

# NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY COUNCIL



## An Open Letter to the 2012 Presidential Candidates

November 18, 2011

The next Commander in Chief will face a complex and difficult set of global challenges. Recently, many candidates for president have spoken of the need to listen to the advice of military leaders on national security, and we appreciate the respect shown to our men and women in uniform. We are writing to emphasize our belief that in addition to a strong defense, strategic and effective foreign assistance is critical to advancing our national interests.

When we entered military service, the world was a very different place. Our Cold War enemies were easy to recognize. In today's interconnected world, the enemies we face know no borders, and the complex threats such as the spread of disease, poverty, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction cannot be dealt with by military means alone. To meet these challenges and protect our national security, we need to use a range of tools in our foreign policy arsenal.

From our own military experience, we know that foreign assistance, development, and diplomacy can keep America safer by addressing threats in the most dangerous corners of the world and by preventing conflicts before they occur. These programs are especially critical at a time when we are asking our diplomats and development experts to take on greater responsibilities in Iraq and Afghanistan, and finish the job of our brave men and women in uniform.

We urge all candidates to follow the advice of our military leaders by supporting a smart power approach to national security that embraces a strategic investment in our foreign assistance programs.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Admiral James M. Loy in black ink.

Admiral James M. Loy, USCG (Ret.)

Handwritten signature of General Michael W. Hagee in black ink.

General Michael W. Hagee, USMC (Ret.)

*The authors are co-chairs of the US Global Leadership Coalition's National Security Advisory Council, a group of over 100 retired three- and four-star flag and general officers.*

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