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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
November 10, 2011

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The Honorable Edward R. Royce
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
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Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Royce:

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Earlier this month justice was served in the case of Viktor Bout, famously dubbed the "Merchant of Death," when a federal jury in New York found him guilty of all charges against him. Your steadfast leadership in Congress was crucial in securing his eventual extradition from Thailand, which paved the way for this notorious international arms dealer to be held account for his crimes.

Mr. Bout fueled some of the most deadly conflicts in Africa including the brutal reign of Liberian president Charles Taylor. Having traveled to Africa several times over the span of two decades, I saw with my own eyes the trail of suffering in countries like Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo that Viktor Bout left in his wake.

Mr. Bout's illicit dealings spanned the globe. Apart from the devastation he wreaked in Africa, he also armed the Taliban. His dealings with international terrorist organizations included Hezbollah and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

Ultimately, Mr. Bout's capture, extradition, trial and eventual conviction were by no means assured. Multiple hurdles stood in the way. Yet, in the face of these challenges you were committed to seeing justice done. You consistently marshaled bipartisan congressional support at critical junctures in the process. In short, you stayed the course and I thank you for your efforts in helping to ensure that the "Merchant of Death" never again arms men bent on destruction.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

FRW:ea

I appreciate you good work. I thank Africa