

THE USAID BETRAYAL

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

February 13, 2025

Serial No. 119-1

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov> // <http://docs.house.gov>, or <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

59-986 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2025

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BRIAN MAST, Florida, *Chairman*

MICHAEL T. McCAUL, Texas	GREGORY MEEKS, New York, <i>Ranking Member</i>
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey	BRAD SHERMAN, California
JOE WILSON, South Carolina	GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania	WILLIAM KEATING, Massachusetts
DARRELL ISSA, California	AMI BERA, California
TIM BURCHETT, Tennessee	JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas
MARK GREEN, Tennessee	DINA TITUS, Nevada
ANDY BARR, Kentucky	TED LIEU, California
RONNY JACKSON, Texas	SARA JACOBS, California
YOUNG KIM, California	SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Florida
MARIA ELVIRA SALAZAR, Florida	GREG STANTON, Arizona
BILL HUIZENGA, Michigan	JARED MOSKOWITZ, Florida
AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, American Samoa	JONATHAN JACKSON, Illinois
WARREN DAVIDSON, Ohio	SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE, California
JIM BAIRD, Indiana	JIM COSTA, California
THOMAS KEAN, JR, New Jersey	GABE AMO, Rhode Island
MICHAEL LAWLER, New York	KWEISI MFUME, Maryland
CORY MILLS, Florida	PRAMILA JAYAPAL, Washington
KEITH SELF, Texas	GEORGE LATIMER, New York
RYAN ZINKE, Montana	JOHNNY OLSZEWSKI, Maryland
JAMES MOYLAN, Guam	JULIE JOHNSON, Texas
ANNA PAULINA LUNA, Florida	SARAH MCBRIDE, Delaware
JEFFERSON SHREVE, Indiana	
SHERI BIGGS, South Carolina	
MICHAEL BAUMGARTNER, Washington	
RYAN MACKENZIE, Pennsylvania	

James Langenderfer, *Majority Staff Director*

Sajit Gandhi, *Minority Staff Director*

C O N T E N T S

REPRESENTATIVES

Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Mast	Page 1
Opening Statement of Ranking Member Gregory Meeks	3

WITNESSES

Statement of Max Primorac, Former Acting Chief Operating Officer, Senior Research Fellow, Margaret Thatcher Center For Freedom, The Heritage Foundation	5
Prepared Statement	8
Statement of The Honorable Ted Yoho, Former U.S. Representative, Florida 3rd Congressional District	11
Prepared Statement	13
Statement of The Honorable Andrew Natsios, Former Administrator, U.S. Agency For International Development	17
Prepared Statement	19

APPENDIX

Hearing Notice	94
Hearing Minutes	96
Hearing Attendance	97

MATERIALS FOR THE RECORD

Material for the Record submitted by Ranking Member Gregory Meeks sub- mitted	98
Material for the Record submitted by Representative Tim Burchett	104
Material for the Record submitted by Representative Maria Elvira Salazar	106
Material for the Record submitted by Representative Bill Huizenga	108
Material for the Record submitted by Representative Anna Pauina Luna	110
Statement for the record submitted by Representative Gerald Connolly	119
Material for the record submitted by Representative William Keating	122
Material for the Record submitted by Representative Sarah Jacobs	139
Material for the Record submitted by Representative Greg Stanton	145
Material for the Record submitted by Representative Jonathan Jackson	148

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Responses to questions for the record from Representative Kweisi Mfume to Andrew Natsios	158
Responses to questions for the record from Representative Kweisi Mfume to Ted Yoho	160

THE USAID BETRAYAL

Thursday, February 13, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 8:34 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Brian J. Mast (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman MAST. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order.

I ask that everybody in the room, regardless of your position, please rise, join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ALL. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Chairman MAST. The purpose of today's hearing is to discuss the misuse of public trust through USAID's woke programming and explore ideas for reorganization to promote a stronger, better, and more prosperous United States.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BRIAN MAST

I now recognize myself for an opening statement on this hearing.

I can tell you that we are here today very simply because many of the people and many of the programs in USAID have literally betrayed America. My colleagues to my left will say that I am lying about these programs, and I know they damn well wish that I was lying.

The programs that USAID and the State Department have spent money on are indefensible, they hurt America's standing around the globe, and I think the fact is clear that America would have been better off if your money had been simply thrown into a fireplace.

Instead, the Biden administration spent it imposing their far left wing ideology onto other nations. Under them USAID spent \$2 million for sex change surgeries in Guatemala, \$22 million to increase tourism in Tunisia and Egypt. That is not lifesaving. \$520 million to pay consultants to teach people in Africa about climate change. That is not medicine. \$4.5 million to teach people in Kazakhstan how to fight back against internet trolls. That is not lifesaving.

Twenty thousand dollars to help LGBT individuals vote in Honduran elections. That is not medicine. \$5.5 million to improve the lives of LGBT individuals in Uganda, \$14 million to identify LGBT leaders in Cambodia, \$425,000 to train Indonesian coffee compa-

nies on how to be more gender friendly, \$15 million for condoms to the Taliban, and I have pages and pages more.

That is not diplomacy. It is a slap in the face to every American who got up this morning and went to work. To this moment you haven't seen or heard any of my colleagues apologizing for this being wrong or wasteful. Instead, for the left their biggest concern is that the person assembling the team to make sure that these programs are not funded is a billionaire named Elon Musk. They are so out of touch that they actually believe these programs are bringing other countries closer to us or that our adversaries are going to gain some kind of foothold if we don't continue doing these programs. That is not what competing looks like for the United States of America.

On the contrary, last month when I participated in a Q&A with my colleague here to the left in the United States Institute of Peace, which will have to explain their funding, the Ugandan ambassador stood up and said these programs were not doing anything to improve relations between our nations.

Take a look at the video.

[Video shown.]

Chairman MAST. Maybe we will get some audio on it.

[video shown.]

Chairman MAST. Maybe we won't get audio on it.

Mr. BURCHETT. Is there a 14-year-old in the audience? Maybe they can fix it.

Chairman MAST. Or a 19-year-old, Mr. Burchett. Thank you.

Maybe we won't do this video. But I have the video that shows exactly what the Ugandan ambassador was saying, and they were thanking us for not continuing these programs. That is what took place, and that is just one of the countless Ambassadors that got that phone call, conversations, and meetings thanking us that these programs will not continue, that they are going to come to an end. Yet my colleagues to the left are arguing for these programs to continue, arguing for the people who put these programs in place to go back to work, arguing that the agency that did this be allowed to continue wasting your money.

They are going to argue that President Trump doesn't have the authority to do this, but the fact is of those who were in Congress, all but three of them voted to give him the authority in 2024, and it says very specifically—and that is FOPS approps—that the administration may potentially expand, eliminate, consolidate, or downsize covered departments or agencies or organizations. That is the language of that authority.

It is not just the content of USAID that is the betrayal. It is the larceny that USAID has conducted, crooked NGO's around Washington, DC, swindling American taxpayers out of their money. A recent audit found that USAID's implementing partners were using upwards of 50 percent of their grants for overhead costs, not life-saving measures.

The administration has said that the aid pause is temporary, and they have proven it. The recipients of USAID programs can apply for a waiver. I have a list with me. Many have applied. Many have been denied, and some have received waivers that actually prove their work was lifesaving.

Let me give a warning to my colleagues. It would be shortsighted of you if you turn a blind eye to USAID's betrayal and more broadly the betrayal within the State Department because we are going to bring in the people who put these programs in place. We are going to show to the American people exactly what they were doing. The videos, the documents—everything— they are going to see it, like \$25,000 for a drag show seminar for Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador. We are going to show you that video.

[video shown.]

Chairman MAST. That is the USAID program spending your money.

We will be writing these programs out of law as we conduct our first full State Department review since 2002.

I would say that when done right, foreign aid can be one of the best tools. It can help strengthen our relationships with our allies that need a hand up, and it can help countries realize that America is the best partner.

But this is only true if we understand a couple of things. What does America actually need from each country or region? What does that country or region actually want from the United States of America? Because it is not these things.

It is only fair to Americans if we can prove that a dollar is better spent going abroad than staying in the pocket of an American who is right now hustling and grinding it out at work.

I now recognize my colleague, Ranking Member Gregory Meeks.

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GREGORY MEEKS

Mr. MEEKS. I want to welcome our witnesses to our first full committee hearing this Congress, but I would be remiss if I didn't make clear my disappointment in the midst of the chaos created by the Trump administration's unlawful attempt to shutter USAID and pause foreign assistance funds.

We don't have anyone here today from the administration to explain, to appear and to explain their actions before this committee. It shouldn't be just private sector individuals here. We are the oversight of the U.S. Government, and we should have members from the State Department, the Secretary of State Rubio present.

My Democratic colleagues and I have asked the chairman to have a committee hearing with Secretary Rubio, and I urge that to be done as soon as possible.

The American people deserve to have their elected representatives question the administration about the decision to shut down a government agency established in law by Congress.

We don't have a king. We have a system. If the administration believes what they have done is legal and merited, they should be before Congress. They should be here. They should be talking to the American people directly. We should be summoning them here.

I also want to do away with the myth that this exercise with DOGE and USAID is about addressing waste, fraud, and abuse, because if you really care about waste, fraud, and abuse, you don't illegally fire 21 independent Inspector Generals in the dark of night. You don't fire the head of the government ethics office.

Just this week President Trump fired USAID's independent Inspector General, just 1 day after he issued a report showing that the administration's own effort to dismantle USAID is wasting taxpayer dollars and putting our national security at risk. That is what is happening. Our national security is at risk.

I am asking unanimous consent to enter that IG's report into the record.

Mr. MEEKS. This committee and the American people deserve to hear from the IG. I would urge you to invite the Inspector General to appear before this committee to tell us about the actual work of addressing waste, fraud, and abuse if that is what this is really about.

Now, many Republicans—this has not been a partisan issue. Many Republicans have long championed U.S. foreign assistance as critical to our national security, as a source of United States soft power, and a key to outcompete China's growing global influence.

Despite my disappointment over not having Trump's administration panelists here, I am pleased that among our witnesses today we have a number of individuals who are Republicans. I look at my former colleague, Ted Yoho, who I have traveled with on several times, on several CODELs, and we visited USAID programs.

I know when you go and travel and see firsthand the work of dedicated USAID foreign service officers, civil servants, and local staff to whom we owe our gratitude and our thanks, not the dishonor shown to them by wealthy billionaires with a social media platform.

Now, I only have a few minutes left, so I won't spend my time debunking every mischaracterization or outright lie we have heard from the Republican distractors of USAID. These are distractions meant to obscure the critical work USAID does. I instead submit into the record the stories by the Washington Post, the New York Times fact-checking dubious claims made by the Republicans.

Chairman MAST. Do you have them?

Mr. MEEKS. Yes.

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

Mr. MEEKS. What I will use my time on is making clear that this hearing title, "The USAID Betrayal," is absolutely correct because this is a betrayal. The Trump administration is betraying our national security. It is betraying our allies.

It is betraying the Americans who carry out USAID's mission in some of the world's most challenging and dangerous places. It is betraying the generosity of the American people, and it is betraying the investments Americans have made for decades to stop diseases before they spread, to make sure girls have the same educational opportunities as boys, and to make sure that the innocent victims ravaged by war and natural disaster have basic human necessities.

It is betraying babies who have been born with HIV in the last 3 weeks who could have been born HIV-free if only we continued to provide their mothers with the necessary medication that was sitting on the shelves. It betrayed Americans' victory in nearly wiping out polio around the world by stopping the funding to stamp it out in the last two countries on the earth with the virus still present.

Want to know what happens when we stop funding this type of work, just look at Kansas with the outbreak of tuberculosis right now grow.

So it is not just about health programs. Economic development programs in Latin America build stronger communities and help reduce migration to the United States. Good governance, independent media, civil society programs in developing countries help break death traps from China and ensure citizens can enjoy their God-given rights.

Bottom line, who wins when we pull back from one of America's greatest threats? China wins. Russia wins. Our adversaries win. So, yes, this is a betrayal. This is a betrayal of our national security.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman MAST. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think I called it exactly right what the arguments were going to be.

Other members of the committee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

We are pleased to have our panel of witnesses here today on this important topic: Max Primorac, senior research fellow at the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at the Heritage Foundation; The Honorable Ted Yoho, former U.S. Representative from Florida's 3d congressional District; and Hon. Andrew Natsios, former administrator at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

This committee recognizes the importance of the issues before us and is grateful to have you here to speak with us today. Your full statements will be made a part of the record, and I will ask each of you to keep your comments, spoken remarks to less than 5 minutes in order to allow time for member questions.

Hopefully you give us something more than what we can just read in your opening statements.

I would also ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. McCormick, be allowed to sit on the dais and participate in today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

I now recognize Mr. Primorac for your opening statement.

TESTIMONY OF MAX PRIMORAC

Mr. PRIMORAC. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee. My name is Max Primorac. I am a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation. I previously served at the U.S. Agency for International—

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Chairman MAST. I guess these guys don't watch the news. They didn't realize that PEPFAR was one of the many programs that did prove to be lifesaving, so the funding was restored. Somebody better give them a link to, I don't know, maybe Fox News or something like that.

You may resume your opening statement.

Mr. PRIMORAC. Mr. Chairman, I previously served at the U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Department of State. I have dedicated 35 years to international relations work. The views I express here today are my own.

President Donald Trump's decision to shutter USAID reflects the agency's loss of bipartisan support in Congress and the trust of the American people. It exposes a bureaucracy that went off the ideological rails and no longer reflects the will or the values of the American people.

What should be and must be an effective tool of U.S. foreign policy has turned into a partisan global vehicle focused on spending money rather than achieving concrete outcomes aligned with American interests and on imposing radical social ideas that divide us at home and spur resentment abroad.

They refuse to be held accountable to Congress and American taxpayers who fund them. Advocates evoke dangers to our national security, citing programs to counter Communist China, protect us from the global spread of infectious diseases, and provide lifesaving humanitarian aid.

I understand the importance of these programs. At USAID I co-chaired a counter China interagency group, oversaw containment of two Ebola outbreaks, and led the bureau for humanitarian assistance. But USAID's obsession with identity politics, gender fluidity, population control, and climate fanaticism undermine these goals. Americans are now aware of massive waste, fraud, and abuse of their money. Every single project was corrupted by this radical agenda. They are not happy.

USAID's leadership failed in its most basic fiduciary responsibility, and that is to avoid the kinds of reputational risks that would imperil the agency's legitimacy with Congress and the American people.

USAID pushed developing countries to rely on Communist China for their green energy needs. 2 years ago 131 African lawmakers and religious leaders from 13 countries implored Congress not to use PEPFAR to promote abortion, stating, We want to express our concerns and suspicions that this funding is supporting abortion, that it violates our core beliefs concerning life, family, and religion.

Many Africans have told me, but also from other places in the world, the Chinese do not ask us to give up our religion to do business with them.

Mr. Chairman, our aid approach has severely harmed our global standing. USAID's humanitarian system is also broken. In Gaza, American aid financed Hamas's campaign to exterminate Israel. Similarly, in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria, where we lack physical presence to ensure that our aid is not diverted to terrorists, our aid is sustaining these war economies.

USAID failed to properly manage the billions of dollars entrusted to it. This committee discovered that USAID partners were charging 50 percent or more for overhead. A government audit showed that USAID could not account for overhead charges concerning \$142 billion worth of awards. These funds proved a boon for the progressive dominated foreign aid industry.

President Trump's leadership has created a unique opportunity to fast track important reforms of our aid system. Secretary Rubio might look at the reforms made during the last Trump administration. Our starting point was that the purpose of foreign aid is to end the need for it. Foreign aid is not an international welfare pro-

gram. USAID is not an international NGO. These must align with American interests and values.

A final point, Congress must also do its part. Why should pro-Hamas South Africa, Beijing's point country in Africa, receive billions of dollars of aid from us? We should support our friends instead.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Primorac follows:]



CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

THE USAID BETRAYAL

Testimony Before
Foreign Affairs Committee
United States House of Representatives

February 13, 2025

Max Primorac
Senior Research Fellow, The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom
The Heritage Foundation

My name is Max Primorac. I am a Senior Research Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. I previously served at the U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Department of State. I've dedicated 35 years to international relations work. The views I express in this testimony are my own and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

President Donald Trump's decision to shutter USAID reflects the agency's [loss](#) of trust of the American people, especially over the last four years. It exposes a bureaucracy and foreign aid sector that went off the ideological rails and no longer reflects the will or values of the American people. What should be an effective tool of U.S. foreign policy has turned into a highly [partisan](#) global vehicle focused on spending ever higher amounts of money instead of achieving concrete outcomes consistent with American interests; [imposing](#) radical social ideas that are divisive at home and cause resentment abroad; and [refusing](#) to be held accountable to Congress and American taxpayers who fund them.

Advocates portray USAID's shut down as a danger to our national security, citing programs to counter Communist China's global ambitions, to protect us from the global spread of infectious diseases, and provide life-saving humanitarian aid. I understand the importance of these programs having served at USAID where I co-chaired a counter-China interagency working group, oversaw containment of two Ebola outbreaks in Africa, and launched and led the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance. Yet, USAID's obsession with identity politics, gender fluidity, population control, and climate fanaticism undermined these goals as a flood of media articles now inform Americans of massive waste, fraud, and abuse of their money. Every single project has been corrupted by this radical agenda.

USAID's leadership failed in its most basic fiduciary responsibility to avoid the kind of reputational risks that would imperil the agency's public legitimacy in Congress and the American public at large. They have also done harm.

Instead of deploying aid to strengthen alliances, USAID forced Africans to [rely](#) on Chinese solar

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

panels and wind turbines and adopt climate strategies that are financially unrealistic. USAID directives on gender ideology and population control [enflamed](#) African government, religious, and civic leaders who mostly hold conservative views. Many told me, “The Chinese do not require us to reject our religious values to do business with them like you do. Why are you pushing us into their arms?” At a panel on Africa, I moderated, a Nigerian [Governor](#) related his conversation with the previous USAID Administrator about linking humanitarian aid with adopting the LGBT agenda. He said, “I told her we would rather starve than violate our Christian faith.” Visting Africa twice last year I learned from religious leaders that millions of Africans were praying for President Trump to be re-elected president, revealing the mass social trauma resulting from this unwanted cultural imperialism.

USAID also failed in its defining mission to alleviate poverty and reduce hunger. It [exacerbated](#) both. Its climate programs helped increase world energy prices that hit the poor hardest, making natural gas-based fertilizers unaffordable for poor farmers and reducing their crop yields. It blocked financing to developing countries seeking to develop their fossil fuel endowment needed to generate jobs and revenues to finance health, education and other social services, locking them into permanent poverty and aid dependency.

USAID’s humanitarian aid system is broken. In Gaza, American aid financed Hamas’s campaign to exterminate Israel. Similarly in [Afghanistan](#), [Yemen](#), and [Syria](#) where we lack physical presence to ensure that our aid is not being diverted to terrorists. Our aid has been sustaining war economies.

USAID failed to properly manage the billions of dollars entrusted to it. This committee’s investigation discovered that USAID partners were charging 50% or more for overhead. A government audit showed that USAID could not account for overhead charges of over [\\$142 billion](#) in awards. According to federal elections commission data, billions of dollars of taxpayer money has been financing a [one-party](#) progressive aid industry that systematically discriminates against the American people.

So, what next? I recently [wrote](#): “Secretary of State Marco Rubio has the daunting task of separating the wheat from the chafe, preserving those foreign aid programs that reflect American values and align with U.S. interests.” The Secretary must figure out with Congress how to restructure a broken foreign aid apparatus that is aligned with our national security needs and does not violate American values.

President Trump’s leadership has created a unique opportunity to fast track reforms of our broken foreign aid apparatus.

Secretary Rubio might look at the reforms made during the last Trump administration. The starting point was that “the purpose of foreign aid is to [end](#) it.” Foreign aid is NOT an international welfare program. USAID is NOT an international NGO. A robust counter-China infrastructure, dismantled by Biden, should be restored. We must end reliance on corrupt U.N. agencies, international NGOs and for-profit contractors and work directly with local Church-run institutions and private businesses that share our values and value a strategic relationship with America. Traditional aid models must be scrapped in favor of increasing trade and investment, the time-tested hallmarks of poverty reduction. The aid budget can be cut by at least half and produce better outcomes for American taxpayers.

But the Secretary needs the help of Congress. Why should pro-Hamas [South Africa](#), China’s main ally in Africa, receive billions in foreign aid? It is time to cut off countries that do us harm and support our

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

allies instead.

Thank you.

The Heritage Foundation is a public policy, research, and educational organization recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is privately supported and receives no funds from any government at any level, nor does it perform any government or other contract work.

The Heritage Foundation is the most broadly supported think tank in the United States. During 2023, it had hundreds of thousands of individual, foundation, and corporate supporters representing every state in the U.S. Its 2023 operating income came from the following sources:

Individuals 82%

Foundations 14%

Corporations 1%

Program revenue and other income 3%

The top five corporate givers provided The Heritage Foundation with 1% of its 2023 income. The Heritage Foundation's books are audited annually by the national accounting firm of RSM US, LLP.

Members of The Heritage Foundation staff testify as individuals discussing their own independent research. The views expressed are their own and do not reflect an institutional position of The Heritage Foundation or its board of trustees.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Primorac.
I now recognize Mr. Yoho for his opening statement.

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE TED YOHO

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Meeks, and members of the committee, it is an honor to participate in this hearing regarding USAID.

I am a former Member of Congress, serving from 2013 to 2021 representing Florida's 3d Congressional District. During my 8 years in Congress, I served on this and the Agriculture Committee. I had the honor to serve as chairman of the Asia-Pacific Subcommittee during the 115th Congress. I entered Congress—

Chairman MAST. Mr. Yoho, could you move a little closer to your mic?

Mr. YOHO. It will help to turn it on too, won't it?

Chairman MAST. Thank you.

Mr. YOHO. I lost that knowledge already, huh?

I entered Congress with the goal of eliminating foreign aid for various reasons. Looking back I was ignorant on what I thought foreign aid was, what it did, and thought it was unnecessary. Soon after my first foreign congressional delegation trip, I realized that foreign aid when used properly can be a tool in soft diplomacy that strengthens the Nation's economy, security, increases trade, decreases migration, creates strong partners and allies. When used improperly, it has the opposite effect on both our friends and adversaries and wastes taxpayers' money.

I became a strong proponent of reforming international assistance by working in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion with my cosponsors, along with the first Trump administration, when we introduced the BUILD Act that authorized the creation of the DFC. This was the largest reform in foreign aid in over 2 decades. And my goal was to move countries from aid to trade with the use of effective tools managed correctly.

I chaired, along with Congressman Adam Smith, the Effective Aid Caucus and met with members and outside groups to improve efficiency and effectiveness on assistance. This committee has had many hearings dealing with USAID.

It is frustrating that an agency set up to further our security prosperity, engage in humanitarian projects, and work to prevent the spread of diseases, hunger, and conflict have strayed so far from its original intent when it was created under President Kennedy in 1961. USAID has lost the trust of a large portion of the American people and the international community. Remember, President Lincoln, he said, With public support, you can do almost anything. Without it, you can't do anything.

The redesigned U.S. foreign assistance entity will have to work hard to recreate that trust here and abroad. Many new reforms are necessary in USAID. There are many ways reform can be performed. Many administrations and, as I heard here today, Congresses have acknowledged this, yet we did not act. The Trump administration acted, and there is a lot of angst and concerns about who has authority, how is it going to be done. Those debates will go on as long as people want to debate, criticize, and complain.

President Trump and Secretary Rubio stated the objectives of international aid very clearly moving forward. Does it make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous? It will serve the Nation, our security, and economy as well as the developing nations and our allies to get new reforms in place as soon as possible. Not all aid is bad, nor is it all good. We should focus on those programs that are good and make them better and more effective. Programs that were misused and not aligned with the administration should be eliminated. Congress should look to support programs that have a proven track record of success, and there are many examples to look at, and I'll be happy to discuss those.

Moving forward I would recommend the Trump administration place aid into two categories. First, the hard infrastructure projects like road, water, energy, transportation, these are the projects that are necessary to build an economy in the recipient countries so we can wean them off of aid. The U.S. Government has instruments like the DFC, MCC tasked with the heavy lifting and initial phases of a project by providing risk insurance, technical assistance, and expertise and brings in outside investors and other nations' DFIs. Second, the humanitarian side of assistance via a repurposed USAID type entity working synergistically with the DFC and other USG agencies. Feed the Future and African Growth and Opportunity Act are effective health and food security programs when implemented properly and generate much soft power goodwill. Unfortunately, if mismanaged, we lose credibility, money and drive the affected nations to our adversaries.

By pausing U.S. international assistance, a vacuum is created. China, Russia, or others are already moving in to fill those voids. The U.S. must quickly bring back the authorization funding and a knowledgeable workforce to implement those programs that align with the administration's goal, does it make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous?

One last point. By not being effectively present can be arguably worse than pausing a program, and all you have to do is look at South and Central America and look at how much we have ceded to China and their influence from Russia, China, and Iran. That has to be dealt with immediately. That is a national security threat.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I yield back my time and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Yoho follows:]

Remarks for the Record

The Honorable Ted Yoho (Former Member of Congress)

House Foreign Affairs Committee

“The USAID Betrayal”

February 13, 2025

Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks and the members of this Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the full committee today on this important topic, titled; “USAID Betrayal.” That’s a strong and damning title, and I look forward to having an engaging discussion about US assistance and international engagement with you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of this historically bipartisan committee.

I had the honor to serve in the U.S. Congress from 2013-2021. I served on this committee and the Agriculture Committee during those 8 years. During the 115th congress, I had the privilege of chairing the Foreign Affairs Asia-Pacific Subcommittee. I also served in Congress as the Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Effective Foreign Assistance, where my colleague Adam Smith and I brought together Members and staff from across the aisle to explore and advance policies and initiatives to improve our international assistance.

I went through a metamorphic change in my approach to foreign aid during my time in Congress. Entering congress, I wanted to eliminate all foreign aid, but soon learned from bipartisan Congressional Delegations to Africa and Latin America that not all aid programs were bad. I became a strong proponent of effective aid programs and for reforming our foreign assistance agencies and programs to increase their impact in service of our national interests. I developed a strong belief that properly designed, efficient and effective foreign aid that is aligned with U.S. foreign policy advances American interests in several critical ways: 1. It projects American leadership and values; 2. It broadens and deepens alliances and economic relations; 3. It challenges the influence of our adversaries and malign actors; 4. It promotes regional stability and thus prevents future conflicts and denies safe havens for violent extremist organizations; and 5. It protects Americans from disease outbreaks through pandemic preparedness, prevention and response.

Secretary Rubio has stated that our international assistance must advance U.S. national interests by making America safer, stronger and more prosperous. This is a commonsense approach that should always be the standard. Another way of thinking about this is that U.S. assistance must pass two critical tests. First, the programs must be designed and implemented in a manner that aligns with and advances U.S. foreign policy, national security and economic priorities. Secondly, all USG funded assistance programs must demonstrate program efficiency and value

for money. We must come together on a bipartisan basis to support assistance that meets these criteria and to oppose assistance that does not. We simply cannot afford to be investing in programs that are not effective and strategic. While in Congress, I repeatedly called for and introduced legislation to mandate bilateral and multilateral aid reviews, and I call on the members of this committee to prioritize such legislative action.

This can be accomplished by reauthorizing in law the objectives and authorities of our foreign assistance apparatus, and it must be done in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion. If not, foreign assistance programs will deviate from their core purpose over time, resulting in reduced effectiveness, diminished bipartisan support, and the erosion of America's credibility with our international partners.

As Congress endeavors to reduce our national debt and reign in government spending, it will be necessary to apply a greater strategic focus to a limited budget for international assistance. We simply cannot afford to be doing too many things in too many places, as this only dilutes the humanitarian and strategic impact of our foreign assistance. Successive Democratic and Republican Administrations have tried to narrow USAID's aperture and graduate countries off assistance, but none have succeeded meaningfully. This must be part of the plan for our assistance efforts going forward. All countries must be put on a journey to self-reliance, and we must concentrate our efforts in the geographies and sectors where we can have the greatest impact. We also must adhere to the fundamental objectives we set out for our aid, such as lives saved, health improved, economic growth and prosperity achieved. Our development programs must maintain purity of purpose, and should not weigh into social policy areas where there is strong political disagreement.

We must put economic growth at the center of our foreign aid strategies and programs. Unlocking the power of the free market to achieve sustained economic growth is the only lasting solution to eradicate extreme poverty, and it puts our partners on a path to move from aid to trade. Investments in health, education, and agriculture enable partner countries to chart a path towards increased prosperity. However, we must do more to support market-based economic growth through increased investments in critical infrastructure and in programs that improve governance and financial management, and spur trade and investment. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) also play a critical role when it comes to U.S. Government efforts to spur economic growth in developing countries.

Another vital area for U.S. leadership is in addressing global food insecurity. I spent my career in the agriculture sector, and I understand that productive agriculture and food security is the bedrock of prosperous and secure societies. During my time in Congress, I worked with and championed USAID Feed the Future Innovation labs at our world-renowned land grant universities. These programs invest in biotechnology and other agriculture research areas, and

connect our university leaders with farmers in low-income countries to help them in developing better farming practices that lead to increased incomes, improved health and more stable communities and nations. On top of that, U.S. agriculture exports to Feed the Future focus countries have increased dramatically, showing how smart assistance programs can create economic opportunity for Americans. My alma mater, the University of Florida, leads the Feed the Future Livestock Innovation Lab, and I was proud to partner with the leaders of this innovation lab to support their work in Africa. Another successful program is the food supplement, known as RUTF. (Ready To Use Therapeutic Food). This product is funded by USAID, carries the American flag on every pack, and is made with US agricultural products sourced from over 27 states. The dramatic scale up of RUTF production and delivery in recent years is responsible for saving the lives of millions of vulnerable, young children. RUTF is a clear-cut example of America first international assistance, where we invest alongside other donors in an American product that is both highly cost-effective in saving lives and a powerful tool for building good will for America.

An often overlooked and underappreciated component of effective U.S. foreign assistance is how the U.S. government leverages its leadership position within international organizations. The United States played the lead role in establishing the World Bank and United Nations systems, yet we have ceded leadership and allowed our adversaries to increase their influence within these multilateral institutions. Renewing U.S. leadership at these international organizations requires increased engagement to exert our influence and an honest assessment of the value these organizations provide. We should adopt the same type of multilateral aid review model as those undertaken by other leading donors, which base investment decisions on organizational performance and alignment with foreign policy priorities. The U.S. is the largest funder and shareholder in the vast majority of international organizations, and we must take back the power in these relationships in order to maximize the benefits of U.S. participation. The U.S. also must lead within independent multilateral organizations that have demonstrated unique value for money and development impact and that share the cost burden and provide a force-multiplier to U.S. investments.

US foreign aid programs needed a reboot, and the question before Congress now is how to design the future of U.S. international assistance. While undertaking the necessary and hard work to reform foreign aid, let us not lose sight of the strategic purpose that it serves and the goodwill it has generated for our nation.

I have complete confidence that if Congress comes together as Americans and does what's best for the nation by putting our international assistance programs on a path of reform and optimization, your actions will leave a more secure, healthier nation and a more stable world for the next generations to follow. Lastly, it's the right thing to do and exemplifies the best of America.

Again, I want to thank you Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks and the committee members for the opportunity to weigh in on this important topic. I yield back.

Ted S. Yoho, DVM,
Former Member of Congress 2013-2021
HFAC and Agriculture Committee

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Yoho.
I now recognize Mr. Natsios for your opening statement.

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE ANDREW NATSIOS

Mr. NATSIOS. Thank you very much. I speak for myself today.

Chairman MAST. Microphone.

Mr. NATSIOS. I speak for myself today. I have been involved in humanitarian work.

Chairman MAST. Let's try that microphone one more time, maybe pull it a little closer.

Mr. NATSIOS. Okay. How is that?

Chairman MAST. Much better.

Mr. NATSIOS. Better. Okay.

I speak for myself today. I don't represent anyone, and I have been doing this work since 1989 when I joined the Bush administration, the first Bush administration as the director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance when the world order was collapsing. And our little office, along with the Food for Peace office, saved tens of millions of lives around the world, which they continue to do through the BHA Bureau which is now much larger than it was when I was there.

If you are upset about getting off course, so am I, but let's course correct, not course destroy.

When I took over AID as the administrator in Bush 43, W's administration, in early 2001, I ordered my deputy to begin reviewing every single project, every single program in AID line by line, and we eliminated 80 programs over a month, and we moved that cash back into the program because there was a Cassava mosaic that was destroying the Cassava crop in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and eastern Congo. There was the risk of a famine. And we got cuttings in, and we stopped the pandemic—the disease pandemic for the Cosaba.

My point is I eliminated a lot of philosophically offensive programs that a conservative administration would not tolerate. And when the Democrats took over, they moved the agency to the left. I moved it to the right. The Obama people actually said I was very right wing, I was the most right wing administrator in the history of the agency, and yet the career people followed what I wanted to do in the agency. We put heavy emphasis on economic growth.

Some of the things you have criticized, sir, with all due respect, are economic growth programs that have been highly successful. Ten percent of the workforce in Egypt is from tourism. AID has properly invested \$100 million over the years, and it has massively increased the number of jobs in Egypt. They are our ally. Don't we want people working instead of being unemployed?

It is 12 percent of the GDP of Egypt, tourism. We call it development tourism. We do it in Lebanon. We do it in Tunisia. We do it in Kosovo and Bosnia. We have done it in Morocco. We do it all over the world. It brings in revenue and employs people. It is an economic growth project.

I believe in economic growth. I believe in the private sector. I believe in free markets. That is what AID does. The notion that AID is some kind of a Marxist institution is absolutely ridiculous. Okay. I know the career officers. I work with them. There is a career

track called the private sector officers. And what do they do? They work with the business community.

I started a program, which the Democrats continued, called the Global Developmental Alliance. We started it very early on, 2001. What it does is it matches AID money with corporate money to supply their supply chains. We do this all over the world. We are working with hundreds of American corporations. We have raised \$60 billion in private sector funding with the American business community to increase jobs all over the world. We have been doing this for 24 years, very successfully.

The Europeans and the Canadians and the Australians have taken our lead in this and tried to replicate these public private alliances. Twenty 5 percent of the money in those GDAs is U.S. Government money. Seventy 5 percent is private money. We invest together. We don't give them any money. They don't give us any money. We design the project. We coinvest, and then we manage it.

The notion that AID is irresponsible in terms of its oversight is utter nonsense. I wrote an essay 12 years ago called "The Clash of the Counter-bureaucracy and Development." It was published. It is the most cited thing I have written in the scholarly literature. And it was based on my frustration with the level over and over and over again of oversight, the Inspector General, the Special Inspector General. Why do we need two Inspector Generals in Afghanistan and in Iraq? Then we have the GAO, we have the OMV, we have the congressional Oversight Committee. Every line of what AID does is overseen by seven different levels of oversight.

You know why money disappears? I will tell you why. Where do we work? Where do we work? Christian NGO's are now delivering food in Sudan in a famine. There will be 2 million people dead by the end of this year. Those are the projections. There is no government in Sudan. There is no police in Sudan. There is no courts.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Natsios follows:]

Testimony of Andrew S. Natsios, Former Administrator, USAID

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Hearing on February 13, 2025

“Foreign Aid in the National Interest: Steps for Reform”

Introduction

Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and members of this committee, I thank you for the opportunity to speak today on USAID. My comments today are my own; I am not representing the Bush School of Government and Public Service nor Texas A&M University at large.

USAID serves as a powerful force protecting and advancing America’s national interests in the world. USAID needs to be refashioned, not abolished for this new era of Great Power competition. It needs to return to its roots. USAID has not always done a good job explaining to the public or the Congress what it does and how it does it. President John F. Kennedy created USAID by executive order in 1961 and later through legislation within months of the Berlin Crisis, one of the most dangerous confrontations between the western alliance and the Soviet Bloc, and the announcement by Fidel Castro of Cuba that he was a Communist aligned with the Soviet Union. It was a time of crisis and imminent threat, just as it is now.

