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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

June 22, 2017

The Honorable James N. Mattis
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Mattis:

We write to express our concern regarding the deeply disturbing allegations contained in a recent report published by the Associated Press (AP) on June 21st titled "In Yemen's Secret Prisons, UAE Tortures and US Interrogates."

The article alleges that Emirati forces and their Yemeni partners have detained hundreds of men captured during operations to counter Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and that many of those detainees have been horrifically abused by their captors in ways that, if true, would clearly constitute torture. The article further alleges that U.S. military personnel provided questions for these Emirati and Yemeni interrogations, but that none of the former detainees interviewed have alleged that those U.S. personnel were involved in the abuse. However, the article seems to imply that U.S. officials in Yemen should have been aware that abuse was occurring.

We are confident that you find these allegations as extremely troubling as we do. The battlefield in Yemen is a complex but vital front in countering AQAP, which has demonstrated both the capability and intent to strike the United States, our allies, and our partners. Even the suggestion that the United States tolerates torture by our foreign partners compromises our national security mission by undermining the moral principle that distinguishes us from our enemies—our belief that all people possess basic human rights, and are entitled to the fundamental protections of those rights in international law.

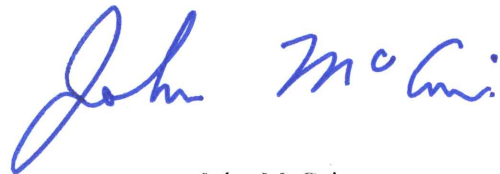
We request that you direct an immediate review of the facts and circumstances related to these alleged abuses, including U.S. support to the Emirati and Yemeni partner forces that were purportedly involved. We also request that you conduct a thorough assessment of what, if anything, U.S. forces knew about these alleged abuses or subsequently learned about them. The Senate Armed Services Committee would like to receive a briefing on your findings as soon as possible.

We look forward to your response. Thank you for your continued service to our Nation.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
Ranking Member



John McCain
Chairman