

the heart of the religious communities while blatantly breaching international treaties and fundamental human rights standards. We have the legal mandate for this action.

Through this task force, we will appeal to heads of state, both to obtain release of key religious prisoners and to help change antagonistic policies. Individual prisoners will be assigned to individual task force members through this advocacy adoption program.

When congressional Members petition Government leaders, the lives of religious prisoners change. Experienced human rights groups confirm this as well as some of our task force members such as TONY HALL and JOE PITTS, who confirm that such intervention improves prison conditions, stops torture and, most importantly, results in prisoner releases.

Ultimately, the joint effort of several Members can influence hostile national policies for the good. Moreover, task force members will engage in joint protests with members from the British Parliament who have implemented a similar prisoner adoption program, providing further weight to this advocacy.

As I speak to you today, thousands are sitting in cramped and dirty cells, for no other reason than that they peacefully expressed their religious beliefs. Most are nameless and lack advocates, yet they are the Sakharovs and the Solzhenitsyns of our day, and they deserve our help.

The national cases that we will advocate involve advocacy for embattled religious leaders in the Sudan, Pakistan, China, Iran, and Tibet and include persecuted Christians, Tibetan Buddhists and Bahais. The following case profiles of incarcerated believers worldwide illustrate the extremities faced by these communities.

In China, one of the people we will initially be advocating for is Bishop Su. He is a 65-year-old Catholic bishop who has already spent 20 years—20 years—in jails and work camps. His crime is that he believed in papal authority, which is prohibited by the Government, and refuses to join the state-authorized Catholic Church, which rejects the Vatican. Previously he was severely tortured but continues to refuse to recant his faith.

Also in China, Pastor Peter Xu, the Protestant leader of a 3- to 4-million member Christian movement, has been sentenced to 3 years in a forced labor camp for his peaceful but unofficial religious activities. His case highlights the plight of unregistered Christian groups which are forced to meet clandestinely to avoid arrest and harassment. Such house churches remain unregistered so that they can freely practice their faith without Government control and censorship. These underground movements constitute a majority of practicing Christians in China, and their leaders constantly face arrest and incarceration.

In Iran, the task force has targeted four Bahais leaders who have been sen-

tenced to death for the simple reason of their religious associations. They are presently incarcerated and awaiting execution. The death sentence is no idle threat. Over 200 Bahais have been executed, including women and teenage girls. And this just since 1979.

In Pakistan, four Christians have been falsely charged with blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammed. If convicted, they will be executed. Blasphemy charges are potent weapons of intimidation and control of minority Christian communities in Pakistan. Sometimes violence erupts against entire towns. For example, last year in Shantinagar, a Christian town—we have a picture of this that I would like to show the body—20,000 were rendered homeless after a mob looted and ravaged for 2 days as police stood by and watched.

This is a picture here that we have of a family in that community that was dislocated when the mob violence came and the police stood idly by.

In Tibet, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, a 6-year old boy, has “disappeared” and most likely is being held by the Chinese Government along with his family, in an attempt to control the Tibetan Buddhists. This is a deep assault on the Buddhist faith which honors this figure as second only to the Dalai Lama, who is now also outlawed. Tibetan Buddhists are suffering a systematic policy of eradication with monasteries being razed and monks and nuns incarcerated. One prison alone boasts over 100 monks and nuns who are presently jailed just for their faith. This does not include the unknown numbers incarcerated in the other six prisons.

I want to show some pictures to the body of people who have been incarcerated, penalized, and attacked by governments for simply practicing their faith. We remember those people pictured in various places throughout the world that you can see, pictures of individuals who are being persecuted for their faith.

This is another picture of people who are practicing their faith clandestinely at a place in the world where they cannot practice their faith in the open.

The gentleman's picture over here to the far right is also a true case of an individual blindfolded and being attacked for his own faith. Even though he is blindfolded and you cannot see his eyes, you can sense in his face that here is a man of faith who knows what he is facing, knowing that death is potential, and still standing for his faith, for that simple right to do with his own soul what he sees fit. Isn't it right for us to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves? Isn't it up to this body and many others to say that this is a fundamental human right, that this man should have an advocate, that we should be standing with him as he stands there for the simple reason of his own faith, whatever that faith might be? This is a foundational human right. It is time we stood up,

stepped forward and spoke out around the world to the world's governments where half of the people live who cannot practice their faith freely. This is the time for us to do that. I hate to think that we will not step up or we will not be up to the cause of the moment, people such as this gentleman, who stands and faces so much more.

