CHARLES E. SCHUMER
NEW YORK

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 1, 2005

The Honorable Harley G. Lappin
Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 1st Street NW
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Director Lappin:

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding new reports that individuals convicted of committing terrorist acts against the United States have been allowed to spread their hateful propaganda and recruit future terrorists from within the walls of their prison cells in the United States. I am extremely disturbed by the fact that these individuals, who have already participated in terrorist attacks against our country, have reportedly been able to recruit and inspire terrorists at home and abroad while in the custody of the United States government. I urge you to investigate and disclose how such a lapse in supervision could have occurred, who was responsible for the reported lapse, and what steps are being taken by the Bureau of Prisons to ensure that such incidents are not repeated.

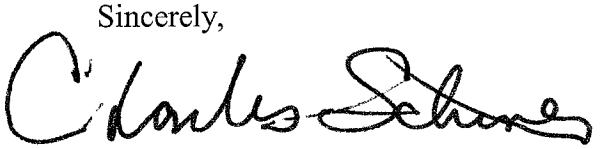
Recent reports indicate that Islamic extremists, each serving sentences of over 100 years for their role in the 1993 terrorist attack against the World Trade Center, were able to correspond with international terrorists and newspapers from the federal government's Administrative Maximum federal prison in Florence, Colorado. As part of this correspondence, these convicted terrorists spread their militant ideology to individuals in a Spanish terror cell, including Mohamed Acraf, who later allegedly led a plot to bomb Spain's National Justice Building in Madrid. Another correspondent of the terrorists is a man Spanish authorities say used the terrorists' letters to recruit suicide bombers. A July 2002 letter reportedly sent from one of the terrorists to the Al-Quds newspaper praised the leader of Al Qaeda, stating that, "Osama Bin Laden is my hero of this generation." I understand that other letters refer to the need to "terminate the infidels" and state that, "The Muslims don't have any option other than jihad."

I am deeply troubled by the appearance that the correspondence of these convicted terrorists, who killed six individuals and wounded 1000 in what at the time was the worst terrorist attack ever waged against the United States, from a maximum security federal prison was not monitored to prevent their potential incitement of future terrorist acts or dissemination of their hateful, anti-American ideology. I believe that even while in federal custody, these individuals are extremely dangerous and must be the subject of the utmost vigilance.

I again urge you to examine how this reported lapse occurred, who is responsible for the lapse, and what steps will be taken to ensure that monitoring is improved. I also request that the Bureau of Prisons undertake a study to determine if similar instances have occurred or are occurring in other facilities, and provide information on whether or not the monitoring of inmate correspondence includes the making of and retention of copies of prisoner letters for subsequent review. I am deeply concerned that if convicted terrorists such as those in the maximum security facility in Florence, Colorado have been able to engage in this type of dangerous correspondence a full security review is warranted to ensure that once we have captured and convicted terrorists they can no longer pose a threat to international security.

I thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



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