



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

December 21, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing you out of deep concern over the upcoming Palestinian legislative elections and the question of terrorist groups such as Hamas participating in these elections. As you stated just a few months ago in discussing Hamas' participation: "You cannot have a democracy based upon a rule of law if you have armed bands of people who will use their weapons to try to achieve a political outcome." We agree completely. Nevertheless, we are concerned that Hamas will be able to field candidates for the upcoming elections without disarming and without committing to an agreed set of basic principles concerning violence and democratic values.

We are deeply disappointed that President Abbas has yet to do what the Palestinian Authority has committed to doing on numerous occasions – asserting its control over the terrorist groups that operate freely within the West Bank and Gaza. We therefore urge you to press the Palestinian leadership to use the leverage they now have with these terrorist groups to insist that they adhere to a basic set of principles before they can run for political office. No democracy in the world allows a political party to bear its own arms; Palestinian democracy should be no different. If such principles are not established now, it will be much more difficult to do later. Furthermore, if terrorist groups gain a substantial foothold in the Palestinian legislature, it will make it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for there to be any progress on the roadmap or on the road to achieving a two state solution.

There would be even more severe policy implications if any such groups were then brought into the Palestinian Authority. The United States – and no doubt other countries as well – would have little choice but to reevaluate all aspects of our relations with the Palestinian Authority.

We hope it never gets to that point. We look forward to working with you over the next few months to make it clear to Palestinian leaders that terrorist groups must either disarm or be barred from the political process.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson

Jim Talent

Lee Stevens

Debbie Steneow

Ken W

Mark Dayton

Jimmy

Carl

Art Bond

F. J.

George Allen

R. E.

John Eisner

Jim deMont

Jefferson

Em Bayh

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Olympic

Chris Dodd

Tom Harkin

Max Baucus

Tom Kyl

Jack Reed

George V. Voinovich

John Cornyn

John

Susan Collins

~~Dick Durbin~~

Kick Sutorum

Ken Salazar

Ally

Mary Landrieu

Chuck Grassley

Bob Dole

Jim Cooper

Byron Dorgan

Kent Conrad

Robert A. Menendez

Mike Cryer

Wayne Allard

Elizabeth Dole

Ben Rayburn

Tom Harkin

Tom Johnson

Richard Shelby

Sam Brownback

Herb Kohl

Frank R. Lautenberg

Russell D. Feingold

Dan Vitter

Charles Schunes

Jim Hill

James A. Deane

Jim Bunning

Kent Lott

Max Baucus

Tom F. Kelly

Sam Brown

Jim Hoffa

Ch. Smith

Don Coffman

Paul S. Sarban

Blanch R. Lincoln

Mike DeWine

Paul L. Cohen

Harry Reid

John McCain

Bob De

Patty Murray

Maria Cantwell