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**House of Representatives**

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February 27, 2003

Mr. W. Ralph Basham  
Director  
United States Secret Service  
950 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20223

Dear Mr. Basham:

I am writing with regard to recent press accounts indicating that a suspected terrorist leader was allowed to enter the White House complex in June 2001.

Last Thursday, Sami Al-Arian was indicted on 50 counts of conspiring to finance terrorist attacks that killed more than 100 people in Israel and the Palestinian territories and serving as a leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist organization.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Washington Post*, Mr. Al-Arian attended a June 2001 briefing in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, which is adjacent to the White House, with President Bush's senior advisor Karl Rove.<sup>2</sup> Vice President Cheney was also scheduled to attend the briefing as well, but canceled at the last minute.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the June 2001 briefing, Mr. Al-Arian had been under investigation by the FBI for at least six years.<sup>4</sup> *Newsweek* has reported that "the Secret Service had flagged Al-Arian as a potential terrorist prior to the event. But White House aides, apparently reluctant to create

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<sup>1</sup>*Florida Professor, 7 Others Are Accused of Terror Funding*, Wall Street Journal (Feb. 21, 2003).

<sup>2</sup>*Alleged Terrorist Met with Bush Adviser*, Washington Post (Feb. 22, 2003).

<sup>3</sup>*Id.*

<sup>4</sup>*Id.*

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an incident, let him through anyway.”<sup>5</sup> According to press accounts, Mr. Al-Arian also visited the White House once during the Clinton Administration.<sup>6</sup>

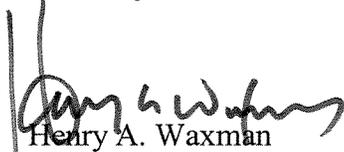
The Secret Service has primary responsibility for protecting the President and the Vice President and screening visitors to the White House complex. Yet it appears that a suspected terrorist under investigation by the FBI was allowed access to the White House complex on at least two occasions. These security breaches raise serious questions about whether the Secret Service is getting sufficient intelligence information to screen potential visitors.

I ask that you provide me with the following information:

- (1) All requests, whether granted or denied, by White House employees that Sami Al-Arian be admitted to the White House complex, including the name of the White House employee who made the request and the purpose of the planned visit;
- (2) All WAVES and EPASS records of visits to the White House complex by Mr. Al-Arian;
- (3) Whether the Secret Service ever “flagged Al-Arian as a potential terrorist” prior to a White House visit and “White House aides . . . let him through anyway,” and if so, the names of the White House aides; and
- (4) Whether the Secret Service checked with the FBI or any other intelligence-gathering agencies prior to approving Mr. Al-Arian’s visits, and if so, what information was provided to the Secret Service about Mr. Al-Arian’s suspected terrorist activities.

I ask that you provide the requested information by March 10, 2003. In the alternative, my staff would be available for a briefing on these issues at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

  
Henry A. Waxman  
Ranking Minority Member

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<sup>5</sup>*Hiding in Plain Sight*, Newsweek (Mar. 3, 2003).

<sup>6</sup>*Alleged Terrorist Met with Bush Adviser*.