Sample Email

[Staff Name],

I am writing to express concern about the potential implications for the International Affairs Budget of the significant cuts to non-defense Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding included in the recently-passed budget deal.

The budget deal included only $12 billion in non-defense OCO funding for FY18 – an $8.8 billion cut from the FY17 level of $20.8 billion. As you may know, nearly one-third of the International Affairs Budget is currently funded through OCO, including much of our response to critical humanitarian crises around the world. In order to maintain current funding levels for the International Affairs Budget in FY18, it is critical that base funding is increased to compensate for any cuts to OCO funding.

*[If sending to a Congressional/Appropriations Leadership office]*

As you work to complete FY18 spending bills and make final 302(b) allocations, I urge you ensure the International Affairs Budget is funded at no less than current levels. Specifically, I urge you to fund the FY18 State-Foreign Operations bill at no less than $57.4 billion.

*[If sending to a key ally in Congress]*

Decisions on topline spending levels, or 302(b) allocations – including for the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which funds the vast majority of the International Affairs Budget – will be made in the coming days. I urge your boss to weigh in directly with Congressional and Appropriations leadership in support of funding the FY18 International Affairs Budget at no less than current levels. Specifically, it is critical that the FY18 State-Foreign Operations bill be funded at no less than $57.4 billion.

[Your Name]

Talking Points

* I was encouraged that Congress reached a two-year budget deal to lift the caps on defense and non-defense discretionary spending, which have artificially constrained funding for key priorities including development and diplomacy programs that are critical for U.S. national and economic security.
* Despite the numerous and growing challenges America is facing overseas, the Administration’s FY18 budget proposed to slash funding for development and diplomacy by nearly one-third. Congress largely rejected this deep and disproportionate cut, but proposed FY18 funding levels for the International Affairs Budget still fall far short of current levels in both the House and Senate.
* As you know, the budget deal significantly raises the cap on non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending, which is critical to ensure the International Affairs Budget is fully funded in FY18.
* However, I am concerned about the potential implications of the budget deal’s $8.8 billion cut to non-defense (i.e. international affairs) Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding in FY18. The budget deal included only $12 billion for FY18, down from the FY17 level of $20.8 billion. Nearly one-third of the International Affairs Budget is currently funded through OCO, including much of our response to critical humanitarian crises around the world.
* In order to maintain current funding levels for the International Affairs Budget in FY18, it is critical that Appropriators increase base funding to compensate for any cuts to OCO funding. Given the range of global threats we face from four famines to North Korea to unrest in the Middle East, we cannot afford to retreat from the world or shortchange our civilian national security tools.
* Decisions on topline spending levels, or 302(b) allocations – including for the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which funds the vast majority of the International Affairs Budget – will be made in the coming days. We urge your boss to speak to Congressional and Appropriations leadership now ensure that the total International Affairs Budget is funded at no less than current levels – or $60 billion. Specifically, please ensure the FY18 State-Foreign Operations bill is funded at no less than $57.4 billion.