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March 12, 2009

The Honorable John M. Spratt, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to clause 4(f) of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I am writing to advise you of the Committee on Foreign Affairs' Majority "Views and Estimates" on the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2010. As has been the practice of the Committee in the past, the Minority will transmit its own views and estimates.

The Committee strongly recommends that the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2010 assume no less than the President's request for \$51.7 billion in budget authority for Function 150 discretionary programs (excluding food aid and certain other programs, which are not within the jurisdiction of the Foreign Affairs Committee). The Committee believes that the Function 150 Account provides critical funding for a wide range of programs vital to protecting U.S. national security and promoting global stability.

While the request represents a significant increase above the FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations level, including emergency funding requested, for programs within this Committee's jurisdiction, it is a much more modest increase from the total FY2009 expenditures projected by the President based on the amounts contained in H.R. 1105, the Omnibus Appropriations Act, FY2009, and the upcoming request for FY2009 emergency supplemental appropriations. Indeed, a large portion of the increase results from moving programmed funding for Iraq, Afghanistan and certain peacekeeping missions (such as the UN-African Union effort in Darfur) from future emergency funding requests to a more realistic reflection of ongoing costs in FY2010. This change, which you and other members of the Budget Committee have requested, is a much needed increase in transparency of the Budget.

The increase also would also address the vital need to enhance the capacity of the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). As has been noted by members on both sides of the aisle from a variety of committees, we urgently need to address

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fundamental shortages in resources and personnel that are impairing the ability of these agencies to carry out the diplomacy and development pillars of any successful strategy for U.S. national security. Indeed, success in Afghanistan, and our ability to promote stability in other post-conflict situations, will require a substantial increase in the capacity of our civilian agencies. The proposed FY2010 budget is a critical down payment on this needed capacity.

As was the case last year, the proposed FY2010 budget includes funding for several multi-year initiatives with significant bipartisan support. Assistance to key partners critical to a reinvigorated Middle East peace process, including Egypt and our increased commitment for military assistance to Israel, continues to be part of this request. The request also includes resources to build an appropriate funding base for core health and development assistance accounts which have been seriously constrained in recent years, and provides needed increases for HIV/AIDS assistance consistent with the five-year Global HIV/AIDS reauthorization bill enacted last year with strong bipartisan support.

In recent years, the final Concurrent Resolution on the Budget has frequently decreased funding for the 150 Account compared to the President's request. While I recognize that the competing priorities are enormous, I believe it is absolutely critical to provide adequate resources to support U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, to rebuild civilian capacity to fully realize a reinvigorated role for development and diplomacy, and to continue to save the lives of millions of people threatened by HIV/AIDS. For all of these reasons, I strongly urge you to include the President's FY2010 budget proposal of \$51.7 billion for function 150 in the House version of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for fiscal year 2010.

I hope this letter is useful to the Committee on the Budget in its deliberations.

Sincerely,



HOWARD L. BERMAN
Chairman

HLB:mco