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## United States Senate

August 8, 2006

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for contacting me regarding the volatile situation in the Middle East. I appreciate your thoughtful inquiry.

Tensions in the troubled area have boiled over repeatedly, resulting in the tragic deaths of hundreds of Palestinians and Israelis. I am concerned that if the fighting and violence is not stopped, the crisis in the Middle East could well spread to other countries, potentially destabilizing the entire region.

A fundamental precondition for the road map to peace remains an empowered and accountable leader for the Palestinian people. The recent election of many Hamas leaders is a very important event that bears considerable scrutiny. The Senate, by unanimous consent, passed a resolution in February expressing the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel. The President has reaffirmed Congress' assertion and announced that direct funding to the Palestinian Authority will be withheld due to Hamas' continued advocacy for the annihilation of Israel. I support this move and the President's efforts to redirect aid to the Palestinians on a humanitarian basis only. I continue to believe that the Palestinian Authority must do its part to promote peace by encouraging and facilitating mass participation rather than subversive violence. Israel's removal of all settlements in Gaza and several in the West Bank has been a necessary step toward a Palestinian state. The U.S. should make every effort to increase bilateral cooperation between Israel and Palestine. We must also continue to support the national security of Israel, simultaneously working with all responsible nations, including our Arab friends.

I am also quite concerned about the most recent violence between Israel and Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon. This event, which was precipitated by the Hezbollah kidnaping of Israeli soldiers without provocation, has resulted in much destruction and unnecessary loss of life on all sides of the conflict. I do not question Israel's legitimate right to defend herself when under attack, but I am worried about the effect this fighting will have on our interests in the region. Our forces diligently serving our country in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere are at increased risk as long as this open violence continues. The conflict threatens to plunge the Mideast into an even more dangerous crisis, placing our best efforts to build peace and democracy under additional stress. Due to all of these reasons, I support a sustainable peace that brings each side to the negotiating table. I expect that some type of international peacekeeping force will

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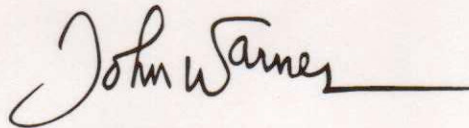
be required to achieve this. I have also encouraged the President to bring all American diplomatic power to bear in this process and have reiterated my belief that America must approach the crisis with an even hand. We must serve as the honest peace broker that is necessary to end this fighting.

I am mindful of your concerns about this issue, as well as the need to engage all partners in the region in constructive dialogue. Please be assured that I will keep your comments in mind should any legislation pertaining to the Middle East come before the full Senate.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns with me.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Warner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Warner

JW/sez