

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 23, 2002

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you are well aware, late Monday Israeli F-16 warplanes launched a missile strike on a densely populated area of Gaza City, killing at least 17 Palestinians and wounding 150, many of them children. We write to express our condemnation of this attack in the strongest possible terms. Furthermore, we request that the Administration examine whether the American-made and supplied military hardware employed in this attack was used in violation of the Arms Export Control Act, U.S. Public Law 90-829.

On June 24, 2002, you offered a vision of how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be resolved in a fair manner, consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, that would result in security for Israel and full sovereignty and statehood for the Palestinians within three years. While your vision was welcomed by all parties as a constructive step toward resolution of this conflict, questions remain unanswered as to the sequence, timeline, and actions required of each party. We hope, through constant coordination and consultation with the Quartet, our regional Arab allies, and the parties themselves, that these questions can be quickly answered and the peace process can advance under balanced American leadership.

Mr. President, the first objective of U.S. policy must be to restore hope and confidence in the peace process. The attack yesterday will only beget more violence and represents yet another serious setback. We are pleased that the Administration has criticized this attack. The timing of the strike was most inopportune, given that representatives of the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority had held discussions earlier in the day aimed at easing tension in the Occupied Territories. The Israeli F-16 attack, which was described by Prime Minister Sharon as "a great success," has been widely condemned and is inconsistent with the "concrete steps" you called on Israel to take in your June 24 vision of peace.

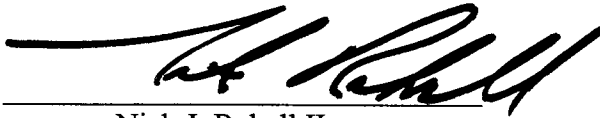
As you know, the F-16's used in this attack were American-made. We would appreciate an explanation as to whether Monday's attack constitutes a violation of the Arms Export Control Act, U.S. Public Law 90-829. The Act prohibits the use of U.S. weapons against civilian targets. As White House spokesman Ari Fleischer noted, the Gaza City attack was not only "deliberate" and "heavy-handed," but was carried out with the knowledge "that innocents would be lost." The use of U.S. weaponry in this manner

appears to violate U.S. law. It also damages the ability of the U.S. government to play its role as an honest broker of peace.

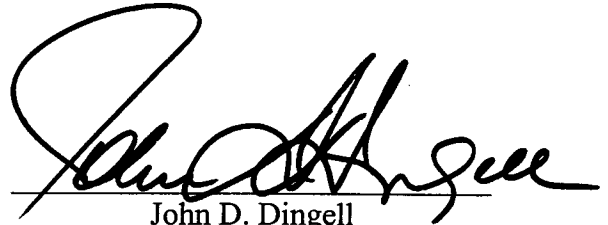
Mr. President, the continuing violence in the Occupied Territories threatens the lives of innocent Israelis and Palestinians on a daily basis, and continues to pose a grave threat to the region, the United States, and the world. Balanced, fair, and consistent American leadership is desperately needed if this problem is to be solved. The Administration must hold both Israelis and Palestinians accountable for actions taken that undermine the peace process and work against U.S. interests. Accordingly, it is important that violent acts that target innocent civilians, regardless of who perpetrates them, must be condemned. There is no justification for the killing of innocent civilians.

We thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. We also strongly encourage you to remain fully committed to peace and fairness, above all else because it is in our national interest.

Sincerely,



Nick J. Rahall II
Member of Congress



John D. Dingell
Member of Congress