

Gilbert LLP

News

Alan Gross statement on coming home from Cuba

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Alan Gross statement on coming home from Cuba

WASHINGTON – Upon returning home from five years of imprisonment in Cuba, Alan Gross had the following to say:

Chag Sameach. What a blessing to be a citizen of the United States of America. Thank you President Obama for everything you have done today.

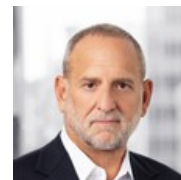
I want to acknowledge the extraordinary and determined efforts of my wife of forty four and a half years, Judy Gross, and my lawyer and Personal Moses, Scott Gilbert, to restore my freedom. They have my endless gratitude, love, and respect. The relentless and often intense efforts by Judy and Scott, the partners, associates, and staff of Gilbert, LLP law firm, Tim Rieser on Capitol Hill, and Jill Zuckman of SKDKnickerbocker have been inconceivable.

Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont has been instrumental in shepherding the arrival of this day. I want to thank all of the members of Congress from all sides of the aisle, such as Senator Jeff Flake and Reps. Chris Van Hollen and Barbara Lee, who supported, spoke up for, and visited me, subjected themselves to my ranting, and helped me to regain some of my weight. [Even in Cuba, M&Ms melt in your mouth, not in your hand.] To all of those who tried to visit me but were unable to, thank you for trying. I am at your service as soon as I get some new teeth, hoping that they will be strong and sharp enough to make a difference.

To the Washington Jewish Community, Ron Halber in particular and his staff at the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), all of the executive directors, staff, and volunteers of participating JCRCs, federations, synagogues, schools, and other Jewish, Christian, and Moslem organizations nationwide, God Bless You and thank you. It was crucial to my survival knowing that I was not forgotten. Your prayers and actions have been comforting, reassuring, and sustaining. And to my extended family, especially my sister, Bonnie, my cousins, and friends – Howard, Bruce, our Shabbat group, Nonie and Larry and so many others who exemplify the true meaning of friendship – thank you.

I do understand that there are many others who actively participated in securing my freedom, of whom I am only nominally aware at this juncture. I promise that I will express a more direct and personal gratitude just as soon as I know who you are. But ultimately – ultimately – the decision to arrange for and secure my release was made in the Oval Office. To President Obama and the NSC staff, thank you. In my last letter to President Obama, I wrote that despite my 5-year tenure in captivity I would not want to trade places with him, and I certainly would not want to

Associated People



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trade places on this glorious day. Five years of isolation notwithstanding, I did not need daily briefings to be cognizant of what are undoubtedly incredible challenges facing our nation and the global community.

I also feel compelled to share with you my utmost respect for and fondness of the people of Cuba. In no way are they responsible for the ordeal to which my family and I have been subjected. To me, Cubanos (or at least most Cubanos) are incredibly kind, generous, and talented; it pains me to see them treated so unjustly as one consequence of two governments' mutually belligerent policies. Five and a half decades of history show us that such belligerence inhibits better judgment; two wrongs never made a right.

I truly hope that we can now get beyond those mutually belligerent policies. I was very happy to hear what the President had to say today – it was particularly cool to be sitting next to the Secretary of State as he was hearing about his job description for the next couple of months. In all seriousness, this is a game changer which I support. In the meantime, I ask that you respect my wishes for complete and total privacy. Claro?

A judicious lesson that I have learned from this experience is that freedom is not free. And, as personified by Scott and our entire team, we must never forget the two pillars of Moses' covenant, freedom, and responsibility. I am incredibly blessed – finally – to have the freedom to resume a positive and constructive life.

But for now I will close with a quote from a Nelson DeMille character, "it's good to be home". Thank you. I wish all of you a happy holiday season.

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