I have been directly involved in the development world for over 30 years, including almost nine years at USAID. Between both the public and non-profit sectors, I have seen the overwhelmingly positive impacts of foreign aid. Before I became administrator of USAID under President George W. Bush, I was the director for USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance from 1989 to 1991, Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance, and Vice President for one of the largest ecumenical, evangelical, Christian organizations in the world for five years in the 1990s. To me, foreign aid was never a “criminal” enterprise as Elon Musk has said—it was delivering textbooks to village schools, responding to disease outbreaks, ending child trafficking, preventing mass starvation, and providing economic opportunities. As Administrator for USAID, I always sought to uphold USAID’s mission, to promote and demonstrate democratic values abroad, and advance a free, peaceful, and prosperous world.

While I share Mr. Musk’s concerns over our national debt, I believe that shutting down our aid program is a mistake. I am a conservative Republican who believes in fiscal responsibility. I was named legislator of the year by the Citizens for Limited Taxation organization in Massachusetts during the 1980s. I was brought in to overhaul the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority’s Central Artery/Tunnel Project, also known as “the Big Dig” after massive cost overruns. I made tough, cost-saving reforms so the project could be finished. The most serious domestic crisis in the U.S. is our debt, which can only be addressed by entitlement reform, which I understand the White House to be very reluctant to undertake given the political battle that would ensue. But what Elon Musk has done is to cut the muscle and bone of federal institutions, particularly those in the foreign policy apparatus of the U.S. government just as we require those institutions to defend against growing threats from abroad. USAID and the State Department, combined, comprise approximately 1% of the federal budget. Cuts at the State Department have not yet begun, but rumors are circulating of what Musk has planned. Gutting these programs is not the solution to balancing the budget, and it will dramatically harm our national security, putting American lives at risk.

The blanket shutdown of our 80 USAID missions damages our ability to conduct diplomacy in countries of the developing world, who will now turn to China and Russia for foreign aid. In fact we have evidence in Cambodia that this has already happened. Development is a way for the U.S. to spread influence abroad. Hard military power is important, but it is not everything. I say that not only as a development expert, but

as a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves who served in the first Gulf War. My son, Philip, served as a field artillery officer in an infantry unit in Afghanistan in the middle of Taliban insurgency. My other son, Alex, has served as an aid worker himself in Africa. So we as a family have been on the front lines. The U.S. is facing a dangerous era of Great-Power competition with a rapidly arming China and a revanchist Russia. These threats warrant having a diverse toolkit at our disposal, which should include both hard and soft power. USAID is instrumental in achieving our objectives and has been a stabilizing force throughout the world for decades.

As a conservative I believe in limited government, but the federal government's first responsibility under the U.S. Constitution is the conduct of foreign policy and the defense of the country through our armed forces. Those duties cannot be delegated to the states or the private sector, though both have roles to play. Foreign aid is part of the foreign policy infrastructure of the United States government.

Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid

The White House executive order, the 90-day pause in U.S. foreign development assistance, could have been a thoughtful review process. This was not a serious attempt to reform the system. Reform comes incrementally and carefully, not with a sledgehammer. If this continues, 90% of the NGO and contractor community will cease to exist within another month. NGOs, many of them faith-based, Christian organizations, will be forced to shut down programs, lay off staff (which many have already been forced to do), and ultimately close their doors, having relied on USAID funds to operate. Despite the stop work order containing caveats to not affect food aid, it did so. It took nearly a month for 500,000 metric tons of food, worth \$489 million, to get moving. Had the pause on food aid continued, these shipments would have spoiled in ports, wasting hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. If food aid is ever frozen again or if contracts are permitted to expire, children will go hungry, and many people will die. Families will be decimated across multiple continents. Right now there are thousands of medications sitting in warehouses with no one to distribute them. Additional reports across implementing organizations indicate that payments continue to be frozen and that food aid remains stuck in ports as a result, creating a massive risk that people will die. Without USAID to monitor and respond to disease outbreaks, many will flourish. It is a gross erosion of trust among our partners in the developing world. USAID's freeze has led to a domino effect on the entire development community. It appears the entire system is collapsing by deliberate design.

How USAID Operates

How does USAID work? USAID's mission is to protect the vital national interests of the U.S. and support our friends and allies. Very little USAID funding is ever spent through the business systems or treasuries of the receiving countries because the risk of diverting funds is an understandable concern for the U.S. Congress (regardless of party), the White House, the Inspector General's office, and career USAID officers. One public opinion poll found the public believes 50% of our aid is stolen by corrupt government officials. That is simply not true, very little of our foreign aid dollars are stolen. Foreign aid, with a few exceptions for close allies such as Egypt, Israel, and Jordan, is not transferred into the treasuries of aid recipient governments. Instead, it is spent through international and local non-governmental organizations, U.S. and local universities, for-profit development contractors, and civil society organizations. For the last decade, at least 20-25% of the budget has been spent through trusted international organizations such as the World Bank, the UN's World Food Program, UNICEF, and the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR). Put simply, USAID works with recipient governments, not through them, because of the risks involved. There is no ideal mechanism for distributing this money. It is different for each country: some states may benefit more from international organizations, others from being a USAID partner. There are strengths and weaknesses to each approach.

To distribute aid, USAID's procurement system is among the most highly developed in the federal government, even though USAID is a comparatively small federal agency. The Agency's procurement process is a highly refined and sophisticated system within the constraints of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Circular Number FAR 15.404-4(c) and other Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations that affect program management. Apart from those in the Agency who deal directly with USAID's procurement system, few people ever see the entire system as a whole and the choices available to the officers managing programs. The simple reason why aid officers do not implement our programs directly themselves is because there are so few of them. The USAID foreign service has 1800 officers with perhaps 1500 civil servants to spend \$40 billion dollars. As former Secretary Robert Gates has said, there are more people in the Army Band than in the USAID foreign service. We must contract the work out or it won't get done. Much of the Pentagon's work is contracted out.

USAID Goes There, so They Don't Come Here

Despite its complexity, USAID is an extraordinary instrument of U.S. national soft power. Immigration is a contentious issue right now in American politics. What many Americans may not know is that USAID worked with the Colombian and Brazilian governments to resettle over two million migrants from Venezuela into the region. When a civil war erupts, when a government collapses, or when the world's poorest people do not have economic opportunities at home, USAID works with surrounding countries and partners to help refugees and migrants relocate to find opportunities. If we do not help these people relocate, they will come to the U.S. By providing opportunities to people abroad with just 0.7% of the budget, USAID prevents mass migration to the U.S. and the costs of deportation down the road.

USAID is a Partner for Private Businesses Around the World.

When I was Administrator, I initiated the Global Development Alliance. It created a system of public-private partnerships to jointly fund development projects that have endured under different names until the funding pause. For example, USAID's Water and Development Alliance increased access to clean water in over 21 countries by partnering with multinational corporations, local businesses, and nonprofits. Thanks to the initiative, we constructed 10 public water taps for 23,000 Angolans, 45 wells used by 40,000 Ethiopians, and wastewater facilities for Egyptians. Corporations, foundations, and NGOs provided 75 percent of the funding while USAID provided 25 percent. A recently completed partnership with Microsoft expanded broadband internet access to remote populations. Through these programs, USAID supported the work of U.S. businesses, philanthropists, and non-profits abroad. Musk has claimed that USAID is Marxist. That claim is simply out of touch with reality. If this were true, USAID would not be so effective and mobilizing such significant private capital investments. Corporate America and private foundations have invested \$60 billion in USAID projects since 2003. Annually, about \$6 billion is invested by the private sector in USAID projects: 25% from taxpayer funds and 75% from private funds.

No government program is perfect. I believe that all human beings are fallen. As a result, all human institutions are fallen, whether they be labor unions, businesses, universities, governments, or USAID itself. Thus, the question then is how institutions can be improved, redeemed even. How does USAID compare to other federal agencies? How accountable is it? USAID has passed its audits with "no reportable noncompliance... no material weaknesses in internal control over financial reporting." Out of these years, USAID never had an issue with financial statements and was never found to be out of compliance with laws, regulations, grant, or contract agreements. In 2022, USAID ranked third out of nine federal agencies and departments when it comes to making evidence and data-driven budget, policy, and management decisions. In contrast, for the seventh consecutive year, the Department of Defense failed its audit.

We should be thanking USAID; it has helped further the U.S. national interest for decades. For example, during the peak of the Cold War in the sixties and seventies, the Agency was spending a third of its budget implementing the “Green Revolution” of Dr. Norman Borlaug. These innovations improved seed varieties used with fertilizer in Asia. USAID’s innovations doubled, and in some cases, tripled grain production while cultivating a third more land. During this time, when USAID was innovating, our adversaries were failing. The famine in Communist China, the Great Leap Forward, led 45 million to starve. Our efforts demonstrated to developing countries that the U.S. was the partner of choice. USAID helped the U.S. win the Cold War, and it will be vital in the new era of great power competition.

In 2023, USAID delivered aid to 160 countries around the world, around \$44 billion. With only 0.7% of the federal budget, USAID cultivated developing countries’ government leaders, monitored disease epidemics to prevent pandemics, built democratic institutions in fragile states, addressed vulnerabilities in the world food system, improved community health, provided de-risking investments for small businesses, and reduced mass migration by giving people opportunities at home. All of these issues benefit Americans and make our world system more secure and prosperous. Paying for these issues now will make them less expensive down the road. Many Americans may remember the 2014 Ebola epidemic. As cases rose in West Africa, it caused a great scare in the U.S. USAID’s monitoring systems are the reason the virus was caught so early and contained and why the region recovered as quickly as it did.

USAID Under Fire

In the past few weeks, USAID has come under heavy scrutiny from the American people as a result of Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Much of this attention has come from DEI programs that are remnants of the Obama and Biden eras. I believe it is bad policy to transfer domestic culture war politics to the developing world. It is beyond the Agency’s scope and offensive to many people whether in the Muslim world or the conservative Christian-majority nations in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere. I do not, however, believe that shutting down our entire aid program over Biden-era policies will be productive. Further, a significant portion of existing USAID projects already reviewed and formally certified that the majority, and in some cases, all their projects had no DEI elements. The fixation that USAID’s programs are “woke” is a false narrative that has been grossly exaggerated based on poor research, or a complete lack thereof, to tarnish USAID for political expediency. Every President orders officials to conduct a review of their foreign aid programs upon entering office. I conducted a review early into my tenure as Administrator, canceled sixty programs, and adjusted the Agency to suit the new administration’s agenda.

If one were to read the criticisms of USAID starting from its origins in the Marshall Plan under President Truman and all the way up through today, one would be struck by the repetition of the same charges: Critics blame USAID for failing to correct its own weaknesses. They claim it is a failed institution. They insist that development does not work and that foreign aid is a waste of money. What critics fail to recognize is that the root of the problem lies not in USAID, but in the political forces outside of its control that drive its decision-making, shape its institutional structure, and determine aid allocation. While we could speak at length on the various issues, I have chosen three for today: congressional earmarking, the counter-bureaucracy, and excessive centralization.

First, budgetary earmarks undermine sound development practices. Policymakers understandably want to ensure that foreign aid will go to important humanitarian causes. However, earmarks often take decision-making power away from aid officers in the field and recipient country leaders, and they place it in the hands of Washington policymakers unfamiliar with countries’ specific development needs. They favor spending on social services, often leaving the important work of institution building underfunded. Contrary

to some claims that USAID is a criminal agency gone rogue, I speak from my own experience as Administrator, and from my conversations with those at the Agency today, that over 90% of USAID's budget is Congressionally earmarked. I will say that again: USAID has only 10% of its budget free of constrictions. The Agency has been severely limited and is constrained by policymakers' demands for rapid, visible, and quantifiable results. These demands limit the Agency's ability to improve institutions. They shift focus to short-term humanitarian projects over long-term objectives.

Under regulatory pressures, USAID's short-term focus on humanitarian projects leaves countries heavily reliant on our services. The abrupt pause of humanitarian projects under the stop work order has left countries reeling. PEPFAR's sudden halt and lack of disbursement means that millions of Africans are without antiretrovirals. USAID's Foreign Service Officers have been sent home, and these countries do not have the infrastructure to disburse the treatments or the capacity to make more at the same level. What does this mean practically? It means that once we left, the infrastructure went with it. To borrow an old metaphor, delivering humanitarian aid is like giving others fish, while infrastructure and capacity building is like teaching others how to fish.

Second, USAID is forced to prioritize compliance with intrusive federal regulations that stifle creativity and responsiveness. The counter-bureaucracy is a complex web of U.S. departments and agencies designed to improve program performance. While performance metrics are good, over-regulation harms the mission. USAID's programs have been distorted, misdirected, and disfigured to such a degree that it is compromising U.S. national security objectives. It is challenging established principles of good development practice. The system has created an incentive structure that leads to an over-emphasis on process above program substance and, in so doing, it has produced a perverse bureaucratic nightmare. The clash of counter-bureaucracy and development shifts career staff to focus on compliance, not performance. I have analyzed these problems in an essay I wrote 13 years ago called *The Clash of the Counter-Bureaucracy and Development*.

Local officials and local aid workers know best. Centralization does not automatically make our programs better. USAID should decentralize aid programming and decision-making to the lowest possible organizational level, where officers have the greatest knowledge of what is happening on the ground. We have rigorous empirical evidence to support the decentralization imperative. One scholar examined whether, when, and how organizational autonomy affects project success. After compiling a database of over 14,000 projects conducted by nine aid agencies, he found that greater organization autonomy led to a higher rate of performance—especially in areas with high levels of unpredictability. Aid programming that is culturally and geographically removed from Washington needs dynamic operations run by people who know the local conditions best.

Who should determine USAID's direction and lead these reform efforts? Ultimately, USAID is a Congressionally authorized and appropriated federal agency, and it cannot be dissolved by executive action. Even setting that concern aside, it is essential for reform efforts to involve Congress in order to embed changes in legislation and prevent future administrations from unilaterally reversing any policies. Otherwise, fighting over USAID will continue indefinitely.

Finally, the argument that USAID is a rogue agency out of sync with American foreign policy is nonsense. The State Department through the F Office, OMB and the Congressional oversight committee approve line by line every dollar spent by USAID. They micromanage USAID to an extraordinary degree. I witnessed this for the nearly nine years I worked at USAID under two Presidents, and it has gotten much worse since I left. USAID does exactly what the White House, State Department, and US Congress want it to do.

Conclusions

USAID should not be merged with the State Department. USAID is a project management organization; the State Department is a policy making institution, which is not operational. Where the State Department hires generalists and policy analysts, USAID hires specialists and program managers. There have been calls for USAID to merge with the State Department before. Secretary Albright, then-Senator Joe Biden, the Hart-Rudman Commission, and Secretary Tillerson have recommended that USAID be merged with the State Department in the past. Notably, not one of these people had a career in development; not one is a former administrator of USAID. Many within the State Department view USAID as a tool of foreign policy goals, a carrot and stick approach to solving foreign conflicts. While using foreign aid as a bargaining chip can sometimes be effective, it is not the end-all-be-all. Sometimes it can backfire. Combined with the work culture issues mentioned above, the State Department is not filled with people who have years of experience managing multi-million dollar projects. The United Kingdom's foreign aid program was gutted by Prime Minister Boris Johnson for similar arguments made today. It used to be one of the world's premier foreign aid agencies; it is not anymore. Budgetary balance to save Americans money is admirable, but not at the expense of our foreign policy and national security.

There have been a plethora of statistics and data flying around online about the Obama and Biden-era DEI-esque policies within our foreign aid program. Some claim this means the Agency itself has "gone woke" and is therefore beyond repair. The Agency itself has not gone woke; a handful of ill-advised programs, out of hundreds of others, do not reflect the broader good the Agency does. Furthermore, some of the claims levied against the "Agency's" DEI programs were not funded by the Agency at all. This committee has reported the \$70,884 DEI musical in Ireland, the \$47,020 transgender opera in Columbia, and the \$32,000 LGBTQ comic in Peru were all State Department programs. Should we abolish the State Department? Should we abolish the Department of Defense for its DEI training and its offering of a gender studies minor to servicemembers at West Point? Of course not. We roll back these programs, as is the case with the new objectives under new administrations. But to suggest that the entire foreign aid program should be merged with the State Department and to gut a workforce of nearly 10,000 employees who focus on governance building, education, health, and other development objectives for a handful of programs is counterproductive.

Other programs have been misconstrued or exaggerated. Some claims are downright absurd. Some allege that USAID bought \$50 million worth of condoms for Hamas. There is absolutely no evidence of this. Simple math disproves this. A condom costs about \$0.04 to produce. That would mean USAID delivered over 1.25 billion condoms. Instead, the program in question was for medical and trauma services for Palestinians. In fact, because of this program, the INGO that implemented this program operated two field hospitals, treated 383,000 civilians, and performed 11,000 life-saving surgeries. Further, this example appeared to confuse Gaza in the Middle East with an anti-AIDS programming in the Gaza Province of Mozambique, demonstrating the very low quality, or complete lack, of thoughtful research that led to this false conclusion.

Our foreign policy needs to adapt to the changing tides of the international environment. A new era of Great Power competition is upon us. To adapt to this new era, we should be making an incremental shift in the location and concentration of USAID Missions. A 2017 study by the think-tank Chatham House identified 14 maritime chokepoints through which much of the global supply of fertilizer for agriculture and 50 percent of commercial food is shipped. To put it bluntly, if, during a conflict, several of these choke points were to close at once, the global food system could collapse or at least be severely compromised. To mitigate this, the U.S. should establish permanent aid missions along these chokepoints.

Culture war politics have no place in our foreign aid programs, but neither do partisan politics. Foreign aid is critical to U.S. national interests. It protects Americans, strengthens our allies, and promotes global stability. I predict within five years we will either recreate USAID and it will not be part of the State Department or we will cease to be a great power. We will rue the day that we destroyed USAID.

Chairman MAST. I thank you for your opening remarks this morning.

I now recognize Chairman Emeritus Ranking Member Meeks for his 5 minutes of questioning—Chairman McCaul, I'm sorry. Chairman Emeritus McCaul for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When I was chairman of this committee, I got congressional notifications of spending programs from USAID and State Department, and I put holds on those programs, many listed by the chairman. Instead of working with me, the administration, the prior Biden administration, decided to blow through those holes, bucking a longstanding tradition.

I want to go through some of those I put on hold. \$1.5 million to promote LGBTQ causes for immigrants in Latin America, allowing them to litigate against foreign governments, primarily Catholic nations. I don't know how that advances the U.S. interests abroad. And as a Catholic myself, I find that very offensive.

We have also heard about the \$15 million for condoms and contraceptives to Afghanistan, a country under surreal law, \$15 million. What did USAID do? They blew through my holds in complete and utter disregard of this committee's oversight responsibilities.

I also uncovered the department had spent \$500,000 to advance atheism in Nepal, atheism in a country where Tibetan Buddhists is a predominant religion. What does that have to do with advancing U.S. interests abroad? The humanist international group that they gave money to, the \$500,000, the CEO called the Catholic Church an institution you should be ashamed to be involved with, our taxpayer dollars to condemn the Catholic Church. Again, as a Catholic, I find that extremely offensive.

And then the one we have heard so much about, \$20,000 for drag shows and drag workshops in Ecuador. Mr. Chairman, I have seen the video you sent out. It is utterly disgusting to the American taxpayer that we are funding that kind of behavior.

All these programs gave USAID a black eye, and that is unfortunate because you go back to the Marshall Plan, really the genesis for thinking about USAID, the Marshall Plan was one of the most successful programs we endeavored in after World War II to make sure a Hitler never arose from the ashes again.

The Food for Peace Program, sir, that you discussed, the American farmer benefits from this. It has been extremely successful.

Why was USAID created in the first place in 1961? It was to counter the Soviet Union during the cold war. I believe it still has a legitimate purpose to counter the rising threat of China and Belt and Road and our other foreign adversaries. It also has the ability to counter terrorism.

Lindsey Graham and I passed the Global Fragility Act, State, DOD, USAID all working together to stabilize destabilized nations which breed terrorism.

PEPFAR, one of the most successful global health programs ever developed under President Bush, yet all of this is called into question because of the irresponsibility of the Biden administration's woke agenda and policies.

Mr. Yoho, we have been friends. We worked together, colleagues. Your greatest legacy is the BUILD Act, and we need to reinforce

that policy as well. But when you look at the core mission, all these programs need to go, and they will be gone. But as we look at program by program and strip down to the core mission, do you still believe that this is a worthwhile endeavor, the core mission of USAID?

Mr. YOHO. I do. I think what you see over a period of time is a mission creep. You know, these programs were designed with purity of purpose, this is what they are supposed to do. And when you get mission creep, you get these things that we are seeing, and they are indefensible, some of the programs that you guys mentioned, and that loses trust, like you said.

In business, what I have learned—and I think everybody can agree with this—people like to do business with people they know, they like, and they trust. If that is true with us on a business setting, it is the same in nations. If other nations know us, they like us, and they trust us, they are going to do business with us. And we have heard this over and over again. You know, it has been brought up by other leaders that—

Mr. MCCAUL. Can I just ask—my time is almost up—is it in our national security interest to maintain the core mission and I would argue under the State Department for proper supervision?

Mr. YOHO. Yes, it is. And if we don't do that, we cede that leadership to other people.

Mr. MCCAUL. I yield.

Chairman MAST. I now recognize Ranking Member Meeks for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you.

I too am a chairman emeritus of this committee, and I can recall where President Trump when he was the president blew past some of my things that I wanted. In fact, he has blown past some already in this term, so that is just the will of what presidents do at times in that regard. But in this instance, 93 missions, every one has been closed, every one. That is not trying to fix something. That is destroying something.

But let me stop there because one of the reasons why I asked Mr. Natsios to testify here, because he is a lifelong Republican and he understands the insides and the outsides of running USAID, more so than anybody—no disrespect to anybody that is on this panel. He is the one that has done it. I will admit we don't agree on certain things. Democrats and Republicans don't agree, some things that Republicans do that I believe is full of waste, destructive, but if they win the elections, they have a choice to try to move it in that direction. When Democrats win, what we stand for we move in our direction. That is part of having a free democratic society. We are not Russia.

So I want to put the politics aside for this discussion and ask Mr. Natsios, can you explain to the committee why you believe foreign assistance and the work of USAID as you have done so is so essential and you feel so passionately enough about it that you did respond? Because I have seen administrators, Democrats and Republicans alike, who have worked at USAID alike come out against closing USAID. Can you tell us that today?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, let me tell you two stories. One story is my last month at AID. No one knew, except my wife, that I was going

to leave and teach at Georgetown, and this was in December 2005. And I always would get briefing from the director of counterterrorism at the CIA, and he came in to see me, and he said, Mr. Natsios, the chatter is you are coming and they are going to attempt to assassinate you. I said, Who? He said, Well, obviously the Taliban. I said, Why are they going to assassinate me? Because you are the head of AID. They can't deal with AID. They can deal with the military, they just shoot each other, but they can't build health clinics—we built 400 health clinics. We got the child mortality rates and the maternal mortality rates down by a third.

It took 7 years to do that, but we did it very successfully. And we opened schools. We published 90 million textbooks in the schools to get the kids back in school, and the Taliban can't deal with that. They are going to try—and we advise you not to go. And I said, Well, let me think about that. But if you do go, announce you have arrived as you are stepping on the plane to leave. I said, What? He said, Announce—when you are stepping on the plane to leave, announce you arrived. So, in other words, they won't know you are there.

So I went—I decided to go, and nothing happened, What I found out was from talking to the MOAS in the village, the religious leaders, who were pro democracy and pro America, that the Taliban regarded their greatest enemy to be USAID. You know in Kosovo they name their kids Usaid? The Albanians are Muslims in Kosovo, and they made it into a Muslim name, Usaid. If you go to the refugee camps and displaced camps around the world, USAID is the image of the United States.

We used to bring 20,000 students to the United States to get their advance degrees during the cold war. You know what the Chinese—you know what we are doing now? 900 scholarships. We stopped doing it. The Chinese are spending huge amounts of money to bring 40,000 people from the developing world to get their degrees in China. We should be investing in that. We are not. And I think we are falling behind and we are focused on the wrong things.

The amount of DEI stuff—I started going through the RFAs. It is a small percentage. Some of these things that have been shown are not AID projects. Those are State Department programs. Why are you blaming AID for what the State Department did? The F Office in State controls all this stuff.

Now, let me tell you the a second story. After the Aceh tsunami, we did a huge response. Ache is a part of Indonesia which had a Muslim insurgency for many years against the Central Government. We did a huge response. We put the AID logo on everything. The mission director got carried away, 50,000 stickers USAID from the American people. Before the Ache tsunami, Bin Laden had a 57 percent approval rating in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world in a democracy. After the tsunami, Bin Laden's approval rating collapsed from 57 percent to 27. The U.S. approval rating went from 28 percent to 63 percent.

Now you say Americans like to be liked. We all like to be liked. But what does difference does it make? President Udenono, the president of the country, said, I like President Bush. I like the United States, but it is very hard to work with you because you are

so unpopular. Not after the Aceh tsunami. The newspapers in Indonesia said, Where is Bin Laden when we need him? The Americans here we really don't like, and now we realize who our real friends are. The United States is.

Chairman MAST. Thank you for answering our questions today, sir. We appreciate it. We agree a lot of waste, like \$10 million through USAID—everything I listed was USAID. \$10 million for circumcision for Mozambique, there is another example for you.

I now recognize Mr. Smith from New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Upon assuming office, President Biden repealed President Ronald Reagan's Mexico City policy expanded by Donald Trump in 2017, but the Biden administration didn't stop there. They initiated a new radical vision that integrated aggressive abortion on demand into PEPFAR programming, called it Reimagining PEPFAR, that included explicit guidance directing recipients—and this is billions of dollars of U.S. taxpayer funds—to use their leverage to enact pro-abortion laws and policies in PEPFAR countries. Biden hijacked PEPFAR, and he shattered—I mean, I did the reauthorization of PEPFAR for 5 years during the Trump administration, the first one. I am all for it. In this place here and on the floor of House and all over Africa as I traveled, all for it, but then it was hijacked.

It is strong rebuke—and Max had mentioned this earlier—131 African lawmakers and religious leaders said that the PEPFAR funding is supporting abortion, and they admonished us to say the NGO's that we finance are highjacking their ideals by pushing it so aggressively in Africa.

Mr. Natsios, as you testified today, and I read your written statement, the USAID needs to be refashioned, and you said that, quote, you believe it is bad policy to transfer domestic culture wars into politics to the developing world.

Do you believe that the Biden administration was wrong to integrate abortion on demand as interglobal health? Because they did it across the board, USAID, and, of course, PEPFAR, much of that money is, you know, deployed through USAID. When you did say that efforts to protect the weakest and most vulnerable from extermination, I do believe that is trivialized when you somehow—bottom line is you say it is a culture war.

We believe in depending unborn children and their mothers from the violence of abortion. Is that a culture war? It is a fact when they are in these countries pushing it that, unfortunately, children will die. I and like-minded pro-life advocates in Congress and around the world seek to protect unborn baby girls and boys from violence of abortion, including dismemberment, decapitation, and, of course, the abortion pills which are now being pushed all over the world, including the United States. How do they work? They starve the baby to death. That is how it works. So the baby—you know, I am all for global—we did two bipartisan—I was a proud sponsor of it—Global Food Security Acts.

I am all for mitigating global hunger, but when you turn around and say to an entire segment of humanity, unborn children, we are going to starve you to death through these abortion pills, to me that is unconscionable.

So do you agree that pro-abortion NGO's should continue to be empowered and subsidized with millions of dollars each year by the American taxpayer to promote abortion with the goal of changing pro-life laws in these nations? And I would ask all three of our witnesses.

Mr. NATSIOS. Congressman, you can check my voting record in Massachusetts. I am 100 percent—and this is in Massachusetts—I am 100 percent pro-life voting record for 12 years in the House, so my position is very clear. And I took a lot of heat from the feminist groups in Massachusetts, and my views have not changed.

I called you once because we found them doing vaginal scraping in Bangladesh in a remote village.

Mr. SMITH. I remember.

Mr. NATSIOS. And the mission director called me immediately and said, We discovered this. We put a stop to it, Andrew. Because if you do that and the woman is pregnant, the child dies. Okay. And you are supposed to check before you do it. They weren't trained properly. They weren't doing it maliciously. They just didn't understand because they weren't trained properly.

We fixed it very quietly. I called you up and told you what happened. We were being transparent about it. Other than that, that is the only violation we had in the 5 years that I was AID administrator.

The career people will do what they are told to do. I am appalled at what you are telling me that they have done. And by dragging AID into these culture wars, the Biden administration has undermined the need for bipartisan support for AID. We cannot tolerate in an agency with programs all over the world a war between parties which I am seeing right now. In my view, it is a failure. All of the things I did at AID, I tried to do it in a way that would not alienate the Democratic party when I left.

If you look, before they took apart the agency, everything I created is still there, was still there. They left it in place.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. I am almost out of time.

The other two distinguished witness. Thank you.

Mr. PRIMORAC. Congressman, everything that we did during the first Trump administration and I had these senior positions, we worked very hard to make sure that everything that we did had bipartisan support. What I have seen with the last administration is actually breaking the law because you are not supposed to—by law you are not supposed to. And I think the PEPFAR coordinator has stressed that point. But when you fund international planned parenthood, when you fund U.N. agencies that openly promote it and when the Africans themselves tell you it is happening, then the law is being broken. I hope that the second Trump administration pursues the pro-life policies that it had in the first one but also to include humanitarian assistance.

Thank you.

Mr. YOHO. When we set these policies forward, it is going to behoove all of us—and this is hard to do. These policies should be what is best for America. If it is best for America, it is going to be best for the rest of the world. And those policies are based on our beliefs as a Nation. If we are a Christian Nation as we always talk about, that is the right thing to do, and I think we need to stay

that way. And the hard part is with us in this body we have to keep the checks on that. If not, it goes away.

I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MAST. Thank you.

And I am glad to hear the conversation about university spending as well because there is a lot of that within USAID also. \$42 million for Johns Hopkins to research and drive social behavior and \$250,000 for FIU for DEI training, and \$244,000 for Stanford to do leadership training, not lifesaving programs.

I now recognize Mr. Sherman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Foreign aid is a good thing. Americans think that we spend 25 percent of the Federal budget on foreign aid and want it reduced to 10 percent, but the fact is it is way less than 1 percent. It helps us challenge China and the world. It reduces not only hunger but migration to our borders, and it helps us fight communicable diseases over there before they mutate and come here. And that is why Ronald Reagan recognized the importance of foreign aid.

Mr. Chairman, my fear, because I have been here for a long time, when I got here it wasn't just Democrats against Republicans. It was the legislative branch against the executive branch. And we need to play that role, and as the ranking member points out, we need to have government witnesses here so we can talk about the future rather than just be a cheering squad for the executive branch.

But I want to bring to your attention, Mr. Chairman, an action taken by the State Department today that was too woke for Sherman. They announced that they are going to spend \$400 million on zero greenhouse gas emitting armored cars. That's right, electric armored cars, \$400 million to replace perfectly good gas-driven armored cars. They said they were going to be Tesla Cybertruck armored cars. This administration will get too woke for Sherman if it helps the shareholders of the Tesla automobile.

There have been a number of falsehoods stated. The biggest one is the \$50 million for Gaza condoms. Musk admitted that it was just completely false. He apologized. So he made a—DOGE made a mistake. Are we going to terminate DOGE? Well, I would like to. But are we going to terminate DOGE because it made one mistake? No. You identify mistakes that are a lot less than \$50 million, people want to terminate USAID. Musk, the statement he should be apologizing for and publicizing because the truth has a tough time catching up with the falsehood.

But let's go through a few others. We are told that there is \$6 million to fund tourism in Egypt. Mr. Natsios, you would demonstrate how that is a good program. We should give credit to Donald Trump for that program. He started it under his first administration. Now it is being attacked.

We are told that circumcision is terrible. It is a very cheap operation. It is only done voluntarily. It has been done by Democratic and Republican administrations, including Trump. Why? Because it is a 60 percent reduction in the risk of female-to-male transmission of HIV.

We are told that USAID was spending \$80 million on subscriptions to Politico. No. The entire executive branch was doing that. But you know who else spends money on Politico? Republicans in Congress who spend \$800,000 of their office budget on Politico. And, Mr. Chairman, you didn't spend any money on Politico. Like me, you spent your money on Bloomberg, as do I. Of course, Michael Waltz spent his money, over \$8,000, on Politico just for his own office.

The list goes on and on. But we are told that there are waivers for all of this. Well, PEPFAR has been allowed to work, but they have had no access to funds. But what doesn't get a waiver is democracy programs, and we need democracy in Iran. Education programs and economic development.

So it is okay under Trump to give a hungry man a fish, but it is illegal to spend a dollar to teach them to fish or to tell them how to get a fishing pole. And under that we will be feeding hungry Egyptians forever because they won't have the tourism so that they can buy their food on the world market. We needed education. We need democracy. We need economic development.

Finally, there is a sad incident. 71-year-old Pe Kha Lau. She was able to survive and flee from Myanmar to Thailand. She was in a camp with over 10,000 people. They cutoff the money, and they cutoff her oxygen, and she died. And no future waiver is going to bring her back to life.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that this committee take a minute of silence to remember Pe Kha Lau.

[Pause.]

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time has expired.

And I would also point out that PEPFAR care and treatment, HIV prevention under the PEPFAR programs have been reauthorized for \$500 million and other appropriations as well just in case you were not aware.

I now recognize Mr. Wilson from South Carolina.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman MAST. Mr. Wilson is recognized.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much, Chairman Brian Mast, and thank you for your leadership on this very important hearing.

In the past I have supported the very inspiring messages and missions of American outreach. I have, though, sounded the alarm for abuse and wasteful spending in aid programs sadly for years. We have routinely seen aid diverted to dictators, such as Assad of Syria, and oppressing the very people it was meant to help. The Biden administration insanely provided and funded woke deranged depravity in Syria instead of trying to help the people, and the U.N. delivered aid through the regime itself to the people as they were being slaughtered by Bashar al-Assad. Legitimate aid was diverted from the needed earthquake recovery that occurred there in Syria. Fortunately, Assad is now removed by the people of Syria, and he is in hiding, of course, in the appropriate location, Moscow, with war criminal Putin.

Another example, Mr. Primorac, is the tragic example of dictator diversion, and that is in Tunisia. Once a shining success of the Arab spring and partner in North America, it has now been turned into a full-blown dictatorship by Kais Saied. While Millenium Chal-

lenge Corporation rightfully suspended aid, USAID sent \$30 million to cover unclear programs while the dictator has corrupted the economy destroying jobs.

What can be done to stop propping dictators and also aid being diverted, as you correctly identified, even to terrorists themselves?

Mr. Primorac?

Mr. PRIMORAC. Yes, sir. I am not familiar with the situation in Tunisia, but this happens a lot. I think there is a lot of good will in these programs. There is a lot of good programs overall but the problem is that very often these things just go on year after year after year, and though there is no change, we are actually propping up bad regimes and socialism.

I was in Mozambique in October for the elections there. We have a marxist, leninist regime. They stole the election. We are spending a billion dollars, half a billion to a billion dollars a year. And what happens? There is no reform. We are supporting socialism, and the government, just 2 months before we came there, provided their port in order to allow the Chinese Navy to project their power into the Western Indian Ocean.

So there has to be a much better affinity between what we do on the development aid side and the diplomacy where we put our Ambassadors on the hook to make sure these things don't happen.

Thank you.

Mr. WILSON. And, indeed, we have seen in the Republic of Georgia, the corrupted election of October where the legitimate president, Salome Zourabichvili, has been replaced by a Georgian dream, which, as you identify ports, indeed, the Chinese Communist Party has taken over the port there in Georgia on the Black Sea.

And simultaneously, the Georgian dream dictatorship in Tbilisi has reached out to work closely with Tehran at the same time as Tehran has sent assassins to murder Donald Trump.

With that in mind, thank goodness we have good people like our congressional alumnus Ted Yoho here. And so Ted, delivering mechanisms for aid have been co-opted by enemies to the United States running the U.N. Fortunately, President Trump has supported Elise Stefanik and the U.N. Ambassador in the transition of Ambassador Nicky Haley who will stand firm for America first.

Many of the nonprofits that are doing the bidding of dictators are being supported. What can we do to ensure that, indeed, these agencies are working for the people we are trying to help and not prop up dictators or support terrorists?

Mr. YOH0. I think the biggest thing is just oversight, and we need to followup on the oversight. We hear every year how many erroneous spending programs there are, how money is being wasted. We hear those reports, but yet when I was in Congress, I didn't see us acting. It was hard to get everybody to act.

And that's where I go back to the purity of purpose and what is the mission. We have to stay within those guardrails, and we need to make sure—well, the body of Congress needs to make sure that they stay that way. And it is a tough thing. If it was a static world, it would be easy, but it is a tough world.

Mr. WILSON. And also, in the best Florida tradition, our Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, has announced just last week a great

letter to Chairman Mast about how they would be stepping in to identify programs and promote those that promote the people legitimately in the world who need it.

I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Wilson.

I now recognize Representative Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I welcome two of my former colleagues here, Ted Yoho, who is one of the more conservative people I served with here in Congress, and Andrew Natsios, who I think is the most conservative member I served with in the Massachusetts house as a Republican and a Republican leader in Massachusetts as well.

You know, I think that what we are seeing with our witnesses, witnesses like this is the fact that up until 3 weeks ago, this issue, the USAID used to be the most bipartisan issue. And I have been on this committee now for 14 years plus. We used to agree with these things. We could find things wrong with it that we can correct.

And the irony of all of this is this. The Republicans are in charge of the White House, the House, and the Senate. They have the power to do this the right way. They have the power of oversight to look at all the things being pointed out. That is your responsibility if you don't like it, and you have the power to do it.

You don't need this draconian executive directive to do it. It is causing chaos not just here in this country but around the world. It is not necessary, and it is a huge departure from everything I have seen occurring in the 14 years before this.

Along those lines, I would like to submit, Mr. Chairman, a letter to the Republican and Democratic leadership in the House and the Senate. And it is from almost 150 former administrative officials, Republicans and Democrats, those who served in the military and the State Department urging the rescission of the Trump executive orders aimed at freezing our foreign assistance and dismantling USAID. It deplores the undemocratic and unconstitutional dismantling of these agencies.

I would like to submit this with unanimous consent.

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

Mr. KEATING. I would also like to point some other correspondence that occurred around this issue. The people that praised this action, where did they come from? I will tell you where they came from. They came from our greatest critics, the greatest critics of democracy right now in the world. They came from the leaders of Russia and Hungary and Venezuela. They are praising this effort. That is who is for this effort.

In fact, the speaker of the Russian State Duma said that anyone who received funding from USAID should be made to publicly confess and repent on Red Square. That is who is praising this. That is who is happy with this. Putin is happy with this.

This is so important now in Ukraine. One example, Putin's primary target in Ukraine is to destroy the electrical grid to us that as an energy weapon of war against the Ukrainians in his illegal aggression. And what does USAID do? They are helping to train and give the resources so that the Ukrainians can repair these

damaged electrical grids so they can keep the power on and fight Putin. Putin is happy with this.

I mentioned the military leaders. General Mattis, who is also Secretary of Defense under Donald Trump, he used to come to this committee time and time again and say don't fully fund these programs like USAID. And you know what, if you don't fund it, just buy me some more ammunition. The military in our country understand the importance of this program.

I have had discussions for years, and I just recently had discussions with our special operations forces. Those people, I respect them beyond words. They are in the most dangerous parts of the world in small numbers, a global footprint, working to know where our greatest threats are in the country.

They are placed in positions, hosting the most dangerous threats to our country, as are so many people working for USAID, risking their lives as well trying to secure the safety of people not just in the world but in our own country, from terrorists threats that are metastasizing and pose increasing threats right here back at home.

They told me of the importance of USAID. They told me how they work together on security issues, on intel issues, on understanding how they can use their ability to keep us safe and use it more effectively. And they particularly pointed out what a threat China is, and it will become a greater threat in the absence of USAID. That is whose asking us not to make these draconian changes.

And, you know, do it the right way all those things you do, all the little small cuts. I won't say anything about circumcisions being a small cut. Listen, all these small cuts, you have the power to do it yourself. Do it. Do it the right way. Don't support this.

I yield back.

Chairman MAST. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts. We will write \$10 million of foreskin out of the budget.

I now recognize Representative Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

USAID was created through executive order in 1961 by President Kennedy, long having lost and strayed from its mission, lost its direction. Even the Clinton administration tried unsuccessfully to reform it, and we spent, I don't know, somewhere between 40 and \$50 billion annually on this organization.

And with the things that you hear, while many of us, probably most of us in this room agree with projecting America's power for the good of all the world around the globe. Quite honestly, if our enemies were asked to design a foreign aid program that would actively undermine the United States of America at maximum cost to the taxpayer, they would be hard pressed to create a scheme more effective than USAID. That is shocking to say.

Look, let's just go to a couple things here. We left Afghanistan, and I will just characterize it as left in August 2021. August 2021. So the Taliban is in charge. The Taliban threatens the lives of the NGO personnel distributing USAID. They claim credit for USAID distribution. They interfere with the distribution of USAID aid.

They tax the beneficiary of the aid. They tax the delivery service. They steal the food commodities. They divert the funds. They extort citizens for protection for USAID aid. They create sham pro-

curement schemes, and they threaten the lives of those who oppose those schemes.

Now, that all occurred before August 2021 when we were there, when we were there. Now, you know, you don't have to be a rocket scientist. You could just read. The Taliban is classified. And if you don't know, the Taliban is in charge of Afghanistan. They are classified as a specially designated global terrorist organization by OFAC.

So post 2021. So this is last year, 2024. We spent 697 million of the taxpayers' dollars in Afghanistan, including \$534,719,000 and change from USAID in Afghanistan. I don't know what we think we are going to change in Afghanistan. We lost 22,000, lost or wounded 22,500 Americans in Afghanistan over the course of our term there in the war, spending over \$2 trillion. We are just going to keep on spending because somehow we think it is going to get better.

And if you are wondering who is in charge of Afghanistan getting the money, and that money I just mentioned, the 697 million is on top of and is in addition to the weekly to every 10-day shipments in cash of 40 to \$80 million.

Afghanistan is ruled by folks named Sirajuddin Haqqani. Haqqani Network mean anything to anybody in the room? How about Abdallah bin Laden who gets some of that money? Does that name ring a bell to anybody in the room? Because your money, your money, \$697 million annually, plus the shipments of cash fund, madrasas, ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, ISIS-Khorasan, terrorist training camps. That is what it is funding.

If you think that the program under Operation Enduring Sentinel entitled Women Scholarship Endowment, which received \$60 million annually, or the Young Women Lead, which gets about \$5 million annually is going to women who, by the way, if you read the Inspector General's report is telling you that the Taliban does not allow women to speak in public, yet somehow you are believing and the American people are supposed to believe that this money is going for the betterment of the women in Afghanistan. It is not. You are funding terrorism, and it is coming through USAID.

And it is not just Afghanistan. Because Pakistan is right next door. USAID spent \$840 million in the last year—last 20 years on Pakistan's education-related programming. It includes \$136 million to build 120 schools of which there is zero evidence that any of them were built. Why would there be any evidence? The Inspector General can't get in to see them.

But you know what, we doubled down and spent \$20 million from USAID to create educational television programs for children unable to attend the physical school. Yes, they can't attend it because it doesn't exist. You paid for it. Somebody else got the money. You are paying for terrorism. This has got to end.

I yield, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Perry.

In addition, we don't even have an embassy in Afghanistan.

The chair now recognizes the representative from California, Mr. Bera.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to start off by saying I know a lot of USAID workers, former workers, alumni are watching this hearing. I want to thank them for their work. They are patriotic Americans. They are out there doing God's work, helping save lives and everything else. And I'm sorry that you guys are caught up in this. So I want to appreciate you on behalf of the United States of America. You guys are patriotic Americans.

I visited with a lot of these folks. I travel a lot, gone into refugee camps and have seen what they do in terms of lifesaving stuff. And, again, it is super important work that they do. It represents the best of American values, and it is really sad to see these folks get thrown under the bus.

When we talk about stronger, better, more prosperous, I think we are all in favor of that. We are all in favor of working together.

You know, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Yoho is my classmate, and he may have been more conservative than you when he got to Congress.

Ted, you and I traveled I think on your first trip abroad. We went out and saw some of these USAID projects. I watched you over time, become the champion of the Build Act, the champion of reforms, and we have continued to stay in touch.

Now, what saddens me about this whole approach—now, I am not going to talk about Elon Musk. I am not surprised about how he is approaching things. But this isn't Twitter. I don't want a 21-year-old tech bro going through deciding which programs we should continue and not continue.

Mr. Chairman, I want us to work and do that work. We can go line by line, or we could hire Mr. Yoho to go through line by line and say, Hey, here are the programs that make sense, here are the ones that don't. But that is our job. That is what we are supposed to be doing. That is our oversight.

I don't want that 21-year-old tech bro who probably has never traveled anywhere, has no passport, doing our job. Let's do this work together.

I am not here to defend every USAID program, but I do believe it serves a really important purpose for our values. You know, we have read Heritage Foundation reports. I worry about what is happening in the Pacific Islands. They put out a good report. We have met with them. We are seeding our influence there. We are already seeing China step in and take things over.

We are watching in Cambodia, in Southeast Asia, programs that are good programs like demining. China stepped in. It is front page news. Let's not shoot everything down. Let's make necessary reforms. Congressman Yoho said let's focus on humanitarian aid. Let's focus on development, and let's look at the programs that do this.

For the American people, the most successful development program in the history of the world was the Marshall Plan. That was us. That was the United States of America rebuilding Europe, creating stable democracy, preventing war, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. That was us.

We can do this, and we can do it better and smarter and not betray our values as Americans. But we should do this. This is Con-

gress job. It is not someone else's job, and I am willing to work with you to figure out what programs make sense.

Let's write a foreign aid authorization bill, but let's do it in a smart way. Let's get former administrators in here. Let's us do the work, Democrats and Republicans, to rebuild a better, stronger, more prosperous USAID—

Congressman Yoho, we are friends, and we have stayed in touch over the years. I appreciate the Build Act. That was bipartisan and your leadership there.

I am a little bit worried because I have heard President Trump talk about creating a sovereign wealth fund, perhaps making that DFC's mission. Will you actually talk about the difference between DFC sovereign wealth fund?

Mr. YOHIO. Yes. What I see is the DFC was designed for a specific purpose when we put it together. We wanted to move countries from aid to trade. That was our big thing. I won't go into why I came up with that. We were on a CODEL over in the DRC.

And if they want to create a sovereign wealth fund, I think they should do that separately. And I think there was an executive order, in fact, to do that, which is good because if you put it in the DFC, it starts clouding the mission. You know, are we going to do development? Are we going to build the trust fund or the sovereign wealth fund? And you start clouding the mission, and you get away from what I like to call purity purpose.

The DFC was for hard core infrastructure projects that will bring in other investors in a region that needs those jobs and the opportunity so that we can wean them off foreign aid. You know, foreign aid by itself has not brought anybody into prosperity, but working together to build that infrastructure, to create that structure there, that will. That brings in the opportunity, outside dollars, and then we create friendships and allies around the world. It increases trade.

Mr. BERA. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I am willing to work. Let's do the work here in Congress in this committee, and let's build a better, stronger, more prosperous—

Mr. YOHIO. And I commend you guys for saying that.

Mr. NATSIOS. Could I just add something if I could?

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time has expired.

I do thank the representative for wanting to work on the State Department reauthorization. I look forward to working with you on that.

The representative from Tennessee, Mr. Burchett, is recognized.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to submit for the record an article, why condoms cannot always be trusted. It is dated March 19, 1993. And it goes on to say that USA distributed around 800 million condoms last year. And this was in 1993. The argument that condoms are not being distributed obviously has some holes in it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Primorac, can you provide an example of a USA program that was harmful to the U.S. foreign interest?

I probably didn't say your name right.

Mr. PRIMORAC. That is okay, Congressman. And thank you.

Mr. BURCHETT. Nobody gets—Jonathan Jackson still doesn't get Burchett right, so we are good.

Mr. PRIMORAC. I have heard a lot about the issue of China, and I agree that it is very important to counter China, but the last 4 years went in the opposite direction. The strong counter-China infrastructure that we had developed over at USAID was simply dismantled by the next administration.

I can't think of anything that has harmed the developing world than the climate agenda. It has pushed all of these countries, especially in Africa, to go green. Solar, wind, EV, who produces all of those materials? It is China.

Then on top of it, we tell them, no, you can't develop your own fossil fuel industry because it is anti-green. So what happens? They can't generate the revenues to create good jobs at home. They can't generate the revenues in order to finance their own health, education, and other needs. And it increases the price of energy, which does what to the poor? It hurts them.

The climate agenda has done more at increasing poverty and increasing hunger than anything else. Of course, the resentment that is building up from around the world that is much more conservative than we are on these woke things, it is extremely damaging.

Look, a friend of mine at work provided me this morning with something that is very, very telling of 19 of the top 20 countries receiving aid from USAID are part of the belt and road initiative that China runs. I mean, this is showing that our efforts are not working.

I agree with Congressman Yoho and Administrator Natsios that the developing world, they want more trade. They want more investment. I don't care if you are speaking to government officials, business leaders, religious leaders. They don't want all of this other kind of aid where 50 percent of it is gone and we are violating their—

Mr. BURCHETT. Let me get a couple more questions in to you, if that would be all right.

Did USAID assist in illegal immigration on our southern border?

Mr. PRIMORAC. I think that is something—it is both State and aid that shared in that responsibility. PRM over at State I think is doing this.

There was this whole thing about root causes and spending billions of dollars in Central America, as if that would stem illegal immigration, but the problem with that argument is that these countries earn tens of billions of dollars of remittances. So the amount of aid that we are spending, it is such a tiny amount. It doesn't have any impact.

If you want to stem illegal immigration, it is not foreign aid. It is closing the border, and we are seeing the results of it now.

Mr. BURCHETT. Did USAID fund foreign terrorist organizations, such as the Taliban?

Mr. PRIMORAC. You know, when I launched and led the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, we had an internal risk assessment tool, and I pushed it immediately into red because we were sending money in places where we didn't have an actual presence. In a place like Afghanistan, we are not there. All of the international NGO's that we worked through, they left. And the Afghans that

had worked for us, they fled or were killed. So we have absolutely no idea what is happening with that money, but it is being spent.

Before I left as the COO, I put in a very tough vetting requirement that anybody who touches the money must go through our data bases to see whether or not these are terrorists, but the next administration just removed it. So I think we can safely conclude that we are.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you. Thank you. Those groups will hate us for free.

Ted, does Congress authorize the spending for every individual USAID program? And that is to say did Congress approve the \$20,000 for the drag show in Ecuador or the \$47,000 for a transgender opera in Colombia?

Mr. YOHO. No, they don't. Again, those things happen without the oversight, and it is hard to do oversight when you have a big organization like that. That is why, again, you have to have the purity purpose, and we had to be diligent, when I was in Congress, to be the ones that say we are not spending this money.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you.

Mr. NATSIOS. But those two projects are State Department projects. They are not USAID projects. That is inaccurate, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. I didn't—did I say—I asked—I didn't say that, sir, but thank you for putting words in my mouth.

I would like to submit this article for the record, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

The gentleman's time has expired.

And I would add they don't just happen whether we authorize or deauthorize. They happen because of bad people in USAID or the State Department that put these forward, programs. You don't belong there if you are putting these programs forward, and their time at those agencies will come to an end.

I now recognize the representative from California, Ms. Jacobs.

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, a question for my colleagues. I know all of us probably remember Ebola from the 2014 outbreak that President Trump, a private citizen at the time, was particularly outspoken about and terrified of.

For those of you who don't remember, Ebola is a disease that has about a 41 percent fatality rate. No vaccine, no treatment. It causes vomiting, muscle pain, and hemorrhagic bleeding. Pretty bad.

I would like all of my colleagues, please raise your hand if you would like Ebola in the United States? No one?

Chairman MAST. Can you say your question again.

Ms. JACOBS. Would you like Ebola in the United States?

Chairman MAST. I am glad the Trump administration approved Ebola response in their waivers.

Ms. JACOBS. Yes. On that point, I ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record a New York Times article, Lifesaving Aid Remains Halted Worldwide Despite Rubio's Promise.

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

But it is not if you want to see the list.

Ms. JACOBS. And on Tuesday, Elon Musk, the billionaire tech entrepreneur empowered by President Trump to combat the agency—

I am quoting the article now—told reporters in the Oval Office that the administration had turned on funding for Ebola prevention and for HIV prevention. But in reality, again, quoting this article, the Ebola funding and virtually all of the HIV prevention funding remains frozen, according to USAID employees and several aid groups. And that is because the payment system called Phoenix that USAID relies on to disburse financial assistance has been inaccessible for weeks.

So as you may know, Mr. Natsios, the outbreak of diseases, infectious disease is one of the big things that USAID helps to prevent, which is why I think we all should be so horrified that because of Elon Musk's illegal takeover of USAID, USAID is no longer able to screen travelers at airports leaving Uganda where there is currently an Ebola outbreak that Americans have already been infected by.

Mr. Natsios, you led USAID, correct? Do you think stopping the screening of travelers makes America more or less safe?

Mr. NATSIOS. It makes us less safe, but I would add that over the last 30 years, we built a system in 90 southern countries for monitoring all infectious diseases, and that is the early warning system. So if an outbreak of any disease takes place, we know about it.

The countries like China where COVID started—and I certainly wouldn't advocate having an AID mission there, but the countries where there is an Aid mission, the ministries of health have been trained, and there is a comprehensive early warning system to protect us. That system, in terms of AID support for it, has been shut down.

Ms. JACOBS. That is right.

Mr. NATSIOS. I might also add—

Ms. JACOBS. Sorry. I just want to reclaim my time because I have a few more questions, but I completely agree with you.

So let's take my Republican colleagues at your word. You want to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse. I agree with that. You want to reform how USAID does its work. I agree with that, too. In fact, I have bipartisan legislation to do that that I am happy to work with you, Mr. Mast, on.

But let's talk about what is actually happening. So, Mr. Natsios, again, would you consider yourself liberal or woke in any way?

Mr. NATSIOS. No.

Ms. JACOBS. Okay, great.

Do you believe USAID is a criminal agency plagued by waste, fraud, and abuse?

Mr. NATSIOS. No.

Ms. JACOBS. And on February 4th, nearly the entire USAID workforce was notified that they were being placed on administrative leave. Mr. Natsios, would you say that removing the majority of the staff responsible for overseeing USAID's programs increases or decreases the risk of waste, fraud, and abuse?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, it increases it because there AID officers there for oversight. That is what they do. Forty percent of the staff of AID are compliance officers. They spend all day trying to make sure these things don't happen. They do happen sometimes because of where we work.

Ms. JACOBS. And the USAID Inspector General agreed with you, as the ranking member entered into the record, stated that all of USAID's oversight controls are largely non-operational. But instead of addressing this problem, Trump actually fired the Inspector General who released this report the very next day.

Mr. Natsios, does firing USAID's Inspector General generally reduce or increase waste, fraud, and abuse?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, Congresswoman, I am trying to stay out of the vitriol here.

The Inspector General is there to investigate abuse. And let me tell you how it works. People think that they watch us and then they find this stuff and then they arrest us. That is not how it works. Eighty percent of the investigations done by AID are initiated by AID compliance officers who call the IG and say there is a problem, you need to come in here and fix it, and then they work with them.

Ms. JACOBS. So just to clarify, not only is this freeze endangering Americans, but Trump and Musk's argument for stopping this assistance to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse is a complete lie because they are doing the opposite. That is because this is not about oversight. It is not about reform. It is about completely gutting foreign assistance itself.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. I thank the gentlelady for her questions.

And I would remind everybody that Ebola response has been restored 250,000 through IOM, 1.5 million through UNICEF, another 250,000 to IRFC and others. The list goes on. And we should be supporting the correct programs.

Uganda was brought up, and I would say there is an example there. There is a program, oh, \$5.5 million for promoting LGBT acceptance in Uganda. That is not lifesaving, and that is not combating Ebola.

The gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Green, is now recognized.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Chairman Mast, and I appreciate your leadership, and I look forward to working alongside you to bring needed reform to our diplomatic strategy. We certainly have a lot of work to do, and this hearing is just beginning. Accountability is coming.

Thank you also to our witnesses today. The corruption going on behind USAID's doors has been a wake up call for all Americans.

As chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, I spent the last 2 years exposing the Biden administration's sabotage of our border and the policies that kept America safe. I saw firsthand their willful refusal to protect this country.

Under the guise of foreign aid, USAID has been an unapologetic front for a far left agenda. It has become self-evident there weren't a handful of foolish policies, but, rather, a coordinated strategy of radical, idiotic, and often anti-American priorities. Idiotic, you say? Millions to teach Moroccans how to make pottery? The Moroccans were making pottery before we were a country.

This entire debate today and the crocodile tears from Democrats just goes to show what is wrong with this town. Not a single Democrat I have heard has expressed dismay at the many examples of

crazy, wasteful spending. I don't understand the objection to a deep dive in how we spend our money.

But perhaps it is the fact that over the last several weeks, a massive surge has occurred in the search for a criminal defense attorney. That probably says it all. Five times in this city, any other city in the Nation.

I would like to remind the committee that President Kennedy unilaterally created USAID through an executive order in 1961. Yet, the President, President Trump, orders a momentary pause after winning a mandate for reform, and Democrats cry constitutional crisis. This is after 4 years of reckless spending and unrepentant lawlessness from the Biden administration.

I want the American people to understand how this works in Washington. As long as you are spending other people's money, no one bats an eye, but the second you want to save taxpayer dollars, the swamp cries wolf or, in this case, unprecedented constitutional crisis.

This breathless, fake outrage from the left is utterly insane. And you know what the American people, you know they can see right through it.

The generosity of Americans and the blessing of giving aid to others has always been one of our most valuable tools for diplomacy. The American people have a proud history of championing aid to our fellow man, but lawless bureaucrats have poisoned that good will.

Many USAID programs are wasteful and actively sabotage our diplomatic relationships by forcing woke ideology on our partners. Just look at PEPFAR, a beacon of hope in the fight against HIV aids, yet the Biden administration even weaponized this crucial program, jeopardizing lives and undermining our relationship with African nations.

Under Administrator Powers, our message to Africa was explicit as it was heinous. Abort your babies and violate your religious convictions or we won't grant you lifesaving aid.

Let me be crystal clear to those who have been complicit in this betrayal. Firing those involved is just a start. We have a long way to go.

And one last point. I want to correct the record on a couple of things. First, Elon Musk and the team that is working does not have access to personal data. They don't have access to your Social Security number. That is a lie.

Elon Musk does have a security clearance. He has a top secret security clearance. By God, he makes the rockets for NASA. But the suggestion that he somehow can't be trusted to dig into how we are spending our money is nothing but a smoke screen to hide the corruption and the wasteful spending that has occurred there.

And I am personally offended at the left's continued references to 19-year-olds and 21-year-olds in there doing work. There are 19-year-olds who have won the medal of honor defending this country. Just because you are 19 doesn't mean you are some child who can't be trusted. It is offensive.

And if you are 19 years old out there, 20 years old and you are serving this country, by God, your service matters. Keep serving. We thank you for that.

It would appear that I am out of time.

Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Chairman MAST. Amen.

Representative Castro is now recognized.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, chairman.

I would just say that if you can find us a 19-year-old medal of honor winner who would love to serve in the U.S. Government, we would love to have him rather than this 19-year-old who is a mystery man and got fired from his last job.

As you all hear a lot of angry fire-breathing rhetoric coming from the other side, I want you to consider as Americans where we started the year. Our country, for all the complaints and all the anger, is still the most powerful, prosperous Nation on earth with the lowest unemployment rate in decades and a strong economy, where foreign aid represents about 1 percent of our total budget.

And yet, Elon Musk and this administration's attempt to illegally shut down USAID and freeze ongoing foreign assistance programs has been met with support and applause from some of the world's worst authoritarians.

Venezuelan interior minister, and Nicolas Maduro's key lieutenant celebrated the Trump administration's actions in ending support to the Venezuelan opposition.

In Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega's sons said that, quote, Trump turned off the faucet for terrorists when he shattered USAID funding.

Belarusian leader, Lukashenka, applauded the administration's decision to cut funding for, quote, the fugitive opposition. The opposition that for years Republicans have said they support they have now abandoned. President Trump has abandoned.

He cutoff TPS for Venezuelans and betrayed the people of South Florida and sent them back to a man he says is dangerous, yet sent Rick Grenell to handshake with.

After this administration's halted funding to Cambodia to remove unexploded bombs that the United States dropped on their country years ago, China offered to move in and replace U.S. funding. China has offered to go do the job that we are no longer doing.

What do you think that does for American diplomacy? What do you think it does for our reputation around the world? What do those people think of us, that we won't help them take away the bombs that we dropped years ago?

Similar celebrations have come from leaders in Russia, Iran, Hungary, Cuba, and other countries as we have cut support to democracy activists in these countries. Democracy activists.

Republicans have been eager to accuse Democrats of, quote, abandoning our allies. The reality is that the Trump administration abandoned our allies everywhere, and it didn't even take a week. Donald Trump has abandoned those fighting for democracy in Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Iran, North Korea, and China. He has abandoned Taiwan, freezing security assistance to the island nation facing threats of invasion from China.

Donald Trump abandoned our partners in Indonesia, Malaysia, Iraq, and other countries fighting terrorism with the support of USAID. He has abandoned the country of Jordan by freezing security assistance, abandoned millions of victims of HIV AIDS sup-

ported by PEPFAR and abandoned those suffering from malaria and TB.

Donald Trump has also abandoned American citizens, American farmers that feed the world, whose produce is rotting in ports and warehouses, and our USAID professionals and families that he stranded abroad.

Make no mistake. These decisions will come back to haunt the United States of America and not only in terms of diplomacy, not only in terms of how people think of us in faraway lands. Those diseases that we are no longer helping to cure, people will get sick not only in those countries but in the United States.

I hope that just as folks are taking credit for what is going on now, that when those diseases hit the United States, that they will take full credit for that.

I have a question of the panel. I want to ask Mr. Natsios whether you think these actions—you were the USAID administrator. You saw the good and the bad and you had reform. I had a reform bill myself, which some Republicans joined me on last Congress.

Do you think the totality of this is making us stronger in the world or weaker?

Mr. NATSIOS. I think that our aid program makes us stronger, and I think USAID, prior to all of the controversy, was achieving that, except for the woke programs that were introduced, which have alienated very conservative Christian societies in Africa.

Mr. CASTRO. And Mr. Natsios, I want to interrupt you for just a second because there was an example of funding to help LGBTQ communities in Uganda. In Uganda, the death penalty was proposed for gay people. Is that considered woke? Is that what they are using as an example of woke is helping gay people because they are under the threat of death by their own government?

Mr. NATSIOS. Any violence against any person is not acceptable. So I understand what you are saying.

Mr. CASTRO. So you would be for that funding then?

Mr. NATSIOS. What I am saying is that we are dealing with a very conservative society, Muslim and Christian, and we need to respect—not what you are talking about because that happened I think in reaction to us, actually, because it wasn't there before.

But let me just say that we give, AID gives 973.5 billion dollars a year to Christian NGO's, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, my church, the orthodox church, and mainline Protestant a billion dollars a year. All those programs are now frozen. They have laid off the staff, and I have to say it is damaging the church's mission in the world.

I think this whole shutdown—and I might say, Mr. Chairman, not to be partisan. Just to tell you what is happening. I met with the Christian groups. Even though they have waivers, the Phoenix system is not operating. Unless the Phoenix system can operate, they can't issue checks. No one is getting funded even though the waiver has been granted.

I am not saying that in a partisan way. Please do something about it. It is having an effect in the field in a profound way. There are a lot of AIDS orphans are being taken care of by the church.

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. NATSIOS. And the staff has been laid off.

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time has expired.

The representative from Kentucky, Mr. Barr, is now recognized.

Mr. BARR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the very important hearing exposing the jaw-dropping waste at the USAID. And may USAID foreign assistance grants are not only wasteful but counterproductive to our diplomatic and foreign policy objectives.

Just a few examples. \$75,000 for a drag show workshop in Ecuador, \$37 million for services for sex workers and their clients and transgender people in South Africa, \$31 million for providing USAID employees with resilience, wellness, and work-life balance counseling, 24 million to build green transportation alternatives in Georgia, a half a million dollars to help Indonesian coffee companies become more climate and gender friendly, \$15 million to promote LGBT rights for individuals Kenya, and \$2 million to conduct sex change surgeries in Guatemala through a trans-led organization.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are whining that President Trump has fired the Inspector General of this agency. Thank goodness for President Trump for firing an Inspector General for not exposing what Elon Musk has exposed with this waste. Are these programs what hardworking American taxpayers should be funding?

But let me focus on Uganda because my colleague from Texas raised that issue. A country that has thousands of soldiers fighting for our counterterrorism interests against Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and that country was severely punished by the Biden administration for signing its anti-homosexuality law into law in May 2023.

The Biden administration revoked Uganda's AGOA eligibility, enacted visa restrictions on Uganda and individuals, and pressured the World Bank to prohibit new public financing. Despite this, USAID has provided a \$600,000 grant to, quote, empower Uganda's LGBT community to push back against this legislation and a \$5.4 million grant to shift public perception and attitudes in Uganda toward LGBT acceptance and to train LGBT individuals on the skills needed to engage in the economy.

Now in Uganda China is expected to finance the \$5 billion East African crude oil pipeline directly because Western leaders and the World Bank are walking away from the project because of the Biden administration's response to their own domestic legislation.

Mr. Primorac, should taxpayer dollars go toward penalizing countries like Uganda for making their own internal domestic political decisions on social issues that one administration doesn't agree with, which, in turn, strengthens countries' relationships with our adversaries like the communists in China?

Mr. PRIMORAC. Congressman, I have spoken to many officials from the region there, and they explained to me their shock when they would prepare for meetings with Secretary Blinken. They prepared about how can we work together to combat China, actually.

But when they had the meeting, they were hit with the woke things about the climate, about the LGBT, and all these issues. They were utterly stunned that here they are, Africa. They know about the challenge and the great GO strategic fight that we have, ready to work with us, but we weren't ready to work with them.

Mr. BARR. Well, look, I get it. The gentleman from Texas disagrees with the Ugandan people. I get it. The Biden administration disagreed with the Ugandan people and Secretary Blinken and USAID in the previous administration, disagreed with the Ugandan people on this issue of homosexuality legislation. I get it.

The question is not their opinion. The question is what is the diplomatic job of the State Department and USAID? Is it to lecture the Ugandans, or is it to help us counter Belt and Road? Is the job of the State Department and USAID to advance American national security? That is the question.

And what they did in that instance with Uganda is compromise American national security and empower our adversary.

Representative Yoho, Ted, it is good to see you. Thank you for your amazing work and your authorship of the Build Act. You were instrumental in the passage of that bill and authorized U.S. International Development Finance Corporation. Can you see DFC playing a much more effective role in advancing our interests abroad and countering China's Belt and Road?

Mr. YOHO. Absolutely.

Mr. BARR. And if you could, how can reforms like equity scoring and country eligibility changes help U.S. investments in countries like Panama?

Mr. YOHO. It is a big reform. I mean, that is the best tool we have to counter the BRI, the Belt and Road Initiative. And the equity scoring is a must fix. It is something that has to be because right now it limits what the DFC can do.

And then raising the country of eligibility allows us to go into these countries strategically where we can counter the BRI where we can't go now. And this is something that we are going to talk about next money in the reauthorization. It is a bipartisan effort, and there is a lot of support, but if we don't do it, we are going to see that much more influence, and it goes to people that aren't friendly to the United States.

Mr. BARR. Well, thanks for your leadership on that. And I agree with you, move from aid to trade.

Mr. YOHO. To trade.

Mr. BARR. And thank you to President Trump for his leadership on rooting out all of this waste and, frankly, frankly activity that undermines our national security.

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time has expired.

Votes have been called. We are going to go through one more round of questions and then recess until the conclusion of votes.

So Representative Cherfilus-McCormick, you will be the last one to be recognized before we recess.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, ranking member. And thank you, everybody, for being here.

USAID along with the State Department has been one of our strongest mechanisms to secure the region and national security and also build relationships throughout the entire world.

In Haiti, we have seen huge support and huge forward movement when it comes to USAID providing an option for many children who are either forced to join the gangs or face starvation and

their families dying. But USAID has stepped in and actually gave them an option, which is to eat and provide food.

We recently spoke with the World Health Organization and other organizations that are there feeding people in Haiti, and one of the things they brought up to us is that if they don't have the funds by March, they will not have the option to start feeding again and doing those programs in Haiti.

Although, there is a waiver, we have already talked about at length about the problems with the waiver and them kicking in back with the payment system. But we also have to talk about how there is not enough people to be working at USAID right now to facilitate that.

We have gotten several calls of people who are anxious about what is going on, including people who are actually sending food out through our ports in Palm Beach. We have heard a lot of people wondering if their food is going to be sent. Farmers now are worried. We have over 23 farmers that are being impacted in the State of Florida.

So I have a question for you. My question is I think we all can come together and agree that auditing USAID is actually a good thing. We can talk about where we agree and disagree. However, the real issue is implementation. We are finding that this implementation is creating extensive collateral damage to American citizens and also to our partners, and we are also finding that some of this damage is irrefutable harm, meaning that we just can't fix it by giving them money.

We are hearing more and more about people who are exposed and who need lifesaving treatment who are not getting it despite the waivers. And so I believe that the strength of our Nation is us following that constitutional privilege of us embodying and allowing Congress to actually determine the implementation.

So I want to know from you how much of USAID's programs are actually lifesaving programs?

Mr. NATSIOS. Of the \$38 billion last year, 15 billion was humanitarian assistance and emergency famine relief, disasters, civil wars; 8 billion was for health. Most, except for the family planning program, which the last time I checked was 275 million, most of the health programs were lifesaving.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. And so do you believe that if Congress—

Mr. NATSIOS. That is about 55 percent of the budget.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. So do you believe if Congress actually had the opportunity to do its role in actually crafting out the implementation over DOGE, do you believe that we would have been able to substantiate or even to make sure that many people who are being harmed right now are not being harmed?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, there is a problem now that people who are being denied, who can't get the anti-retrovirals because the system is shut down, there is violence against the AID workers and against our AID offices.

There was an incident just now in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo where the AID officers had to take their family and go across to Brazzaville, across the river to

another country because they were under attack for people who thought they were going to die because they couldn't get this aid.

There is a whole bunch of articles on this. This is not a small incident. This was very, very serious. Some of the embassy people were under attack, too.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Well, thank you so much for identifying that because USAID is not a faucet that you can turn on and off. You cannot pause it and then turn it on and think that there will be no damage.

However, I do have confidence that if Congress had the opportunity, instead of DOGE, that we could have worked across the aisle to identify what would have been the consequences and, in fact, protect not just our farmers but the people who are using it.

We are hearing more and more stories about people who are actually losing their lives because they were part of an experimental program, they were part of the USAID program. Even hearing stories about people who have objects and instruments that are still in their body, and because there is a stop order, they cannot remove them.

And so as we move forward, I would like for us to focus on what is the strength of our Nation. Us being able to work together and identify how we can actually promote the agenda of the United States but still preserve our compassion. And I have full faith and confidence that if we had the opportunity to do our constitutional duty as Members of Congress, working with the chairman, who I have worked with several times before, and I believe he is a compassionate person, that we would have saw what was happening and prevented any kind of collateral damage to our farms, to our districts, to our ports, especially the loss of life.

So as we go forward, I think we should stop focusing on a few programs, which we may disagree on, but focus on how we can regain ourselves internationally because every single day that we actually have these arguments and funding isn't going out, China is stepping in. Russia is stepping in. And what they are telling them is that we are not reliable, that we will not be there, that we will start and we will stop and people will get hurt.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, representative.

We do have time to do one other round of questioning before we recess for votes, and so we are going to recognize Representative Salazar.

Ms. SALAZAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to the witnesses.

My name is Maria Salazar. I am the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee here in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and I am very distraught because some of the programs that we have been talking about come from the region that I represent. Many people in South Florida come from those countries of origin, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Peru.

So I understand, Mr. Natsios, that you do not agree with the way that Elon Musk has conducted his investigation into USAID, but I do believe, you know, coming from the world of television, that you are judged by the results not by the process. And Musk has discovered things that are completely and absolutely embarrassing and

specifically in the region that I am saying that I am representing, a lot of constituents.

So I just want to salute you because you said that you did the job, you were the administrator, that you went line by line, that you were cleaning up the different programs, that you took your job very seriously. But, apparently, we are in different times.

And I am just going to share with you within the time that I have three programs coming from Latin America, which I think are highly embarrassing. Let's start with Venezuela. And here is the video that chairman played before.

You know, Venezuelans, they are fleeing Marxism. They are hungry. The average Venezuelan weighs 15 pounds less because of lack of food. We know that Chavez has destroyed the country. They make it to Ecuador. They are tired. And then they encounter the United States, which is the beacon of hope, is offering this program to become a drag queen.

So I think there is something wrong with that picture. And I am not sure if we can play it again, but I just wanted your opinion.

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, that particular program was a State Department program, and I have great respect for the State Department, but I think it is troubling they did it, to be very frank with you.

Ms. SALAZAR. So you do not agree with those \$35,000 invested—

Mr. NATSIOS. No, I don't. I think we should stick with our basic mission.

Ms. SALAZAR. But you agree that they have not. Not under you but—

Mr. NATSIOS. Oh, no, they have not, and I think that needs to be changed.

Ms. SALAZAR. I just want to hear your thoughts because, unfortunately, time is of the essence.

\$2 million for Native Indians in Guatemala. You know, President Giammattei called me. I mean, I have never had a President from a country saying I don't want the United States' money. I mean, highly conservative. These are the Native Indians in Guatemala, people who are just, you know, flipping the tortillas, and they just want to learn how to do a job, not sex change surgeries.

What do you think about that?

Mr. NATSIOS. That is beyond what the USAID mission is. I don't think—

Ms. SALAZAR. Good. That is all we need to know.

Peru, in the Amazon. This is the jungle. This is not Jeff Bezos' Amazon. This is like where people have harsh conditions. They need mosquito nets to fight malaria.

So \$25,000 for diversity recruitment events. What is a diversity recruitment event in the middle of the jungle?

Mr. NATSIOS. I have no idea.

Congresswoman, just one comment. You can move AID to do what you want by hiring a development professional, a conservative who knows how to manage a large complex operation. Mark Green was such a person, okay, under Trump.

Ms. SALAZAR. But then what happened between your time and this time? Tell me. What happened?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, politics gets involved.

Ms. SALAZAR. Oh, politics.

But then Elon Musk comes and tries to clean politics and go back to the original mission of the program. Is that correct?

Mr. NATSIOS. I think it would be useful if Musk and some of his staff would go to the field and see the projects.

Ms. SALAZAR. Well, I am not sure—wait, wait, wait. I am sure they don't have time, sir, to do that. But what I am saying is that he did something that, according to what you just explained, brings benefits to the USAID programs.

Mr. NATSIOS. USAID staff do what the political appointees tell them to do.

Ms. SALAZAR. Well, Okay.

Mr. NATSIOS. They don't initiate these things.

Ms. SALAZAR. They don't.

Mr. NATSIOS. No.

Ms. SALAZAR. So that means that all those directives came from the White House?

Mr. NATSIOS. The White House, yes, and the State Department.

Ms. SALAZAR. Okay. But then the White House—the State Department responds to the White House.

So you are telling me that under the Biden administration, USAID lost its course? Yes or no?

Mr. NATSIOS. I think AID needs to be more independent of the political wars in Washington.

Ms. SALAZAR. You just told me that the State Department is the one that directs?

Mr. NATSIOS. Yes.

Ms. SALAZAR. Okay. And the State Department responds to the White House?

Mr. NATSIOS. That is correct.

Ms. SALAZAR. All right. So that means then that the White House gave the wrong directives to USAID.

Mr. NATSIOS. In my view. In my view.

Ms. SALAZAR. In your view, good. Thank you. Well, that is all we needed to know.

So now we have a new sheriff in town called Donald Trump and then that guy brought another guy called Elon Musk to do the job, something that no one else has done before. So why do we need to criticize him?

Mr. NATSIOS. Because he doesn't know anything about development. He may be a genius at technology. He does not know anything about development.

Ms. SALAZAR. Wait, wait, wait. Development has nothing to do with what is the mission statement for USAID. Secure, prosper, and value, American values. \$2 million for the Native Indians in Guatemala to change their sex surgeries has nothing to do with that.

Mr. NATSIOS. \$15 billion was spent on humanitarian assistance and emergencies in refugee camps. There is particular skills you learn in doing that. I did that. I know what that is.

Ms. SALAZAR. I understand but you are talking about what works. I am talking about what does not work.

Chairman MAST. The gentlelady's time expired.

Ms. SALAZAR. Thank you. I appreciated it, chairman.

Thank you, sir, for your time, too.

Chairman MAST. I will also let you know, Ms. Salazar, that I have had numerous calls from Ambassadors during the Biden administration who intend to provide us with the reprimands that they wrote against career employees who were undermining their work, doing these programs that they didn't want but did them anyway, and the administration didn't care. And we look forward to bringing those things to light as well.

We are going to recess, as votes have been called, as I mentioned. We are going to recess until 10:50, and we will look forward to returning.

The committee stands in recess.

Chairman MAST. The committee will come to order.

The chair now recognizes Representative Kamlager-Dove for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you, Mr. Chair and to the Ranking Member.

You know, I have noticed a theme with Republican hearing titles that always seem to have one word of truth in them, but they are strung together by callous duplicity, or as the chair said, lies. "Betrayal" is the word of truth today, and it is an incredibly accurate description of what Musk, Trump, and silent Republicans are doing to the American people. By unilaterally dismantling our entire foreign assistance apparatus, you have endangered every American who relies on that system to keep them safe from global crises and that relies on them to feed their own family.

Not only that, but you have betrayed some of the stakeholders that I thought my colleagues cared most about, our farmers, our veterans, faith-based groups, diaspora communities in all of our districts, and the Constitution. Not to mention the people who have tragically died because you have ripped away the lifesaving assistance they need to survive, and for no good reason.

I was struck by the opening remarks of the chair. The chair mentioned helping people to vote, and why do Republicans not support the right to vote. There was a reference to all of these small dollars going to people in need who just happened to be of the LGBTQ community. And why are the Republicans, who actually crashed Grindr, the gay dating app, during the RNC, so focused on the LGBTQ community?

But let's circle back to what the real betrayal looks like. First, there is the fact that Elon Musk ripped up the Constitution and our system of checks and balances by illegally dismantling USAID with zero congressional input. Congress is not a peanut gallery. It has constitutional oversight authorities that have been categorically violated. But this weaponization of government has been met with deafening silence. Betrayal.

And now to the so-called woke programming. The farmers. USAID's humanitarian assistance is a major source of income for American farmers, \$2.1 billion in 2020. Farmers supply 41 percent of the food aid that USAID uses to feed starving people around the world, meaning that farmers' livelihoods directly benefit from these programs. The foreign aid freeze rips away their incomes while condemning vulnerable people to famine. Betrayal.

And veterans. American servicemembers fought for decades in Afghanistan. Many of them are only alive today because of the heroic service of Afghan interpreters, like my brother-in-law who served. And these folks we have worked with tirelessly to evacuate to the United States, but Trump canceled the refugee admissions program and left them behind, abandoned by the very people who use them for political gain and then rip the rug out from underneath them at the first chance they got. Betrayal.

And then the Christians. USAID supports numerous faith-based groups in implementing humanitarian assistance in some of the world's worst hotspots, because their faith teaches them that every human life has dignity, is sacred, and is worth saving. Cutting off aid has forced massive layoffs at these organizations and desecrated their life's work. I guess no one cares about religious freedom when it interferes with a billionaire's political agenda. Betrayal.

And diaspora communities. USAID's support for Pakistani democracy organizations and flood relief efforts is now gone. Students in Burma benefiting from USAID scholarships have now been deprived of a better future. Venezuelans who relied on USAID-funded integration services to build a life outside of Maduro's oppressive regime are now left in the lurch, and the Republicans are deporting them back into terror. You can claim to support any of these communities. How you can do that is beyond me. It is hypocrisy and it is betrayal.

And, finally, the American people. Every American is less safe today because USAID is not out in the field stopping crises from reaching our shores. If there was a pandemic-like disease outbreak that risks spreading to our shores, we could not respond. If there is a natural disaster in Mexico or the Caribbean that would drive people to our border, we could not respond. The dismantling of those protections is an unequivocal betrayal of the American people. Oh, but what about that new \$400 million contract the State Department is just signing with Tesla for cyber trucks, because I guess people need cyber trucks more than they need malaria pills.

So now to my questions, if I have time.

Mr. Yoho, in your testimony you touched on the important work of American farmers and the work of American universities and USAID Feed the Future Innovation Labs. What capabilities do we lose domestically, and what domestic constituencies do we hurt by eliminating these programs?

Mr. YOH. Those are important programs that have worked, and by this pause that we have right now, I think the goal is, instead of putting blame everywhere, we focus on how we get these things back online to do the work they have done. If you like at like the RUTF program, the ready-to-use therapeutic food program, that saved over 17 million people, children, and it sources products from 27 different States in America that provide, you know, income for our farmers, you know. And those are things that we need to get back online as soon as we can. And I think you will see that.

You know, there is a reset. It had to happen, you know. Shame on us when I was in Congress that we didn't do these things earlier. It is done. Can't go back. We can only go forward.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you. And I yield back. Thank you for the time, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MAST. You are welcome.

And in answer to the question, the reason LGBTQ is the focus is because that is what became the focus of USAID and State Department. It was not the exception; it was the rule. We are just reading off the lists of grants and pages and pages and pages more.

I now recognize Representative Kim for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you, Chairman Mast, for holding this hearing. I want to thank all of our witnesses for joining us today.

The U.S. foreign assistance has long been a very powerful, soft power tool to advance our American leadership by building trust with our allies, promoting democracy, stabilizing terrorism-prone regions, and providing market access for American businesses. However, we have seen serious and credible cases of wasteful uses of American taxpayer funds abroad. For example, \$2.5 million was sent through USAID to build the electric vehicle charging stations in Vietnam. How is this spending critical to U.S. national security or advancing our American interests? They are not. Unfortunately, these cases of unproductive spending abroad undermine the many targeted, valuable, and effective foreign assistance programs that are essential to our national security.

Mr. Yoho, as you know very well, the strategic competition with China and its Belt and Road Initiative is a top priority for the East Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee that you once chaired and I now currently chair. Xi Jinping is watching and he is waiting for the chance to fill any U.S. vacuum. And already there have been many reports of Chinese Communist Party officials signaling their willingness to replace USAID in Nepal and de-mining activities in Cambodia, and these are just the instances that we know about. Even critics of USAID acknowledge the critical soft power value of targeted and efficient programming.

So let me ask you, if USAID is fully merged into the State Department, what specific authorities will the State Department's Bureau of East Asia and the Pacific need to effectively implement USAID programs to directly counter CCP's influence in the region, such as training journalists to expose illegal CCP information tactics or strengthening critical infrastructures there?

Mr. YOHO. I think the important thing they can do is get it back online as quick as they can and put people—authorize them to get back into the field, the implementers. The State Department might can do that, but I don't know if they have the bandwidth or if they have the expertise and the capability. The people that were there on the ground with USAID, as Administrator Natsios said, these are the people that have institutional knowledge and they know how to do that.

They are not Rs or Ds; they are mission driven. And I think we can get some of those people back in there that are experts in their field to move America's agenda forward of are we going to be safer, are we going to be stronger, and are we going to be more prosperous, and if we do that, those countries will be too, and it counters China. And if we are not there, China will be there.

Mrs. KIM. Sure. So I am glad that Secretary Rubio issued waivers for lifesaving humanitarian assistance programs. However, I

am also hearing many concerns regarding the lack of clarity on those scope of the waivers and challenges with getting paused programs restarted. It is hard to restart them if we completely turn the lights off, right.

So what recommendations do you have for the administration to ensure an effective waiver process?

Mr. YOHO. Again, moving forward, I think the quickest thing they can do and the most effective thing is identify the program that you want to do and then put the people in there that know how to implement that. That could be at State. There is people at USAID, and I know there is this big black eye on USAID, but I think we need to look at what they did do good.

You know, it is like a cake recipe; one drop of kerosene in a cake batter ruins the whole thing. So what happened and what has been exposed doesn't mean the whole thing was bad. And like I said, not all aid programs are good, not all of them are bad. Let's take the good ones and implement them as quickly as we can so we do not cede that ground to China, Russia, anybody that doesn't like us.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

I would like to ask a question to Mr. Primorac. What specific reforms can be implemented so the current audit and review processes ensure programming aligns with our U.S. national interests?

Mr. PRIMORAC. I think transparency is probably the most important. We have various websites where we are supposed to provide information to the American public as to what we are doing in all of these different countries, whether it is grants.gov or foreignassistance.gov, but it is not consolidated. And too often, actually probably most of the time, we don't have information as to who are the awardees, who are the sub awardees. If those are made available—and not only to Congress, they should be made available to the American people—I think by having this kind of transparency that a lot of these bad things happening, people will be a little bit more careful because they know lots of people are watching.

Mrs. KIM. I appreciate that. Thank you very much. My time is up.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Kim.

The chair now recognizes Representative Titus.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here.

You know, we have heard a lot this morning kind of cherry-picking programs out of context and then a very narrow view and some that just aren't true about the bad things and the weird stuff that USAID has been supporting. There are programs in the Department of Agriculture that I bet we could pull out that show a waste of money in some weird programs that I certainly don't support, but I am not calling for the dissolution of the Department of Agriculture.

It is kind of like Mr. Natsios said, if there is a problem or you don't like a certain kind of program, you can fix that, you can address it, you can discuss it and talk about how to make it better. But you don't destroy it. You don't just throw the baby out with the bath. So why would we do that with USAID when the programs that it does support are so much better, so much more ex-

tensive, so much more productive than some of these little things that you have been hearing ad nauseam from the other side of the aisle.

One of the areas that I am particularly interested in that you have heard less about is how USAID supports democracy around the world, whether it is backsliding in some countries or whether it is just trying to develop democratic institutions in others. People are on the front lines in very dangerous situations often trying to push democratic principles, and we have a number of programs through USAID that helps with that development.

Mr. Natsios, would you talk about what happens when we pull out and when it comes to development of countries that would be friendly toward us or would be more democratic, what happens to those people who are on the ground? We know that this is a great source of soft diplomacy, soft power. We have heard generals say every dollar you spend on something like this is a dollar you don't spend on bullets and soldiers having to go and fight a hot war. But if we are not there, what are the consequences for democratic development?

Mr. NATSIOS. My view is that the AID missions in the field are our greatest strength. Two-thirds of the staff of AID are not Americans. They are Kenyans or Nigerians. They are Cambodians. They are Moroccans, wherever you are. And many of them go on to be the heads of State, believe it or not.

Ms. TITUS. I do believe it.

Mr. NATSIOS. The first woman head of State in Costa Rica was an FSN with AID for 10 years. The first woman Vice President in El Salvador was an FSN with AID. The First Lady of Peru was a FSN. Her husband got a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in economics. He was the President of Peru and the first Inca President in history of the country. All of them devoted to the United States, all of them right of center and honest people.

I was in Macedonia just before 9/11, met with and two FSNs I said, any of you ever run for office? Both of them one—had just got elected to parliament, and they said, we ran on the platform that we work for USAID.

So not having our missions in the field has unintended consequences, because we are a recruitment ground for leaders in the developing world who are pro-American. Wouldn't it be better to have someone who got their degree in the United States rather than Beijing to be the head of State somewhere? I think it is.

We have a story from Nigeria just a couple years ago, during COVID, where the minister of health was presented with a Chinese vaccine, Russian vaccine, or our vaccines. The minister himself said, I got my Ph.D. in the United States—or M.D. In an AID scholarship. We are going with the American vaccines. In fact, I didn't want these other vaccines in the country. And they bought them. This is not just a contribution.

So having the missions in the field, having scholarships—having relationships with these countries through the missions is very important to build trust. And, in my view, shutting them all down is not in our national interest.

I understand that Secretary Rubio has sent out a message saying none of the FSNs will be laid off. They will be integrated into the

embassy. But they have to have Foreign Service Officers from AID or people who know development, know procurement, and understand all of the rules to manage them. They can't do a lot of the stuff on their own.

So one last comment about democracy. I am a little troubled, because I am looking at the patterns of what has been canceled. All the democracy programs and governance programs have been canceled.

Ms. TITUS. Exactly.

Mr. NATSIOS. And I am a little—I hope that is not a deliberate decision. Maybe I am misreading it.

Ms. TITUS. I don't think so.

Mr. NATSIOS. But if that is the case, it is a disaster, because people around the world who want democracy and want freedom rely on us. They look to the United States. They certainly don't look to China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, the CRINK alliance as we call them in the Pentagon. They are our enemies. They are not our friends. And we need to support those democratic forces around the world, in my view.

Ms. TITUS. I agree. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Titus.

The chair now recognizes Representative Davidson.

Mr. DAVIDSON. I thank the chairman. And, look, I appreciate this hearing. It is certainly timely.

When we talk about woke and weaponized governments, it is easy to get desensitized to the long list of frivolous, frankly, pretty radical programs that are being exposed, you know, stuff like \$1.5 million for DEI in Serbia, \$47,000 for transgender operas in Colombia, \$2 million—the former Ambassador to Guatemala talked to me about this, \$2 million for transgender surgeries in a conservative country like Guatemala. It is a long list.

I mean, USAID funded scholarships for people who became terrorists, like Anwar al-Awlaki. We have sent—under the guise of USAID, we sent money to UNRWA, which returned funds directly to Hamas. In blatant violation of U.S. law, the Helms amendment, PEPFAR has funded abortions and killed babies. What is happening in Africa is just the tip of the pro-abortion iceberg that the Biden administration weaponized aid agencies into. It also happens to be against the law that Congress has passed.

So USAID funded independent media, so-called, in Hungary, but it was actually trying to run a color revolution playbook to overturn the government, very popular government, of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who is a NATO ally. So let's be clear, this color cultural revolution playbook hasn't just been weaponized against allies in foreign countries; it has been brought home and weaponized against our own citizens right here.

If you had unapproved opinions of COVID vaccines or origins of COVID or maybe the Hunter Biden laptop story, there was almost certainly a puppet NGO working overtime on taxpayer dollars—which contradicts the word “NGO” in the first place—you know, to shut down or de-platform speech in America. That is a clear violation of the First Amendment.

So, look, our staff has heard every day from—terrible stories about the abuse of our government in conflict with our own na-

tional interest in places like Uganda, where if they don't embrace aborting babies, they will be retaliated against and have aid taken away from them. I mean, coercive activities.

So thank goodness President Trump has brought us back into the Geneva Consensus Declaration, protecting life, building pro-life, and other values that align with America First policies. They advance our interests, but they also help our allies advance their interests, and that is probably the most—it is terrible to waste the money, but it is also terrible to not just waste it but to actually work against the interests of the United States.

So, look, I agree that there is probably some things—and we will get to those things—that are good, but when you have a completely nonresponsive agency actively working to undermine the guidance that Congress is giving them, they don't steer.

So, last July, Marjorie Taylor Greene, a colleague of ours, introduced an amendment to defund USAID, and the amendment was defeated 81 to 331. Now, I voted yes, but 331 colleagues were opposed to this, you know, somewhat radical change. I bet the vote would be different today. But thanks, Secretary Rubio is going to take charge and say, yes, we are going to do the good things. We are just going to turn it off and we are going to clean house. And I think that is where they were. We knew there were abuses there, but, you know, that is what we are up against, folks.

So let's just—you know, Mr. Primorac, you have written about disgraceful efforts in the Biden administration to bully conservative countries into accepting radical gender theory, abortion policies, a far-left agenda. In a piece last year, you wrote that East African faith leaders viewed USAID staff as, quote, missionaries of evil because the Biden administration hijacked popular aid programs to promote their agenda. Could you elaborate on that?

Mr. PRIMORAC. Yes. I have been to—I traveled to Africa a couple of times last year and spoken to many of them who visit here in the United States. And many of them, like me, remember the 1990's where I was involved in democracy development and we helped turn the former Warsaw countries into allies of the United States. But these were values that were akin to our bill of rights. Things have really radically changed a lot.

I have spoken to a lot of faith-based organizations that are feeding Hungary. In Kenya, for instance, they have so many refugees from surrounding countries. Some of these diocese, they simply will not take U.S. funding because it is tied to all—it had been tied to all of these things. I did a—I monitored a—or moderated a panel on Africa at Liberty University, and a Governor from north—the northern part of Nigeria had a conversation with Samantha Power, who told her that you have to tie food to aid with all of this other woke stuff and LGBTQ—

Mr. DAVIDSON. Yes. Crazy leverage. And, look, I wish I could talk more. And I will submit questions for the record, because, Mr. Yoho, look, nevertheless, there are certain things post USAID's demise and the imminent funeral for this Agency that we might want to keep intact, so how do we advance our interests. I look forward to collaborating with you all, and I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Davidson.

The chair now recognizes Representative Amo.

Mr. AMO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, it is ironic that this hearing is called the USAID betrayal, because Donald Trump betrayed USAID. He betrayed the Agency's mission and its employees. He betrayed the American workers and the businesses supported by USAID contracts. And he betrayed the literal starving children who rely on food from USAID to stave off hunger.

I would like to highlight a few of the groups that Republicans are leaving out in the cold with this freeze. Let's start with the USAID employees. Americans around the world, they feel abandoned by our government saying, quote, We have lost contact with Washington. We are on our own. Some USAID employees, again, Americans, have been forced to flee the country where they worked after protests over frozen aid turned violent.

What does it say about us when we turn our backs on our own citizens, these global helpers who are just doing their job? But the betrayal extends to every American worker who relies on USAID, including American farmers, manufacturers, and universities. In my home State, the University of Rhode Island works with USAID to improve aquatic food systems and fight food insecurity. Right now, the university is unable to access nearly \$300,000 they are owed. Let me repeat, universities are being stiffed for work they have already completed, and that was before the funding freeze.

What kind of government refuses to pay its debts? You know, it might be a government led by a multitime bankrupt billionaire, I suppose. But of all the people affected, the worst impact of this betrayal fall on those who rely on USAID for food and medical care. People are already dying because of the aid freeze. As you heard earlier, yesterday we learned that a 70-year-old woman in Thailand died because the aid freeze cutoff her oxygen supply and her access to care.

Whether from lack of medical attention or from starvation, more people will die because of Trump's decision and my colleagues on the other side having a collective silence. It is mind-boggling. This food aid was funded. Some of it was already purchased. It is ready to feed starving people. As this inspector general report finds, right here, before they were fired, USAID stop work orders jeopardized nearly \$500 million in food assistance, leaving 500,000 metric tons of American-grown food at risk of spoiling. Look, if DOGE wants to eliminate waste, it can start with the lifesaving food that is literally rotting in our ports because of Trump's betrayal.

This administration has failed us. It has compromised our national security. We beat our chests about national security. This is hurting it. Adversaries like China and Russia are salivating at our retreat. They are reaching out to our allies and partners to undermine our work across the world. Republicans are abandoning global health work. That is an insane decision after a global health pandemic that we have recently experienced.

Right now, there is a deadly Ebola outbreak in Uganda, where more than a dozen Americans are exposed to this fatal virus. But where is the United States? Nowhere to be found. Look, I worked on President Obama's response to Ebola domestically and President Biden's response to COVID when I worked at the White House in two stints, and the No. 1 lesson from the pandemic play-

book is that we must contain the virus before it kills more people and makes its way to the United States. It is in our best interest to get involved.

So I know I am running short on time, but former Administrator Natsios, if you could answer quickly, do any of the betrayals that I have explained here today make America safer or promote America's values abroad?

Mr. NATSIOS. I do believe that a robust foreign aid program properly managed is in our national interest. I wrote an article for Foreign Affairs that came out 2 weeks ago, February 7, with a realist policy, not a liberal internationalist policy, on how we should run our aid program during this period of great power rivalry. The basic argument is that humanitarian assistance in health should be based on need only.

All the rest of it should be based on the following standards. One is, there are 14 chokepoints in the high seas that control the food supply of the world. We should have AID missions in these countries. We do in Egypt. It is not just because Israel's security is connected to Egypt's; it is because the Suez Canal is there. Morocco, they are not going to change the geography of the Gibraltar Straits.

AID had a mission in Panama, and we left because it is a middle-income country. We should not have left, in my view. There should be a permanent mission in Panama because the Panama Canal is not going to go away. When we left, guess who moved in? The Chinese do. And who is upset with us now? Properly so, is the President. We should have had a large AID mission permanently in Panama. I went down there with my university, and they all wanted it. They didn't want us to leave.

So I think we need to place our missions more strategically. The area around Russia and China are under severe stress. All of the Central Asian countries want a larger aid mission. You know the Kazakhs, Kazakhstan, we were going to move out, and the President said, we will pay for half of it. I said, what? It is an aid program. He said, we don't want you to leave, Mr. Natsios. We want aid here. We want the United States here. And we value what you are doing, so we will pay from our gas revenues half of the cost of the aid program.

Chairman MAST. I thank the gentleman for his response. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. AMO. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter in the article from which I cited.

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

Chairman MAST. The gentleman may want to find a time to apologize on Twitter or somewhere else to the administration, or thank the administration, as \$6 million-plus, as one example, has gone to the WFP, the World Food Program; \$250,000 in one line item for Ebola response; another \$1.5 million for Ebola response; another \$250,000 for Ebola response. The list goes on and on. Those are programs that have moved forward, and it goes exactly to your point of being more strategic, not doing the absurd, crazy BS that has been done in the past. It all comes to an end, and can't wait to have the people come here and literally stand before us and answer for the craziness they have been doing.

Representative Baird is recognized.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and thank the witnesses for being here.

And, Dr. Yoho, it is always good when I can see you. But, you know, I want to express that the American people really deserve not to have their tax dollars spent on the programs that Chairman Mast mentioned earlier in his opening statement. And I really appreciated Emeritus McCaul reminding us about how the USAID came about, and it was really and easily created, as was said, to combat the Soviet Union and their efforts to spread communism around the world.

So it is disappointing to hear about the billions of dollars being distributed to foreign countries, and some of those are our adversaries, without really accomplishing our mission. So we have people here at home that are really struggling, for example, those that are still sleeping in tents after some of the hurricanes and it is cold wintertime. And so I think you can recognize, and I am sure you recognize, the importance of taking care of our own people.

But, anyway, Dr. Yoho, thank you for your service in the 113th Congress. And I am interested in agriculture, just as I know you are. So I would really be interested to hear your perspective as a veterinarian on the impact of early detection of zoonotic diseases and the development of early detection in vaccines for controlling some of these diseases.

Mr. YOH0. Sure. Thanks for that question, because it is very important.

You know, there are so many things that are going around. The things that affect people in pandemics and epidemics and things like that originate in the animal world, the zoonotics. There is 27 viral families that come through, and we saw the effect of COVID. I mean, COVID is in the animal world. It is in the human world.

The thing we are looking at now is H5N1, the highly pathogenic avian influenza. We are seeing it mutate and get into the mammals, from the birds to the dairy cattle to the feline population into the porcine population and into the human population. This is a very dangerous virus if it gains a hold in the human population and can get to the point of transmission the way influenza viruses did.

COVID, as bad as it was, had about a 97 percent recovery rate. You get one of these bad strains of influenza or the Marburg virus that is showing up or a new strain of Ebola, they have a 40 to 50 percent death rate. What we went through with COVID was bad enough, but it is nothing like what we are going to see. And the research that we do through organizations like our land grant universities, those are the ones that are on the cutting edge of this.

But then you have multifunded donor international organizations like CEPI, the Coalition Epidemic Preparedness Innovators. They are doing research on the emerging viruses so that we can have the platform for the vaccines to be developed ahead of time. And this is—that platform, the United States provides about 5 percent of their funding, roughly \$170 million over the last 5 years out of a budget that they have of about little over \$4 trillion—or, yes, \$4 billion. The amazing thing is, we have received about \$1.25 billion back here in the United States of America. They are going to our research universities, our biotech parks to do this advanced re-

search, and that leads to global health and national health, and you can't have national security if you don't have health security.

Mr. BAIRD. So could you—are you supportive of the idea that having people in some of these foreign countries allows us to have early detection into these—

Mr. YOHO. It really does. And I think, as Administrator Natsios brought up, if we have missions in these, we can monitor the spread of that. And they are the first ones—if they are trained in the medical field and they can follow these things, we can see where it is breaking out. We can do the mitigation of quarantining that area before it gets to a pandemic. And it is—again, this is national security. We don't want to cloud the good that they do with some of these programs that we heard that were abused. That should never have happened, because that ruins the whole credibility of us. It ruins credibility of the AID arm of the United States of America, and it is—that is all I am going to say.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you.

Do either one of the other witnesses have a comment? We have got about 28 seconds left.

Mr. NATSIOS. I agree with every single word of what Dr. Yoho just said.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you.

Mr. NATSIOS. He is absolutely correct.

Mr. BAIRD. That is good.

Mr. NATSIOS. I didn't think of adding in the zoonotic, the animal diseases, just from a veterinary point of view, in terms of monitoring. That is a very good idea.

Mr. YOHO. Stick around, we will help you.

Mr. PRIMORAC. I would just add that, though these are important ideas, but we also have to strengthen the capability of other countries to be able to do it on their own, countries in Africa and Latin America. Year after year, we are spending a ton of money, and we are not getting ownership from these countries, and that, to me, is a better, more mature relationship. Thank you.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you.

My time is up, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Baird.

The chair now recognizes Representative Jayapal.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Over the past 2 weeks, the Trump administration and unelected billionaire Elon Musk have led a reckless and illegal attack on USAID, freezing funds for an agency that in the past words of the Republicans' own witness, Mr. Primorac, quote, increase countries' self-reliance and resilience all while advancing American values and interests. Stopping USAID's work jeopardizes millions of lives and billions of dollars of investments in American small businesses and farms, all while undermining our national security, diplomatic efforts, and global influence.

It is great to be on this committee. Before coming to Congress, I actually spent many years working for a Seattle-based global health nonprofit organization that employs about 1,600 people in my district as well as around the world. And many of our partners were USAID funded, and so I got to see firsthand the direct impact

of effective USAID programs and lifesaving work all over the world.

The devastation that is being caused by this irresponsible funding freeze is alarming and painful. Even though Secretary Rubio did backtrack from Trump's order and said that lifesaving humanitarian work would be exempt from the freeze on foreign aid through a complicated waiver process, that process has been a mess. Funding has stayed frozen even for programs with a waiver. And now there is a new directive that, again, puts any approvals for these waivers on hold. Drug deliveries have been stopped, life-saving food is rotting at ports, and we have abandoned people with experimental drugs and medical products in their bodies, cutting them off from the researchers who supervise their care.

So let's be clear, this conspiracy theory-driven liquidation by DOGE is about trying to come up with spending cuts—that is the other committee I am running back and forth between—however minor in the grand scheme of things that they hope will finance the extension of Trump tax scam 2.0, the effort to make American taxpayers pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest.

Dangerously, it is also about fueling an erroneous belief that America spends too much on foreign aid that does not serve American interests. If you ask any American—or the average American in this country how much we spend, they will say 25 percent of our Federal budget is going to foreign aid. And I will say, I will tell you what, give me a number that you would be willing to spend on foreign aid and we will agree to spend it. And they will say 10 percent. But guess what? We actually don't even spend three-quarters of 1 percent of our entire Federal budget on foreign assistance. And so the reality is that USAID spends much less than most Americans think, and the impact for that tiny amount of money is extremely important for our diplomatic efforts, for our national security, and for our relationships and global presence on the stage.

Mr. Natsios, you are the former Massachusetts Republican Party chair. You served as the U.S. administrator under George W. Bush. Can you briefly explain why the average American should care about USAID money and work, and what are the benefits to the average American? And I have a couple questions for you, so just be brief, please.

Mr. NATSIOS. So the first thing is, we can't shut ourselves off from the world because our borders—we have a huge problem at the border. I have no doubt that that is a legitimate issue. We need to deal with it. But I will tell you what is going to happen once the border is impregnable, they are going to come through the coastline. And you can't put walls up for the whole coastline of the United States. It is too big.

I live in the coast in the summertime. We even live in Texas, but in the summertime we live in Maine, because it is a little hot in Texas, and I don't want walls up on the coastline in Maine. So how do you deal with that? You make sure that if famines are starting, you stop them before they get ahead. You know what people—at the end of any famine, people start moving en masse. When you have an earthquake, as we did in Haiti, what did people do? They start leaving the island. Where do they come? They come to the United States, not through the border, along the coast.

So we need a presence in the world to reduce forced migration. This is the biggest forced migration crisis in the history since World War II. 125 million people are now not where they intend to be. They are refugees. They are internally displaced.

No. 2, we already went through the diseases. It is not an American interest to have a disease get out of control because it is going to be a catastrophe for all of us. And Dr. Yoho is absolutely correct, this pandemic was nowhere near as bad at 1918. Five percent of the world's population died in 1918 in 6 months.

Ms. JAYAPAL. I am going to stop you because I have one more question before I get to the end of my time.

The waivers. Secretary Rubio said these waivers are there. Are they working? Even in PEPFAR, are they working? Are we getting money to these lifesaving programs?

Mr. NATSIOS. I have spoken to the Christian NGO's, because I know them, that is the community I come from, and they said they appreciate the waivers. They have the waivers. But there is no money flowing to them. That is what they told me.

Ms. JAYAPAL. A waiver doesn't feed families.

Mr. NATSIOS. And there is no reason why—many of them are old friends of mine. They would not make this up.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you.

I just want to congratulate RFK who has just been confirmed by the Senate. Say congratulations, speaking of health.

And say now Representative Self is recognized.

Mr. SELF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There is an advantage to being this far down the dais. There is too much material to cover that has come out of this briefing. So to my colleagues on the other side, they like to talk about this firing of the IGs. They forget the 2022 law that specifically says 30 days paid then you can be fired. And then the unelected people that are working in the executive branch, as far as I know, there are only two elected people throughout the entire elected branch—executive branch. That is the President and the Vice President. Every other one of the 2 million plus the 12 million contractors are unelected. So everybody that we are praising, as well as the people that we are condemning, are all unelected.

Mr. Natsios, it is—either you or during one of your—colleague on the other aisle during your testimony said, well, it is only a small number. And it reminded me of the reporter that said about the Argentinian gang taking over just a couple of apartment buildings. Well, it is only a couple of apartment buildings. This country is \$36 trillion in debt. We are trying in this Congress to do something about that, but we have taken all of these small amounts now for decades, and they now add up to \$36 trillion in debt. So every small amount is crucial.

Forty percent. You said that 40 percent of USAID are compliance officers. That is not the issue. What are they complying to? During the Biden administration, they were complying to things that were not in the interest of the United States. I don't care about the percentage. What are they requiring compliance of would be my question.

So this is for Dr. Yoho and Max. So the title of this agency is Agency for International Development. Is it not? Is that correct?

Mr. YOHO. Uh-huh.

Mr. SELF. International Development. So in the—just in the few grants that we have been looking at, there is a USAID for activities in D.C., to provide USAID employees in D.C. with counseling, organizational resilience, wellness, and work-life balance. Now, I realize that D.C. might be different than the rest of the United States, but it is not international.

We will skip over the—and having worked in both the Third World, Africa and the Middle East, we will skip over the climate change because a poor country doesn't care about climate change. They care about survival.

But I want to go to a USAID contract for activities in Albuquerque. And this is for you, Mr. Yoho—Dr. Yoho, excuse me. Emergency DEI support in Albuquerque. Now, I assume that is Albuquerque, New Mexico. So it was in 2022 through 2023, so it may have been in your last budget. Were you aware of emergency DEI support—probably not. It is an unfair question—in Albuquerque?

And then the last one I want to talk about is another USAID for activities in D.C. Now, this one is really interesting because it is to hire an LGBT adviser for the USAID's U.S. Personal Services Contractor program, but the interesting thing about this is they are to—it is to undisclosed contractor.

