

GLOBAL SECURITY PRIORITIES AND CHILD SURVIVAL

Redefining “Global Security”

When the issue of global security is raised, the discussion tends to focus on matters like the threat of nuclear proliferation or the ongoing challenge of international terrorism. But a growing number of defense and foreign policy experts are concerned about the security implications of global poverty and disease.

The 9/11 Commission, for example, recommended that a comprehensive strategy to counter terrorism should include policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities that improve the lives of families and enhance prospects for their children’s futures. Addressing the needs of the very poor in the world, particularly children, reduces a source of international tension and local despair that contribute to terrorist initiatives.

UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children 2008 notes that 9.7 million children under the age of 5 die every year, mostly from preventable and treatable causes. Can we consider ourselves secure in a world where so many children die needlessly? Investing in the health and nutrition of children and their mothers reflects America’s deepest humanitarian values, and it is also a sound economic decision – one of the surest ways for a country to set its course toward a more promising future.

From UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children 2008: Child Survival:

It is time to rally behind the goals of maternal, newborn and child survival and health with renewed energy and sharper vision, and to position these goals at the heart of the international agenda to fulfill the tenets of social justice and honor the sanctity of life.

The means are at hand. It is now a question of will and of action – for there is no enterprise more noble, or reward more precious than saving the life of a child.

The Global Security Priorities Resolution

The Global Security Priorities Resolution, H. Res. 1045, fosters a bipartisan dialogue on the interrelation of nuclear proliferation, terrorism, global security, and the implementation of global goals to save the lives of vulnerable children. Introduced by Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Rep. Dan Lungren (R-CA), two thoughtful members of the House Budget Committee, the measure calls for negotiated reductions in nuclear armaments that could save as much as \$13 billion annually. These savings would be used to dismantle and secure nuclear weapons. The savings further would fund an additional \$5 billion over 5 years to enhance child survival in the world’s most needy countries, by scaling up implementation of integrated packages of high-impact and low-cost health and nutrition interventions at the community level. Additional funding would be applied to global school feeding and related programs to combat child hunger.

Despite the progress that has been made, the world is not yet on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal #4 of a two-thirds reduction in the rate of child mortality by 2015. Business as usual will not get us there. The Global Security Priorities

Resolution represents a break from business as usual. It puts the House of Representatives on record to secure global child survival and nutrition program funding from targeted reductions in the nuclear arsenal, without jeopardizing America's nuclear deterrent or defense security.

Take Action Now

Write your Representatives and tell them you want our budget to promote a new vision of global security that makes saving children's lives a top priority – and ask them to cosponsor the Global Security Priorities Resolution.