



**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS**
Chairman Brian Mast

MEMORANDUM

TO: House GOP Leadership, House Foreign Affairs Committee Republicans

FROM: House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Brian Mast

DATE: February 3, 2024

RE: Review of U.S. Foreign Assistance, the State Department, and the U.S. Agency for International Development

Background

As members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee we work on behalf of the American people in ensuring foreign assistance spending and State Department and USAID priorities align with U.S. interests and promote American values abroad.

In fulfilling this critical function, our first Committee action in the 119th Congress was to conduct a probe examining State Department and USAID foreign assistance priorities under the Biden administration. As part of our thorough examination, we reviewed millions of dollars State Department and USAID grants awarded over the past four years and hosted a closed-door briefing with career State Department officials in the final days of the Biden administration. This undertaking offered a comprehensive and unvarnished look at exactly where Americans tax dollars were spent abroad.

What we found was the State Department and USAID had completely lost sight of their mission. For decades, U.S. foreign assistance has been an important extension of American influence and power on the global stage. One would expect the State Department and USAID to ensure that these programs promote policies, values, and objectives consistent with the national security interests of the United States and widely held American values. It would also be reasonable to expect the agencies to maintain meticulous and transparent records of all such programs, because awards, as federal expenditures, are subject to congressional oversight. However, the Biden State Department and USAID failed on both counts.

Rather, a small cadre of career State Department and USAID bureaucrats deployed billions of dollars in foreign grants and awards through an opaque and antiquated process. Hard-earned American tax dollars were spent on funding drag shows in Ecuador, proselytizing atheism in Nepal, counseling migrants to circumvent U.S. immigration law, providing condoms to the Taliban, and spreading LGBTQ awareness throughout the globe. Furthermore, State Department officials have demonstrated their disregard for Congressional oversight as evidenced by their obligation of millions of dollars for a series of foreign grants funding radical initiatives in the final days of the Biden administration over objections by our committee.

Such misguided foreign spending damaged the United States and significantly benefited our foreign adversaries during the Biden-era.

President Trump is taking swift action to end this wasteful spending and restore the United States position as a global leader. As Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I stand in full support of President Trump and Secretary Rubio's decision to thoroughly review U.S. foreign assistance spending and revamp the structure of USAID.

The potential merger of USAID and the State Department has been a proposal supported by Democrats and Republicans for years.¹ Madeleine Albright advocated for the merger of USAID under the State Department during her tenure as secretary of state under the Clinton administration.² Then Senator Joe Biden also advocated for the merger in 1999 while serving on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.³ And in 2001, the bipartisan Hart-Rudman Commission recommended that USAID "be fully integrated" into the State Department, noting that "development aid is not an end in itself, nor can it be successful if pursued independently of other U.S. programs and diplomatic activities."⁴

President Trump is the only one who has the political strength and willpower to make these much-needed reforms a potential reality.

This is the bold action the American people have demanded from their leaders. But we must remain clear-eyed that Democrats will continue to attempt to mislead the American people about President Trump's measures to regain control of U.S. foreign assistance. We can fully expect them to fight to tooth and nail to allow unelected bureaucrats to continue funding their far-left projects.

As Republicans, we have an opportunity to give the American people a voice, and to regain control of the State Department and USAID. We have a duty to ensure U.S. foreign assistance aligns with American values.

We have seen the truth about where American tax dollars have gone over the past four years. A summary of findings from our review of State Department and USAID foreign grants are provided in subsequent sections of this memo. As members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, we must remain committed to honesty and transparency in the face of Democrats' attempts mislead the American public.

¹ <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://securitypolicy.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Integrating-USAID.pdf>

² <https://www.kff.org/news-summary/former-secretary-of-state-albright-discusses-concerns-over-agencys-proposed-reorganization-funding-in-devex-interview/>

³ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-105shrg47753/html/CHRG-105shrg47753.htm>

⁴ <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/nssg/PhaseIIIFR.pdf>

Talking Points for Members

- President Trump’s 90-day foreign aid pause and review is already paying dividends for America. The State Department is rooting out waste, blocking radical initiatives, and exposing bureaucrats that are working counter to America’s national security interests.
- America is spending \$40 billion in foreign aid annually. Much of those aid dollars are not even reaching the intended recipients and are instead propping up an NGO industrial complex that has, for years, swindled the American taxpayer. Foreign aid should not be paying the brunch tabs of NGO executives at Le Diplomate in Washington, D.C. It should be feeding starving children in war-torn countries.
 - *Foreign Policy* noted in June 2022 that “Biden’s Foreign Aid Is Funding the Washington Bubble.”⁵
 - A USAID report published in June 2023 under the Biden administration noted that just one out of every ten dollars reaches actual people in need abroad.⁶
 - Even groups like Unlock Aid have raised concerns about America’s “phantom aid” problem.⁷
- A freeze is needed because it's nearly impossible to evaluate foreign aid programs when they are on autopilot. After all, the groups being funded — both inside and outside of the government — have no incentive to share programmatic-level details so long as the money keeps flowing. A 90-day review period, with commonsense waivers for truly life-threatening situations, is the only way to give the State Department the time needed to root out waste.
- President Trump’s initial executive order outlining the 90-day review period created several important exceptions, including “emergency food assistance.” Secretary Rubio also has created an exemption for “life-saving medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence assistance, as well as supplies and reasonable administrative costs as necessary to deliver such assistance.”
- Contrary to misleading claims by Democrats, USAID has not been eliminated yet.
- The White House has cited, among others, sections 7063 and 7015 of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2024, by which the administration may potentially “expand, eliminate, consolidate, or downsize covered departments, agencies, or organizations.”
- The potential merger of USAID and the State Department has been a proposal supported by Democrats and Republicans for years. Madeleine Albright advocated for the merger of USAID under the State Department during her tenure as secretary of state under the

⁵ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/06/us-foreign-aid-biden-build-back-better-world-development/>

⁶ <https://www.unlockaid.org/follow-the-money>

⁷ <https://depts.washington.edu/globalhealthjustice/what-is-the-problem-with-international-aid/>

Clinton administration. In 1999, then-Senator Joe Biden also advocated for the merger while serving on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

- Joe Biden and former Secretary of State Antony Blinken engaged in a last-minute spending spree before leaving office. In the last month of the Biden administration alone, Congress was notified of nearly **\$1.5 billion in foreign aid** the State Department sent overseas. This included:
 - \$15.5 million for organizations like The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association and promoting radical social agenda in places like Zimbabwe, El Salvador, and Lebanon.
 - \$11.5 million for gender programming throughout the State Department.
 - \$300 million for environmental resilience in Guatemala.
- That is on top of millions spent on radical, far-left programs throughout the Biden administration. Several egregious examples captured in the summary of findings include:
 - \$15 million for condoms to the Taliban through USAID.
 - \$446,700 to promote the expansion of atheism in Nepal through the State Department.
 - \$1 million to boost French-speaking LGBTQ groups in West and Central Africa through the State Department.
 - \$14 million in cash vouchers for migrants at the southern border through the State Department.
 - \$20,600 for a drag show in Ecuador through the State Department.
 - \$47,020 for a transgender opera in Colombia through the State Department.
 - \$32,000 for an LGBTQ-centered comic book in Peru through the State Department.
 - \$55,750 for a climate change presentation warning about the impact of climate change in Argentina to be led by female and LGBT journalists through the State Department.
 - \$3,315,446 for “being LGBTQ in the Caribbean” through USAID.
 - \$7,071.58 for a BIPOC speaker series in Canada through the State Department.
 - \$80,000 for an LGBTQ community center in Bratislava, Slovakia through the State Department.
 - \$3.2 million to help Tunisian migrants readjust to life in Tunisia after deportation through the State Department.
 - \$16,500 to foster a “united and equal queer-feminist discourse in Albanian society” through the State Department.
 - \$10,000 to pressure Lithuanian corporations to promote “DEI values” through the State Department.
 - \$8,000 to promote DEI among LGBTQ groups in Cyprus through the State Department.
 - \$1.5 million to promote job opportunities for LGBTQ individuals in Serbia through USAID.

- \$70,884 to create a U.S.-Irish musical to promote DEI in Ireland through the State Department.
- \$39,652 to host seminars at the Edinburgh International Book Festival on gender identity and racial equality through the State Department.
- \$2.5 million to build electric vehicle charging stations in Vietnam's largest cities through USAID.
- \$425,622 to help Indonesian coffee companies become more climate and gender friendly through USAID.