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Congress of the United States

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Law Enforcement Caucus
Historic Preservation Caucus

September 21, 2006

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

Dear Secretary Rice:

I am writing to urge you to appoint a special envoy for Sri Lanka because I am deeply troubled by the situation on the ground there. This summer brought an end to the negotiated permanent ceasefire, which had been generally observed since 2002. The renewed violence and rising death toll in Sri Lanka are a grave risk to the fragile peace process and threaten a return to open civil war.

News reports indicate that recent heavy fighting has resulted in hundreds of deaths and the displacement of more than 200,000 people in Sri Lanka. Parties to the conflict are not the only ones suffering. As you know, The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) recently investigated the murder of 17 aid workers, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights made clear just this week that "there is an urgent need for the international community to monitor the unfolding human rights situation."

Naming a special envoy for Sri Lanka would further emphasize our government's commitment to creating a lasting peace. It is essential that the U.S. envoy be a high-level official with the ear of President Bush and you. The envoy's mandate should be clear and must include efforts to increase monitoring of human rights violations.

The citizens of Sri Lanka have endured civil war for too long. We must do everything we can to foster a lasting peace for the country. Again, I request that you appoint a special envoy for Sri Lanka to help bring peace to the country.

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress