



Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development

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July 3, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
The Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State

BY FAX: 202 647 2283

Dear Madam Secretary:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I would like to convey our deep joy on learning of the release of eleven of the hostages held in Colombia for many years. The fact that the group included three U.S. citizens is a blessing for our nation and we pray that their return to family and friends will be a time of healing and peace.

While all people can rejoice in seeing those released return home, we are reminded of the ongoing suffering of so many Colombians who yearn for justice and peace. It is our prayer that this release of hostages will lead to increased dialogue and reconciliation within Colombia.

USCCB will continue to work in solidarity with the Church in Colombia as we pray for the end of violence and the restitution of a just peace for all Colombians. We hope that those who continue to be held will be freed safely and that hearts of violence will be turned toward justice and peace.

With prayerful support for your work in search of peace for the people of Colombia, I remain

Sincerely,

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