

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 8, 2009

Ambassador Jon Huntsman
C/O Department of State
China
Washington DC 20512

Dear Ambassador Huntsman:

Congratulations on your new appointment as U.S. Ambassador to China. We look forward to working with you on areas of common interest.

We are deeply concerned over a recent report that a secret directive has been issued by the Chinese government to dismantle six leading house churches in Beijing. We visited one of these churches in June 2008, the Shouwang house church; the church has over 1,000 members, many of whom are intellectuals, and we were greeted warmly.

Some have raised concerns that this secret directive is the first step in a crackdown on house churches in Beijing in the lead-up to the observance of the 60th anniversary of the Communist Party rule in China on October 1, 2009. These churches pose no threat to social order, nor should a pending national event be cause or justification for violating the constitutional right of Chinese citizens to fundamental religious freedom.

In this key time at the beginning of your appointment in Beijing and in the lead-up to a major national anniversary, we urge you to affirm the U.S. position prioritizing religious freedom, and to publicly state the vital importance of religious freedom to a modern nation, the role of religious freedom to holistic stability and development, and the imperative for people of faith to be allowed to freely worship outside of government establishments.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,


Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress


Chris Smith
Member of Congress

FRW:ea