March 22, 2017

Rep. Diane Black, Chair
U.S. House of Representatives Budget Committee
1131 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. John Yarmuth, Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives Budget Committee
131 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Black and Yarmuth:

As you are aware, President Trump has proposed a drastic reduction in funding to the U.S. Department of State. Although all of the details are not yet known, one of the cuts would eliminate the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP).

I strongly urge you to protect USIP and support the essential educational and diplomatic work it does on behalf of the United States.

Created by Congress in 1984 under President Ronald Reagan, USIP has a distinguished record and is widely respected as an organization that works in the most dangerous parts of the world to further peace through such activities as reducing extremism and promoting religious tolerance.

What you may not know about USIP is the critical role it plays in graduate education of future diplomatic and military leaders. The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area has provided graduate student research assistants to USIP for decades. Since 2011 alone, 231 Consortium graduate students have advanced their careers through work as research assistants at USIP, especially through supporting the Jennings Randolph Senior Fellows. These graduate student research assistantships are viewed as a pathway to careers in diplomacy, conflict resolution, and international relations.

In addition to the Consortium graduate student program, roughly 265 graduate student scholars have received support for their dissertation research through USIP’s Jennings Randolph Peace Scholars Program since its inception in 1988. Additionally, postdoctoral scholars are supported through the Transatlantic Post-Doctoral Fellowship for International Relations and Security (TAPIR) Program. Many of these scholars have moved on to highly successful careers in policy making, teaching, and research.
Since 1995, USIP has also supported Military Fellows who serve in a Senior Service College Fellowship role. Over the course of this successful and important program, Fellows have come from all military branches.

The $35.3 million investment in USIP—a very small amount in the overall context of the federal budget—returns significant dividends. Indeed, Rep. Edward R. Royce (R-CA) and Rep. Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), the chairman and ranking member, respectively, of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, both agreed that cuts in diplomacy would hurt efforts to combat terrorism and would be a mistake.

I thank you for your consideration in this critical matter. I have included a brief overview of the Consortium for your information. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.

Respectfully yours,

John C. Cavanaugh, Ph.D.
President & CEO

Enclosure