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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The eighth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attack on our nation is a moment where we are reminded that we are confronting a worldwide network of Islamic terrorists, overseas and at home, who adhere to one global ideology that legitimizes and orders attacks against the United States and other countries who oppose them.

As jihadists and Islamists have stated, their goal is to topple any country that does not practice their ideology, including moderate Muslim states, and establish on their ashes a vast Islamic state that forces people to adopt their ideology, beliefs and practices.

Your Administration has failed to state this. In fact, this is the first anniversary of the September 11th attacks where our nation lives under a government that has abandoned identifying the enemy we are fighting and its ideology.

It is important to remain clear in who we are fighting and why. Clarity is, in fact, national security because only as an educated people can we identify our enemies and work to defeat them.

That is why I am troubled that eight years after jihadists brought the fight directly to our shores, your Administration has been moving backward in its clarity on who our enemies are, what they believe and what they want. In his remarks to the Center for Strategic and International Studies on August 6, 2009, your Homeland Security and Counter-terrorism advisor, Mr. John O. Brennan, laid out new concepts and words your Administration has chosen to adopt. These words and concepts are ill conceived and are erroneous.

In the search to create a new linguistic vocabulary to use with the American people in defining the enemy, Mr. Brennan called it a *"transnational challenge that poses one of the greatest threats to our national security—the scourge of violent extremists who would use terrorism to slaughter Americans abroad and at home"*.

While our enemy clearly states they are at war with America, here, your Administration has abandoned the term "war" and labeled our response a mere "transnational challenge". Further, your Administration said it does not want to describe this as a "global war" because it could show that *"the U.S. is somehow in conflict with the rest of the world"*.

I have no idea what a "transnational challenge" is; neither do the American people.

This unfortunate naive phrase misses the overwhelming fact that we are deploying many forces around the world, engaging terrorists in multiple countries, operating in alliance with dozens of other militaries, fighting heavy wars in multiple battlefields and acting militarily on a daily basis, as reported daily by the media.

This war we are fighting wasn't started by us, but it doesn't make it any less of a war because you call it a "transnational challenge". The fact is that we have established a very wide alliance against a very specific enemy. By claiming that we aren't in a global war against that enemy, we are handing them an unnecessary victory and confusing the American public and our allies.

Mr. Brennan also said you don't see this battle as a fight against jihadists. He argued that *"describing terrorists in this way—using a legitimate term, "jihad," meaning to purify oneself or to wage a holy struggle for a moral goal—risks giving these murderers the religious legitimacy they desperately seek but in no way deserve"*. Instead of jihadists, you have adopted the term "violent extremists".

This assertion shows a systemic failure in your Administration's understanding of the ideology behind jihadism. We called Nazis Nazis in WWII because that is what they called themselves. Terrorists call themselves jihadists in their own words through texts, videos, and recordings. It is clear your Administration has not listened directly to the enemy, but to their propagandists who camouflage their ideology by claiming that "jihad" is solely self-purification. Further, the government of the United States should refrain from officially endorsing a particular theological interpretation of any religious belief; jihad as a religious notion should not be defined by the US government.

The phrase "violent extremists" does not define the essence of the foe. Not all methods used by the jihadist enemy are "violent" inasmuch as not all methods used by previous enemies were always violent. The battlefield is but one part of war. There are also the economic and political arenas that this term doesn't grasp and describe to the American public.

It is true that this is not a new definition and has been used by government officials and experts for more than a decade, including two previous Administrations. However, I strongly opposed the use of this definition when President George W. Bush's Administration used it, and I continue to oppose it.

The "jihad" we are confronting is political, military and ideological in nature as defined by our enemies' own words. They call themselves "jihadists" and say they are practicing "jihad". Thus using the term "jihadists", as long as it identifies the enemy, is not only accurate but it is a duty to our citizens because it makes it clear who we are fighting.

Mr. President, I urge you to stop using confusing and fuzzy words when speaking about the war against jihadists and Islamic terrorists. Use clear language the American public understands so they are educated on who we are fighting and why.

Stop beating around the bush: We are fighting a war...against self-proclaimed jihadists.

The anniversary of September 11th reminds us of that very clear and very simple fact.

Sincerely,



Sue Myrick  
Member of Congress