

MILITARY LEADERS' LETTER TO CONGRESS -- (Extensions of Remarks - March 22, 2010)

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SPEECH OF
HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2010

- Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to submit this letter signed by 48 retired four- and three-star generals/flag officers urging Congress to support the President's FY11 International Affairs Budget request--given its importance to U.S. national security. These military leaders state that ``balancing our military power with the range of International Affairs programs funded by the International Affairs Budget is critical to stabilizing fragile states, combating terrorism, and deterring

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threats before they reach America's shores." I couldn't agree more, and appreciate the hard work that these signatories and the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition have done to support our international affairs budget.

March 10, 2010.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: As retired officers of the U.S. military across all branches of the armed services, we are writing to express our support for the President's FY 2011 International Affairs Budget request, a fundamental pillar of U.S. national security and foreign policy. The critical programs in the International Affairs Budget invest in the non-military tools of development and diplomacy, foster economic and political stability on a global scale, strengthen our allies, and fight the spread of poverty, disease, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Continuing the bipartisan precedent set by the Bush Administration, the Obama Administration views the International Affairs Budget as part of the national security funding alongside Defense, Homeland Security, Intelligence, and Veterans programs. However, the International Affairs Budget remains underfunded, representing 1.4 percent of the entire federal budget and less than 7 percent of our total national security funding.

Our view is shared by Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who has stated that ``America's civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long--relative to what we traditionally spend on the military, and more important, relative to the responsibilities and challenges our nation has around the world." Secretary Gates and other military leaders believe, as we do, that our national security is dependent not only on a strong military force but also on increased

investments in the full range of diplomatic, development and humanitarian tools funded through the International Affairs Budget.

The United States must combine its strong military with robust, effective civilian tools of international development and diplomacy to secure its national interests in an era when many of the challenges of the 21st century recognize no borders. While our military power can provide the logistics and organizational support to help those in need in times of humanitarian crisis, as demonstrated by our current efforts in Haiti, it can only help create the conditions necessary to allow the other tools of statecraft--our diplomatic, development and humanitarian programs--to effectively address these issues.

Balancing our military power with the range of International Affairs programs funded by the International Affairs Budget is critical to stabilizing fragile states, combating terrorism, and deterring threats before they reach America's shores. Therefore, we urge you to support no less than the Administration's request of \$58.5 billion for the International Affairs Budget.

Sincerely,

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