



Duncan Hunter  
U.S. House of Representatives  
50th District, California

June 20, 2016

The Honorable Ashton Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Carter:

We previously corresponded on the prevalence of child sex slaves in Afghanistan—specifically, the assault of young boys—and its impact on the U.S. mission, as demonstrated by the cases of Jason Brezler and Charles Martland. While I recognize that separate reviews into this matter are ongoing, I remain concerned with new reports that the Taliban is increasing its use of these children to access security positions and mount insider attacks against Afghan military and police forces. This also poses a direct threat to U.S. service personnel.

In the case of Martland, he confronted a corrupt Afghan police commander who kidnapped and repeatedly raped a young boy, and then assaulted the boy's mother. This occurred after Martland and his Special Forces team was made aware of separate human rights violations against children and young adults, including another rape and an honor killing. The Army's first response was to discipline Martland and expel him from service—a decision that was initially reaffirmed in a response provided by your office. The Army ultimately made the right decision, however, reinstating Martland and returning him to active duty. It was obvious—as told to me—that Martland and his teammates could not ignore such severe human rights violations, specifically rape, and there was also a concern about the security and safety risks to U.S. operators and service members. This is especially true of those tasked with advising and training Afghan military and police forces. Much of that concern is also validated by the experiences of Martland and Brezler.

According to reports, the Taliban is now regularly turning to child sex slaves to initiate insider attacks against Afghan forces. In fact, one report cites at least six attacks between January and April that killed “hundreds” of Afghans. This is concerning given our interests in Afghanistan, but it also requires serious attention due to the presence of U.S. forces and their ongoing mission to train, assist and advise the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.

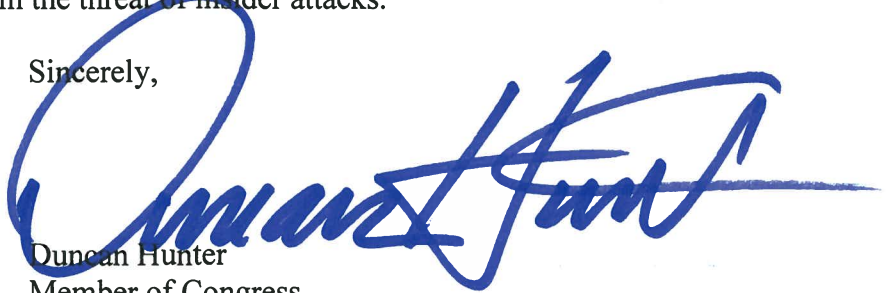
Not accounting for any recommendations that might come from ongoing reviews, it is my belief that we can begin taking immediate steps to stop child rape from occurring in the presence of U.S. forces and reduce any risk of coinciding insider attacks. This includes imposing a zero-

tolerance policy and ensuring service personnel are not discouraged from reporting cases, due to the expectation of no results, or even intervening if necessary—as did Martland and Brezler.

I would like to know how the Department of Defense is addressing this issue as the DoD Inspector General (IG) and Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction continue their reviews. Specifically, I would like to know what steps have been taken—following the Martland and Brezler experiences—to reduce the threat of insider attacks and address instances of child abuse that might occur in the presence of U.S. forces.

Mr. Secretary, I know you take this issue seriously. However, I truly believe we do not need to wait for IG reports to begin addressing this issue—beyond the positive outcome in Martland’s case—to send a signal that child rape will not be tolerated and that every effort is being made to protect U.S. forces from the threat of insider attacks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Duncan Hunter", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the right of the typed name and title.

Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress