

# The Budget Threat to Foreign and National Security Policies

By

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[The following is a reprint of a 2 September 1987 letter from the then Secretary of Defense to Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D., Hawaii), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Committee on Appropriations. The letter is excerpted from the Subcommittee's *Report on Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriation Bill, 1988* (S. 1924), 4 December 1987, pp. 30-31.]

Hon. Daniel K. Inouye,  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. Chairman: I believe that the fiscal year 1988 budget resolution, if adhered to by the Appropriations Committees, would slash international affairs funding so much that it would run the grave risk of devastating U.S. foreign and national security policies. I ask you to consider the serious implications for American interests of unchecked international conflict and poverty. If the regrettable trend continues of funding international affairs as if it were an expendable adjunct to our domestic priorities, we should be prepared to face the consequences.

Congress has traditionally invested 1.7 percent of the Federal budget in international affairs. This level of investment has allowed the United States to maintain a leadership role in an increasingly diverse world, preserve our vital international economic interests, deter or manage international conflict, and influence favorably independent and democratic political development throughout the world.

In fiscal year 1987, Congress used Gramm-Rudman-Hollings as a mechanism to reduce the deficit and slashed \$2,000,000,000 from international affairs funding. This action reduced international affairs' share of the Federal budget to only 1.5 percent. These cuts in most cases have led our friends and allies to question our commitment and willingness to lead the Free World. Economic and military assistance funds that we need to provide for our friends' and allies' economic needs and military security have been severely reduced. Unfortunately, the cuts are destroying our ability to represent effectively our interest and values to the world.

Similarly, the fiscal year 1988 budget resolution would further reduce international affairs funding by at least another \$650,000,000 below the fiscal year 1987 level, reducing its share of the budget to only 1.4 percent. At the 1.4 percent funding level or even at the fiscal year 1987 level, the programs traditionally earmarked by Congress will cause major disruption to the programs of other countries upon which we rely. We cannot afford to place ourselves in the self-defeating position of either reducing our financial support for the Camp David accords or completely walking away from vital interests elsewhere in the world.

The budget resolution also directs that one-half billion dollars of this seriously deficient funding level be diverted from meeting urgent foreign policy requirements to cover anticipated arrearages of the Guarantee Reserve Fund. This provision further punishes our foreign policy for an arrearage situation largely caused by our own interest rates and the severe global economic

conditions at the beginning of this decade in order to solve an accounting problem that can be handled by other means.

The defense of such vital interests as our national security does not require increased Federal spending, but only the restoration of international affairs' traditional share of the budget. I hope you agree with the President, Secretary Shultz, and me that we have no sensible alternative.

Sincerely,

Caspar Weinberger