

(January 5, 2009) LIPINSKI STATEMENT ON SITUATION IN ISRAEL

[WASHINGTON, D.C.] Congressman Dan Lipinski today issued the following statement regarding the security situation in Israel.

"Israel is one of America's strongest, most important allies. Our two nations share fundamental moral and political values based on freedom and democracy.

"Last year, Israel continued its important work toward achieving sustainable peace in the Middle East by accepting a proposal for a six-month cease-fire with Hamas. At the same time, this agreement provided Hamas with an opportunity to embrace a peaceful means to resolving its differences with Israel.

"Unfortunately, Hamas utilized the six month cease-fire to significantly boost its arsenal, which culminated in renewed rocket assaults on southern Israel. In fact, more than 600 rockets and mortars have been fired from Gaza at innocent civilians in Israel over the past six weeks and almost 500,000 Israelis live with the constant risk of attack.

"Like every other sovereign nation, Israel not only has the right but the duty to defend its citizens from attack. It is clear that Hamas' actions left Israel with no choice but to take action.

"While I strongly believe all parties involved must work towards sustainable peace, the continued attacks on Israel by

Hamas significantly undermine this effort, threaten the overall security in the region, and greatly exacerbate the humanitarian situation for those living in Gaza.

"My thoughts and prayers are with all the innocent victims of this crisis."