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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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November 20, 2008

The Honorable John Helgerson
Inspector General
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Inspector General Helgerson:

I very much appreciated the thorough and important work of you and your staff on the Report "Procedures Used in Narcotics Airbridge Denial Program in Peru, 1995-2001." For years, I have expressed deep concern about the possibility of grave misconduct both in the management of the airbridge denial program and in actions taken after the tragic failure of the program. While past investigations into this matter failed entirely to get to the bottom of the matter, my concerns appear to have been fully substantiated by your Report of Investigation.

I believe that several of your findings require aggressive followup by the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, including the repeated failure by the CIA to follow the required procedures resulting in loss of life, apparently false or misleading statements made to Congress by CIA officials, withholding of information from the National Security Council, and potential obstruction of justice by CIA employees with respect to a Department of Justice criminal investigation.

While I intend to vigorously pursue these issues in the Committee, at the outset I would appreciate your assistance with three matters.

First, key portions of the report detailing actions taken by CIA personnel to avoid (and in my view, potentially to obstruct) criminal and civil liability are classified. Except for certain information relating to the identity of covered personnel, it is not immediately apparent why these portions of the report are classified. Because you served as the classification authority for the report, I would appreciate it if you would conduct a further review to determine whether additional portions of the report could be declassified in order to permit public discussion, and whether an unclassified version of the report could be released publicly. As you know, Executive Order 12958 specifically provides in part that "In no case shall information be classified in order to: (1) conceal violations of law, inefficiency, or administrative error; [or] (2) prevent embarrassment to a person, organization, or agency....."

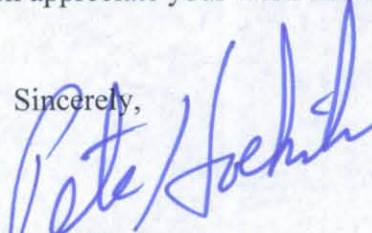
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Second, I believe that the Department of Justice must review this report to determine whether further criminal investigation of the underlying facts is warranted, with respect to both the original incident and the evidence you have discovered of potential false statements and obstruction of justice after the fact. If you have not done so already, I would like to ensure that your report is made available to the Department for review.

Third, I intend to ask for additional congressional hearings on this matter. I hope that you and your staff will be available to further assist the Committee in reviewing these significant and important matters, and that you will continue to keep me and the Committee advised of any material information as review continues of these important issues.

Your report clearly establishes that the circumstances surrounding the tragic deaths of Veronica and Charity Bowers were even more senseless and avoidable than I originally imagined. I understand that Director Hayden intends to review the report and matters relating to internal accountability for individuals, and my views and requests are without prejudice to that process. However, as long as the CIA is unwilling as an institution to accept responsibility for its actions and for the internal culture that has promoted them, the American people will continue to question the trust that they should place in that institution and its majority of employees who approach their critical work with honor and integrity. I very much appreciate your work and assistance to restore that trust.

Sincerely,



Peter Hoekstra
Ranking Republican