

The next morning I had the opportunity to sit down with Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti, Founder and President of the Christian Liberation Front of Pakistan whom I had met in Philadelphia earlier this year. His group is an umbrella organization whose self described mission is the "liberation of the oppressed from social subjugation, economic deprivation, religious discrimination, religious intolerance and expression." Mr. Bhatti and I discussed Pakistan's blasphemy law, which he told me is broadly interpreted, and states that anyone who blasphemes the Prophet Mohammed is to be sentenced to death. Mr. Bhatti told me that there were many individuals currently being detained in Pakistani jails under the law and he provided me with a list of names. I asked Mr. Bhatti if he thought that the religious persecution act the Congress had passed had any effect on his situation in Pakistan.

He told me that he thought the Act was a useful instrument for the enhancement of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance, not only in Pakistan, but also all over the world. Mr. Bhatti told me that he felt that the U.S. State Department needed to be more focused on persecution in Pakistan in the coming year. Mr. Bhatti said that while he had met with the U.S. Ambassador when he had visited Pakistan and that he had met with the Ambassador again in Washington, he felt that Pakistan should be elevated to a country of special concern in the State Department's annual report. Mr. Bhatti felt that Islamic militants inside Pakistan were pressuring the government to be even less tolerant of religious minorities. Mr. Bhatti told me that he had received telephonic threats at his home and that vandals had done property damage to his office. He told me that he had a meeting with General Musharraf to discuss religious tolerance and while the General seemed to be genuinely concerned about the plight of the religious minorities, he told Mr. Bhatti that he had to deal with a constituency, which did not share his tolerant views.

After my discussion with Mr. Bhatti I called the Foreign Secretary to discuss the plight of the religious minorities and the detention of certain individuals under the blasphemy law. The Foreign Secretary told me that he would look into the matter and I told him I would send him a list of those imprisoned because of their religion which Mr. Bhatti provided me.

We departed Islamabad and arrived into Istanbul on the night of January 8. The next morning we had a working breakfast with the Ambassador, his wife, Station Chief and the regional head of the DEA. Our discussions at breakfast covered a wide range of issues from resolution of Turkey's long-standing conflict with Cyprus, Syrian-Turkish relations, Turkey's entry into the European Union, and the strong political and military ties between Turkey and the United States.

After departing Istanbul, we traveled to Mons, Belgium to meet with General Ralston, the Supreme Allied Commander of all NATO forces in Europe. General Ralston and I discussed the United State's proposed National Missile Defense System and the views our European allies had of that plan. General Ralston told me that he felt that the European's felt vulnerable to strategic missile attack under the U.S. plan which just proposed to protect the United States. We discussed the stand-alone European Defense force in addition to NATO. General Ralston had high praise NATO's new members, Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary and in fact was headed to the Czech Republic that afternoon.

General Ralston told me that his forces were ready, willing and able to assist the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in effectuating the arrest and return to The Hague of persons indicted for war crimes as soon as his political leadership instructed him to do so.

After our meeting with General Ralston, we traveled to The Hague to meet with the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, Carla del Ponte, and some of her staff. She expressed her strong sentiment to me that Slobodan Milosevic must be returned to The Hague for trial at the ICTY before standing trial in Belgrade. Madam del Ponte felt very strongly about Milosevic being brought to trial in Belgrade for a number of reasons. First of all, she said, the ICTY had a clear mandate and enjoyed primacy over domestic courts—this was a Security Council mandate. Secondly, she expressed her fear that the Milosevic regime would still retain some power—even behind the scenes—for a long time; Further, she stressed that The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must first establish its credibility before it takes on the daunting task of judging a former President. She said that the whole basis of the ICTY was to tackle those difficult, painful cases for which domestic courts are ill-equipped. I told the Chief Prosecutor that I shared her desire to have Mr. Milosevic prosecuted at The Hague but was doubtful that Mr. Milosevic would be turned over to The Hague after my recent meeting in Belgrade.