Mr. YOHO. Wow.

Mr. SELF. That one requires some sort of investigation.

So my question is, to you, Mr. Natsios, why do we have activities in the United States if this is international development?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, I haven't read that so I can't tell what is in it, but I can tell you I was—sorry. I can tell you, I was in a commission—this is when I was teaching at Georgetown, after I left AID. A number of officers came back from Afghanistan and Iraq whose colleagues had been murdered by the Taliban. We lost a large number of contract staff in both countries, and they committed suicide. And so they created a commission, which they asked me to serve on and I did, to see what we need to do when people come back, because—and this is true for the military. My son was in Afghanistan.

Mr. SELF. Absolutely.

Mr. NATSIOS. I was in the first Gulf War as a major in the Army Reserves that was mobilized. Actually, I was in the Bush administration. I left to go to Iraq. And there is a suicide problem in the U.S. military. So I believe, but I am not sure, that that may have been counseling, because they do it in an organized way. If they see depression when people come back from the field who have seen a lot of violence, then they put them through—

Mr. SELF. I will actually give you that because, you are right, we still have 17 military veterans that commit suicide every day.

Mr. NATSIOS. Right.

Mr. SELF. I am on the VA Committee as well. I was in Afghanistan and the Gulf for Iraq.

Mr. NATSIOS. Let me mention the compliance officers—

Mr. SELF. Yes.

Mr. NATSIOS [continuing]. What they comply with. It is a very good question. The Federal acquisition regulations, which were passed by the U.S. Congress, I might add, it is 2,000 pages long. I tried to read it when I was the AID administrator. I almost jumped out the 4-story window. They are so complicated. They are worse than the IRS Code. We have to comply with them. When people say, well, why is the aid stuff so complicated—

Mr. SELF. Let me stop you there, because leadership matters, and in the Biden administration, leadership came from the top. We will not—and, Mr. Chairman, I yield back, but that is the central point. It is not the regulations; it is leadership at the top. And I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Self.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Olszewski.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all for being here and your service.

I will just start with a point my colleague just made about the inspectors general. In fact, there are provisions to remove an inspector general, but, again, they were not fired in any of these cases. Inspector general firings, the President must provide Congress 30-day notice and, quote, substantive rationale, including detailed and case-specific reasons for the firing. And to my knowledge, that has not taken place.

I really appreciate, again, you all being here. I will just reinforce the point that was made by Ranking Member Meeks earlier that I think that, as helpful as these conversations are, it would be even more beneficial, especially as a new member, to have representatives of the administration also at the table so that we can hear directly from them about what they are doing, why they are doing it as we exercise our oversight work.

You know, I just want to also say, as someone new here, Mr. Chairman and colleagues, I welcome the opportunity to go after some of these programs and some of this spending. I want to be at the table with all of you. I think that we can agree that several examples that were cited today merit investigation, defunding. If there was inappropriate action, there should be action taken. I completely agree with that. But I think there is a well-established process that does not include wholesale elimination or pausing of funding.

I guess my concerns are twofold, one of which is that in the meantime, we are affecting real Americans—we talked about that earlier—real Americans who are either employees and have given their life to this country in service to it or there are those who are our farmers and other folks who are helping out.

So as we think about this work, I am particularly concerned about the funding freezes that are being taken place. Congress explicitly has the power of the purse under Article I of the United States Constitution. In the wake of overreach by the Nixon administration, Congress passed the Impoundment Act of 1974 that said the President may only propose rescissions or pulling back funding with specific notice to Congress and with approval of Congress within 45 days. Again, none of that has happened in any of these cases. And I would just encourage colleagues to say—again, I want

to be part of these conversations, but let's do it through the legal and well-established process.

For those of you who don't know my background, before I was a State rep and a county executive I was a school teacher, and so really believe in the power of education, both domestically and internationally. And one of the things that worries me, particularly now as a new member on the Subcommittee of Africa, as we know, there are tens of millions of individuals on that continent who cannot read. There are tens of millions of children now not in school. There were programs that were being afforded 44 million learners, young people, under USAID-supported programs were being taken place.

So in addition to the democracy programs being defunded we talked about, my understanding is there is no waiver and there is no funding for education. I guess my question is, would education programs—and we can sort of do a yes or no, or if you keep your answer—like, do you see any concern for the education programs that were being supported by USAID?

Mr. YOHO. Do I see any concerns with them or—I see the benefit that we have with the education, and when you go back to the 1961, they focused on agriculture and education. And as Mr. Natsios brought out, we used to educate leaders around the world that when we go around, as you go on delegations, they were educated here. There is over 300,000 students going to China. That used to—not that many coming here in the past, but China has jumped on this and they see the value, and that effect from that will be 10 to 15 years down the road.

Mr. NATSIOS. Let me show you one major benefit of education that has to do with conflict. They have done studies of all these militias that are so vicious and so destabilizing all over the world. Almost all of them, the young men, are completely illiterate. They have never been to any schooling at all, and that is how they recruit them.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Yep.

Mr. NATSIOS. When I was in Darfur as a special envoy, I noticed that. They didn't even know what the United States was. These people were that isolated from the world. They didn't know what Europe was. And that is not good.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Yes.

Mr. NATSIOS. It is destabilizing, and it affects us when these groups start attacking. Sometimes they attack Americans.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Yes. Just reclaiming a little bit of time. I completely agree with both of you. Thank you for that response. I think as we think about economic development, as we think about world security, people are less likely to endorse political violence, to join those, when they are educated.

And so, as we are taking that step, I would just welcome, particularly you, Administrator Natsios, how you would go about through a legal framework, if you were working in the position currently, if you could followup with this committee, how you would go through and actually make those changes to programs that are of concern without jeopardizing all of those other actions.

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, you can put some of it in statute, and I certainly would. But part of it is the two parties working together,

when I was in office, the two parties did—they supported AID and they helped me a lot, I have to tell you. And when we needed support, I got more support sometimes from the Hill than I did from the other branch that I was in.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. I will say sign me up, and amen to that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Olszewski.

And I would just say that the authority for Secretary Rubio to consolidate, reduce, eliminate, it does fall—though you were not here—in a law passed in the 2024 appropriations, SFOPS appropriations section 7063, where you can expand, eliminate, consolidate, downsize, cover department agencies, expand or reduce the size of permanent civil service, Foreign Service, the list goes on and on. And, again, I would also remind everybody that all but three Democrats voted for that that are on this committee that were here at the time.

And I now recognize Representative Moylan.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And as many of my colleagues previously mentioned, the U.S. Agency on International Development is in dire need of reform. And the chairman has already done an excellent job highlighting some of the wasteful and burden—that has burdened the American taxpayer both in this hearing and on YouTube. Yet, when we talk about how USAID betrayed the American people, it is also important to recognize some of the good USAID has accomplished when done right.

Being from Indo-Pacific, I know the critical role that U.S. foreign aid has played in disaster response. As an example, when done right, USAID has provided much needed humanitarian assistance to Japan after the 2011 Fukushima disaster. Specifically, USAID deployed its Disaster Assistance Response Team to Japan for almost 2 months. With many similar examples elsewhere, USAID's track record in disaster assistance has proven to be a positive force when done right.

As an alumni, I can also speak on the incredible partnership USAID provides to the University of Guam and other academic institutions by offering internships, fellowships, and grant opportunities. And when done right, USAID has made it possible for the U.S. to connect with other nations on a societal level. And as we look at America's diplomatic effectiveness, and when done right, I commend the opportunities that USAID has provided to students.

These successes make USAID's wasteful programs all the more heartbreaking. For every stride the Agency has made to prevent disease, they fund drag shows. For every country they have helped after disasters, they fund DEI seminars. My hope is that Secretary Rubio maintains what works, but hopefully it is clear that USAID needs to change.

Dr. Yoho, your previous foreign affairs legislation highlighted the strong relationships between the U.S. and partner nations in Pacific and Asia. Where do you think USAID succeeded in this region, and where do you think it needs to improve?

Mr. YOHO. I think where it succeeded, there is multiple examples of that. You look at the work they have done with organizations like CEPI or in the food programs and the educational programs

like you brought up, those create good will that make us stronger. Programs like we have heard talked about today drives nations away from us, and if they drive them away, it makes us weaker. So we need to focus on those.

I worked a lot in the agricultural sector my whole life as a veterinarian. And working on food security and taking that knowledge and going into the island nations or—whether it is in Africa, wherever it is, teaching them our best practices that we have learned and then teaming up with AID, USAID, to carry these out and then wean these countries off, it creates trading partners. It just makes us stronger in the end, and it creates that relationship that we have that is going to make us both more secure.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you.

For Mr. Primorac, your contribution to Project 2025 focuses on foreign assistance role to counter PRC efforts. Now, despite the fraud, waste, and abuse, the programs that work in USAID are an incredibly diplomatic tool. How do you think we can maintain necessary USAID programs like disaster response, health, and economic growth, while trimming this mismanagement?

Mr. PRIMORAC. Thank you. Actually, when I was leading the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, I had to deal with many disaster responses, and we did it quite well. We also had a very good and robust to counter China framework there. Unfortunately, the next administration just tore it all down.

I think when we are talking about how do we prevent losing the good by taking away the bad, that we have to regain the trust of the American people. And right now, the more they learn, the more they are distrustful. That is why I think this review, this pause in review is very important, so that the American people can feel that—know all of this bad stuff is gone.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you. Thank you.

And for my final question, Mr. Natsios, if you can, could you please explain some of the challenges associated with the Pacific and Asia time during your tenure, please?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, China was not as big a threat when I was in office. In fact, Hu Jintao was very helpful in getting the Sudanese Government to be responsive, because President Bush called him and asked him. And China was liberalizing then, and that has been reversed by Xi Jinping. I think Xi Jinping—I shouldn't say this—but is a disaster for China. I think Hu Jintao, if they followed the route he was taking, China would not be what it is doing now, and I think it is really sad.

The Asian countries feel very threatened. I was just in Bangkok, I think it was in October, and my delegation talked to a prominent political scientist, and this is what he said—and there were Chinese in the room when he said it. He said, We love America, we love freedom, but you are unreliable. You come in, you come out, you leave, we can't predict what you are doing—

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. NATSIOS. And the Chinese are always here.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman MAST. Thank you Representative Moylan.

The chair now recognizes Representative Jackson.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. Thank you much, Chairman.

I think it is important to hear the voices of employees directly impacted by this administration's effort to dismantle USAID. One foreign servicemember recently filed a declaration declaring how the chaos created by these abrupt actions of USAID being shut down jeopardized his and his family's safety during the recent evacuation from the DRC.

I ask unanimous consent that his account be entered into the record book, Mr. Chairman. It is a harrowing account of we have left our employees abroad stranded because of the rashness of this decision.

If I could have this entered into the record, Chairman.

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. Mr. Primorac, thank you, and thank you, Mr. Yoho and Natsios, for coming out today.

Mr. Primorac, you have written extensively in Project 2025 about your critique of USAID. May I ask you, do you work with any of the members of DOGE, or DOGE—how do you pronounce the name of the committee?

Mr. PRIMORAC. No, not at all. No communication whatsoever.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. Do you know the pronunciation of that organization?

Mr. PRIMORAC. I just call it DOGE like others do.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. Okay. Is it a private firm or is it a government entity?

Mr. PRIMORAC. It is a government entity, and the people working for it are government approved.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. It was formed by who?

Mr. PRIMORAC. The President of the United States.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. And how is it funded?

Mr. PRIMORAC. I understand that most are working for free, but any other costs are going to be covered by the U.S. Government.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. If they are working for free, who is paying them? Are they employees of Mr. Musk?

Mr. PRIMORAC. I have no idea.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. Okay. I just know that you have an extremely close working relationship with the organization. And how many years have you worked in foreign affairs and in foreign aid?

Mr. PRIMORAC. About 35 years, different capacities, from NGO to as a contractor, State Department, working for the Office for the Vice President, and also directly with USAID.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. Thank you. Is there anything that a 19-year-old could tell you about USAID that you don't understand from your years of experience?

Mr. PRIMORAC. My understanding is that they are technical staff.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. Can any of those 19-year-olds teach you something that you don't understand about USAID?

Mr. PRIMORAC. In terms of anything to do with data overview and looking at things, I am just clueless. Sorry.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. Okay. Well, thank you so much.

I think that—and for the record, I would like it to be clear that you and I probably would have a difference of opinion on what di-

versity means. And this is African American History Month. Mr. Frederick Douglass had written an article and a speech regarding composite nation, that this is a land of many different cultures, races, ethnicities that have all come to call this great land home. And if we are looking at the future of Africa, in the year 2050, being one in four human beings on Earth, that there should be a push for cultural diversity, expanding how we reach out to people.

And so when we talk about America and USAID betrayal, I would like to put the eye on DOGE. Not one member on this panel has had anything to say or do with the cuts of food. And let it also be entered into the record at this moment the irony of the richest man on Earth taking food away from the poorest humans on this Earth. Let it also be entered into the record that the most powerful man on Earth is denying food assistance, medical assistance, malaria vaccinations to the poorest people on Earth. We don't need to operate in this chaotic manner.

I would like to ask, Mr. Natsios, how should this project work? How should we convene to date that would make this more productive?

Mr. NATSIOS. This is a more radical proposal, but I had proposed this in foreign affairs some years ago. I think we need to consolidate the MCC, the DFC, AID, and a couple of the foreign aid parts of the State Department into one department and raise the visibility and integrate the programs more. I don't think, for example, there would be a representative for the DFC and the MCC in each country that they work in. They can have the AID mission do that. They could be an integrated mission for all of these purposes.

There are countries where there is CDC and AID running the same program, PEPFAR. It has never been corrected. They fight with each other. It is embarrassing, and it is duplicative, and there is no need for it. I think they should put one agency in charge of the whole thing and that is it. That is what happened with the malaria program and it has worked very well.

The third thing I would do is decentralize—now, with what is going on now, no one will agree to this, but the literature on bureaucratic processes, James K. Wilson, my favorite writer, who is, by the way, a conservative, he says decentralize every administrative function to the lowest level where people have knowledge of what is going on.

You have to have oversight in Washington. But AID during the cold war was the most decentralized agency, and it drove the Russians crazy, because the mission directors and the Ambassadors could be responsive to the local President and the local Prime Minister, and that is one of the reasons we won the cold war. We helped win the cold war through AID because we were highly decentralized and very responsive. Right now, there are 275 earmarks in AID. We tell the country because we don't have any choice. There is no flexibility in the budget.

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. I thank the gentleman.

And I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Jackson.

I would wonder how many transgender operas they funded during the cold war. Probably not many.

The chair now recognizes Representative Biggs from South Carolina.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your efforts in organizing this important hearing.

Thank you to our witnesses for your testimonies today.

So today's hearing has provided a target rich environment of examples of funding allocations that, while perhaps they were intended for worthy causes, in my opinion, they raise serious questions about our priorities and where our focus truly lies. These include—we have mentioned many, but just to name a couple others—\$3.3 million for being LGBTQ in the Caribbean and \$37.6 million for sex workers, their clients, and transgender individuals in South Africa.

While I acknowledge the complex global changes USAID seeks to address, we must ask a fundamental question: Are we truly fulfilling our responsibility to the American people when we allocate tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars for programs abroad while neglecting critical—and, yes, I said critical—needs right here at home, just like districts in South Carolina's 3d District which I represent.

I struggle to explain to a veteran in Newberry County who is fighting to find a job why our resources are directed overseas to programs that don't enhance our national security instead of supporting his career prospects.

We have mentioned healthcare. I watched a veteran with his face in his hands sobbing because he couldn't get healthcare needs met. We talked about the mental health needs that he couldn't get met. And he said to me, I feel like I am a hamster in a wheel. I can't get out of the process.

I find it difficult to justify to families in Greenwood that are facing mounting medical bills why resources are being spent on programs abroad when those funds could expand access to vital healthcare services in their own community.

I question how we can prioritize funding initiatives overseas, you know, when we have cybersecurity vulnerabilities in Anderson County that threaten local businesses and critical infrastructure.

For those of us who are guided by Christian values, the principle of charity begins at home. It resonates strongly with me. While we are called to care for all of God's children, there is also a natural and an understandable inclination to prioritize the needs of our immediate community, our fellow citizens, and those within our own Nation.

Let me be very clear. This is not about abandoning our global responsibilities. It is about investing in the very foundation of our Nation, our communities, our families, and our future. It is about ensuring that the hardworking people of South Carolina's 3d District and all across the Nation are not left behind while resources are directed to woke programs that do not advance American interests.

So my question to our witnesses is very simple. What went wrong, and why did the oversight measures fail to prevent taxpayer money from being spent on wasteful programs that don't put America first?

Mr. YOHO. Accountability and transparency. And it is this body—and I was a part of this body—we didn't do our job, is what I feel. You know, the American people sent us up here to do something. We hear the IG reports, you know, this person that got fired, he got fired, he was the IG, made a report, gets fired. There is an IG report every year. We don't act. And if we don't act, this is what happens. You know, we complain about everything that is bad, and then we don't act. And then when somebody like Trump comes in—and it will be somebody after that. And when they come in and they do this, we get upset. You know, we have got to fix Congress.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you.

Mr. YOHO. It is why people send us here.

Mr. PRIMORAC. I would also add that what I have seen over the past 25 years is the progressive left has gradually just seized control over the entire foreign aid industrial complex, and that is something—the political sociology of the industry has to be changed if we are not—otherwise, we are going to have this same vicious circle occur again and again.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you.

Mr. NATSIOS. Just let me add, there is a large number of Mormons at AID. I have never met a communist Mormon before. There aren't any, that I know of. I don't theologically agree with them, but I have a great respect for the Mormons. There is a very large number of practicing Catholics in AID and Evangelicals, and there is a large number, as I said earlier today, of missionary kids. Why? Because they speak the languages of the countries they were brought up in, and they make wonderful Foreign Service Officers, and many of them have risen to the senior levels of the Agency.

Is there a contingent of younger, very liberal? Yes, there are, but it is very mixed. And my experience in the Agency—maybe it has changed—is that when you ask offices to do something, they do it. I didn't used to have to ask their backgrounds. I just said, I want this done. And if they didn't do it, I would take action. I actually fired 16 senior people when I was in office.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Natsios.

The gentlelady's time is expired.

Even if they are Catholic, if they are doing LGBTQ musicals in Ireland, their time is coming to an end.

The chair now recognizes Representative Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

And, Ted, welcome back. It is good to see you.

Mr. Natsios, when you were AID administrator, did you oversee an agency that was rife with LGBTQ dances in Ireland and, I don't know, condoms to the tune of 2 million in Gaza, and all kinds of iffy, marginal, flaky projects that were funded with U.S. taxpayer money bringing dishonor to the United States of America? Would that be a fair characterization of AID, from your point of view?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, it certainly wasn't when I was there, and I don't think it is now myself, but I do think there are programs that I saw on the list that I would not have allowed in my agency.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, let's stipulate that, but let's not let that characterize AID, because all of us are losers if that succeeds, it seems to me.

Global health. What percentage of AID's work would fall under the rubric of global health, fighting disease, child/maternal healthcare or rehydration projects, on and on, polio——

Mr. NATSIOS. \$8 billion.

Mr. CONNOLLY. What is that?

Mr. NATSIOS. \$8 billion.

Mr. CONNOLLY. \$8 billion out of 40?

Mr. NATSIOS. Out of 38 billion.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Out of 38, so big chunk.

What about food security and nutrition programs?

Mr. NATSIOS. The emergency response part of AID is now by far the largest. It is \$15 billion. It just amazes me because it is so much more than I had when I was in office so——

Mr. CONNOLLY. So 23 of the 38 billion is just those two categories?

Mr. NATSIOS. That is correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And those aren't fringe projects. Those are really lifesaving projects.

Mr. NATSIOS. Yes, they are.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is that a fair characterization?

Mr. NATSIOS. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And what about disaster relief?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, the \$15 billion is—the food security is—food security, for me, is the emergency side. Agriculture is separate from that, and that is what I think you are talking about in the longer term development sense.

Mr. CONNOLLY. But when we are talking about disaster assistance, we are not only talking food?

Mr. NATSIOS. No.

Mr. CONNOLLY. For example, my fire department is part of a FEMA-AID relationship where they can go to trouble spots overseas and, again, try to save lives.

Mr. NATSIOS. Right. I don't know what part of the \$15 billion is food versus what we call nonfood assistance, which is usually emergency medical care and public health, like immunizing kids in refugee camps and that kind of thing. I don't know the breakdown.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So let's say one were sincere about wanting to clean up marginal fringy projects that should never have been funded. Is the way to do that to basically announce we are going to fire 10,000 employees and leave 239 left?

Mr. NATSIOS. It is not.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And what would be the consequences of depopulating the Agency to the tune of 10,000 out of 10,239 employees?

Mr. NATSIOS. In my experience—I have run seven institutions in the last 50 years. The AID officers that I worked with were among the smartest and the best managers that I have worked with and the most creative because of the circumstances they deal with in the developing world that are very challenging.

I think losing career people is like losing the cadre of the military officers. It is a disaster for the United States.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And the chairman seems to be under the impression that the appropriations bill provides blanket authority to Secretary of State Marco Rubio. I beg to differ. My view is that, ultimately, AID was established by statute in the Foreign Assistance

Act of 1961, as amended. And if you want to dismantle or fold it into another organization, you must get statutory authority from the U.S. Congress, and we certainly will fight that out.

Final point, Mr. Natsios, and maybe, Ted Yoho, you may want to comment as well. I am worried about the vacuum being created by these actions that China is going to waltz right in there. They are already big actors. Now we, the United States, are going to make them even more so, and I struggle to see how that is in an American interest.

One of you comment.

Mr. YOHO. It is going to drive people closer to China, Russia, the adversaries, and we see this, but I saw that before too with the programs. I had one of the past Presidents of Ghana say that we want aid, but if we have one party from the United States in power, they have a short list; if we have another one, it is a long list. He goes, If we go to China, they say here is your money. But they said this, I would rather do business with the United States.

That is something that we can take advantage of, and we need to, and we need to focus on those things because that makes us stronger, safer, and, you know, more prosperous, not just here but in those other countries. We need to get back to the basic mission here.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Connolly.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Representative Kean, is recognized.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

America is spending \$40 billion in foreign aid, yet much of that money never reaches the intended recipients. Instead it gets caught up in bureaucratic inefficiencies and organizations that have not always been transparent with the American taxpayer.

A USAID report published in June 2023 under the Biden administration noted that just one out of every \$10 reaches the actual people in need abroad. A recent study by the Middle East Forum revealed that USAID awarded \$164 million in taxpayer funds to extremist organizations, including \$122 million to groups linked to designated terrorist entities.

I believe that my colleagues here would agree that this reckless spending has drifted from American interests and instead has benefited foreign interests. It is time that we commit to cutting waste, fraud, and abuse in government funding on programs and initiatives that do not align with American values. American people deserve to know where and how their money is being spent and how they align with the U.S. interests.

Now, Mr. Yoho, should this reorganization include a comprehensive forensic audit of USAID spending over the past 4 years, how should this audit identify waste, fraud, corruption in programs that may have undermined U.S. foreign policy objectives?

Mr. YOHO. Absolutely. But, I mean, you could go back years, but it is a great opportunity for bipartisan leadership conducting oversight and defining the priorities and the parameters of future USAID assistance programs. That leads to the certainty that where

we are at, we are not wavering, it creates continuity in our programs, and it makes us stronger.

Mr. KEAN. As you were just—I am sorry. Go ahead.

Mr. YOHIO. And it must be done in a bipartisan effort. If not, it will go away with it when tides change.

Mr. KEAN. But as you just said in your previous answer to another question, you are right, the best policies here and abroad are consistent over administrations.

Mr. YOHIO. Sure.

Mr. KEAN. They are transparent with the American people as well as people looking from abroad. And so having that bipartisan strategy and consistency is extraordinarily important.

What are ways you think that we can ensure that they are consistent over time, these policies?

Mr. YOHIO. I ponder that. And if you look at—well, just take the JCPOA and the Paris climate accord. President Obama put us in both. President Trump took us out of both. President Biden put us back in both. President Trump takes us out. Stand on the sidelines as another nation looking in at America. They are like, these people don't know what they are doing. We have no confidence that we are exuding. Congress I think can direct it as this is the policy of the United States of America, and give leeway to the executive branch in times of emergencies.

But if we don't have a policy of the United States versus a Democratic party or a Republican policy—and that is the spoils of winning an election, but they should also focus on what is best for America instead of what is best for a party. And until we do that, we are going to go back and forth on this, and it is up to us and, of course, the American people.

Mr. KEAN. And so how would you—if you were structuring this legislatively and making sure it is bipartisan solutions that is consistent over time, how would you structure that under your best vision?

Mr. YOHIO. I think it is just getting consensus and building a bipartisan movement in this, and you have got a great opportunity. You have got to—this Congress has an opportunity you haven't had in over 40 years with the Supreme Court ruling on the Chevron deference case. The Chevron deference, when that came into effect, allowed the administrative agencies to have all this power. All right. That has been repealed. Congress can go ahead and move forward and say this is what an agency may do, this is what they shall not do. And if we don't do that in a bipartisan way, it is going to go right back to these agencies and Congress has allowed their powers to be usurped again by an administrative agency and you have administrative law.

Mr. KEAN. And in doing that, in instructing, how do we ensure that taxpayer-funded aid does not fall into the hands of corrupt governments, terrorist organizations, or entities that are hostile to U.S. interests, Mr. Yohio?

Mr. YOHIO. Define the mission of what you want, and then you have to have that oversight, as Mr. Natsios brought up. You have got to approve these things, and you have to have it done now. And I think there should be an immediate review after this stuff. You know, with every—when you send out a check, you want to get it

back. The IRS makes us do that and be accountable for our taxes, and I think we should do the same thing in government programs.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you, Mr. Yoho.

I yield back my time.

Mr. NATSIOS. Could I just one thing in terms of a suggestion?

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time has expired, so maybe in another round.

Thank you. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey.

Representative McBride is now recognized.

Ms. MCBRIDE. Thank you, Chairman Mast. It is a privilege to serve on this committee with you and Ranking Member Meeks. It is also an honor to be here for my first Foreign Affairs Committee hearing.

I am looking forward to working alongside each and every one of you in a bipartisan manner in support of U.S. interests. Unfortunately, right now, we are seeing a partisan attack on USAID, one of the most effective tools of American leadership and our national security.

By gutting this agency, President Trump is not just turning his back on our global commitments; he is undermining American interests and our security, and he is causing unnecessary deaths. If President Trump can get away with gutting USAID, he can do it anywhere. That means that no part of the Federal Government, including programs like Medicare and Social Security and Medicaid, will be safe from this administration.

The President and the majority conference in this House are fostering opposition to vital government programs by mischaracterizing diversity efforts and using it as a trojan horse to gut programs that all Americans rely on.

This hearing is titled "USAID Betrayal," but let's be clear, the real betrayal is that Donald Trump promised to lower costs facing families, but instead is pursuing policies that threaten American jobs and increase costs for workers.

Foreign aid is not a charity. It is an investment in stability, security, global health, economic security, American leadership, and American jobs. USAID buys food from farmers in Delaware to help prevent famine and conflict abroad. USAID funds over \$1 million of critical research at the University of Delaware on both energy and poultry production. USAID collaborates with Delaware's businesses to expand agriculture in places like Ukraine. These cuts, this effort to decimate USAID doesn't just hurt people in distant countries, it hurts Delawarians.

And so my first question is for you, Mr. Natsios. I want to talk about everyone's favorite topic. It may have come up already. Egg prices. One reason for rising costs is the spread of bird flu. Yet this administration has stopped monitoring bird flu in 49 countries, increasing the risk of it spreading to the U.S. and decimating our poultry industry, a cornerstone of Delaware's economy.

With USAID halting its efforts on bird flu, I am curious what you believe could be the impact on egg prices and also, of course, the health of Americans.

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, I have said before that I think the 80 USAID missions that used to exist are our frontline defense for infectious disease generally, and I am now convinced by Dr. Yoho that we

should add in animal disease, zoonotic diseases, not that it would jump to humans, although that is a huge problem, but just that are in the animal kingdom because it affects our domesticated population of animals in the United States whose food supply is critical to our health in the United States and, I might add, to the developing world as well.

We have had some very successful programs over the years to eliminate the zoonotic diseases in Africa, in Central America, Mexico, and I think we should revive those.

I know when Bush was President, that they monitored all birds dying in Alaska because there are billions of birds in the world and the administration used to test some of them for viruses. Now, I didn't at USAID, but I think USDA tested them for viruses to see if bird flu was in the flocks and then try to take action.

So I think early warning systems in all areas are extremely important so we can do preparedness work to protect the American people, but we would also at the same time be protecting people in the developing world too.

Ms. MCBRIDE. That is right.

One quick question, because we have heard commentary about, quote, fringe programs at USAID. You acknowledge that there are programs at USAID now that you might not have approved in the past. I think we have already seen that there have been gross mischaracterizations of programs, that there have been outright mistruths said about USAID programs right now, and that many of the sort of most outrageous things that we are hearing turn out not to be accurate.

And you led—and I am running out of time, but you led USAID when PEPFAR was created under President Bush. I am curious if you believe that there are elements of PEPFAR, which have saved 25 million lives globally, if there are elements of PEPFAR that could be mischaracterized and sound a bit outrageous?

Mr. NATSIOS. I suppose there are. I actually wanted to include more local input into how we structured the program in these countries because it is very standardized, and I am not into central standardization in aid programs. I am a decentralist. I guess I am a Federalist, you would say, and I believe all development is local and that we should allow the countries more discretion as to how we structure the PEPFAR program.

But I lost that battle 23 years ago. If it were reauthorized, I would add a lot more local discretion in terms of structuring the program.

Chairman MAST. The Representative's time has expired.

The chair now recognizes Representative Radewagen.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Talofa lava. I want to thank the three of you for testifying again.

Congressman Yoho, it is good to see you. I want to thank you for all of the good things that you have done in the region. You have been a true friend of the Pacific.

In the past 2 weeks, independent Samoa and the Cook Islands have signed deals with the PRC. With Kiribati to the north, independent Samoa to the west, Cook Islands to our east, my home district of American Samoa is now surrounded on three sides by China-friendly nations.

I have a couple of questions.

During the Trump administration and the Biden administration, the State Department and USAID proposed that USAID take over and manage U.S. economic assistance and Federal programs and services to the three strategically vital Compact of Free Association allies; namely, Palau, Marshall Islands, and Micronesia. We have made sure that was rejected because Congress has been providing all such assistance to those strategic partner island people through Interior Department since 1961, including under COFA since 1986. Now that assistance is appropriated so that Interior continues to actually administer these funds and programs under COFA for the next 20 years at least, and that will continue until Congress changes it.

The State and those who have or will be exercising USAID authorities understand that COFA economic assistance is not discretionary grants but usually agreed to obligations that secure the highest level of strategic interests of the U.S. in the Pacific?

Mr. Natsios? Any one of you are free to answer.

Mr. NATSIOS. I couldn't quite hear the—

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Turn your mike on, please.

Mr. NATSIOS. Could you just repeat it? I couldn't quite hear your question.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. I am running out of time now. I don't know whether the chairman will let me roll that back a bit.

During the Trump administration and the Biden administration, the State Department and USAID proposed that USAID take over and manage U.S. economic assistance and Federal programs and services to the three strategically vital Compact of Free Association allies; namely, Palau, Marshall Islands, and Micronesia. We made sure that was rejected because Congress has been providing all such assistance to those strategic partner island people through Interior Department since 1961, including under COFA since 1986. Now that assistance is appropriated so that Interior continues to actually administer these funds and programs under COFA for the next 20 years at least and that will continue until Congress changes it.

Does State and those who have or will be exercising USAID authorities understand that COFA economic assistance is not discretionary grants but usually agreed obligations that secure the highest level of strategic interests of the U.S. in the Pacific?

Mr. NATSIOS. Congresswoman, I don't know a lot about how the program works now, so I don't want to render a judgment. I would have some outside group that all of you agree upon to evaluate the interior program and then ask AID how it might change it and then you decide, but I wouldn't dismiss AID.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Natsios.

Mr. NATSIOS. But if you are really devoted to the Interior option, then you keep it.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Thank you. My time is so brief and you had me repeat a long question.

Mr. YOHO. I am sorry.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Congressman Yoho?

Mr. YOHO. Yes. Same question?

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Yes.

Mr. YOHO. The Compact has worked pretty well, and I think you guys vote on it and you determine your destiny of what you want to do. I would use USAID or whatever entity comes back as a facilitator, but I would certainly engage DFC, MCC to do those structural projects that you need that really boost your economy down there.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Do you think with the reforms for traditional USAID foreign assistance now underway that the role of agencies like the U.S. Government's Development Finance Corporation that was mentioned earlier will become more important as instruments of U.S. foreign relations, or do DFC and similar agencies that harness private sector investment also need to be reformed?

DFC was modeled after the Marshall Plan, which creates jobs in the private sector overseas instead of handing out grants. That can create markets for U.S. exports.

Mr. YOHO. Sure.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. So while we are promoting foreign investment in the U.S., should we also be promoting U.S. investment overseas to create jobs back here at home? What direction are we headed in this regard?

Mr. YOHO. It is imperative that we do that. We need to revamp the reauthorization of the DFC. And if you look at—post World War II, if we did not come in there with the Marshall Plan or something like that, would Germany, Japan, Vietnam, South Korea, and the other countries that benefit from that, would they be in our top 20 trading partners? And if we didn't do that, who would have been in there to do that? It is either going to be our influence with our values or it is going to be the other people, and we don't want them there. They are authoritarian, and then it will be a disaster for the world. Liberty and freedom will go away.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Primorac, do you have anything you would like to add?

Mr. PRIMORAC. Communist China cannot compete with our private sector. It is massive. And when you include our allies in Japan and elsewhere, it is overwhelming. China cannot come close. So DFC as that tool to be able to bring in that kind of capital power I think is a perfect solution.

Thank you.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Natsios?

Oh, Congressman?

Mr. YOHO. No. Go ahead.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. You have anything to add, Mr. Natsios?

Chairman MAST. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. NATSIOS. I think the DFC—

Chairman MAST. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Chairman, can we get a bathroom break?

Chairman MAST. Can you hold it?

Mr. YOHO. Two of us are 70-plus.

Chairman MAST. Can you hold it for two individuals or no?

Mr. YOHO. I am going to remind you that when you are 70.

Chairman MAST. I ask in seriousness. Can you hold it for two individuals or no? If you can't, I am happy to give you a restroom break. I want you to be able to concentrate on answering to our

Representatives. I don't want anybody to say you were distracted, so—all right. We will continue, and we will muster on once more into the breach, dear friend.

The chair now recognizes Representative Luna.

Mrs. LUNA. Chairman, for the record, I would like to submit this letter saying that PEPFAR funding was actually resumed. I know there has been a lot of push saying that the Trump admin had actually cut it, but—

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

Mrs. LUNA. Thank you.

You know, I want to start off by saying initially I think the idea behind USAID was done with a good intention. However, we have come to find out that the Agency has indeed, to a certain extent, operated in a rogue capacity. And USAID has absolutely broken the trust with the American people and not been transparent about where our taxpayer dollars are going.

There is an individual by the name of Mike Benz. He actually served over at the State Department for a while, and he has been going on to expose a lot of what USAID has been doing, which being a member of Oversight and being on this committee I wanted to verify and see if he was telling the truth, which much to my disappointment he was.

And I say that because I am disappointed that our taxpayer dollars are funding some of these items. I mean, to just put this in perspective, in 2021, the Special Operations Command under Mark Milley as chairman of the Joint Chiefs put out an instruction manual, "A Vision for 2021 and Beyond," that contained instructions and examples on how the military could work with the State Department, intel services, and USAID using race riots—here are examples of some of the instruction manuals here, one and two—in order to destabilize nations.

In addition to that, they advocated for setting up job fairs near some of these riots so that disaffected workers could gain employment.

Now, as a Member of Congress, I ask myself, did anyone in USAID get elected? To Congress? How about to a Presidency? When you are acting in the shadows and you are destabilizing nations using race wars to do it and then advocating that the military does it, in my opinion, not only do you put the future generations that would have to fight in those wars in jeopardy, but at the end of the day, you are operating without any oversight.

So I guess the question for you guys is, Mr. Natsios, is that something that you were aware of? Are you aware that that instruction manual is being promoted not just with the military under Milley but that USAID may be operating in this capacity? Because, in my opinion—and I am sure I speak on behalf of many of my constituents—I don't think that is where our taxpayer dollars need to be going.

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, I completely agree with you. Personally, I doubt very much that what you have been told is accurate, but let me just say—

Mrs. LUNA. Well, look, I am telling you right now I brought the receipts. Okay. And the reason—I am not trying to argue with you, but I find this disturbing—

Mr. NATSIOS. Very disturbing.

Mrs. LUNA [continuing]. On so many capacities. And I would like to also just, if I can, sir, Mike Benz, what he is exposing and bringing receipts, I have confirmed it, thank you for doing that on behalf of the American people because I understand that when you take on the intelligence agencies, we are also now finding that apparently in this manual that they are also advocating for social media campaigns illuminating controversy to a global audience. I mean, using disinformation campaigns. Is this happening here in our own country? Where is the oversight?

Mr. NATSIOS. Just to ask you, who in the Agency, what bureau—

Mrs. LUNA. I just sent you—you can actually find that instruction in this manual that Milley approved.

Mr. NATSIOS. Military manual, is it?

Mrs. LUNA. Yes, but Milley approved it. You have it right here. USAID working with government agencies. I mean, this is not—

Mr. NATSIOS. Wait a second. Did AID say that or did the military say AID should—

Mrs. LUNA. Well, that would be the question for you, sir.

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, I don't think AID wrote that.

Mrs. LUNA. I mean, these operations—sorry to interrupt you. These operations that are taking place without government oversight, without the authority of the President, without the authority of Congress, real men and women serve and they die because of stuff like this. When you destabilize nations without any oversight, we have to fight those wars. You have our chairman right here that literally risked his life—

Mr. NATSIOS. I—

Mrs. LUNA. No. I am sorry to interrupt you. I am frustrated. I know it is not necessarily your fault.

Mr. NATSIOS. But I am telling you it is nonsense.

Mrs. LUNA. But as the head of the Agency—

Mr. NATSIOS. I am telling you what Benz told you is nonsense.

Mrs. LUNA. That is not nonsense. These are the information and forms—

Mr. NATSIOS. AID didn't write that.

Mrs. LUNA [continuing]. And Benz put this out to the American people.

Mr. NATSIOS. AID did not write that.

Mrs. LUNA. Sir, I disagree with you on so many levels, and I appreciate you being—

Mr. NATSIOS. How do you know they wrote it?

Mrs. LUNA. How do I know what?

Mr. NATSIOS. Any person can write AID's name into a manual. It goes on all the time.

Mrs. LUNA. Sir, they are advocating that the U.S. military work with taxpayer-funded State Department USAID funds to destabilize nations. That is unacceptable. I don't care who wrote it. USAID needs to come down and condemn it. They need to provide oversight to Congress on exactly where our tax dollars are going.

And I know I might be at 17 seconds with our time, but, sir, I hope that you agree—yes or no. Do you agree that this is wrong, period? Should this be happening?

Mr. NATSIOS. I think the military should be held accountable. I think it is nonsense that——

Mrs. LUNA. And should USAID condemn it?

Mr. NATSIOS. It is nonsense to suggest that AID wrote that.

Mrs. LUNA. Should USAID condemn it? Should they condemn it?

Mr. NATSIOS. The military should.

Mrs. LUNA. Should USAID also condemn this?

Mr. NATSIOS. Of course. We don't comment——

Mrs. LUNA. Thank you.

Mr. NATSIOS. AID does not comment on military manuals.

Mrs. LUNA. Chairman, I yield my time back.

Thank you.

Chairman MAST. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. NATSIOS. It is none of our business

Chairman MAST. Since there have been a couple more members that have shown up and I promised you only two, let's do the 5-minute restroom break and stand in recess for 5 minutes.

[recess.]

Chairman MAST. The committee will come to order again.

The chair now recognizes Representative Costa.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I was here earlier in the hearing, and then we had votes, and I had a meeting to go to, but I am glad to be back, although I seemed to be walking into some—what seems to me was a surreal conversation.

Mr. Yoho, it is good to see you again, having served with you. And our other witnesses, thank you for your service.

You know, Mr. Yoho, like you and I, we have had debates with our opponents in the past, and I always think that is good, but I have a line that I like to use when I think a person on the other side is straying from the facts. I say you are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts. And now that, I guess, we have alternative facts, it doesn't matter.

But I want to talk about this—part of this discussion deals with oversight. And Article I of the Constitution gives not only as the purse strings—power of the purse strings but oversight. And I must say, in 20 years I have been around here, I don't think that we do oversight as well as we should.

I have a real problem with this whole issue of hiring someone—or not hire—but to take over the role of what is this committee's jurisdiction and every other committee in Congress to do proper oversight and then point the finger somewhere else I think is an abdication of our role, not only here in this effort, but also in advise and consent over in the Senate.

But let's talk about the USAID freeze that—and I am trying to understand where this administration is now coming with their policy and what I think is an illegal dismantling of the USAID. Because we can make changes, we can make modifications, as we discussed earlier this morning, and we should. And this administration should put its imprimatur on its own foreign policy, as every administration does, whether I agree or not. But the oversight is our responsibility, not the executive branch's.

So let me ask you, in terms of China, which is our adversary, there is no clear strategy, it seems to me, the administration thus far is all over the place.

Mr. Natsios, do you think the actions on the USAID freeze operations help us counter China and Russia?

Mr. NATSIOS. I said earlier that I believe our AID missions are one of our greatest strengths because our FSOs are in the countries and two-thirds of them are from the countries.

The Chinese do not have an aid system in the field. They have a highly centralized system. Everything is done in Beijing. They have no oversight over their programs.

Mr. COSTA. So basically it is used as a tool, USAID, to project U.S. mark power or soft power, whatever you want to call it, and our influence abroad, right?

Mr. NATSIOS. That is right.

Mr. COSTA. It is not altruistic. It is in our national interest, right?

Mr. NATSIOS. That is right.

Mr. COSTA. And, by the way, it benefits American farmers by a tune of about \$2 billion, right, in purchase of American agricultural products, right—

Mr. NATSIOS. That is right.

Mr. COSTA [continuing]. In farm country? And I represent a significant farm district.

I want to focus on Ukraine for a moment. USAID allocated over \$30 billion to fund supported projects that stabilize the energy grid, as mentioned earlier, government efficiency programs, civil society groups. These efforts have bolstered and strengthened Ukrainian society in the last 3 years especially and the resolve to fight back against Russian aggression.

Russia, Mr. Yoho, is our adversary. Would you not agree?

Mr. YOHIO. Agree.

Mr. COSTA. And so for those who claim over the past 2 years to care about oversight on how the money is spent on USAID staff, how do you think these investments in civil society and development-based projects have helped to bolster Ukraine's fight against the Russian invasion, the hostile invasion?

Mr. YOHIO. You know, there is a need on the humanitarian side with the food programs and things like that, health, medical, those kind of things, but I question the role of NATO. You know, why is NATO not there stronger than we are?

Mr. COSTA. Well, I will give you some numbers, and we can do that off side. But, really, when you add the EU support and NATO support, it is pretty close to what we have done when you look at the totality of the numbers.

Let me go to another place, Armenia, that I have worked with over the years. USAID has played a significant role in helping Armenians wanting to turn to the West. Russia has abdicated its role under the treaty and sided with Azerbaijan.

Mr. Natsios, were you involved with the support for Armenia when they found out or, Mr. Yoho, do you care to comment about the precarious position they are in right now?

Mr. NATSIOS. Are you asking me?

Mr. COSTA. Yes.

Mr. NATSIOS. I am sorry. I am trying to remember if we had an AID mission there. It was not huge, but the relationship between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which is the problem you are talking about—

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Mr. NATSIOS [continuing]. Was stable then.

Mr. COSTA. It is not now.

Mr. NATSIOS. It is not now. And the Russians and the Iranians are deeply involved and in fact, the Iranians almost went to war with Azerbaijan. And, in fact, I was told by one of our professors that they had actually started to put in military bridges from Iran into Azerbaijan. This is about 8 or 9 months ago, and they were worried about a Middle Eastern war over it because then Russia would have been drawn in and Turkiye. Would have been a catastrophe. I don't know what caused them to pull back, but they did.

Mr. COSTA. Well, my time has expired. More to discussed, and thank you for your testimoneys today.

Chairman MAST. The chair now recognizes Representative Issa.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you.

I want to thank Mr. Lawler for trading places with me and allowing me to go a little early.

You know, this has been interesting because I have been in and out of here, but I have kept it on the television if I have had to be out.

We seem to have an agreement to disagree because I think we agree on the following: At least some of the programs that each of you have seen when you have gotten into it are wasteful, unnecessary, and/or would be better reprogrammed to some other use.

Can we all agree on that?

Mr. YOHO. Agree.

Mr. ISSA. So are we dealing more with a stylistic complaint here today that this administration has said stop, go back to baseline, justify your programs, and we will restart versus, as Andrew did, you said 80 programs were stopped in a very short period of time, and that money was reprogrammed to better use? Many of the programs that were talked about here—and some of them did turn out to be State Department. So let's assume for a moment that we are really talking about State and USAID and, for that matter, maybe the EXIM Bank, maybe a lot of places that disburse our funds have been used for purposes that the new administration rightfully objects to and has the power or the desire to reprogram.

Can we all agree that that is the case?

[nonverbal response.]

Mr. ISSA. So now I am going to ask a couple of questions. One, earlier there was this question that I objected to based on my 25 years of experience here, and it was, why did we need a special IG for Afghanistan and why did we need a special IG for Iraq? And I am going to answer that for you folks. And if any of you really disagree, happy to—since the answer came from there as though we didn't need it, these were unique, high expense areas, like Ukraine is today, in which it was very difficult to audit and certainly difficult for one IG that does the whole State Department to do so.

Can we all agree that that was the reason the prompting of the special IGs?

Mr. YOHO. I would agree with that.

Mr. PRIMORAC. Yes.

Mr. ISSA. Okay.

Mr. NATSIOS. I don't agree with you, but—

Mr. ISSA. No, no. But that was the reason for prompting. You would agree with that?

Mr. NATSIOS. That is the reason for it, yes.

Mr. ISSA. So you disagreed that it made sense, even though those IGs found time and time again things and brought them to Congress so we could consider whether to change the programs. And I am going to ask you, not rhetorically, but directly, because I believe we will need special IGs from time to time in the future. Do you really believe that we would have gotten the same level of oversight if we had simply had one IG sitting at State Department rather than somebody who had a more direct mandate and less politically motivated because those special IGs transcended administration after administration?

Mr. NATSIOS. We had three audits from three different inspectors—the GAO, the special IG, and then the regular AID—on the same program, at the same country, at the same time. That is nuts.

Mr. ISSA. Okay. So your point for us in the future so we can do our job better is, if we have two IGs with overlapping, try to deconflict them so you only get one request from one of them?

Mr. NATSIOS. Yes.

Mr. ISSA. I agree with that. But I am going to ask you a followup question in the limited time I have left.

During the entire 4 years—because the other day we had this big question about IGs, 19 of them being dismissed and they are going to be replaced. During your time in Bush 2, in W. Bush, you had an IG and you had a second IG, but you didn't have an IG for the entire—for the State Department for the entire period of time that Hillary Clinton was the Secretary of State.

So if we had not had a special IG that transcended that, Hillary Clinton would have had 4 years with no IG looking at what was going on in a very expansive—two expansive combat zones. Isn't that true?

Mr. NATSIOS. You are correct, but we also didn't have an IG—I have to say this—for State during the Bush administration. I am not criticizing my own President, but State Department does not like IGs.

Mr. ISSA. So during the last administration—I left Congress for 2 years to work for President Trump and was heading the Trade Development Agency, so I have been on your side of the fence advocating for the good work that an agency can do.

But my question to all of you is, don't we need more oversight so we don't have each administration coming in and saying, halt, we need to look at this? And wouldn't it have been better if, before we got to this point, Congress had been more aware sooner of the need for the kinds of changes we are hearing about here today?

Mr. YOHO. I have to agree 100 percent with you. You can get it report after report after report, but if you do not act on it, the report is worthless.

Mr. ISSA. Okay. I want to thank all of you.

And, again, I thank my colleague from New York and yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Issa.

The chair now recognizes Representative Lawler.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Chairman.

How many of you use some form of online banking and get email notices for your credit card statements?

Have you ever had the moment where you get the email notice, you open it, and you look and go, Oh, my God, what did I spend this month? And then you go check the online portal, and you look and you see the itemization, and you go, Oh, wow, I didn't realize that.

That is what has happened here, very simply. USAID has an important mission. And, unfortunately, they have gone askew on that mission. PEPFAR is a program that I have been in strong support of, and 60 percent of the program is administered by USAID. It is a vital program.

Humanitarian assistance—and when you think humanitarian assistance, you think food, you think shelter, you think supplies, medical supplies. You think testing for different types of diseases. Unfortunately, as we peel back the onion here, we are finding more and more that billions of dollars of taxpayer money are being misappropriated.

And so what Secretary Rubio has done by putting a 90-day freeze in place, per President Trump's executive orders, is to have a comprehensive review. Now, during that review, they have granted a waiver for lifesaving treatment and care and humanitarian assistance, inclusive of PEPFAR and food, and that is what they should do.

Now, some of my Democratic colleagues will say, Under what authority are they doing this? Well, section 7063 of the 2024 appropriations gave the Secretary the authority to do this. And I would remind my colleagues that, under the Clinton administration, Madeleine Albright tried to bring USAID under the control of the State Department.

So this is not some new concept. And, certainly, USAID wouldn't have been in the crosshairs as much as it has been had the people working there abided by the order issued by the Secretary of State. Instead, they thought their judgment should be substituted and that, in fact, they as bureaucrats unelected, have more authority than the elected President, Congress, or the confirmed Secretary of State.

Mr. LAWLER. Now, when it comes to oversight, we had Samantha Power in here last Congress. We asked her numerous questions. We asked her for information. And as often the case, when Congress as a coequal branch ask for information, the executive tries to stymie that. And because it was a Republican-controlled House, the Democratic White House and Democrat-controlled USAID did not want to cooperate with these investigations and requests for legitimate information.

And so, frankly, in 3 to 4 weeks, DOGE has gotten more information than Congress ever could because the executive oftentimes refuses to cooperate.

And for those saying there is no transparency here, how is it not transparent? You are hearing about it. It is being released. It is being reported upon. This isn't happening in the middle of the night.

Now, one of the things we have uncovered is the fact that a congressionally appropriated fund, the Nita Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act, and Nita Lowey being one of my predecessors, is a \$250 million fund controlled by USAID. And it was set up for the purpose of cultural dialog.

And USAID, under this program, gave \$3 million to tomorrow's youth, and ahead of that has produced numerous antisemitic, anti-Israeli songs as part of this cultural dialog.

Now, given what has happened in the Middle East and given what happened on October 7, do any of you actually believe that is a good use of American taxpayer dollars, to promote antisemitic rap songs in the Middle East?

Mr. YOHO. Those are criminal activities that need to stop.

Mr. PRIMORAC. I would add that any institution, university, or otherwise that is engaged in antisemitic behavior or stop it on their campuses should be disqualified from getting any kind of foreign aid.

Mr. YOHO. Agreed.

Mr. NATSIOS. I agree, too.

Mr. LAWLER. Well, that is what we are talking about, and that is what we are dealing with. And for those saying, where is Congress? We are here. We are having this hearing. We are providing this oversight. That is our role, but it is the role of the executive to manage the agencies and departments, and that is exactly what they are doing.

And, frankly, they have provided more information to Congress in the last few weeks than Congress ever got under the Biden administration. And the Biden administration is the one that approved that \$3 million to go to an antisemitic rap artist to promote Jewish hatred.

That is what we are talking about. That is why the 90-day pause was put in place, and that is why this nonsense needs to end.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Lawler.

Representative Jackson was hoping—he was advocating for you to get another 5 to 10 minutes, but I told him we have to move on to Representative Mackenzie, our final person for questions.

You are now recognized.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I appreciate the hearing that we are having today because it relates to some of the biggest challenges that our country faces today. And first is we have an economic crisis in this country. Millions of Americans are still struggling to make ends meet. We have \$36 trillion of debt. We have a \$1.8 trillion deficit. And so it is incumbent upon us as Members of Congress to scrutinize every tax dollar that is spent.

So I am a little surprised when some of our colleagues here today want to diminish the fact that we are talking about \$40 billion. It is still \$40 billion of taxpayer money that we are talking about.

And so USAID does provide, in some cases, very good services that advance our interests around the world and help others, and that is something that we want to maybe continue, but that should come before Congress.

At the same time, we have seen illegal immigration devastate our country. That is the other big challenge that I believe our country is facing. We have had a wide open southern border where the Biden administration took their executive powers and used them to not build a border wall. There were funds that were appropriated through Congress to build a border wall. I was down on the southern border. I saw the equipment laying by the side of the border not being built. And so Mexican drug cartels were bringing in weapons and human trafficking and drugs right across our border, and there was nothing being done about it.

So those are two of the biggest challenges that we face.

We have heard about the absolute waste that is going on in USAID today, total waste of taxpayer dollars, adding to our debt and to our deficit. At the same time, we have seen USAID has actually made some kind of attempt to stem illegal immigration, but it seems to have totally failed.

And so I want to bring up, in 2021, USAID announced Centroamerica Local, a 5-year \$300 million initiative to pay local organizations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to address the, quote, root causes of migration. The GAO found that this initiative did not require training of staff to detect and reduce fraud risks because USAID did not actually regulate the training of agencywide individuals.

So we have money that is going to this cause. At the same time, we have people who in this chamber still want to fight us on building a border wall and border security. In fact, many of the Members that were part of the longest shutdown in U.S. Government history over a border wall are still here, and we still hear about them saying that they may potentially shut down the government.

So I would like to ask the members of our panel today if they have thoughts on is the USAID initiative to stem the root causes of migration the right way to go or is building a border wall the right way to go?

Mr. PRIMORAC. I have written on this, and we have looked at all of the numbers, and the amount of money that we spend, no matter how much, has absolutely no impact on migration. It is having a firmly sealed, enclosed border. That is what the solution is.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Well, thank you. I appreciate that response, and I agree with you. And so I look forward to, as we move through this Congress, providing funding for a border wall that will secure our country. And also, I look forward to scrutinizing every single dollar of the billions that are going out through USAID for absolute waste and programs which are not effective or efficient in actually achieving their mission. And so that is the prerogative of Congress.

But the reason that we are having this hearing today is because of the executive branch shining a light on all of this waste and inefficiency and so we can work in collaboration with an administra-

tion to provide for our American citizens safety, security, actually protecting and spending taxpayer dollars in an efficient and effective fashion, not putting our children and grandchildren in trillions of dollars of debt. I believe that we can do all of that, and we are going to do that this Congress and with this administration.

So with what, I will yield back my time to the chairman, but I want to thank all of our panelists and everybody for today's hearing.

Chairman MAST. I thank the representative from Pennsylvania. I am now going to recognize Representative Jackson for any closing remarks that you may have.

Mr. JACKSON OF ILLINOIS. I would like to thank you so much, Chairman Mast.

On behalf of Ranking Member Meeks, I would like to say we very much thank you for the time that you all have spent with us today, your candidness, your forthright, and the amount of time and sacrifice that you have made in not making your bodies more comfortable earlier in the program.

So continued success. And I know we have many things in common. We will have continued success together, and we are going to continue to work for the best outcome for our Nation and our great people.

With that, I yield back, Chairman Mast. Great to work alongside you, sir.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Jackson.

I also thank the witnesses for their testimony on this important topic today. I have no doubt that we will be speaking on this further.

President Trump, in my opinion, is absolutely making America immeasurably stronger by gutting USAID and gutting the State Department forthcoming. He is making it clear that there is no more stupid social engineering programs that will continue. No more comic books for \$50,000 or \$50,000 trans operas. No more \$800,000 job fairs in Bangladesh for trans individuals specifically in a country where the average monthly wage is \$220. These things come to an end.

Asking the questions, are Americans better because that dollar came out of their pocket and went to these programs or not? That is a bar that we have to hold ourselves to. Should somebody working today have kept those dollars in their pocket instead of sending their dollars to programs like those? There is not a more important question that we could ask.

Our President Trump and Secretary Rubio and Elon Musk and his team, are they eliminating waste? Absolutely, yes. Are they making the system accountable where the buck stops with Secretary Rubio? Yes.

Secretary Rubio is, in fact, encouraging important lifesaving programs to continue. America is significantly stronger every minute the wasteful programs are ended, and we are weakened every minute that they are allowed to continue.

We gave the Biden administration and my Democrat colleagues the chance to work on oversight. One easy example that I worked on personally would be the expansion of atheism in Nepal with \$500,000 grants. My colleagues played the game; admit nothing,

deny and lie about all of it, and make counter accusations. Even with all of the documents laid directly in front of them, that is what took place. We tried. They wouldn't do it.

I know Americans are not stupid. They know there is no value for them in a \$100,000 DEI survey in Ghana. They know that there is not value for them spending \$520 million to pay ESG consultants to teach people in Africa about climate change.

Also, what is extremely telling to all of us is the amount of grant recipients who are not asking for waivers. They know that the gig is up and do not even want to try and justify what it is that they had been doing, the way that they were grifting off of Americans who are going to work each and every day.

What is not surprising is that my colleagues have tried to lie to the American people saying that people are dying. We have heard that argument before again and again. My colleagues have said about 10 times at least in this hearing that there is an elderly lady in Thailand who died because they couldn't get her the oxygen she needed because America cutoff aid.

Let's tell the truth about what really happened. The NGO who was providing oxygen, International Rescue Committee, known as IRC, their CEO, David Miliband, has a salary of about \$1.2 million a year. That is the theft, the larceny that is going on at USAID, where the grants, while even possibly lifesaving grants, are paying for high salaries for former British members of Parliament.

Parts of PEPFAR have been approved for waiver because it provides lifesaving medication to people who need it. Certainly not the abortions they were conducting. But that took Secretary Rubio shutting down the program, reviewing the BS that was going on, and correcting it.

Combating the spread of Ebola has been approved for waiver because it is lifesaving. World Food Program aid in Haiti has been approved for waiver because it is lifesaving. What hasn't been approved is the waste, the grift, and the larceny.

Now, despite the arguments that we have had today, we do agree that aid can be effective and that aid can advance America's interests, but the countries that receive aid will not receive it if they are taking the United States of America and its people for granted. And it will be lifesaving aid, period, not social engineering.

In that, I will ask that members of the committee, if they have additional questions for the witnesses, that you do respond in writing.

Pursuant to committee rules, all members may have 5 days to submit those statements and questions and extraneous materials for the record, subject to the length limitations.

Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:14 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD



**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

Brian J. Mast (R-FL), Chairman

February 7, 2025

Revised

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held at 8:30 a.m. in room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing is available by live webcast on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>.

DATE: Thursday, February 13, 2025

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

LOCATION: 2172 RHOB

SUBJECT: The USAID Betrayal

WITNESSES: The Honorable Ted Yoho
Former U.S. Representative
Florida's 3rd Congressional District

* ~~Mr. William "Bill" Steiger~~
~~Public Policy Fellow~~
~~Wilson Center~~
~~Former Chief of Staff~~
~~U.S. Agency for International Development~~

* Max Primorac
Senior Research Fellow
Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom
The Heritage Foundation

* The Honorable Andrew Natsios
Former Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development

*NOTE: Witnesses added/changed

**NOTE: Witnesses may be added.

By Direction of the Chair

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-226-8467 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Thursday Date February 13 Room 2172 Rayburn

Starting Time 8:34 Ending Time 13:14

Recesses 2 (to 11) (to) (to) (to) (to) (to)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Mast, Rep. Lawler

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

The USAID Betrayal

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Attached

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. McCormick

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Attached

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 13:14

Meg Wagner
Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

Committee on Foreign Affairs
119th Congress

ATTENDANCE

Meeting on: The USAID Betrayal

Date: 2/13/2025

Representative	Present	Absent	Representative	Present	Absent
Chairman Mast	X		RM Meeks	X	
Rep. McCaul	X		Rep. Sherman	X	
Rep. Smith	X		Rep. Connolly	X	
Rep. Wilson	X		Rep. Keating	X	
Rep. Perry	X		Rep. Bera	X	
Rep. Issa	X		Rep. Castro	X	
Rep. Burchett	X		Rep. Titus	X	
Rep. Green	X		Rep. Lieu	X	
Rep. Barr	X		Rep. Jacobs	X	
Rep. Jackson	X		Rep. Cherfilus-McCormick	X	
Rep. Kim	X		Rep. Stanton	X	
Rep. Salazar	X		Rep. Moskowitz	X	
Rep. Huizenga	X		Rep. Jackson	X	
Rep. Radewagen	X		Rep. Kamlager-Dove	X	
Rep. Davidson	X		Rep. Costa	X	
Rep. Baird	X		Rep. Amo	X	
Rep. Kean	X		Rep. Mfume	X	
Rep. Lawler	X		Rep. Jayapal	X	
Rep. Mills		X	Rep. Latimer	X	
Rep. Self	X		Rep. Olszewski	X	
Rep. Zinke		X	Rep. Johnson	X	
Rep. Moylan	X		Rep. McBride	X	
Rep. Luna	X				
Rep. Shreve	X				
Rep. Biggs	X				
Rep. Baumgartner	X				
Rep. Mackenzie	X				



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. Agency for International Development

**Oversight of USAID-Funded Humanitarian
Assistance Programming Impacted by Staffing
Reductions and Pause on Foreign Assistance
February 10, 2025**



Introduction

The United States Agency for International Development [Office of Inspector General](#) (USAID OIG), through its investigations and audits, conducts independent oversight of USAID's programs and personnel. Our [oversight work](#) includes reviews of the Agency's controls over its humanitarian assistance funding. For example, in July 2024, we published a [report](#) identifying shortcomings and vulnerabilities in USAID's oversight mechanisms to prevent diversion of aid to U.S.-designated terrorist organizations in Gaza. Similarly, in late January 2025, we issued a [memorandum](#) highlighting challenges and potential "fixes" to ensure enhanced accountability of foreign assistance funding, including humanitarian assistance programs funded by USAID but implemented by United Nations agencies.

In this alert, we identify risks and challenges to the safeguarding and distribution of USAID's \$8.2 billion in obligated but undisbursed humanitarian assistance funds following (1) the Department of State's pause on foreign assistance programs and (2) subsequent personnel actions by USAID that have substantially reduced the operational capacity of its Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

Background

On January 24, 2025, the Secretary of State ordered a pause in all new obligations of foreign assistance funding pending an 85-day review of United States foreign assistance programs.¹ The Secretary additionally ordered contracting and grant officers to issue stop-work orders for all existing foreign assistance awards.² As such, all USAID programs were suspended, including those with funds already obligated and disbursed.³

The Secretary's January 24 order contained an initial waiver for "emergency food assistance." Four days later, the Secretary issued a waiver for disbursements under existing "lifesaving humanitarian assistance" programs, defined as "life-saving medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence assistance, as well as supplies and reasonable administrative costs as necessary." USAID guidance on implementation of the pause and subsequent waivers also included a directive for staff to refrain from external communications outside of "communications necessary to implement the pause."⁴ Moreover, Agency officials' plans to place more than 90 percent of the USAID workforce on paid administrative leave effective February 9 were paused for at least a week by a court order issued on February 7.⁵

¹ 25 STATE 6828. The Secretary of State issued this order consistent with the President's [Executive Order](#) on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid.

² 25 STATE 6828.

³ Pre-existing programs falling under a waiver were eligible for payments; however, USAID staff and implementers state that the uncertainty and lack of communication surrounding the scope of the waivers has caused payment delays and decisions by aid organizations to suspend work.

⁴ "Clarification on Implementing the President's Executive Order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid," FAQs from Acting Administrator Jason Gray, USAID, January 26, 2025.

⁵ "Update on the Path Forward," Office of the Administrator, USAID, February 8, 2025.

This alert is intended to raise risk-related concerns related to USAID-funded humanitarian assistance and is based on information provided by USAID staff, implementers, government officials, and prior OIG oversight work. In producing this alert, we followed Quality Standards as required by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

Personnel Actions Reduce the Operational Capacity of USAID Staff Responsible for Humanitarian Assistance Programs

USAID employs approximately 10,000 staff, with approximately two-thirds posted at the Agency's more than 60 missions overseas.⁶ BHA is the Agency bureau responsible for providing humanitarian assistance—including food, water, shelter, emergency healthcare, sanitation and hygiene, and critical nutrition services. According to BHA, prior to the personnel actions over the past 2 weeks, the bureau employed approximately 1,089 staff: 741 U.S. Direct Hires and Personal Services Contractors (197 posted overseas with the remaining 544 posted in Washington, DC), and 348 Institutional Support Contractors who, while employed by private contractors, essentially function like regular staff.

On February 4, 2025, USAID notified its entire workforce that they would be placed on paid administrative leave beginning February 8 with limited exceptions. At the same time, BHA staff began reporting sudden loss of access to USAID email and information technology (IT) systems. On February 7, based on disabled user account information, BHA leadership identified approximately 535 Direct Hires and Personal Service Contractors who had been placed on administrative leave but expected the number of sidelined staff to increase to just over 600 later that day. Hundreds of BHA's Institutional Support Contractors were furloughed the week before by their private employer. Collectively, executed and planned personnel actions would remove, temporarily or permanently, approximately 90 percent of BHA's worldwide workforce.

Existing waivers issued by the Department of State account for lifesaving humanitarian assistance programming should allow the flow of what BHA identifies as \$8.2 billion in undisbursed obligations. However, BHA staff reductions, together with a lack of clarity about the scope of the humanitarian assistance waivers and the extent of permissible communications between BHA staff and its implementers, has significantly impacted USAID's capacity to disburse and safeguard its humanitarian assistance programming. Specifically, USAID's existing oversight controls—albeit with previously identified shortcomings⁷—are now largely nonoperational given these recent directives and personnel actions. Moreover, the February 7 court order that paused additional staff reductions⁸ does not obviate, at this time, concerns regarding the capacity of BHA staff to work with implementing partners to protect and distribute humanitarian assistance commodities and conduct vital oversight of taxpayer-funded programs.

⁶ Congressional Research Service, "U.S. Agency for International Development: An Overview," January 6, 2025. USAID FY 2022 Agency Financial Report.

⁷ USAID OIG, "[Assessment of USAID's Oversight Policies to Prevent the Diversion of Assistance to Hamas and Other Terrorist Organizations](#)," July 25, 2024. USAID OIG, "[Memorandum: Challenges to Accountability and Transparency Within USAID-Funded Programs](#)," January 28, 2025.

⁸ *American Foreign Service Association v. Donald Trump*, Civil Action No. 1:25-cv-352 (D.D.C. February 7, 2025) (granting [temporary restraining order](#)).

Disruptions to the Delivery of Humanitarian Aid Place U.S.-Funded Commodities at Risk of Diversion and Spoilage

While initial guidance following the pause in foreign assistance funding provided a waiver for emergency food assistance, shipments of in-kind food assistance have been delayed around the world. USAID-funded implementers face conflicting instructions, and USAID staff express concerns about potentially circumventing the restrictions on external communications by providing clarifying guidance. According to USAID staff, this uncertainty put more than \$489 million of food assistance at ports, in transit, and in warehouses at risk of spoilage, unanticipated storage needs, and diversion. As a routine matter, USAID pre-positions emergency food aid in BHA warehouses around the world, including approximately 29,000 metric tons in Houston, Texas, valued at nearly \$39 million, more than 40,000 metric tons in a warehouse in Djibouti in East Africa valued at \$40 million, and over 10,000 metric tons in a South African warehouse valued at \$10 million. All BHA warehouses have pre-positioned emergency food aid commodities supplied by U.S. manufacturers and American farmers, as required by law.

Moreover, USAID staff identified over 500,000 additional metric tons of food currently at sea or ready to be shipped. The food is sourced from American farmers pursuant to Title II Food for Peace (the longest standing permanent program for international in-kind food aid, administered by USAID) and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funding. Because this funding source was not included under the Secretary's emergency food assistance waiver,⁹ these commodities were held in limbo, subjecting them to spoilage, unanticipated storage needs, and potential diversion.

Recent Directives Have Curtailed USAID's Ability to Vet Humanitarian Assistance Awards for Potential Terrorist Ties and Monitor Aid Deliveries in High-Risk Environments

The pause in funding and reductions in staff, including over 90 percent of BHA's workforce furloughed or placed on administrative leave, has undermined two key oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability over humanitarian assistance funding: partner vetting and third-party monitoring.

Partner Vetting

USAID describes partner vetting as a risk-mitigation tool to "ensure that American taxpayer funds do not benefit terrorists and their supporters." Currently, partner vetting is required for programming in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen where designated terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS, and Ansar Allah (also known as the Houthis) operate. Before the Agency awards a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement in these locations, the proposed awardee must submit to USAID data needed to vet the organization and its key personnel. The same vetting must be undertaken before an aid

⁹ Reports indicate that food assistance under Title II programs has recently resumed. See U.S. Department of Agriculture, "[USDA Global Food Security Programs Continue](#)" (press release), February 7, 2025; Senator Jerry Moran's [post on X](#), February 8, 2025; World Food Programme [post on X](#), February 9, 2025.

organization issues a subaward. While USAID OIG has previously identified gaps in the scope of partner vetting,¹⁰ USAID staff have reported that the counter-terrorism vetting unit supporting humanitarian assistance programming has in recent days been told not to report to work (because staff have been furloughed or placed on administrative leave) and thus cannot conduct **any** partner vetting. This gap leaves USAID susceptible to inadvertently funding entities or salaries of individuals associated with U.S.-designated terrorist organizations.

Third-Party Monitors

Third-party monitoring¹¹ (TPM) is a mechanism USAID utilizes for oversight of humanitarian assistance programs, particularly in dangerous locations where its staff cannot safely travel. Site visits conducted by USAID-contracted TPMs help USAID verify if the delivery of physical goods align with self-reporting by aid organizations. TPM field monitors conduct simple, standardized surveys and interviews with recipients to check if USAID programming was delivered as intended. The January 24 pause on foreign assistance programming suspended all TPM contracts and activities, including in high-risk environments such as Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti, Gaza, Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia, Syria, and Venezuela, impacting another layer of oversight over U.S. taxpayer-provided aid.

Staff Reductions Have Constrained USAID's Ability to Receive and Respond to Allegations of Misconduct Involving Humanitarian Assistance Programming

The Secretary of State granted waivers for emergency food assistance and lifesaving humanitarian assistance. However, uncertainties about the scope of the waivers, the degree of permissible communication between USAID staff and aid organizations, the sudden dismissal of contract staff, and the placement of staff on paid administrative leave has limited BHA's ability to receive and respond to allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, or diversion of humanitarian aid.

As noted in our July 2024 [advisory](#), USAID relies on aid organizations to self-report allegations of misconduct, consistent with their mandatory award obligations. Such mandatory reporting—particularly in nonpermissive environments such as Gaza and Ukraine where USAID's ability to travel to program sites is limited—enables USAID to take remedial measures to modify or in some cases terminate programming experiencing unacceptable losses. For example, in 2023 a USAID-funded nongovernmental organization (NGO) reported to USAID that food intended for families in the al-Hol displaced persons camp in northeast Syria had been diverted by the Asayish (Internal Security Forces of North and East Syria) and al-Hol camp administration to themselves. In response to this disclosure, USAID disallowed the relevant costs submitted by the NGO and undertook additional remedial measures to protect programming in Syria.

Further, USAID OIG has previously [reported](#) that USAID-funded commodities, supplies, and equipment in high-risk environments are susceptible to diversion to terrorist organizations,

¹⁰ In July 2024, USAID OIG issued an [advisory](#) that identified the lack of vetting of UN agencies as a major vulnerability in USAID's partner vetting program.

¹¹ TPM includes the systematic collection of performance monitoring data by a contractor that has not been directly involved in the activity being monitored, either as a prime or subawardee.

such as Hamas. Over the past 2 weeks, staffing shortages and limitations on communications with aid organizations stemming from the cessation of U.S. foreign assistance have limited USAID's ability to receive, react to, and report allegations of diversion, all of which impacts the Agency's mandatory reporting obligations to Congress.¹² Additionally, according to BHA staff, the placement of most of its staff on administrative leave is preventing the bureau from responding to USAID OIG audit requests, reports of investigative findings, and other routine OIG oversight inquiries.

Conclusion

USAID OIG's independent oversight of USAID's humanitarian assistance programs over the years has identified significant [challenges](#) and offered recommendations to improve Agency programming to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. Our longstanding concerns about existing USAID oversight mechanisms [persist](#). However, recent widespread staffing reductions across the Agency, particularly within BHA, coupled with uncertainty about the scope of foreign assistance waivers and permissible communications with implementers, has degraded USAID's ability to distribute and safeguard taxpayer-funded humanitarian assistance.

For more information on USAID OIG's work or to report allegations of fraud, waste, corruption, and abuse, please visit our website at oig.usaid.gov.

On the cover: USAID pallets with emergency food bars for Syrian refugees. Courtesy World Food Programme, 2013.

¹² Section 7015(j), P.L. 118-47, Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024: "The Secretary of State and USAID Administrator, as applicable, shall promptly inform the appropriate congressional committees of each instance in which funds appropriated by this Act for assistance have been diverted or destroyed, to include the type and amount of assistance, a description of the incident and parties involved, and an explanation of the response of the Department of State or USAID, as appropriate."

New Straits Times 3/19/1993
Malaysia

Why condoms cannot always be trusted

By Judith Perera

UP to 13 per cent of the six billion condoms used each year break during use, says a two-year study by the US organisation, Family Health International (FHI).

At one time failure of a condom could result in unwanted pregnancy or an unpleasant, but curable, sexually transmitted disease. As AIDS takes hold world-wide, condom reliability becomes more vital.

The study identifies three stages which affect whether a condom will break during use: manufacture, storage and use. Problems can arise at all of these stages.

Testing is quite stringent at the manufacturing stage, especially by the major organisations responsible for distributing condoms to the Third World.

USAID is the biggest donor, followed by the United Nations Population Fund, the International Planned Parenthood Foundation, the World Health Organisation, the World Bank and European Community.

USAID distributed around 800 million condoms last year.

The reliability of new condoms is checked by testing samples from each consignment.

The main tests are for water leakage (expanding the condom to four times its size with water to test for pinholes), tensile strength (cutting out a middle section and stretching it to breaking point), and air inflation (inflating it with air until it bursts).

FHI believes tests for water leakage and air inflation are the most reliable.

By conducting air burst tests on new, old and used condoms, FHI estimates that any condom with an air burst volume below 11 litres is likely to break during use.

five years old.

In many cases the five-year rule is not enough. Condoms in store for two to five years should be tested regularly, says FHI.

Only this can detect deterioration, which is not visible.

Even if storage conditions are good, management of supplies must minimise the length of time condoms are kept in store.

This requires estimating accurately how many will be needed in the coming months and ensuring that the oldest are distributed first.

Based on regular checks around the world of USAID-supplied condoms held in store, FHI has developed a quality control measure, the CQI — Condom Quality Index — based on air burst test data.

Those tested are given a score from 0 to 100. Recent CQI tests on three lots of condoms stored in Trinidad produced scores of 76 (recommended for unconditional release), 47 (for immediate use only) and 30 (not suitable for use).

Even after it is released from storage as reliable, the condom may still fail because of improper use.

Studies by FHI over the last two years in eight countries found condoms breaking at rates of 0 to 13 per cent.

They identified four main reasons for breakage: incorrect method of putting on condoms, use of oil-based lubricants, re-use, and duration or intensity of coitus.

The studies identified various instances where condoms were put on incorrectly.

These included being stretched and put on "like a sock" being tested for holes before use by inflating with air, and failure to roll the condom down over

The main difficulty is lack of standardisation as companies and organisations use different tests and different criteria for descriptions such as "extra strength".

Usually, new condoms get stronger during the first six months after manufacture — a process called "curing".

Then they gradually deteriorate, and even under the best storage conditions will be unsafe for use after five years.

Three factors affect the rate of deterioration, says FHI — packaging, storage conditions and management of supplies.

To protect them from ultra light, humidity, and air pollutants (especially ozone) which cause deterioration, condoms are normally packed in plastic or foil.

Researchers at Southern California School of Medicine found that condoms exposed to pollutants found in urban smog were unusable within 48 hours.

The pressure required to burst them was only 44 per cent of that needed to burst control samples.

In hot, humid conditions stored condoms gradually deteriorate as they do in salty, humid conditions found near the sea in some countries.

The results have already confirmed the need to protect stores from heat, humidity, sunlight and pollutants.

Cartons should also be regularly inspected for signs of damage and batch dates checked to ensure that they are no more than

the penis.

Use of oil-based and silicone-based lubricants are just not available in some countries.

Lubricants used included animal and vegetable oils, petroleum jelly, mineral oil, and various lotions, all of which cause the latex to deteriorate.

Although latex condoms are designed for single use, the FHI studies found that they were often washed and re-used.

In other cases, although the single use instructions were observed they were interpreted as applying to a single period of sexual activity, even if this included several ejaculations.

Breakage was also linked to duration and intensity of intercourse.

The studies found that although the normal duration was one to ten minutes, in some instances intercourse may last up to 30 minutes, during which time the man may withdraw and rest but not put on a new condom.

Problems also arose during vigorous intercourse after prolonged absence from sexual partners.

The World Health Organisation hopes that breakage during use may be reduced in coming years as instruction for correct use are now included during advisory discussions at family planning clinics and sexually transmitted disease clinics.

Various organisations, including FHI, have produced posters showing correct use of condoms. — Gemini News

I SUBMIT THIS FOR THE RECORD

Testimony to the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs
Feb 13, 2025

Submitted by Rev. Eugene Cho

Members of the Committee, I am Reverend Eugene Cho, President and CEO of Bread for the World. I want to start by thanking you both, Chairman Brian Mast and Ranking Member Gregory Meeks, for your years of support for critical food assistance programs. Your leadership on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and prior support for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been fundamental to addressing hunger, and we are grateful for your bipartisan support for this work. We look forward to continuing to work with you both in strengthening bipartisan support for food assistance.

Bread for the World is a Christian advocacy organization with a network of 300,000 supporters – advocates, faith leaders, churches, and partners – in every U.S. congressional district that works to address hunger, poverty, and malnutrition in our country and around the world. For five decades, Bread's network has supported pragmatic international aid programs that balance the needs of vulnerable populations with U.S. national security, policy, and economic interests.

We are deeply concerned by the order temporarily pausing new and existing U.S. foreign assistance programs and urge an immediate end to this interruption of services as the Administration completes its necessary review of these critical programs. Bread believes that addressing and advocating for global hunger is a moral and strategic priority.

Bread affirms the need to ensure U.S. international aid programs are free from waste, fraud, and abuse, and are managed in the most effective and efficient manner possible. At less than one percent of our annual federal budget, this aid not only helps our neighbors abroad, it keeps America safe; that is a tangible return on a very modest investment. Maintaining our unique efforts stabilizes nations and keeps away bad actors.

U.S. international aid, particularly historic USAID and USDA programs, provide critically important food assistance to tens of millions of people worldwide. This pause in funding will result in malnourished children and pregnant and lactating mothers dying. Families will struggle to feed their children. Communities will face near-famine conditions. Desperation caused by these circumstances will likely exacerbate conflict and instability. **I urge you to call upon Secretary Rubio to ensure U.S. international aid programs are fully funded, the funds are readily accessible, and waiver requests are swiftly processed. I also urge that the livelihoods of dedicated Americans impacted by the pause are quickly restored.**

Pausing aid has immediate and ongoing impacts, including:

- 200,000+ American jobs supporting US foreign assistance programs have been lost
- 14,000 American contractors have lost income due to the closure of USAID contracts
- \$65 billion in U.S. exports to USAID recipient countries will be lost annually
- 30 million people are at risk of losing access to clean water

In specific countries:

- In Niger, over one million children will not receive primary healthcare including malnutrition screening and treatment, diagnosis and treatment of childhood illnesses, and immunizations for diseases including measles and polio.
- In the Philippines, over 30,000 children no longer have access to critical child protection systems and, as a result, are exposed to risks of abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence, as well as recruitment from nonstate armed groups.
- In Ethiopia, almost 50,000 women and girls, including some who are pregnant and lactating, will be at risk of potentially fatal malnutrition.
- In Turkey, almost 22,000 people will lose help with shelter, protection from violence, and self-sufficiency, leaving them at the mercy of extreme weather and hunger.

When foreign aid is suddenly paused and lifesaving work ends, millions become vulnerable to humanitarian crises that cause conflicts and instability – which in turn damages the international reputation of the U.S. While the U.S. has historically been a leading provider of humanitarian assistance, the inability to effectively help vulnerable populations meet even a most basic need – access to food – raises serious concerns about the U.S. commitment and capacity to uphold its leadership in this field.

Scripture reminds us in Matthew 25:35, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink.” May God continue to strengthen and guide you in heeding this call and fulfilling your great mission and noble work.

As we, in Congress, work on behalf of the American people, I am disappointed by the repeated misuse and disrespect of the US taxpayer by bureaucrats at USAID who, for decades, have put their personal political agenda ahead of fiscal responsibility and our national security interests.

All of this had come to a head in the last month when President Trump finally had the courage to say that the State Department and USAID had utterly lost sight of their mission. We must reassess in order to better prioritize these dollars.

The current state of affairs is that excessive and wasteful spending exists within the agency in every corner of the world. Programming from bureaucrats focused on a radical liberal agenda oftentimes runs counter to local norms and, frankly, America's norms, ultimately leading to lifesaving aid being taken out of the hands of people in need.

I am not here to say that all USAID programs are inadequate. Some programs save countless lives day after day. For example, in Burma, a USAID-funded program provides an early warning system for airstrikes on Chin communities, who face the constant threat of civilian bombing from the brutal junta. As someone who represents a large Chin diaspora in my district, this is a valiant program.

On the flip side of this conflict, however, in Bangladesh, where hundreds of thousands of legitimate refugees are escaping brutal torture, rape, and death from the junta in Burma, USAID thought it was a worthwhile endeavor to spend \$77,000 to host an annual job fair for transgender individuals and \$81,000 to empower women to take part in political life.

Again, all of this while people are starving in Cox's Bazar (*cock's bazaar*). This is counterproductive to our mission.

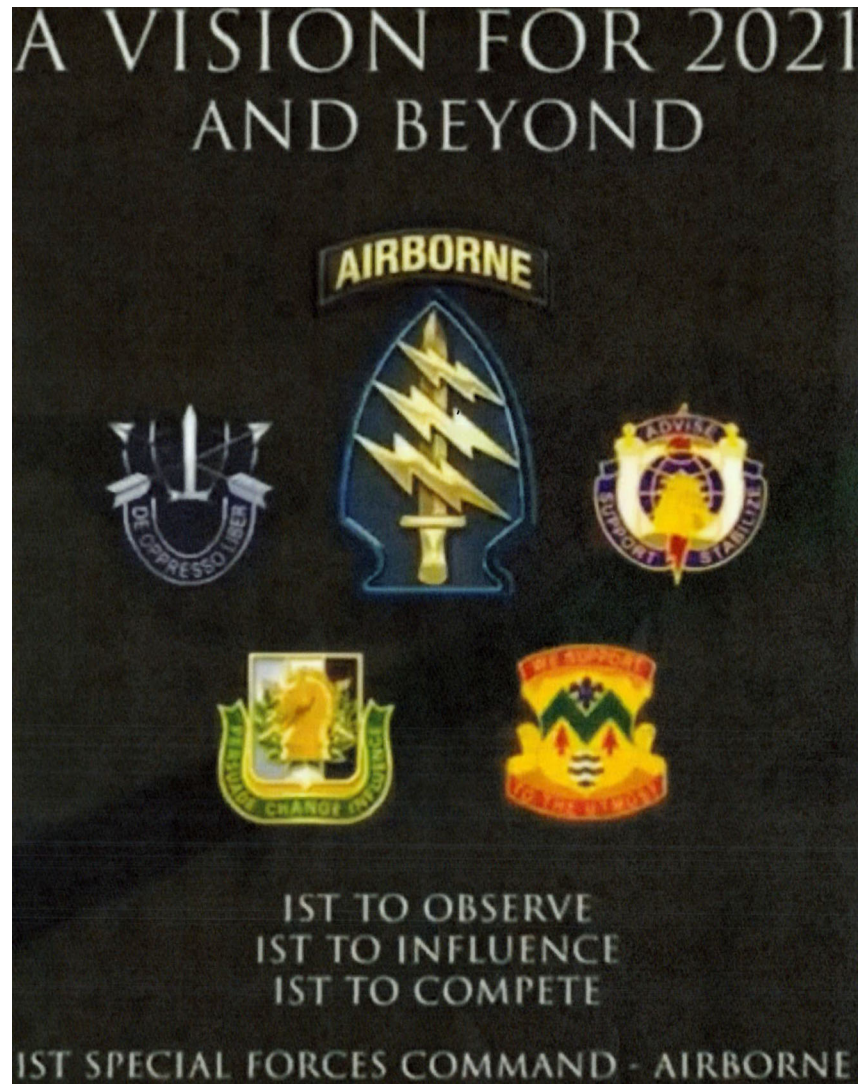
Let's turn to Africa, where China and Russia are destabilizing numerous countries, a new civil war breaks out monthly, and civilian populations are left to flee their homes in terror. In response, USAID spent \$12.2 million to promote LGBT rights for individuals in Kenya; \$29.5 million for services for sex workers, their clients, and transgender people in South Africa; \$128 million throughout the continent on ESG consultants to teach people about climate change;

While my Democrat colleagues and members of the media refuse to acknowledge that glut has overtaken this agency, its own employees have the courage to do so. Buried at the bottom of a February 8, 2025, New York Times article, it reads:

*"In private, even senior USAID officials agree that the agency needs an overhaul. In interviews, several recognized the need to streamline its bureaucracy and even questioned an aid system that relies so heavily on American contractors and fosters a damaging culture of dependency among African governments."*¹

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/08/world/africa/usaaid-africa-trump-musk.html>

The fact remains that wasteful, deficit spending plagues this agency. The disease of politically motivated bureaucrats has soiled the well for the lifesaving programs that effectuate change and enhance our national security mission. It's time for reform and change to the system.



Winston
Marshall

SOJTF-C activated the CMSE who, working with local branches of the Naruvian government, DoS, USAID, and NGOs, established job fairs near protest areas, providing disaffected workers with alternative employment options.



PO forces conduct Military Information Support Operations (MISO) in permissive, uncertain, and hostile environments to change the behavior of foreign audiences—both friendly and adversarial—in support of US objectives. PO forces analyze select audiences by determining critical vulnerabilities and accessibilities of the targeted population's information conduit and thinking. PO shapes the informational and cognitive dimension of operating environments by creating information campaigns that shape and challenge established perception frameworks. PO is integrated across all special operations core activities, including UW, FID, and COIN. In addition, PO forces conduct PE activities by creating favorable conditions for friendly force operations. PO forces can incorporate Military Deception (MLDEC) operations by disrupting and exploiting adversarial decision-making cycles. In the cross-functional team model, PO can lead the mission in the cooperation and competition continuums.

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS SUPPORT TO CIVIL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL FORCES

PO forces can analyze select target audiences to ensure that planned Civil Affairs Operations (CAO) are targeting the right vulnerabilities and conduits for achieving desired effects. PO forces create and disseminate supporting information narratives to accompany CA projects and programs, amplifying their influence on targeted population's perceptions. PO also support CA through Counter-Adversary Information Activities (C-AIA)—which include disinformation and propaganda—by identifying and mitigating false perceptions of CA initiatives.

Introduction #1

They first directed the IWC to initiate their previously-developed influence campaign. Relying on civil-economic information provided by the CMSE, the IWC's approach empowered IWTF's, in coordination with the JJIM, to enflame long-standing friction between Naruvian workers and Chinese corporations. Within days, protests supported by the CFT's ODA, erupted around Chinese business headquarters and their embassy in Ajuba. Simultaneously, the IWC-led social media campaign illuminated the controversy to a global audience.

.rac-

Instruction #2

SOJTF-C activated the CMSE who, working with local branches of the Naruvian government, DoS, USAID, and NGOs, established job fairs near protest areas, providing disaffected workers with alternative employment options. Within two weeks, the construction company lost 60% of its required labor pool.



FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

*Submit to record
@ beginning.*

INFORMATION MEMO FOR ACTING ADMINISTRATOR

CC: Agency Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff [cleared by email 2/6]

Date: February 4, 2025 *Nicholas Enrich*

From: Nicholas Enrich, Acting Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Global Health

Subject: Bureau for Global Health programming under the lifesaving humanitarian assistance waiver of the pause on foreign assistance

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Pursuant to Secretary Rubio's temporary waiver to the pause on foreign assistance, and subsequent USAID Agency Notice issued on January 28, 2025, in alignment with the President's Executive Order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid (EO), USAID's Bureau for Global Health (GH), in coordination with the Office of Acquisition and Assistance, is taking steps to resume or continue activities deemed to be lifesaving humanitarian assistance in central GH mechanisms.

BACKGROUND:

GH deems a limited subset of Global Health activities constitute lifesaving humanitarian assistance as outlined in the Agency Notice, Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Waiver - Foreign Assistance Pause. These lifesaving activities **must resume or continue in the next 30 days of the 90 day pause on foreign assistance to prevent imminent mortality among USAID beneficiaries**. These lifesaving activities, identified more specifically below, address tuberculosis, malaria, acute risks of maternal and child mortality, including severe acute malnutrition, and other life-threatening diseases and health conditions. Please note, for PEPFAR-funded activities, GHSD has issued separate guidance titled "Implementation of Limited Waiver to Pause of U.S. Foreign Assistance for Life-Saving HIV Service Provision."

For non-PEPFAR-funded **Bureau for Global Health programming**, only the following categories of activities will be resumed during the 90-day pause or until superseded by new guidance:

- Direct service delivery:** Provision of lifesaving essential services related to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of key diseases and conditions listed above required on an emergency basis to resume within 30 days. For purposes of this category, lifesaving humanitarian assistance applies only to:
 - As required to resume within 30 days, provision of the following lifesaving essential services related to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of severe illnesses and conditions which--if not addressed--lead to mortality in women, newborns, and children under five:

- i. Antenatal care and post-partum services for women to address acute complications before, during, and after delivery, which require lifesaving treatments such as safe Cesarean section, safe blood supplies, oxytocin for post-partum hemorrhage, antibiotics, and access to lifesaving commodities.
 - ii. For newborns and children, this includes essential newborn care, including for preterm, low-birthweight, small and/or sick newborns; essential immunizations to prevent imminent mortality; treatment of acute child illness with antibiotics, oxygen therapy for pneumonia, and oral rehydration solution and zinc for acute diarrhea; and management of severe acute malnutrition with Ready-to-use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) for children under five.
 - b. Essential screening, testing, and treatment for tuberculosis (TB) and drug resistant TB (DR-TB) including provision and monitoring of laboratory services, drug susceptibility testing, clinical visits, dispensing of essential medicines to avert near-term mortality and spread of infection.
 - c. Essential services that must resume within 30 days to ensure malaria diagnosis and treatment, as well as prevention through distribution of nets and indoor residual spraying targeting highest burden areas (where infected children are at risk of dying from malaria within 48 hours), and lifesaving malaria medicines for pregnant women and children.
2. **Emergency Response to Infectious Disease Outbreaks:** As required to resume within 30 days, rapid emergency response to immediate infectious disease outbreaks, focused on pathogens with high pandemic potential that pose a national security risk to U.S. citizens, such as viral hemorrhagic fevers (e.g. Ebola and Marburg), Mpox and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (e.g. H5N1). This includes detection, prevention, and containment efforts required to resume within the next 30 days such as the following activities: risk information for affected populations, active surveillance, infection prevention and control, support for testing, case management and treatment, and supply of medical countermeasures.
3. **Essential Health Commodities & Supply Chain Management:** Corresponding to activities under #1 and 2 above, and as required to resume within 30 days, procurement, warehousing and distribution of essential life-saving medicines and health products; laboratory systems to support accurate diagnosis and treatment; and targeted supply chain management (e.g. focused data and systems maintenance) to ensure the availability of such essential health commodities.
4. Reasonable implementing partner administrative costs strictly necessary to deliver and provide oversight of the assistance under #1-#3 above.

GH will maintain a pause of foreign assistance for all other activities not covered by this guidance until completion of the foreign assistance review or further guidance. As stated in the Agency Notice, this waiver **does not** allow for any global health activities related to abortion

services, family planning, conferences, administrative costs outside the scope outlined in the notice, or programs centered on gender; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); transgender surgeries; or other forms of non-lifesaving assistance. USAID fully abides by U.S. law, including the Helms Amendment, which precludes the use of foreign assistance funds to pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning, or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions.

Certifications

For resumption of work, consistent with the certification required in the USAID Foreign Assistance Pause Waiver Request template, GH intends have OAA include a requirement that implementing partners provide to the cognizant CO/AO and the COR/AOR a separate written certification that the implementing partner will not extend to activities related to abortion services, family planning, conferences, administrative costs outside the scope outlined in #4 above, or programs centered on gender; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); transgender surgeries; or other forms of non-lifesaving assistance.

NEXT STEPS:

- GH is applying the above criteria to identify GH centrally managed mechanisms that support lifesaving, humanitarian assistance and to specify which activities should resume. GH will maintain a comprehensive tracker of lifesaving, humanitarian activities that are resumed by implementing partners of GH central mechanisms, and will share updates regularly with the Agency Front Office. Mission bilateral activities will not be included in this tracker.
 - **NOTE:** Final approval for activities supported through centrally managed GH Bureau mechanisms, including field support, that are allowed to resume under this waiver rests with the GH Acting Assistant Administrator. For Mission bilateral awards, this authority remains with Regional Bureau and Mission leadership.
- GH will coordinate with OAA to communicate with implementing partners of GH central mechanisms that implement lifesaving humanitarian assistance activities within the scope of this guidance on global health activities to resume those activities, including the certification requirement discussed above.
- GH will share this memo with Regional Bureaus & Agency OUs for their awareness; however, regional bureaus and missions will make their own decisions regarding whether to adopt guidance similar to the GH Guidance or develop their own standards regarding Mission activities that fall within the Life-Saving Humanitarian Assistance Waiver. Regional Bureaus will also maintain responsibility for guiding and tracking activities that are permitted to restart in Mission bilateral awards and in providing visibility to the Agency front office regarding these activities.

CLEARANCE PAGE FOR: A/AID Memo re: Global Health Programming**Drafter:** Nida Parks**Approved:** GH/A/AA**Bureau Level Clearances****Clearance Status****Date**

GH/MCHN: NLowenthal	Clear	02/03/25
GH/PRH: SdeSilva	clear with edits	02/03/25
GH/ID: MFotheringham	Clear w/ ID Edits	02/04/25
GH/PMI: MVenkatesan	clear with edits	02/03/25
GH/OHA: AFrost	INFO	02/03/25
GH/OHS: MHijazi	Clear	02/03/25
GH/P3: RGodbole	Clear with edits/comments	02/04/25
GH/OCS: WPressman	Clear	02/03/25
GH/CII: MSchaefer	Clear	02/03/25
GC/GH: DBui	Clear	02/04/25
AFR/A-AA: BFrantz	INFO	
LAC/A-AA: MMcLaughlin	INFO	
ASIA/A-AA: PYoung	INFO	
E&E/A-AA: JHope	INFO	

“The USAID Betrayal”
House Foreign Affairs Committee
8:30 AM, Thursday, February 13, 2025
2172 Rayburn
Statement for the Record
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)

The Trump – Musk DOGE wrecking ball is attempting to destroy the world’s premier aid organization. In other words, the world’s richest man is stealing food and medicine from the world’s poorest children. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was established in 1961 through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 which was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy. USAID was created by statute, and it cannot be undone unilaterally by the Executive Branch. For over six decades, USAID has effectively led U.S. humanitarian and development efforts and has served as a powerful tool to counter malign influences globally. USAID bolsters U.S. national security priorities, saves countless vulnerable lives through critical public health programs, employs thousands of U.S. employees, and helps deliver billions of dollars in American agricultural products to food insecure populations around the world. The U.S. government has been the single largest humanitarian assistance donor, consistently providing nearly one-third of the total humanitarian assistance worldwide. President Trump and Elon Musk are sounding a unilateral global retreat that will sacrifice more than 60 years of American leadership on humanitarian and development assistance.

I spent ten years as a professional staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee helping write the annual foreign assistance budget. There has been a longstanding, bipartisan coalition in Congress that funds and supports our global aid and development agenda. Congress ultimately has the power of the purse, and such powers cannot be usurped by a hostile Administration.

USAID only comprises 1 percent or less of the federal budget, but it has a positive and long-lasting impact worldwide. It also serves as one of the key providers of life-saving food and health assistance. It is the world’s largest food aid program, and it saves tens of millions of lives every year. It saves starving children from malnutrition by providing ready-to-use therapeutic foods so they can live long and healthy lives. USAID is also one of the largest public health agencies in the world, helping to eradicate polio, schistosomiasis, and tuberculosis. Through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) a bipartisan program created by President George W. Bush, the U.S. has saved approximately 26 million people from HIV/AIDS. USAID has created key health infrastructures throughout the continent of Africa to collect antiretroviral therapy, distribute HIV tests, diagnose new cases, and provide women antenatal care. PEPFAR through USAID also provides cervical cancer screenings, diagnoses and treats hundreds of women with pre-cancerous or cancerous conditions, and treats victims of gender-based violence. The pause in foreign assistance by President Trump and stop-work order issued by Secretary of State Rubio prevents these treatments, medicines, and tests from being distributed, destroying the decades of work that USAID has put into local communities to protect them and their children from harmful and deadly diseases. Every day that the Administration continues to freeze funding for aid, 300 more babies are born with HIV. Approximately 21

million people rely on life-saving medication to treat HIV/AIDS. This is a humanitarian agency that produces huge, positive, and consequential outcomes that we must save and protect.

The dismantling of USAID is being led by Elon Musk, an unelected billionaire. A man with no credibility to determine that USAID programs are fraudulent, wasteful, and abusive. His efforts to eliminate USAID without Congressional approval are unconstitutional and unlawful. His efforts are being supported by the Trump Administration that is determined to disguise the erasure of USAID as government efficiency. This is why on February 7, I led a letter with Rep. Suhas Subramanyam, the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Military and Foreign Affairs, to Secretary of State Rubio requesting specific documents that would expose Trump and Musk's efforts to freeze foreign aid and purge critical USAID staff. On February 11, the Trump Administration fired the inspector general of USAID due to the release of a report critical of President Trump's efforts to dismantle the agency. The report includes details of how President Trump's aid freeze risks \$500 million in food aid. In a Trump Administration, exposing \$500 million in potential waste is a fireable offence.

Republicans are fueling their attacks on USAID with outright lies. White House talking points on the elimination of USAID have been widely debunked. They accused USAID of providing \$70,000 to produce a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) musical in Ireland, which was a State Department Grant to allow the U.S. Ambassador to host an event with a folk duo and Irish and American musicians. Republicans also alleged that USAID provided \$47,000 to have a "transgender opera" in Colombia. It was a \$25,000 State Department grant to Universidad De Los Andes in Bogotá to stage an opera by an American composer. They also falsely stated that USAID provided \$32,000 for a "transgender comic book" in Peru. This was a \$32,000 State Department Grant to Peru's Education Department to produce a comic that featured an LGBTQ+ hero to address mental health and difficult social issues.

Since the onset of President Trump's Executive Order titled "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid," I have consistently urged for an end to the Administration's foreign assistance ban, the reinstatement of assistance for key programs, and increased transparency and accountability. I joined Ranking Member Meeks' letter to Secretary Rubio asking him to testify before this Committee about the foreign assistance ban, I joined Reps. Pocan and Kelly's letter to Secretary Rubio emphasizing the importance of U.S. funding for PEPFAR, I joined Rep. Keatings's letter to reinstate critical Ukraine assistance, I joined Reps. Cherfilus-McCormick and Jacob's letter to President Trump raising concerns about the negative impacts of the assistance ban on women and girls, and I publicly condemned Musk's efforts to dismantle USAID in front of its headquarters in D.C.

This brutal crackdown on USAID and its staff is self-defeating and will create a vacuum that authoritarian regimes are eager to fill globally, especially the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia. Through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the PRC has invested more than \$1 trillion into infrastructure projects in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. What appears to be a good-willed investment in an infrastructure project, leaves vulnerable nations in debilitating debt to the PRC. The PRC is already offering to fill USAID's void by reaching out to the governments of Nepal, Colombia, and Cambodia. Russia has funded manipulation campaigns to sow division

in Central and Latin America and is shipping arms and ammunition to fuel conflicts in countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Central African Republic.

The U.S. must reaffirm its commitment to assisting those who need it most, carrying out effective foreign assistance, countering instability and malign influence, and reflecting the good will of the American people globally.

My colleagues and I will not sit idly by as Elon Musk destroys the lead development agency in the world. We are going to fight every way we can in the courts, in public opinion, with the bully pulpit, and in the halls of Congress. Foreign assistance has served as a core foreign policy principle for the U.S. since its inception as a global power and we will not let this injustice go unanswered.

February 12, 2025

The Honorable John R. Thune, Senate Majority Leader
 The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Senate Minority Leader
 The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House
 The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, House Minority Leader
 United States Capitol, Washington, DC

Dear Senators Thune and Schumer, and Representatives Johnson and Jeffries:

As former U.S. government officials who served in national security and humanitarian positions in both Democratic and Republican administrations, we write to ask you to take all steps in your power to urge rescission of the Trump administration executive orders and directives aimed at freezing U.S. foreign assistance and dismantling USAID. These directives inflict irreparable damage on hundreds of millions of people around the world, harm Americans by crippling our ability to protect U.S. citizens from disease and other harms, and invite China and other competitors to fill the gap we have created, thereby increasing their power and influence at our expense.

In the some 200 countries where hundreds of millions of people have benefitted from U.S. aid, the bulk of such support has been economic and humanitarian assistance. When Presidents, Cabinet Secretaries, and Members of Congress are welcomed in countries of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and South Asia, and Europe, the concrete manifestations of U.S. government support have been the humanitarian and development programs supported by USAID and the State Department's humanitarian operations.

These operations represent less than one percent of the federal budget. At the same time, U.S. aid has amounted to between a quarter and a third of global assistance, roughly the same as the U.S. share of GDP among wealthy countries. It has given the United States enormous capacity for influence, while making our country the global leader in efforts to reduce human suffering and abject poverty.

These are the programs that President Trump and Elon Musk are decimating, as we write, while depriving the U.S. Congress of its constitutional and legislative roles.

It is difficult to capture in one letter the scope of what the *Financial Times* has accurately called the "willful sabotage of U.S. soft power." But the human suffering that these cut-offs have caused is catastrophic and heartbreaking. Elon Musk's measures have halted critical and highly effective life-saving initiatives, including programs that provide clean water to infants; healthcare to mothers who are expecting; food, shelter, and refuge for those fleeing persecution and disaster; and life-saving support to those suffering from disease.

In Kenya, Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere, aid to survivors of torture was stopped in its tracks. Children and adult victims of war and terror who have relied on the United States have been left without care. And in poorer countries around the world, thousands of women and girls will die in

the next 90 days due to complications of childbirth that might otherwise have been avoided through interventions funded by Congress and administered by USAID.

Even the highly visible PEPFAR program to combat AIDS, started by President George W. Bush and responsible for saving some 25 million lives, was frozen. Clinics were closed and HIV sufferers were denied access to antiretrovirals. While some services were resumed, crucial programs remained suspended and millions are affected.

In our own country, the suspension of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program has led to tragic stories of thousands who were ready to travel to the United States, including Afghans who helped to support U.S. goals in their country. This modest and carefully managed program has revitalized declining communities and strengthened the U.S. economy, and persuaded other countries to do their fair share.

The tragic stories go on and on and on, from the curtailing of remarkable U.S. efforts to limit the spread of tuberculosis and eradicate polio, to the ending of programs that have built local economies and have thereby discouraged migration to the United States, to the abrupt halt of the USAID-supported Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), the gold standard for anticipating and monitoring famines worldwide.

Due to horror stories shared with Members of Congress about the impact of the funding freeze, Trump administration officials have added some exemptions to the ban. But this piecemeal effort is a wholly inefficient, inadequate, and cynical way to proceed with reform. It has merely left hundreds of millions around the world in disbelief at how the United States could act in such an arbitrary and cavalier manner.

History will not look kindly on this avoidable tragedy – for the hundreds of millions in need, for U.S. leadership and moral authority around the world, and for U.S. national security, as global competitors like China and Russia rush to fill the gap we have created. It will be part of the legacy of this Congress if not reversed.

We implore you to urge President Trump to rescind the freeze, which curtails U.S. efforts to provide critical humanitarian aid and development support around the world, and undermines the Constitutional authority of Congress. In particular, we ask that you urge the President to resume the funding and operations of USAID and its overseas offices, as well as the humanitarian programs of the Department of State.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Pickering
Former Under Secretary for Political Affairs and former Ambassador to the United Nations,
Russia, India, Israel, Jordan, El Salvador, and Nigeria

J. Brian Atwood
Former Administrator, USAID, and Former Undersecretary of State for Management

William Taft, IV
Former Deputy Secretary of Defense, former General Counsel, Department of Defense

Nancy J. Powell
United States Ambassador (Ret.)
General Michael V Hayden
CIA and NSA

Thomas J Scanlan Jr
Brig Gen, USAF (Ret.), Former Director Operations, U.S. Space Command
Former Director SIGINT, NRO

Christopher Kojm
Former Chair, National Intelligence Council

Glyn Davies
Former Executive Secretary, National Security Council
Former Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand

John D. Hutson
RADM JAGC USN (Ret.)

Ambassador Susan Rice
Former National Security Advisor

Jock Covey
Former Special Assistant to the President, U.S. National Security Council

Eric Schwartz
Former NSC Senior Director and Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State

Jonathan Treacy
Major General, USAF, Retired
Former Director of Staff, National Guard Bureau

Hon. David B. Buckley
Former Inspector General
Central Intelligence Agency

Rear Admiral John Butler
USN (Retired)

Cmdr. Philip D. Hogg
USN-Ret.

General (Retired) Frank Grass

Tom Malinowski
Former Member of Congress, former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Rights, and Labor

Rand Beers
Former Deputy Homeland Security Advisor

John Shattuck
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Rights, and Labor

Carlos E. Martinez, Brigadier General, USAF, Retired
Former Mobilization Assistant to the Air Force Director of Warfighting Integration

Richard A Boucher
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Brian P. McKeon
Former Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources

Anthony Lake
Former U.S. National Security Advisor

Elizabeth L. Carswell
Former Chief of Staff, Intelligence Community Advanced Campaign Cell

Marie Yovanovitch
Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan

Anne M. Peniston
Former Deputy Director, Office of Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition, Global Health Bureau, USAID

Elizabeth Millard
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Bruce Riedel
Former CIA officer and Former Special Assistant to the President.

Harry Thomas
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Thomas Countryman
Former Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation

Robert Goldberg
Former Deputy Associate Director for International Affairs, Office of Management and Budget,
Executive Office of the President

Alexander R. Vershbow
Former Ambassador to NATO, Russia, and the Republic of Korea

Dana Mansuri, Career Minister (Ret.)
U.S. Agency for International Development

Aaron David Miller
Former Deputy Middle East Coordinator, Department of State

Gordon Adams
Former Associate Director for National Security Programs, Office of Management and Budget

Donald Camp
Former National Security Council Senior Director for South Asia

Charles Kupchan
Former Special Assistant to the President, National Security Council

Amit Pandya
Former Director for Humanitarian Assistance, Office of the Secretary of Defense

Charles Ray
Former Ambassador to Cambodia

Teresita C. Schaffer
Former United States Ambassador to Sri Lanka

Stephen Rapp
Former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice

David Sandalow
Former Under Secretary of Energy, Assistant Secretary of State, and Senior Director, National
Security Council

Mary Curtin
United States Foreign Service Officer (Ret.)

