

Promoting “Wilberforce Agenda” Initiatives: A Work Plan for the Coming Year

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This memo sets out where matters stand on a number of “Wilberforce Agenda” human rights initiatives with which I am engaged. Each is supported by a left-right, religious-secular, bipartisan coalition whose members range across the country’s otherwise fierce ideological battle lines. Each involves modest and in some cases no budget expenditures. Most deal with matters now either ignored by U.S. policy makers or treated as low priority concerns. Most can achieve the rescue of millions of victims through — and because of — their non-utopian approaches and policies. Each is premised on the idea that the judicious application of American values can enhance American interests, and each can greatly strengthen America’s standing in the world. And, critically, with continued engagement by the coalitions that support them, each is on a pathway to rapid implementation.

Taken together, the initiatives are important for reasons other than the inherent policy value of each. To a country now increasingly fragmented along political and cultural lines, the initiatives demonstrate America’s shared values and its capacity for unity. They can satisfy the strong desire of most Americans to demonstrate that the “us v. them” ideological gridlock in which the country is now often trapped does not reflect America’s underlying reality. They can satisfy the equally strong desire of most Americans to promote freedom and rule of law governance and to peacefully challenge closed society regimes. They reveal a powerful means by which America’s parties and leaders can earn enduring public trust — and achieve what the country sought when it elected President Obama: a clear demonstration that Americans have more in common with each other than MoveOn or the Christian Coalition will acknowledge.

For these reasons, I have worked to persuade Evangelical Christians and Reform Jews, Democrats and Republicans, human rights NGOs and anti-abortion conservatives, feminist organizations and Tea Party activists to not merely support but to seize ownership of the human rights initiatives described in this memo. I have argued that treating the issues as high priority, “signature” matters will not only save lives and peacefully promote American national interests, but will also help shatter the caricatures in

which many groups and leaders are now trapped.

As a political conservative, I find much in the Tea Party movement worth applauding. But while the movement may achieve periodic election victories, I also believe that it will not gain long-term, majority support from American voters if its policies are seen as negative, angry or self-concerned. Precisely because America's Judeo-Christian values are strong, perception of the Tea Party movement as isolationist and indifferent to the suffering of others will ensure that it will not be trusted to do more than periodically monitor America's governing majorities. Writing of the movement the incomparable Peggy Noonan noted its strengths, then had this to say: "Movements based on resentment, anger and public rage always fade, they rise and fall, they never stay." While many Americans may be prepared to

left has been split between modern-day abolitionists and those who believe that “sex workers” can be protected by legalization of their “work” and enhanced government regulation of it. On North Korea policy, most Democrats now reject a “Helsinki” strategy that puts human rights issues on the bargaining table — and instead support offers of subsidy and legitimacy to the Pyongyang regime in exchange for its weapons reduction promises and guarantees. This shift in progressive priorities was nicely captured by Tony Blair in a comment to *The New Yorker* magazine:

The biggest scandal in progressive politics is that you do not have people with placards out in the street on North Korea. I mean, that is a disgusting regime. The people are kept in a form of slavery. Twenty-three million of them, and no one protests! ... The left has two impulses, which come into conflict with each other, though both of those impulses are perfectly good. One is peace, and the other is intervention to help people. Peace is great. But, if you’re living with a tyrannical regime, you don’t have much peace.

The increasing “realism” of the left’s international and human rights policies and the increasing “idealism” of the right in such matters — developments of the past decade — represent a reversal of priorities on the part of America’s political parties and bodes poorly for progressives and the Democratic Party. I believe that this growing shift will increasingly undermine the moral credentials and public trust that helped make the Democratic Party America’s governing party for most of the second half of the 20th century. And I have therefore argued that widespread adoption of Wilberforce Agenda initiatives with the commitment shown by such leaders as Ann Lewis and David Saperstein can be a critical antidote to progressive political decline.

I have argued that the above considerations are equally applicable to America’s religious leaders and communities. In exchanges with such leaders as Richard Land, Chuck Colson and Robbie George, I have criticized the often singular focus given to such issues as abortion, pornography and gay marriage. I argued that young people in particular will abandon traditional Christian churches if those issues were seen as crowding out all other expressions of Christian witness in the public square. I have also argued that identifying Christian concern with Wilberforce issues would help define opposition to aborti

vulnerable beings, and would thus strengthen rather than dilute its appeal — and would do so even with people who failed to share the view that a fetus is a vulnerable person. In sum, I believe that priority regard for Wilberforce Agenda issues will have the double value of rescuing millions of victims and shattering caricatures of the “Dread Christian Right.” Many Christian leaders understand this — including Colson, Land and George — as do such model officials as Sam Brownback and Frank Wolf. They know that the positions of 19th century Christian leaders like William Wilberforce, William and Catherine Booth and Josephine Butler on such issues as African slavery, prison reform and widespread prostitution imbued Christianity with lasting power, and were powerful means by which Christian witness shaped and led society. They know, as many of their colleagues do not, that such issues are as potent today as they were in the 19th century. My concern continues to be that their actions and their all too often seemingly singular focus on “hot button” issues often masks this understanding.

I have similarly sought to persuade leaders of the mainline Protestant, progressive Evangelical and Reform Jewish communities that Wilberforce issues offer a powerful means of morally engaging the real world — what they rightly wish to do — without identifying their faiths with one side of such actively debated issues as global warming, corporate governance, tax policy and welfare reform. In lengthy exchanges with leaders like Ron Sider, I have argued that a Wilberforce-based set of issues will save lives that would otherwise be lost while sharply reducing the risk of subsuming and displacing religious faith with politics. Given the increased secularization of America’s Jewish community and the rapid decline of America’s mainline Protestant churches, I believe that the identification of religious faith with one side of fully debated policy/political issues will ultimately cause congregants to find the Sierra Club and the American Civil Liberties Union preferable substitutes for synagogue and church.

Here is the state of play on, and a list of, key Wilberforce Agenda initiatives on which I intend to work during the coming year. I will do so by helping coalition leaders devise strategies and achieve greater internal harmonies and, in general, by working with them to realize the successes I believe highly possible and, in many cases, likely.

The list, which should be seen as a representative and by no means an exhaustive survey of potential Wilberforce Agenda issues, now follows:

1. Internet Freedom:

The issue will be a signature concern for religious, human rights and political leaders; it recognizes that the walls by which 21st century

An at-will and safe access to Western websites by all residents of closed societies;

Secure an interactive communication between the Dalai Lama and his Tibetan followers, interactive worship services conducted by the Pope or Evangelical leaders for millions of Chinese House Church Christians, and secure communication with and by closed society residents; and

Safe communication to, from and between residents of closed societies when their regimes initiate political crackdowns or seek to cover up internal scandals.

The Secretary's exchange with Senator Specter, the State Department's decision to classify the failed record of the recipients of an FY 08 \$15 million Internet freedom appropriation, the 19 months it has taken the State Department to process an FY 09 \$5 million Internet freedom appropriation, and the failure of the State Department's proposed FY 11 budget to include *any* funding request for Internet freedom, make the administration's record an inexcusable and vulnerable one.

Members of Congress, interested members of the press and, among others, "Tiananmen 21" arrestees, Iran Green Revolution leaders, Burmese anti-regime activists and Chinese House Church supporters can be expected to engage the issue — with passion — if the State Department fails to rapidly support successful firewall circumvention systems with appropriated funds it has deliberately failed to obligate.

A senior administration official anonymously acknowledged to *The Washington Post* what Senator Brownback, Nicholas Kristof of *The New York Times* and many others have openly alleged: that the State Department's refusal to support Global Internet Freedom ["GIF"] systems that now facilitate Internet "circumvention" services for as many as one million Chinese users per day (and for almost as many Iranian users) is based on the fear of a "ballistic" Chinese government reaction. Others in the administration, echoing concerns expressed in earlier times about U.S. support for Radio Free Europe or the supply of fax machines to the former Soviet Union, believe that challenging the Internet firewalls of closed society regimes — a process that involves no hacking of computers or computer systems — could lead to cyberwar attacks on U.S. computer systems. And, operators of circumvention systems other than GIF's have expressed "zero sum" concerns that support for GIF will dry up support for

their presently less successful systems. (This position is profoundly mistaken; as a former Office of Management and Budget official I believe it certain that GIF success in tearing down Internet firewalls will generate budgets for circumvention system support far in excess of the mere \$30 million Internet freedom appropriation of the FY 10 budget.)

This is an issue with as much potential significance as any I have worked on, and I intend to spare no effort to ensure what I believe is now a feasible development: the rapid dismantling of the Internet firewalls by which the world's dictatorships isolate and control their people.

create a model program by which a major American university medical center will expand its reach beyond American borders; and

put America on the right side of a central historical development by which the 21st century will be judged — its emancipation and empowerment of women.

Recent articles by Dr. Wall in *Christianity Today* and *Prism* magazines [2] movingly describe fistula's causes, effects and cost-effective remediability, and a companion *Christianity Today* article described the importance of the initiative to the U.S. Christian community. Much has been written about the need for a major fistula initiative — and Nicholas Kristof has written in explicit support of the coalition's plan.

Next steps for the coalition will be to find a senior Democratic and Republic Senator and a senior Republican House member to join Congresswoman DeLauro in sponsoring the fistula initiative bill. Following that, a national summit meeting of major religious, women's, African American and human rights leaders will be convened. Efforts will be made to gain administration support for the initiative and, as noted elsewhere in this memo, efforts will be made to make it a joint U.S.-U.K. project.

3. The Trafficking in Persons [“TIP”] Office:

Grave concerns exist about the ability of the present leadership of the TIP Office to maintain the momentum of — and to effectively deal with — what has been fairly described as the slavery issue of our time. Those concerns make a strong case for rapid overhaul of the Office and the replacement of its Director. The 2010 TIP Report confirmed many fears about the current state of the anti-trafficking initiative; the report was the subject of a powerful condemnation from the New York State Coalition Against Trafficking that many national feminist leaders have endorsed. At least as troublesome is that fact that the TIP Office has failed to comply with (or ensure Federal agency compliance with) many of the express statutory deadlines and mandates of the 2008 Wilberforce Act. An office that cannot even achieve compliance with the laws that govern its conduct is almost certain to be deficient in the perform

make or break period for anti-trafficking reform. Failure to rapidly and visibly satisfy today's high expectations for historic anti-trafficking reform will establish a broad and strong public perception that nothing serious can be done about the issue. Reform movements that disappoint strong expectations and lose their momentum lose the capacity to achieve forward progress for many years thereafter, and this must not be permitted to happen to the anti-trafficking movement.

I played a major role in ensuring often critical oversight of the Bush administration's anti-trafficking policies — and in achieving the dismissal of the Bush administration's first TIP Office Director. (I'm proud that the dismissal was followed by John Miller's appointment and extraordinary service in that position.) I am prepared to do the same in the case of Obama administration policies and TIP Office leadership — this to ensure that the Office is taken seriously within the federal government and by foreign governments and becomes the agent of historic change I believe it can be.

4. Shahbaz Bhatti:

I know of no public official who offers greater potential in the struggle against religiously-based terrorism in the Islamic world than Bhatti, founder of the All Pakistan Minority Alliance and now Pakistan's Federal Minister for Minorities. During his career as a religious freedom advocate, Bhatti has been the subject of many fatwa threats — including one issued a few weeks ago for success in sharply limiting the use of Pakistan's once-notoriously enforced apostasy and blasphemy laws.

Remarkably, Bhatti's influence within the Pakistani Parliament and Cabinet, *and with Pakistan's leading Muslim clerics and its non-Muslim religious leaders*, is significant and growing. He has extraordinary standing with the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the European Parliament, key U.S. Jewish and Christian leaders, the U.S. International Religious Freedom Commission, key Congressional leaders from both parties, Canada's Prime Minister, Italy's Foreign Minister and the Hague Foreign Ministry in Britain. To date, however, he has not received meaningful recognition or useful assistance from U.S. policy makers.

On July 12, in a culminating event, Bhatti convened an all-day National Interfaith Consultation that included Pakistan's four principal Imams, other senior Pakistani Imams, the heads of the country's principal

madrassas, bishops of Pakistan's Catholic, Evangelical and Baptist churches and the principal leaders of Pakistan's Hindu, Sikh, Farsi, Buddhist and Ahmadi communities. Following the meeting, the participants issued a remarkable Statement of Principles that condemned religious extremism and terrorism and called for nation-wide interfaith harmony and national solidarity. The Statement received live television coverage when signed, and has been much lauded in the Pakistani press and Parliament, and belies defeatist pessimism about prospects for progress with Muslim leaders in Pakistan and elsewhere. It opens up the extraordinary prospect that the Islamic clergy can comprise a third (and the most important) leg of anti-terrorist policies that to date have solely relied on military and political

refugees have not significantly altered the human rights neutral policies of

The passivity and indifference of the Korean-American community

grassroots concern to the Korean-American community and to its church community in particular.

The government of Korea can play an important role in moving the Korean-American community to action, and I intend to follow up on past communications with Korean leaders to help make this happen. My point will be that a more active effort to educate and energize the Korean-American community is the best means by which the government of Korea can achieve its policy objectives with the U.S. government — on North Korea issues and others. The governments of such countries as Israel understand the value of such a strategy, and if the government of Korea acts with similar sophistication — if it focuses as much on Korean-American leaders as on U.S. government officials — a more human rights oriented, less appealing U.S.-North Korea policy will almost certainly follow.

The good news is that key community leaders may be ready to assume the risks of leadership and ready to speak out and take action — a development strengthened by the regime's mounting economic and succession crises and by the increasingly open internal criticism of the regime reported by such sophisticated observers as Barbara Demick and Chun Ki Won. But if the Korean-American community does not soon begin to robustly claim ownership of U.S.-North Korea policy I and others are finally prepared to speak out in open and vigorous criticism of its failures. The community must soon move to action; it has long been promised, is long overdue and is a critical step if the community is to earn respect and stature with its fellow Americans and its future generations.

6. The International Prison Reform Bill:

I have worked to make the satisfaction of baseline humanitarian standards in developing world prisons a critical eligibility test for U.S. foreign assistance and a permanent, important element of U.S. human rights policy. Following coalition efforts, the FY 10 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act: a) obligated the State Department to issue an annual world prison conditions report; and b) created a Deputy Assistant Secretary position responsible for preparing the report and for monitoring and achieving developing world prison reform. Unfortunately, the Department has pledged to issue the report in mid-2011 at the earliest, a date I will work to expedite. More importantly, the Department has “double-hatted” the position created by the Appropriations Act — i.e., it has appointed a current

official with full time responsibility for other matters to “fill” the job. This is a critical failing I will seek to correct in order to ensure that a distinguished appointee is rapidly chosen as the full-time official accountable for international prison reform — and for the failure to achieve it.

The Foreign Prison Conditions Improvement Act of 2010, worked out through active discussions between human rights NGOs, religious groups and Members of Congress, will be shortly introduced by Senators Leahy and Brownback and by Representatives Delahunt and Pitts. Passage of this bill, which I believe clearly achievable by the current Congress, will permanently institutionalize international prison reform as a major U.S. human rights policy objective — a step likely to save tens of thousands of lives per year at extremely low cost, and one sure to enhance rule of law values in the developing world. Following passage of the bill, I intend to work with such coalition members as the Open Society Institute, the Southern Baptist Convention, Prison Fellowship and Human Rights Watch to ensure that State Department officials treat and enforce it with commitment and vigor.

7. Domestic Prison Rape:

I helped create the coalition responsible for the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 [“PREA”], a law that established a commission charged with proposing low-cost regulations to eliminate the widespread incidence of sexual violence in America’s prison systems. (The legal basis of the PREA was the Supreme Court’s *Farmer v. Brennan* holding that deliberate indifference to prison rape violated the 8th amendment’s ban on cruel and usual punishment.) Under the PREA, the Department of Justice was charged with evaluating the Commission recommendations and then rapidly promulgating prison rape abatement regulations in such areas as predator isolation, staff training, whistleblower protection and the early identification of likely victims. The PREA also charged the Justice Department with conducting prison surveys that would allow for comparisons of the prison rape abatement performances of state prison systems. After some difficulties, the Commission took the first, critical step in the process when it issued its report in 2009.

The Commission’s recommendations have been met with intense opposition from state prison officials — and the Justice Department. The Department has made clear that it will be at least one year late in meeting the express June 2010 statutory deadline for issuing final PREA regulations, and

has shown itself at best indifferent to designing and conducting state prison surveys. It has failed to indicate its willingness to link failure to comply with final PREA regulations to potential liability in *Farmer* lawsuits. Critically, it has appeared to construe the PREA's requirement for low-cost standards as a bar against standards that impose *any* costs, including those whose costs are marginal in relation to overall prison budgets — a statutory construction that would gut the PREA.

To date, the PREA coalition has not been as effective as it might have been in challenging the Justice Department's conduct. Fortunately, the press (and *The Washington Post* in particular) have condemned the Department's PREA delays, conduct and position — and this has put some (but still not enough) pressure on the Department to take the Act seriously. The coming year will be an active one in terms of holding the feet of the Justice Department to the fire on the issue of domestic prison rape, and I look forward to taking part in this effort.

8. The Advance Democracy Act:

The training, reporting, reorganization and other provisions of the Act that Mark Palmer and I helped draft in 2008 are now law. Although the Act was ultimately passed in much reduced form — e.g., many of its “shall” mandates were reduced to “may” provisions — many of its features can help make the peaceful promotion of democracy a major element of U.S. foreign policy. A particularly important feature of the Act is its promotion of the Community of Democracies as an institution through which the U.S. engages in multilateral foreign policy initiatives, and I much look forward to enhancing its role.

Getting the Act taken seriously by a State Department that was hostile to its passage will be a challenge for the coming year, and I hope to leverage the media, Congressional and NGO community support that exists for the Act into a force that moves the Department to effectively implement it.

Two critical initiatives are intended to serve as “multiplier” measures; if realized, they will greatly enhance prospects for the above and other human rights issues. They are:

Accents and Dialects for Stage and Screen, founder and Director of the International Dialects of English Archive of the University of Kansas, a founding editor of the *Voice and Speech Review*, a Board Member of the

Other issues will arise during the year on which I believe I can help. The potential initiatives are:

An anti-“honor killing” effort that leverages U.S. foreign aid and U.S. support from the World Bank and IMF to end the routine murder of thousands of girls and women because they have refused to agree to arranged marriages, have engaged in pre-marital sex or even social dating or, indeed, have been rape victims. This initiative will need to explore means of monitoring and taking action against governments complicit in this still-common “tradition.” Preliminary discussions have revealed great interest and great potential for collaborative action.

Further efforts to deal with the disaster of Darfur where, as a prime author of the Sudan Peace Act that helped end a 20 year genocidal North-South war, I have long believed that promiscuous moralism towards the Government of Sudan and the free pass offered to irresponsible Darfur rebel groups has been counterproductive. Current policies have ensured more warfare, undermined the North-South peace agreement and permitted the survival of the unspeakable Lord’s Resistance Army of Joseph Kony in Uganda. Reinvigorating and changing the terms of the Darfur policy debate will not be easy, but I believe it both possible and essential.

Seeking achievable reforms in the Kurdistan region of Iraq where better and, I believe, model Christian-Muslim relations can be developed. This can be done by a delegation of senior U.S. religious leaders willing to serve on a fact finding mission to Kurdistan that consults with Kurdish and Christian leaders and makes recommendations for easing current misunderstandings and tensions. I intend to work for the creation of such a commission.

Working with such immigration support groups as Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and with religious leaders, on the implementation of last year’s Leahy-Kyl reforms of the Real ID and Patriot Acts. The objective will be to seek an end to still-in-effect Bush administration policies that define victims of terrorism as terrorists for purposes of refugee and asylum determinations. A broadly signed letter to the President is being circulated, and strong

follow-up action is likely to achieve the needed policy changes.

My work has made me a lucky man if only because it has been a source of friendships with such people as Mark Palmer, John Miller, Ann Lewis, David Saperstein, Debbie Fikes, Barrett Duke, Janice Crouse, Donna Hughes, Chuck Colson, Frank Wolf and Sam Brownback. And, as each of them would be the first to say, I've

the Department?

Answer:

As the President and I, and Assistant Secretary Michael Posner, have repeatedly emphasized, the Administration is strongly committed to freedom of expression and the free flow of information on the Internet. We place great value on the input and suggestions of pro-democracy leaders, especially from tightly closed societies, in addressing this evolving threat to freedom of expression and the free flow of information.

The problem of restrictions on Internet freedom is growing in complexity. Systems for filtering content are only one of the many methods governments have used to restrict freedom of expression and access to information on the Internet. Increasingly, e-mail and website hacking, limitations on access, and arrests of digital activists are also being used to restrict open discussion and debate in cyberspace. There is no “silver bullet” that will, on its own, prevent repressive governments from suppressing online debate and discussion. The Department therefore takes a multi-faceted approach to Internet freedom policy and programming that seeks to address a growing range of threats, including, but not limited to, technical systems designed to filter content.

The strategic principle behind the Department’s programming in support of Internet freedom is to use available funding for the most competitive proposals and to the best effect. We recognize that the letters support a particular approach to the increasingly complex problem of restrictions on Internet freedom, and the Department seeks to consider a wide variety of approaches.

In the Appropriations Act of 2008 and 2009, Congress has directed the Department to award funding in support of Internet freedom on a competitive basis. The Department has executed this directive in awarding Internet freedom grants, and intends to continue to do so in the future. Applicants for funding are evaluated through the usual grants application process. The Department does not undertake evaluations of technology tools on an ad hoc basis.

2.

http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/article_print.html?id=86344<http://www.worddeednetwork.org/images/mmDocument/PRISM%20Archive/Features%202010/MarApr10SorrowBeyondChildbirth.pdf>

3. We write as pastors of Korean-American Church Coalition who are grateful for the blessings of democracy that our beloved country has bestowed upon us. In exercising our democratic rights – and obligations – we and our fellow worshippers respectfully seek your views on the questions posed by this letter. We begin by expressing our concern with policies that ignore three present developments that jeopardize the prospects for peace on the Korean peninsula. They are:

The abhorrent record of the Kim Jong Il regime towards our brothers and sisters, the people of North Korea;

The mass transfer of North Korean refugees by the government of China to the regime’s concentration camps – action taken in clear violation of China’s U.N. treaty obligations; and

The silence of the United Nations towards those treaty violations and towards the regime’s human rights record.

We believe that [current U.S.] policies ignore the clear lessons of history and neither serve American values or interests. We further believe that offering money and legitimacy to the regime solely in exchange for its nuclear promises and concessions will invite future and increasingly grave weapons-related crises on the Korean Peninsula and beyond...

From this day forward, we intend to follow the examples of the American Jewish community’s Campaign for Soviet Jewry and the African-American community’s campaign against the former apartheid regime. Guided by those models, we will call for policies that no longer abandon our North Korean brothers and sisters and no longer ignore the “Helsinki” human rights principles of the North Korea Human Rights Act that we believe offer the best hope for peacefully resolving the crisis produced by the character and conduct of the North Korean regime.

We take to heart something else we have learned from the anti-apartheid and Soviet Jewry campaigns. In America, a community's standing with its fellow citizens does not come from economic or political success. Such respect is only earned when a community stands for something more than increasing its personal wellbeing -- as when it speaks out for oppressed brothers and sisters whose voices would not otherwise be heard. We are moved by this lesson an