



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D. C. 20535-0001

September 28, 2006

Honorable Rush Holt
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Holt:

Yesterday, the FBI received media inquiries relating to a letter from you to FBI Director Mueller regarding the 2001 anthrax attacks. Unfortunately, we were unable to respond to the media because we were unaware of, and had not received, any such letter from you. After contacting your staff, we were able to obtain a copy of the letter referenced in media reports and are now able to respond to your inquiries. We will also provide a copy of our response to the media.

Contrary to the assertions in your letter, the investigation into the anthrax attacks of 2001 has made significant progress and has been one of the largest and most complex investigations ever conducted. The FBI has devoted hundreds of thousands of Agent-hours to the case and currently has 17 Special Agents assigned to a Task Force, along with 10 U.S. Postal Inspectors, who are dedicated to solving this case. Over the past five years, the investigation has spanned six continents, involved over 9,100 witness interviews, 67 searches, and the issuance of 6,000 grand jury subpoenas. The information that has been developed as a result of these investigative efforts is not appropriate for disclosure at this time because the investigation remains active. I can advise you, however, that the FBI and its partners in this investigation have never been under any misconceptions about the character of the anthrax used in the attacks. On the contrary, since the earliest months of this investigation, we have consulted with the world's foremost scientific experts on anthrax and relevant bio-forensic sciences, both inside and outside the FBI. While there have been erroneous media reports about the character of the 2001 anthrax, the FBI's investigation has never been guided by such reports.

With regard to your request for a classified briefing, we must respectfully decline at this time. As you may recall, the FBI provided updates to you on the anthrax investigation on June 5, 2002, August 21, 2002, and on April 1, 2003. We also provided briefings to other Members of Congress due to the national significance of this matter and the fact that anthrax-laced letters had been addressed to Members of the United States Senate. After sensitive information about the investigation citing Congressional sources was reported in the media, the Department of Justice and the FBI agreed that no additional briefings to Congress would be provided. Since we regard this as a criminal law enforcement matter, rather than an intelligence activity, a briefing to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence would not be appropriate nor consistent with our long-standing policy on pending matters.

Honorable Rush Holt

In closing, I believe it is important to note that many complex investigations, such as the Unabomber case and the Centennial Park bombing in Atlanta, often take years to resolve. Like those, we intend to pursue this investigation to its conclusion and support the successful prosecution of the individual(s) responsible for these attacks.

Sincerely,



Eleni P. Kalisch
Assistant Director
Office of Congressional Affairs

Honorable Peter Hoekstra
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Jane Harman
Ranking Member
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
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