

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

April 5, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing you out of a deep sense of frustration and concern over recent events in the Middle East. Less than eight months ago at Camp David, Israel offered a final status proposal to the Palestinians that was extraordinary in the scope of its concessions. The Palestinian response was not only to reject Israel's offer, but to embark on a deliberate campaign of violence against Israelis, derailing prospects for a final peace agreement.

Indeed, the real response to Israel was given by a member of the Palestinian Authority, Abu Ali Mustafa, two days before the Camp David summit ended, that: "The issues of Jerusalem, the refugees and sovereignty will be decided on the ground and not in negotiations...the situation in the future will be more violent than the Intifada."

Mr. Mustafa was tragically right. Over the past several months, the Palestinians have initiated on average over 30 "incidents" a day against Israeli soldiers and civilians. Initially, rocks and guns were used; increasingly, it is mortars and anti-tank missiles. Many of the attacks are well planned operations involving the highest levels of the Palestinian security forces, openly led by the PLO's own militia. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has released from detention since July over 130 members of the most radical anti-Israel groups directly involved in attacks against Israelis and has suspended all security cooperation with Israel. Since the start of the violence in September, he has never once stood up and addressed his people in Arabic unequivocally calling for an end to the violence, despite calls to do so by the United States.

Mr. President, the United States opened a dialogue with the PLO, allowed the PLO to maintain an office in Washington, allowed PLO officials to visit the United States and provided funding to the Palestinians under very specific conditions; that the Palestinian leadership remain committed to the negotiating process and that they renounce the use of violence. In fact, Section 1302 of the International Security and Development Act of 1985 specifically prohibits any employee of the U.S. government from negotiating with a PLO official unless the PLO "renounces the use of terrorism".

Given the drastic changes that have taken place in recent months in Palestinian behavior, we believe it is time for the United States to reassess our relations with the Palestinians. Such a reassessment should, in our view, examine whether those Palestinians involved in attacks against Israelis should be barred from coming to the United States, whether those Palestinian groups involved in violence should be designated as foreign terrorist organizations under 8 USC 1189, whether the PLO office in Washington should be allowed to remain open, and whether US aid to the Palestinians is in fact meeting its goals and should continue. While this reassessment is taking place, we do not believe Chairman Arafat should be invited to meet with high-level officials in Washington. We also believe that you should reaffirm America's opposition to a unilaterally declared independent Palestinian state.

We raise these questions with sorrow about the turn of events in the region. The Palestinians had a unique opportunity to secure virtually everything they had been seeking from Israel at the negotiating table. Inexplicably, they rejected this option and chose instead to initiate a campaign of violence against Israel. This campaign comes at a great cost to everyone involved and with little foreseeable benefit. From our perspective, it is time for the United States to require that the leadership of the Palestinians speak and act against the continuing violence and terrorism, or face a significant change in our relationship with them.

It is also time for those of us in both parties who serve in Congress and your Administration to restate our commitment to Israel's security and the uniquely common values and interests which Americans and Israelis share.

Mr. President, we look forward to working with you on these issues.

Sincerely,

Cosponsors:

Henry Hyde (R-IL), Tom Lantos (D-CA), Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Robert Aderholt (R-AL), Rob Andrews (D-NJ), Dick Armey (D-TX), Spencer Bachus (R-AL), Brian Baird (D-WA), Richard Baker (D-LA), Ken Bentsen (D-TX), Shelley Berkley (D-NV), Howard Berman (D-CA), Sanford Bishop (D-GA), Rod Blagojevich (D-IL), Roy Blunt (R-MO), Henry Bonilla (R-TX), Robert Borski (D-PA), Allen Boyd (D-FL), Kevin Brady (R-TX), Corrine Brown (D-FL), Henry Brown (R-SC), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ed Bryant (R-TN), Steve Buyer (R-IN), Sonny Callahan (R-AL), Christopher Cannon (R-UT), Eric Cantor (R-VA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Brad Carson (D-OK), Michael Castle (R-DE), Steve Chabot (R-OH), Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Bob Clement (D-TN), Howard Coble (R-NC), Mac Collins (R-GA), Jerry Costello (D-IL), Bud Cramer (D-AL), Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), Joe Crowley (D-NY), John Culberson (R-TX), Jo Ann Davis (R-VA), Jim Davis (D-FL), Tom Davis (R-VA), Dianna DeGette (D-CO), Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Tom Delay (R-TX), Peter Deutsch (D-FL), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Norman Dicks (D-WA), Cal Dooley (D-CA), John Doolittle (R-CA), Vernon Ehlers (R-MI), Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), Eliot Engel (D-NY),

Phil English (R-PA), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Bob Etheridge (D-NC), Lane Evans (D-IL), Mike Ferguson (R-NJ), Bob Filner (D-CA), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Ernie Fletcher (R-KY), Mark Foley (R-FL), Harold Ford, Jr. (D-TN), Vito Fosella (R-NY), Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ), Martin Frost (D-TX), Greg Ganske (R-IA), Richard Gephardt (D-MO), Jim Gibbons (R-NV), Charles Gonzalez (D-TX), Bart Gordon (D-TN), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Sam Graves (R-MO), Gene Green (D-TX), Mark Green (R-WI), Felix Grucci (R-NY), Luiz Gutierrez (D-IL), Jane Harman (D-CA), Melissa Hart (D-PA), Robin Hayes (R-NC), J.D. Hayworth (R-AZ), Van Hilleary (R-TN), Joe Hoeffel (D-PA), Mike Honda (D-CA), Steve Horn (R-CA), Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Asa Hutchinson (R-AR), Steve Israel (D-NY), Ric Keller (R-FL), Sue Kelly (R-NY), Mark Kennedy (R-MN), Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), Peter King (R-NY), Jack Kingston (R-GA), Mark Kirk (R-IL), Nick Lampson (D-TX), Jim Langevin (D-RI), Steve Largent (R-OK), Rick Larsen (D-WA), John Larson (D-CT), Steve LaTourette (R-OH), Jim Leach (R-IA), Sander Levin (D-MI), John Lewis (D-GA), John Linder (R-GA), Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), Nita Lowey (D-NY), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), James Maloney (D-CT), Donald Manzullo (R-IL), Bob Matsui (D-CA), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Jim McCrery (R-LA), Mike McIntyre (D-NC), Buck McKeon (R-CA), Mike McNulty (D-NY), Dan Miller (R-FL), Gary Miller (R-CA), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Anne Northup (R-KY), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Jim Nussle (R-IA), Doug Ose (R-CA), Butch Otter (R-ID), Major Owens (D-NY), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Ed Pastor (D-AZ), Mike Pence (R-IN), Collin Peterson (D-MN), John Peterson (R-PA), David Phelps (D-IL), Chip Pickering (R-MS), Richard Pombo (R-CA), Todd Platts (R-PA), Jack Quinn (R-NY), Jim Ramstad (R-MN), Dennis Rehberg (R-MT), Tom Reynolds (R-NY), Bob Riley (R-AL), Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX), Mike Rogers (R-MI), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Mike Ross (D-AK), Steve Rothman (D-NJ), Marge Roukema (R-NJ), Paul Ryan (R-WI), Jim Ryun (R-KS), Max Sandlin (D-TX), Jim Saxton (R-NJ), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Robert Scott (D-VA), Pete Sessions (R-TX), John Shadegg (R-AZ), Clay Shaw (R-FL), Chris Shays (R-CT), Brad Sherman (D-CA), John Shimkus (R-IL), Ronnie Shows (D-MS), Robert Simmons (R-CT), Chris Smith (R-NJ), Mark Souder (R-IN), Ted Strickland (D-OH), Bart Stupak (D-MI), John Sweeney (R-NY), Tom Tancredo (R-CO), Lee Terry (R-NE), Todd Tiahrt (R-KS), Pat Tiberi (R-OH), John Tierney (D-MA), Ed Towns (D-NY), Stephanie Tubbs-Jones (D-OH), Jim Turner (D-TX), Mark Udall (D-CO), Peter Visclosky (D-IL), David Vitter (R-LA), Zach Wamp (R-TN), J.C. Watts (R-OK), Henry Waxman (D-CA), Anthony Weiner (D-NY), Gerry Weller (R-IL), Robert Wexler (D-FL), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), David Wu (D-OR), Al Wynn (D-MD), Don Young (R-AK).