

Might Plus 'Smart Power'

Gen. James T. Hill and Adm. Robert J. Natter, Special to the Times

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As officers in the U.S. military, we were honored to be able to devote our careers to keeping America safe. We are proud to have served in the best and strongest military in the world, but our decades of experience have taught us that military might alone is not enough to protect the United States.

Today, some of the most serious threats facing our country from around the world come from poverty, disease, weak and failing states, and a lack of economic opportunity. Keeping America safe still requires a strong military. But more than ever, we must utilize all three tools of our national power — defense, diplomacy and development. Often called "smart power," this approach is absolutely essential for American security, prosperity and global leadership.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates has been an outspoken proponent of increasing U.S. diplomacy and development capabilities, saying, "When it comes to America's engagement with the rest of the world, it is important that the military is — and is clearly seen to be — in a supporting role to civilian agencies. Our diplomatic leaders — be they in ambassador's suites or on the seventh floor of the State Department — must have the resources and political support needed to fully exercise their statutory responsibilities in leading American foreign policy."

Gates' support for U.S. civilian agencies has been echoed by bipartisan leaders on Capitol Hill, senior officials in the Obama administration, and members of the military at the Pentagon and abroad.

We know personally the value of development and diplomacy. When we served in the armed forces, we each saw firsthand the important roles the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development play in sustaining and enhancing the military mission on the ground. The military does its job in bringing peace to armed conflict, but our civilian-led programs help ensure military progress results in longer-term security.

Over the past weeks, we have all watched Haiti struggle to recover from a devastating earthquake. But in the midst of this tragedy, Americans can be proud of the brave men and women in uniform working side-by-side with our development experts and diplomats. By putting the "smart power" approach to work, the American response to crisis is stronger and more effective.

Diplomacy and development are not just important for national security — they have a real impact on the economy, too. Florida exported over \$52 billion in goods overseas in 2008, which was an 87 percent increase over 2004. Given that developing countries are America's fastest growing markets, U.S. investments in countries overseas that enhance and build better trade are critical to Florida's economy.

Our nation's development and diplomatic efforts are funded by the International Affairs Budget. This covers programs that save lives, strengthen alliances, and improve opportunities for American businesses overseas — and it's less than 1.5 percent of the entire federal budget. Programs funded by the International Affairs Budget help people in

countries all over the world have a greater chance at peace, health, security and prosperity. In doing so, they make Florida and the nation both safer and more prosperous.

For too long, our nation's development experts and diplomats have had neither the resources nor the support to do their jobs with the greatest impact possible. A robust International Affairs Budget can make development and diplomacy initiatives more effective, and help ensure U.S. civilian institutions are able to serve as strong, capable partners with the U.S. military.

The good news is there is bipartisan support to increase the International Affairs Budget and to elevate our engagement with the world. As members of Congress begin their work on the next budget, it is imperative that our state's congressional delegation supports efforts to adequately fund our "smart power" tools — it's in the best interests of Florida, our country and in building a better, safer more prosperous world.

Gen. James T. Hill served as commander of the U.S. Southern Command, 2002-04. Adm. Robert J. Natter served as the commander in chief of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, 2000-03. Both are members of the National Security Advisory Council of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. Gen. David Petraeus is speaking Wednesday at an event sponsored by the coalition and the Tampa Bay Council of World Affairs and Commerce.