June 22, 1999

Protect DOE Whistleblower Against Retaliation

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to enlist your support on behalf of Lt. Col. Edward J. McCallum, the dedicated Department of Energy employee who fought for years to improve the safety and security of our nation's nuclear laboratories -- and is now being targeted as a result. Lt. Col. McCallum has been DOE's Director of Safeguards and Security for ten years, and a Department employee for twenty-five years. Throughout the past decade, this former Green Beret officer attempted numerous times to alert the Administration to grievous lapses in security which left our nation's nuclear facilities vulnerable to foreign espionage and terrorist attack. Officials at the highest levels, including three Secretaries of Energy and White House personnel, consistently ignored Lt. Col. McCallum's warnings, placing our national security in jeopardy.

Now that the Cox-Dicks Committee has revealed the details confirming one of the most extensive and successful campaigns of nuclear espionage against this country, we are paying the price for the Department's disregard of Lt. Col. McCallum's assessments. Astoundingly, the Administration is now attempting to demonstrate "accountability" in the aftermath of the Cox report by firing Lt. Col. McCallum -- one of the few responsible individuals who could have helped it prevent the stealing of nuclear secrets. Wary that Lt. Col. McCallum will focus attention on the Administration's failure to heed his warnings, the DOE has lodged unsupported charges against him and placed him on administrative leave. This "shoot the messenger" approach is not only grossly irresponsible, but it suggests that the Administration is more committed to preventing further criticism of its programs than working to make credible reforms with those who have an in-depth understanding of the problems.

Lt. Col. McCallum deserves accolades for what he did to protect our national security --- not the continued destruction of his reputation and career. Congress must make it clear that the sacrifice of this dedicated public servant will only exacerbate our concerns about the Administration's past failings while raising continued doubts about the effectiveness of any reforms being implemented. I urge you to join with us in protecting Lt. Col. McCallum against the Administration's retaliatory effort by signing the attached letter to Secretary Richardson. Please contact Nancy Lifset in my office (X5-2011) if you are interested in signing or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Curt Weldon
Member of Congress
Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to protest the Department's actions with regard to Lt. Col. Edward McCallum, the dedicated DOE employee who fought for years to improve the safety and security of our nation's nuclear laboratories.

As DOE's Director of Safeguards and Security for ten years, and a Department employee for twenty-five years, this former Green Baret officer attempted numerous times to alert the Administration to grievous lapses in security which left our nation's nuclear facilities vulnerable to foreign espionage and terrorist attack. Those warnings were consistently ignored by the Department's leadership and White House personnel, placing our national security in jeopardy.

Now that the Cox-Dicks Committee has revealed the details confirming one of the most extensive and successful campaigns of nuclear espionage against this country, we are paying the price for the Department's disregard of Lt. Col. McCallum's assessments. The Administration's consideration of an "accountability" strategy that includes the firing of Lt. Col. McCallum is astounding. This "shoot the messenger" approach is not only grossly irresponsible, but it suggests that the Administration is more committed to preventing further criticism of its programs than working to implement credible reforms.

The Department will make no headway in resolving congressional concerns by removing one of the few responsible individuals who could have helped the Administration avoid the stealing of secrets. He is one of the few knowledgeable employees in whom we still have confidence to fix the problems that were revealed. The continued launching of unsupported charges against Lt. Col. McCallum will only serve to increase suspicions about Administration officials' liability for the problems that developed.

Lt. Col. McCallum deserves accolades for his efforts to protect national security -- not the continued destruction of his reputation and career. We want to convey in no uncertain terms that the sacrifice of this dedicated public servant will only exacerbate our concerns about the Administration's past failings while raising continued doubts about the effectiveness of any reforms being implemented. We ask that you publicly denounce these retaliatory attacks on Lt. Col. McCallum, and act to ensure his job security.