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H-405, THE CAPITOL
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(202) 225-7690

MICHAEL DELANEY
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July 20, 2007

The Honorable J. Michael McConnell
Director of National Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Director McConnell:

It is with some alarm that I read a recent public report alleging that senior officers of the Central Intelligence Agency willingly, and outside authorized channels, participated in a foreign probe of alleged U.S. intelligence activities. I hope there is no merit to this report, but the allegation itself, and what it portends, is so startling that I believe it warrants further review by your office.

The sovereign rights of the United States and the right of our nation to defend itself are well-established. Any effort that undermines these rights, especially by those entrusted by our nation to serve as its first line of defense—the United States Intelligence Community—should be a cause of alarm for all Americans.

As a nation, we will find ourselves in a most precarious situation if senior members of the Intelligence Community, those entrusted with the nation's most sensitive information, come to believe themselves above laws governing classified information or rules governing their conduct. Those who find themselves opposed to any particular Intelligence Community program or activity have an official, legal path through the Intelligence Community Whistleblower Protection Act (ICWPA) to raise their concerns.

I cannot help but note that at no time, from the initial illegal disclosure of certain CIA programs to the recent assertions of cooperation with a foreign probe into alleged U.S. activities, has anyone who objected availed themselves of the ICWPA process with regards to this matter.

Regardless of motivation, it is not an option to go to an agent of a foreign power about the classified activities of the United States, and if anyone did, they should be punished to the maximum extent of the law.

To make this determination, I request that you immediately begin an inquiry into whether the public allegations and references to anonymous participation by senior CIA officials in the published report of the Council of Europe have any merit. If the allegations show merit, clearly a criminal referral to the Department of Justice is in order, and I request that you make such a referral.

If you determine the allegations are without merit, I request you formally demand of the Council of Europe that they instruct the investigator to immediately cease his spurious claims of CIA cooperation that threaten to tarnish the reputation of the hardworking men and women of the CIA.

Those who work in U.S. Intelligence Community hold a special trust with, and on behalf of, the American people. Allegations that this trust has been violated cannot be taken lightly. I make this request to assure the American people of their trust and faith in their Intelligence Community.

Sincerely,

Peter Hoekstra
Ranking Republican

cc: Silvestre Reyes