

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515
May 28, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare to address the “Muslim world” on June 5th from Egypt, we ask that you remain mindful of the power of your words. You have the ability to inspire the countless individuals who wither under the control of repressive governments, encourage Middle Eastern governments to engage important issues, and remind the world of America’s commitment to protecting religious freedom for all people of faith, including Muslims.

The Middle East has historically been a place of religious pluralism and cultural diversity. However, groups espousing extremist ideologies based upon Wahabbism and Khomeinism have marginalized and repressed both non-Muslim and Muslim women, youth, reformists, pro-democracy advocates, human rights activists, as well as ethnic and religious minorities. Groups such as the Taliban and al Qaeda, whose ideology is intent on dividing humanity between Muslims and non-Muslims, have killed countless individuals, including Muslims, in an effort to overthrow Middle Eastern governments and weaken other non-Muslim governments.

Based on these facts, we urge you to call upon all governments to join the international community in declaring al Qaeda and the Taliban a threat to humanity, and urge them to fight these radical Islamists.

We also ask you to urge Middle Eastern governments to relentlessly lend their support to the marginalized, weak, and oppressed segments of their societies by recognizing the universal importance of basic human dignity.

In a recent opinion piece published in *The Washington Post*, Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu proclaimed that “repression cannot be rewarded; the voices of those it has silenced must be heard as if the walls of their jails did not exist.” It must be made clear that the United States will stand with all those that are oppressed around the world, from the Baha’is in Iran to the imprisoned blogger in Egypt.

Countless dissidents can attest that their lives improved when their plight was raised publicly by leaders in the West. The pressure put on the Egyptian government by Members of Congress and the Administration following the imprisonment of famed Egyptian dissident Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim helped lead to his eventual release in 2003, after almost three years in prison. We therefore ask you to raise the individual cases of dissidents that languish in the prisons, and others that face persecution, to assure them that they are not forgotten by the American people. We ask you to advocate for the region’s struggling religious minorities as is consistent with our own rich tradition of religious freedom.

We ask you to call upon the governments of the Middle East to commit to defend freedom and democracy in pluralistic Lebanon, and to call for a stop to political assassinations and a disarmament of militias within their borders. We urge you to ask the Arab League to help the mostly Muslim population of Darfur, which is subjected to a genocide at the hands of a regime

whose president is under indictment by the International Criminal Court. We urge you to ask them to help Pakistan in its war against the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other terrorist organizations. We ask you to call on the Organization of Islamic Conference to abandon its goal of imposing so-called "Defamation of Religions" laws which will repress reformists and groups seeking democracy in Muslim and non-Muslim societies alike.

We urge you to ask the governments of the Middle East to commit to a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict via a two states solution based on a mutual recognition between Israel and any Palestinian state-to-be. The starting point for this should not be Israeli concessions, but the recognition of Israel and its right to exist.

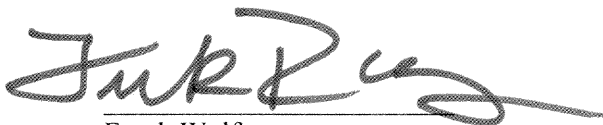
Please remind your audience that while the international community is committed to help Muslim minorities around the world, including those in India, Russia, China, and the West, at the same time we must ensure that all other minorities inside the "Muslim world" are granted their basic rights. We urge you to ask them to discuss the root causes of what they call "Islamophobia," particularly the rise of radical Islamist ideologies, which have generated tensions and violence worldwide among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. We urge you to ask them to help Egypt fight the scourge of terrorism and stand by its own Coptic minority, often targeted by extremists' violence. We urge you to ask them to speak out against radical Islamists all around the world and not condone their behavior with complacency.

We urge you to highlight the contributions of the American people to ameliorate suffering in Muslim communities around the world. For example, the United States military saved countless lives in the hours and days immediately following the tsunami that ravaged Indonesia. Similarly, our military forces were the first on the scene to deliver humanitarian relief and medical treatment to Pakistan in 2005 when that country was hit by a terrible earthquake. In fact, your Administration recently announced \$100 million in aid to provide relief to the Pakistani people who are affected by the effort to rout Taliban extremists in that country. These are efforts of which the American people can be proud, and which your speech could rightly highlight.

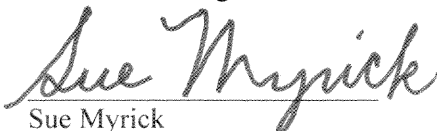
Similarly, your speech can remind the Muslim world of U.S. efforts in the Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts to prevent Muslim massacres and ethnic cleansing, as well as American efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan which liberated 50 million people, mostly Muslim, from the jaws of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and the cruel violence of the Taliban terror regime.

Mr. President, you have a great opportunity to engage and inspire Middle Eastern governments and Muslims around the world with your words. We urge you to consider including these important recommendations in your speech.

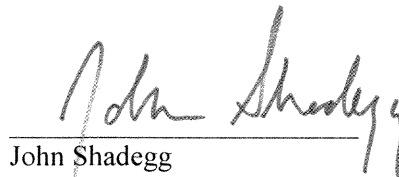
Sincerely yours,



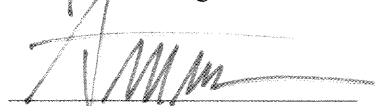
Frank Wolf
Member of Congress



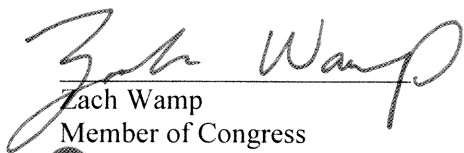
Sue Myrick
Member of Congress



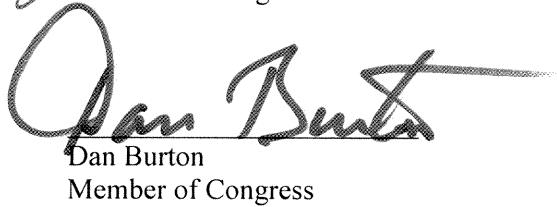
John Shadegg
Member of Congress

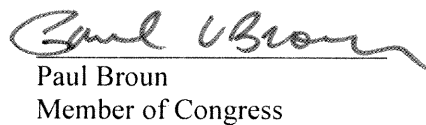


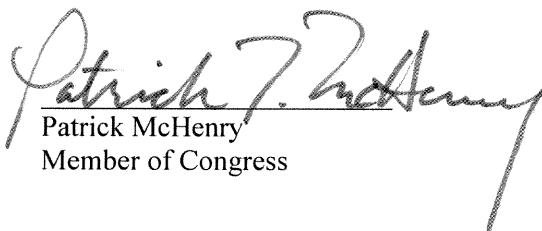
Ted Poe
Member of Congress



Zach Wamp
Member of Congress


Trent Franks
Member of Congress


Dan Burton
Member of Congress


Paul Broun
Member of Congress


Patrick McHenry
Member of Congress


Joe Pitts
Member of Congress