

March 30, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

This letter is in furtherance of my letter to you of March 6, 2006, regarding the American Bar Association's support of your efforts to strengthen the resolution providing for the creation of a new United Nations Human Rights Council. While we were disappointed that the resolution was adopted without the amendments you supported, we strongly recommend that the United States immediately announce its candidacy for a seat on the Council and exert all diplomatic efforts to secure this seat. We believe that the United States will be able to maximize its ability to influence the success of the body as a member fully engaged in the Council's inaugural sessions. In the first few years, these members will establish the agenda and responsibilities of the new Council. The United States should be fully engaged in this process, which will shape the work of the Council for years to come.

Furthermore, we urge that the United States lead efforts to ensure that only countries committed to promoting human rights are elected to the new Council. In particular, the United States should do its utmost to ensure that the process of selecting the new members of the Human Rights Council takes fully into account "candidates' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments thereto," as set forth in operative paragraph 8 of the General Assembly Resolution. Although it would have been vastly preferable to have required a two-thirds vote for election to the Council as you and we proposed, we believe that the objective of keeping human rights violators off the most important UN human rights body can still be achieved through sustained and effective diplomacy. We respectfully suggest that the great weight of the United States be put behind this effort.

In this connection, we suggest that the United States work closely with the Democracy Caucus and its members at the UN, starting with those who have already pledged to oppose candidates under UN human rights sanctions. You may be assured of the full and vigorous support of the ABA in this critical campaign.

I will lead a delegation of American Bar Association leaders for meetings next Tuesday, April 4th, at the United Nations and at the US Mission as part of our annual "ABA Day at the UN." We look forward to discussing these important issues with the delegation at the US Mission at this time.

Please let us know if the ABA can be helpful in other ways to support the successful launch of the newly-created UN Human Rights Council.

Sincerely,



Michael S. Greco