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James A. Himes
Congress of the United States
4th District, Connecticut

August 21, 2009

Mr. Stephen Miller
83 Waldorf Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Dear Steve,

I wanted to follow up with you about our conversation on July 17, 2009. Enclosed please find my correspondence between my office and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'James A. Himes', written over a printed name and title.

James A. Himes
Member of Congress

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July 29, 2009

Patrick Gallagher
Deputy Director
National Institute of Standards and
Technology
100 Bureau Drive, Mail Stop 1000
Gaithersburg, MD 20899

Shyam Sunder
Director
Building and Fire Research Lab
National Institute of Standards and
Technology
100 Bureau Drive, Mail Stop 8600
Gaithersburg, MD 20899

Dear Deputy Director Gallagher and Director Sunder,

I am writing to you regarding NIST's investigation of the World Trade Center site after the events of September 11, 2001. I was recently visited by several constituents who raised concerns about the presence of thermite found in dust samples taken from the site of the wreckage. I would like to know if you found any traces of this chemical compound in your investigations, and if so, what might explain the presence of said substance?

I look forward to hearing from you in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

James A. Himes
Member of Congress



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

AUG 06 2009

The Honorable James A. Himes
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Himes:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituent inquiring about the presence of thermite at the site of the World Trade Center collapse. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has looked at the application and use of thermite and has determined that its use to effect the collapse on September 11, 2001, was unlikely. Thermite is a combination of a metal powder and a metal oxide, the most common example being aluminum powder and iron oxide (rust), that releases a tremendous amount of heat when ignited. An analysis of the site for the elements in thermite/thermate would not necessarily have been conclusive as these same compounds would have been present in the construction materials making up the World Trade Center buildings.

It is also important to note that the amount of thermite that would have been needed to collapse a structure the size of those found at the World Trade Center is significant. For a steel column that weighs approximately 1,000 lbs. per foot, at least 100 lbs. of thermite would need to be placed around the column and configured to remain in contact with the vertical steel surface as the thermite reaction took place. This is for one column. Presumably, more than one column would have been prepared with thermite, if this approach were to be used. It is unlikely that this quantity of thermite could have been carried into the building and placed around columns without being detected, either prior to September 11, 2001, or during that day.

Finally, based upon the observation of the fires that day and the demonstrated structural response to those fires, NIST does not believe that thermite was used to fail any columns in the buildings.

If you have any further questions, please contact Jim Schufreider, Director of the NIST Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, at (301) 975-3080.

Sincerely,

Patrick Gallagher
Deputy Director

NIST