

June 14, 1990

Secretary of State James A. Baker.  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C.

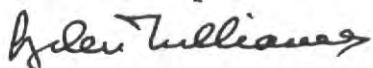
Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing this letter to commend and thank you for being the first senior American official in my memory to have the candor and guts to take a firm public stance regarding the policies of the Shamir government in Israel. Perhaps your example may one day even embolden some of our elected officials to do so as well.

Simply stated, the Likud policy for some years has been to impose an unwanted rule on a captive population at the point of a gun, a practice that has gone singularly out of style in Eastern Europe and even in the Soviet Union. And when the Palestinian victims publicly protest, the Israeli army is ordered to shoot and beat in the name of "maintaining order." But of course the root cause of the "disorder" is the Israeli occupation itself. In short, do something wrong, shoot those who disagree, and then justify it by asserting a right to "maintain order." And when polite friends suggest that it might be better to negotiate with the victims, drag your feet, because the last thing you want is any public discussion on the merits. Such is the Shamir/Likud policy, and it could get worse now that Sharon & Co. are now back in the act.

Your excellent statement lacked candor only in one respect, when you said that if Israel did not want to get on with the peace process, there is nothing that the U.S. could do about it. For starters, we could withdraw about \$1 billion of the U.S. taxpayers' subsidy to Israel and devote it to more deserving causes, such as aid to Nicaragua or to the development of freedom in Eastern Europe. We might be amazed at the renewed interest in peace that could suddenly appear in the Middle East, and the renewed respect for America elsewhere in the world. But your statement was a noble step in the right direction, for which you and President Bush are to be praised.

With thanks and best wishes,



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