No. 04-5928

IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

JOSÉ ERNESTO MEDELLÍN,

Petitioner,

v.

DOUG DRETKE, DIRECTOR,
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE,
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS DIVISION,

Respondent.

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES
COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

BRIEF *AMICUS CURIAE* OF AMBASSADOR L. BRUCE LAINGEN AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN J. SWIFT, *ET AL.*, IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONER

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INTEREST OF *AMICI CURIAE*[1]

Amici are either U.S. citizens who have benefited from consular assistance abroad or suffered in its absence; attorneys or diplomats familiar with the importance of consular assistance; or organizations dedicated to the interests of U.S. citizens abroad.

Ambassador L. Bruce Laingen served in the United States Foreign Service from 1949 to 1987. His tours of service included assignments in Germany, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. He served as U.S. Ambassador to Malta from 1977-1979. In mid-1979, he returned to Iran for a second term as Chargé d'Affaires of the American Embassy before being held hostage in the Iran Hostage Crisis from November 4, 1979 to January 20, 1981. During the Hostage Crisis, the United States sought and secured a judgment against Iran from the International Court of Justice based on Iran's violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. Ambassador Laingen holds the Award for Valor from the Department of State, as well as the Distinguished Public Service Medal from the Department of Defense.

Lieutenant Colonel John J. Swift was a career member of the United States Air Force. On November 19, 1951, he was flying between Munich and Belgrade with three other American servicemen: co-pilot Dave H. Henderson; Engineer Sergeant Jess A. Duff; and Radio

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[1] Counsel for all parties have consented in writing to the filing of this brief, and *amici* have filed those consents with the Clerk of the Court. No counsel for a party in this case authored this brief in whole or in part, and no person or entity, other than the undersigned *amici* and their counsel, has made a monetary contribution to this brief's preparation and submission.

Operator Sergeant James A. Elam. During the flight, Soviet officials forced the aircraft to land in Hungary. Soviet and Hungarian officials captured and interrogated the men, deliberately concealing them from the United States for several weeks. The men were ultimately convicted of illegally entering Hungarian airspace in secret proceedings by a Hungarian military tribunal. At no point was Captain Swift or any of the other fliers allowed access to American consular officials, despite their own as well as U.S. protests. The airmen were finally released into American custody on December 28, 1951, but only after the United States agreed to pay the fines levied by the Hungarian military tribunal. Mr. Swift served in the U.S. Air Force until he retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1968. Lieutenant Colonel Swift currently resides in New York and Florida.

Thomas R. Dawson served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Iran in 1966. On the way to attending a Peace Corps Conference in September of that year, Mr. Dawson and a fellow volunteer decided to explore the shore of the Caspian Sea in Astara, Iran, which was close to Soviet territory. Mr. Dawson unwittingly crossed over the unmarked border into Soviet territory, and he was promptly captured by armed soldiers, taken into custody, and interrogated for several days. He repeatedly pleaded with his captors to allow him contact with the American consulate, but to no avail, until the tenth day of his captivity when he was finally allowed contact with American officials. Mr. Dawson was eventually released to Iranian authorities, who delivered him to the American embassy in Tehran. Mr. Dawson completed his service in the Peace Corps in Micronesia, without further incident. He and his wife live in Annapolis, Maryland, where they own and operate an art gallery.

Billy Hayes is a filmmaker, producer and writer based in Los Angeles, California. Mr. Hayes spent five years in a Turkish prison during the 1970s, an ordeal described in his book, *Midnight Express*, which was made into a feature motion picture by the same name. Prompt notification of the U.S. Consulate ensured that Mr. Hayes was able to retain a lawyer, while regular consular visits throughout his incarceration provided an essential and reliable link to the outside world.

Richard Atkins practices law in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and has specialized for more than twenty years in assisting American citizens who run afoul of the law in foreign countries. He has testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on international prisoner transfer agreements and wrote a guide to prisoner transfer treaties for the United Nations. Approximately a thousand incarcerated Americans abroad have been freed or returned with his assistance.

William D. Rogers served as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from 1974-1976, and Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs from 1976-1977. During his lengthy career as a diplomat, he played a key role in Secretary of State Kissinger's negotiations to end white rule in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), participated in the final Panama Canal Treaty negotiations, was special emissary for President Carter to El Salvador in 1980, co-chaired the Bilateral Commission on the Future of U.S. Mexican Relations, and was Senior Counsel to the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America. He has also served as President of the Center for Inter-American Relations in New

York, and as President of the American Society of International Law.

