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Congressional Letters Calling for a Strong International Affairs Budget

Members of the House and Senate are circulating letters to President-elect Barack Obama that urges him to support a robust international affairs budget for fiscal year 2010, which includes critical security assistance for Israel.

The letters, led by Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) in the Senate and by Reps. Howard Berman (D-CA) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) in the House, send a strong message to our elected officials that during this period of economic uncertainty and political change, our country must not turn its back on the rest of the world. The international affairs budget directly funds vital security assistance to Israel and thus plays a critical role in ensuring that our close ally has the resources to maintain its qualitative military edge and to defend itself against increasing threats.

- The international affairs budget directly funds aid to Israel and thus plays a critical role in ensuring that Israel has the resources to defend itself against increasing threats, including a possible nuclear-armed Iran.
- The foreign aid programs funded in the international affairs budget are a critical component of our country's leadership tools, enabling us to support critical allies such as Israel and exert influence on the international stage.
- In this time of economic uncertainty and political change, our country must not turn its back on the rest of the world, and should provide the necessary resources for foreign aid and diplomacy to maintain strong U.S. leadership.
- The international affairs budget reflects our humanitarian and democratic values and is critical to promoting global stability and to building overseas markets for American goods and services.
- Both America and Israel have long recognized that their mutual interests in deterring war, promoting stability and achieving peace are only possible if the U.S. continues to help ensure Israel's qualitative military edge over its potential adversaries.
- The international affairs budget is an investment America can afford to make, representing only 1.2 percent of all federal spending, or about one cent of every federal dollar spent.
- As President-elect Barack Obama prepares to take office and plans his budget for fiscal year 2010, it is critical that he hears from Congress about the importance of a robust international affairs budget that includes vital security assistance for Israel.