

SUE W. KELLY
19TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3219

December 7, 2005

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President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Bush:

As you continue to engage in the U.S.-Saudi Arabia Strategic Dialogue that you initiated with King Abdullah in April 2005, I encourage you to maintain a strong focus on the effectiveness of the kingdom's efforts to combat terror financing.

As chair of the Congressional Anti-Terrorist Financing Task Force, I have closely examined Saudi Arabia's work on this issue and strongly believe that while the Saudi government has made significant progress in recent years, there remain a number of serious issues which demand continued scrutiny and action from U.S. officials. I am hopeful that the Strategic Dialogue will be useful in this regard. Issues of concern are laid out below:

Charitable Committees Run by the Saudi Arabian Government

There are strong reasons for concern regarding the charitable committees run by the Saudi government which send aid outside the kingdom. You will recall that one particular charitable committee, the Saudi Committee for Aid to the Al Quds Intifada, appears to have knowingly provided payments to the family of Palestinian suicide bombers. Former Ambassador Bandar advised me previously that this charitable committee currently "is banned from sending aid abroad," a position which was reiterated to me during my visit to Riyadh in March. Information put out by the Saudi government itself about the charity's recent and ongoing activities, some in partnership with United Nations agencies, suggests otherwise.

Moreover, I was troubled to learn of a recent television ad on Saudi television for a unified account established for this charitable committee (*Account 98*) in which the narrator discussed the importance of supporting jihad fighters while images of armed militants were displayed. This is particularly disturbing in light of the fact that the Saudi government runs other

charitable committees, including one which has sent aid to Iraq through a similar account (*Account 111*). These circumstances leave me deeply concerned with the possibility that a charity run by the Saudi government may be supporting terrorist activity in Iraq. U.S. officials must continue to press concerns about these government-run charities with the Saudi government.

Saudi-based "Multilateral Charities"

Saudi Arabia has demonstrated an unwillingness to improve the transparency and financial controls of the large, Saudi-based charities which operate throughout the world. These charities, such as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (*WAMY*), International Islamic Relief Organization (*IIRO*) and the Muslim World League (*MWL*) transmit millions of dollars in charitable aid annually with little apparent scrutiny and are thought by some to have supported terrorist activities in the past.

I was advised earlier this year by former Ambassador Bandar that the kingdom's influence over these charities is nominal. Ambassador Bandar suggested that, "Blaming the Kingdom for the actions of such bodies is like blaming the United States for any transgressions by any arm of the United Nations." I encourage you to reject any such interpretation, as these charities were created by the Saudi government and have maintained a longstanding, close relationship with the government under the leadership of prominent Saudi citizens. The charities maintain accounts in Saudi financial institutions and actively solicit contributions from Saudi citizens. These facts suggest that the kingdom's oversight of the activities of these bodies should be anything but nominal.

U.S. officials should also not accept the argument that Saudi donations no longer support the international activities of these charities. During my visit to Riyadh, I was repeatedly informed that while current Saudi regulations exempt these "multilateral charities" from the account registration, collection and distribution controls placed on other Saudi charities (See *SAMA Regulation 300-1-6-5, "Rules for Multilateral Organizations and their Direct Employees"*) that in practice even the "multilateral charities" are prohibited from sending aid outside the kingdom.

Attached, please find two reports - one from December of 2004 which indicates that IIRO accounts at the National Commercial Bank in Jeddah had been used to send charitable aid to Fallujah, Iraq; and another from October 2005 detailing IIRO use of funds raised in Saudi Arabia for IIRO operations in Pakistan. Also attached is a list of the contribution collection accounts currently maintained by the IIRO in two Saudi banks, suggesting

that both fundraising within the kingdom and the overseas activities that this fundraising activity supports are ongoing.

The Saudi National Commission for Relief and Charitable Work Abroad

The Saudi government's announcement in February 2004 of their intention to establish a commission through which all private charitable donations would be sent abroad was an encouraging sign. Unfortunately, the commission has not actually been established, almost two years after its announcement. What's more, statements by Saudi officials indicate that, once in operation, the proposed commission may not include the large, Saudi-based "multilateral charities."

I have been frequently assured by Saudi officials that current charitable regulations ensure that no private charitable aid leaves the kingdom until the commission is stood up. While this may be true with regard to smaller Saudi charities, the information referenced in the preceding sections of this letter undermines the broader validity of this assertion, especially the public reports – some issued by the Saudi government itself – about the ongoing activities of Saudi-run charitable committees and Saudi-based "multilateral charities." U.S. officials must continue to insist that the Saudi government establish a charitable commission that will include oversight responsibility for private charities, government charitable committees and large, internationally active charities based in the kingdom.

Accountability

The Saudis have undertaken a vigorous anti-terrorism publicity campaign to dissuade its citizens from supporting terrorism. While this is commendable, I believe that we must continue exploring whether an appropriately strong message of accountability has been sent to Saudi citizens regarding the negative consequences of providing financial support for terrorism. I and many of my colleagues in Congress are concerned with what appears to be a rather passive Saudi approach to prosecuting terror finance cases, particularly with regard to individuals in the kingdom who have been designated by the U.S. as terrorist financiers.

The apparent lack of action regarding designated terror financiers, coupled with the activities of the charities referenced above and reports of insurgents in Iraq being financed by private donors in the kingdom, suggest the need for an environment of accountability for financiers of terror in Saudi Arabia. U.S. officials must continue to make clear the importance of accountability.

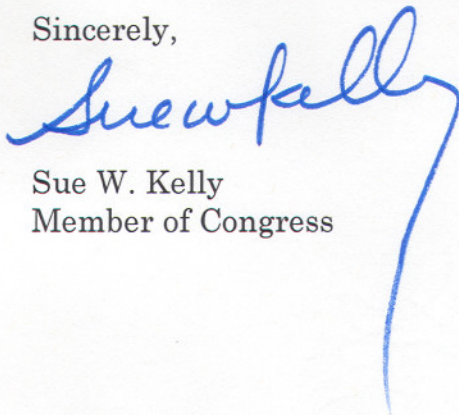
In conclusion, it is my view that the current state of the dialogue between U.S. and Saudi officials regarding terror finance needs improvement, and I believe that the U.S.-Saudi Strategic Dialogue presents an important opportunity for addressing the issues described above openly and directly. The appearance of a persistent, largely un-scrutinized flow of Saudi charitable money abroad must be addressed by the Saudi leadership.

As you know, some Saudis receive our concerns with their charitable activities as an indication of an over-arching opposition to their humanitarian efforts. We must continue to emphasize this is not the case. Open, transparent and accountable charitable relief activity is to be commended and encouraged. Nevertheless, the United States Government must make it clear that it is aware of the double-game that some Saudis may be trying to play with regard to government charitable committees, large internationally active charities based in the kingdom, and the collection accounts that support them.

We should make it clear that we know Saudi officials are making some assertions about their activities to U.S. officials and Members of Congress that are directly contradicted by activities that the Saudi government itself is publicizing at home and abroad. We must get beyond the current state of affairs.

Attached you will find a letter I sent to Saudi Arabian Ambassador Prince Turki Al-Faisal further explaining my views on these matters. Should I receive a response, I will be sure to make it available for your review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sue W. Kelly", with a long, sweeping line extending downwards and to the right.

Sue W. Kelly
Member of Congress

IIRO distributes aid to Falluja war victims

Falluja, Iraq, Dhul Quidah 9/Dec 21, 2004 (IINA) - The Jeddah-based International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) has distributed relief aid to the victims of the recent military confrontations in Falluja, Iraq.

The aid consisted of domestic utensils, water, fuel, and medicines, according to the secretary-general of the Jeddah-based International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), Dr. Adnan Khalil Basha, who added that IIRO, with the cooperation of the Iraqi Ministry of Health, has given support to five medical clinics that give treatment to the displaced and refugees.

Dr. Basha said the support was in the form of medicines and medical equipment, in addition to 3,000 gallons for preserving water, gas cylinders and other supplies, such as large quantities of rice. He added that there are around 20,000 Fallujan families who are facing very trying conditions, in that they lack the most basic things for sustaining life, including food and winter clothing for the forthcoming winter season, which is expected to be very cold this year.

