



Committee on International Justice and Peace

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3160

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

May 23, 2012

His Eminence Jaime Lucas Cardinal Ortega y Alamino
Archbishop of Havana
Calle Habana 152
La Habana 10100 Cuba

Dear Cardinal Ortega:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I write to share the concerns of my fellow bishops arising from a May 3 editorial signed by the director of Radio and TV Marti that criticized you.

Mr. Garcia-Pérez's leadership position in an organization affiliated with the U.S. Government makes his remarks all the more troubling since they could be interpreted as representing the views of the U.S. Government. His comments do not serve the cause of religious freedom.

During a visit to Cuba in March, coinciding with that of our Holy Father, I had the opportunity to see first-hand the challenges faced by the Church, and to visit and consult with your brother bishops and other Church officials. Our delegation was extremely grateful for your gracious hospitality and kindness. We learned about the courageous individuals in the Church in Cuba who are standing against injustice and working towards reconciliation and peace.

The Church provides crucial social services and support to the most vulnerable: the young, the elderly, the imprisoned and the marginalized. You are unquestionably a distinguished leader of the Church, and its life-affirming efforts. Professor Jorge Dominguez of Harvard University noted, "Who freed the political prisoners in Cuba? Not the European Union. Not the U.S. Government. And not Radio and TV Marti. It was [Cardinal] Ortega who convinced Raul Castro to let them out."

We urge Radio and TV Marti to issue an apology and to review their policies to prevent future incidents. You will find enclosed a copy of a letter of concern to Secretary of State Clinton. We also enclose an earlier letter we sent to Secretary Clinton, urging the lifting of the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

Be assured of our prayers as you continue your work to build reconciliation and peace in Cuba.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Richard E. Pates

Bishop of Des Moines

Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Enclosures: Letters of the Chairman of the Committee on International Peace and Justice to the Secretary of State of the United States of America, dated May 23, 2012 and April 17, 2012, respectively.