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February 21, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

Your administration's Fiscal Year 2009 budget request for Pakistan comes at a pivotal moment in that nation's history. With the rapid succession of events there over the past few months -- including this week's elections -- and with this latest budget request before us now, this is an opportune time for our country to make a determination about how best to support a secure and free Pakistan moving forward. Without a doubt, Pakistan is a key strategic ally, but additional taxpayer funding without a strategy for effective results from the Government of Pakistan is not in our nation's financial or security interests. And as chairman of the subcommittee which oversees U.S. foreign assistance, there are questions that must be answered as I weigh my support for the Administration's \$826 million Fiscal Year 2009 request for U.S. taxpayer money in Pakistan.

I ask that you provide tangible results of the billions of assistance dollars sent from this country to Pakistan over more than six years. I also ask that you provide an update on the battle against extremists inside Pakistan -- a battle that impacts our security here at home but seems not to have been generally successful.

Again, it is in our nation's security interests to help foster a stable Pakistan, devoid of terrorist elements that seek to do harm to the West. However, when militant violence broke out in Pakistan last year, it became clear that \$10 billion in American taxpayer money since 9/11 had not prevented al Qaeda from operating in a safe zone over there, nor had it guaranteed a free and fair democratic process. American taxpayers expect better results from such expenditures of their money; otherwise it may be wiser to approach the fight against extremists in a different manner.

In addition, a recent *Washington Post* article on military assistance to Pakistan reveals more problems with the process through which American taxpayer money is being spent. The reported, "vague accounting, disputed expenses and suspicions about overbilling" has led several senior administration officials to acknowledge these problems. I find this laborious process without receipts or true accountability to be disturbing and am concerned we are not holding it up to sufficient accounting standards. I voiced these concerns in a Foreign Relations Committee hearing that I chaired in November, and as I mentioned in a letter to you late last year, American taxpayers expect and deserve to have an accounting of the billions of American dollars sent to President Pervez Musharraf's

government – where it has gone and what progress it has spurred. This issue has come into sharper focus with the substantial loss of power suffered by President Musharraf's political party on Election Day.

Now is the time to assess the direction in which the state of Pakistan is headed and how our assistance efforts are contributing. More specifically, I ask that you provide the latest information on Pakistan's efforts to fight against extremism in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) region, as well as our nation's role in those areas. Recent reports in the press indicate that the Pakistani Government may have once again entered into some kind of cease-fire agreement with the militants in the border region. Is the cease-fire in fact a reality? What is the current state of the battle against extremists? I urge the Administration to work with the Government of Pakistan to develop a strategy for full-scale Pakistani Government engagement in the FATA region.

Additionally, I am concerned that the progress made in late January in the mountains of South Waziristan may have since been tempered by what appears to be a reversal by the Government of Pakistan. To date, such actions have not enabled Pakistan to make real progress, and I see no reason to believe that continuing with the same strategy will yield results that are any less disappointing.

As a member of the Budget and Foreign Relations Committees who has been keenly interested in our policies toward Pakistan, I am particularly interested in the assistance budget for that nation. To that point, your Administration's ability to demonstrate tangible results from our assistance programs and explain recent efforts in the FATA region and the ultimate integrity of the recent elections will heavily influence my potential support for Pakistan assistance this year. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator