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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

January 28, 2009

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The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
2201 C St NW Ste 7276
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Dear Secretary Clinton:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation to the critical post of secretary of State.

In the final year of the Bush Administration I wrote the State Department five times regarding my concern about the content of textbooks being used at the two Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA) campuses in northern Virginia. According to the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), the academy is the only school in the United States that is “operated with the direct authority of the Saudi embassy.”

In October 2007, USCIRF first raised concerns about the official Saudi textbooks being used at the academy. In June 2008, the commission released a report confirming its earlier findings, namely that material inciting violence and intolerance remained in the textbooks being used at ISA.

The school’s lease with Fairfax County clearly 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 government of Saudi Arabia is abundantly clear. Under the Foreign Missions Act (FMA) of 1982, the State Department is charged with overseeing all foreign missions in the United States.

This interpretation of the FMA is consistent with the findings of the American Law Division of the Congressional Research Service and with a report issued by the Heritage Foundation which noted that “presidential case law and established rules of statutory interpretation mandate that the secretary of State may declare that the ISA is a foreign mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and, if operating against the interests of the United States, may be closed.” I share this with you so that you are aware that you are within your authority as secretary of State to take action, and, in fact, given the seriousness of the issue, must do so.

I urge you, as I did your predecessor, to convene a meeting of relevant State Department and USCIRF representatives (which would include the expert analysts commissioned by USCIRF months ago to translate and interpret the ISA textbooks, as well as any analysts

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commissioned by the State Department prior to your arrival to translate and interpret the ISA textbooks that the department has received) and to conclusively determine exactly what is being taught at ISA. The findings of these analysts would naturally inform your response.

To date, we have only had vague assurances on the part of the State Department and the school that the curriculum has been reformed. But these assurances are insufficient, particularly when they are utterly at odds with USCIRF's findings, and may be indicative of a wider problem—namely the status of Saudi commitments made in 2006 to conduct “a comprehensive revision of textbooks and educational curricula to weed out disparaging remarks.”

During your confirmation hearing, many senators raised concerns about the potential conflict of interest arising from the millions of dollars in foreign donations that have poured into your husband's foundation. The *New York Times* reported that “Saudi Arabia alone gave to the foundation \$10 million to \$25 million...” Your immediate action on this long outstanding issue, could help put to rest some of these concerns.

If the students at ISA are *not* being taught or exposed to texts that incite hatred and intolerance of other people and faiths, then in all fairness to them and those associated with the academy, concerns should be put to rest. If, however, the content of the textbooks is consistent with USCIRF's findings, then action is required.

I look forward to your response. Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

