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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 11, 2003

The Honorable Paula Dobriansky
Under Secretary for Global Affairs
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

To: Cynthia Andrews

From: G. House

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Dear Under Secretary Dobriansky:

A recent article in the Washington Post (December 26, 2002) provided a detailed account of interrogation methods used in Afghanistan with Al Qaeda and other prisoners. The article quoted American officials as saying beatings, so-called "stress and duress" techniques, and denial of medical treatment are used on a systematic basis, and that some prisoners are sent to foreign intelligence services in other countries for more intensive interrogation.

I understand the need to obtain important information concerning terrorist networks and plans, as well as the new realities of the international system. That said, if these allegations are correct, I am concerned that the United States may surrender the moral high ground it has held in the past, undercut our image as a civilized society, and, in this manner, seriously harm our long-term national security interests.

I would appreciate your comments on the Washington Post article, specifically whether our previous commitment against human rights violations is being reconsidered in light of the threats we face from Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.

Sincerely,


Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator

JB/rs