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July 14, 2008

The Honorable John Withers II
U.S. Ambassador to Albania
9510 Tirana Place
Dulles, VA 20189

Dear Ambassador Withers:

I have received your letter of July 11, 2008, and read with interest your comments in the *Los Angeles Times*.¹ Your letter requested an opportunity to meet, and I would welcome this opportunity.

In my letter to Secretary Rice on June 23, 2008, I requested that you appear voluntarily for a transcribed interview with the Committee staff to assist the Committee's inquiry. I ask that you inform the Committee staff by 5:00 p.m. on July 16, 2008, whether you will appear voluntarily for this interview. I also ask that you indicate by then whether you will provide the responsive documents in your possession to the Committee.

The *Los Angeles Times* article confirmed some key elements of the account that Major Larry D. Harrison provided the Committee. According to the *Times*, you have acknowledged that you had a late-night meeting with the Albanian defense minister on November 19, 2007; that there were discussions at this meeting about how to respond to a request by the *New York Times* to visit a site in Albania where a U.S. arms contractor, AEY, Inc., repackaged ammunition to remove its Chinese origins; and that at the meeting, the Albanian defense minister suggested in your presence removing the Chinese markings from the site before the visit by the *New York Times* reporter.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, you dispute Major Harrison's assertion that you agreed with the defense minister's suggestion. You also said that you did not inform the Committee about this incident because the name of the arms dealer did not come up.

¹ Letter from John L. Withers II, U.S. Ambassador to Albania, to Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee (July 11, 2008); *Arms Fraud Inquiry Takes a Political Turn*, *Los Angeles Times* (July 14, 2008).

The Honorable John Withers II
July 14, 2008
Page 2

The Committee's investigation into what actually happened in Albania in November has been impeded by a lack of cooperation from the State Department and Embassy officials. To date, the Committee has not received the documents the Committee requested, nor has the Committee been able to conduct any interviews with Embassy officials. For this reason, I appreciate your offer to meet and hope that you will now cooperate fully and voluntarily with the Committee.

You may contact David Rapallo or Theodore Chuang of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5420 to arrange a convenient time for your interview with the Committee staff and our meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. A. Waxman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Henry A. Waxman
Chairman

cc: Rep. Tom Davis
Ranking Minority Member