



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

August 26, 2015

The Honorable Ash Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Carter:

Recently, I contacted you regarding Army Sergeant First Class (SFC) Charles Martland, who the Army is soon relieving from duty for standing up to a child rapist in Afghanistan. The incident occurred in 2011, when SFC Martland and one of his Special Forces teammates confronted an Afghan Local Police (ALP) commander identified as the rapist. The ALP commander also beat the child's mother.

As a result of the confrontation, SFC Martland's record was tarnished, with Army officials advising that SFC Martland or others had no moral obligation to intervene, despite the horrendous nature of the ALP commander's repeated actions—which included chaining the victim. In fact, General Christopher Haas signed a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand on October 4, 2011, citing an “intentional assault of a local Afghan man, ALP Commander Abdul Rahman, at VSP Larkhabi.” Haas specifically states conduct associated with the incident “demonstrates a flagrant departure from the integrity, professionalism, and even-tempered leadership I expect from all Soldiers of this command and especially a Special Forces professional... you have an absolute, unquestionable duty to set the standard in exercising good judgment, leading by example, and conducting yourself in a professional manner at all times... Your behavior is inexcusable and incompatible with the high standards of performance and operational readiness of Special Forces...”

Having learned the facts of the confrontation with the ALP commander, I am absolutely astounded and no less troubled by what appears to be a rush to judgment against SFC Martland and his teammate. Mr. Secretary, you should expect each and every one of our warriors and military professionals to intervene in such a situation—and especially when that ALP commander, supported by U.S. trainers and tax dollars, is raping a young child and then proceeds to beat the child's mother, only to laugh off both incidents when confronted. I believe SFC

Martland and his team should be commended for showing any restraint at all. And they most certainly had a moral obligation to intervene.

Also, it is important to note that a linguist with direct knowledge of the situation informed me that he contacted a team member's language assistant immediately after the confrontation. He reported that the ALP commander was "totally exaggerating about his injury and the incident to the Afghan Provincial Chief of Police." The linguist, who spoke directly to the Police Chief at the time, stated that it was the Police Chief's request that the ALP commander be "strongly condemned" and further suggested he be "dismissed and arrested," though concerns with the ALP commander's personal associations complicated the situation. According to the linguist, SFC Martland and his teammate "acted respectfully and professionally according to [the] Afghan Provincial Chief of Police and... the Language Assistant."

It is the wish of SFC Martland to continue serving his nation—and the totality of his record over 11 years must be considered. The fact that this one incident—an incident that was seriously misrepresented by Army leadership, without even taking into account the moral necessity to intervene—is now the determining factor in SFC Martland's career is a black mark for the U.S. Army. There is still time for you to do the right thing, Mr. Secretary. I am confident that you will choose to support a decorated hero over an ALP commander responsible for such serious crimes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "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