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ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate

June 3, 2002

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Mr. Scott Bidstrup

Dear Mr. Bidstrup:

Thank you for contacting me to share your views about the prospects for peace in the Middle East. I appreciate your conviction and would like to take this opportunity to address your concerns.

I have always been a strong supporter of Israel, whose popular values reflect many of the beliefs Americans hold dear and whose democratic politics offer hope in a region otherwise dominated by monarchies and dictatorships. Israel remains an invaluable democratic ally in a region critical to American strategic interests. Israel's long record of security cooperation with the United States and strong support for American foreign policy interests in the Middle East, at the United Nations, and elsewhere warrant our continued support for Israel as she seeks to legitimately defend herself. The current crisis, and the threat of broader conflict in the region, underscore the importance of America's bedrock commitment to Israel, a nation that shares our values and our commitment to fighting terrorism.

I believe the terrorist attacks of September 11th should only reinforce America's proud support for the freedom and security of Israel. Israelis have lived for far too long with terrorism in their midst. Rather than pressure Israel to make concessions that threaten its security and territorial integrity, the United States, now urgently aware of the danger terrorism poses to our own people, must stand firmly with our ally in these difficult times.

On November 10, 2001, President Bush spoke of his vision of a Middle East containing both Israel and the state of Palestine - the clearest acknowledgment by an American President of our support for the national aspirations of the Palestinian people.