

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 18, 2010

The Honorable Michael H. Posner
Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Posner:

During the recent U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue, you reportedly cited the Arizona immigration statute (SB 1070, as amended) as an example of a “troubling trend in our society” that you seemed to imply is morally equivalent to China’s persistent pattern of abuse and repression of its people. As the Assistant Secretary of State in charge of the bureau of democracy and human rights, your remarks are particularly offensive. We demand that you retract your statement and issue an apology.

According to the 2009 Human Rights Report produced by your bureau, China remains one of the worst human rights offenders, and its record is only worsening. Your bureau’s report details how democracy activists, religious groups, journalists, and human rights advocates in China continue to be “targeted for arbitrary arrest, detention, and harassment.” The report also describes the brutal tactics the Chinese regime uses to suppress these peaceful groups: “security forces reportedly committed arbitrary or unlawful killings,” “officials used electric shocks, beatings, shackles, and other forms of abuse,” and “arbitrary arrest and detention remained serious problems.” To compare in any way the lawful and democratic act of the government of the state of Arizona with the arbitrary abuses of the unelected Chinese Communist Party is inappropriate and offensive.

There is no place for moral equivalency in democracy and human rights policy. The United States is the world’s leader in defending the rights of all people. Someone in your position should be proud to proclaim that.

Sincerely,



JON KYL
United States Senator



JOHN McCAIN
United States Senator