

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On December 18, the Department of State released the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability pursuant to Section 504(a) of the Global Fragility Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-94). While this strategy laid an important foundation for implementation of the Global Fragility Act, the strategy did not include key elements of the report required by the law. We write to request your robust leadership in ensuring successful implementation of this critical bipartisan legislation.

Successful enactment of the Global Fragility Act mandated a new approach to stabilize conflict-affected areas and prevent violence and conflict globally. Now with the COVID-19 pandemic [exacerbating](#) the root causes of fragility and increasing the risk of conflict due to economic contractions, rising resource competition, fraying social cohesion, deteriorating state-society relations, proliferation of misinformation, and violent extremist organizations and other malign actors looking to exploit community grievances, the Global Fragility Act is more urgent than ever. The University of Denver's Korbel School of International Studies [forecasts](#) the pandemic will likely ignite conflict in 13 more countries through 2022, pushing the total of countries experiencing conflict to 35, more than at any point over the past 30 years. The Global Fragility Act provides the U.S. government the authorities and resources to respond to these threats in fragile states. In particular, the law requires improved interagency coordination, enhanced research, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance, and strengthened multilateral partnerships to align our stabilization and prevention efforts with those of other donor governments and organizations.

During Secretary Antony Blinken's confirmation hearing on January 19, 2021, we were heartened to hear him describe the Global Fragility Act as a "terrific foundation" on which to prioritize addressing fragility and that he had already had some conversations with you on these issues. We are encouraged that we have a ready partner in the White House to lead implementation and ensure interagency coordination and cooperation to advance the long-term strategic planning as required by the law. We agree that development programs and diplomacy should be the first thought, not an afterthought, in our foreign policy.

While we appreciated the State Department's efforts to develop the [Global Fragility Strategy](#), the Administration must urgently proceed with the selection of at least five priority countries and/or regions in accordance with the process established by the law and the development of related implementation plans. While we understand the selection of priority countries is an important

effort and believe it should not be rushed, we would urge leadership to place a priority on the timely selection of priority countries so that the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Defense can begin implementation of the Global Fragility Strategy. We also urge the appropriate agencies to report to Congress the necessary authorities, staffing, and other requirements needed to implement the law and what limitations, if any, continue to impede progress on implementation, pursuant to Section 504(c)(4) of the Global Fragility Act. We encourage you to use this as an opportunity to ask Congress what the executive branch needs to ensure successful implementation.

In addition, the Global Fragility Strategy is only as effective as the resources put behind it. To date, Congress has appropriated \$360 million for the implementation of this legislation, specifically for the Prevention and Stabilization Fund and Complex Crises Fund. We request a status update on the obligation of these funds and a detailed plan on how the remaining funds will be used to implement the Global Fragility Act.

We appreciate your attention to these pressing issues. We hope that your Administration embraces the long-term strategic planning and interagency coordination as required by the Global Fragility Act as a key foreign policy tool and national security imperative. The Global Fragility Act is a bipartisan priority, and we look forward to working with your Administration to ensure successful implementation.

Sincerely,



SARA JACOBS
Member of Congress



GREGORY W. MEEKS
Chair
House Foreign Affairs
Committee



MICHAEL T. MCCAUL
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs
Committee



ADAM SMITH
Chair
House Armed Services Committee



PETER MEIJER
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COLIN ALLRED
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WILLIAM R. KEATING
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KAREN BASS
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Member of Congress

CC:

Antony Blinken, Secretary
U.S. Department of State

Samantha Power, Administrator
United States Agency for International Development

Lloyd Austin, Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense

Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor