that one.

But they did not let him get away with that. You know how they press.

Question:

Given the choice between private and Christian or private and public universities, who do you think has the best deal?

Secretary Paige answered:

That's a judgment, too, that would vary because each of them have real strong points and some of them have some vulnerabilities, but you know, all things being equal, I'd prefer to have a child in a school where there's a strong appreciation for values, the kinds of values that I think are associated with the Christian communities so that this child can be brought up in an environment that teaches them to have strong faith and to understand that there is a force in their lives.

So the Secretary of Education basically was saying he would like to have a child in a school where there is a strong appreciation for values, and those values are sometimes associated with the Christian communities. So that brought the left up in arms.

That is what we are too often reduced to in this country, that one is not able to express those kinds of ideas. So we are at the point now where we question whether or not the words, "In God We Trust," should be on the wall of this Chamber. There they are, several inches high, right over the main door to this Chamber.

Are we going to rip that down? Take down the Ten Commandments that are in the Supreme Court building? Have no prayer at football games at graduation? That pretty well has been taken care of. I remember when former President Jimmy Carter's Attorney General, the wonderful Griffin Bell, was asked about litmus tests for judges, and he responded without hesitation. He had left office at that point or he probably would have caused a controversy. He said: I tell you we ought to have a litmus test. Nobody should be a Federal judge who does not believe in prayer at football games.

We cannot say "under God" in the pledge now according to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. They struck down the Pledge of Allegiance. They are not happy with the Boy Scouts because they teach values and they believe in disciplining personal behavior. We certainly cannot do those things in school, the left says.

So what we are asking for, it seems to me, or at least the hard left is, elimination of any reference to moral or spiritual values in public life in this country, and I do not think that is how we were founded.

Secretary Paige has dedicated his entire career to promoting children and promoting diversity, making sure that all children of all ethnic groups and all faiths have access to the best possible education. Yes, he is a man of faith. He is a man of conviction. He is a man of character. Those are good reasons for

him to be the Secretary of Education. Do we want someone who is not?

Secretary Paige talks about preferring a school that has a strong sense of values; not that he is requiring or thinks all children should go to Christian schools. He never said that. He uses Christianity as an example of those values because that is his background, because he has made it very clear he believes the same could be said of other religions.

I agree with what the Secretary said, and I think that those who would attack him for talking about the state of American education are doing a tremendous disservice to our children.

Let's face it, this is part of a regular, organized attack on faith more than it is a complaint about Dr. Paige. It is close to requiring a religious test for public service, prohibited by our traditions in law. It is saying that your religion must be secular; people of faith need not apply. If you have any religious beliefs, keep them to yourself, do not let them guide you, for heaven's sake, in anything that you might do.

Unfortunately, there is a group in this country, small but very vocal, who are offended by any expression of faith in public life. I think we have drifted out of sync, we have drifted away from what we are about. I do not think it is healthy.

Religion is woven into the fabric of our great Nation. Faith has always guided our leaders. I think most Americans were taught, as I was taught, not to make fun of someone else's religion, to respect their faith. It did not have to be the same as yours. Ronald Reagan called America "a shining city on a hill."

We are a nation that believes so deeply in our values we confidently promote those values around the world.

Reagan understood the role of religion in fulfilling our mission. Here is what he believed about God in schools:

The Declaration of Independence mentions the Supreme Being no less than four times. "In God We Trust" is engraved on our coinage—

And I will note, on that wall right there.

The Supreme Court opens its proceedings with a religious invocation—

Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye. God bless this Honorable Court and save these United States.

And the Members of Congress open their sessions with a prayer.

We have a prayer every time this door opens.

I just happen to believe the schoolchildren of the United States are entitled to the same privileges as Supreme Court Justices and Congressmen.

I think we have gone too far. Thomas Jefferson, whom we know to be the architect of that great Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and who is considered to be a great bulwark of the separation of church and state, said:

I consider the doctrines of Jesus as delivered to contain the outlines of the sublimest system of morality that has ever been taught.

He would not make Secretary of State today if he were to say that. People can have different views. Public officials can express their own views. President Reagan said:

Without God there is no virtue because there is no prompting of the conscience; without God, there is a coarsening of the society; without God democracy will not and cannot long endure. If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a Nation gone under.

If one wants to see a nation that has a virtueless government, all they have to do is look at Iraq for the last 25 years. Certainly, Saddam Hussein was not a religious person of any kind, Muslim or any other faith. To see such a nation gone under and to see a revival, one had to just turn on the television on Wednesday morning to see the exhilaration of the Iraqis dancing on Saddam Hussein's statue.

I thought about that poem: My name is Ozymandius, king of kings. Look on my face and beware, and now it has fallen in the desert and nobody has seen it in a thousand years.

For decades, these helpless citizens have lived under a government without, more or less, virtues or values. The only thing that was valued by the government was the power and privilege of the Saddam Hussein regime. Their own might was their God.

The Iraqi people, on the other hand, have been liberated by a group of nations, led by our Nation, a government that was motivated by values—liberty, justice, democracy, morality, fairness, equality. Those are the sorts of values I think Secretary Paige was talking about. Right and wrong. Right and wrong does not come from the self-interest of whatever dictator happens to be in power. Right and wrong comes from the Creator.

At our core, we are, and remain a people who believe that each life has sacredness, and that is why our military would not leave one life or not rest with one POW still in prison or even without a body recovered because we believe life is sacred. As the Declaration says, we are a people endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. Thus, right and wrong for believers never changes. And millions of Americans, many of them Christians, Muslims, and Jews, take their guidance on questions of right and wrong out of their core faith in a creating God.

Before those on the secular left attack people for expressing their religious beliefs or their desires to instill values and moral and religious values in their children, I would urge them to take a step back and think about the millions of people of faith in this country. We strike the right balance in America, I believe. Religion is okay, we think. It is good. It is to be encouraged, not diminished, but we respect people of other faiths. We do not demean them.

People can come here from Muslim nations and live happily and safely, and if any of them are harmed we de-

fend them; we prosecute those who harm them. We will not accept that. It is our heritage.

The complaints on Secretary Paige should be turned down. It is time to reacquaint ourselves with the principles of our Founders. They got it right. Every person was free to be faithful or to be secular, to follow their own creed. Government should never bring force to bear, our Founders said, on the mind of man. Never establish a church by the government.

But the Constitution does provide free exercise. The Constitution simply says about religious faith: Congress—us—shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

Secretary Paige was not out stirring this issue up. He had to be asked repeatedly before he even got into the subject. It was not on his mind. He was asked and he gave his personal view. He said: I think. He did not say "everybody else did" or "You must believe." He said: I think we should have an appreciation for values, the kinds of values often associated with the Christian community.

What is wrong with that? Have we gone that far down the road to denying the right of our American citizens to freely exercise and comment on their faith? I hope not.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF JEFFREY SUTTON

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, we are wrapping up prior to going on a 2-week break from the Congress. We have the supplemental appropriations bill yet to do, so we are wrapping up this evening, late on Friday night. Congress will be gone for 2 weeks.

Something happens when we come back. Something very important and something very meaningful happens when we come back. I will talk about that for a few moments.

Mr. President, what is going to happen when we come back, there will be at some point soon after we get back from our break, a vote up or down on the Senate floor on whether or not the Senate will advise and consent to approving President Bush's nominee, Mr. Jeffrey Sutton, to be a judge on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

I will speak for a while tonight about Jeffrey Sutton, but when we come back I will have a lot more to say. I don't think too many people have focused on this. There has been a lot of talk about Mr. Estrada and now there is talk about Judge Owen from Texas but not too much has been said about Mr. Sutton. I will lay out the case and lay out for my fellow Senators and for the public at large what is at stake in this nomination.

First, for the record, Mr. Sutton is a 42-year-old lawyer, currently a partner at Jones, Day, Reavis and Pogue in the Columbus, OH, office. He is an adjunct