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March 26, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:


As Democratic Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, we are writing to express our profound disappointment that the Budget Committee slashed the President's request for the function 150 international affairs budget by nearly 10 percent. Assuming that the President's upcoming supplemental for the Department of State and other foreign affairs activities is fully funded, the Budget Committee's recommendation of \$48.5 billion for fiscal year 2010 will represent a cut from the FY2009 appropriated level. This will force President Obama to request additional funds in a future supplemental that should be part of the 2010 regular budget – an unacceptable approach that undermines our stated goal of “honest budgeting.”

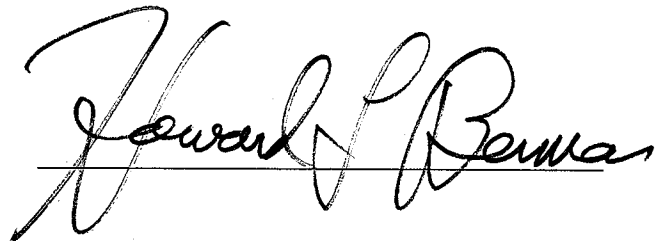
These cuts are unwise and harmful to our national security. The International Affairs Budget invests in the strategic tools that are essential to protecting our national security, building economic prosperity and demonstrating our moral values. Regrettably, it remains massively underfunded, hindering the ability of our civilian agencies to meet our key foreign policy priorities. Indeed, the Budget Committee's short-sighted recommendation significantly undermines the President's decision to deploy hundreds of additional civilian experts to Afghanistan to support our shared objective of bringing stability to that country and preventing Al-Qaeda from threatening the U.S. homeland. This is just one example of how the International Affairs Budget can be a cost-effective way of reducing our reliance on the U.S. military to perform essentially civilian diplomatic and development missions.

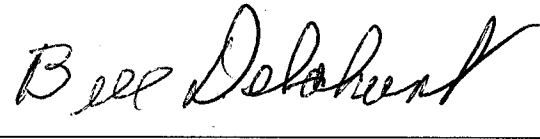
We are particularly shocked that the vast majority of the \$7 billion in cuts to the non-defense discretionary budget for FY 2010 appears to have come directly from the critical International Affairs Budget. The Chairman's mark clearly fails to reflect the strong support for fully funding the 150 budget expressed by key members of Blue Dog Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Progressive Caucus and the New Democrats.

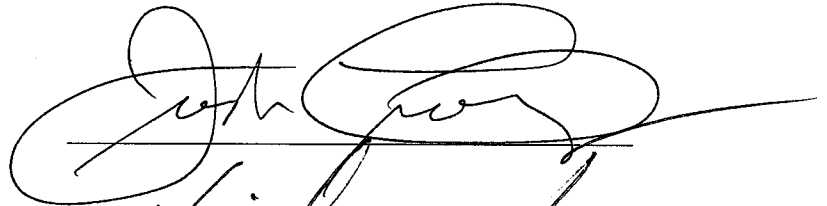
President Obama has given our nation a unique opportunity to restore the standing of the United States with the rest of the world. The 150 account gives him and Secretary Clinton the tools they need to fulfill this promise and recover the moral leadership that the United States lost over the last eight years. If we truly believe that the path to U.S. success abroad is by exerting U.S. "smart power", then we as Democrats must stand with the President in fully supporting his budget request and thereby reinvigorating diplomacy and development as two of the three essential pillars of our national security.

Sincerely,

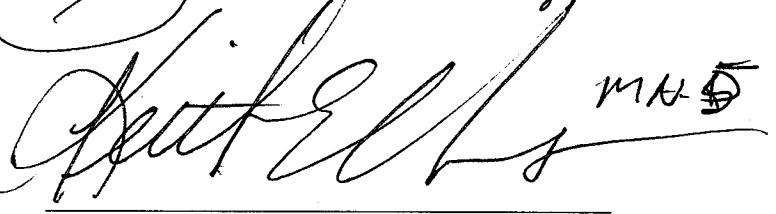


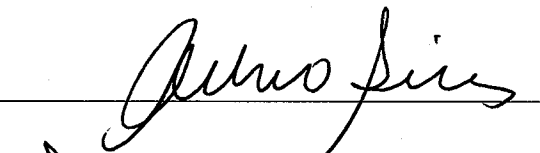


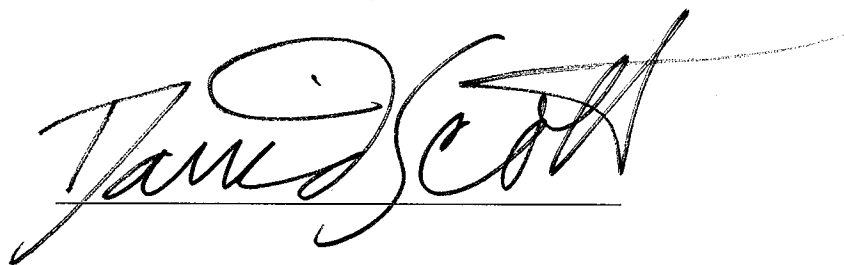




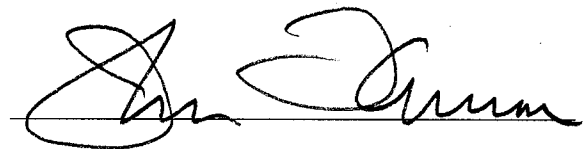


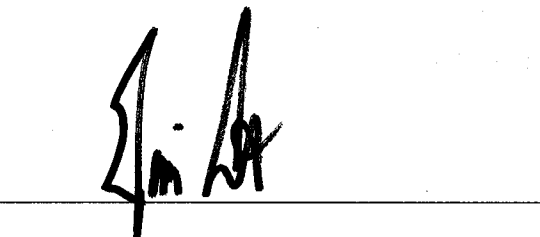


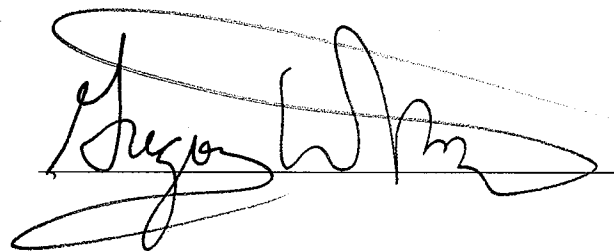












cc: The Honorable Steny Hoyer
The Honorable John M. Spratt, Jr.

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Salomon [unclear]

Sam Carmel

Erwin L. Engel

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Michael E. [unclear]

Donald A. Payne

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Barbara Lee

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