



Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development

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April 3, 2008

The Honorable Christopher R. Hill
Assistant Secretary of State for
East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2200 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Hill:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I note with concern that the protests which began peacefully in Lhasa, Tibet in early March have resulted in violence and loss of life. I commend the remarks made by Secretary Rice calling for calm in Tibet and asking the Chinese government to exercise restraint in responding to the protests as well as appealing to all parties to turn away from violence. We understand that the Dalai Lama has repeatedly urged the protesters, both monks and civilians, to be non-violent. In response to the deteriorating situation, Pope Benedict XVI has called for “dialogue and tolerance” as a way forward to a peaceful resolution to the current unrest in Tibet, and we add our voice to that call.

Over the years, our Bishops’ Conference has expressed its concern about protection of basic human rights, especially religious liberty, in the People’s Republic of China. The eyes of the world are on China in the run-up to the Summer Olympics 2008. In your interaction with the Chinese government, we would ask that you impress upon the Chinese leadership the need to respect the cultural diversity, traditions, and rights, including religious freedom, of minorities, be they Tibetan Buddhists or Chinese Christians.

Sincerely yours,

Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski
Bishop of Orlando
Chairman, Committee on International
Justice and Peace