

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
WELCOME FOR NATAN (ANATOLY) SHCHARANSKY
ROTUNDA, U.S. CAPITOL
MAY 13, 1986

WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER? IT IS A QUESTION WHICH HAS
PLAGUED MAN THROUGHOUT HIS HISTORY. EVEN BEFORE GOD SPOKE TO JOB
OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND, THERE WERE TRUE BELIEVERS WHOSE FAITH WAS
FORGED IN THE CRUCIBLE OF INDIVIDUAL SUFFERING. IN TRIAL CAME
TRIUMPH, IN VICTIMIZATION, VICTORY. AND YET NO CIVILIZATION
WHICH VALUES LIFE AND ALL THAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING CAN TAKE
FOR GRANTED THE PERSECUTION AND DEGRADATION OF MEN AND WOMEN
WHOSE ONLY "CRIME" IS THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO A POWER HIGHER THAN ANY
STATE.

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AMERICANS OVERLOOK SUCH OUTRAGES AT GRAVE PERIL TO OUR OWN MORAL STANDING. FOR AS A FREEDOM LOVING PEOPLE, WE MUST BE ADVOCATES FOR HUMAN LIBERTY WHEREVER IT IS ENDANGERED. AS CHILDREN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY -- THE BLOODIEST, MOST OPPRESSIVE OF THE MODERN ERA -- EITHER WE STAND UP FOR PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE WHEREVER THEY ARE ENDANGERED, OR ELSE WE RISK THE CRIME OF SILENCE, THAT MURDEROUS PRELUDE TO AUSCHWITZ AND BUCHENWALD.

TODAY, WE WELCOME SUCH A MAN, AN AUTHENTIC HERO IN THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN POSSIBILITY. WE RECALL THE HORRORS TO WHICH HE HAS BEEN SUBJECTED -- AND WE REJOICE IN HIS REUNION WITH LOVED ONES. BUT IN CELEBRATING HIS RELEASE, WE ALSO SHINE THE LIGHT ON

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THOUSANDS OF OTHERS WHO REMAIN IMPRISONED BY A GODLESS STATE. WE POINT AN ACCUSING FINGER AT A SYSTEM OF TRUANCY, PLEDGED TO STAMP OUT JEWISH CULTURE. WE ARRAIGN AN OFFICIAL STAR CHAMBER WHICH IS ITSELF PREPARED TO INCARCERATE THE FAITHFUL FOR THEIR REFUSAL TO ACCEPT ATHEIST DOGMA. IN THE WORDS OF ELIE WIESEL:

"RUSSIAN JEWS MUST KNOW THAT WE CARE ABOUT THEIR PLIGHT. THAT THEIR SUFFERING, THEIR RESISTANCE TO INJUSTICE MATTERS TO US DEEPLY. NOW THAT THEY HAVE CHALLENGED US NOT ONLY WITH THEIR EYES, BUT WITH THEIR ACTIONS, WITH THEIR LIVES, WE MUST RESPOND IN KIND, AND RAISE OUR VOICE IN PROTEST. YES, WE MUST BE HEARD NOT ONLY BY THE OPPRESSORS, BUT BY OUR

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OPPRESSED BROTHERS AND SISTERS AS WELL. THEY NEED TO KNOW
THAT THEY ARE NOT ALONE. THAT WE HAVE LEARNED NOT TO BE
INDIFFERENT."

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WHEN HE WAS ONCE CHARGED WITH BEING TOO
IDEALISTIC, WOODROW WILSON HAD A TIMELESS RESPONSE. "THAT IS HOW
I KNOW I AM AN AMERICAN," HE SAID. "BECAUSE I AM AN IDEALIST."

OUR GUEST OF HONOR IS AN IDEALIST WHOSE IDEALS LANDED HIM IN
PRISON. FOR LIGHTING HANUKKAH CANDLES AND RECITING HEBREW
PSALMS, HE WAS PUT AWAY IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. FOR REFUSING TO
ABANDON HIS GOD, HE WAS GIVEN BREAD AND WATER -- BREAD EVERY
OTHER DAY. FOR HOLDING THE MEN IN MOSCOW ACCOUNTABLE FOR

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COMPLIANCE WITH THE HELSINKI ACCORDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, HE HAD HIS OWN HUMAN RIGHTS TAKEN AWAY. BUT NO REGIME, NO PARTY AND NO POLITBURO COULD BREAK HIS WILL OR SHAKE HIS BELIEFS.

AND NOW HE COMES TO US, TO REMIND US OF OTHERS WHO SHARE HIS PLIGHT. WE WOULD DO HIM STRANGE HONOR INDEED, IF WE WERE TO FORGET THE THOUSANDS WHO STILL LANGUISH BEHIND BARS, AND WHO SEEK NOTHING MORE THAN THE CHANCE TO EMIGRATE TO A LAND WHERE THEY CAN WORSHIP THEIR GOD AS HE WOULD HAVE THEM. SO TODAY IS ONE OF THANKSGIVING, BUT ALSO OF RENEWED CONCERN -- OF GRATITUDE FOR NATAN SHCHARANSKY'S RESCUE, AND DETERMINATION THAT WE WILL NOT REST UNTIL THE KEY IS TURNED THAT WILL UNLOCK COUNTLESS CELLS IN THAT UNHAPPY LAND WHERE DISSENT IS HELD TO BE A CRIMINAL OFFENSE,

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AND TRUE FAITH IS FEARED AS THE ENEMY OF POLITICAL ORTHODOXY. IT
IS IN THAT SPIRIT THAT I PRESENT TO YOU A MAN WHO LENDS HEROIC
STATURE TO THIS OLD, PROUD CITADEL OF HUMAN FREEDOM ... A FREE
MAN, AND A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD ... ANATOLY (NATAN) SHCHARANSKY.