

DAN BURTON, INDIANA,  
CHAIRMAN

BENJAMIN A. GILMAN, NEW YORK  
CONSTANCE A. MORELLA, MARYLAND  
CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT  
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA  
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK  
STEPHEN HORN, CALIFORNIA  
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA  
THOMAS M. DAVIS, VIRGINIA  
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA  
JOE SCARBOROUGH, FLORIDA  
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, OHIO  
BOB BARR, GEORGIA  
DAN MILLER, FLORIDA  
DOUG OSE, CALIFORNIA  
RON LEWIS, KENTUCKY  
JO ANN DAVIS, VIRGINIA  
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA  
DAVE WELDON, FLORIDA  
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH  
ADAM H. PUTNAM, FLORIDA  
C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER, IDAHO  
EDWARD L. SCHROCK, VIRGINIA  
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051  
TTY (202) 225-6852

[www.house.gov/reform](http://www.house.gov/reform)

October 9, 2001

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,  
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA  
MAJOR R. OWENS, NEW YORK  
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK  
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA  
PATSY T. MINK, HAWAII  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK  
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND  
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO  
ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH, ILLINOIS  
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS  
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
JIM TURNER, TEXAS  
THOMAS H. ALLEN, MAINE  
JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY, ILLINOIS  
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI  
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA

BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT,  
INDEPENDENT

The Honorable Colin L. Powell  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Powell:

I am writing to urge that you take action to remedy a serious and immediate terrorist threat: the national security risk posed by long-range fifty caliber sniper weapons. As a military commander during the Gulf War, you no doubt are familiar with the extreme power and extraordinary range of fifty caliber weapons. They are capable of bringing down airplanes and helicopters, they can pierce armored personnel vehicles, and they can be fired from thousands of yards away.

A new report by the Violence Policy Center documents the terrorist threat in alarming detail. The report is entitled *Voting From the Rooftops: How the Gun Industry Armed Osama bin Laden, Other Foreign and Domestic Terrorists, and Common Criminals with 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles*. It demonstrates how terrorists could use these readily available weapons to cause massive carnage at civilian airports, at chemical and nuclear facilities, and at key infrastructure points throughout the world.

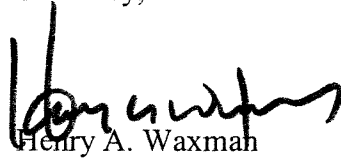
For these reasons, I urge you to immediately halt the practice of granting licenses to export fifty caliber weapons to foreign nationals abroad. As I understand it, exports of fifty caliber rifles are regulated by the State Department through the Arms Export Control Office, which grants permits to U.S. manufacturers to export firearms. Given the threat these weapons pose to our military troops and civilian populations, I believe it is urgent to prevent further proliferation of these weapons among civilians abroad.

According to an October 1, 2001, article in Forbes Magazine, the State Department recently reversed the policy of the prior Administration and gave the largest domestic manufacturer of fifty caliber weapons permission to sell these weapons to private individuals in Europe. I request an explanation for this change in policy. In addition, I request that you forward copies of all applications, permits granted, and permits denied over the past fifteen years for persons seeking to export fifty caliber weapons. I also request any information that your Department may have about the dates, quantities, and recipients of any exports of fifty caliber weapons.

The Honorable Colin L. Powell  
October 9, 2001  
Page 2

I have also written to Governor Ridge, the newly appointed Director of Homeland Security, regarding this issue, and I have urged him to work with you to immediately halt the export of these dangerous military weapons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry A. Waxman". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Henry A. Waxman  
Ranking Member