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Congress of the United States  
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June 2nd, 2006

Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

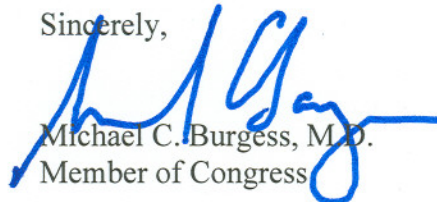
Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

With the recent troubling news regarding the case involving a Marine patrol in Haditha, Iraq and alleged civilian murders, I request that the Department hold a briefing for Members of Congress about the details involved in this case and how your staff and investigators have handled these assertions. I believe a briefing would give Members the opportunity to discuss this issue first hand instead of pulling together details from news accounts that may or may not be entirely accurate. Having concrete facts on hand as opposed to speculation in the press or statements uttered with base political purposes in mind would improve the quality of dialogue Members of Congress will inevitably have with their constituents or the media on this matter.

When I have had the chance to meet with troops when visiting Iraq and Afghanistan, I am always impressed with their professional demeanor and commitment to the mission, their country, and their fellow soldier or marine. We train these young men and women with the full expectation that they will treat civilians in a humane manner while completing their mission. However, when acts like the ones alleged in this case happen, I also place a high degree of trust in our system of military justice to discover the truth and punish any bad actors.

I respectfully urge you to consider this request at your earliest convenience. As American and coalition troops continue to fight terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan it is imperative that Members of Congress provide them with the support they need to win. I believe a briefing on this topic would help put this alleged incident in its appropriate context. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress

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