

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2008

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairman Conrad and Ranking Member Gregg:

We urge you to maintain the Senate position on International Affairs funding during conference negotiations with the House on the Fiscal Year 2009 budget resolution. Maintaining the President's requested level of funding, \$39.8 billion, is critical to protecting our national security and furthering our economic interests abroad.

Seventy-three senators voted for an amendment that restored this funding to the level requested by the President. This was the most significant shift in spending priorities agreed on by the Senate during debate on the budget resolution, and its adoption was broadly bipartisan.

As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has said, "Having robust civilian capabilities could make it less likely that military force will have to be used in the first place." The Committee on Foreign Relations recently heard testimony from two retired flag officers, representing more than fifty fellow retired flag officers, making the same point.

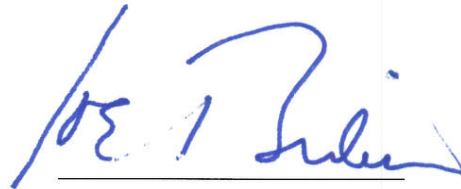
Currently, for every fifteen dollars we spend on the military, barely one dollar goes to the civilian component of our international efforts. Defending the Senate-passed funding level for the International Affairs budget will help us maintain funding for critical programs such as the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the fight against global AIDS, nonproliferation efforts, and refugee and development assistance.

The Senate has spoken clearly on these priorities, and we urge you to maintain the Senate-passed position. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



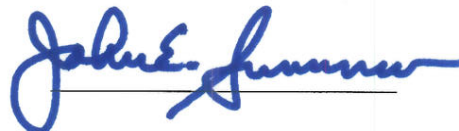
Dick Lugar



Judd Gregg



Dick Durbin



John E. Sununu

Dianne Feinstein

Ch. Sit

Jack Reed

Patrick Leahy

Robert A. Menendez

M. Min

Jon Lieber

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Olympia Snowe

Susan M. Collins

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Hillary Rodham Clinton

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