



Department of Social Development and World Peace

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • FAX 202-541-3339
WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/SDWP

May 12, 2006

Mr. Stephen J. Hadley
National Security Advisor
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

BY FAX: 202-456-9490

Dear Mr. Hadley,

I write on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops concerning the recent ordinations to the episcopate of priests in China without the proper concurrence of the Vatican.

The gradually improving relations between the Peoples Republic of China and the Holy See in recent years have enabled ordinations of bishops to go forward with the appropriate approval of the Vatican. Over the past five years, bishops in several dioceses have been ordained with the approval of both Rome and Beijing, and indeed a bishop already approved by the Pope has just been ordained.

However, the ordinations on April 30 of Bishop Joseph Ma Yinglin of Kungmin and on May 3 of Bishop Joseph Liu Xinhong of Anhui, arranged by the government-sponsored Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA), have broken this agreement and have set back much of the progress lately achieved. A further unauthorized ordination is scheduled for this weekend and more may be expected in the near future.

While these are primarily matters of internal concern for the Catholic Church, they reflect a disturbing reversal of China's official approach to religious freedom. They thus become issues that properly concern our government in its efforts to promote human rights and religious freedom.

As you may know, a resolution condemning China for these ordinations is circulating at this time in the House of Representatives. It would be helpful if the Administration could quietly interpret to the Chinese authorities the counter-productive effect that the CPA's interference in the internal life of the Catholic Church is having on improved relations between our two countries.

With thanks for your attention to this, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Bishop of Orlando
Chairman, Committee on International Policy