

Dear Congressman Farr:

We expect that soon after Congress reconvenes this month, one or more resolutions will be offered that essentially endorses Israel's recent attacks on the Gaza Strip and places blame for continued violence wholly with the Hamas Government of Gaza.

Residents and voters from your district, including those of us who have actively supported your election many times, have repeatedly demonstrated our support for a political resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that honors both peoples' rights and aspirations. You have often stated this same position. We write to implore you, please do not lend your name or suggest that the 17th District supports any resolution that attempts to justify Israel's continuing attack on Gaza. Such resolutions are detrimental to the cause of a sustainable, negotiated end to violence in the region.

Specifically, we urgently request that you not lend your name in support of or vote for any Congressional resolution that:

- fails to recognize the responsibility of both sides for the failure of the cease fire and the ongoing tragedy
- contains any language contradicting findings by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories/B'Tselem and other reputable human rights groups which recognize that both the Israeli armed forces and Hamas and Palestinian armed groups have been engaging in violations of international humanitarian law.
- fails to acknowledge the illegality and the humanitarian consequences of the Israeli siege of Gaza – heightened in November 2008 – and how the siege contributed to the breakdown of the cease fire

We urge you to act immediately to garner Congressional support for a comprehensive ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the protection of civilians on all sides, and addressing the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza by lifting of the blockade of Gaza by land, air and sea. Only through US leadership and forceful international action and oversight can the bloodshed be stopped, and real progress made toward a wider peace in 2009.

We recognize that the indiscriminate Palestinian attacks on civilians by firing rockets and missiles from Gaza into Israel are a clear violation of international humanitarian law. We also believe it is important to recognize that the Israeli government is engaging in ongoing violations of international humanitarian law as well through its bombardment of densely-populated civilian areas of the Gaza Strip, its policy of assassination and detention of Palestinian leaders, and its continued illegal expropriation of Palestinian land.

It is critical that Congress recognize how the U.S. government in recent years has failed to support a concerted movement towards a negotiated settlement. We call on you and your Congressional colleagues to acknowledge how the stalled peace process has demoralized advocates for a negotiated settlement and has fueled extremism among both Palestinians and Israelis.

In addition, we encourage you to call for hearings regarding the apparent violation of U.S. arms exports regulations by the Israeli government in their use of U.S.-provided weapons against civilian targets and to call for an immediate suspension of U.S. military assistance to Israel until it comes into compliance with U.S. law. We also encourage you to call for

hearings investigating the veracity of reports that the United States has provided military assistance for the Israeli attacks on Gaza by giving extended intelligence and logistical support to the Israeli air force in its savage raids on the Gaza Strip

We agree with those who have observed that failure to achieve a diplomatic solution leads to greater suffering of Palestinians and Israelis, heightens risk of a broader confrontation, and makes the achievement of a two-state solution increasingly impractical. Avoidance or delay of a political solution only strengthens extremism by all parties to the conflict.

Signed by

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We look forward to your response that can be sent c/o Scott Kennedy, the Resource Center for Nonviolence, 515 Broadway, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (831) 423-8716 or kenncruz@pacbell.net.