

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 3, 2012

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear President Obama,

We are writing to urge you to develop a comprehensive strategy to combat the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and the trade in materials to manufacture them.

The IED is becoming the weapon of choice for armed groups who seek to achieve their goals through violence. If you exclude the 233 IED incidents per month during 2010 in Iraq and Afghanistan, there are estimated to be, on average, three IED incidents each day in the remainder of the world. According to the National Counterterrorism Center's Worldwide Incident Tracking System, this represents a doubling of monthly IED incidents in just five years. In addition to being the main cause of casualties for our military forces, IEDs on a global level now create more civilian than military casualties. Based on data from 2010, compiled by Partners International Foundation, a United States non-government organization for the Global Campaign against IEDs, IEDs killed 268 U.S. service members and over 7 times that many civilians (1,898) with combined killed and wounded civilians reaching 7,747. Ammonium nitrate, long used to manufacture IEDs in the Near East and South Asia, is becoming prevalent in Africa and it may be only a matter of time before IEDs are used by gangs in the United States. Taken together this amounts to a global epidemic of IED use.

IEDs are the number one cause of casualties for American service members and will be for the foreseeable future. According to the Blinded Veterans Association, vision loss is the fourth most prevalent injury caused by IEDs behind hearing loss, traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder for which IEDs are also the major cause. Approximately 34% of those injured by IED blasts suffer dual sensory loss of vision and hearing. This is in addition to the well documented physical wounds such as loss of limbs and other permanent physical disabilities. Similar injury statistics are likely much higher for the civilian populations effected by IED attacks.

These trends underscore the seriousness of the IED problem where innocent civilians, most often women and children, bear the brunt of the suffering. Those in affected areas live in fear of additional attacks that disrupt everything from daily routines, to health care, to elections. When displacement, destruction, and loss of personal assets are added to this mix sustainable livelihoods are severely degraded.

Despite the fact that they are a significant global threat to stability, sustainable development, human rights, and humanitarian operations, IEDs are inevitably framed as a predominately military problem. Military responses alone will not halt the proliferation of IEDs; eliminate civilian casualties; or address the root causes of IED production networks. A comprehensive

approach is needed that combines military responses with the public and private efforts of the Global Campaign against IEDs. Their approach emphasizes a three-pronged methodology of prosecutions under international rule of law, fact-based information campaigns, and community-based sustainable development initiatives through public-private partnerships with associated information and technology transition enabled by an independent, non-partisan Global IED center. We are asking you to take steps that will substantially fill the remaining gaps.


The Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, and State have supported inter-agency and multi-national engagement on this issue. Through their efforts, the United States is playing a vital and important role against IEDs; unfortunately, however, these efforts are not enough. As we learned from the successful international effort over a decade ago to address the scourge of anti-personnel landmines, confronting the global problem of IEDs requires a focused, holistic, and coordinated global response.


To address critical gaps in the humanitarian response to IEDs, strengthen application of the rule of law, and eliminate serious deficiencies in public-private information sharing, we urge you to:

- Designate a Lead Federal Agency to develop a U.S. Government strategy that coordinates with the Global Campaign against IEDs to eliminate the root causes of IED networks and help control the proliferation of IED production materials and techniques, including promoting the exchange of IED-related lessons learned, best practices, and alert and reporting techniques between and among relevant Federal Agencies and other public and private entities; defining objective metrics with which to measure progress with respect to counter-IED programs; conducting public-education; executing appropriate IED related information and technology transition; encouraging other governments and international organizations to join these efforts; and
- Direct the Department of State to introduce a resolution at the United Nations condemning the use of IEDs and calling for international cooperation in prosecuting IED users under international rule of law, while at the same time strengthening existing controls on the proliferation of IED production components such as explosive remnants of war, ammonium nitrate, and commercial explosives.
- Direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a U.S. Government strategy partnered with Veterans Service Organizations, Military Service Organizations, and other public-private partners to identify the long term physical and psycho-social effects of IED related injuries; share findings and best practices with appropriate agencies and the private sector; and ensure adequate programs and benefits are available to affected veterans and their care-givers.

Thank you for your consideration.

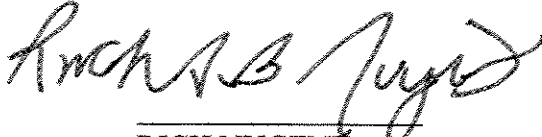
Sincerely,


  
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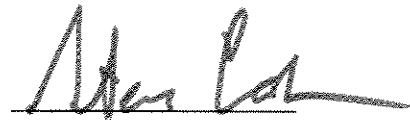
  
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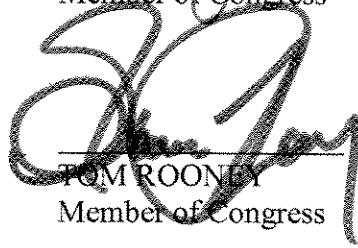
  
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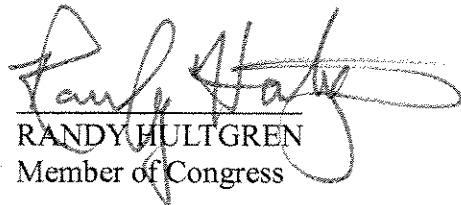
  
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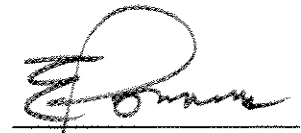
  
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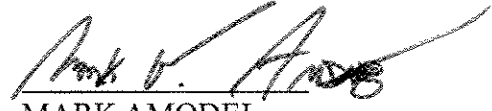
  
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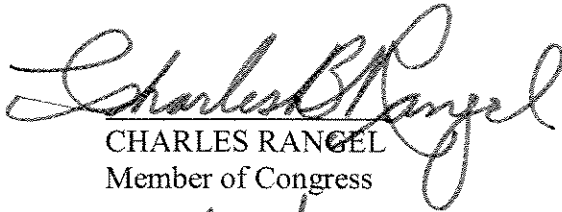
  
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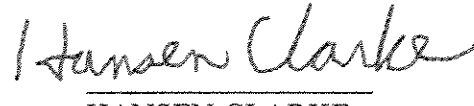
  
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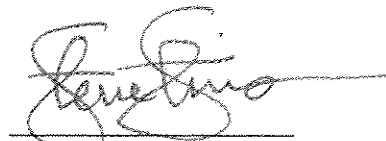
  
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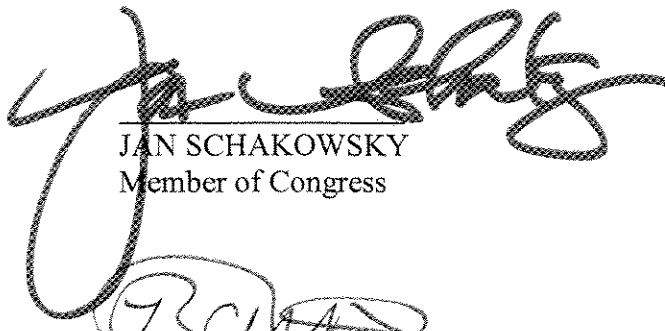
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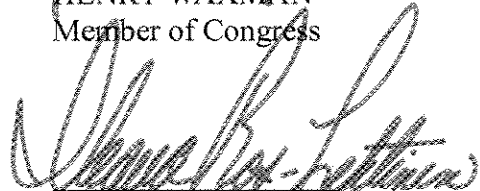
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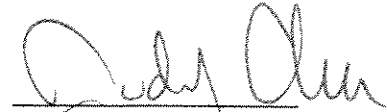
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