Founded in Geneva in 1978, **American Citizens Abroad** (ACA) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to serving and defending the interests of U.S. citizens living outside the United States. ACA works closely to assist the U.S. Government in developing cohesive national policies dealing with Americans overseas. The organization has members in over 90 countries worldwide.

Established in 1973, the **Association of Americans Resident Overseas** (AARO) is a volunteer, non-partisan service organization representing the interests of more than 4.1 million Americans living and working abroad. Its mission is to ensure that Americans resident overseas are guaranteed the same rights and privileges as their U.S. counterparts. AARO has worked to change U.S. laws and policies so that Americans abroad receive the same benefits and protection as citizens in the United States.

Founded in 1931, the **Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas** (FAWCO) is a non-partisan network of 74 independent organizations in 34 countries around the world, with over 17,000 members. FAWCO is a non-profit U.S. corporation and a recognized NGO with special consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council. Among its stated purposes is to defend the rights of all Americans overseas.

Amici stress that we take no position in this brief on the moral or legal propriety of capital punishment in the abstract, or whether a sentence of death is an appropriate sanction for Mr. Medellín. Some of the *amici* are opposed to the death

penalty, and some are not. All are in agreement, however, that the failure by the lower court to give a vigorous and robust scope to the protections of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations will ultimately, and inevitably, endanger the welfare of United States citizens abroad.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Every year, a significant number of United States citizens traveling or living overseas find themselves ensnared in the criminal justice system of a foreign government. Consular assistance provides a vital service to these Americans, maintaining a desperately needed link to the outside world, and helping them navigate and understand an unfamiliar, and perhaps hostile, legal system.

The United States played a leading role in creating Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, which ensures that consular officers will be allowed to perform this important service. Article 36 obligates Member States to notify detainees of their right to seek consular assistance, and to permit consular access to the detainee. But if officials in this country fail to provide foreign nationals with the full benefit of consular assistance, it is inevitable that U.S. citizens abroad will soon suffer a similar, reciprocal fate. Indeed, nothing presents a greater threat to consular assistance abroad than the failure by officials in this country to grant reciprocal assistance at home.

The United States also played a leading role in drafting the Optional Protocol Concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes, which established the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in disputes involving parties to the Convention. The United States has

frequently recognized the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as a proper forum to adjudicate disputes between states. In fact, it has invoked the jurisdiction of the World Court more often than any country in the world. Of particular significance to this dispute, the United States brought an action in 1979, following the Tehran hostage crisis. The action challenged, *inter alia*, Iran's failure to comply with Article 36 of the Convention. Under these circumstances, the United States cannot be heard to denigrate or discount the recent judgment of the International Court of Justice in *Avena*.

The failure by the lower court to provide meaningful review and reconsideration of Mr. Medellín's conviction and sentence is inconsistent with the leading role taken by the United States in creating the Convention. It is also at odds with its steadfast determination to accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. But more ominously, if the judgment below is allowed to stand, it is inevitable that U.S. citizens abroad will soon suffer in kind.

ARGUMENT

I.

The United States Played A Leading Role In Developing The Legal Protections Provided By Both The Vienna Convention And the Optional Protocol

The United States has long recognized what can scarcely be gainsaid: the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (Convention)[2] provides vital safeguards to persons

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[2] April 24, 1963, 21 U.S.T. 77, 596 UNTS 261.

imprisoned by a contracting State.[3] But equally clear, and no less important, is the leading role the United States played in securing these essential protections. Both the Convention and the Optional Protocol Concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes (Optional Protocol)[4] are substantially the product of U.S. leadership.

The Convention codified the pre-existing law on consular relations between States, an area that had previously been regulated "mainly by bilateral agreements or other less formal arrangements and by national laws."[5] In that respect,

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[3] *See, e.g.,* Memorial of the United States, *Case Concerning United States Diplomatic and Consular Staff in Tehran*, I.C.J. Pleadings 1980, p. 174 ("A principal function of the consular officer is to provide varying kinds of assistance to nationals of the sending State, and for this reason the channel of communication between consular officers and nationals must at all times remain open. Indeed, such communication is so essential to the exercise of consular functions that its preclusion would render meaningless the entire establishment of consular relations."); U.S. Department of State telegram to all U.S. diplomatic and consular posts abroad concerning consular assistance for American nationals abroad, January 1, 2001, *available at* http://www.state.gov/s/l/16139.htm ("Consular notification of and access to a detained or arrested U.S. citizen has long been crucial to providing basic protective services abroad. . . Protesting unreasonable delays in consular notification is not discretionary but has long been an integral element of U.S. policy to provide protective consular services to detained Americans overseas.")

[4] April 24, 1963, 21 U.S.T. 325, 596 UNTS 487.

[5] Report of the United States Delegation to the United Nations Conference on Consular Relations, Vienna, Austria, March 4 to April 22, 1963, reprinted in S. Exec. Doc. E, 91st Cong., 1st Sess., May 8, 1969, at 41 (hereinafter "Report").

the Convention brought unity to this multiplicity by forging a single, global agreement on consular relations, thereby "contribut[ing] to the promotion of friendly relations between nations."[6] The United States actively participated in creating this agreement, and took a substantial part in drafting Article 36, the text of which was agreed to "after much debate."[7]

Significantly, the United States recognized even before ratification that vigorous enforcement of Article 36 would provide important reciprocal benefits to U.S. citizens overseas. The Report of the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations Conference on Consular Relations notes that Article 36(1)(b), which requires that "[arresting] authorities shall inform the person concerned without delay of his rights under this sub-paragraph,"[8] establishes a "requirement which is not beyond means of practical implementation in the United States, and, at the same time, is useful to the consular service of the United States in the protection of our citizens abroad."[9]

While the Convention therefore represents an important codification of the obligation to provide consular

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[6] Report at 41.

[7] Report. at 59.

[8] Convention, art. 36(1)(a).

[9] Report at 60. Elsewhere, the Report notes that "[t]he standard of treatment required by the present Convention conforms in all essential respects to the views of the United States as to what is or should be required by international law and practice. *Id.* at 74.

notification, the United States additionally recognizes that consular notification is not dependent upon the legal protections of the Convention alone:

> Consular notification is in our view a universally accepted, basic obligation that should be extended even to foreign nationals who do not benefit from the VCCR or from any other applicable bilateral agreement. Thus, in all cases, the minimum requirements are to notify a foreign national who is arrested or detained that the national's consular officials may be notified upon request; to so notify consular officials if requested; and to permit consular officials to provide consular assistance if they wish to do so.[10]

The United States likewise played an integral role in drafting the Optional Protocol, which provides in relevant part that any "[d]isputes arising out of the interpretation or application of the Convention *shall* lie within the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and may accordingly be brought before the Court by an application made by any party to the dispute being a Party to the Present Protocol."[11] Indeed, this language derives substantially from the original proposal of the United States,

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[10] Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Consular Notification and Access, Instructions for Federal, State, and other Local Law Enforcement and Other Officials Regarding Foreign Nationals in the United States and the Rights of Consular Officials To Assist Them 44 (no date of publication available, "[t]he Department of State expects to update it every 2-5 years"), *available at* http://travel.state.gov/law/consular/consular_744.html.

[11] Protocol, art. 1 (emphasis added).

which provided that "[a]ny dispute arising from the interpretation or application of this Convention shall be submitted at the request of either of the parties to the International Court of Justice unless an alternative method of settlement is agreed upon."[12] At the Conference, the United States voted *against* a motion by the Yugoslav delegation that would have weakened the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ.[13] While the final language of the Protocol is slightly different than the language proposed by the United States, it clearly provides for the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ, precisely as urged by the United States.

That the United States would have argued so assiduously for an Optional Protocol that provided for the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ should come as no surprise: the United States has been involved in more cases at the ICJ than any other nation in the world, and has invoked the jurisdiction of the World Court more often than any other State.[14] Two such actions, however, are of particular interest to *amici*.

On November 19, 1951, a C-47 cargo aircraft of the

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[12] Report at 72.

[13] The Yugoslav delegation proposed adding a paragraph to the U.S. proposal, providing that "[a]ny contracting party may, at the time of signing or ratifying this Convention or of acceding thereto, declare that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 1, of this article [the United States proposal]. The other contracting parties shall not be bound by the said paragraph with respect to any contracting party which has formulated such a reservation." *Id*. at 73.

[14] The official website for the ICJ lists all cases from 1946 to the present. *See* http://www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/idecisions.htm.

85th Air Depot Wing of the U.S. Air Force carrying four American airmen was making a routine flight from Erding Air Force Base in Germany to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. During the flight, the plane accidentally crossed into Hungarian airspace and was "brought down by Soviet authorities in Hungary and subsequently turned over with its crew to Hungarian authorities."[15] American authorities searched in vain for the missing fliers until December 2, 1951, when Russia's *Tass* news agency revealed that the aircraft and its crew had been in Hungarian and Soviet custody since its disappearance.[16] Although U.S. State Department officials immediately sought the release of the fliers, Hungarian officials would not permit it, nor, despite repeated requests, would they let American officials speak with the men.[17]

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[15] Press Release, United States Department of State, U.S. Asks Return of Property Seized in 1951 Plane Incident, (December 10, 1952), *in* 27 Department of State Bulletin 980, 980-84 (1952).

[16] *Budapest v. U.S.*, N.Y. Times, December 9, 1951, at 168 *available at* http://www.il.proquest.com/proquest/ (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, N.Y. Times (1851-2000)); s*ee also*, *U.S. Promises Action to Free Seized Fliers*, Washington Post, December 4, 1951, at 1, *available at* http://www.il.proquest.com/proquest/ (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, Washington Post (1877-1988)):

> Also expected is a protest over the fact that the Communist authorities kept silent for nearly two weeks while search planes combed Yugoslavia… Press Officer Lincoln White said at the State Department that the Soviet charges are 'apparently a cover-up for the fact that despite repeated representations by the American Chargé d'Affaires at Budapest, George Abbott, requesting information concerning the plane, the Hungarian authorities repeatedly said they had no information.

[17] Press Release, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Seeks Release of American Fliers Held in Hungary, (December 28, 1951), *in* 26

On December 23, 1951, Hungary announced that the four men had been tried in secret by a Hungarian military court and sentenced to a fine of almost $30,000 each, or three months imprisonment, for "intentionally violating the Hungarian border."[18] "The trial was secret, and the United States was given no opportunity to be present through any representative…."[19] In a speech given to the United Nations the following year, Senator and U.S. Representative to the General Assembly Theodore Green observed:

> What concerns us most here is the stubborn and implacable manner in which both Soviet and Hungarian officials refused U.S. representatives repeated requests for access to the airmen. Not only this, but both our diplomats and the airmen were prevented from obtaining their own legal counsel in the trial which took place.[20]

Department of State Bulletin 7 (1952).

[18] *U.S. Air Crew Fined, Hungarian Border "Violation,"30,000 Dollars Each*, London Times, December 24, 1951, at 4, *available at* http://www.galegroup.com/Times/ (Times of London Digital Archive, 1785-1985).

[19] Press Release, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Asks Return of Property Seized in 1951 Plane Incident, (December 10, 1952), *in* 27 Department of State Bulletin 980, 980-84 (1952).

[20] Statement by Senator Theodore F. Green, U.S. Representative to the General Assembly, United States Department of State, Soviet Harassment of Foreign Diplomats, (October 29, 1952), *in* 27 Department of State Bulletin 787 (1952).

Hungary released the American airmen on December 28, 1951. Upon their release, the United States promptly closed the Hungarian consulates in New York and Cleveland and barred Americans from traveling to Hungary.[21] Secretary of State Dean Acheson placed the blame for this retaliation squarely upon Hungary's failure to "live up to the accepted standards of international practice with regard to the right of consular officers to exercise protective functions in behalf of nationals of their country."[22]

The incident also provided the occasion for this country's first litigation in the World Court. On March 17, 1954, the United States initiated proceedings at the ICJ against Hungary and the Soviet Union, claiming the failure to allow consular access and assistance had deprived the United States and its citizens of their respective right to provide and receive consular assistance. "International law," the United States correctly observed, "recognizes the right of the government in such matters to act on behalf of its nationals and is applied in Hungarian judicial practice."[23]

Significantly, the cases against Hungary and the Soviet

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[21] Press Release, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Orders Closing of Hungarian Consulates, (December 29, 1951), *in* 26 Department of State Bulletin 7 (1952).

[22] Press Release, U.S. Department of State, Statement by Secretary Acheson, (December 28, 1951), *in* 26 Department of State Bulletin 7 (1952).

[23] Application Instituting Proceedings and Pleadings (U.S. v. Hungary; U.S. v. U.S.S.R.), 1953 I.C.J. Pleadings, (*Treatment in Hungary of Aircraft and Crew of United States of America*) Annex I at 36 (February 16, 1954).

Union could not proceed because those countries refused to accept the World Court's jurisdiction. Upon the removal of the case from the Court's docket, the United States lamented:

> This conduct on the part of the two defendant Governments merely demonstrates again that they have no compunctions in publicly asserting principles of international law and order but in then refusing to permit those principles to be applied to their own conduct. *The U.S. Government must of course accept the decision of the International Court of Justice.*[24]

The United States returned to the ICJ in 1979 when it submitted an application to the World Court against the Islamic Republic of Iran "concerning the seizure and holding as hostages of members of the United States diplomatic and consular staff and certain other United States nationals."[25] In its application, the United States accused Iran of several treaty violations, including violations of Article 36 of the Convention, and requested that the ICJ "adjudge and declare" that Iran was under a "particular obligation immediately to secure the release of all United States nationals currently being detained."[26] The ICJ indicated provisional measures against Iran on December 15, 1979, and entered a final judgment in favor of the United States

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[24] Press Release, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Applications in C-47 Case Removed From Calendar of ICJ, (July 16, 1954), *in* 31 Department of State Bulletin 130 (1954).

[25] *Case Concerning United States Diplomatic and Consular Staff in Tehran (U.S.A. v. Iran*), 1980 I.C.J. 3 (Judgment of 24 May).

[26] *Id.* at 6.

May 24, 1980. Thereafter, the United States insisted the decisions of the ICJ were binding in all respects, and that Iran must comply with the Court's judgment.[27]

In sum, having played a prominent role in drafting the Convention, having successfully led the international charge for the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ, and having sought relief from that Court more than any other country, the United States cannot be heard now to disparage or discount its judgment.

II.

Failure To Provide Vigorous And Robust Enforcement Of The Vienna Convention Could Have Grave Consequences For U.S. Citizens Abroad

In a legal system that has no independent enforcement mechanism, the integrity of the process depends on nothing less than the acceptance of mutually shared obligations. Behind this acceptance is the essential lesson of diplomatic experience: so long as they are able, nations will respond in kind to the treatment they receive. This notion of reciprocity is both an inescapable reality, and the animating force to a bedrock principle of international law – *pacta sunt servanda* ("pacts must be respected") – which captures the requirement that nations must observe their agreements in

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[27] *U.S. Urges the Iranians to Obey Court Decision*, N.Y. Times, May 25, 1980, pg. 9: "The State Department said today that the decision by the International Court of Justice ordering Iran to release the American hostages and pay compensation to the United States was binding on Iran, and it called on the Teheran Government to carry out its provisions."

good faith.[28] In matters both mundane and monumental, membership in the international community implies a solemn obligation to comply with treaties in good faith, "undertaking to do (or not to do) unto others what they would have done (or not done) unto them."[29]

In the present context, the importance of reciprocity cannot be overstated. Over the last 30 years, the number of Americans living overseas has increased dramatically. The State Department now estimates that "[a]pproximately 3.2 million Americans reside abroad, and Americans make about 60 million trips outside the United States each year."[30] The State Department also reports that over 2,500 Americans are arrested abroad annually.[31] And this total does not include the number of citizens detained outside the formal criminal justice process. All told, roughly 6,000 Americans are arrested or detained abroad every year.[32] The largest number of these – 400 – are detained in Mexico.[33]

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[28] *See, e.g.,* Restatement (Third) of Foreign Relations Law of the United States §321 cmt. a (1987) (*pacta sunt servanda* "lies at the core of the law of international agreements and is perhaps the most important principle of international law.")

[29] Louis Henkin, *How Nations Behave* 30 (2d ed. 1979).

[30] Bureau of Resource Management, U.S. Department of State, *FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report* (2003), *available at* http://www.state.gov/m/rm/rls/perfrpt/2003/html/29037.htm.

[31] Office of Overseas Citizens Services, Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Department of State Publication 10252, *Overseas Citizens Services*, (2002), *available at* www.internationalbenefits.com/travel-tips/overseas-citizens-services.htm.

[32] Kevin Herbert, *The Terrorist Threat to the American Presence*

These statistics are both descriptively and normatively instructive: they demonstrate that at one time or another many U.S. citizens will find themselves overseas in need of legal help, and they suggest that a failure to provide foreign nationals in the United States with vigorous and robust enforcement of the Vienna Convention could have grave consequences for U.S. citizens abroad. This risk to U.S. citizens has not gone unnoticed.

The State Department Foreign Affairs Manual instructs American consuls abroad to secure "immediate [consular] notification, no matter what the language of applicable treaties legally requires."[34] Apart from ensuring the timely provision of legal information, prompt notification and access "is necessary to forestall physical abuse of the prisoner. . . or to ascertain when such abuse has occurred."[35] American consuls are required to determine if there has been

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Abroad: A Report of a Consultation of The Critical Incident Analysis Group and The Institute for Global Policy Research, Part II. 2. Threat to Citizens Overseas, University of Virginia, April 12-13, 1999, *available at* www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/ciag/reports/report_terr_citizens.cfm (Kevin Herbert is from the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, U.S. Department of State).

[33] Press Statement by James P. Rubin, Spokesman, U.S. Department of State (Apr. 15, 1998), *available at* www.hri.org/news/usa/std/1998/98-04-15.std.html.

[34] U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual (1984), 7 FAM 411.3, *Relations with Local Authorities*.

[35] *Id*., 7 FAM 412, *Access*.

"any physical abuse or violation of rights"[36] and to look for signs of ill-treatment, bearing in mind that "many forms of physical abuse, including systematic torture, are calculated to leave no physical evidence."[37] Consular officers also should arrange for detainees to be "examined by a private medical doctor to determine the extent and probable cause of any injury"[38] when appropriate and observe "the physical conditions under which the prisoner is being held."[39] Finally, the consulate is required by law "to assist U.S. citizens abroad who, as a result of their incarceration, cannot secure the minimal medical treatment or dietary regimen necessary to sustain an acceptable standard of life."[40]

The State Department has repeatedly stressed to domestic officials the vital importance of reciprocal enforcement of the Convention. As Governor of Texas, George W. Bush received a letter from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that noted:

> As Secretary of State, ensuring the protection of American citizens abroad – including over 300 imprisoned Texans last year – is one of my most important responsibilities. Our ability to provide

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[36] *Id.*, 7 FAM 414.1, *Abuse of Prisoners*.

[37] *Id.*, 7 FAM 414.1-1, *Examination by an Officer*.

[38] *Id.*, 7 FAM 414.1-2, *Examination by Independent Physician in Cases of Abuse*.

[39] *Id.*, 7 FAM 414.2, *Conditions of Detention*.

[40] *Id.*, 7 FAM 451, *General Policy (Emergency Medical and Dietary Assistance).*

> such assistance is heavily dependent, however, on the extent to which foreign governments honor their consular notification obligations to us. At the same time, we must be prepared to accord other countries the same scrupulous observance of consular notification requirements that we expect them to accord the United States and its citizens abroad.[41]

On another occasion, Secretary Albright noted that the State Department stood ready to provide a range of assistance to Americans detained abroad, including "attempting to ensure that they understand the foreign country's legal system and their legal options, by helping them obtain qualified legal representation, by communicating with their families if they wish, and by taking other steps to improve the prisoner's situation and in some cases, to influence the outcome of the proceedings."[42] She has also cautioned that non-compliance with the orders of the International Court of Justice "could be seen as a denial by the United States of the significance of international law and the court's processes in its international relations and thereby limit our ability to insure that Americans are protected when living or traveling abroad."[43]

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[41] S. Babcock, *The Role of International Law in United States Death Penalty Cases*, 15 LJIL 367, 376 (2002) (quoting from Secretary Albright's letter to Governor Bush, dated November 27, 1998).

[42] Letter from Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State, to Victor Rodriguez, Chairman of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, quoted in footnote 211 of the Memorial of Mexico, *Case Concerning Avena and Other Mexican Nationals*, I.C.J. Pleadings (2003), *available at* www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/idocket/imus/imusframe.htm.

[43] Linda Greenhouse, *Court Weighs Execution of Foreigner*, N.Y. Times, April 14, 1998, page 14 (quoting from Secretary Albright's letter to

U.S. consular officers overseas have been instructed to insist on scrupulous observance of Article 36 rights, in order to carry out their "primary mission" of protecting Americans:

> If we are to be effective in protecting the rights of U.S. citizens detained or otherwise in distress abroad, we must first know their situation and we must be vigilant in personally assisting them. By consistently protesting violations of notification and access obligations, we reinforce with the host government the seriousness with which we take our consular responsibilities and underscore our efforts to protect our citizens against any abuse, mistreatment or discrimination.[44]

Secretary Albright's position is neither surprising nor unusual. It has been consistently echoed by others at the State Department – most recently by William H. Taft, IV, the Department's Chief Legal Advisor. As he observed in a letter to the Oklahoma clemency officials presiding over the recent case of Osbaldo Torres, Article 36 of the Convention "is not only of importance to foreign nationals in the United States. It serves to protect all Americans who travel or live abroad."[45]

Virginia Governor James Gilmore).

[44] U.S. Department of State telegram to all U.S. diplomatic and consular posts abroad concerning consular assistance for American nationals abroad, *supra*, fn. 3.

[45] S. Lynne Walker, *Okla. case pits U.S. against world court*, San Diego Union-Tribune, May 7, 2004 (quoting Mr. Taft's letter to the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board), *available at*

Other State Department officials have voiced the same sentiment.[46]

Robust enforcement of the Vienna Convention is not merely the concern of cabinet level officials. On the contrary, the law of unintended consequences in this field has been the subject of frequent judicial comment. In *Standt v. City of New York*, for example, the Court observed:

> The United States has repeatedly invoked Article 36 on behalf of American citizens detained abroad who

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www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20040507/news_1n7penalty.html.

[46] For example, State Department Spokesman James P. Rubin stated that "[c]onsular notification is no less important to [other countries] than to U.S. nationals outside the United States. We fully appreciate that the United States must see to it that foreign nationals in the United States receive the same treatment we expect for our citizens overseas. We cannot have a double standard." Press Statement by James P. Rubin, Spokesman, U.S. Department of State (Nov. 4, 1998), *available at* http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/statements/1998/ps981104.html. State Department Spokesman R. Nicholas Burns captured perfectly the obligation imposed by reciprocity:

> A lot of American citizens who are tourists … find themselves in trouble, find themselves ill or in prison because they didn't understand the legal system or they came crosswise with the system, and the only people they can turn to for help are American diplomats. So it's critically important to the average American -- and millions of Americans travel overseas every year -- that they have Americans who can help them when they get into trouble. It happens all the time.

Press Statement by R. Nicholas Burns, Spokesman, U.S. Department of State (Sept. 29, 1995), *available at* http://www.hri.org/docs/statedep/1995/95-09-29.std.html.

> have not been granted the right of consular access. … It is critical for the judiciary to recognize VCCR rights of foreign nationals detained in the United States for the United States to continue its success in invoking the Vienna Convention on behalf of U.S. citizens detained abroad.[47]

Judge Butzner, of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, expressed a similar sentiment during the *Breard* litigation:

> United States citizens are scattered about the world – as missionaries, Peace Corps volunteers, doctors, teachers and students, as travelers for business and for pleasure. Their freedom and safety are seriously endangered if state officials fail to honor the Vienna Convention and other nations follow their example. Public officials should bear in mind that international law is founded upon mutuality and reciprocity.[48]

In another case, one jurist asked, perhaps only rhetorically:

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[47] 153 F. Supp. 2d 417, 427 (S.D.N.Y. 2001).

[48] *Breard v. Pruett*, 134 F.3d 615, 622 (4th Cir. 1998)(Butzner J., concurring)(internal quotations omitted); *see also U.S. v. Carillo*, 70 F. Supp. 2d 854, 860 (N.D. Ill. 1999)("Treaty violations not only undermine the 'Law of the Land,' but also international law, where reciprocity is key. If American law enforcement officials disregard, or perhaps more accurately, remain unaware of the notification provision in Article 36, then officials of foreign signatories are likely to flout those obligations when they detain American citizens.").