The IIRO chief appealed for help from philanthropists and well-wishers, whose donations could be sent to either of the two accounts held by the organization: Al-Rajhi Bank Account Number 31900010777023 or the National Commercial Bank Account Number 10477702000102, both of which are in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
HI/OB/IINA



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24/10/2005 IIRO Assists Earthquake Victims In Pakistan

Jeddah, 24 October, 2005

The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), an affiliate of the **Muslim World League** (MWL), has mobilized, through its offices in Pakistan, all its resources to reach victims in the isolated areas and regions which are inaccessible and have witnessed great damage and destruction.

The IIRO offices in Saudi Arabia will receive donations through its account number: 206608010085399 in Al-Rajhi Bank, and account number: 104204350001090 in Al-Ahli Bank.

The IIRO has called on philanthropists to contribute financially and in kind to help the Pakistani people who are facing difficult circumstances these days.

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 11 Jul to 17 Aug 2005
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شركة الراجحي المصرفية
31900010777700
البنك الأهلي التجاري
10477770000104



علم ينتفع به
شركة الراجحي المصرفية
31900010777205
البنك الأهلي التجاري
10460000000107



المهاجرين و اللاجئين
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31900010777023
البنك الأهلي التجاري
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September 9, 2005

Prince Turki Al Faisal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
601 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Ambassador Turki:

My purpose in writing is to continue with you the dialogue I have had with your predecessor and other Saudi officials about the need for continued progress in the global fight against terrorist finance. As you may know, I spent three days in Riyadh earlier this year visiting with many government officials discussing this important issue. The gracious hospitality of your government in facilitating an extremely informative visit remains sincerely appreciated.

I wish to raise several issues with you at this time.

Saudi Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)

The matter of establishing a Saudi Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) seems to be making progress towards a satisfactory completion. During my visit, I appreciated the interest expressed to me by numerous Saudi officials in consulting with our Treasury Department as the Saudi government worked to establish a fully-operational FIU. It is my understanding that there have been subsequent, promising discussions between our governments which may lead to the creation of an Egmont-eligible Saudi FIU very soon. I look forward to hearing about more progress on this matter in the near future.

Saudi Charities

Despite the enactment of measures aimed at improving controls and transparency for the charitable activities of the Saudi government and its citizens, I am compelled to reiterate my concerns on this matter.

Saudi-based Multilateral Charities

I remain troubled with the apparent absence of any controls over multilateral charities based in Saudi Arabia such as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). There is a pressing need for progress in achieving a shared understanding about the status of these organizations and the nature of their relationship with the Saudi government.

In response to my concerns, Ambassador Bandar set out the Saudi perspective on this matter, which makes the distinction between domestic, government-run charitable committees, over which the government exerts control, and multilateral charities such as WAMY and IIRO, over which there is little, if any, Saudi government influence.

This distinction has been difficult for me and other U.S. officials to accept. It is evident that these charities continue to enjoy their historically deep relationship with the Saudi government and continue to send funds abroad. In Congressional testimony, U.S. Treasury Department Under Secretary Stuart Levey advised my subcommittee that Prince Bandar's argument did not provide a "valid distinction." I share the view of the U.S. Treasury and State Departments that these multilateral charities should be formally brought under the control of the Saudi Arabian government, specifically under the not-yet-established Saudi National Commission for Relief and Charitable Work Abroad. This, along with the elimination of the SAMA regulation exempting multilateral charities from Saudi Arabia's strict charity measures (*Rules Governing the Opening of Bank Accounts in Saudi Arabia & General Operational Guidelines, April 2003, Section 300-1-6-5*), could mark important progress towards a mutual goal. On a related note, I would appreciate any new information as to when the national charity commission will be established.

I hope to continue working together in establishing a shared understanding of these multilateral organizations, as it seems the desire to alleviate suspicion from Saudi humanitarian efforts is strong with the Saudi people. During my visit, I was very interested to hear of the deep interest held by several Saudi officials with the possibility of multilateral charities adopting transparency and financial management measures similar to those used by the Red Cross. This possibility holds promise. I recently sent information on this matter to Foreign Affairs Advisor Adel Al-Jubeir and Assistant Minister of Interior for Security Affairs Prince Mohammed Bin Nayef Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to follow-up on conversations we had in Riyadh. I look forward to discussing this further.

