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Poor way to cut

In our efforts to solve our budget crisis, many Americans believe the foreign aid budget is much larger than it is. With a budget of approximately \$2 trillion, elimination of \$17 billion, or three-tenths of 1 percent, will not balance any part of the budget, but will certainly damage our reputation as a country.

We are still the richest country in the world and we spend hundreds of billions on wars and the Defense Department. The small amount of money we give to the world's poor is and should be required by a country that professes Christian values.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI) saves poor children around the world with cost-effective vaccines negotiated with the pharmaceutical companies.

Every year, 8.8 million children under the age of 5 die from preventable conditions. Forty percent of these deaths are caused by two diseases: pneumonia and diarrhea. Vaccines provided by GAVI could save most of these children.

The United States' share would be only \$450 million over three years to fund this vital program. We should spend this very small portion of our tax dollars on these programs to save children instead of fighting wars.

Bill and Tari Nicholson
Martinez