

FRANK R. WOLF

10TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

RANKING MEMBER—STATE-FOREIGN
OPERATIONS

TRANSPORTATION-HUD

CO-CHAIR—CONGRESSIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 16, 2008

241 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4610
(202) 225-5136

13873 PARK CENTER ROAD
SUITE 130
HERNDON, VA 20171
(703) 709-5800
(800) 945-9653 (IN STATE)

110 NORTH CAMERON STREET
WINCHESTER, VA 22601
(540) 667-0990
(800) 850-3463 (IN STATE)

wolf.house.gov

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
2201 C St NW Ste 7276
Washington DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

I am deeply disappointed that as your time at the State Department draws to a close you have failed to take any action regarding concerns about the content of the textbooks being used at the Virginia campus of the Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA). This is my fifth letter since June to the Department on this particular issue.

You have often spoken with great eloquence about the importance of combating “ideologies of hatred.” It is well known that Saudi Arabia promotes the radical Wahhabi interpretation of Islam within its own borders and in schools and madrassas around the world. A 2006 Congressional Research Service Report had the following to say about Saudi educational material: *“Some reports suggest that teachings within Saudi domestic schools may foster intolerance of other religions and cultures. A 2002 study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) indicates that ‘some Saudi textbooks taught Islamic tolerance while others viciously condemned Jews and Christians...[and] use rhetoric that was little more than hate literature.’”*

Further, the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has noted that “ISA is unlike any conventional private or parochial school in the United States in that it is operated by a foreign government and uses that government’s official texts.” Given widely held concerns about Saudi education material, given the school’s direct affiliation with the Saudi government and given its location just miles from our nation’s capital, continued inaction is nothing short of a moral failure on the part of the State Department.

I urge you once again, as the first semester of the 2008 school year comes to an end, to convene a meeting of relevant State Department and USCIRF representatives--including the expert analysts commissioned by USCIRF to translate and interpret the ISA textbooks as well as any analysts commissioned by the State Department to translate and interpret the textbooks that the department has received--to conclusively determine what

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice

December 16, 2008

Page 2

is being taught at the school. As I noted in my last letter, if ISA is in the process of adopting new curricula, as State's response indicated, then this review would have the effect of determining once and for all whether there is any merit in these persistent concerns and if so what must be done about it.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

FRW:ea

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.