

Poverty a security concern

By: Paul A. Olson – April 24, 2013

Nebraska Sen. Deb Fischer asked Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel whether poverty in the world was “a defense mission” (“Hagel finds support to limit cuts,” April 18) in a hearing on defense cuts.

It is a “defense mission.” Poverty creates insecurity at home and abroad, and it will not be cured by new weapons systems. We spend as much on our military as the next 14 countries combined, while about 14 percent of our people live in poverty and 21 percent of the world’s people so live. Washington budget proposals have focused on weakening the poor to save military systems and bases that such conservative think tanks as the Cato Institute deem unnecessary.

Programs often slated for cutting include Head Start, tax savings for the very poor, food stamps (SNAP) and the commodities programs. Americans deprived of education, food and shelter in youth will not strengthen America to their full possibility in adulthood.

The places overseas ruled by instability often have been places of poverty, hunger and unemployment: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, several African and Latin American countries, and parts of Southeastern Asia. Poverty is a security issue.

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