

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 15, 2011

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Attorney General Holder and Secretary Panetta:

Recent reports indicate that your departments have initiated reviews of all federal law enforcement and military counter-terrorism training and educational programs – specifically regarding the cultural-awareness of such programs. We understand this is in response to media attention on the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Countering Violent Extremism training.

We are concerned that the political nature of these reviews might inadvertently weaken our law enforcement and military counter-terrorism training programs by censoring certain language that is used to objectively identify the asymmetrical threats that are present in today’s world. As you well know, accurately defining the threat is an important step in creating and enforcing successful counter-terrorism doctrines.

In a February 2011 report issued by the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, the committee articulated a number of improvements that the government can make to strengthen its counter-terrorism doctrine. Amongst the suggested improvements, the committee recommended that the Department of Defense, “update its policies on extremism and religious accommodation to ensure that violent Islamist extremism is not tolerated. DOD should also train servicemembers on violent Islamist extremism and how it differs from Islamic religious belief and practices.” We strongly support the committee’s recommendations.

As members of Congress, we respectfully request that you provide us additional information about your counter-terrorism training review processes. We would like to know the following:

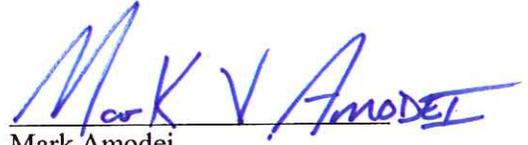
- What non-government organizations, agencies, and other individuals are involved in the review process?
- What are the objectives of the training reviews?
- What changes are you planning to implement?
- How will the changes improve the current model of counter-terrorism training?

We thank you for your prompt response to our questions.

Sincerely,



Sue Myrick
Member of Congress



Mark Amodei
Member of Congress



Dan Burton
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress



J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress



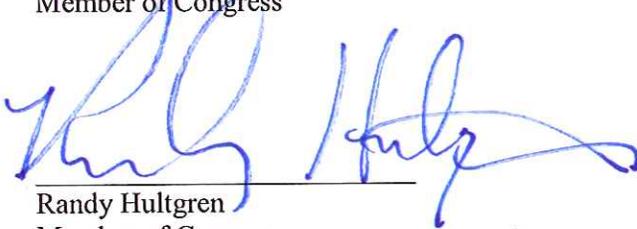
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