

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 8, 2010

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
2432 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheila Jackson-Lee
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Transportation Security
and Infrastructure Protection
Committee on Homeland Security
2160 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thompson and Chairwoman Jackson-Lee:

As you know, packages sent from Yemen containing explosive devices were intercepted by U.S. authorities and our international partners on Friday, October 29, 2010. Those packages were addressed to Jewish synagogues in Chicago. As representatives of Chicago and its suburbs, we write to respectfully request that the Committee on Homeland Security hold public hearings on these attempted attacks.

While the packages were addressed to Jewish places of worship, media reports indicate that they may have been intended to detonate mid-flight. Furthermore, we understand that these packages may not actually have been able to be detonated at all, indicating they may have been a "dry run" for a future attack or may have been intended to spread fear among Jewish Americans and the public at large. A public hearing would bring clarity to these questions on behalf of the people of Chicago and the country.

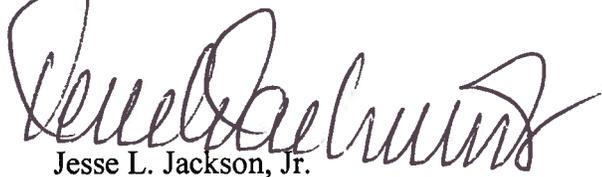
Clearly, the investigation into these attacks will last for many months. That investigation will involve sensitive intelligence and security matters that must remain top-secret. In no way should any hearing jeopardize that classified information.

However, we believe that hearings should be held as soon as possible, perhaps when the House meets again this month, so that the appropriate initial findings can be shared with the public. This would demonstrate in clear terms that the various government agencies and private-sector stakeholders involved are acting vigilantly every day to both investigate and respond to this particular attack, and to keep the American homeland safe from any additional threats.

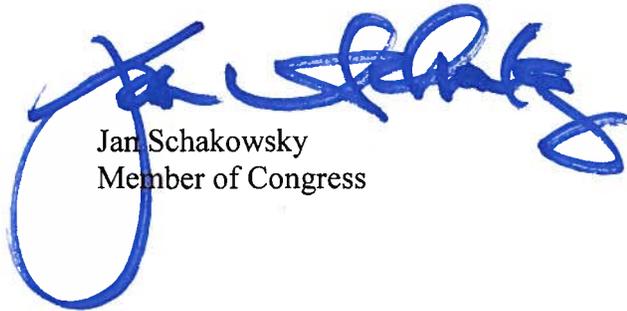
We are grateful for your letter to the Government Accountability Office dated November 2, 2010 in which you ask the GAO to conduct "an assessment of the progress and challenges associated with screening and securing U.S.-bound cargo." We believe such an assessment is vital. We also believe that a public hearing held concurrently with that assessment and involving officials from the GAO, the Department of Homeland Security, and other government and private-sector entities would ensure that the American people have full confidence in the efforts to respond to these attempted attacks.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. We are prepared to assist you in any way we can on this matter.

Sincerely,



Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress