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Hon. Mary Beth Long, *Department of Defense*

June 12, 2008

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

We write regarding the recent report in the Washington Post, "Some Detainees Are Drugged for Deportation" (by Amy Goldstein and Dana Priest, May 14, 2008). According to this article, the Washington Post has identified more than 250 cases since 2003 in which the government has, without medical reason and without consent, given psychiatric drugs to immigrant deportees. The forced medication of detainees may violate both domestic and international law; moreover, these reports further tarnish the already badly damaged reputation of the United States. We urge the Department of Homeland Security to cooperate fully with investigations of these allegations undertaken by Congress.

As members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Helsinki Commission), we were particularly alarmed to read that in 2007, of the 53 deportees drugged without their consent, 50 of them were administered Haldol, a medication designed to treat schizophrenia and acute psychotic states. Due to its abuse by Soviet psychiatric prisons, Haldol has a particularly noxious reputation. The Helsinki Commission has long voiced its concern about medical treatment that may violate international norms, from Russia to Slovakia, and we urge your department to respond seriously and credibly to the issues raised by the Post article. This includes examination of the threat to detainees' health; possible violation of medical ethics by persons employed by DHS; and the policy-making process which resulted in practices that may have been both dangerous and illegal.

Sincerely,

Alcee L. Hastings, M.C.
Chairman

Benjamin L. Cardin, U.S.S.
Co-Chairman

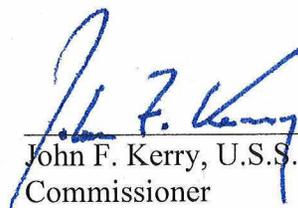
Hilda L. Solis, M.C.
Commissioner

G.K. Butterfield, M.C.
Commissioner

Hon. Michael Chertoff

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John F. Kerry, U.S.S.
Commissioner



Christopher J. Dodd, U.S.S.
Commissioner