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RAHALL WANTS ISRAEL TO BUY AMERICAN COAL

Washington D.C. --- West Virginia's Fourth District Congressman Nick J. Rahall, chairman of the Congressional Coal Group, expressed his strong displeasure with Israel's purchase of coal from South Africa.

In a statement to his colleagues in the House of Representatives, Congressman Rahall said, "I firmly believe that a certain degree of reciprocity must be maintained between the U.S. and its trading partners, especially when those trading partners benefit greatly from their relationship with this Nation."

"When it comes to buying coal, I make no country exempt, and for this reason must extend my criticism to Israel," Rahall stressed.

"When the Israelis look for coal, they do not look to the U.S.," the Beckley Democrat claimed. "Rather, they go to South Africa and purchase coal produced by slave labor," Rahall charged.

Congressman Rahall pointed out that, "Approximately one-third of our foreign aid package goes to Israel. Therefore, taxpayers in southern West Virginia and throughout the Appalachian coalfields support Israel's economy. These same taxpayers are suffering 32 percent unemployment in the coal labor force, as a result of coal's depressed markets."

In 1982, Israel purchased 700,000 tons of coal from South Africa. Only 96,495 tons from the United States.

"The U.S. aid package to Israel in 1984 may be in excess of \$2.5 Billion. It only seems fair that they send some of this money back in the form of coal purchases from the United States--a country that does much more for Israel than South Africa," Congressman Rahall concluded.