

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2007

Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 7226
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary:

As you know in 2004 Congress created Al-Hurra, an Arab-language satellite television network, to promote freedom, democracy and the rule of law throughout the Arab world. Congress' intent was for the network to be a vital tool in our public diplomacy to the Arab world. For at least its first two and a half years after launching in February 2004, Al-Hurra lived up to that mandate.

We are deeply troubled by reports published March 12, 2007 in the *Wall Street Journal* indicating that since a new news director, Larry Register, took over in November 2006, Al-Hurra has decreased its coverage of human rights abuses and corruption in the Arab world in favor of broadcasting live speeches from terrorist leaders preaching anti-American and anti-Israeli propaganda. We strongly believe that by adopting this new editorial direction Al-Hurra is not only failing in the mission Congress gave it, but actively undermining that mission.

For example, according to reports, on November 26, 2006 Al-Hurra ran an interview with an alleged al-Qaeda operative who praised Osama bin Laden and expressed joy that 9/11 rubbed "America's nose in the dust."

On December 7, 2006, we understand that Al-Hurra broadcast over an hour of a speech by Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hasan Nasrallah - whose organization has killed more Americans than any other terrorist organization beside al-Qaeda - wherein he told the audience to stop firing guns into the air, explaining, "the only place where bullets should be is [in] the chest of the enemies of Lebanon: the Israeli enemy."

Al-Hurra reportedly broadcast commentary by Palestinian imam Ikrima Sabri on February 9 regarding a confrontation between Israeli Security forces and rioting Palestinian youth near the Al-Aqsa mosque that included vicious propaganda about Israel, without any counterinterviews or challenges from the Al-Hurra anchors.

Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Page 2

The *Wall Street Journal's* article alleges that Sabri "accused Israel of firing guns and throwing bombs into the mosque, then refusing to allow medical care for the wounded." In two hours of coverage our U.S. taxpayer funded network interviewed 8 Muslim guests - who blasted Israel for its oppression of Muslims - and 3 Jewish guests - who were accused by the Al-Hurra's anchors of provoking violence in order to undermine the Mecca deal establishing a so-called Palestinian unity government.

We fully understand that terrorist leaders are, sadly, part of the public discourse in the Middle East, but that does not justify the use of U.S. taxpayer dollars to provide them a platform to spread their hate-filled ideology- particularly when they-already have too many forums on other Arabic-language TV networks.

We understand that after the *Wall Street Journal* article appeared that the Broadcasting Board of Governors - who did not challenge a single fact presented in the story - voted 5 to 1 to write a letter expressing "disappointment." The use of U.S. taxpayer funds to help spread anti-American propaganda and help incite violence against Americans here at home and abroad is far more than disappointing; it is unacceptable and inexcusable. It is the obligation of the Broadcasting Board of Governors to oversee Al-Hurra and ensure that the network is fulfilling its critical role in advancing the cause of freedom, not implicitly condoning broadcasting the messages of our enemies.

Madam Secretary as a Member of the Board of Governors and senior advisor to the President on all foreign policy matters we urgently ask you to use your influence with the Board and the President to begin an immediate investigation into the new direction of Al-Hurra, and report back to us the investigation's findings within 30 days.

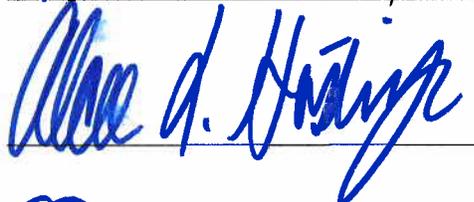
We thank you for your personal time and attention to this critical national security issue.

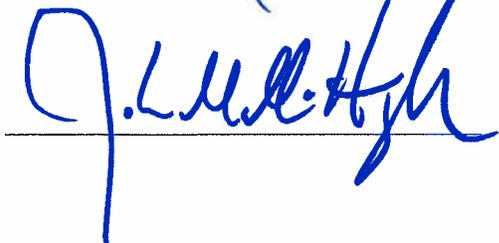
Sincerely,













Thaddeus ~~Atkinson~~ Steencher

Tom Tando

Mark Kim

Shelley Berkeley

Ron Klein

Donald Murray III

John Burt

Joe Wilson