



United States Department of State

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

**MAR 10 2011**

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your inquiry of February 18 regarding the potential misuse of U.S. security assistance by security forces in Bahrain.

The Department shares your concern about Bahraini use of force against peaceful demonstrators. President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and other senior administration officials have publicly and privately urged the Government of Bahrain to show restraint in responding to peaceful protests and respect the universal rights of the Bahraini people for freedom of assembly, association, and expression.

We view the Bahraini government's decision to investigate the actions of its security forces during the events of February 14-18 as a positive step toward holding any who may have used excessive force accountable. We are working with the U.S. Embassy in Manama to determine which units were involved in the government's response to protests, and will be evaluating the conduct of those units. We also will conduct an internal review to determine if these units received assistance, and what specific equipment or training this assistance entailed.

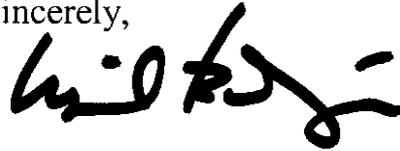
There are conflicting reports regarding the role of the military in responding to protests and we are working to establish the facts as soon as possible. We are also investigating the actions of the Bahraini police and Ministry of Interior forces and assessing their conduct in connection with the protests. The Department will continue to review all security assistance for Bahraini units under our Leahy vetting procedures, and will take into account any evidence of gross violations of human rights by any unit involved in the recent protests.

The Honorable

Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman,  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs,  
Committee on Appropriations,  
United States Senate.

Additionally, the Administration is reevaluating its procedures for reviewing U.S. security assistance and defense sales during periods of domestic unrest and violence and has specifically included Bahrain in this reassessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miguel E. Rodriguez', written in a cursive style.

Miguel E. Rodriguez  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Legislative Affairs