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October 31, 2000

The Honorable Dan Burton
Committee on Government Reform
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
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The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6143

Dear Chairman Burton and Representative Waxman:

I represent Soka Gakkai, a lay Buddhist association with more than 10 million members. Soka Gakkai and I are both mentioned in Chapter IV of the Committee's report on "Janet Reno's Stewardship of the Justice Department." Without waiving any applicable privilege, I write to bring to the Committee's attention serious flaws in Chapter IV, which contains numerous demonstrable factual errors, and recklessly accuses private individuals of criminal wrongdoing without any pretense of due process or any substantive evidence. Chapter IV overstates its conclusions and ignores errors and omissions in the investigation.

The report acknowledges that the issues discussed in Chapter IV relate indirectly to litigation in Japan between Nikken Abe and Nichiren Shoshu, on the one hand and my client, Soka Gakkai, on the other. *E.g.*, p. 161. It appears from various sources, including the report's Exhibit 56, that representatives of Nikken Abe and Nichiren Shoshu have had contact with the Committee staff, in an attempt to have the Committee issue a report that would be helpful to their position in the Japanese litigation. The three-judge panel of the Japanese trial court has already ruled unequivocally in favor of Soka Gakkai in that litigation, finding that the position of Nichiren Shoshu and the testimony of Nikken Abe were not credible. The matter is now on appeal and the efforts of Nichiren Shoshu's representatives to influence the Committee are simply an attempt by the losing side to use the Committee to influence the Japanese appellate process. The Committee should guard against such abuse of its processes.

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More specific errors include:

1. The report recklessly accuses several private individuals of crimes, including several whom the staff never interviewed. The report accuses several individuals of committing serious crimes. It also accuses others of misleading the Committee. Such charges, cloaked with the authority of the Committee, are outrageous when made with so little concern for fairness or due process. It is significant that the report modifies many of its charges with qualifiers like "apparently" or "possibly" (*e.g.*, p. 162), but that does not excuse such reckless charges. Simply put, there is no evidence that Soka Gakkai, Jack Palladino or I committed any crime or engaged in any improper activity whatsoever. As the report acknowledges, the staff failed even to interview Mr. Palladino or me about our role in this matter. *Id.* n. 801. These charges are particularly objectionable because they are not even relevant to the report's central thesis, that Ms. Poston and others working at her direction received favorable treatment at the hands of the Justice Department. *E.g.*, pp. 159-60. Thus, these serious attacks are made almost casually, without any claim or relevance to any public purpose.

In fact, even a preliminary investigation would have revealed that the so-called "reliable source," Richard Lucas, never met with Mr. Palladino or discussed with him any of the facts or issues concerning this matter. Further, an investigation would also have shown that I had no personal involvement with the activity criticized in the report.

2. The report repeatedly relies on a witness who lacks credibility. Many assertions in the report – including many of the most misleading, erroneous or otherwise objectionable assertions – are cited only to Mr. Lucas. *E.g.*, notes 799, 806, 814, 822-24. Mr. Lucas is not a credible witness for several reasons: much of his story to the Committee is contradicted by his own sworn affidavit; he is apparently engaged in a legal dispute with one of the Committee's other witnesses and thus has an incentive to blame that witness for his own conduct; and he committed a conscious and intentional breach of his contractual and ethical obligations to the Steel Hector & Davis law firm. After having been retained by the law firm, he entered into a relationship with individuals hostile to the firm and the interests of its clients, and repeatedly breached his ethical and contractual obligations by secretly and systematically providing the opposing side in a litigation matter confidential information about the law firm's and client's activities.

A further sign that Mr. Lucas is simply not reliable is that he authored several memoranda under a pseudonym, "Michael Wilson." The report never discloses that fact. The report also frequently relies on these memoranda, without any other corroborating evidence. *E.g.*, notes 831, 832, 837. That Mr. Lucas felt compelled to write memoranda under a pseudonym, in a complete departure from ordinary business practice, seriously undermines his credibility and shows that

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Mr. Lucas understood there was something about his conduct that needed to be hidden. Moreover, the memoranda themselves demonstrate that Mr. Lucas was violating his contractual and ethical duties to the Steel Hector & Davis law firm, and thus are independently not worthy of belief.


Significantly, the report itself accuses Mr. Lucas of criminal misconduct. *E.g.*, p. 168.

3. The report contains sensational charges that it fails to support. The report's headings repeatedly charge individuals or organizations with illegal acts. *E.g.*, p. 162 ("Soka Gakkai Illegally Obtains Information on Nobuo Abe Through Jack Palladino"); p. 163 ("Poston Requests Her Private Investigators To Break The Law"). Those inflammatory headings are not supported by the text. For example, the passage about Mr. Palladino is modified by the word "apparently," and is sourced only to Mr. Lucas, the tainted witness; as the report concedes in the very next footnote, it did not even bother to discuss this allegation with Mr. Palladino. Mr. Palladino has publicly stated that he had nothing to do with illegally obtaining any information about Nobuo Abe and had no involvement with obtaining information from any federal source whatsoever. Similarly, Ms. Poston testified that she at no time asked her investigators to break the law.

4. The report lends unmerited credibility to mere speculation. The report seeks to suggest that an employee of the Bureau of Prisons "planted" a fabricated record in the NCIC involving an arrest in Seattle in 1963. The report recognizes this as "speculation," and attributes it to some unnamed "individuals involved in the case." p. 162. There is no evidence to support this speculative theory, and again the staff failed to perform any of the investigative work – such as interviewing knowledgeable law enforcement officials from the Seattle area – that would have helped clarify these facts. The report's careless presentation of the speculation may be injurious to the parties to the lawsuit in Japan – a lawsuit that, once again, the report specifically acknowledges. p. 161.

I ask that the report be corrected in light of this information, or, at a minimum, that this letter be made part of any final report issued by the Committee.

Yours very truly,



Barry B. Langberg