

Senator Kerry – Statement for the Record on Cuts to the International Affairs Budget in the FY11 Continuing Resolution

We are living through one of the most important transformations in the history of the modern world. Some have likened the wave of protests sweeping the Middle East to the revolutions of 1848, which changed Europe's political landscape forever. They certainly call to mind the dramatic events of 1989, when the nations of Eastern Europe threw off the yoke of communism to embrace free markets and democracy. Like those upheavals, there is no doubt that the events of this year will be studied for decades to come.

The challenges we face are great. We are being called upon to forge new relationships in a part of the world that has been and will remain vital to our national security. And we have been given the opportunity to demonstrate conclusively to the young men and women of the Muslim world and beyond that al Qaeda's belief that change requires violence and radicalization is wrong.

But, even as we try to navigate these momentous developments, we are contemplating drastic cuts to our international affairs programs. I understand that we face a budget crisis in our own country. But we can either pay now to help brave people build a better, democratic future for themselves, or we will certainly pay later with increased threats to our own national security.

The international affairs budget lays the foundation for our ability to fulfill our responsibilities abroad. The approximately \$50 billion that funds all our diplomats, development professionals, embassies, missions, consular services, global health programs, food aid, and disaster relief is a tiny investment for the great return we receive. Consider that this year we will spend approximately \$700 billion on our military. By contrast, the international affairs budget is less than one-tenth of the Pentagon's. As Secretary Gates once pointed out, if you took the entire Foreign Service roster, you could barely crew one aircraft carrier.

And yet our diplomats are serving on the frontlines of multiple revolutions and wars. They are making vital contributions in Afghanistan, and in Iraq they are planning the transition from a military mission to a diplomatic one so that we can cement the political progress that has cost hundreds of billions of dollars and thousands of American lives.

In Africa, they are helping to midwife the birth of a new nation in South Sudan, to resolve the situation in Darfur, and, as we make progress on those fronts, to forge a new relationship with the government in Khartoum. They are leading the fight against global challenges, like nuclear proliferation and climate change. And in countless communities around the world they are providing essential humanitarian assistance—preventing the spread of cholera in Haiti, distributing food to refugees in northern Kenya, and providing shelter to flood victims in Pakistan.

This is not a time for America to pull back from the world. This is a time to step forward.

Yet, H.R. 1 imposes draconian cuts that would completely undermine our core national security priorities and our humanitarian commitments.

The bill threatens our ability to stabilize Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq by slashing Economic Support Funds by \$2.2 billion, or nearly 30 percent below FY11 levels. In Afghanistan, for example, these cuts would make it extremely difficult to support high-priority infrastructure programs that are critical to our counterinsurgency and stabilization efforts. And they would curtail our ability to support governance, economic development programs, and basic services to districts cleared by the military.

H.R. 1 would also threaten our efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan by zeroing out funding to meet our obligation to take up the U.S. shares in the Asian Development Bank (ADB). If we don't provide funding by April of this year, we will give up our leadership position at ADB and allow Chinese influence at the bank to surpass our own. The impact of that loss of influence cannot be overstated. The ADB funds projects throughout Pakistan and Afghanistan, supporting U.S. efforts in this critical region. General David Petraeus himself wrote to Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to praise the Asian Development Bank for supporting U.S. interests, stating that "strong partnership with the ADB is part of our overall United States purpose and goals in these areas of critical importance."

The House bill also cuts our humanitarian aid by 50 percent, decimating our ability to provide food, shelter, and medicine after natural disasters and putting hundreds of thousands of lives at risk. In Pakistan, USAID would be unable to meet emergency and recovery needs in the south, where an estimated 4 million people remain displaced and require critical support. In Haiti, over 1 million displaced persons living in transitional shelters may lose funding and support. And with these cuts, more than 1.6 million Internally Displaced Persons in Darfur will not receive critical health care, access to water, or help in meeting other basic needs.