> Why should Mexico, or any other signatory country, honor the Treaty if the U.S. will not enforce it? The next time we see a *60 Minutes* piece on a U.S. citizen locked up in a Mexican jail without notice to any U.S. government official we ought to remember these cases.[49]

Relevant organizations whose members will be most affected by a restrictive interpretation of the Convention have also voiced their concerns. The Southern Baptist International Mission Board, for example, oversees 4,200 missionaries and 15,000 volunteers in 130 countries. The president of the organization noted his concerns in urging former Virginia Governor George Allen to commute the sentence of an inmate on Virginia's death row. "I am horrified to think of the potential repercussions in Mexico and other countries, and its potential harm to our missionaries' that could occur because the Commonwealth of Virginia failed to honor the obligations of the Vienna Convention."[50]

Finally, as recent events in India and China make plain, the danger to U.S. citizens, though perhaps more pronounced in these turbulent times, does not arise solely from the random acts of rogue states. Only last month, Avnish Bajaj, a naturalized American citizen and CEO of

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[49] *Flores v. State*, 994 P.2d 782, 788 (Okla. Crim. App. 1999)(Chapel, J., concurring in result); *see also id.* (court's narrow vision of the Convention "puts U.S. citizens traveling abroad at risk of being detained without notice to U.S. consular officials.").

[50] Frank Green, *Mission Chief Urges Allen to Commute Sentence*, Richmond Times-Dispatch, Sept. 17, 1997, at A1.

Baazee.com, the wholly owned Indian subsidiary of eBay, was arrested on charges that his company unwittingly permitted pornographic materials featuring minors on its website.[51] Indian law enforcement officials arrested Mr. Bajaj, who had been cooperating with authorities investigating the source of the pornography, claiming he violated India's Information Technology Act of 2000, which makes a criminal offense "publishing, transmitting, or causing to publish any information in electronic form, which is obscene."[52] Richard Boucher, spokesperson for the U.S. State Department, noted that "(t)his situation is one of concern at the highest levels of the U.S. government."[53] American officials provided Bajaj with consular assistance, and at least one U.S. diplomat attended a hearing at the Delhi High Court where Bajaj successfully appealed a lower court decision that he remain in jail without bail.[54]

Similarly, Gao Zhan, a sociologist and permanent resident based at American University, was traveling with her young son in China when she was arrested for

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[51] Paul Watson, *India Roiled by Internet Sex Case*, L.A. Times, December 22, 2004, *available at* http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2004/12/22/india_roiled_by_internet_sex_case/.

[52] Rajesh Mahapatra, *Court Grants Bail to eBay's Indian Exec*, Assoc. Press, December 21, 2004, *available at* http://wtop.com/index.php?nid=108&sid=367373.

[53] *Id*.

[54] Paul Watson, *India Roiled by Internet Sex Case*, L.A. Times, December 22, 2004, *supra.*

espionage.[55] She and her son, an American citizen, were held *incommunicado* by China's state security ministry, without notice to the U.S. Embassy. When her husband came to China seeking information, he too was detained and threatened.[56] These events prompted the House of Representatives to pass House Resolution 160, unanimously condemning the acts of the Chinese government.[57]

In sum, *amici* stake their argument on the mutually binding obligations of international treaties. Responsible officials in this country have repeatedly expressed the concern that a failure to honor Article 36 presents grave risks to American citizens living and traveling abroad. The Founders expressed a like concern when they foresaw what has eluded the lower courts in this case: membership in the international community implies a reciprocal obligation; but if it is an obligation, it is one that redounds most to the benefit of the citizens of this country.[58] We urge the Court to recognize the same obligation today.

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[55] *See US Family Detained in China*, BBC News, Mar. 21, 2001, *available at* http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1233163.stm; Ann Scott Tyson, *Where's Gao? Disappeared in China: 100 days and counting*, Christian Science Monitor, June 5, 2001, *available at* http://www.csmonitorservices.com/csmonitor/archivesearch.jhtml.

[56] *See id*.

[57] H.R. Res. 160, 107th Cong. (2001).

[58] *The Federalist No. 64*, at 392 (Clinton Rossiter ed., 2003):

> Others, though content that treaties should be made in the mode proposed, are averse to their being the SUPREME laws of the land. They insist, and profess to believe, that treaties like acts of assembly, should be repealable at pleasure. This idea seems to

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the judgment of the Court of Appeals should be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,

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be new and peculiar to this country, but new errors, as well as new truths, often appear. These gentlemen would do well to reflect that a treaty is only another name for a bargain, and that it would be impossible to find a nation who would make any bargain with us, which should be binding on them ABSOLUTELY, but on us only so long and so far as we may think proper to be bound by it.