

# BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
THURSDAY, MAY 8, 1986

CONTACT: WALT RIKER,  
DALE TATE 202/224-3135

STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR ANATOLY AND AVITAL SHCHARANSKY

TODAY THE SENATE WILL, I TRUST, APPROVE A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE STRIKING OF THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL IN HONOR OF NATAN (ANATOLY) SHCHARANSKY AND HIS WIFE AVITAL. THE TIMING IS AUSPICIOUS, SINCE TODAY NATAN (ANATOLY) SHCHARANSKY ARRIVES IN THE UNITED STATES -- HIS FIRST TRIP OUTSIDE ISRAEL SINCE FEBRUARY 11 WHEN THE SOVIET UNION FINALLY LET HIM GO.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY PRODUCES FEW HEROES -- MEN AND WOMEN OF UNDENIABLE COURAGE AND STRENGTH. THERE ARE THOSE WHO, IN TIMES OF CRISIS, REACH BEYOND THEMSELVES AND SHOW HEROIC QUALITIES.

BUT THE KIND OF HEROISM IT TAKES TO WITHSTAND EIGHT YEARS IN A SOVIET PRISON CAMP -- TO WITHSTAND CONSTANT AND PROLONGED INTERROGATION, MONTHS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, HUNGER, LACK OF MEDICAL CARE, THE EVER-PRESENT THREAT OF EXECUTION, AND ALL THIS WITHOUT COMMUNICATION FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD -- IS VERY RARE INDEED. NATAN (ANATOLY) SHCHARANSKY IS JUST SUCH A HERO.

NOR CAN WE FORGET HIS WIFE AVITAL, WHO FROM THE MOMENT SHE LEFT RUSSIA RIGHT AFTER THEY WERE MARRIED, BEGAN HER RELENTLESS CAMPAIGN TO FREE HER HUSBAND. AS A RESULT OF AVITAL SHCHARANSKY'S CRUSADE, THE WORLD AND ITS LEADERS WERE EDUCATED ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF SOVIET JEWRY. AVITAL SHCHARANSKY GAVE UP ALL SEMBLANCE OF A PERSONAL LIFE -- HER LIFE BECAME HER DRIVE TO FREE NATAN (ANATOLY). AND BECAUSE OF HER PERSISTENCE, AND THE PUBLIC'S AWARENESS OF HER HUSBAND'S STRUGGLE, NATAN (ANATOLY) SHCHARANSKY WAS FINALLY RELEASED.

BUT THEY ARE NOT ALONE.

(MORE)

WHILE WE WERE ALL OVERJOYED IN FEBRUARY WHEN MR. SHCHARANSKY WAS FINALLY RELEASED FROM THE SOVIET PRISON CAMP, WE DID NOT FORGET THE 15,000 SOVIET REFUSENIKS WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR, BUT BEEN DENIED, EXIT VISAS, AND ARE TORTURED AND CASTIGATED FOR THEIR EFFORT. NOR HAVE WE FORGOTTEN THE 400,000 SOVIET JEWS WHO HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY TOO WANT TO WANT TO EMIGRATE.

THE MEDALS FOR AVITAL AND NATAN (ANATOLY) SHCHARANSKY WILL DEMONSTRATE THIS COUNTRY'S RESPECT AND ESTEEM FOR THESE TWO MODERN HEROES. BUT THEY WILL ALSO SYMBOLIZE OUR SOLIDARITY WITH THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF JEWS WHO REMAIN IN THE SOVIET UNION LIVING OUT A DAILY STRUGGLE TO ATTAIN THEIR FREEDOM.

AT THE END OF MR. SHCHARANSKY'S TRIAL HE SPOKE FOR ALL THESE JEWS WHEN HE SAID: "FOR MORE THAN 2,000 YEARS THE JEWISH PEOPLE, MY PEOPLE, HAVE BEEN DISPERSED. BUT WHEREVER THEY ARE, WHEREVER JEWS ARE FOUND, EVERY YEAR THEY HAVE REPEATED, 'NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM.' "

THROUGH THEIR INDOMITABLE SPIRIT, THE SHCHARANSKY'S HAVE ACHIEVED THE DREAM OF JERUSALEM. MAY THEY SOON BE JOINED BY MANY MORE.