

Rothman, Colleagues Call on Saudi Arabian Ambassador

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to Denounce Anti-American Libel

Article in Saudi Government owned newspaper perpetuates

anti-Americanism in the Middle East

Washington, DC - Responding to an anti-American article that appeared in the Saudi Arabian government daily newspaper, al-Watan, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) and 6 of his House colleagues sent a letter to Ambassador Bandar bin Sultan calling on him to condemn the libelous article. Specifically, Rothman and his colleagues expressed their outrage about the article, which charges that U.S. soldiers in Iraq are harvesting and selling the human organs of Iraqi citizens.

"All of these claims are blatantly false and should be denounced by the Saudi Arabian government," Rothman and 6 of his House colleagues wrote to bin Sultan. "We urge you to forcefully condemn this fallacious article and its numerous fabrications, which only serve to perpetuate untruths about the American men and women serving valiantly in Iraq."

The offending article was written by Fakhriya Ahmad and first appeared in the Al-Watan newspaper on December 18, 2004, but it has also been re-printed in the Syrian and Iranian press. It falsely alleges that American Armed Forces have mutilated cadavers, removed internal organs and appendages from cadavers, and have even recruited Iraqi citizens to assist them in these extractions. The article also made outlandish and untrue suggestions that U.S. military commanders in Iraq are informed of these practices and have instructed the military forces of our European allies to "maintain silence and to avoid the discussion of the subject due to its gravity."

"As the American Armed Forces continue to assist the Iraqi people establish a democratic government and rebuild their country after the fall of Saddam Hussein, the stability of the Middle East is at a critical point. The indoctrination of Saudi Arabian citizens with such horrific untruths about American soldiers' activities in Iraq creates hostility and prejudice against American Armed Forces as well as the United States during a time when terrorism directed at Americans stationed in the Middle East is at an all-time high," Rothman and his colleagues wrote. "The spread of anti-American sentiments such as these puts at risk the stability of regional relations in the Middle East as well as the trans-Atlantic relationship between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States."