

**Testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs**

**By**

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Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey and other members of the Subcommittee, I am Richard Solomon, President of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). I appreciate this opportunity to testify. As part of the national security structure of the United States, USIP fully supports the Administration's request of \$42.74 million for our international conflict management and peacebuilding operations in FY 2012.

The world is experiencing one of the most challenging transitions in our nation's history. No longer are we burdened with interstate wars with imperial states, but with the more complex challenges of terrorism, ethnic and religious conflicts that are tearing apart weak countries, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and non-military threats such as economic instability and the search for secure energy resources. It is within this context that USIP has come to play a significant role in our country's national security system.

As the great bureaucracies shift from the Cold War struggle to adapt to this new world, USIP has emerged as a center of agility and innovation in international conflict management. Our programs in areas of instability abroad support the work of the Departments of State and Defense. Our programs save lives and save money. We perform the full spectrum of peacebuilding, generating new tools for conflict prevention and management, deploying those tools to conflict zones abroad, and then bringing them back to our education, training and public information operations. No other federal institution implements a "think, act, teach, and train" approach to non-violent international conflict resolution. According to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, USIP was ... "formed by the Congress to operationalize America's commitment to peace by working with like minded institutions around the world." USIP does this at minimal expense to the American taxpayer.

We must not forget that America has a strong tradition as international peacemakers. We invest in peacebuilding because it is in our national interest to do so. The annual budget of USIP is less than three hours of our military operations in Afghanistan. The cost of the first week of enforcing the no-fly zone in Libya would more than fund the next ten years of USIP's operations. The savings that arise from preventing one war would fund USIP for centuries.

The Institute's personnel work in areas of instability and conflict around the world. As former CENTCOM Commander General Anthony Zinni observed, USIP staff were "... among the first nonmilitary personnel on the ground after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The Institute's headquarters in Baghdad has twice been damaged by rocket and mortar attacks. At the height of the Iraq insurgency, when virtually every other American and international group pulled out their personnel, the State and Defense Departments requested that the Institute stay. Under fire regularly, it was the only United States organization outside of those departments that did not flee."

General Petraeus called our work facilitating reconciliation in the area of Iraq known as the Triangle of Death "a striking success story." USIP's contributions helped quell violence, dramatically reduced American casualties, and allowed the redeployment of two-thirds of American forces from that region – saving American and civilian lives and billions of dollars.

Institute programs have strong advocates in the American military, which in recent years have had to perform crucial peacebuilding tasks that the armed forces are normally not trained or equipped to perform. As NATO's former Supreme Allied Commander General Wesley Clark observed, these tasks are generally regarded by the military as distracting them from their primary responsibility. Therefore, many within the military establishment look to USIP for help and expertise in these areas. Institute personnel are working closely with Generals Petraeus and

Caldwell, and Ambassador Eikenberry, as we train Afghans to manage their own conflicts non-violently.

The lack of trained personnel for the tasks of post-war stabilization and reconstruction has created numerous difficulties for America in trying to withdraw from zones of conflict. Valuable time was lost in Iraq following the invasion as the military and civilian personnel had to develop new skills on the job. USIP's professional training academy teaches the skills necessary to develop a "whole of government" and "whole of community" cadre of military, civilian government, and non-government personnel ready to meet post-conflict management challenges. The independence of USIP gives these classes a neutral, professional environment which is conducive to developing cohesive perspective and effective collaboration among agencies.

As its Congressional founders understood, USIP's independence is essential for the effectiveness of our most important contributions to national security. When Congress wanted an independent evaluation of American policy toward Iraq, it turned to USIP because of our independence, professionalism, and nonpartisanship. If USIP were part of the Administration, many would have questioned the objectivity of its findings. Similarly, because USIP is not identified with a particular Administration or particular policy, it has a unique ability to convene a broad range of opinion and expertise both inside the U.S. and in zones of conflict.

The Institute's Congressional founders also understood that Congressional funding was crucial to USIP's independence. The Institute's Board of Directors, appointed by the U.S. president and confirmed by the Senate, oversees USIP's policies and programs. The Secretaries of State and Defense are Board members. Private funding for programs was prohibited because the Congressional founders were wisely concerned that private sector donors would influence

program content. Privately funded organizations have private agendas. USIP has a national agenda and serves Congress.

In addition to Iraq and Afghanistan, we are actively engaged in the world's hot spots. In Pakistan, one of the most serious challenges to our national security, USIP is working to prevent conflict that could embroil America. A key part of USIP's mission in Pakistan is helping to reform the curricula of madrassas. In the Middle East, our Senior Working Group on Middle East Peace has operated since 2009 under former National Security Advisors Sandy Berger and Steve Hadley. With the Middle East in turmoil, USIP is focusing rapid response attention on Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Egypt. Northeast Asia has been the subject of a sustained 1.5 track dialogue because of the challenge of North Korea's nuclear proliferation activities. In Africa, we are active in Sudan, Nigeria, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. USIP is assisting Southern Sudan in writing their constitution and engaging civil society. In Nigeria, USIP has helped to dampen Christian/Muslim conflict in Plateau State and in the Niger Delta. We are helping to build the rule of law in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. USIP is contributing to the U.S. goals in Colombia and Haiti.

Finally, attracting future generations of America's leaders to careers in international conflict management and peacebuilding was the primary objective of the Institute's Congressional founders. Thousands of high school students have been introduced to international conflict issues through USIP's annual peace essay contest, and many have gone on to serve our nation in international affairs.

USIP is required by its Congressional charter to commit a quarter of its budget to grants to non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education and NGOs. As former Notre Dame University President Father Theodore Hesburgh has observed, hundreds of courses are now

possible in universities throughout the country because of the publications and instructional materials produced by USIP.

Former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles once observed, “The world will never have lasting peace so long as men reserve for war the finest human qualities. Peace, no less than war, requires idealism and self-sacrifice and a righteous and dynamic faith.” While as a nation we have yet to achieve balance between warriors and peacebuilders, we are certainly closer to it today than we were 27 years ago when Congress and President Reagan created USIP. The daily contributions of USIP’s dedicated, hard working staff and the tens of thousands of peacebuilders whose work we support and enable are moving America steadily in that direction.

Americans know that peace is not attained easily. Eleanor Roosevelt captured this realization. “It isn’t enough to talk about peace,” she said. “One must believe in it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.” America’s Founding Fathers believed that the pursuit of peace was the most effective way to assure our national security and foresaw the need for an institution like USIP.

USIP recently took occupancy of its new headquarters building at the northwest corner of the National Mall. The project of building a permanent facility for the Institute has been in the works for twenty years. Our nation can be proud of this symbol of peacemaking located by the nation’s war memorials, just as Congress can take satisfaction from the work that is being done within the walls of the new building.

USIP is a unique national institution dedicated to mitigating the costs of international violence; an institution that is helping our soldiers and diplomats build and keep the peace. Federal funding for USIP’s mission is more critical than ever in today’s difficult world.