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Saudi prince gets an apology — from Georgia

■ Congresswoman says Mayor Giuliani was wrong to turn down offer of $10 million in aid for victims

By JEFFREY McMURRAY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A Georgia congresswoman is facing criticism for sending a letter to a Saudi prince apologizing for New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's refusal to accept the prince's $10 million check for terrorism victims.



Rep. Cynthia McKinney

Democratic Rep. Cynthia McKinney thanked Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal and said she was disappointed by Giuliani, who returned the check last week upon learning the prince had suggested U.S. policies toward the Mideast were partly to blame for the Sept. 11 attacks.

Alwaleed also said the United States should "adopt a more balanced stance toward the Palestinian cause."

"I think he should have recognized your right to speak and make observations about a part of the world which you know so well," McKinney said in the four-page letter, dated Oct. 12.

McKinney also wrote that she was concerned about reports of "a pattern of excessive, and often indiscriminate use of lethal force" by Israeli security forces against unarmed Palestinians.

Jewish groups and some of McKinney's colleagues harshly criticized her statements.

Sen. Zell Miller, D-Ga., called the letter "disgraceful."

Mark Moskowitz, director of the Atlanta office of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, said McKinney should not "divide America at a time when we are still mourning the loss of over 6,000 of our citizens."

Hussein Ibish, spokesman for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said McKinney was right to defend the prince's comments, even if they were poorly worded.

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