

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

October 4, 2011

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kerry:

We are living through a momentous period of change and upheaval. Revolutions are remaking the Middle East as fragile transitions take shape and tyrants test the limits of repression. Rising powers are making inroads and gaining influence. Economic setbacks have sparked debt crises and riots in European capitals. Troops are coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan, placing new demands on our civilians on the ground in both places. We face enemies who still wish to do us harm and global challenges like extreme poverty and food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, and loose nuclear materials, and here in America, we face an urgent need for economic renewal and jobs for the American people.

I write today to ask for your assistance securing America's leadership in a changing world.

We all know that Congress faces tough choices. However, the Department of State and USAID make up one percent of the entire federal budget; even the most drastic cuts to this essential investment in our national security barely would make a dent in our deficit.

I know that foreign policy can sometimes seem distant from the everyday concerns of your constituents, but nothing could be further from the truth. From opening new markets for American businesses to breaking up terrorist plots to creating the conditions that let our troops come home and stay home, our civilian presence around the world delivers real benefits to the American people.

With just one percent of the budget, State and USAID make an outsized contribution to America's security, prosperity, and global leadership. We are working across the globe to ensure that our foreign policy is a force for economic growth and job creation at home. State Department economic officers from Mexico City to Mumbai wake up each day looking for new ways to champion

American businesses and break down barriers to their entry. USAID is helping aid recipients become strong trading partners and creating new markets for American goods. We are advocating for transparent investment climates, and when we see American companies being treated unfairly, we step in.

We help prevent wars, defuse crises, protect our allies, promote democracy, provide life-saving food and medicine, negotiate to reduce the threat posed by loose nuclear material, prevent millions of deaths from humanitarian crises and preventable diseases, provide educational opportunities and clean water and sanitation for millions of poor families, evacuate Americans in harm's way, protect religious minorities, train police who fight drug cartels, oversee international adoptions, issue the passports that let Americans see the world, and do so much more. We address the drivers of extremism and conflict, which lightens the burden on our troops, and we are constantly reviewing our programs to see how we can get more out of every dollar of taxpayer money.

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a reasonable allocation for the Department of State and USAID – \$42.0 billion plus \$8.7 billion for our Overseas Contingency Operations. However, the House made deep cuts to our proposed fiscal year 2012 budget. These cuts would be on top of the 14 percent reduction to our fiscal year 2011 request.

These cuts are disproportionately higher than those proposed for other agencies. They also would compromise severely our ability to promote America's security, values, and economic interests around the world. The measures we would be forced to take could well include shuttering overseas posts; scaling back on the number of civilians working shoulder to shoulder with our troops; paring back our presence in the places where instability threatens all of us; and turning our backs on the world's hungry and sick, who depend for survival on the generosity of the American nation. As the Arab Awakening shakes the Middle East and the world's strategic center of gravity shifts toward Asia and the Pacific, now would be a dangerous time to retreat.

Many of you have shared with me your concern that, if we do not maintain our presence, other countries will take our place. If we want America to lead, we need to show up. Otherwise, other countries will promote their own values, create the jobs in their countries that should be created here, and increasingly claim the mantle of global leadership for themselves. None of us want to see that happen, and most people around the world do not either.

The world looks to the United States for leadership. When famine threatens the lives of millions or adversaries need an honest broker or fundamental freedoms need a champion, people turn to America. We are an unparalleled force for peace and progress.

Maintaining our leadership takes resolve, and it takes resources. I look forward to working closely with you to promote the full spectrum of American interests globally, to sustain and to expand our leadership, and to serve the American people.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hillary Rodham Clinton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Hillary Rodham Clinton