Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2005

The President
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

We write in order to urge that you require your Deputy White House Chief of Staff, Karl Rove, to either come forward immediately to explain his role in the Valerie Plame matter or to resign from your Administration.

Notwithstanding whether Mr. Rove intentionally violated the law in leaking information concerning former CIA operative Valerie Plame, we believe it is not tenable to maintain Mr. Rove as one of your most important advisors unless he is willing to explain his central role in using the power and authority of your Administration to disseminate information regarding Ms. Plame and to undermine her husband, Ambassador Joseph Wilson.

We now know that e-mails recently turned over to the prosecutor by Time, Inc. between writer Matthew Cooper and *Time* editors reveal that one of Mr. Cooper's principal sources in the Plame matter was Mr. Rove.[1] This has been confirmed by *Newsweek*, which obtained a copy of an e-mail from Mr. Cooper to a *Time* editor stating that "'it was, [Karl Rove] said, wilson's wife, who apparently works at the agency on wmd [weapons of mass destruction] issues who authorized the trip'" and not the CIA Director or Vice President.[2] According to the e-mail, Mr. Rove spoke to Mr. Cooper on "'double super secret background'" just three or four days before Robert Novak wrote a column outing Ms. Plame as a CIA operative.[3]

We also know that Mr. Rove told Chris Matthews that Ambassador Wilson's wife and her undercover status were "fair game."[4] A White House source also appears to have previously acknowledged that Mr. Rove contacted Mr. Matthews and other journalists, indicating that "it was reasonable to discuss who sent Wilson to Niger."[5]

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[1]Michael Isikoff, *Matt Cooper's Source: What Karl Rove Told Time Magazine's Reporter*, NEWSWEEK, July 18, 2005.

[2]*Id.*

[3]*Id.*; Josh White, *Rove Told Reporter of Plame's Role But Didn't Name Her, Attorney Says*, WASH. POST, July 11, 2005, at A1.

[4]Evan Thomas & Michael Isikoff, *Secrets and Leaks*, NEWSWEEK, Oct. 13, 2003, at 26.

[5]*Id.*

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The above facts appear to be directly inconsistent with previous statements by you and representatives of your Administration concerning leaking in general and the Plame case in particular. For example, on September 30, 2003, you stated "there's just too many leaks [in Washington]. And if there is a leak out of my administration, I want to know who it is."[6] You also stated "I want to know the truth. If anybody has got any information inside our administration or outside our administration, it would be helpful if they came forward with the information so we can find out whether or not these allegations are true and get on about the business."[7] On October 10, 2003, White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan was asked if Mr. Rove or two other aides in your Administration had ever discussed the Plame matter with any reporter, and he stated he had spoken to Mr. Rove and the others and "they assured me that they were not involved in this."[8]

Regardless of whether these actions violate the law – including specific laws against the disclosure of classified information[9] as well as broader laws against obstruction of justice,[10] the negligent distribution of defense information,[11] and obligating reporting of press leaks to proper authorities[12] – they seem to reveal a course of conduct designed to threaten and intimidate those who provide information critical of your Administration, such as Ambassador Wilson.

We hope you agree with us that such behavior should never be tolerated by any Administration. While it is acceptable for a private citizen to use every legal tool at his or her disposal to protect himself against legal liability, high-ranking members of your Administration who are involved in any effort to smear a private citizen or to disseminate information regarding

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[6]President George W. Bush, President Discusses Job Creation with Business Leaders (Sept. 30, 2003) (transcript available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/09/20030930-9.html).

[7]*Id.*

[8]White House Press Secretary Scott McLellan, Press Briefing (Oct. 10, 2003) (transcript available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/10/print/20031010-6.html).

[9]50 U.S.C. § 421(a).

[10]18 U.S.C. § 1510.

[11]18 U.S.C. § 793.

[12]18 U.S.C. § 793(f).

a CIA operative should be expected to meet a far higher standard of ethical behavior and forthrightness. This is why we believe it is so important that Mr. Rove publicly and fully explain his role in this matter.

Sincerely,

John Conyers Jr.
Diane E. Watson
Sam Farr
Barbara Lee
Bill Pascrell
Danny K. Davis
Henry A. Waxman
Lynn C. Woolsey
Bennie G. Thompson
Hilda L. Solis
Zoe Lofgren
Corrine Brown
Raúl M. Grijalva
Jim McGovern
Mike Honda
Carolyn C. Kilpatrick
Frank Pallone
Charles B. Rangel

Jim McDermott

Robert Scott

Maxine Waters

Carolyn B. Maloney

Louise Slaughter

José E. Serrano

Tom Udall

Robert Wexler

Maxine Waters

Chris Van Hollen

Lynn Woolsey

Donald M. Payne

Nancy Kaptur

Tammy Baldwin

Ted Strickland

Martin O. Sabo

Jerrold Nadler

Linda T. Sánchez

Bennie G. Thompson

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Barney Frank

John Lewis

Ana Sanchez

Elijah E. Cummings

Albert R. Wynn

Jan Schakowsky

Jim V. Costa

Rush Holt

Diana DeGette

Loretta Sanchez

Bill Delahunt

Pete Stark

G. L. Mikes

Emanuel Cleaver

Mary Jo Kilroy

John W. Olver

Jim Moran

Peter A. DeFazio

Jerrie Jackson

Bob Filner