

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7012

March 19, 2014

The Honorable John Brennan
Director
United States Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Director Brennan:

Given our discussions on several recent occasions, you are aware of my deep concerns regarding the CIA's actions with respect to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) Study of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program, particularly your notification of SSCI Chairman Dianne Feinstein and Vice Chairman Saxby Chambliss that the CIA apparently, without prior authorization or consultation, searched the computers and computer networks designated for exclusive SSCI use in carrying out its oversight responsibilities. As Chairman Feinstein has noted, this incident would mark the third time since 2010 in which the CIA has acknowledged intruding into SSCI computer networks without authorization. You are no doubt aware of the grave and unprecedented concerns with regard to constitutional separation of powers this action raises.

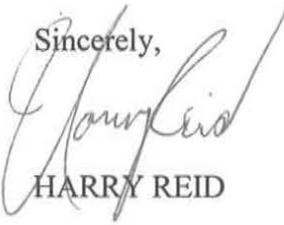
I am aware that you have defended the CIA's actions in this case by alleging that the actions came in response to SSCI misconduct. Specifically, I understand that you have alleged that Senate committee staff illicitly accessed classified CIA networks to obtain a document – the so-called “Panetta Review” – which appears to corroborate the findings and conclusions of the Committee's Study and to contradict the CIA's own official response to the Study. To my knowledge, the CIA has produced no evidence to support its claims that Senate committee staff who have no technical training somehow hacked into the CIA's highly secure classified networks, an allegation that appears on its face to be patently absurd.

The Senate has an interest in bringing final resolution to this dispute. In coordination with the Intelligence Committee, I have instructed the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms to initiate a forensic examination of the computers and computer network assigned for exclusive SSCI use, in order to determine how the “Panetta Review” entered into the SSCI network.

In light of your statement in your January 27 letter to Senator Feinstein that you “would welcome an independent review” of this matter, I trust you will support this examination. To ensure its independence, I ask that you take whatever steps necessary to ensure that CIA personnel refrain from further interaction relating to this issue with Senate staff other than the Sergeant-at-Arms staff conducting the examination while the examination is underway. Furthermore, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that Sergeant-at-Arms staff have the access, including security clearances, necessary to complete their examination in a timely and effective manner.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns about this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harry Reid".

HARRY REID

CC: Attorney General Eric Holder