

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 28, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write in strong opposition to the massive cuts proposed for the Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).¹ These cuts, far in excess of those included in your April 22 reorganization, would dramatically harm U.S. national security, increase the likelihood of conflict, reverse eight decades of U.S. global leadership, and would contribute to the deaths of thousands, if not millions, of people around the world from preventable disease, famine, and violence.

We urge you to forcefully and continuously oppose this proposed budget request and work within the Administration to draft a budget that upholds our national security and maintains long-time core U.S. interests and values.

As you know well from your many years of service in the Senate, the threats to U.S. national security are the most daunting, varied, and inter-connected than at any time since the end of World War II. To confront and deter the growing partnership between China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, the United States should be strengthening our alliances, expanding our partnerships, and building influence with other nations around the world. Planned cuts to the United Nations, NATO, and foreign assistance programs do the opposite – they undermine the credibility of U.S. assurances and weaken our allies' and partners' ability to provide for their own defense. The primary beneficiary to these cuts will be China, which will exploit the vacuum to gain influence and expand its commercial and economic reach.

The budget would slash our ability to project U.S. influence around the world, including through cuts to State Department embassies and consulates; the foreign

¹ See, for example, Adam Taylor and John Hudson, "Trump Plan Would Slash State Dept. Funding by Nearly Half, Memo Says," *Washington Post*, April 14, 2025.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/14/state-department-budget-cuts-trump-rubio/>

and civil service; participation in NATO and the United Nations; foreign assistance projects; broadcasting through the U.S. Agency for Global Media; and outreach programs like the Fulbright program, Peace Corps, and fellowships. These cuts handcuff our ability to spread democracy and freedom, to oppose authoritarianism, expand economic opportunities, and to buy goodwill across the globe in a much less expensive way than military power.

Senate Democrats, joined by half of our Republican colleagues, voted against slashing many of these programs when Congress passed the full-year continuing resolution last month.² We similarly oppose rescissions to important State Department and foreign assistance programs now reportedly under consideration.

We agree that State Department and USAID funding can be spent more effectively and efficiently, and that the budget should be aligned with core U.S. interests and values. The budget under consideration does not do this. It robs the United States of decades of experience, influence, and goodwill that can be harnessed to prevent war, resolve crises, spread democracy, open markets, and preserve and enrich life.

We urge you to engage in the budget process in order to produce a budget that preserves and enhances U.S. national security interests.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator

² Senate vote 132, 119th Congress, March 14, 2025.

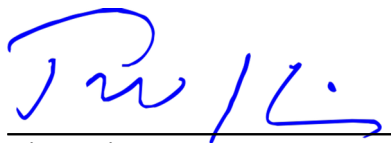
https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_votes/vote1191/vote_119_1_00132.htm



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator




Peter Welch
United States Senator



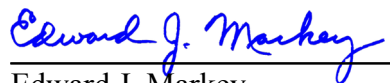
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



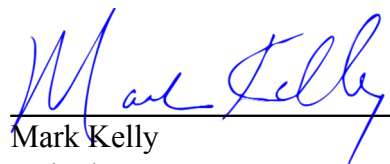
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



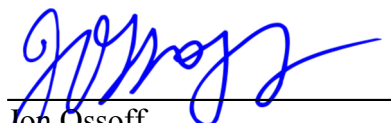
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Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator