

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—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.