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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

July 14, 2008

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The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
2201 C St NW Ste 7276
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Dear Secretary Rice:

I am writing to follow up on my June 24 letter regarding the two Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA) campuses in Virginia and concerns raised by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) on the content of textbooks being used there.

With the start of the 2008 school year rapidly approaching, the timely resolution of this matter is of the utmost importance. If, in fact, the students at ISA are *not* being taught or exposed to texts that incite hatred and intolerance, then in all fairness to them and to the teachers and parents associated with the Academy, the cloud of suspicion presently surrounding the school should be lifted. If, however, the content of the textbooks is consistent with USCIRF's findings outlined in its June 11 report, then urgent action is required. Both scenarios require State Department involvement, in collaboration with USCIRF.

The school's lease with Fairfax County plainly indicates that one of the school's properties is being leased by "the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia d/b/a/ (doing business as) the Islamic Saudi Academy." The school's other property is owned by the embassy. Further, the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. chairs the school's board and the school uses the Saudi Embassy's Internal Revenue Service employer tax number. ISA's direct link with the Saudi Government is unquestioned. Under the Foreign Missions Act of 1982, the State Department is charged with overseeing all foreign missions in the United States, including having the power to require "any foreign mission to divest itself of, or forgo the use of, any real property [if such divestiture is] determined by the Secretary...[to be] otherwise necessary to protect the interests of the United States." And yet, I have seen transcripts of various State Department briefings in which there appears to be profound confusion as to what the department's role is in resolving this matter. For example, on June 24, deputy spokesman Tom Casey said, "As you know, this is a school that is incorporated and overseen through the county there. It's not an institution that we have any sort of formal role in accrediting or managing."

In July 2006 the department released a media note following a congressional briefing by Ambassador John Hanford on "religious practice and tolerance issues in Saudi Arabia." At that time Congress was told that the "Saudi Government is conducting a comprehensive revision of textbooks and educational curricula to weed out disparaging remarks toward religious groups, a

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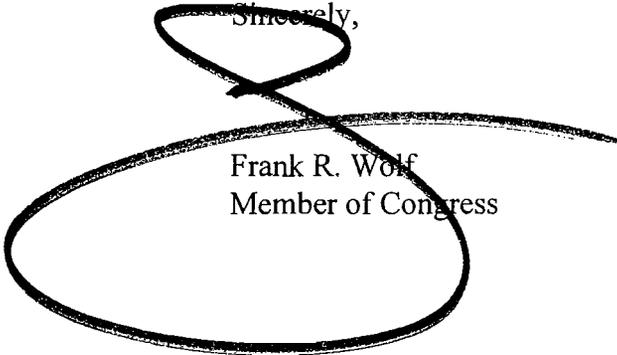
process that will be completed in one to two years.” It is two years this month, and many in Congress, myself included, have repeatedly raised concerns about the veracity of these commitments and our ability to verify them.

As such, the concerns raised with regard to ISA are both relevant and timely. If we can not be certain of what is being taught here at home in Saudi-affiliated schools, how can we take seriously their claims that the radical Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, which they have been known to propagate in educational institutions globally, is a thing of the past.

In light of these pressing concerns I respectfully ask you to convene a meeting of relevant State Department and USCIRF representatives (which would include the expert analysts commissioned by USCIRF to translate and interpret the ISA textbooks, as well as any analysts commissioned by the State Department to translate and interpret the ISA textbooks that the Department has received), and to conclusively determine, prior to the start of the 2008 school year, what precisely is being taught at ISA and what steps, if any, need to be taken. Please keep me informed of your progress in this regard.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

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THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT
THE STATE DEPARTMENT NEEDS
TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE.