

□ July 27th, 2011 □

“Thank you Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey and Chairman Rogers for the work that you and your staffs have done on this bill. I appreciate that the majority worked closely with our side to put this bill together and that we were able to find common ground on a few key issues. In particular I am encouraged that the bill fully funds our commitment to Israel, about \$3.1 billion, and that it meets our funding obligations to Jordan and Egypt. Given the political upheaval in the Arab world, the bill also contains some sensible precautionary measures to assure that U.S. support is not finding its way into the wrong hands.

“What is most discouraging about this bill, however, is the allocation that the Republican leadership has recommended. It is a level that, in my judgment, will significantly set back our diplomatic efforts overseas and threaten our national security. The amount included in this bill to carry out the foreign policy and diplomatic obligations of the United States government is \$11.25 billion below the President’s request for the next fiscal year and it is \$8.6 billion below the amount approved this year.

“At these levels the damage will indeed be serious. It proposes deep cuts to the State Department’s core programs. Diplomatic and Consular Programs would be slashed by \$3.1 billion a 35 percent reduction below the current level. These programs fund the people, platforms and activities necessary to conduct official U.S. representation at 270 posts in more than 180 countries around the world. While the majority may want to believe that it will be politically popular to propose drastic cuts in foreign aid, especially at this time, these are cuts to the most basic functions of the Department of State that will greatly hinder its ability to manage diplomatic affairs and further the interests of the United States worldwide. I caution my colleagues that there is a national security dimension to reductions of this magnitude at a time when the world is not getting any less dangerous and when U.S. diplomatic efforts are more important than ever.

“In addition, the threat posed to our overseas personnel at embassies and consulates is as serious now as it has been at any time in our nation’s history. Thus I was disappointed to see in this bill a reduction of 21 percent below the budget request for Embassy Security. That makes no sense. Not only would this bill diminish the most basic diplomatic needs of the Department, but it would be imposing unacceptable risks to the security of State Department personnel

stationed abroad.

“I regret also that this bill proposes a devastating, \$3.5 billion cut to bilateral economic assistance programs. The Global Health and Child Survival account would be cut by \$715 million below the current year, and it designates no specific funding is included for important programs like the Global Fund or the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization. Development Assistance is cut by \$452 million below FY 2011, and at that level USAID would clearly not be able to fully fund Feed the Future or programs to reduce global poverty, help educate kids or provide safe drinking water.

“Again, I understand that there are those here in Congress who believe foreign assistance should be reduced at a time when our domestic economy is struggling. I believe we must take a hard look must be taken at these programs to make sure that they are both efficient and effective. But I have grave concerns about the effect that cuts of this magnitude will have on the security of our nation and on our ability to carry out our fundamental foreign policy objectives.

“No federal programs generate as much goodwill to America and U.S. interests on the ground in foreign countries as our economic assistance programs. As a percentage of our budget, foreign assistance is an exceedingly small amount of money, but it plays a vital role around the world. U.S. support for health care, education and basic infrastructure such as roads and clean water in impoverished countries shows the world the true spirit of America. This is an important tool of American diplomacy that we should not be walking away from, as I fear we are doing in this bill.

“In addition to the drastic reduction of this subcommittee’s allocation, this bill is also loaded down with short-sighted and ideologically-driven riders that would place limitations on United Nations functions, seek to curb abortion and family planning services, and that continue to deny the impacts of global climate change. These policy riders and provisions have no place in an appropriations bill and it is my hope that most, or all, of them will be removed before the final version of this bill is approved.

“Therefore I look forward to working with you, Madam Chair, as well as Ranking Member Lowey and Chairman Rogers to improve the bill as it moves forward.”

