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## Congress of the United States

### House of Representatives

June 16, 2010

wolf.house.gov

Mr. John Brennan  
Deputy National Security Adviser  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. Brennan:

I am in receipt of your May 28 letter responding to my request that the administration implement several bipartisan recommendations that would make our country safer. I appreciate your response, but I remain disappointed that the administration continues to oppose these recommendations, which would enjoy strong bipartisan support from the American people.

Unfortunately, the efforts described in your letter miss the point of the fundamental problems that I have repeatedly brought to your attention since January. Ultimately, your letter makes clear that this administration remains unwilling to take important steps to secure our country, including bringing back the co-chairs of the 9/11 Commission and creating a "Team B" of outside experts to challenge assumptions and strategies across the entire intelligence community, not just within the "stovepipe" of individual agencies.

By resisting legitimate bipartisan suggestions from Congress and outside experts, this administration is taking a shortsighted approach to national security policy. A number of lawmakers from both parties, including Senate Intelligence Chairman Dianne Feinstein and Ranking Member Kit Bond, have criticized this administration for its failure to share information with Congress. Your letter to me reaffirms the administration's unwillingness to work with Congress.

This is particularly troubling given a recent Department of Homeland Security report advising that terrorist threats against the U.S. are now at an all-time high. ABC News reported, "The pace and number of attempted terror attacks against the U.S. over the past nine months has surpassed the number of attempts during any previous one-year period, according to an internal Department of Homeland Security report issued on Friday, May 21." One week later, a report released by the Department of Justice's Inspector General found that the government is not prepared to ensure public safety following a terrorist attack involving nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons.

Above all, I believe that the administration's resistance to outside expertise on national security issues is troubling -- particularly the centralization of national security *operations* in the National Security Council (NSC) over the last year and a half. Historically, the NSC has played a critical role in national security *policy* development, while federal agencies have managed operations. The result of this change is the increasing marginalization of congressional oversight of U.S. national security.

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Yesterday, *The Atlantic* reported that "The White House has withheld a key report, which maps out a strategy for fixing the troubled Director of National Intelligence, from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence." The congressionally mandated report, "Study of the Mission, Size, and Function of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence," was apparently withheld because it was to be released at an "inopportune time for the White House, which has pursued a policy course counter to the report's advice." This is a timely example of the dangers of marginalizing Congress and outside experts from national security oversight. This is precisely why bipartisan proposals to interject outside review and expertise are needed.

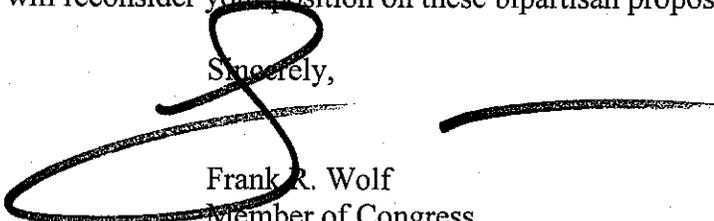
With regard to your assertion that a "Team B" of outside experts is unnecessary because several agencies have implemented "red cells," it appears that you have misunderstood the primary objective of this proposal. Respected Georgetown University professor Bruce Hoffman aptly told me that a "Team B" approach is needed *across* the entire intelligence community, not just within the "stovepipe" of individual agencies. Without a comprehensive review of threats, assumptions, and strategies across the entire intelligence community, we will be unable to truly understand the range of threats we may face. The steps that you outlined in your response are insufficient.

Your letter also states that there is no need to bring back the co-chairs of the 9/11 Commission, former Rep. Lee Hamilton and former Gov. Thomas Kean, for a six-month review because the administration has appointed Hamilton to the President's Intelligence Advisory Board (PIAB). We need an open and transparent review of the status of the commission's recommendations in order to help Congress make the necessary statutory improvements to our nation's national security structure and policies. This cannot be effectively accomplished in the half-hearted and secretive manner the administration has proposed. The suppression of the PIAB's report on the DNI is, again, an example of why a public review by the 9/11 Commission co-chairs is necessary.

Finally, I was disappointed that you will not make space at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) for the High Value Detainee Interrogation Group (HIG). I believe that co-location of the HIG at NCTC is a critical component of interagency collaboration and breaking down the "stovepipes" that led to the confusion about the role of the HIG following the attempted attacks on Christmas Day and in Times Square, New York. I am prepared to work with you in my capacity as ranking member on the House Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Subcommittee to find a solution to place the HIG at NCTC.

Candidly, your response and unwillingness to implement these proposals are greatly disappointing. As you know, I have been urging adoption of these ideas since January and yet the administration continues to resist working with this Congress to strengthen our national security. I hope you will reconsider your position on these bipartisan proposals.

Sincerely,



Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress