

July 13, 2009

I rise today in support of H.R. 3081, the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010. In addition to providing for operations at the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, the bill includes important funding for broader diplomatic and development efforts around the world. It provides needed assistance for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq; fulfills the U.S. commitment to assist the security of our ally Israel; and maintains vital support for peacekeeping missions in places like Darfur, Haiti, Lebanon, and Somalia.

I applaud the amendment by Chairwoman Lowey to restrict military assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka. As the process of rebuilding from that nation's long conflict begins, the United States must ensure that the Sri Lankan Government protects the rights of all its citizens and allows humanitarian assistance to reach all those in need.

Other important provisions in H.R. 3081 will advance global health, including the fights against HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. The bill makes available \$1 billion each for programs that will improve access to basic education worldwide and provide for global food security and agricultural development. I am pleased that H.R. 3081 provides increased funding to expand the Peace Corps; enhance educational and cultural exchanges; and strengthen microfinance programs that help the world's poorest people, especially women, lift themselves out of poverty.

This is a good bill that will help our Nation accomplish many important tasks. However, there is one area that I believe deserves greater attention, and that role is that science should play in American diplomacy and foreign aid. The fundamental role of science and technology in international development has long been recognized, but over time we have dismantled our staffing and support structure in this area. We must refurbish the science and technology workforce at USAID so that we can effectively address global challenges like health, poverty,

environmental hazards, and food security. U.S. scientists, working alongside their foreign counterparts, can help other countries build the indigenous institutions and expertise that will create sustainable, domestic solutions to pressing issues. At the same time, these efforts generate respect and affinity around the world for the United States, one of the many underappreciated benefits that will accrue from more fully integrating science and scientists into our diplomatic efforts. H.R. 3081 makes important strides toward rebuilding our diplomatic capacity, but as part of that effort, we should focus on enhancing the scientific expertise and capacity at the State Department.

The U.S. also should support more robust scientist exchange programs, which foster lasting ties between individuals and allow societies to share discoveries that advance our collective knowledge. Similarly, international research facilities provide a setting to generate productive science while advancing cultural understanding and building bridges between nations. One example is the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East. Known as "SESAME," this project is being completed in Jordan under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The facility will bring together Arabs, Israelis, and other scientists from the region to work cooperatively on dozens of simultaneous experiments in fields ranging from biological and medical sciences to archaeology.

The U.S. should vigorously support and participate in these types of initiatives. We have much to offer the rest of the world with respect to science and technology, but we also have much to learn and much to gain by scientific engagement. I look forward to working with the Administration and my colleagues in Congress to strengthen our international efforts and diplomatic capability in these areas.