MILITARY LEADERS LETTER TO CONGRESS

March 30, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:

As retired flag and general officers of the U.S. military from all branches of the armed services, we are writing to express our belief that the International Affairs Budget, which funds our civilian-led efforts, is a critical part of our national security funding. We recognize that we must reduce our nation’s debt, but we urge you to support a strong and effective International Affairs Budget and oppose disproportionate cuts to this vital account.

When we entered the military, the world was a very different place. The threats and the world we faced were defined by the Cold War and the prospect of military conflict between nations. Today’s interconnected world knows no borders, and the United States must use all of its tools of national power and influence to foster political and economic stability, strengthen our allies, and fight complex threats such as the spread of disease, poverty, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Development and diplomacy keep us safer by addressing threats in the most dangerous corners of the world and by preventing conflicts before they occur. The State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development and other civilian-led programs are especially critical at a time when we are asking them to take on greater responsibilities in Iraq and Afghanistan. Addressing today’s challenges with civilian tools costs far less than it does to send in the military in dollars and, more importantly, in terms of the risks to the lives of our men and women in uniform. At just over one percent of federal spending, the International Affairs Budget is a strong return on our investment.

It may seem unusual for military men and women to speak on behalf of the non-military tools but we are not alone. Secretary of Defense Robert S. Gates has said that “without development we will not be successful in either Iraq or Afghanistan.” Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen recently testified before Congress, saying “I reiterate my unequivocal support to fully resource an expansion of…diplomacy and development capabilities, particularly in Iraq to support the transition from a military to a civilian-led mission.” General David Petraeus has said that “maintaining a close civil-military partnership is a critical part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign” and a “hugely important aspect of our operations.” And a recent poll found that ninety percent of active duty and retired military officers believe that a strong military alone is not enough to protect America, and we need to use the tools of development and diplomacy to achieve our national security objectives.

We must be able to improve our fiscal situation without sacrificing American leadership in the world. Therefore, we urge you to support a strong and effective International Affairs Budget. Our nation’s security depends upon it.

Signed,

General Michael W. Hagee, USMC (Ret.)
Co-Chair, National Security Advisory Council

Admiral James Loy, USCG (Ret.)
Co-Chair, National Security Advisory Council

See attached signatory list of 70 military leaders
Admiral Charles S. Abbot, USN (Ret.)
Deputy Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command ('98-'00)

Admiral Thad W. Allen, USCG (Ret.)
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (96-10)

Vice Admiral Albert J. Baciocco, Jr., USN (Ret.)
Director of Research, Development & Acquisition, Department of Navy (83-97)

Admiral Frank L. Bowman, USN (Ret.)
Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion (96-'04)

General Charles G. Boyd, USAF (Ret.)
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency (96-'99)

General James T. Hill, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (96-'99)

Admiral Timothy J. Keating, USN (Ret.)
Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force (91-'95)

Lt. General Claudia J. Kennedy, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Chief of Staff for Army Intelligence (97-'00)

General Paul J. Kern, USA (Ret.)
Commander General, U.S. Army Materiel Command (01-'04)

General William F. Kernan, USA (Ret.)
Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic/Commander in Chief, U.S. Joint Forces Command (00-'02)

Lt. General Donald L. Kerrick, USA (Ret.)
Deputy National Security Advisor to the President of the United States (00-'01)

Admiral Charles R. Larson, USN (Ret.)
Commander, U.S. Pacific Command (91-'94)

Vice Admiral Stephen F. Lofius, USN (Ret.)
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Logistics (90-'94)

Admiral T. Joseph "Joe" Lopez, USN (Ret.)
Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (94-'98)

Lt. General Patrick M. Hughes, USA (Ret.)
Director, Defense Information Systems Agency (96-'99)

General James L. Jamerson, USAF (Ret.)
Deputy Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (95-'98)

Lt. General Jerome L. Johnson, USA (Ret.)
Chief of Naval Operations (90-'92)

General John P. Jumper, USAF (Ret.)
Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force (01-'05)

General Paul V. Hester, USAF (Ret.)
Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe/Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (91-'93)

Lt. General Jeffrey W. Oster, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Administrator and Chief Operating Officer, Coalition Provisional Authority, Iraq (2004); Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources, Headquarters Marine Corps (ended in 98)

Lt. General Charles P. Oststatt, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Chairman, NATO military Committee (90-'92)

Admiral William A. Owens, USN (Ret.)
Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (94-'96)

Admiral Joseph W. Prueher, USN (Ret.)
Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (96-'99)

Lt. General Harry D. Raduege, Jr., USAF (Ret.)
Director, Defense Information Systems Agency (90-'05); Commander, Joint Task Force for Global Network Operations (94-'05)

Lt. General Lee F. Gunn, USN (Ret.)
Director, U.S. Joint Staff (94-'97)

Lt. General Richard D. Hearn, USMC (Ret.)
Assistant Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps (94-'96)

Lt. General Joseph W. Ray, USN (Ret.)
Deputy Chairman, NATO Military Committee (92-'95)

General James E. T. Dobbins, III, USA (Ret.)
Secretary of the Navy (07-'08)

General Richard E. Hawley, USMC (Ret.)
Commander, Air Mobility Command (90-'94)

General Michael B. Donley, USAF (Ret.)
Assistant Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (96-'04)

Lt. General Paul E. Jones, USAF (Ret.)
Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (00-'01)

General James T. Conway, USA (Ret.)
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (99-'01)

Lt. General Birgitte J. Smidt, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (98-'99)

Lt. General Robert J. Natter, USN (Ret.)
Commander in Chief, Fleet Forces Command (96-'99)

Lt. General Gregory S. Newbold, USMC (Ret.)
Director of Operations, J-3 Joint Staff (90-'02)

General William L. Lyman, USMC (Ret.)
Assistant Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps (02-'05)

Lt. General Robert W. RisCassi, USA (Ret.)
Commander in Chief, United Nations Command/Commander in Chief, Republic of Korea/U.S. Combined Forces Command (90-'93)

Lt. General Norman R. Seip, USAF (Ret.)
Commander, 12th Air Force/Air Forces Southern Europe (96-'09)

General John M. Shalikashvili, USA (Ret.)
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (93-'97)

Lt. General Charles B. Brown, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (97-'00)

Lt. General Michael T. Sullivan, USA (Ret.)
U.S. Military Representative to NATO Military Committee (96-'09)

Admiral Leighton W. Smith, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (97-'01)

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Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (97-'01)

President, Naval War College (03-'04)

General Peter J. Schoomaker, USA (Ret.)
Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (03-'07)

Lt. General Patrick M. Hughes, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Commandant, U.S. Naval Forces Europe/Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (96-'99)

Lt. General Richard W. Myers, USA (Ret.)
Commander, Air Mobility Command (90-'94)

General Michael J. Williams, USMC (Ret.)
Assistant Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps (00-'02)

President, National Defense University, 1977-1981

Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., USN (Ret.)
Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (96-'99)

Lt. General Richard W. Myers, USA (Ret.)
Commander, Air Mobility Command (90-'94)

Lt. General Patrick M. Hughes, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Commandant, U.S. Naval Forces Europe/Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (96-'99)

Lt. General Paul T. Mikolashek, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Commandant, U.S. Army Materiel Command (02-'05)

Vice Admiral Ronald A. Route, USN (Ret.)
Naval Inspector General (94-'97)

Lt. General Jerome L. Johnson, USA (Ret.)
Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force (90-'92)

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Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet/Commander, Fleet Forces Command (90-'93)