



VETERANS *for* SMART POWER

February 11, 2021

Dear Chairmen Moulton and Banks,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to America's current and future national security needs. The U.S. Global Leadership Coalition's Veterans for Smart Power (VSP) network – which consists of more than 30,000 veterans from across the U.S. – applauds the strong bipartisan leadership of the Future of Defense Task Force to ensure our nation's defense assets and capabilities can meet the challenges of emerging threats.

As the Task Force's 2020 report rightfully recognizes, the complex global threats facing our nation cannot be solved by military power alone. This is especially true amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, and why a "whole of government" approach is essential to securing U.S. interests around the world – and ultimately protecting American families and communities here at home. As General Joseph Votel, U.S. Army (Ret.) and Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, III, U.S. Navy (Ret.) emphasize, "strengthening our global health security is critical for our national security because what happens in other countries will undoubtedly echo back into our own. "

Development and diplomacy are critical components alongside a strong national defense, especially in today's rapidly changing world. Strategic investments to tackle the root causes of conflict and instability around the globe from famine and poverty to violent extremism and mass migration – all of which have been exacerbated by COVID-19 – are critical for the success of our nation's long term national security interests. These investments are also cost effective – for every \$1 spent on conflict prevention, the U.S. saves \$16 in response costs.

The Task Force rightfully emphasizes the U.S., "must invest in whole-of-government tools like diplomacy, foreign economic aid, research and development, and education" to meet the complex global threats and challenges of today and tomorrow. The fact is the State Department, USAID and our other development agencies are more important than ever in advancing our nation's interests and values, and we look forward to supporting your ongoing efforts to advance a comprehensive approach to national security that includes a fully resourced civilian toolkit alongside a strong military.

Thank you again for your leadership and commitment to our nation's safety and prosperity,

Sincerely,