Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

During a recent speech, top White House counterterrorism advisor John Brennan stated that the United States only authorizes "a particular operation against a specific individual if we have a high degree of confidence that the individual being targeted is indeed the terrorist we are pursuing."[1] Yet according to *The Washington Post*, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) has been given new authority that allows them "to fire on targets based solely on their intelligence 'signatures' – patterns of behavior that are detected through signals intercepts, human sources and aerial surveillance, and that indicated presence of an important operative or plot against U.S. interests."[2] This new authority is in stark contrast to what your Administration has previously claimed regarding its drone campaign: that they are targeted strikes against suspected terrorists on lists maintained by the CIA and JSOC.[3]

We are concerned that the use of such "signature" strikes could raise the risk of killing innocent civilians or individuals who may have no relationship to attacks on the United States. Our drone campaigns already have virtually no transparency, accountability or oversight. We are further concerned about the legal grounds for such strikes under the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force.

The implications of the use of drones for our national security are profound. They are faceless ambassadors that cause civilian deaths, and are frequently the only direct contact with Americans that the targeted communities have. They can generate powerful and enduring anti-American sentiment.

As members of Congress, we are deeply concerned about the full impact of drone strikes. Please explain the process by which "signature" strikes are authorized and executed; mechanisms used by the CIA and JSOC to ensure that such killings are legal; the nature of the follow-up that is

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[1] Bennet, Brian and David S. Cloud. (2012, April 30). Obama's counter-terrorism advisor defense drone strikes. *The Los Angeles Times*, Online. Accessible: http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/30/world/la-fg-brennan-drones-20120501.

[2] Miller, Greg. (2012, April 25). White House approves broader Yemen Drone Campaign. *The Washington Post*, Online. Accessible: http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/federal_government/yemeni-officials-yes-to-more-us-anti-al-qaida-aid-but-no-to-drone-strikes-on-large-groups/2012/04/26/gIQAksHGiT_story.html.

[3] (2012, January 31). Obama defends U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan. BBC News, Online. Accessible: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-16804247.

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conducted when civilians are killed or injured; and the mechanisms that ensure civilian casualty numbers are collected, tracked and analyzed.

We look forward to your rapid response.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Jesse Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress

Maurice D. Hinchey
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Bob Filner
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress

Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress

Ron Paul
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

John Lewis
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Peter Welch
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Jerrold Nadler
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Keith Ellison
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Walter B. Jones
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Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress