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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

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ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

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ROBERT S. RANGEL, STAFF DIRECTOR

Dear Colleague,

Iraq's noncompliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441 goes well beyond a general failure to disarm. While the chief U.N. weapons inspector continues to confirm Saddam Hussein's unwillingness to dismantle his illegal ballistic missile systems and biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons programs, it is worth considering Iraqi intransigence elsewhere.

In spite of renewed promises to abide by its U.N. obligations, Iraq continues to fire at U.S. and British pilots enforcing the United Nation's northern and southern no-fly-zones. The attached fact sheet shows that Saddam Hussein's forces have fired at coalition aircraft approximately 330 times since the November 8th passage of Resolution 1441. This pattern of aggressive disregard of obligations occurred as recently as yesterday.

A humanitarian effort designed to protect Iraq's Kurdish and Shiite minorities from Iraqi air attacks, the U.N. no-fly-zones were established after the Gulf War to enforce three related Security Council resolutions. Resolution 1441 subsequently reaffirmed their legitimacy, but a cursory review of the data proves that Iraq cares as much about this provision as the one that mandates unfettered inspections.

In fact, even though patrolling aircraft may only fire in self-defense, Iraq's forces have shot at coalition planes more than 3,000 times since March 1991, when the zones were first raised. This remarkable situation should come to no surprise—Saddam Hussein has offered a reward to the Iraqi soldier who finally downs an American or British pilot.

The attacks on coalition aircraft in the no-fly-zones are a clear example of persistent Iraqi noncompliance, although the ongoing weapons of mass destruction programs solely grab the headlines. I urge all members to give this telling information the careful consideration it deserves as U.S. policy progresses.

Sincerely,



Duncan Hunter
Chairman