

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2009

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Conrad and Senator Gregg:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2010 Senate Budget Resolution, we strongly urge you to support full funding for the Obama Administration's \$51.7 billion FY10 Budget request for the State Department and foreign assistance and for the entire U.S. International Affairs Budget in the Chairman's mark. A robust International Affairs Budget reinforces the continued bipartisan commitment of Congress and the Obama Administration to invest in the strategic tools that are essential to ensuring our national security, building economic prosperity and promoting important American values.

The global realities of the 21st century require America to utilize the full range of non-military initiatives as a fundamental pillar of our national security. President Obama and Secretary Clinton have put forth detailed and comprehensive proposals to elevate diplomacy and development, alongside defense, in U.S. global engagement. As Secretary Clinton stated: "The United States is committed to a new era of diplomacy and development in which we will use smart power to work with historic allies and emerging nations to find regional and global solutions to common global problems."

President Obama has emphasized: "Progress will not come quickly or easily, nor can we promise to right every single wrong around the world. But we can pledge to use all elements of American power to protect our people and to promote our interests and ideals, starting with principled, focused and sustained American diplomacy."

Secretary Gates, national security and foreign policy experts across the political spectrum support an increase in the International Affairs Budget as an essential component of our national security. The 2006 National Security Strategy, the Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review, the 9/11 Commission and the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group all conclude that diplomacy and development reduce long-term threats to our national security and call for increased investments in the full range of diplomatic, development and humanitarian tools to deliver long-term U.S. foreign policy success.

America has a proud history of bringing hope to millions of people who live under oppressive poverty, face starvation, battle HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases or suffer the consequences of conflict and insecurity. Continued investments in diplomatic, economic, democracy, and development programs are critical to building global stability and saving lives.

In view of the importance of development and diplomacy to U.S. global engagement, there is strong bipartisan support for the International Affairs Budget in Congress. In December 2008, 217 Members of Congress, including a bipartisan majority of 51 Senators and 166 Representatives, sent letters to President Obama urging his support for a robust FY10 International Affairs Budget request. Last year, by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 73 to 23, the Senate restored \$4.1 billion to the International Affairs Budget.

The International Affairs Budget strengthens America's civilian capabilities and energizes our outreach to the world. Nevertheless, the International Affairs Budget remains dangerously underfunded – currently 11 percent below Cold War levels – hindering the ability of our civilian agencies to fully participate in meeting our foreign policy goals.

Mr. Chairman, we urge you to support the Administration's full request level of \$51.7 billion for the FY10 International Affairs Budget.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein

Dick Lugar

John F. Kerry

Ron Wyden

Dick Durbin

Norm Feinstein

Chris Dodd

Barack Sanders

Tom Harkin

Robert M. Meyer

George V. Voinovich

Frank R. Lautenberg