

Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address February 24, 2014

“Drone Strikes Should be the Work of DOD”

Hello this is your congressman, Michael Burgess. This week, I'd like to discuss an important bill I recently introduced. This legislation would correct a provision hidden in the 2014 Omnibus that allows the CIA to continue to carry out our nation's drone campaign.

The role of the CIA has always been to gather intelligence which the Department of Defense and the armed forces may then use to carry out military action. Yet the provision in the Omnibus gives the agency far more authority to carry out these drone strikes than it should.

The new bill, H.R. 4036, would cease the CIA's use of drones and instead allow the Pentagon to carry out preemptive drone strikes against pre-arranged targets, as it is designed to do.

Many of us here in Congress believe the provision in the Omnibus dangerously blurs the lines of jurisdiction between CIA and DOD, which is why I felt compelled to introduce this important bill.

The CIA historically has never been involved in strategic defense work other than gathering information that is of use to our highest-ranking military officials. They are the ones who are specifically trained to do this work. By giving the CIA authority to do what should be the work of our military community, it compromises its ability to do its core intelligence-gathering work. Frankly, it oversteps its mission by a longshot.

This concept already has strong support from members on both sides of the aisle and even the President. In fact, Senator McCain, a well-known war hero, shares my concerns.

The nature of the world we live in today is such that there is simply more intelligence gathering going on. I know I speak for myself and other Members of Congress when I say we are being briefed on critical intelligence at an increased rate than in past years. And while it may be human nature for an agency to want to amass more power, it's Congress' job to balance that power.

Different agencies specialize in different areas. They have separate mission statements. As a Congress, we must ensure that separation in order to maintain efficiency within both departments.

As always, I appreciate your calls and comments on this issue. Thank you for taking the time to listen. May God bless you and your family, and as always, may God bless Texas.