



One Hundred Fourteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

June 10, 2016

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing with questions and concerns regarding the International Security Advisory Board (ISAB) and how the Department handles appointments to this group of highly qualified national security experts. As you may know, recent investigative reports revealed that your predecessor appointed an individual to this Board who lacked background and experience relevant to the Board's mandate.

Pursuant to statute, ISAB was established to advise and make recommendations to the Secretary of State "on United States arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament policy and activities," with required participation by "individuals who have a demonstrated knowledge and technical expertise with respect to arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament matters," who have "distinguished themselves in any of the fields of physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, or engineering, including weapons engineering." (22 USC 2581(f))

It appears that in early 2011, Secretary Clinton appointed to the ISAB Mr. Rajiv "Raj" Fernando, the CEO and founder of Chopper Trading, a securities trading firm headquartered in Chicago. Mr. Fernando's online biographies list bachelor degrees in history and economics, but no apparent background or expertise on arms control, nonproliferation, or disarmament. According to press reports, prior to his ISAB appointment Mr. Fernando was, however, a significant political contributor.

According to State Department emails obtained by the press, Mr. Fernando's name was not on the list of potential ISAB appointees sent to Secretary Clinton, but was added at the insistence of the Secretary's office. It appears that, within days after journalists began asking questions about the Fernando appointment in August 2011 – after internal Departmental communications regarding the need to "protect the Secretary's and Under Secretary's name," and a reported request to "stall" responses to the press – Mr. Fernando resigned from the Board. Although he is a former member of the Board, Mr. Fernando is curiously omitted from the list of "Former ISAB Board Members" currently posted on the Department's website.

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As you know, the ISAB has a serious mandate to provide the Department with advice on arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation. Most Board members have had previous high levels of relevant government, military, and academic service, reflective of the seriousness of these issues. Needless to say, this episode casts doubt on the credibility of the Board.

To better understand the role that the Board currently plays in informing Department policy, I would like to know what criteria and procedures you have used to select Board members as well as whether and how those criteria have changed since the 2011 appointment of Mr. Fernando. In addition, please provide me with information on any steps the Department has taken to restore and protect the integrity of the Board in the past five years. Finally, the Department must explain why Mr. Fernando is omitted from the online list of "Former ISAB Board Members."

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



EDWARD R. ROYCE

Chairman