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Attention: Senator Tom Harkin

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Re: Gaza

Senator Harkin,

Yesterday, I lobbied your office with my body. Today I return to beg of you, yet again, to consider doing what you are able to see that the people living in Gaza are afforded basic human rights and dignity.

As the husband of an observant Jew, and as a father to an eight year old being raised in the Jewish tradition, I am painfully aware of the fears which the Jewish community live with in terms of the security of Israel. Unfortunately, the policies exhibited by the government of Israel are not going to secure a peaceful future for Israeli citizens and the Jewish community at large.

I stand by the statement which was faxed from your Des Moines office yesterday, and today I appeal to reason.

Let us try to face an objective reality, if we can. As a former Navy pilot, I am certain you have some experience with military ordnance. Hamas does manufacture and fire “dumb”, or unguided artillery rockets in Israel. These rockets are very crude in manufacture, and are only able to deliver an amount of explosive on the order of a hand grenade. I acknowledge that this technology is improving, as well as the range of these rockets, but even with much improved technology, this does not constitute an “existential threat” to Israel.

As well, I hope you are aware that when large numbers of ordnance are used during a bombing campaign, there are always those bombs which fail to explode. The BBC had a report documenting a warehouse in Gaza City where some three tons of UXB (Unexploded Ordnance) was being stored. Hamas asked for a UN demining team to render these munitions harmless. Egypt and Israel refused to allow this initially, and by the time the UN team finally arrived on site, one 2000 pound bomb had “disappeared”.

Much of the Hamas resistance work is done on a guerilla footing, and dropping oodles of bombs on Gaza has been a goldmine in terms of providing Hamas and militant factions with literally tons of ordnance to mine for future rockets. This is tactical folly. Bombing this population is only going to increase the already existent resistance, and handing them the means to fight back is outright stupidity.

How many months would it take those same militants to smuggle that much explosive into Gaza, the denial of which is the stated aim of the recent Israeli incursion into Gaza.

Any individual with an electric saw, some duct tape, and a water hose can construct a device which could mine those bombs for explosive very easily. I won't go into details here, but I would be very willing to set up a demonstration for you sometime as to how it has been done by other guerilla factions elsewhere, including Vietnam. And I am willing to do it on live ordnance, under properly supervised conditions of course. It's that easy.

In the statement I received from your office yesterday, I see that you open with a sentence describing your support of Israel to defend itself against rocket attacks coming from Gaza. I don't think anyone would debate whether or not Israel has a right to defend itself. However, denying the Palestinian people living in Gaza fundamental aid necessary to sustain life does not fall into the realm of self defense. Bombing a clearly marked UN truck bearing aid to the Gazan people is not an act of self defense, it is tantamount to political suicide. Denying the entry of basic rations, including macaroni, (as was reported in the Des Moines Register, this date), saying this is not an essential food item for the Gazan people is not an act of self defense.

The policies of Egypt and Israel in denying the Palestinian people of Gaza the right to self determination are simply digging a very big hole. I ask again that you consider what message a policy measure or a single vote from you can send to the governments of Israel and Egypt. With your help and assistance, perhaps we can begin to shovel some dirt back into the hole the policies of Egypt and Israel have dug for themselves, instead of turning it into a grave for the bodies of innocents on all sides of this conflict and continued escalation of same.

Thank you very much for your time, and yes, I will continue to try and be a major pain in the ass on this, until I see some concrete action by you on asking difficult questions of the human rights aspect of this situation that is.