



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

June 7, 2002

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for contacting me with your concerns regarding my recent remarks on Hardball with Chris Matthews. I apologize for the delay in getting back to you.

As you know, I appeared on the MSNBC show Hardball on May 2 and engaged in a discussion about the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. My comments on the show left the impression with some viewers that I believe peaceful Palestinian civilians should be forcibly expelled from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify my views. In the interview, I was merely trying to convey my strong belief that Israel should not yield any further territory until its security is assured and the individuals who support and promote terrorist activities may be properly expelled from the area.

The people of Israel are engaged in the same war on terrorism that we, in the United States, are fighting. As such, I strongly support their right to defend themselves against such threats and to secure their peace and security.

Furthermore, I believe that it is important to remember that Israel is the sole democracy in the Middle East region, and without its presence, the U.S. would have to maintain a much larger presence in the region. This is why the U.S. has historically provided support, particularly in the form of military assistance, to Israel. I generally support military aid to Israel because I believe it is in the national security interests of the U.S. to do so.

Having said that, I regret any confusion or affront that may have resulted from my comments on Hardball. And while I realize we do not see eye-to-eye on this matter, I appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with me.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick Arme".

DICK ARMEY
Member of Congress