Rep. Waxman criticizes the *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report for claiming that terrorism reached a record low in 2003 when the underlying data shows that significant terrorist activity was actually at a 20-year high.

May 17, 2004

The Honorable Colin L. Powell
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Last month, the Department of State released its annual Patterns of Global Terrorism report,

According to the report, the number of international terrorist attacks per year has declined by

Despite these claims of success, the data show an increase in “significant” terrorist incidents

Two independent experts – Professor Alan Krueger of Princeton University and Professor Da

Moreover, the actual increase in significant terrorist attacks appears to be undercounted in th

The State Department’s claim that terrorism is on the decline is based solely on a steep decre

In an effort to understand why the State Department reported that nonsignificant terrorism att

The secrecy surrounding the nonsignificant incidents prevents independent verification of the

I have been a vigorous critic of the politicization of science by the Bush Administration. A repo

Simply put, it is deplorable that the State Department report would claim that terrorism attacks

In January, I raised concerns about a report from the Department of Health and Human Servi

In addition, to facilitate my investigation of this incident, I request that you provide by

1. Detailed annual listings of all “total international terrorist attacks” since 1995;

2. The complete listing of “significant terrorist incidents” in 2003, including those that occurred

3. The identities of the members of the U.S. Government Incident Review Panel who decide w

4. An explanation of the procedures for defining an act as an international terrorist attack and

I hope you will give this matter your prompt and thorough attention.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member

1 U.S. Department of State, Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003 (April 2004).
2 Statement of Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Release of the 2003 "P
3 U.S. Department of State, Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003 (April 2004).
4 Professors Alan B. Krueger and David Laitin, Faulty Terror Report Card, Washingt
5 Telephone conversation between Joseph W. Reap, Office of the Coordinator for C
6 The 2003 report lists 355 total attacks for 2001 and 190 for 2003. The 2001 report
7 Telephone conversation between Joseph W. Reap, Office of the Coordinator for C
8 Professors Alan B. Krueger and David Laitin, Faulty Terror Report Card, Washingt
9 Minority Staff, House Committee on Government Reform, Politics and Science in t
10 Union of Concerned Scientists, Scientific Integrity in Policymaking: An Investigati
11 Letter from Rep. Henry A. Waxman to Secretary of Health and Human Services T
12 Washington in Brief, Washington Post (Feb. 11, 2004).

Documents and Links

- Letter to the State Department