



Open Letter to Members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction

October 3, 2011

On behalf of the more than 400 business and NGO members of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC), including business, military, and faith-based leaders in all 50 states, we strongly urge you to **oppose deep and disproportionate cuts to the International Affairs Budget in your upcoming work on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction.**

Our coalition recognizes the gravity of America's fiscal challenges and appreciates the significant undertaking before the committee to return our nation to solid fiscal ground. We agree that all programs must contribute their fair share to reducing our national debt. We are very concerned, however, that development and diplomacy accounts are being forced to shoulder disproportionately deep cuts compared to other accounts.

The International Affairs Budget absorbed nearly 20% of the total spending cuts in the final FY11 spending agreement earlier this year, even though it is only 1.4% of the budget. The dramatic reductions to non-war related programs in the House FY12 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill – in some cases more than 30% below current levels – would cut back even more and further diminish U.S. global engagement and competitiveness.

International Affairs programs are strategic, cost-effective investments that help tackle the root causes of conflict and extremism, respond to humanitarian crises, and build new markets for U.S. goods and services. Military leaders – including former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, and General Petraeus – have all been adamant that deep budget cuts to development and diplomacy programs will be detrimental to our national security.

The International Affairs Budget also plays a major role in U.S. economic growth and job creation. With ninety-five percent of the world's consumers living outside our borders, the strength of the U.S. economy is directly linked to our ability to tap new and emerging markets overseas. The report, "[America's Global Leadership: A Strategic Investment for U.S. Jobs](#)," authored by executives of leading U.S. businesses such as Caterpillar and Walmart, highlights the many ways the International Affairs Budget boosts our economy here at home.

Now is not the time to retreat in support of programs that protect America's national security and create conditions for growth and prosperity at home. Moreover, these cuts could actually cost taxpayers more in the long run through costly military involvement and humanitarian crises.

We urge you to avoid further deep and disproportionate cuts to the International Affairs Budget and hope you will look to our coalition as a resource during the Committee's deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Rupp".

George Rupp, International Rescue Committee
Co-President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Lane".

Bill Lane, Caterpillar
Co-President