

harrowing stories, hard data is difficult to obtain. Experts agree that security incidents among voluntary organizations operating overseas are vastly under-reported. By working cooperatively, aid organizations can share information and resources as incidents occur. Another solution involves training; InterAction, in conjunction with the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, recently developed a security training course for aid organizations which was well received. I encourage their continued endeavors and commend all groups seeking ways to improve security training. Training resources could be developed and shared via a consortium.

The gathering of more information quantifying the problems is another step towards solutions. The skills and equipment that once well-served field workers in the past may no longer be adequate. To get a better understanding of the scope and nature of these new problems, I am working with the General Accounting Office to provide a detailed study to assess this problem.

Aid workers are one of America's great natural resources—living in obscurity at great personal sacrifice to ease the suffering of strangers, they express the best of the American character through their extraordinary generosity. They already sacrifice their personal lives, they should not also pay with their blood. We should not lose them to senseless acts of violence if this can be avoided by appropriate risk assessment and resource sharing. I believe there are unique solutions for these unique challenges, where the best security experts will creatively address these special needs. We should not let these heroes be defeated by heartless terrorism—we should not unnecessarily lose our best to this insidious form of violence.

THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, for some months now, pressure has been building for the enactment of legislation that would address the long-neglected but widespread problem of religious persecution in a number of countries, notably persecution of Christians. This legislation, which has been approved by both Houses of Congress and has been sent to the White House, addresses that problem in a manner that will allow the flexibility to protect U.S. interests. Because there was no Committee Report for this legislation, it is important that appropriate guidance be given as to the intent behind the legislation, for the benefit both of the Executive Branch and, in particular, the Commission established by the Act. As an original cosponsor of the legislation, I wish to supplement the Statement of Managers submitted by Mr. NICKLES to draw particular attention to two provisions in the Act that address what is the fundamental duty of any government: to protect the rights of its own citizens.

The primary purpose of this bill is to address the rampant persecution in many foreign countries by the governments of those countries against their own people. But however repugnant we find persecution of citizens of foreign countries—and properly so—it is even worse when we find that the U.S. government has too often turned a blind eye to violations of Americans' religious freedom by persecuting regimes. For example, the State Department has collaborated with the denial of religious freedom by shutting down Christian services on the premises of the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) and punished a whistle-blowing State Department official who protested. Similarly, the State Department has refused to take any meaningful action to secure the release of an unknown number of minor U.S. citizens who have been kept from leaving Saudi Arabia and who have been forcibly converted to Islam. This is an especially acute problem in the case of girls, who will not be able to leave Saudi Arabia even after reaching the age of majority—in effect, theirs is a life sentence.

This bill addresses both of these issues, and the intent of Congress is clear. First, the bill requires the State Department to report on both practices as they affect the rights of American citizens (section 102(b)(1)(B) (i) and (ii)). This report should be detailed and specific both as to the nature of the violations and the remedial actions that have been applied. Second, because forced religious conversion is among the violations that mandate presidential action under this bill, documentation of the victimization of minor U.S. citizens in this manner by any foreign government should be of particular note in the President's decision to take action. Third, section 107 mandates access for U.S. citizens to diplomatic missions and consular posts for the purpose of religious services on the same basis as the many other non-governmental activities unrelated to the diplomatic mission that frequently are permitted access. Fourth, the Commission should take particular note of Congress' intent in the provisions relating to violations of Americans' rights in making its recommendations and should be strict in reviewing U.S. government policies in this area. And fifth, notice of these violations of U.S. citizens' rights should prompt a thorough review of the Department of State's too-often dismissive attitude toward these concerns in comparison to its desire to cultivate good relations with foreign governments.

ACCESS TO U.S. MISSIONS ABROAD

It is important to note that these concerns were not invented in the abstract but are drawn from real problems of real people. On the question of the State Department's negative attitude toward the desire of American citizens to be afforded the opportunity for worship in countries where this is forbidden, the following is relevant

(from *The American Spectator*, "Saving Faith: Why won't the State Dept. stand up for Christians?" By Tom Bethell, April 1997):

The Saudi dictatorship forbids all non-Muslim religious activity, but services were for years held on embassy and consular grounds in Riyadh and Jeddah. In the 1970's, hundreds of Catholics attended Mass within the U.S. mission each week; Protestant services were equally well attended, and Mormons had their own service. (No American diplomats thought to be Jewish are stationed in Saudi Arabia.) Within the British mission, such religious services continue today. But the U.S. mission has now phased them out. In contrast, the U.S. consulate in Jeddah sets aside special facilities for Islamic worship, five times a day, whether by Americans, Saudis, or embassy employees from other countries.

I met with Tim Hunter at a restaurant near his home in Arlington, Virginia. Before joining the Foreign Service, he told me, he had worked for the U.S. Army in counter-intelligence and as a political appointee to various federal agencies. When he arrived in Saudi Arabia in 1993 he was told by the Consul General that his "informal duties" would include monitoring the "Tuesday lecture," a euphemism for the Catholic Mass held on consulate grounds. By then, the number of attendees had dwindled to fifteen. The reason was not hard to find. Hunter's job was to tell any inquiring U.S. citizens that the embassy knew nothing about any such service or "Tuesday meeting." Only if callers were extremely persistent was he to meet with them and gauge their trustworthiness.

Since this was entirely irregular and contrary to U.S. law, Hunter decided to blow the whistle. He even told the FBI what was going on. Within days of telling visiting officials from the Inspector General's office he was ordered to return to the U.S. A State Department review panel observed that Hunter had not "absorbed the Foreign Service culture"—an understatement. In April 1995, Hunter recalled, "two uniformed officers of the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service, displaying brightly polished 9mm caliber pistols, appeared at the office of my supervisor [James Byrnes] and advised him that I was being removed from further employment." Today Hunter calls the U.S. mission in Saudi Arabia a "rogue part of the U.S. diplomatic establishment." Thomas Friedman provided an oblique corroboration in the *New York Times*, noting in December 1995 that the U.S. has "withdrawn diplomats from Riyadh whom the Saudis felt became too knowledgeable and frank about problems in the kingdom."

Section 107 of this bill will remedy this problem. The State Department may not adopt a cavalier attitude toward the requests of U.S. citizens for access for the purpose of religious worship or suggest that such requests are uniquely unrelated to the conduct of the diplomatic mission in comparison to other permitted activities, for example, the dispensing and social consumption of alcoholic beverages and the serving of pork products, that are also contrary to Saudi law. Many other social and American community activities without any discernable diplomatic purpose will no doubt continue, and in most cases should continue, but religious service access requests under section 107 may receive no less consideration. The fact that several other foreign consulates afford access to worship for their citizens disproves any

suggestion that diplomatic interests preclude similar provisions for Americans by the State Department. The annual report required under the bill must make this clear, and the Commission should give strict scrutiny to enforcement of this provision according to its clear intention. Finally, the victimization of Mr. Hunter for blowing the whistle on this matter is unconscionable, and the Commission should recommend and monitor speedy redress of his status by the State Department.

FORCED CONVERSION OF MINOR U.S. CITIZENS

If the neglect of the worship needs of Americans abroad is deplorable, inaction in the cases of the victimization of minors who have been taken to a foreign land, subjected to forced religious conversion, and prevented from returning to the United States where they would enjoy religious freedom is intolerable. One particular case illustrates the severity of this problem, that of Alia and Aisha Al Gheshiyan. In Chicago, Illinois, on January 25th, 1986, Alia, aged seven, and Aisha, aged three and a half, visited the apartment of their father, Khalid Bin Hamad Al Gheshiyan, a citizen and Saudi Arabia. The girl's mother, Patricia Roush had been awarded custody of the children by a U.S. court but had agreed to permit their father to have the children for an overnight visit. He promised to return them to their mother the next day. However, instead of returning the girls to their mother, Al Gheshiyan abducted the two girls and took them to Saudi Arabia. On January 28th 1986, an Illinois court issued a warrant for Al Gheshiyan's arrest on charges of child abduction.

Having been removed from the United States and placed under the law of Saudi Arabia, where no non-Islamic region may be practiced, the girls (who had been baptized as Christians) were obliged to give up their previous Christian identity. According to their mother, who has secured documentation of her daughters' mandatory conversion to Islam:

My daughters Alia and Aisha Gheshiyan were raised in a Christian home by a Christian mother and were not familiar with Islam or their father's family, culture or religion. (Which he stated he was disobeying when he was in the United States for twelve years). My daughters are now young women who are nineteen and sixteen years of age with no possible choices of religious freedom. If they do not practice Islam, they could be killed—quite possibly by their own father. This is not uncommon in Saudi Arabia. If a child, especially a daughter, does not submit to her father's commands, he has the right to put her to death.

It is important to remember that in cases like that of Alia and Aisha, their plight amounts to a life sentence, because under Saudi law, even after attaining majority (as Alia already has) they may not travel abroad without their father's permission (in the case of unmarried girls and woman) or their husband's permission (in the case of married women).

As if the total denial of rights to these Americans were not bad enough,

even more deplorable has been the response of the Department of State, which has simply dismissed the matter as a "child custody" case and has advised Ms. Roush to hire a lawyer for proceedings in a Shari's religious court—a court in which she, as a non-Muslim and a woman, has virtually no standing. There is no evidence that the State Department has ever dealt with this (and other such forced conversions) as not just a private dispute or a routine consular access case but as a state-to-state matter involving not only the solemn obligation of the government of the United States to secure the rights of its citizens but of the indefensible hostility of the Saudi government toward religious freedom. If the United States could make the fate of prominent Soviet Jewish "refuseniks" Natan Scharansky and Ida Nudel a matter of national policy in American relations with the Soviet Union—as we should have—the fate of Alia and Aisha must be seen as a litmus test of the willingness of the State Department to give proper weight to the requirements of this statute in its relations with the Riyadh government. The Commission should recommend specific action as the highest level to ensure that the United States no longer gives the impression that such treatment of its citizens is acceptable or is only a routine "private" or "family" matter.

COSPONSORSHIP OF S. 1529

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I would like to state for the RECORD that Senator LEAHY agreed to cosponsor S. 1529, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998 on September 30.

Due to an unfortunate clerical error, his name was not added until today, October 15.

Y2K CHALLENGE

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, almost everyone has heard of the impending "Year 2000" or "Y2K" problem, also commonly known as the "millennium bug." The problem itself is fairly simple. In the early years of computers, programmers set aside only two digits to denote the year in dates. To the "minds" behind computers and other technology-driven devices, the year 2000 is indistinguishable from the year 1900. The problem is present in billions of lines of software as well as billions of small computer chips embedded in electronic devices used by Americans every day. Without the necessary checks to ensure that electronic devices can operate by January 1, 2000, the impact of this computer bug could be wide-ranging and even disastrous. Household gadgets like garage door openers or VCRs could break down. Traffic delays could be caused by non-complaint traffic lights. Stock exchanges and nuclear reactors could shut down.

Although the problem is easy to describe, it has proven difficult and time-

consuming to solve. To make the necessary corrections, each line of computer code must be hand-checked by a computer programmer, and all computer chips must be tested. In the United States alone, it is estimated that it will cost over \$600 billion to correct the millions of lines of computer program code. Not only are these corrections expensive, the process of analyzing, correcting, testing and integrating software and hardware has become a heavy management burden on all levels of government as well as the private sector.

Although the federal government has been working to meet the time constraints of the Y2K deadline, the General Accounting Office has found that problems still remain with computer systems at every federal agency they examined. Overall, it is estimated that the federal government must check at least 7,336 mission critical computer systems. Some larger systems, those used by the Internal Revenue Service, for example, have more than 60 lines of code per system. The Office of Management and Budget has established an interagency committee to facilitate federal efforts to instruct each federal agency on the best possible solutions.

Some federal agencies are closer to achieving Y2K compliance than others. The Treasury Department's Financial Management Service, responsible for paying Social Security disability and retirement benefits, Veterans' benefits, and IRS refunds, installed two new Y2K compliant systems earlier this month. Treasury Department officials are confident they will be ready and checks will arrive on time.

The Federal Aviation Administration is among the agencies furthest behind in this process. This is of particular concern to me. A recent survey by the Air Transport Association of America shows that 35 percent of our nation's airports surveyed do not yet have a Y2K plan and that only 20 of 81 of our country's larger airports are on schedule to fix their Y2K problems. Although FAA officials testified that they will, in fact, be fully compliant by the end of June 1999, this will not give their administrators much time for testing the updated systems. The Transportation Department is prepared to shut down unsafe aviation systems domestically and will be working with the State Department to access the safety of international systems so they will be ready to stop flights to unsafe airports. Unless we can accelerate Y2K compliance at our airports, the rippling Y2K effect on air travel could make air travel inconvenient and costly to the American traveler.

During this session of Congress, we have devoted a great deal of attention to the Y2K challenge. A special Senate Subcommittee on Y2K, headed by our colleague from Utah, Senator ROBERT BENNETT, held several hearings to raise awareness of this problem and to discuss possible solutions. To expedite the federal government's efforts to correct