



Duncan Hunter
U.S. House of Representatives
50th District, California

November 5, 2014

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel:

As part of the ongoing examination into specifics involving the captivity and release of Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, I have asked Pentagon officials on multiple occasions whether a ransom was ever considered, attempted or paid for Bergdahl. Thus far, these officials have told me—in official settings, even—that a ransom was never considered or attempted.

I recognize the reluctance to describe a payment as a ransom, but regardless of how the transaction is described, it has been brought to my attention that a payment was made to an Afghan intermediary who “disappeared” with the money and failed to facilitate Bergdahl’s release in return. The payment was made in January-February 2014, according to sources, through Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). This is supported by the fact that JSOC did pursue at least two lines of effort for Bergdahl: a kinetic rescue operation, if necessary, and; a payment to the Haqqani Network to gain Bergdahl’s release.

Given the significance of this matter, as well as the fact that Pentagon officials have denied that a payment was even considered, and you also said you were unaware of any such attempt, I ask that you immediately inquire with JSOC to determine the specific order of events. I also ask that you confirm whether a payment of any kind was considered and/or paid—and whether the same consideration, for others in captivity, is still being given by JSOC.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Duncan Hunter". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress