

March XX, 2017

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Enzi, Ranking Member Sanders, Chairman Cochran, and Ranking Member Leahy:

We write to express strong bipartisan support for robust funding for the Fiscal Year 2018 International Affairs Budget. This budget invests in the strategic tools that are essential to promoting our national security, building economic prosperity, furthering humanitarian and democratic principles, and demonstrating American values. At a time when we face multiple national security challenges around the world, deep cuts in this area would be shortsighted, counterproductive, and even dangerous.

Today's national security challenges require the United States to utilize a full range of non-military tools to ensure our nation's safety. The United States International Affairs Budget bolsters our security through programs that identify and help mitigate threats, improve the political and economic lives of others, address humanitarian crises, and help stabilize fragile states that are prone to become unstable havens for terrorism. Aid workers and our diplomats are indispensable partners in these efforts, and depriving them of critical resources would make Americans less safe.

Republican and Democratic national security and foreign policy experts have long championed a strong International Affairs Budget as a key component of our national security. For example, retired general and former Secretary of State Colin Powell recently emphasized the importance of effective diplomacy and the need to properly fund the International Affairs Budget. As you know, in February, more than 120 retired generals and admirals urged that "resources for the International Affairs Budget keep pace with the growing global threats and opportunities we face," arguing, "Now is not the time to retreat." The letter further noted that while the military will lead the fight against terrorism on the battlefield, "it needs strong civilian partners in the battle against the drivers of extremism— lack of opportunity, insecurity, injustice, and hopelessness." It is also worth noting that now-Secretary of Defense James Mattis said while Commander of the US Central Command, that, "If you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition."

As your committees make important decisions, it is also worth considering the words of former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates. He said, "One of the most important lessons of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is that military success is not sufficient to win: economic development, institution-

building and the rule of law, promoting internal reconciliation, good governance, providing basic services to the people, training and equipping indigenous military and police forces, strategic communications, and more – these, along with security, are essential ingredients for long term success.” We could not agree more, and we believe that deep cuts to our International Affairs Budget would ignore these hard-won lessons learned.

Given the escalating international threats to our country’s security, when it comes to our International Affairs Budget, we would be wise to heed the advice of experienced and respected statesmen and leaders like Secretaries Powell, Mattis, and Gates.

There is no question that we must conduct assertive oversight, scrutinize the value of every program, and eliminate waste and inefficiency – including within the International Affairs Budget. However, deep cuts to the International Affairs Budget would undermine our country’s economic and national security interests, as well as the humanitarian and democratic principles we support. For these reasons, we urge you to ensure that Congress supports robust funding for the Fiscal Year 2018 International Affairs Budget.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Todd Young
United States Senator