



**Senator Feinstein Urges Release of  
Political Prisoners, Restoration of Basic Freedoms in Nepal**  
February 9, 2005

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) urged the King of Nepal today to take immediate steps to release political prisoners, restore basic freedoms, and establish a plan for restoring democratic institutions after he imposed a state of emergency on February 1.

Senator Feinstein is also urging the Nepalese government to allow the re-opening of the Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office (TRWO) and the Dalai Lama's representative office in Kathmandu, both of which were closed on January 21.

Senator Feinstein sent the following letter to King Gyaendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev:

February 9, 2005

His Majesty King Gyaendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev  
Royal Government of Nepal  
Kathmandu, Nepal

Your Majesty:

As a friend of Nepal and the Nepalese people for over 25 years, I am writing to express my concern about the current situation in your country.

According to the U.S. State Department, several political prisoners remain under house arrest, communications systems are inoperative, and press freedoms have been suspended for six months. These events are indeed troubling and it is important for me to better understand the motivations behind your decision to dissolve the government and impose a state of emergency.

I understand you have appointed a 10-member Cabinet, headed by yourself, with the goal of restoring peace and democracy within three years. I urge you to build on this pledge and take immediate steps to release political prisoners, restore basic freedoms, and set out a clear plan for restoration of democratic institutions. In addition, I urge you to engage representatives of the Maoist insurgency and negotiate a just and lasting peace to a conflict which has cost far too many lives.

By taking these actions, you will help reassure the Nepalese people and your friends and allies in the international community of your commitment to civil rights and representative government.

I fully understand that Nepal has faced serious challenges in the past few years in confronting the Maoists and seeking to bring political stability and economic prosperity to the Nepalese people. Please know I will continue to do what I can to assist you in those efforts.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

Senator Feinstein's letter to Nepalese Foreign Minister Ramesh Nath Pandey follows:

February 9, 2005

The Honorable Ramesh Nath Pandey  
Foreign Minister  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Royal Government of Nepal  
Kathmandu, Nepal

Dear Minister Pandey:

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding recent news that your government has decided to close both the Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office (TRWO) and the Dalai Lama's representative office in Kathmandu.

As a friend of Nepal and a strong supporter of good relations between our two countries, I would be interested to know more information about the reasons your government made this decision.

Both the TRWO and representative office provide valuable services to the Tibetan community in Nepal, Tibetan refugees transiting Nepal en route to India, and the Nepalese people. By taking on the responsibilities of caring for the Tibetan refugees, the TRWO frees the Nepalese government from the logistical, financial and political burdens of doing so. This office also provides important services to the resident Tibetan refugee community in Nepal, such as assistance with refugee identity cards, recordation of new births, and other functions that are also helpful to the Nepalese bureaucracy. Their work is apolitical and strictly

humanitarian, and they are uniquely positioned as an organization to carry out these important duties.

From a religious and social perspective, the Dalai Lama's representative office is an important link between both Tibetans and Nepalese to a revered spiritual leader. Again, your government has worked closely with the representative office to negotiate sensitive political issues, such as ceremonies marking important religious and cultural events in the Tibetan calendar. To the best of my knowledge, the representative's office has always carried out its work in Nepal in a manner that is respectful of the wishes of the Nepalese authorities and sensitive to the difficult political situation of its host country.

For these reasons, I hope that your government will reconsider its decision to shut down these offices and work to assist them in complying with Nepal's registration requirements. While this registration process is ongoing, I would also ask that you permit the TRWO to continue their normal operations, including the partnership with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

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