The Chief Prosecutor and I also discussed the ongoing negotiations to establish an International Criminal Court and the concerns surrounding such a body. I told her that there were concerns in the United States Congress regarding the vulnerability of U.S. servicemen of being subjected to charges that are purely politically motivated and had no basis in fact. We discussed her consideration of requests by Russia and Yugoslavia under Milosevic to charge NATO officials with war crimes. Madam del Ponte told me that as a prosecutor she had no discretion in the matter and that, as a matter of course, she had to investigate the charges which she eventually deemed to be without merit.

I asked Madam del Ponte if the ICTY needed any additional resources. She told me that resources continued to be tight—stressing that there was a great deal of work to do collecting evidence of the war crimes and that additional resources would be beneficial.

My next meeting was with ICTY Judge Patricia Wald who resigned from the federal judiciary to serve at The Hague. We discussed the functioning and legal rules of the ICTY. Judge Wald informed me that the ICTY bench consists of members from the U.S., England, France, Australia, Portugal, Italy, China, Vienna, Malaysia, Zambia, Colombia, Jamaica and Egypt.

My meetings with Chief Prosecutor Carla del Ponte and Judge Pat Wald, following on my earlier meetings in Belgrade, supported my notion that bringing Milosevic to justice at The Hague rather than in Yugoslavia would prove to be complicated. The new Yugoslavian democratic government's persistence on trying Milosevic in Serbia and the ICTY's insistence that it had primacy over Milosevic established the complexity of the issue. The concept on an International Criminal Court arose because of the failure of national courts to bring individuals like Milosevic to trial. On one hand, to permit Yugoslavia to try Milosevic, at least first, would encourage national courts to deal with such issues. On the other hand, Madam del Ponte's adamant that the ICTY had primacy granted under U.N. Resolutions and should not have to negotiate. She further expressed her concern that Yugoslavia could not be trusted to prosecute Milosevic due to problems of witness intimidation and the Milosevic regime still retaining influence in the Justice system. It is a difficult problem with no easy solution.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF TOMMY G. THOMPSON TO BE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now go into executive session and resume consideration of the nomination of Tommy G. Thompson, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Tommy G. Thompson, of Wisconsin, to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 10 minutes each under the control of the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY; the Senator from Montana, Mr. BAUCUS;

and the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. President, I, as I did yesterday, urge my colleagues to vote to confirm President Bush's nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services, the outstanding Governor of the State of Wisconsin, Tommy Thompson.

Statements made during yesterday's session by Senators from both sides of the aisle made it apparent that the qualities that have made Governor THOMPSON so successful in Wisconsin also make him an ideal choice to lead this very all-encompassing Department of Health and Human Services.

Governor Thompson is a problem solver. He is an innovator and really is a leader with a record of success, particularly during the 14 years he has served as Governor of the State of Wisconsin.

His record as Governor of the State of Wisconsin should show everybody that he is a person committed to improving the lives of real people. The impressive results he has brought about in his great State should inspire all of us. In fact, his success in welfare reform there inspired Congress to pass the Welfare Reform Act of 1996. He was, even while Governor, an advisor to many Members of the Congress who felt we ought to move people from welfare to work, move people from the fringe of our economic society to the center, to the mainstream of that society so they can benefit, as others do, from the dynamics of our economy.

Most Wisconsinites—94 percent—have health insurance because of his leadership. The disabled and elderly persons needing long-term care have a state-of-the-art support system to turn to, thanks to Governor Thompson's leadership.

Programs such as Pathways to Independence and Family Care are efficient and effective and are part of a reliable safety net program. They call the program he instituted in Wisconsin the Wisconsin Works Welfare Reform Program. It has helped the State reduce its welfare caseload by nearly 95 percent. Think of that: reducing the welfare caseload by 95 percent. This is good for government, but, most important, we do not have welfare reform to help government; we have welfare reform to help people.

The program that has been before the country for the last 4 years is not doing everything we want it to do. It is not good to have people on the fringe of our society, people who know no other life than a public check coming from the welfare office. That is not a humane way to treat people. It is humane in our society to help people who cannot help themselves, but for those people who can help themselves—and people generally, if given the incentive, do want to help themselves—we have the responsibility to move them from the edge of society into the mainstream of

society. That is exactly what happened in Wisconsin.

More specifically, there was a program in place in Wisconsin before we adopted ours in Washington, DC, for the entire nation, and that program reduced the caseload by 95 percent.

Governor Thompson's record in Wisconsin is, indeed, impressive, and we are prepared, I believe, to confirm his nomination. He will bring a wealth of knowledge, a very positive outlook, and an innovative style to the national debate on welfare reform and to Medicare improvements, including prescription drugs.

Governor Thompson made it clear during his nomination hearings that he welcomes the opportunity to work with any Member, Republican or Democrat, who has a special interest or special concern. One only needs to listen to the glowing recommendations from the distinguished Senators from Wisconsin, both Democrats, to be assured of his commitment to bipartisanship. Such bipartisanship, if anything is going to get done, is dictated by the makeup of the Senate and the closeness of the Presidential election.

More importantly, it is the way that Governor Thompson has worked in Wisconsin. Obviously, it is the way he is going to work with us.

I look forward to his collaborative approach to getting the job done and urge my colleagues to join me in approving this nomination.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time. Just in case there is an interest in speeding this nomination along, I am prepared to yield back any time I have left.

Before I sit down, Mr. President, I have this request from the leader.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—NOMINATION OF NORMAN MINETA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the 11:30 a.m. vote today, the nomination of Norman Mineta, to be Secretary of Transportation, be placed on the calendar. I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to its consideration and a vote on the confirmation of the nomination. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that following the vote, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Therefore, Mr. President, I am announcing for the leader, there will then be two back-to-back votes beginning at 11:30 a.m. today.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the yeas and nays be in order en bloc on both nominations.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. I now ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

NOMINATION OF TOMMY THOMPSON TO BE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to speak in support of the nomination of Governor Tommy Thompson to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. Governor Thompson brings an extraordinary record to Washington, DC, and he has accomplished a great deal as Governor of the State of Wisconsin.

He began his political life in the Wisconsin State Assembly in 1966. He was elected to an unprecedented third term in Wisconsin, and then he broke his own record by being elected to a fourth term—of course again unprecedented. He has had remarkable accomplishments in the field of education, and tax cuts, where the tax rolls in Wisconsin have been very substantially reduced, in crime control, and perhaps his greatest achievement has been in welfare reform in Wisconsin. While Governor, Wisconsin got more waivers from the Department of Health and Human Services than any other State. Now it will be interesting to see how, in his capacity as Secretary of the Department, he will function to create policies in a climate where the Federal Government can articulate and implement policies which will not require States to seek waivers, as he was so successful at doing.

His reform of the welfare system in Wisconsin has received national acclaim. He initiated the program called "Learnfare." He was able to change the approach in Wisconsin to have work instead of welfare—all enormous accomplishments.

When I looked at the record of Governor Thompson, candidly, I wondered why he did not run for President with those accomplishments behind him. I know some consideration had been given by Governor Thompson to that. It is an onerous road, considering all the difficulties. Perhaps foremost was the formidable candidacy of Gov. George Bush of Texas, who is now our President. So we have done very well indeed on the Presidency, and on the designation of Secretary Thompson for Health and Human Services.

He will be facing some very difficult problems. One of the problems he will be facing is the controversial issue of stem cells, where I and others have introduced legislation to remove the ban on Federal funding for the extraction of stem cells from embryos. This has been a controversial matter because I think it is really not understood that the embryos from which the stem cells are extracted are to be discarded. They had been created for in vitro fertilization and are not to be used. So, instead