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Congressional Progressive Caucus

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81 Strong and Growing: Open to New and Different Ideas

April 6, 2010

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

As members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, we want to express our deep commitment to U.S. humanitarian and development assistance programs that are critical to America's global engagement and to saving lives around the world. That is why we write to strongly support the President's FY 2011 request for at least \$58.5 billion for the International Affairs Budget and urge its full inclusion in the FY 2011 budget resolution.

Programs supported by the International Affairs Budget showcase America's humanitarian values, our compassion for those in need, and help build a healthier and more peaceful world. America's goodwill, innovation, and investment – both through public and private sources – is essential to addressing severe poverty, hunger, disease, environmental degradation and numerous other global challenges: 10 million children are dying every year of preventable diseases before their fifth birthday; 77 million children are out of school; more than one billion people are without clean water; and over two billion people are without basic sanitation.

By helping to alleviate suffering, fight disease, and promote more transparent and democratic institutions, the United States creates opportunities for individuals to lift themselves out of poverty and build better lives. Already this year we have seen the critical role of our International Affairs programs in the lives of millions of Haitians and Chileans in response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti and now in Chile. Needs like this exist every day, in every corner of the globe.

Ensuring full funding for the President's International Affairs Budget request is critical to continuing these efforts and to supporting new initiatives on food security, climate change, and global health that we all support. It is important to note that the FY 2011 International Affairs Budget request for these and other non-war activities is a modest \$2.5 billion (or 4.8%) increase above current levels. The President's request also seeks to expand the Peace Corps and create a new initiative to forge better and new relations with Muslim communities globally, and bolster our support for critical multilateral institutions.

We applaud President Obama's continued pledge to double U.S. foreign assistance by FY 2015. The FY 2011 request would hold true to this commitment. However, any cuts to the International Affairs Budget would severely endanger meeting this objective. And make no mistake, U.S. foreign assistance is very much in America's national security and economic interests.

Letter to Chairman Spratt
March 31, 2009
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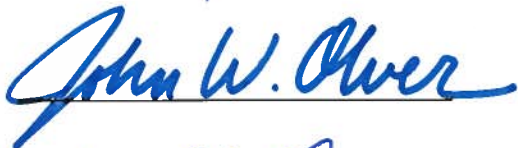
Representing less than 1.5% of all federal spending, the International Affairs Budget funds America's development and diplomacy efforts that are absolutely essential to addressing the myriad of challenges around the world. As a nation, we cannot afford to under-invest in these programs. We urge you to support the President's funding request of at least \$58.5 billion and to oppose any reductions in this account.

Sincerely,



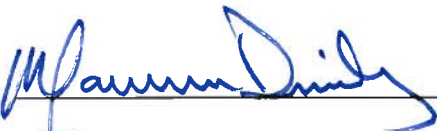
Lynn Woolsey, Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus




















Raul Grijalva, Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus

















~~John Sears~~
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