

December 21, 2007



The Honorable Condoleezza Rice Secretary of State Department of State 2201 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20520





Dear Secretary Rice:

Thank you for meeting with the Human Rights Leadership Coalition on December 10. We would like to follow up on the conversation we had on Pakistan and respond to Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher's recent reply to our November 13 letter.

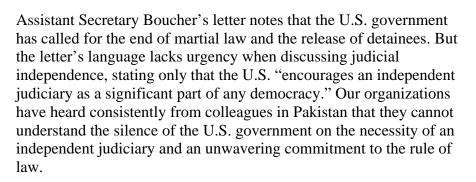




We remain deeply concerned that you and President Bush have not yet called unequivocally for the restoration of an independent judiciary and the lifting of restrictions on the media, particularly television. Pakistan's judiciary supervises the nomination and polling process at every level, while High Court and Supreme Court judges hear appeals regarding qualifications and fraud. The Election Commission is composed of retired and serving judges. The removal of independent-minded judges has rendered free and fair elections impossible, while strict curbs on media further impede accurate reporting on the political and electoral processes. It does not make sense to call for free and fair elections without addressing these concerns.













Since our meeting, President Musharraf has formally lifted martial law, as the United States had called on him to do. However, in his revocation order and another order issued the day before, President Musharraf renewed his attacks on the judicial system, permanently replacing the dismissed judges and barring judicial review of his actions. Orders and amendments imposed during martial law,





fundamentally changing the constitution and people's access to basic rights, remain in place and outside judicial review. Such provisions allow for military trials of civilians and suppression of the media by imposing harsh prison sentences and fines for "anything which . . . brings into ridicule" the head of state or other government officials.

We urge the United States government to call on the Government of Pakistan to restore the judges to their positions and to lift media restrictions prior to the January 8 elections. Furthermore, the Pakistani government must return the power to license or disbar lawyers to the independent Bar Council. Without such steps, some of the most dangerous aspects of martial law will become enshrined in the Pakistani legal and political system, and neither free elections nor long term stability will be possible.

Sincerely,

Mr. Larry Cox, Executive Director Amnesty International USA

Ms. Karin Ryan, Director Human Rights Program The Carter Center

Ms. Jennifer Windsor, Executive Director Freedom House

Mr. Salih Booker, Executive Director Global Rights

Ms. Maureen Byrnes, Executive Director Human Rights First

Mr. Kenneth Roth, Executive Director Human Rights Watch Mr. Gary Haugen, President International Justice Mission

Mr. Robert Arsenault, President International League for Human Rights

Ms. Felice D. Gaer, Director Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights

Ms. Robin Phillips, Executive Director Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

Mr. Frank Donaghue, Chief Executive Officer Physicians for Human Rights

Ms. Monika Kalra Varma, Director Robert F Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights