



November 14, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:

As former Secretaries of State from both Democratic and Republican administrations, we urge you to support a strong and effective International Affairs Budget. We believe these programs are critical to America's global leadership and represent strategic investments in our nation's security and prosperity.

We have seen first-hand how the International Affairs Budget is a strategic investment to advance America's interests throughout the world. Development and diplomacy programs are a cost-effective tool to tackle the root causes of conflict and extremism, build new markets for U.S. goods and services, respond to humanitarian crises, and demonstrate America's proud tradition of goodwill and global leadership.

We recognize the gravity of America's fiscal situation and that all programs must contribute their fair share to reducing our nation's debt. Yet, the International Affairs Budget -- only 1.4% of the federal budget -- already received deep and disproportionate cuts this year. These programs are facing additional reductions in FY12 disproportionate to other security accounts-- cuts that could be the steepest since the end of the Cold War.

Given the challenges and the opportunities facing our nation today, it is more vital than ever that we utilize a full range of tools to address these issues and advance our national interests. Now is not the time for America to retreat from the world, which is why we need a strong and effective International Affairs Budget. This is one area where leaders of both parties can find common ground and come together to ensure a better, safer world and a more prosperous future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Madeleine Albright".

Madeleine K. Albright
U.S. Secretary of State, 1997-2001

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry A. Kissinger".

Henry A. Kissinger
U.S. Secretary of State, 1973- 1977

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin L. Powell".

Colin L. Powell
U.S. Secretary of State, 2001 - 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Condoleezza Rice".

Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Secretary of State, 2005 - 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George P. Shultz".

George P. Shultz
U.S. Secretary of State, 1982 - 1989