
Four Billion Dollar Increase for Foreign Affairs

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Senator John Kerry, Democrat-Massachusetts, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, said this week that he and ranking Republican Richard G. Lugar, Republican-Indiana, have been gathering supporters to help them push for a \$4 billion international affairs spending increase to the 2010 budget resolution, offset by unspecified budget cuts.

Senator Kerry supports the entire amount of money that the Obama Administration requested for the international affairs account, which includes discretionary spending for global health, aid to countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, and nuclear nonproliferation programs. The Senate's 2010 budget resolution only calls for \$49.8 billion.

Although Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, Democrat-North Dakota, warned against such an increase, Kerry argued that money for development and diplomacy is a smart investment especially for U.S. national security. At one point, Kerry did consider adding the money to the fiscal 2009 supplemental spending bill.

Representative Howard L. Berman Urges Support for International Affairs Budget

Representative Howard L. Berman, Democrat-California, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, voiced strong support this week for President Obama's plan to boost civilian assistance efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan and for the President's overall international affairs budget request, which proposes long-overdue investments in diplomacy and development.

His remarks are as follows:

For far too long, we have failed to provide adequate funding for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, the civilian national security and stabilization agencies that will be at the forefront of our efforts in Afghanistan. I applaud President Obama for proposing an international affairs budget that begins to reverse this damaging trend, and I will work with him to see that it is fully funded by the Congress. I also look forward to working with the Administration to advance its comprehensive strategy for the Afghanistan/Pakistan region.

President Obama rightly noted that it will take a substantial increase in civilian assistance to ensure lasting stability in Afghanistan. As the President said, this civilian effort should not be short-changed; it is an investment that will pay dividends for years to come in greater security for the United States and the world.

Berman Introduces Pakistan Bill

Berman introduced legislation on Pakistan on 2 April that will significantly increase funding for democracy programs, economic development, education, and strengthening Pakistan's civilian government. While the bill would authorize \$500 million of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) annually through fiscal year 2013, it would prohibit the use of FMF for Pakistan's F-16 program beyond the \$142 million that is expected to be notified to Congress shortly. It will also ensure that all assistance provided to Pakistan, including military aid, is managed through civilian authorities of the Pakistani government. In addition, it will call for auditing, monitoring, and evaluation of all of U.S. assistance to Pakistan.