H.R. 1 decreases global health funding by over \$1 billion, which means that over 400,000 people who would have been able to enroll in life-saving treatment programs through PEPFAR will now linger on waiting lists as their HIV diagnosis becomes a death sentence. It also means that 300,000 orphans and children will not receive care and support, and that 100,000 women who would have received medication to prevent the transmission of HIV to their newborn children will not, resulting in tens of thousands of babies that will be born HIV-positive.

H.R. 1 also slashes support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The Global Fund is a public-private partnership where every American tax dollar is leveraged twice over by the rest of the world. Its programs are also deeply intertwined with U.S. efforts: in Haiti, for example, Global Fund grants support the purchase of anti-retroviral drugs for AIDS patients, while PEPFAR ensures their delivery to patients. Thus, these drastic reductions to the Global Fund will affect U.S. efforts as well.

Our global health programs represent some of our most successful and effective international policies. In Pakistan, as I discussed today with Bill Gates, working with the government there, we could eliminate polio entirely. Our malaria programs have already virtually eliminated that killer of children in parts of Africa. The Centers for Disease Control are working to reduce the spread of drug-resistant diseases, such as tuberculosis, before they come to our own shores. Cutting off these programs is poor foreign policy, it is poor public health policy, and it stands in sharp contradiction to American values.

The House bill also cuts nearly two-thirds of the funds devoted to promoting clean energy and increasing resilience to climate change in the most vulnerable regions of the world. This includes eliminating funding for the Climate Investment Funds, which support exports of clean energy technology, help developing countries respond to the impacts of climate change, and promote increased carbon sequestration from forests. H.R.1 also eliminates government positions needed to negotiate international agreements on climate change that are favorable to the United States, while ensuring that other nations live up to their commitments to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

H.R. 1 also slashes food and education for the world's poorest children by 50 percent. It eliminates feeding programs for 18 million of the world's poorest and hungriest people, and approximately 2.5 million young children benefiting from McGovern-Dole program would lose their daily school meal. Another 15 million people, primarily women and children, would lose access to the sustenance provided through Title II. These cuts are not abstractions. These are people.

The House bill would even eliminate FY 2011 funding for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). USIP is more than a Washington think tank. Created by Congress and President Ronald Reagan, it is a working instrument, utilized by the Department of Defense as well as the Department of State. Defunding USIP would significantly reduce America's ability to find non-violent solutions to conflict, just as we trying to resolve wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. USIP's personnel operate on the ground in dangerous areas where America's security is threatened. For example, in 2007 USIP's reconciliation efforts between Shia authorities and Sunni sheiks helped dramatically reduce U.S. troop deaths in the "Triangle of Death" near Baghdad. That in turn allowed the U.S. Army to reduce its presence in the area by about 2,000 troops and save a significant amount of money. In a letter to the Office of Management and Budget, General Petraeus called this a "striking success story," and I ask unanimous consent that his letter be included in the Record at this time.

I've long been impressed with USIP's work in Sudan, where the Institute's training in electoral violence prevention contributed to the relatively peaceful referendum and the low levels of violence in its aftermath. USIP is now actively assisting in the development of a new constitution for Southern Sudan through its Rule of Law program. Recognizing the volatility of the north/south border areas and the potential for an outbreak of contagious violence, USIP has instituted a Cross-Border Grazing Corridor project and designed a Popular Consultations process in the troubled border states of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan.

In Pakistan, another area of great concern to me, USIP is developing a network of conflict management facilitators to work at the local level, training Pakistani parliamentarians and women leaders in conflict resolution and developing a curriculum for schools based on principles of gender equality, tolerance, pluralism, and peace.

Under the Senate substitute, USIP's funding would be reduced by almost 20 percent. But any greater reduction would threaten this federal institute that has proven it saves American lives and money. The drastic action of the House to defund USIP must not stand.

These sorts of severe cuts, which will reduce our capacity from Afghanistan to Sudan, from war zones to earthquake zones, will do almost nothing to rein in our budget deficit. But they will cost thousands of lives overseas, and they will increase the threats to our own country. At a time of great challenge to American interests abroad, we must step up at home and provide the vital funds that our diplomats need.