John Prendergast
Former Director for African Affairs, National Security Council

A. Peter Burleigh
Former Ambassador to the United Nations, to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and for Counter-Terrorism

Joe Sestak, Vice Admiral (Ret.)
Former Member of Congress, former Director, Defense Directorate, National Security Council

Earl Anthony Wayne
Former Ambassador of the United States to Mexico and Argentina
Former Deputy U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

Susan Reichle
Former Counselor and Senior Foreign Service officer, USAID

Karl F. Inderfurth
Former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs

Edmund Hull
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Frank Loy
Former Undersecretary of State

Frank Jannuzi
Former Intelligence Analyst, U.S. Department of State

Peter Eicher
Former U.S. Deputy Representative to the UN Commission on Human Rights

Laura Kennedy
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Kurt D. Donnelly
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Robert C. Perry
Ambassador (Ret.)

Frances D. Cook
United States Ambassador (Ret.) and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Morton H. Halperin.
Former Director, Policy Planning, U.S. Department of State

Tom Hushek
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Ricardo Zuniga
Former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S.
Department of State

The Reverend Anne E. Derse, U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)
Former Ambassador to Azerbaijan and Lithuania

Jamie Metzl
Former Director, National Security Council

Bruce Wharton
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

John M. Evans
Former Ambassador to Armenia

James Bishop
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Mattie R. Sharpless
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Johnnie Carson
Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and former U.S. Ambassador to Kenya

Genta Holmes
Former Assistant Administrator for Legislative Affairs, USAID

Tom Engle
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, former Minister Counselor, U.S. Foreign Service

Robert D. Bauerlein
Former Director, Office of Policy and Resources, U.S. Department of State

Deborah K Jones
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Richard Kauzlarich
Former Ambassador to Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ambassador (Ret.) Gerald M. Feierstein

Annie Pforzheimer
U.S. State Department Minister Counselor (Ret)
Former Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy Kabul

Lynne Weil
Senior Advisor, Public Diplomacy
Department of State

Pamela White
Ambassador (Ret.)

Steve Andreasen
Former Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control
National Security Council

Margot Ellis
Former Acting Assistant Administrator – Europe & Eurasia
USAID

Chester A. Crocker
Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

Ruth A. Davis
Former Ambassador to the Republic of Benin and former Director General of the U.S. Foreign
Service

Jane Stromseth,
Former Deputy for Global Criminal Justice, U.S. Department of State,
and former Director, National Security Council staff

Aurelia E. Brazeal
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific, former Ambassador to
the Federated States of Micronesia, to Kenya, and to Ethiopia

Ken Brill
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Charles O. Blaha
Foreign Service Officer (Ret.), U.S. Department of State

Mosina Jordan
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

James A. Schear
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Jeffrey Meer
Former Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs

John S. Wolf
Former Assistant Secretary for Non Proliferation

Robert F. Cekuta
Former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan

Amb. (Ret.) Eric S. Rubin
Former U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Dr. Kenneth Stringer
CIA Senior Executive (retired)

Carol Bellamy
Former Director, Peace Corps

Bernadette M. Allen
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Steven A. Browning
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Michael Schiffer, Former Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Asia, USAID and former Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia, Department of Defense

Liliana Ayalde
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Keith J. Masback
Former Department of Defense and Intelligence Community Senior Executive

Heather Hurlburt
Former Chief of Staff, U.S. Special Trade Representative

Robert A. Flaten
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Merrie Blocker
Senior Foreign Service Officer (Ret.), U.S. Department of State

Stephen Rickard
Former Senior Advisor for South Asian Affairs
U.S. Department of State

Eileen A. Malloy
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Jonah Blank
Former Policy Director, South and Southeast Asia, Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Desaix Myers
Former Senior Foreign Service Officer, Mission Director USAID, Professor of National Security Studies, National War College

Ambassador Miriam Sapiro
Former Deputy U.S. Trade Representative

Uzra Zeya
Former Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights

Barnett Rubin
Former Senior Advisor, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan

James Holthaus
Former U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Army

Robert Riley
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Nancy McEldowney
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Michele Thoren Bond
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs

Hon. Aaron S. Williams
Former Career Minister, USAID

Arsalan Suleman
Former Acting U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

David Abramowitz
Former Chief Counsel, House Foreign Affairs Committee and Former Acting Assistant Legal Adviser for Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State

Jeff Davidow
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemispheric Affairs, and former Ambassador to Mexico, Venezuela, and Zambia

Frederick Barton
Ambassador (Ret.) and former Assistant Secretary of State

Nancy Ely Raphel
Former U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia

Anne-Marie Slaughter
Former Director, U.S. State Department Office of Policy Planning

Robert M. Clay
Former Deputy Assistant Administrator, USAID

Jonathan Winer
Former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Law Enforcement and former
Special Envoy for Libya

Sarah Charles
Former Assistant to the Administrator, USAID Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs

Michael McFaul
Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia

Clyde D. Taylor
Former U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay

Anne C. Richard
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration, and former
Director, Secretary of State's Office of Resources, Plans, and Policy

Robert P. Jackson
Former United States Ambassador

Maria Otero
Former U.S. Undersecretary of State

Jess Baily
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Kathleen Doherty
Former U.S. Ambassador

Larry Garber
Former USAID Mission Director, West Bank-Gaza

Alexander F. Watson
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Anthony W. Gambino
Former USAID Mission Director, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Ambassador (Ret.) Janet A. Sanderson
Former U.S. Ambassador to Haiti and Algeria

John B. Oliver
State Department Foreign Service Officer (Ret.)

Harold Hongju Koh
Former Legal Adviser and Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Eric J. Boswell
Ambassador (Ret.) and Former Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security

Susan Kosinski Fritz
Career Minister, USAID

J. Stephen Morrison
Former staff member, State Department Office of Policy Planning, former Staff Consultant, House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee

Pamela E. Bridgewater
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Paul Simons
U.S. Ambassador to Chile (Ret.)

Jock Conly
Former USAID Mission Director

Bennett Lowenthal
Foreign Service Officer (Ret.)
US Department of State

Jessica John
Former Intelligence Officer, CIA

James Keith
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Arturo Valenzuela
Former Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs, National Security Council, and Former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs

William Patterson
Former Deputy Mission Director for USAID/Iraq

Kevin J. McGuire
Ambassador (Ret.)

Beth Jones
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.), former Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia

Deborah R. Malac
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Sarah Suzanne Olds
Former USAID Caucasus Mission Director

Mark Fitzpatrick
Former Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation

Rosa Brooks
Former Counselor to the Undersecretary of Defense

Gary Usrey
Former Senior Advisor
U.S. Mission to the United Nations

Andrew L. Lluberes
Former Director of Communications, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, DHS.

Beth Paige
Career Minister (Ret.), USAID

Robert Blake
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Sarah Yager
Former Senior Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Nicole Widdersheim
Former National Security Council Director for Africa

Chris Hoh
Former Senior Adviser, Department of State

Jennifer Klein
Former Assistant to the President

Mark Bocchetti
U.S. Foreign Service Officer (Ret.)

Donald Steinberg
Former NSC Senior Director, former Deputy Administrator, USAID, former U.S. Ambassador to Angola

Paul Hughes
COL, U.S. Army (Ret.), and former Deputy Director, Office for Humanitarian Assistance and Anti-Personnel Landmine Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Robert O. Boorstin
Former NSC Senior Director

Ted Osius
Former U.S. ambassador to Vietnam

Gregory W. Engle
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Joy Riggs-Perla
Senior Foreign Service Officer (Ret.), USAID

Michael Myers
Former Director, Humanitarian and Refugee Affairs, Department of Defense

Lynn Northcutt Vega
USAID Career Foreign Service Officer (Ret.)

Thomas M. Young
Senior Foreign Service Officer (Ret.)

Diane Orentlicher
Former Deputy for War Crimes Issues, U.S. Department of State

Patricia M Haslach
US Ambassador (Ret.)

Scott Busby
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Barbara K. Bodine
Former U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen

Mark L. Schneider

Former Assistant Administrator Latin America and Caribbean, USAID, and former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, Department of State

Makila James, Ambassador (Ret.) and Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Africa and the Sudans

Rachel Vogelstein

Former Special Assistant to the President

Dawn M. Liberi

Former United States Ambassador and former USAID Mission Director

Avis Bohlen

Former United States Ambassador

William Douglass

Former Coordinator of the Development Leadership Initiative, USAID

David Shinn

Former United States Ambassador to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia

D. Holly Hammonds

Former Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director, National Economic Council and National Security Council

Thomas H. Staal

Former USAID Counselor

Jonathan S. Gration

Former U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan

Pamela L. Spratlen

Former U.S. Ambassador to Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan

Robert Hutchings

Former Coordinator of the U.S. Support for East European Democracy (SEED) program

Emmy Simmons

Former Assistant Administrator, USAID

Jake Walles

Former United States Ambassador to Tunisia and Former U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem

Hattie Babbitt

Former Deputy Administrator of USAID.

Michael Pelletier
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Janice Jacobs
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

John D. Feeley
Former Ambassador to Panama and former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
Western Hemispheric Affairs

Jonathan Addleton
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

David Kaye
Former Attorney-Adviser, State Department

Khadijat Mojidi
Former Health Foreign Service Officer, USAID

Adrian A Basora
United States Ambassador (Ret.)

Diana Swain
Former USAID Mission Director to Namibia and Angola

Todd Stern
Former U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change

Daniel Serwer
Former U.S. Special Envoy for the Bosnian Federation

Monica Stein-Olson
Former Senior Foreign Service Officer, USAID

Rachel Peniston, Former Senior Policy Advisor, Bureau of Planning, Learning, and Resource
Management, USAID

Robert Herman
Former staff member, State Department Office of Policy Planning

Corbin B. Lyday, PhD
Former Senior Policy Analyst, USAID

Leslie Rowe
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Greg Delawie
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Ann Tutwiler
Former Global Food Security Adviser, Office of the Secretary, USDA

Lissa Muscatine
Former Director of Speechwriting and Senior Adviser to the Secretary of State

Wanda L. Nesbitt
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

Larry Cathy Crandall
Former USAID Mission Director

Stephen K. Craven
Former Counselor, Foreign Commercial Service

Barry B. White
Former U. S. Ambassador to Norway

David Thomas Wolfson
Former Minister Counselor for Political Affairs, U.S. State Department

Gordon Gray
Former U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia

Lifesaving Aid Remains Halted Worldwide Despite Rubio's Promise

A new directive puts further exemptions on hold. Aid workers also say the U.S. government has made it impossible to pay partners around the world.



By Karoun Demirjian, Michael Crowley, Edward Wong and Stephanie Nolen

Published Feb. 12, 2025 Updated Feb. 13, 2025, 10:02 a.m. ET

When Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced last month that lifesaving humanitarian work would be exempt from a freeze on foreign aid, global health workers breathed a collective sigh of relief.

But a new directive has put such exemptions on hold.

Several senior employees at the U.S.A.I.D. Bureau of Global Health received an email Tuesday telling them to “please hold off on any more approvals” pending further directions from the acting chief of staff, according to a copy reviewed by The New York Times.

Senior officials at the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance received similar instructions during a meeting this week, according to a person familiar with what transpired.

For weeks, U.S.A.I.D. officials and the organizations, contractors and consultants who partner with them have struggled to continue the kind of work that Mr. Rubio promised to preserve — “core lifesaving medicine, medical services, food, shelter and substance assistance.”

Some waivers have been issued to programs that fall under Mr. Rubio's definition of “lifesaving” aid, but the payments system called Phoenix that U.S.A.I.D. relies on to disburse financial assistance has been inaccessible for weeks. That means even programs that received waivers have struggled to continue, according to multiple employees of U.S.A.I.D. and the partner organizations that rely on the funding they distributed.

The State Department did not reply to a request for comment for this article.

On Tuesday, Elon Musk, the billionaire tech entrepreneur empowered by President Trump to combat the agency, told reporters in the Oval Office that the administration had “turned on funding for Ebola prevention and for H.I.V. prevention.” But in reality, the Ebola funding and virtually all of the H.I.V. prevention funding remains frozen, according to two U.S.A.I.D. employees and several aid groups.

Young engineers working for Mr. Musk seized control of the agency's payments system as they took over in recent weeks. And as part of the dismantling overseen by Mr. Musk, the State Department also recently circulated plans to reduce U.S.A.I.D. staff from about 10,000 workers to 611 who had been deemed essential personnel.

Without access to funding, organizations that partner with U.S.A.I.D. have been unable to pay their workers and suppliers for projects that were dependent on U.S. government funding.

The Norwegian Refugee Council, which does U.S.-backed humanitarian work in about 20 countries, said it has been unable to take advantage of the waivers because the agency's payments had stopped.

"We currently have millions of dollars in outstanding payment requests to the U.S. government," the group said in a statement, noting that civilians in conflict zones like Ukraine, Afghanistan and Sudan would suffer if its work stopped. ↻
 "Without an immediate solution we may, at the end of February, be forced to halt U.S.-funded lifesaving humanitarian programs."

New political appointees at the State Department and U.S.A.I.D. have put other hurdles in place.

At one mission in Asia, officials received waivers for three programs, including one for malaria eradication, but then were told they needed waivers for individual projects under those programs, a person with knowledge of the impasse said.

Beleaguered U.S.A.I.D. staff members said this week that the waiver pause was a sign that the end of their lifesaving work and other projects may be near.

Agency officials were notified this week that some 350 awards would be canceled. It was not immediately clear how many of those contracts were on a list that circulated last week identifying about 800 potential award cancellations.



Stephanie Nolen
Global health reporter covering access to medicines and health care

"The guiding principle of my work is 'go there.' I want to hear directly from the people who are affected by disease, or lack of access to a new drug. I've been writing about global health for 30 years and have reported from more than 80 countries."

Learn more about how Stephanie Nolen approaches her work.

Unlike previous notifications, emails sent to staff on Wednesday alerting them to some of the most recent cancellations did not encourage them to check for potential exemptions.

People deputized by Mr. Trump and Mr. Musk have accused U.S.A.I.D. officials of delaying and trying to undermine efforts to terminate programs by conducting their own reviews of contracts to ensure lifesaving work is not canceled. However, those reviews would be needed to grant the waivers promised by Mr. Rubio.

As the reductions get underway, unions representing U.S.A.I.D. staff as well as companies and organizations that work with the aid agency have been scrambling to push back against the cuts through a series of lawsuits. Some have succeeded in obtaining temporary restraining orders against the president's efforts to dismantle the agency.

The plaintiffs have argued that the downsizing measures are unconstitutional and illegal, as Congress appropriated the funds for the agency and, by law, has to approve their withdrawal.

In one lawsuit, filed by companies that have had U.S.A.I.D. contracts for global programs, a development firm reported that \$250 million worth of health supplies were stuck in transit or "stranded in warehouses around the world" because of the stop-work orders that accompanied the freeze. The firm, Chemonics, had to furlough about two-thirds of its U.S.-based staff in recent weeks.

Lawyers for the Trump administration argued in a response to one of the lawsuits that “the president has broad discretion to set the terms and conditions” on the provision of aid.

As the legal battles wear on, the drastic changes to the U.S. government’s premier foreign aid agency continue.

On Tuesday, the Trump administration fired the inspector general for U.S.A.I.D., Paul K. Martin, just one day after he released a report warning that staff reductions and spending freezes risked the misuse and waste of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, according to three people familiar with the dismissal.

The report documented confusion around the waivers. It warned that nearly half a billion dollars of food aid was at risk of spoiling, and that a reduced ability to vet partner organizations had made it more difficult to ensure no U.S. money would go toward terrorism.

Also on Tuesday, the agency made another round of cuts to contractors, the latest at U.S.A.I.D. to be forced to leave.

And the General Services Administration, a federal agency that oversees building leases and other contracts, in recent days terminated the U.S.A.I.D.’s lease for headquarters space in the Ronald Reagan Building in downtown Washington. The General Services Administration said in a statement on Tuesday that it took down the aid agency’s signs and that the 570,000-square-foot space would be “repurposed for other government needs.”

U.S.A.I.D. employees in the building lobby on Monday reported seeing officials from other agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection, surveying the office space. Employees learned on Tuesday that they had lost parking

privileges because the agency's leases had been canceled, according to a copy of an internal email obtained by The New York Times.

Almost all of the agency's employees have been barred from entering its headquarters for more than a week, though some of them were given access to their work email accounts this week in order to prepare for their departures.

Foreign Service officers working for the agency overseas have been ordered to leave their posts and return to the United States this month, as part of a move putting the vast majority of direct hires on administrative leave. The order has been temporarily delayed by a federal judge, who will next hear arguments in the case on Thursday.

Employees say they expect most of U.S.A.I.D.'s work force to be fired or pushed out, and the few remaining to be absorbed into the State Department. Both Mr. Trump and Mr. Musk, who has posted dark conspiracy theories about the aid agency on his social media platform, X, have called for its demise.

Karoun Demirjian is a breaking news reporter for the The Times. More about Karoun Demirjian

Michael Crowley covers the State Department and U.S. foreign policy for The Times. He has reported from nearly three dozen countries and often travels with the secretary of state. More about Michael Crowley

Edward Wong reports on global affairs, U.S. foreign policy and the State Department. More about Edward Wong

Stephanie Nolen is a global health reporter for The Times. More about Stephanie Nolen

The USAID Betrayal

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Full Committee

Greg Stanton (D-AZ)

Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 8:30 AM ET, Rayburn 2172

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

IMPORTANCE OF USAID

For more than 60 years, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been a cornerstone of strong American foreign policy. . . under Democratic administrations and Republican ones. It's one of the most effective foreign policy tools we have for shaping American influence around the globe.

One of my constituents, an Afghan refugee and doctoral student at Arizona State University, was himself a beneficiary of USAID. He told me, quote: *"When I was 7 or 8, I saw bags of flour with the American flag on it. The well that we drank out of was made by USAID. That always stuck with me."*

USAID has not only provided life-saving assistance to people around the world. . . USAID helps stabilize fragile nation states. . . reducing the risk of them becoming havens for terrorist cells like ISIS. It fights famine and drought, helps after natural disasters and promotes economic stability to lessen global migration to our borders.

But humanitarian accomplishments aside, USAID isn't charity. It is the tool that gives us a strategic edge over our competitors – spreading American influence and goodwill and reducing dependence on our competitors.

And it does so at an incredibly modest price tag—less than 0.7 percent of the federal budget. It is worth every penny. And it should never be used as a political punching bag.

REPUBLICANS SUPPORT USAID

Republicans used to agree. Congress has passed budget after budget across party lines providing robust funding for USAID – it’s always enjoyed bipartisan support.

This includes our last funding bill, where 148 Republicans – a majority of the majority, and 12 Republican members of this committee – voted to fund all the programs in USAID that they are now attacking.

They know—and have seen—how it helps after disaster strikes in Turkey. They know that it benefits their constituents, like those who make water purification systems used by USAID in Africa. And they know that USAID is a critical tool in countering the Belt and Road Initiative and growing influence of the Chinese Communist Party.

This is our soft power. Power the CCP understands the benefits of all too well. In fact, they’re already stepping into the void Trump is leaving.

LARGER DEMOCRACY ISSUES

So I cannot begin to fathom why my colleagues are being silent—or cheering on!—Trump’s elimination of USAID.

You want to talk about waste? Trump and Musk’s illegal funding freeze has left \$500 million worth of food aid to spoil in ports, ships and warehouses. Hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of medications are sitting on pallets about to expire. Is that good governance?

Maybe you’re afraid of President Trump. But he is a president. Not a king. He does not have the power to unilaterally halt Congressionally-appropriated funding or abolish a Congressionally-created agency.

Let me be clear: President Trump and his unelected, unaccountable Elon Musk are bypassing you, too. They picked on USAID first, but we know

Hearing: The USAID Betrayal

Page: 3

it will not be the last. They are testing the boundaries to see how far they can get as they dismantle our checks and balances.

And Congress is not the only branch they are testing. They have ignored court orders and they are setting the stage to undermine judicial authority.

We are heading directly to a constitutional crisis.

And the illegal dismantling of USAID is the canary in the coal mine. It is just the start.

It's important to hear the voices of employees directly impacted by the Trump Administration's efforts to dismantle USAID. One foreign service offers recently filed a declaration detailing how the chaos created by the USAID shutdown jeopardized his and his family's safety during the recent evacuation from the DRC. I ask unanimous consent that his account be entered into the record.

{ Less than 1%.
Reduced Migration
Brand Skirmish.

AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE)
ASSOCIATION, et al.,)

Plaintiffs,) Civil Action No. 1:25-CV-352

v.)

DONALD TRUMP, et al.,)

Defendants.)

I, Marcus Doe, declare the following under penalties of perjury:

1. I am over 18 years of age and competent to give this declaration. This declaration is based on my personal knowledge, information, and belief.
2. I am a member of the American Foreign Service Association.
3. I am a USAID Foreign Service Officer assigned to USAID/Democratic Republic of the Congo in Kinshasa.
4. On January 20, 2025, the President of the United States issued an Executive Order imposing a 90-day “pause” on all U.S. foreign assistance. The scope of this Executive Order was unclear at first, given ambiguities and inconsistencies in the language used.
5. Beginning January 21, 2025, the first workday after the Executive Order was issued, USAID staff immediately set about determining how to interpret and implement the Executive Order. This effort continued zealously and in good faith

by all employees of USAID DRC that I was able to observe in Kinshasa and in the United States. I observed no instances of insubordination or opposition to efforts to implement the Order.

6. Over the weekend of January 25–26, 2025, M23 rebels in eastern DRC took control of the city of Goma. Many Congolese citizens view western nations, including the United States, as having culpability for M23's ongoing war in eastern DRC. The fall of Goma led to rumors of protest in the capital city of Kinshasa the following week. On Monday, January 27, however, protests in Kinshasa were relatively limited.

7. Over the course of the evening of Monday, January 27 in the DRC, dozens of USAID senior leaders were placed on administrative leave without notice or explanation and were cut off from USAID information systems. I learned of these actions first thing upon waking up and checking messages on January 28. I was deeply shaken by the sudden removal of nearly all USAID leadership without explanation. The Agency eventually issued a notice to all staff that these leaders were placed on administrative leave for allegedly circumventing Trump Administration Executive Orders. I have never read or heard of any specific allegations supporting this, nor have I ever seen anyone attempt to circumvent or subvert any of the January 20, 2025 Executive Orders.

8. Given the minimal protests in Kinshasa on January 27, many U.S. Embassy staff, including me, prepared to go to the office the morning of Tuesday, January 28. Likewise, my children prepared to go to school. The children boarded the

school bus to go to school and I boarded the shuttle bound for the office. Each departed around the same time that morning, heading in different directions.

9. Shortly after leaving, the Embassy drivers received word that they should turn around and return employees back to their homes, as demonstrations began to form and the security situation near the U.S. Embassy began to deteriorate. Employees and children en route to their destinations were immediately returned home. All staff received messages through the Embassy's "SAFE Alert" system regarding the change in operational posture, and providing instructions to shelter in place. Some U.S. Embassy staff, including some from USAID, had already made it to work early, and could not leave the Embassy.

10. I continued to telework throughout the morning, focused primarily on understanding and implementing the foreign assistance "pause," while monitoring the Embassy-issued radios for information and instructions on security. At some point later that morning, I, along with others at USAID, learned via messages from another USAID employee that there were protesters outside his house setting fires and causing damage. He also described the situation over the radio.

11. Eventually, I heard this USAID employee describe over the radio that protesters had breached the gate of his home, and I heard him request an evacuation. I learned later that he and his family had been safely extracted from the situation by armed security working for the U.S. Embassy, but had lost all their belongings to looting. Videos of the looting of his home circulated on local social media. Shortly thereafter, around mid-day, I began to hear protesters chanting and shouting outside

the walls of my home. My children were playing outside, so I called them in, and my spouse and I set about locking all doors and gates of our home. We were scared. Mercifully, the protesters never attempted to breach our gate.

12. Within a few hours, Embassy leadership convened a meeting to discuss the security situation and determine whether the Embassy should evacuate and go on ordered departure, often referred to as "OD." Leadership determined in that meeting that we would evacuate and go on ordered departure, though a small number of staff would stay behind to maintain operations.

13. After learning of the impending ordered departure, I along with others from USAID/DRC communicated with colleagues in Washington about what was happening. My Washington colleagues were still reeling from the removal of multiple layers of leadership, and were unsure of who held what position.

14. I mentioned to these remaining Washington staff that the executive order pausing foreign assistance prevented USAID from obligating money to fund travel, and therefore USAID would be unable to fund the cost of the evacuation of its staff out of Kinshasa. Throughout the preceding week, USAID had been losing access to and control of its payment systems, as various standard payments for travel vouchers and cost of living allowances (COLA) were not successfully processed. It seemed that no one in Washington had yet considered the problem of funding the evacuation. It was unclear at the time who should have responsibility for resolving it, or what process existed for getting approval to spend money to save American lives. I began to worry that USAID staff would have to fund their own evacuations, and

communicated this concern to multiple Washington staff. I began to feel an intense sense of panic that my government might fully abandon Americans working for USAID in Kinshasa.

15. Washington staff, concerned that any spending not directly approved by then-acting Administrator Jason Gray would be met with accusations of subverting the executive order and swift retribution, determined that they needed to process a “waiver request” with approval from Acting Administrator Gray. Thankfully, the career staff took up this effort despite perceived risks that they may suffer retaliation for attempting to spend money to save lives. The Acting Administrator did not approve the waiver request until January 29, well after the evacuation had already begun.

16. Despite the lack of an approved waiver, USAID staff and their families participated in the evacuation from Kinshasa, and boarded small boats alongside friends and colleagues from other foreign affairs agencies to cross the Congo River to Brazzaville. Each individual was able to take only what would fit in their lap. For most families, this was one carry-on-sized bag per person. Staff remained in a hotel in Brazzaville for about two days before flying from Brazzaville to Dulles International Airport, landing in Dulles the afternoon of January 31.

17. By the time we landed in Dulles, news reports were swirling that President Trump and Elon Musk were actively planning to shutter USAID. While State Department and USAID staff welcomed us home and offered us food and warm clothing, we were being aggressively maligned by Musk and Trump as a “criminal

organization” composed of “marxists” who “hate America” that “needs to die.” Musk bragged about missing parties to “feed USAID into the woodchipper.” The President called USAID staff “radical lunatics,” both repeatedly and publicly asserted their intent to close the Agency.

18. After landing in Dulles, all evacuees were allowed two nights in the airport hotel in which to figure out what we would do next. This involved figuring out where we would live, how we would get around, where our children would go to school, and all other aspects of daily life in the United States. This is a stressful endeavor under the best of circumstances, but for USAID families, we did not know whether we would ever receive the housing allowances and other support payments that would normally be owed to evacuated families, as we did not know how long our Agency would exist.

19. To date we have still not received any of these payments, and USAID systems for processing and issuing such payments remain unavailable to USAID staff trained to use them. At the time of writing we have not yet even received the standard cost of living allowance (COLA) for Kinshasa that would normally have been paid to us weeks ago, before the evacuation.

20. As part of the evacuation instructions, staff were informed they must locate in the Washington, DC area so they could go to the office for in-person work—a supposed priority for the Administration. While family members could separate and go to alternative safe haven locations, employees were mandated to appear in the office. However, on February 3, the first workday after we arrived in the United

States, the USAID building was closed to staff. As of the time of this writing, it has never reopened. Despite being forced to take on expensive DC-area leases and costs, USAID staff have never been allowed to go to the office. Again, despite significant efforts by USAID administrative staff, thus far no evacuation support payments have yet been made to anyone from USAID/DRC.

21. The evening of February 4, after most USAID/DRC staff had already taken on leases and made longer-term life decisions such as where children would attend school, all USAID staff received an email indicating they would be placed on administrative leave effective Friday, February 7. The unsigned email provided no reason for the decision nor any information on the longer-term implications. No one at USAID or the State Department could answer how this would affect eligibility for evacuation support payments. Even as of the morning of Friday, February 7, USAID evacuees did not know how they would live the next day.

22. For my part, I have taken on a month-to-month lease of a furnished 2-bedroom corporate apartment for my 4-person family. I will not be able to afford to continue this lease if I do not eventually receive evacuation support payments. If USAID is shuttered, I would lose those payments and my salary, and my family would have no home to live in and no income to procure one. We have already left nearly all our belongings in Kinshasa, save our four carry-on-sized suitcases. Even if those belongings were returned to us as part of the proposed mass repatriation of USAID Foreign Service Officers, we would have to pay to store them because we presently have no place to keep them.

23. The chaos of the Trump administration's haphazard and extra-Constitutional shutdown of USAID has caused my family and me immense emotional distress by contributing to the already intense sense of panic and uncertainty of the riots in Kinshasa. My family has left behind our home and all our belongings as a result of our service to the United States of America overseas, and we have been harassed through a combination of malignant, violent rhetoric and threats of financial ruin from the officials effecting this shutdown.

24. Trump administration officials have cut off my Agency's capacity to pay me what I am owed. I have undertaken significant costs and liabilities in good faith reliance on the government's obligations to my family and me for my service. These obligations, including Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), Special Evacuation Allowance (SEA), Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE), and hotel costs have not yet been paid or reimbursed, and it is unclear at the time of writing whether they will ever be paid. Despite my need to make long-term financial and other commitments regarding my life and lifestyle, the Agency that employs me makes unexplained short-term threats to my employment with no indication of any plan for what I can expect in the coming days, let alone in the coming months.

25. USAID/DRC staff are patriots who are proud of our service and have risked our lives and our family's lives to serve our country overseas in one of the most difficult environments on Earth. We deserve respect and dignity, or at least the payments promised to us for our sacrifices. To date, we have received none of those things.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on February 9, 2025.

/s/ Marcus Doe
Marcus Doe

**House Foreign Affairs Committee
The Honorable Andrew Natsios
February 13, 2025
Congressman Kweisi Mfume**

Thank you Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and to all of our witnesses for appearing here today.

As the Ranking Member of the House Oversight Government Operations Subcommittee for nearly three years, I am committed to combatting true government waste, fraud, and abuse.

Much has been made over the alleged “government waste” perpetuated by USAID. Various thoughts come to my mind when I hear these claims. One of them is this: It is never wasteful to use our position as a leader of the free world and economic superpower to help those in need.

The fact is, the United States spends not 30%, not 10%, but just 1% of our total budget on foreign assistance. That foreign assistance is a key part of our soft power abroad, helping us to win influence via minds, saved lives, and diplomacy, instead of bombs and bullets.

It is difficult for me to stomach arbitrarily cutting life-saving foreign aid to those in need in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Haiti, and so many other countries, while House Republicans introduced a budget resolution just this week that would raise our deficit by \$4.5 trillion over the next 10 years via tax giveaways to the wealthy.

Question Block 1 – Damage to Organizations

I have heard from constituents in my District and organizations around the country that USAID implementing partners are being forced to lay off large numbers of staff as they seek the money they are owed for work they completed before the current administration came into office. Some organizations may be forced to lay off as much as 60% of their staff.

1. Mr. Natsios, can you please speak to the long-term impacts these mass staffing cuts will have on the effectiveness of USAID and soft power projection?

Not Answered

2. Mr. Natsios, in your experience, will impacted organizations be able to easily restart their operations if their funding is blocked for a full 90 days?

Not Answered

The fact is, if USAID implementing partners lose their capacity after an extended funding freeze, there is no easy way to bring them back. I urge Secretary Rubio to take every action necessary to ensure that, at a minimum, USAID pays implementing partners for work they have already done to keep us from losing their capacity forever.

After all, nothing would be more wasteful than squandering the years of knowledge and expertise held by USAID employees and implementing partners that have been in this field for years.

Question Block 2 – Supporting Those Who Support Us (Special Immigrant Visa Holders) -
Question Suggested by Global Refuge

When President Trump signed his so-called “Reevaluating and Realigning US Foreign Aid” Executive Order”, it didn’t just affect USAID – it also affected critical work done by the State Department to support Special Immigrant Visa Holders, also known as SIVs. These SIVs, are immigrants to the United States that assisted the United States military in Iraq and Afghanistan, were legally vetted, and allowed to enter the United States in return for their service.

SIVs receive initial support funding from the State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration for their first ninety days in the country. I have heard from aid groups in my district that this funding has been paused, leaving immigrants that served our country with no funding for basic necessities while they get on their feet.

3. Mr. Natsios, how do you believe this affects our ability to build alliances to protect our American troops in the future?

Not Answered

4. Mr. Yoho and Mr. Natsios, do you believe that supporting SIVs constitutes government waste?

Not Answered

**House Foreign Affairs Committee
Questions for the Record
The Honorable Ted Yoho
February 13, 2025
Congressman Kweisi Mfume**

Thank you Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and to all of our witnesses for appearing here today.

As the Ranking Member of the House Oversight Government Operations Subcommittee for nearly three years, I am committed to combatting true government waste, fraud, and abuse.

Much has been made over the alleged “government waste” perpetuated by USAID. Various thoughts come to my mind when I hear these claims. One of them is this: It is never wasteful to use our position as a leader of the free world and economic superpower to help those in need.

The fact is, the United States spends not 30%, not 10%, but just 1% of our total budget on foreign assistance. That foreign assistance is a key part of our soft power abroad, helping us to win influence via minds, saved lives, and diplomacy, instead of bombs and bullets.

It is difficult for me to stomach arbitrarily cutting life-saving foreign aid to those in need in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Haiti, and so many other countries, while House Republicans introduced a budget resolution just this week that would raise our deficit by \$4.5 trillion over the next 10 years via tax giveaways to the wealthy.

Question 1 – Damage to Organizations

I have heard from constituents in my District and organizations around the country that USAID implementing partners are being forced to lay off large numbers of staff as they seek the money they are owed for work they completed before the current administration came into office. Some organizations may be forced to lay off as much as 60% of their staff.

Congressman Yoho, I understand from your testimony that you believe in the importance of foreign aid, but also believe it needs a hard “reboot”.

Are you concerned that a total pause of funding will destroy our capacity to resume any sort of foreign assistance moving forward?

ANSWER: It depends on the program and its effectiveness and alignment with America’s foreign policy. A complete pause on a bad program will not hurt. A temporary pause will not be detrimental on an effective program that aligns with the USG policies and the needs of the recipient country. These changes will be welcomed by those countries. In the end it will

strengthen the relationships between US and recipient nations while projecting the best of American soft diplomacy.

The fact is, if USAID implementing partners lose their capacity after an extended funding freeze, there is no easy way to bring them back. I urge Secretary Rubio to take every action necessary to ensure that, at a minimum, USAID pays implementing partners for work they have already done to keep us from losing their capacity forever.

After all, nothing would be more wasteful than squandering the years of knowledge and expertise held by USAID employees and implementing partners that have been in this field for years.

Question 2 – Supporting Those Who Support Us (Special Immigrant Visa Holders) -
Question Suggested by Global Refuge

When President Trump signed his so-called “Reevaluating and Realigning US Foreign Aid” Executive Order”, it didn’t just affect USAID – it also affected critical work done by the State Department to support Special Immigrant Visa Holders, also known as SIVs. These SIVs, are immigrants to the United States that assisted the United States military in Iraq and Afghanistan, were legally vetted, and allowed to enter the United States in return for their service.

SIVs receive initial support funding from the State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration for their first ninety days in the country. I have heard from aid groups in my district that this funding has been paused, leaving immigrants that served our country with no funding for basic necessities while they get on their feet.

Mr. Yoho and Mr. Natsios, do you believe that supporting SIVs constitutes government waste?

ANSWER: The Trump Administration from a former member of congressman’s perspective is going through a triage evaluation of all programs via their “Reevaluating and Realigning US Foreign Aid exercise. The purpose is to ultimately make all programs more efficient and effective while meeting the needs of the recipient country and aligning with the policies of the US that were stated clearly by Secretary Rubio, ie, “our aid programs must make America safer, stronger and more prosperous.”

To answer your question, no, I do not think supporting SIV’s constitutes government waste provided they were legitimate when the SIV’s were issued with the proper oversight and vetting and meets the required stringent security checks. These programs will be brought back rather quickly but the needed pause by this administration was needed. It will be inconvenient for a period of time but unfortunately necessary due to the past mistakes.