

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 1997

*Handwritten notes:*  
The situation  
is  
not  
settled  
Mr.

His Excellency  
Alberto Kenyo Fujimori Fujimori  
President of the Republic of Peru  
Lima, Peru

RELEASED IN FULL

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our deep concern about the situation of Mr. Baruch Ivcher, which is causing an exceedingly damaging impression of your country and may result in undesirable repercussions for the image of Peru as well as for our bilateral relations.

No government welcomes press criticism, but freedom of the press is an essential part of freedom itself. That is why we were genuinely troubled when Mr. Ivcher was singled out for attack by the Peruvian military high command, because this had the appearance of an assault on press freedom. The resulting criticism that has already appeared in the U.S. press is certain to be followed by more.

In our view, this situation was made far worse by the efforts to revoke Mr. Ivcher's citizenship, along with the charge that he had been an agent of Israel in the sale of arms to Ecuador. This emphasis on Mr. Ivcher being a naturalized citizen originally from Israel, and the conclusion that he is therefore disloyal, is particularly ugly and redolent of the worst anti-Semitic stereotypes. We hope your government will dissociate itself from all of this before more damage is done to your country.

Finally, as you know, foreign investors are always concerned about judicial security, respect for property rights, and the rule of law. If no law protects Mr. Ivcher's property -- in this case, his interest in Channel 2 -- investors are almost certain to conclude that their own investments will be unequally unsafe. This can only damage your efforts to attract foreign investment to Peru.

We urge that you restrain those who undercut freedom of the press with reprisals against Mr. Ivcher for his station's reporting, and to stop the unworthy effort to deprive him of his citizenship and property on trumped-up charges that he is an Israeli agent. Such action on your part will be welcomed in the United States and surely restore the prestige and the image of your government.

Sincerely,

*Handwritten signature of Jesse Helms*

Jesse Helms, Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
U.S. Senate

*Handwritten signature of Benjamin A. Gilman*

Benjamin A. Gilman, Chairman  
Committee on International Relations  
U.S. House of Representatives

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