

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

JUL 26 2011

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Chairman:

I am writing to express my profound concern over H.R. 2583, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2012, as reported by the House Foreign Affairs Committee on July 21.

The bill includes onerous restrictions on State operations, international organizations, and foreign assistance. Among these are the severe curtailing of assessed contributions to international organizations, the elimination of assessed contributions to the Organization of American States, and the sunset of a crucial waiver from the mandate to locate our embassy in Jerusalem.

On foreign assistance, the bill reinstates, contrary to U.S. policy, the Mexico City Policy banning funding for any foreign non-governmental organizations that may otherwise promote or perform abortions with non-U.S. government funding. The bill bans furnishing authorized bilateral economic assistance funds for the Administration's Global Climate Change Initiative, greatly undermining such assistance. Another provision prevents any bilateral economic assistance from going to any government not meeting the Millennium Challenge Corporation anticorruption criteria – despite the irrelevance of such criterion to many types of assistance – and has the potential to affect a staggering number of needy aid recipients. Furthermore, the bill prohibits any economic development and democracy assistance to governments of countries that oppose the United States in UN voting more than 50 percent of the time, and bans aid for the government of Argentina in a provision directed at the governments of Bolivia, Venezuela, Iran, Ecuador, and Nicaragua.

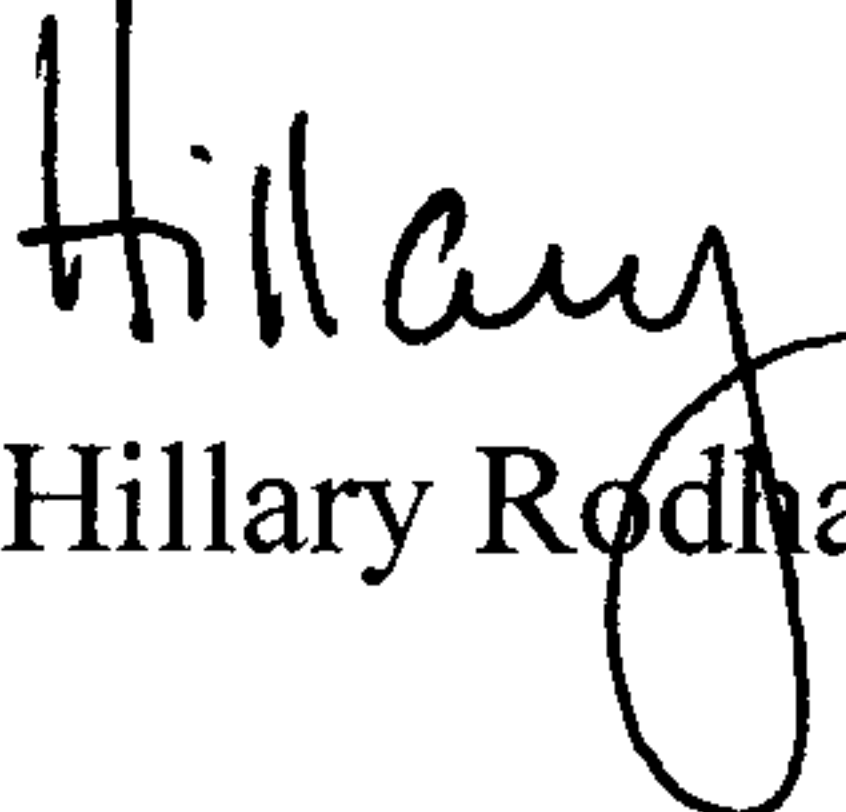
The bill includes crippling restrictions on security assistance where maximum flexibility is needed, especially with regard to the governments of Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen, and to the Palestinian Authority (PA). To release aid

for these governments and the PA, the Administration would have to meet burdensome and infeasible certifications with detailed criteria – e.g., concerning involvement of foreign terrorist organizations in such governments and in the PA, and confirming that the PA is not declaring independence. For Pakistan, the bill toughens the certification criteria for assistance under current Kerry-Lugar-Berman Pakistan legislation and removes altogether that law’s waiver authorities. Furthermore, the bill would impose restrictions in force in 2009 on travel and remittances to Cuba, would ban contractors from disclosing political contributions under current policy, and would mandate withholding 25 percent of Foreign Military Financing for Iraq until the Secretary submits a plan on the management and oversight of large scale FMF contracts.

The net effect of these and other restrictions in the bill would be debilitating to my efforts to carry out a considered foreign policy and diplomacy, and to use foreign assistance strategically to that end. The Department of State opposes this bill. Should this bill be presented to the President, I will recommend personally that he veto the bill.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the presentation of this letter from the standpoint of the Administration’s legislative program.

Sincerely yours,


Hillary Rodham Clinton