

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20504

March 23, 2002

Dear Mr. Dzirasah:

Thank you for your letter to President Bush on the subject of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). I am responding on the President's behalf.

No decision has been taken by the Bush Administration to withhold money allocated by the Congress to UNFPA. The Congress did, however, give the President discretion to spend as much or as little of the \$34 million as he determines is appropriate. Any money that the President may decide to provide to the UNFPA must be given in a manner consistent with other United States laws, including the Kemp-Kasten Act.

The President shares the view of you and the Parliamentarians for Global Action that it is vitally important to promote international efforts aimed at improving women's health care, including reproductive health, around the world and especially in Afghanistan. He also, however, is deeply concerned about credible reports of forced sterilizations and coerced abortions in China. While the UNFPA is clearly not itself directly involved in forced sterilizations and abortions, there are legitimate questions about its association with Chinese national programs that may engage in such practices.

The President has not yet made a decision on what level of funding the United States will provide to the UNFPA. Whatever decision he makes, the President's commitment to the crucial issue of women's health will remain steadfast.

Sincerely,



Elliott Abrams
Special Assistant to the President for
Democracy, Human Rights and
International Operations

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