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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pence  
Vice President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Vice President Pence:

We are writing to express concern about the international spread of the coronavirus and its impact on the safety and security of Americans here in the United States. As you know, if the pandemic continues to spread around the globe without an adequate international response, the risk of COVID-19's reintroduction in the United States, once we successfully bring the virus under control domestically, is very high. The United States has historically played a leading role in preventing and responding to pandemics. It is critical that the United States mount a robust federal response to COVID-19 both domestically and internationally to galvanize our partners around the world to work collectively to prevent and end further suffering.

We write to urge a comprehensive administration response that fosters engagement and cooperation with trusted international partners, and is aimed towards mitigating the pandemic's devastating effects on the world's most vulnerable populations and fragile economies. Such a response should be driven by objective data informed by scientific analysis, and led by medical and global health experts and experienced humanitarian and crisis managers. The United States has the necessary expertise and resources to lead an effective global response and recovery effort.

The United States Agency for International Development is the nation's lead agency for delivering aid and strategically responding to international disasters and global health and humanitarian crises. However, USAID still does not have a seat on the White House COVID-19 Task Force. USAID is tasked with responding to the international COVID-19 crisis, and has been allocated millions of dollars to execute response efforts, yet, USAID officials have yet to provide any details on the strategy, planning, or priorities of its COVID-19 mission. If the United States executes a comprehensive and collaborative international response effort now, we may avoid a worst-case scenario; continued delay could result in hundreds of thousands of lives lost, and a global economic downturn that will jeopardize our own recovery.

The United States' long-term domestic security depends on reducing the number of COVID-19 cases domestically and internationally. The U.S. must respond now. At a minimum, our response must include the following:

1. Placing the USAID Acting Administrator on the White House Coronavirus Task Force;
2. Ensuring collaboration and coordination between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. international response efforts;
3. Engaging with international partners and allies to establish a clear plan to respond to future COVID-19 hotspots and stem further spread of the virus; and
4. Coordinating with multilateral institutions and global medical and therapeutic industries in a transparent, constructive, and collaborative manner through data-sharing and shared expertise.

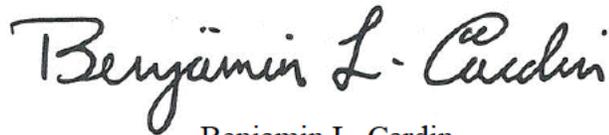
We urge you to lead in ensuring that the United States is not perceived as casting blame, disrupting global supply chains, and sowing discord and xenophobia among countries and institutions who must be seen and treated as partners in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States cannot bully its way to lasting safety and security in the fight against COVID-19.

Time is running dangerously short for a responsible and effective response to the pandemic. It is essential that the United States demonstrates global leadership during this unprecedented global crisis. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Jeffrey A. Merkley in blue ink.

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Cory A. Booker in blue ink.

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

CC: Secretary Mike Pompeo, U.S. Department of State  
Acting Administrator John Barsa, U.S. Agency for International Development