

## November 14, 2005: Congress: USCIRF Chair testifies on State Department's Religious Freedom Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2005

Contact:

Anne Johnson, Director of Communications, (202) 523-3240, ext. 27 WASHINGTON - Michael Cromartie, Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), testified at a hearing on the State Department's 2005 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom and its designation of "countries of particular concern" (CPCs). The hearing was held by the House International Relations Committee Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations and is titled, "In Defense of Human Dignity: The 2005 International Religious Freedom Report." In a November 10 press release, the Commission welcomed the continued designation by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice of Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Vietnam as "countries of particular concern" (CPCs), as there have been no developments in the past year in any of those countries to warrant their removal from the CPC list. At the same time, the information in this year's Annual Report on Religious Freedom, released this week by the State Department, makes clear that three other countries merit CPC status in addition to those that have been previously named by the Secretary of State. The Commission finds that the governments of Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan persist in engaging in or tolerating particularly severe violations of religious freedom, and regrets that they were, once again, not designated as CPCs this year. However, the Commission notes that countries may be designated as CPCs at any time during the year.

**What:** Hearing on the State Department's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom and Designations of Countries of Particular Concern  
**Where:** Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2172  
**When:** Tuesday, November 15, 2005, 10:30 a.m.  
**Others testifying are:** The Honorable John V. Hanford III, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State; Most Reverend Ricardo Ramirez, C.S.B., Bishop of Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (also a USCIRF Commissioner); Ms. Nina Shea, Director, Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House (also a USCIRF Commissioner); Mr. Tom Malinowski, Washington Advocacy Director, Human Rights Watch; Mr. David Aikman, Author, *Jesus In Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China And Changing The World Balance Of Power*; and Mr. Lawrence A. Uzzell, President, International Religious Freedom Watch. Chair Cromartie's testimony will be available on the Commission's web site at [www.uscirf.gov](http://www.uscirf.gov) at 10:30 a.m. on November 15 and may also be obtained by contacting the Commission's Communications Department at [communications@uscirf.gov](mailto:communications@uscirf.gov) or (202) 523-3240, ext. 26 or 27.

Michael Cromartie, Chair

- Felice D. Gaer, Vice Chair  
 Nina Shea, Vice Chair  
 Preeta D. Bansal, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput  
 Khaled Abou El Fadl  
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 Elizabeth H. Prodromou  
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 Ambassador John V. Hanford III, Ex-Officio  
 Joseph R. Crapa, Executive Director