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July 21, 2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare to host Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki at the White House next week, I write today to strongly encourage you to publicly express your support for his declaration that Iraq's national reconciliation policy will not include amnesty for those who have attacked or killed American troops or civilians.

Prime Minister Maliki has released his 24-point national reconciliation since I wrote to you last month regarding H.J.Res.90. As expected, the plan included language that leaves the door open to providing amnesty to Iraqi insurgents who have participated in attacks on our troops and citizens. There have been conflicting media reports about the specifics of the proposed reconciliation plan since its release. However, on June 27 Prime Minister Maliki held a meeting with western reporters in which he stated that "there will be no amnesty for those who have killed Americans."

While this clear statement on the issue is certainly a welcome indication of the Prime Minister's position, it is important to recognize that he will still be involved in wider negotiations with members of the Iraqi National Assembly and other organizations in crafting a final reconciliation plan.

As you well know, our troops continue to face a strong and deadly insurgency on the ground waged by the very people that the new Iraqi government is considering providing amnesty to. I strongly believe that providing such a wide ranging reward now, when nearly 47 percent of Iraqis approve of attacks on American forces, is exactly the wrong message to send to the insurgency and may put our troops in greater danger. Our servicemen and women continue to fight too hard and sacrifice too much to see those that are waging an unceasing campaign of violence against them be rewarded with amnesty.

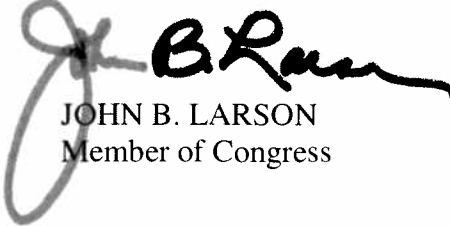
As the Iraqi Government moves forward with their reconciliation plan, it is vital that the United States send a clear and unequivocal message that our nation stands with

the Prime Minister in opposing amnesty for those who have killed Americans. To this end, I strongly encourage you to raise this issue during your discussions with Prime Minister Maliki next week and publicly stand with him on this important issue.

In addition, I hope you also use your time with the Prime Minister to share our nation's deep concern with the recent anti-Semitic comments of Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani. Earlier this month, the Associated Press reported comments by Mr. Mashhadani in which he accused "Jews" of financing acts of violence in Iraq in order to discredit Islamists who control the parliament and government so they can install their "agents" in power. These comments raise very serious concerns that anti-Semitism remains rampant in the Middle East. We must focus our efforts on eliminating the hate that fuels terrorism and work to bring peace and stability to the Middle East, and we must start by repudiating unfounded and hateful remarks such as these.

I appreciate your urgent consideration of these requests and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress