

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 1, 2009

General James L. Jones, USMC (Ret.)
National Security Advisor to the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear General Jones,

As you are well aware, despite worldwide condemnations and commitments of “never again,” genocide and mass killings still occur far too often. There have been several studies over recent years to identify ways that the United States government can better prevent mass atrocities. Most notable among these is the report produced last December by the year-long Genocide Prevention Task Force chaired by former Secretary of State Madeline Albright and former Secretary of Defense William Cohen. We are writing to inquire what steps you and the Obama administration are taking in this area.

We understand that Director of National Intelligence Admiral Blair has committed to several new initiatives to enhance our focus on and ability to anticipate countries at risk of genocide. Additionally, as you know, our intelligence community continues to publish the *Atrocities Watchlist* highlighting countries at risk of widespread or systematic atrocities as well as the *Instability Watchlist* highlighting countries at risk of serious political instability.

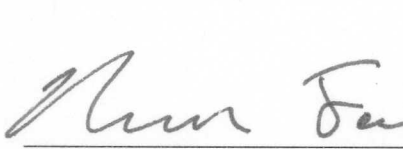
These are all positive steps, but identifying countries at risk of mass atrocities is only useful if there are mechanisms within the U.S. government to receive that intelligence and coordinate preventative action by executive agencies. As you are likely aware, based on lessons learned from Rwanda and Bosnia, the Clinton administration created an Atrocities Prevention Working Group, which functioned from 1998-2000 and was chaired by then-Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes David Scheffer. The interagency Working Group convened monthly to review countries identified by the *Atrocities Watchlist* and assess policy options for prevention.

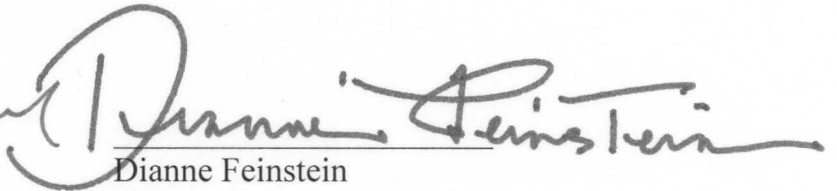
The Genocide Prevention Task Force recommended the creation of a mechanism similar to that Working Group, but suggested that it be transformed into a standing inter-agency committee directed from the White House. Furthermore, its report suggested that the committee be co-chaired by a senior official from the National Security Council and the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human

Rights and Labor, and that it include, at a minimum, representatives from State, Defense (including the Joint Chiefs of Staff), the intelligence community, Justice, Treasury and USAID.

We would like to know your thoughts on the usefulness of the proposed interagency Atrocities Prevention Committee and whether you are planning to form such a committee or working group. We would also like to know of any other steps that NSC is considering to enhance our ability to anticipate and prevent mass killings and genocide. If we or our staffs can be helpful in facilitating any of those steps, we hope you will not hesitate to let us know. We look forward to working with you, Secretary Clinton and other members of the Obama administration to prevent atrocities and finally give meaning to that phrase: "never again."

Sincerely,


Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State