Saudi Charitable Committees

Various charitable committees run by your government continue to be of interest as well. In my previous letter, I expressed deep concern with the Committee for the Relief of the Palestinian People which is supervised by Interior Minister Prince Nayef, as it appears at one point the charity was knowingly providing payments to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. Until recently, the charitable committee's website included beneficiary information which showed payments for individuals involved in "martyrdom operations."

Though it appears the Palestinian committee now contributes significantly to legitimate humanitarian work, their apparent knowing past support of terrorism is deeply troubling and raises many questions about the continuing authority and operations of this charitable committee and others created by the Saudi government for Bosnia, Kosova, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The activities of the Iraq committee are of great interest in light of numerous press reports that private Saudi citizens are helping to finance the terrorist insurgents. Treasury Under Secretary Levey testified before Congress that, "Even today, we believe that Saudi donors may still be a significant source of terrorist financing, including for the insurgency in Iraq." It is my understanding that the Iraq Committee collects donations via a unified account number 111 at National Commercial Bank, similar to accounts established at various Saudi banks in the past for the Palestinians (90 and 98), Afghanistan (80), Bosnia (99), Chechnya (48 and 49) and Kosova (22 and 33).

Are these charitable committees and accounts now subject to the strict regulations referenced above? I would be interested in additional information about the regulatory authority under which they operate and their current operational status. It is my hope that additional information about the charitable committees will put to rest the concerns understandably provoked by the disturbing precedent apparently set by the Committee for the Relief of the Palestinian People.

Accountability

I previously expressed concern regarding the appearance of a lack of rigor from the Saudi government in taking action against certain suspected financiers of terrorism, citing the rather limited scope of terror finance prosecutions. Prince Bandar's response fairly pointed out concern for protecting the innocent, as well as cultural differences which make public disclosure of actions taken against terror financiers a highly-sensitive matter in the kingdom. Furthermore, Prince Bandar cited an excerpt from the 2004 FATF report which specifies that 62 anti-money laundering cases have been opened, along with five terror finance cases.

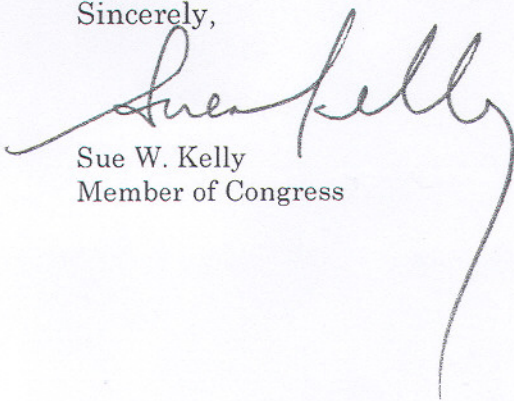
By restating my concerns on this matter, I do not mean to be dismissive of cultural differences, or of the importance of protecting the innocent. I agree that both factors are critically important. My chief concern on this issue is one of accountability and of sending a strong, unambiguous message to citizens about the consequences of financially supporting global terrorism.

I understand and appreciate the Saudi government's desire to accept and take action with any available evidence which indicates wrongdoing by its citizens. But it is also reasonable for the U.S. to expect from an ally a rigorous effort of their own to procure evidence which is most likely to be found in their own country. The Saudi response in this particular aspect of the terror finance fight appears to be one of relative passivity, particularly in cases of high-profile individuals that have been designated as terrorist financiers by the U.S. government.

Surely you can understand how Americans must feel to hear that individuals acknowledged by both the Saudi and U.S. governments to have knowingly provided financial support to Al Qaeda ostensibly live freely in Saudi Arabia. Is there additional information that may help Americans in trying to understand how exactly the Saudi government has sent a strong message— in both words and actions— that those who provide financial support for the international al Qaeda terror network, for the insurgency in Iraq, for Palestinian terror groups or for other terrorist networks face serious, severe punishment?

Your interest in discussing these important matters is appreciated, as I firmly believe that an open, ongoing dialogue is vital to a strengthening of our alliance against terrorism. From my experience in Riyadh, I know well that Saudi officials have been deeply affected by acts of terrorism against their citizens. We must continue building on our mutual abhorrence of terrorism so that the people of our nations and others will be better protected from this global atrocity. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sue W. Kelly". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Sue W. Kelly
Member of Congress