



A Union of Professionals

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers
AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Healthcare

555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
202/879-4400
www.aft.org

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May 20, 2005

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

On behalf of the 1.3 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, I am writing to strongly encourage the United States to take a much more active role in responding to the bloody massacre of civilians engaged in peaceful protests against the government of Uzbekistan.

The killing of hundreds of unarmed civilians, including many women and children, is an atrocity that calls for a much more aggressive response from the United States than we have heard in the last few days. The AFT has worked for many years with teachers and civil society leaders in Uzbekistan who support the spread of democratic values and the rule of law. We are deeply concerned that the government of Uzbekistan is unwilling to take any actions that would reduce its grip on power and undermine its authoritarian policies.

While I am sure that the administration is taking action diplomatically, the severity of these crimes against the people of Uzbekistan, and the demands of the current potentially explosive climate in the region, require that the United States make it clearly understood that we cannot tolerate acts of barbarity by governments that seek to be our partners. We strongly urge you to insist that this horrible massacre be investigated by an impartial international agency. Moreover, we urge you to inform the government of Uzbekistan that the United States will not tolerate a continuation of activities and policies which undermine the Uzbek people's pursuit of a free and democratic society.

Sincerely,

Edward J. McElroy
President

EJM : dh opeiu#2 afl-cio

