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April 23, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary of State Clinton,

I am writing to express my outrage and concern over acts of torture committed by a member of the royal family of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sheikh Issa bin Zayed al Nahyan, brother of the country's crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed, which were assisted by uniformed members of the UAE police. I strongly urge you to investigate this matter further, express the outrage of our nation regarding these acts, and call for an end to the impunity that has provided Sheikh Issa the freedom and license to carry out such heinous acts without the fear of legal reprisal or consequences.

As you are aware, last night, April 22nd, *ABC Nightline* broadcast the story of Sheikh Issa's vicious acts, including a few minutes of videotape documenting his torture of a male victim. At the invitation of ABC journalist Brian Ross, I reviewed over 30 minutes of this videotape on Tuesday, April 21st. I cannot describe the horror and revulsion I felt when witnessing what is on this video; the very brief excerpts publicly broadcast by *ABC Nightline* do not even come close to revealing the cruel and inhumane acts depicted on the longer videotape. I could not watch it without constantly flinching.

It is my understanding that Mr. Bassam Nabulsi, a U.S. citizen from Houston, Texas, and former business associate of Sheikh Issa, got these tapes out of the UAE. It is also my understanding that Mr. Nabulsi had earlier presented portions of these tapes to Mr. Bill Wallrap, a Department of Homeland Security official stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi to train UAE police. I respectfully request that you personally ask Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano to investigate what efforts Mr. Wallrap made to bring this information to the attention of higher-ranking U.S. Homeland Security and State Department officials, and what action these higher-ranking officers then undertook, if any. Since all embassy personnel, regardless of their portfolio, bureau or agency affiliation, are under the authority of the U.S. Ambassador, I believe it is important for you, Madame Secretary, to take the lead role in initiating and carrying out this investigation.

In light of the fact that the UAE Ministry of the Interior, which is headed by another of Sheikh Issa's brothers, has stated that it carried out a review of the allegations against Sheikh Issa and the involvement of uniformed police in helping him torture his victim and found "all rules, policies and procedures were followed correctly by the Police Department," I respectfully ask that you place a temporary hold on further U.S. expenditures of funds, training, sales or transfers of equipment or technology, including nuclear, to the United Arab Emirates until a full review of this matter and its policy implications can be completed. I also ask that the U.S. deny any visas for travel to the United States by Sheikh Issa or his immediate family, including his brothers.

Finally, I would like to suggest that you and other relevant State Department and Homeland Security officers ask Mr. Ross for the opportunity to review the full videotape – it shocks the conscience. I believe you will then understand why I feel so adamantly that a strong response by the U.S. is required.

If you would like to discuss this case in more depth, please know that I am available at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you soon regarding what response the State Department is considering in light of this documented evidence of torture by Sheikh Issa with the assistance of uniformed members of the UAE police.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James P. McGovern". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

JPM:cmb