

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, urges you to support a strong and effective U.S. International Affairs Budget and oppose deep cuts to these programs.

U.S. businesses understand that diplomacy and development assistance play vital roles in building economic prosperity, protecting our national security, and promoting America's humanitarian values. The International Affairs Budget is critical to U.S. economic engagement with the world, especially at a time when there is a wide recognition of the need to boost U.S. exports to create American jobs.

Diplomacy and development programs are essential to creating jobs and spurring economic growth in the United States. The International Affairs Budget supports and protects U.S. diplomats, who are on the front lines of American commercial diplomacy and export promotion efforts. Additionally, U.S. foreign assistance programs provide technical advice and build stronger political, legal, and economic policy regimes in developing countries that help these nations to become reliable trading partners. This is more clearly the case than ever before, as developing countries last year purchased more than half of all U.S. exports for the first time in years.

As Defense Secretary Robert Gates has stated, "America's civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long ... relative to the responsibilities and challenges our nation has around the world." America must utilize all of the tools and resources it has to strengthen U.S. national interests and ensure global competitiveness. The Chamber urges you to support a strong and effective U.S. International Affairs Budget and oppose deep cuts to these important programs.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten