

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 8, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice,

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the worsening situation in Gaza, specifically the influx of sophisticated weaponry and the continued rocket attacks on Israel. In November 2005, following Israel's full withdrawal from Gaza, you negotiated an agreement to allow for direct passage between Egypt and Gaza and for a secure border. Unfortunately, the border has become a major conduit for smuggling illegal arms, money and terrorists into the Hamas-dominated Palestinian Authority. This situation has served the Hamas-led terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, weakened the position of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and proven deadly for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Terrorists continue to fire rockets into Israel, indiscriminately targeting innocent civilians. Since a "ceasefire" was announced last November, more than 200 rockets have fallen on Israel from a Gaza that Israelis no longer inhabit. In the first days of May, rockets struck a strategic facility in Ashkelon, a gas station in Sderot and narrowly missed a kindergarten in Sderot. These rockets are traveling further into Israel than ever before and becoming more precise in their targeting. It is only a matter of time before disaster strikes.

The quantity and quality of weapons being smuggled into Gaza through illegal tunnels emanating in Egyptian territory are staggering. On February 5, 2007, Israel's Shin Bet Chief Yuval Diskin revealed that 30 tons of high-grade explosives were smuggled from Sinai into Gaza in 2006, compared to six tons in 2005. Additionally, the Israel Defense Force reports knowledge of 20,000 assault rifles, 38 long range Qassam missiles, 12 anti-aircraft guided missiles, 95 anti-tank rocket launchers, 410 anti-tank rockets and 20 precision-guided anti-tank missiles being smuggled in by Palestinians. According to Palestinian and Israeli security sources there are approximately 15 active tunnels in Rafah.

These weapons are increasingly being used by Hamas and other terrorist groups to target Israel and wreak havoc upon Gaza. In the first four months of 2007, more than 150 Palestinians, mostly in Gaza, have been killed as a result of internal Palestinian battles.

Israel took a great risk for peace by moving its forces completely out of Gaza, including off the border with Egypt. In return, Egypt pledged it would secure its border with Gaza and do all in its

power to stop the smuggling of arms, money and terrorists into Gaza. We are deeply concerned that the facts on the ground are not meeting the intentions of the pledge.

We urge you to conduct a serious and comprehensive review of the situation on the ground in Gaza. The Egyptians play a critical role in Gaza, and we urge you to impress upon our ally the need for them to address the root of the smuggling infrastructure in Sinai and to uphold their security responsibilities. The Palestinians must stop the rocket attacks into Israel. With the escalation of violence and the increasingly untenable arms buildup in Gaza, this is a critical moment for all of our allies to curb the proliferation of weapons and the launching of rockets in the region. The consequences of inaction can only result in greater death and destruction. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

May L. Landi

Noam Coleman

Jack Reed

Tom Harkin

Ken Salazar

Jon Kyl

Bill Nelson

Mark Feicht

Robert A. Menendez

Whitman

Daniel Vitter

Lyethia

Lee Stevens

George V. Kinnick

Jeanne Kristina

Ang Klobuchar

Sam Bunnick

Dick Deuk

Chuck Schumer

Jim Bennings

Robert Mendenhall

Bar Bar

Blanch L. Lincoln

W. W. W. W.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Shirley Brown

C. H. Sita

Chris Dodd

Bob Casey, Jr.

John Z. Sawyer

William J. Murray

James J. Murray