



December 11, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

The undersigned individuals and organizations share with the Department of State the fundamental goal of creating a peaceful, secure, and prosperous global future. To achieve such an end in an increasingly complex world, the U.S. needs accurate analyses by well-trained specialists both in and outside the government.

For the region of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, the Department of State has for thirty years trained future leaders and scholars through the Research and Training for Eastern Europe and the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union Act (PL 90-164, Title VIII). Title VIII has played a significant part in the education of many prominent American policymakers and specialists in the region, including former Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice, and US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul. We are writing to you today to urge you to restore funding for the Title VIII program and to include funding for the Title VIII program as part of your fiscal year 2015 budget request.

Title VIII programs in fiscal year 2012 were administered by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and supported by the Department of State at a level of \$3.5 million. Despite its low cost, Title VIII is a program that continues to have a significant impact on the analytic and diplomatic capacities of the Department of State and on the research base in the academic sector.

At stake are programs that support policy-relevant research, advanced language training, and a specialized information clearing house and reference service related to countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Russia and Eastern Europe. A remarkably high percentage of US university faculty who teach about Eastern Europe and Eurasia, State Department specialists on the region, and think tank analysts who advise policymakers have conducted their field work and research and obtained advanced language proficiency thanks to programs funded by Title VIII.

Although the Department of State solicited applications for a fiscal year 2013 Title VIII program, the Department in September announced the cancellation of the program for fiscal year 2013 because it did not receive appropriations. We believe the discontinuation of this program is short-sighted and not in the national and public interest. We urge you to use existing authority to continue to fund this program under the administration of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at least at the current funding level of \$3.5 million for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. We

also ask that you include at least that level of funding within the fiscal year 2015 budget request for the Title VIII program.

Title VIII is a small but impactful program that has directly supported several generations of policymakers, diplomats and scholars and indirectly supported their thousands of students and the people who depend on their analyses to make the right business, humanitarian, and foreign policy decisions about a crucial region of the world.

We respectfully draw your attention to this issue and strongly urge that the Department of State immediately take steps to restore funding for the Title VIII program.

Sincerely,

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Also Signed are ASEES Board and Past Presidents

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cc: Ambassador William Burns, Deputy Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Secretary

Daniel Rubinstein, Acting Assistant Secretary for Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR)

Ambassador Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary for Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
(EUR/FO)