#### April 19, 2013

#### Professor Larry Gross

#### Editor, *International Journal of Communication* Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism University of Southern California

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Dear Professor Gross:

I would like to submit the attached manuscript to be considered for publication in *International Journal of Communication*.

This manuscript is part of a research program examining U.S. political and news discourse in moments of national dissonance—specifically, when the U.S. military has been accused of committing serious transgressions. In previous work (Rowling, Jones & Sheets, *Journal of Communication, 2011*), we analyzed U.S. political and news discourse in the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal and found that frames aimed at protecting and restoring American national identity dominated press coverage of the incident, despite considerable contestation from Congress. The reason, we argued, was because these frames were particularly resonant among the broader American public.

In the present study, we sought to build on this earlier work in two important ways. First, we wanted to test the effects of these particular frames on individual attitudes, in response to a nationally dissonant incident, to better determine their cultural resonance. Second, we wanted to explore whether contestation of these frames by other political officials—if manifest in the press—would undercut receptivity to them among citizens. To do so, we conducted an experiment in which a population of U.S. adults was exposed to a news story about a U.S. drone strike that accidentally killed 23 Afghan civilians. Ultimately, our results reveal both the broad appeal of national identity-protective frames among Americans when such nationally dissonant incidents arise and the considerable impact on public opinion when contestation by political officials manifests in the press.

My co-authors and I believe that this manuscript will be of interest to readers of *International Journal of Communication*. If anything else is necessary, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Rowling

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