Mr. President, in conclusion, we hope that the Religious Prisoners Congressional Task Force, along with many other efforts, will be a voice for religious freedom internationally. Our goal is the release of prisoners who have taken a stand for religious liberty, those who have paid the high price of loss of freedom and threat to life and even death. They deserve our advocacy for this most personal of human rights, this most important of human rights, to freely express a belief in God.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS SWEEPSTAKES II

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, these remarks are the second in a series that I call “The Corps of Engineers Sweepstakes.” Two or 3 weeks ago I was on the floor to speak about a series of foot-dragging and irrational decisions on the part of the Corps of Engineers in an area that affects not only your State and mine, including its proposal to bury an archeological site on which a 9,000-year-old human skeleton had been found. Because of the wishy-washy answers on that subject from the corps, there is now included in the supplemental appropriations bill about to be discussed on this floor a prohibition against the corps destroying that archeological site.

But the corps is at it again, another installment in the comedy of errors. The bureaucrats in the Army Corps of Engineers office in Walla Walla, WA, have taken it upon themselves to promote and publish a survey of public opinion on the removal of four dams on the lower Snake River. The corps right now, today, is in the process of distributing this survey to some 12,000 people. Sending out a survey to 12,000 people to determine what they think about removing dams is one thing. But if you are the winner in this sweepstakes and get one of the surveys in the mail, out of the envelope drops a \$2 bill. The corps is using \$24,000 in taxpayers' money just to put \$2 bills in the envelope that contains the survey.

But that is not all. You get \$2 for being the passive recipient of the survey. If you fill it out and send it back

to the Corps of Engineers, they will send you another \$10. That is much better than the odds in any of the multitude of sweepstakes we receive that say you may be a winner if you send it in, with odds of 100 billion to 1. Everybody gets the \$2, and everybody who sends the survey in gets the additional \$10. If they all answer, that is \$144,000 of the taxpayers' money.

Mr. President, both you and I are constantly on the backs of the corps to engage in constructive projects that really mean something for us. I am sure you have received the same reaction that I have, on a number of occasions, that "We just don't have enough money to do that. You are going to have to appropriate more." Here is \$144,000, plus the cost of the survey, designing it and totaling it up. That simply is a waste of money. Am I to believe that the Corps of Engineers is truly broke when it is littering mailboxes in my State with \$2 bills and promises of more? Last night, when I was discussing this with a friend, he laughed and said that he had recently gotten a survey from Lexus about luxury automobiles. In dealing with automobiles that cost more than \$35,000, Lexus promised that if you sent in the survey they would send you \$1. Luxury automobiles, \$1 per survey; the Corps of Engineers on removing dams, \$12 per survey. This is just not the way in which to spend taxpayer money. This is not going to increase confidence in the way that our Government spends our money.

This is such a totally outrageous use of the taxpayers' money that I cannot resist the temptation to make more than one set of remarks on the floor on the subject, so I can promise you, Mr. President, that I will be back next week to tell you what is in the survey. If you are shocked about free \$2 bills and free \$10 bills from your friendly neighborhood Corps of Engineers office, wait until you, as a Senator from Oregon, see the totally distorted way in which the corps seeks your views, completely stacked toward one set of answers to the questions rather than an objective survey. But that is for another time.

For this morning, the sole remark is: Here is this Government agency, constantly crying poverty to us when we have constructive activities for it to engage in, dropping \$2 bills in mailboxes across southeastern Washington, and maybe a part of Oregon, for all I know, and promising \$10 more for 5 minutes' worth of work in filling out a phony survey.

This is not the way we should be spending our taxpayers' money.

WIDESPREAD EDITORIAL SUPPORT FOR INCREASING THE H-1B CAP

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to draw the Senate's attention to several editorials from across the country that endorse an increase in the number of skilled professionals who are allowed in on H-1B visas.

The American Competitiveness Act, which I have introduced along with Senators HATCH, MCCAIN, DEWINE, SPECTER, GRAMS, and BROWNBACK, approaches the shortage of high-tech workers problem in both the short and long term. The bill will increase the annual number of H-1B visas that awarded to foreign-born professionals by approximately 25,000 this year, and will create 20,000 scholarships a year for U.S. students to study math, engineering, and computer science.

The cap of 65,000 on these visas will likely be reached in May, four months before the end of the fiscal year. This will cause considerable disruption at U.S. companies and universities. Without legislative action, this problem will worsen each year until companies will no longer be able to count on access to key personnel that help fuel growth.

If American companies cannot find home grown talent, and if they cannot bring talent to this country, a large number are likely to move key operations overseas, sending those and related jobs currently held by Americans with them. We do not want that to happen.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that these articles be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the materials was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

HIGH-TECH TALENT: DON'T BOLT THE GOLDEN DOOR

(By Howard Gleckman)

Perhaps she's named Irina—a brilliant computer engineer from Kiev. She wants to come to the U.S. and bring her dreams of developing the next breakthrough in communications software. But if she doesn't make it in the next few weeks, she probably will be turned away.

That's the sad result of bad immigration policy. In 1991, Congress set quotas that allow only 65,000 high-tech workers to enter the country annually. The cap was part of a larger scheme to stem the flow of immigrants, legal and illegal. But with American companies scrambling to find programmers, engineers, and other highly skilled workers in a tight labor market, business fears the 1998 quota could be filled by May.

ON THE CHEAP

The high-tech industry is working with Senator Spencer Abraham (R-Mich.) to raise the annual quota of these so-called H-1B visas to 90,000. But companies are getting a chilly response from the Clinton White House, which argues that U.S. employers are trying to get foreign workers on the cheap when they should be investing more money in educating and training the domestic workforce. "Companies shouldn't be able to say, 'We'll use immigration law as our way out,'" says White House economic policy coordinator Gene B. Sperling.

The debate over wages and education misses the main point: The U.S. shouldn't bar entry to skilled and creative people at all. At the same time, there's no question that U.S. businesses must support and generate efforts to raise the quality of math and science schooling to ensure a sufficient domestic crop of programmers and engineers in the future.

But such educational reform will take years. In the meantime, skilled immigrants

who want to work in the U.S. should be welcomed with open arms. Top-notch workers, no matter what their nationality, stimulate an economy, creating wealth and improving living standards overall.

Indeed, the high-tech revolution now helping to fuel U.S. economic expansion might not have been so powerful without the drive and creativity of gifted immigrants. Everyone knows about Andrew S. Grove, the Hungarian who co-founded chip-making giant Intel Corp. But there are hundreds of others. Two of Sun Microsystems Inc.'s founding quartet were foreigners. At Cypress Semiconductor Corp., four of 10 vice-presidents are immigrants—from Britain, Germany, the Philippines, and Cuba. Says Cypress CEO T.J. Rodgers: "What would [the U.S.] look like if the computer chip had been created in Europe because of our lousy immigration policy?"

Many immigrants arrive as students. Alan Gatherer, branch manager of wireless communications at Dallas-based Texas Instruments Inc., came from Scotland to study at Stanford University. Simon Fang, who now works on complex integrated circuits at TI, is originally from Taiwan. He also came to the U.S. to attend graduate school, and thanks to an H-1B visa, was able to stay.

WHIZ KIDS

The ivy path makes the current visa restrictions all the more perverse. Foreign students come to the U.S. to profit from the best graduate education in the world. Some take jobs here. But under H-1B visas, they must pack their bags six years later. Other countries get the benefit of these U.S.-trained engineers and scientists.

When these immigrants leave, the U.S. loses more than just their talents. An extraordinary number of their children achieve great success, too. Example: Of the 40 finalists in this year's prestigious Westinghouse Science Talent Search Award, 16 are either foreign-born or children of immigrants.

Critics say immigrants take jobs from native-born Americans. Maybe a few do. But artificial barriers won't protect U.S. jobs for long. If U.S.-based companies can't get the skilled workers they need at home, they will set up shop elsewhere—be it Dublin or Kiev. "We are disarming the economy of the United States if we don't allow skilled workers to come in," argues Dell computer Corp. CEO Michael S. Dell.

That's why it is essential for the U.S. to nurture the best workforce in the world. It shouldn't matter whether these top-notch employees are born in New York or New Delhi. America, a nation of immigrants, should never turn its back on people who want to come here to work. They have too much to offer.

[From the Detroit News, Feb. 21, 1998]

CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

Republican Sen. Spencer Abraham of Michigan is drafting a bill that would help neutralize what is perhaps the single biggest threat to America's economic boom: a shortage of high-tech workers. The bill, which will propose raising the 1990 cap on highly skilled temporary workers from abroad, deserves the support of all those who want to see continuing gains in American prosperity and standard of living.

The rapid pace of economic growth combined with record low unemployment have created a paradoxical situation: High-tech companies, the engine of much of the economic growth, cannot find enough skilled workers to sustain current growth levels. A study conducted by the Information Technology Association of America estimates that there are more than 346,000 unfilled positions for highly skilled workers in American companies.