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THE DIRECTOR  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

6 August 2015

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

(U) I am writing in response to your letter dated 8 May 2015, regarding remarks that I made during an event at the Council on Foreign Relations earlier this year.

(U) In response to a question about atrocities carried out by Iraqi security forces, I stated that, "[i]n an area like Iraq and Syria, there has been some horrific, horrific human rights abuses. And this is something that I think we need to be able to address. And when we see it, we do bring it to the attention of authorities. And we will not work with entities that are engaged in such activities."

(U) In offering this response, I intended to signal to the public -- and to our liaison partners -- that we are deeply concerned by human rights abuses, no matter who commits them or for what purpose. When we receive intelligence indicating that individuals associated with a liaison service have engaged in human rights abuses, we work actively to validate those allegations. If we determine that such abuses have occurred, we carefully assess whether national security imperatives warrant continuing contact with the individual implicated or the entire liaison service. In some instances, we have chosen to terminate a liaison relationship because of our concerns.

(U) When we choose to continue a liaison relationship despite allegations of human rights abuses by individuals associated with a liaison service, CIA policy requires that we take several steps to inform our U.S. Government partners and to mitigate the risk of future human rights abuses. First, we advise the local Chief of Mission of CIA's concerns and seek the Chief of Mission's input on whether to continue the liaison relationship. Once we receive the Chief of Mission's input, and if we decide that continuing the relationship is in the national

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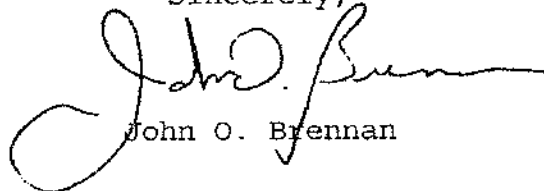
security interests of the United States, a plan is formulated to make our concerns known to our liaison partner; to offer human rights guidance and training to reduce the likelihood of future abuses; and to continue, or even enhance, collection so that we can reassess our decision if the offending behavior continues.

(U) With that background, I understand your concerns about my brief, extemporaneous remarks. While we neither condone nor participate in activities that violate human rights standards, we do maintain cooperative liaison relationships with a variety of intelligence and security services around the world, some of whose constituent entities have engaged in human rights abuses. We strive to identify and, where possible, avoid working with individuals whom we believe to be responsible for such abuses. In some cases, we have decided to continue those relationships, despite unacceptable behavior, because of the critical intelligence those services provide, including information that allows us to disrupt terrorist plotting against the United States.

(U) An original of this letter is being set to Senator Heinrich and Senator Hirono.

(U) Thank you for your interest in this important topic and for your continuing support for the men and women of CIA.

Sincerely,



John O. Brennan