Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 19, 2004

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On last night's episode of *60 minutes*, Bob Woodward, author of the new book *Plan of Attack,* made a startling assertion. According to Mr. Woodward, you have an understanding agreement with Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador, that the Saudis will lower oil prices "in the months before the election - to ensure the U.S. economy is strong on election day."[1]

More specifically, *60 Minutes* reported the following:

> WALLACE: (Voiceover) Prince Bandar enjoys easy access to the Oval Office. His family and the Bush family are close. And Woodward told us that Bandar has promised the president that Saudi Arabia will lower oil prices in the months before the election to ensure the US economy is strong on Election Day.
>
> And you also say, 'Bandar wanted Bush to know that the Saudis hoped to fine-tune oil prices to prime the economy in 2004. What was key, Bandar understood, were the economic conditions before a presidential election.'
>
> Oil prices are at an all-time high.
>
> Mr. WOODWARD: They're high, and they could go down very quickly. That's the Saudi pledge. Certainly over the summer or as we get closer to the election, they increase production several million barrels a day and the price would drop significantly.[2]

From a different source, these claims would be so astounding that they would not be credible. In effect, Mr. Woodward is alleging that you have an understanding with the Saudis that the Saudis will manipulate gasoline prices for your political advantage. Mr. Woodward, however, has had extraordinary access within the Administration. In preparation for his book, he interviewed 75 top Administration officials, including two long interviews with you.

Mr. President, we request that you fully explain the understanding that you or your Administration reached with the Saudis to boost oil production and disclose any promises that have been made to the Saudis on behalf of the U.S. Additionally, we request that you explain what steps you are taking today to address excessive gasoline prices, and why your

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[1] *Woodward Shares War Secrets,* 60 Minutes website (Apr. 19, 2004)(online at http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/04/15/60minutes/main612067.shtml).
[2] *Plan of Attack; Bob Woodward discusses his interviews with President Bush and White House staff about the Iraq war*, 60 Minutes (April 18, 2004).

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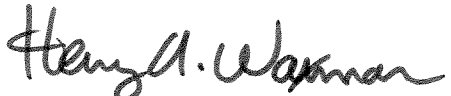
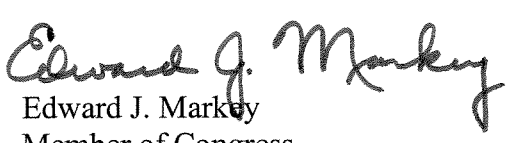
Administration has not pressed the Saudis to increase their production prior to this year's driving season.

Our nation's economy is too important to suffer from high gasoline prices to suit the political timing of any Presidential reelection campaign. We urge that you immediately address Mr. Woodward's claims.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress