

March 7, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Minority Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write to thank you for your leadership in supporting America's international affairs programs to advance the security, economic, and health interests of American families.

From the great power competition with China to Russia's war in Ukraine to global hunger, the United States faces significant threats that dramatically impact both global stability and stability here at home.

As leaders who served at the highest levels of military service and commanded regional or special operations combatant commands throughout Asia, Africa, Europe, the Indo-Pacific, and the Western Hemisphere, we believe that responding to these threats requires more than just a strong military. It is imperative we continue to invest in our nation's civilian national security toolkit, alongside a strong defense, to ensure our nation can meet the unprecedented scale and scope of today's global challenges.

Throughout our decades of service in uniform, we witnessed firsthand how what happens globally has a direct impact on the security and safety of Americans. Strengthening our nation's strategic investments in the State Department, USAID, and other development agencies gives the United States a competitive edge and helps prevent future conflict and instability. These investments in development and diplomacy are critical to reduce threats before they reach our shores. As we continue to see, shortchanging our investment in these critical tools is dangerous to our own national interests.

At a time of growing global challenges, we urge Congress to continue to support a strong and robust International Affairs Budget to defend America's interests and demonstrate our values on the global stage. Doing so sends a clear signal to both our allies and our adversaries around the world and is essential to protect our national security.

Thank you for your consideration and bipartisan leadership at this pivotal moment.

Very respectfully,

General Philip M. Breedlove, USAF (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe ('13-'16)

General Wesley K. Clark, USA (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe ('97-'00)

General Bantz J. Craddock, USA (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe ('06-'09)

General Ralph E. Eberhart, USAF (Ret.)

Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command/Commander, U.S. Northern Command ('02-'04)

Admiral Thomas B. Fargo, USN (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Pacific Command ('02-'05)

General Douglas M. Fraser, USAF (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Southern Command ('09-'12)

General James T. Hill, USA (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Southern Command ('02-'04)

Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, USN (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Pacific Command ('12-'15)

General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., USMC (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Central Command ('19-'22)

Admiral Eric T. Olson, USN (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Special Operation Command ('07-'11)

General David H. Petraeus, USA (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Central Command ('08-'10)

Admiral Joseph W. Prueher, USN (Ret.)

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command ('96-'99)

General Victor "Gene" E. Renuart, USAF (Ret.)

Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command/Commander, U.S. Northern Command ('07-'10)

Admiral James G. Stavridis, USN (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (’09-’13);
Commander, U.S. Southern Command (’06-’09)

General Thomas D. Waldhauser, USMC (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Africa Command (’16-’19)

Lt. General William E. “Kip” Ward, USA (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Africa Command (’07-’11)

General Charles E. Wilhelm, USMC (Ret.)

Commander, U.S. Southern Command (’97-’00)

General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (Ret.)

Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command (’97-’00)

CC: The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Christopher Coons, Chairman, Senate State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Ranking Member, Senate State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Kay Granger, Chairwoman, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chairman, House State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Barbara Lee, Ranking Member, House State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee