



MILITARY LEADERS' LETTER TO CONGRESS

March 27, 2012

Dear Member of Congress:

As retired flag and general officers from all branches of the Armed Services, we urge you to support a strong FY13 International Affairs Budget and to oppose disproportionate cuts to this vital account. We firmly believe the development and diplomacy programs in the International Affairs Budget are critical to America's national security.

The world has changed dramatically since the Cold War when we began our military service, and so have the threats we face. In today's ever-complex world, we must use all the tools of national security to achieve our objectives, including a strong State Department and other civilian-led agencies.

Development and diplomacy keep us safer by addressing threats in the most dangerous corners of the world and by preventing conflicts before they occur. Our civilian-led programs are particularly critical at a time when we are asking them to take on greater responsibilities with the military drawdown in Iraq that began this past December and the impending transition to a civilian-led mission in Afghanistan.

Ensuring our civilian programs have the resources needed to maintain the hard fought gains of our military is of the utmost importance. To do otherwise endangers the lives of our men and women in uniform. And at only 1.4% of the federal budget, these programs represent one of the most cost effective measures we have to confront the many threats we face today.

Military leaders and national security experts – from Republican and Democratic Administrations alike –have consistently called for robust funding of the State Department, USAID, and other civilian-led agencies. Secretary of Defense Panetta and Former Secretary of Defense Gates have spoken of how vital our civilian tools are to national security and lamented that these programs were not more adequately funded and resourced. Secretary Panetta recently said, "Strong national security is dependent on having a strong diplomatic arm, a strong development arm, a strong intelligence arm, a strong capability to try to have strong economies in the world." And a recent survey shows that ninety percent of active duty and retired military officers believe that a strong military alone is not enough to protect America and that we must use the tools of development and diplomacy to achieve our national security objectives.

The reality of our nation's fiscal crisis demands that every area of the federal budget must contribute its fair share to tackling our unsustainable debt. However, we can – and must -- achieve these debt reductions without sacrificing American leadership in the world. Therefore, we urge you to oppose deep and disproportionate cuts to America's development and diplomacy programs and to support a strong FY13 International Affairs Budget. Our nation's security depends upon it.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James M. Loy".

Admiral James M. Loy, USCG (Ret.)
Co-Chair, National Security Advisory Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. W. Hagee".

General Michael W. Hagee, USMC (Ret.)
Co-Chair, National Security Advisory Council

See attached signatory list of over 80 military leaders

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March 27, 2012

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