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House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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August 20, 2008

Mr. John Maguire
c/o Mr. Chris Walker
Director of Congressional Affairs
Central Intelligence Agency
Room 7-C38 OHB
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Mr. Maguire:

I am writing to follow up on recent serious allegations regarding the creation of a false letter from Tahir Jalil Habbush, Saddam Hussein's former Chief of Intelligence, to Saddam Hussein. The letter, which was allegedly backdated to July 1, 2001, attempted to establish an operational link between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein in the period before the 9/11 attacks by specifically stating that 9/11 ringleader Mohammed Atta had received training in Iraq. At the time of the alleged decision in 2003 to concoct the false letter, the Vice President's Office had been reportedly pressuring the CIA to prove this connection as a justification to invade Iraq. The letter also falsely noted that Iraq had received a "shipment" (presumably uranium) from Niger with the assistance of al Qaeda.

Upon careful review of the allegations concerning this matter, I have become very concerned with the possibility that this Administration may have violated federal law by using the resources of our intelligence agencies to influence domestic policy processes or opinion. The law specifically provides that "[n]o covert action may be conducted which is intended to influence United States political processes, public opinion, policies, or media."¹

According to recent allegations, in your capacity as one of the heads of the CIA's Iraq Operations Group in the Near East Division, you were briefed by Rob Richer, former CIA Deputy Director of Clandestine Operations and Chief of the Near East Division, about drafting the false letter. You were reportedly given the order to execute the letter and then arrange that it

¹ 50 USC 413b(f).

Mr. John Maguire
Page 2
August 20, 2008

be hand-carried by a CIA agent to Baghdad for dissemination. Given your reported direct knowledge of these events, I am requesting that you contact Judiciary Committee staff as soon as possible to set up a time to discuss your involvement and knowledge of the allegedly false letter. Please direct your response and any questions to the Judiciary Committee office, 2138 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 (tel: 202-225-3951, fax: 202-225-7680). Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Conyers, Jr." in a cursive, flowing script.

John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Lamar S. Smith