

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 20, 2007

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2009 budget, we are writing to express bipartisan support for an increase in the International Affairs Budget – one that reinforces the continued commitment of Congress and your Administration to invest in strategic tools that are essential to protecting our national security, building economic prosperity and demonstrating our moral values.

We live in an interconnected world where infectious diseases and terrorism have no borders. America's security and prosperity is linked with the security and prosperity of other nations. The global realities of the 21st century require America to utilize the full range of non-military tools as a fundamental pillar of our national security. Investments in our international affairs programs bolster our national security by allowing us to work with foreign partners to track down terrorists overseas, to secure dangerous weapons wherever they are found, and to help stabilize fragile states.

National security and foreign policy experts support an increase in the International Affairs Budget as a key component of our national security. The 2006 National Security Strategy reaffirmed that "Development reinforces diplomacy and defense, reducing long-term threats to our national security by helping to build stable, prosperous, and peaceful societies." The Pentagon's 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review cited the lack of U.S. civilian international capacity as hindering the Pentagon's core mission to defend the United States. Furthermore, the bipartisan 9/11 Commission called for an increased investment in the full range of diplomatic, development and humanitarian tools to deliver long-term success for U.S. foreign policy.

In addition, America has a proud history of bringing hope to millions of people who live under oppressive poverty, face starvation, battle HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and suffer the consequences of conflict and insecurity. Investments in our diplomatic, economic and development programs are critical to saving lives, restoring America's capacity to engage the world, and building global stability.

Investments in our export promotion agencies and overseas missions open new markets for America's businesses and advocate for U.S. commercial interests overseas. These programs help developing countries to fully participate in the world economy which create economic opportunities at home and abroad. Moreover, the International Affairs Budget strengthens America's civilian capabilities and energizes our outreach to the world through vigorous public

diplomacy, educational and cultural exchanges, and capable, secure embassies and diplomats who provide the first line of offense for America's interests abroad. Despite modest increases, the International Affairs Budget remains dangerously underfunded, 17 percent below Cold War levels, hindering the ability of our civilian agencies to adequately participate in meeting our foreign policy goals.

Together we must ensure that the U.S. is fully equipped to face the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Despite progress in restoring dangerously low levels of funding for the International Affairs Budget, much more needs to be accomplished. As you prepare the FY09 Federal Budget, we urge you to continue to increase funding for U.S. International Affairs programs.

Sincerely,

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cc: The Honorable Jim Nussle, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State
The Honorable Stephen Hadley, National Security Advisor