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September 19, 2016

Mr. Bashar Ja'afari
Syrian Ambassador to the United Nations
820 2nd Avenue, 44th Street
New York City, New York

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I write to express my deepest regrets for the terrible tragedy at Deir al Zor. The soldiers who were killed and those wounded were among the greatest heroes of the Syrian nation. For years, they defended the city, which was surrounded by ISIS terrorists, allied with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. I join the Syrian people in mourning the loss of the soldiers, and I express my sincere condolences to their families.

While I cannot say whether this was a deliberate attack, the battle lines at Deir al Zor have been relatively static for years, and the aircraft attacking their positions were equipped with GPS targeting devices. I am sickened by the possibility that the attack may have been deliberately launched to support ISIS troops to overwhelm the valiant defenders of the city. I pray that this was not the case.

Normally, I would dismiss the attack as accidental. However, at times the State Department has found ISIS to be a useful tool in the covert U.S. war against Syria. For years, the administration deliberately permitted 2,000 ISIS oil tankers to conduct a massive trade with Turkey to fund the operations of ISIS. It was Russia that finally interdicted the unsavory oil trade with Turkey, forcing ISIS to cut its payroll in half.

Furthermore, my travels beyond Palmyra in April left no doubt that the U.S-led Coalition deliberately allowed ISIS to cross 100 miles of open desert without dropping a single bomb. They could easily have interdicted the hundreds of tanks and other vehicles that ISIS assembled to seize the city. Clearly, the Coalition hoped that ISIS would fight its way beyond Palmyra and on to the capital of Damascus. They were quite willing to see ISIS impose its gruesome reign of terror on the entire

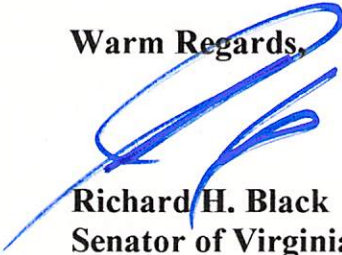
Syrian people. I thank God for those who intervened to prevent this fate from befalling Syria.

I would like to personally apologize for the disgraceful behavior of UN Ambassador Samantha Powers when she addressed the United Nations about the incident. I was embarrassed by her callous attitude toward the death and wounding of so many innocent men. Sadly, her attitude is all-too characteristic of the bloodthirsty nature of some members of this administration.

I hope that the United States will soon turn the page on its sordid record of employing religious terror to achieve regime change in nations like Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Few Americans realize how deeply complicit our government has become in propagating the wave of terrorism that is engulfing the world today.

I speak for many Americans in asking that you convey my thoughts and prayers to Syria.

Warm Regards,



**Richard H. Black
Senator of Virginia, 13th District**

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