

Protect a National Security Asset: Vote NO on Buck Amendment

Sending Office: Honorable Adam Kinzinger (R-IL)

Dear Colleague,

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) plays a vital role in our country's national security apparatus. Created by Congress in 1984 and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, USIP is nonpartisan institute dedicated to reducing violent conflict abroad. Specialized teams of USIP mediators and trainers work in some of the most fragile and dangerous places in the world—like Iraq, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Ukraine, South Sudan, and more—equipping local civil society with the skills necessary to prevent or resolve their own violent conflicts *themselves* before they threaten the U.S. USIP's cost-effective approach serves as a force multiplier for U.S. national security interests by helping to preserve U.S. investments in hard-won military gains and economic support in post-conflict environments.

USIP's mission of reducing violence at a local level to bolster U.S. national security has never been more essential. With ISIS on the ropes in Iraq, a long-term and stable Iraqi society is necessary to preventing the reconstitution of the terrorist threat. USIP's engagement helps people to create and maintain their own ability to resolve conflicts without violence.

For example, at the request of the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division, the USIP successfully negotiated a 2007 peace agreement in Mahmoudiya, Iraq located in the infamous "Triangle of Death." Soon after, violence was dramatically reduced among the warring Sunni and Shia tribes and the Army was able to curtail 80 percent of its deployment in the region – thus saving more than \$150 million per month. That initiative cost USIP approximately \$1 million and this local peace accord holds to this day.

Former National Security Advisor and current USIP Chairman of the Board Stephen Hadley echoed the value of USIP-facilitated efforts, stating: *"the fact that this peace agreement has sustained stability and improved Iraqis' lives for a decade—the fact that we can celebrate that act of peacemaking today, in 2017—is proof that the model can work. That proof is a vital source of hope and conviction as Iraqis and other peoples across the Middle East struggle to end the violent conflict and extremism so widely spread throughout the region, and to replace them with governance that meets their populations' needs."* It is imperative that USIP continues its work today in Iraq and in other conflict zones where it's uniquely positioned to build local civil society's capacity to mediate and solve their own internal conflicts without costly foreign intervention.

In addition to its work in Iraq, USIP links research, policy, and training with application of practical solutions in conflict-affected countries to help stem the rising toll of violent conflict around the world. In Burma, USIP trained civic leaders, government officials, and police to help achieve a peaceful 2015 election for a more democratic government during a delicate transition from autocratic rule to democracy. In Tunisia, USIP provided training to Tunisian university students on how to resolve conflicts without violence in order to inhibit extremist recruitment among a highly vulnerable Tunisian population.

The Buck Amendment (#94) to Division G of H.R. 3354, the Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act, would zero out funding for USIP. This amendment would have a devastating effect on U.S. national security interests in Iraq and across the Middle East. **Consequently, we urge our colleagues to vote against the Buck Amendment.** As a nation, we should be investing in USIP's low-cost, high-impact efforts to protect our national security and not destroy the hard-fought gains our men and women in uniform gave their lives to achieve in Iraq and throughout the world.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please have your staff contact Zach Silberman in Rep. Adam Kinzinger's office at zach.silberman@mail.house.gov or 5-3635, Sarah Callaway in Rep. Tom Rooney's office at sarah.callaway@mail.house.gov or 5-5792, or Scott Hughes in Rep. Liz Cheney's office at scott.hughes@mail.house.gov or 5-2311.

Sincerely,

Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL)

Rep. Thomas J. Rooney (R-FL)

Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY)

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress