

# Save USAID, Benefit America

## Grassroots Outreach Toolkit

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## Background

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The people who will stop this gutting of a Congressionally-authorized agency aren't in Washington. National press coverage is great, but it won't do the job. It takes constituents like you, all across the country, to make it uncomfortable for all Members of Congress to

stand by and watch quietly as one of our country's most effective national security tools is dismantled.

**This toolkit is for friends and family of USAID - people who know the value of United States investments in stemming conflict, growing crops, protecting water resources, and more - both for the people in faraway places and for those of us here at home.**

On February 26, the Trump administration cancelled thousands of USAID programs — including hundreds of life-saving activities — to skirt its legal obligations. The administration claims it has conducted a “good-faith, individualized assessment of [each] contract or grant,” but this simply cannot be true after just 30 days in office, especially without the staff required to undertake such a review, because they have been put on administrative leave, terminated, or furloughed. According to Charles Kenny of the Center for Global Development: If the administration’s submission to the court that Secretary Rubio “**made a final decision with respect to each award, on an individualized basis,**” **were true it would mean that the Secretary reviewed one award every minute and twenty seconds in the eight days between 2/18 and 2/26.**

**It is urgent that we stop this destruction, before it’s really too late. YOUR voices across the country are needed urgently - before this story is out of the headlines.**

## Actions to Take Now

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1. Check out the [key arguments](#) below and on [USAIDStopWork.com](https://USAIDStopWork.com) and choose which ones you think are most important in your city, town, or state, or simply the one(s) you care about most.

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[congressaidletters@gmail.com](mailto:congressaidletters@gmail.com)

2. Email, call, or meet with your [Members of Congress](#) - Democrat and Republican alike or [attend a Town Hall](#) when your Members are in town during recess. (Meetings and asking questions at Town Halls are most impactful!)
3. Help us get these arguments out to the press in your area: write an [op/ed](#) or submit a [letter to the editor](#).
4. Share accurate information about USAID on your social media accounts. Find posts you can reuse on @USAIDStopWork and @FriendsOfUSAID on Instagram and TikTok, or make your own with a key fact or stat you find compelling.
5. Tell as many friends as you can - help everyone understand that USAID is an essential tool for protecting Americans at home and abroad. Combat misinformation one person at a time.

## Contacting Your Members of Congress

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As a constituent, your Representatives and Senators work for you. This means that you don't have to have any experience or any special expertise to email, call, or meet with them. Meetings have the most impact, followed by calls, and emails.

You can try to meet with the Member themselves, especially if you or someone in your group is a prominent member of your community or has some type of direct relationship to the Member, such as a shared religious or professional affiliation. If that doesn't work, meeting with their foreign policy staff is just as good!

**To find out who your Members of Congress are, click [here](#) and enter your address.**

To request a meeting, start by contacting the district office closest to you. To call or email your comments, you can reach out to any district or Washington, DC, office.

**In-District:** To find your Members of Congress' in-district and Washington office locations and phone numbers check out their websites.

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**In DC:** To reach a Washington office you can call the number on your Members of Congress's websites or call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to speak to your Representative's/Senator's office.

**Email:** You can email your Members of Congress through an advocacy campaign such as [USAIDStopWork.com](https://USAIDStopWork.com) or [RESULTS.org](https://RESULTS.org), or you can craft your own email and send it directly.

- If you email using a pre-written campaign like these two, please make sure to personalize it - tell them why you care, as a constituent, and why they should care, as your representative.
- If you plan to email directly without using an online campaign, call their office first and ask for the name and email address of their foreign policy staffer so you get to the right person.

**Additional tips and tools to support your Congressional outreach are available [here](#)**

## *What to Ask them To Do*

Any action to prevent the further illegal dismantling of USAID is a useful action at this time.

There are a few ways you could phrase your call to action:

- I am asking you to speak out about how the destruction of USAID will harm the American people, our economy, and our security.
- I urge you to hold the Administration accountable for implementing laws that created USAID and established many of its programs.
- Please leverage the upcoming appropriations process to ensure that the Administration spends funds for foreign aid as Congress intended, and that USAID remains funded for the next year.
- I urge you to insist on a meaningful plan to reform U.S. foreign assistance. What is happening now is chaotic, inconsistent, and reflects no meaningful review of evidence, no consultation, and no respect for existing laws. This is making America less safe, less secure, and less prosperous.

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## *Tips for Meeting with Congressional Offices*

- **Request a meeting.**

- Find your Representatives and Senators' local phone numbers on their website.
- When you call, identify yourself as a constituent in the opening sentence and request a meeting with the staffer who covers foreign affairs, to discuss U.S. foreign aid.

*Note: if you don't get through to a person, try again. If they refuse to meet with you, ask why. If they still refuse, follow up with a call to the Washington Office, and send an email as well.*

*Some offices have stopped answering their phones - while this is a dereliction of their duty to represent constituents, there is also nothing you can do about it. If you encounter that, send an email and move on.*

- **Prepare for your scheduled meeting.**

- Do a little research into your Representative/Senator to help choose an argument that might resonate with them.
  - Are they a member of a church that partners with USAID? Are they a farmer or a military veteran? Were they in the Peace Corps or did they do a church Mission trip? What have they said about foreign aid in the past?
- Take notes on the points you want to make.
- Keep in mind what you want them to do.
- Note down any stories or statistics you want to mention, along with the sources. Write down more than you think you will need.
- Use whatever prep methods work for you - your goal is to feel confident and comfortable.
- If possible, bring along a "leave behind": a short (no more than 2 pages) document that succinctly makes the key points you want the office to remember.

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- For example you might print out the state-level agriculture impacts infographics linked [below](#), or create a document, drawing on a variety of resources, that highlights multi-sectoral impacts such as through health partners and universities, as well as job losses.
- If you plan to write an [op/ed](#) or [letter to the editor](#), bring along a copy (even if it hasn't been published)

*Note: You can take meetings alone or with friends, OneAid state group members, fellow members of your house of worship, or any other group to which you belong.*

- **Dress professionally, stay calm, and be yourself.**

- Arrive at the offices 5-10 minutes before your scheduled meeting time. Be prepared to wait.
- Shake hands if offered, be respectful. Introduce yourself and thank the staff for meeting with you.
- Open by telling the staff what you want to discuss and briefly tell them why.
- If you have already written an op/ed or a letter to the editor, whether or not it was published, give the staffer a copy in your meeting and use it as the basis for your conversation.
- Tell them what you want your Representative/Senators to do. Then give an example or a data point about why it matters to you and your state or community.
- Be open to any questions they have. Answer them to the best of your ability.

*Note: It is better to say "I don't know, can I get back to you" than to make up a response. You don't have to be an expert in everything to have a valid reason to meet with your elected representatives!*

- Feel free to take notes - and please share them afterwards with [us](#).
- Before you go, ask for the business card(s) of the person/people with whom you've met, so you can follow up.
- Say thank you, again.

*Note: Try not to be offended or take it personally if the meeting is short or if the staff asks you no questions. There can be many reasons for a very brief meeting with limited interaction, and not all of them are bad.*

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- **Follow up.**
  - After the meeting, send an email thanking the person you met with.
    - Reiterate your ask of your Representative/Senator, and provide any additional information that you promised, or links and attachments that you think help to advance your argument.
    - If you publish a blog, an op/ed or a letter to the editor after the meeting, send it to the person you met with.
    - Close by offering to serve as a resource, or to connect the staff with others they may wish to speak to.

## *Tips for Asking Questions at Town Halls*

Members of Congress often host Town Halls during Congressional recesses, or “in district work periods.” These are platforms for constituents to ask questions, tell their representatives about their experiences and priorities, and hear from neighbors about their concerns. Often, local media will attend, too. That means that Town Halls are a premium opportunity to get your message out in a context where your Members of Congress have agreed to listen to you - in other words, it’s not dependent on someone answering their phone or emails!

RESULTS, an amazing grassroots organization focused on eliminating domestic and global poverty, has an awesome how-to on Town Halls. Click [here](#) to check it out!

Ahead of time, make a note about what you want to say and what you want to ask. You can draw on the [key asks](#) and [key arguments](#) in this document for help.

## *Tips for Calling Your Members of Congress*

You can call offices anytime, multiple times, and just leave a message. Or you can use a campaign like [5 Calls](#).

- Ask to speak to the staffer who handles foreign policy.
- If you are not connected to that person, leave a message.
  - Open by saying you are a constituent and you are calling to urge Representative/Senator [name] to take urgent action to stop the illegal dismantling of USAID.

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- Then use one sentence to express why your Member of Congress should care, drawing on the tips above for preparing for a meeting.
- Close by saying you would appreciate a call back and leave your name, address (to prove you're a constituent) and phone number.

## Tips for Emails to Congressional Offices

- Identify yourself as a constituent in the opening sentence
- Start with a clear point about why you are writing and what you want them to do about it.

*Example: I am a constituent and I am writing to encourage you to take urgent actions to stop illegal attempts to dismantling foreign assistance and to hold President Trump accountable for implementing relevant laws and spending Congressional appropriated funds accordingly.*

- Provide an argument, ideally one relevant to your state (see [below](#)).
- Repeat your call for action.
- Sign the letter respectfully.
- Provide contact information in case the office wishes to follow up - most do.

## Media Outreach

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### Op/Eds

Submitting an opinion piece or editorial (Op/Ed) to your local paper is a great way to start a conversation in your community and with your elected officials. Most Congressional offices have staff that read local papers to learn what their constituents care about, and you can use a published Op/Ed to continue conversations with your neighbors, houses of worship, and even with decision-makers in Washington, DC.

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Anything that is timely and has broad public appeal makes a good topic for an Op/Ed. Topics on the periphery of national news often make for good Op-Eds because they're timely, and they face less competition from other submissions, versus front-page news that everyone is chasing.

**Right now, USAID is making national news, but the most important stories to most Americans aren't being told. That's where you come in.**

Usually, Op/Eds should be between 650-800 words, but check your newspaper's website for more guidance about what they publish and how to submit.

*Note: You can also publish your thoughts on a platform like Substack. These won't be picked up in Congressional press clips, but if you don't succeed in placing your op/ed in a more traditional news outlet, don't waste your work! Look for other places to post it so you can make the most of it. Then send it to your Members of Congress no matter where it appears.*

## Steps to Take

1. Review the Op/Ed submission guidelines for your target newspaper, and be sure you follow them.
2. Write your op/ed (see below)
3. Find the name and email address of the Opinion and Editorial pages editor for your target newspaper.
4. Craft a pitch email of approximately 100 words that grabs the editor's attention right away, and then tells them why they should read your submission.

*Note: don't send attachments, instead copy-paste your op/ed into the body of the email, below your pitch.*

5. If they agree to publish, make a plan for using the published Op/Ed to continue your efforts. Options include emailing it to your Members of Congress, requesting a meeting with them to discuss it, posting it on your social media accounts, and more.

*Note: publishing the Op/Ed is exciting, but it doesn't close the deal. Using it as an entry point for more conversations helps take your efforts all the way.*

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## Writing Tips

### Know your argument:

- Choose something from the [key arguments](#) below or research your own - but make sure you are clear about the point you want to make.
- Think about the counter-argument: what would people say who disagree with you? Can you counter that? If not, do a bit more research.
- Gather facts. Sources include links throughout this document, plus [www.foreignassistance.gov](http://www.foreignassistance.gov), [www.usaidstopwork.com](http://www.usaidstopwork.com), Friends of USAID, and many articles published around the world. You can also look at the data visualizations [here](#) for an easy way to understand the global impact of illegal terminations of USAID contracts and grants.

### Make it easy and compelling to read:

- Use active voice and plain language.
- Keep sentences short.
- Aim for a simple explanation of your argument. Every sentence should have a point - no fillers!
- Eliminate anything that doesn't support your core argument.

### Structure your Op/Ed carefully:

- Open with a short "lede" - an attention grabbing sentence that ties to current events and introduces your argument.
- Spend 1-2 paragraphs laying out your argument. It's ok to include your own opinion alongside research, facts, stats, and quotes from experts.
- Dedicate one paragraph to countering those who disagree with you. Acknowledge the counter argument, but assert why you disagree (with more evidence you haven't already provided above)
- Write a short closing that reiterates your argument. If you want, you can also add a call to action, such as urging people to call your Members of Congress.

*Note: If the newspaper or online journal agrees to publish your piece, you should expect your submission to be edited. As long as it remains accurate and retains the key messages you want to deliver, don't worry too much about stylistic edits. HOWEVER, if an editor tries to change your*

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message in a way that is no longer yours, don't be afraid to speak up, or to withdraw your submission.

## Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are another great tool for getting your opinion in front of your Members of Congress and your community. They are included alongside Op/Eds are other articles in clip books compiled by district staff, and can give you a great reason to follow up with them to discuss your published comments.

Letters to the editor generally must be in response to something the newspaper has already published. They are much shorter than an Op/Ed but still require you to make a strong argument.

## Steps to Take

1. Identify a recent article published by your newspaper to which you want to respond. Plan to submit your letter as soon as possible after the article is published - ideally within 24 hours.
2. Review the Letters to the Editor submission guidelines for your target newspaper, and be sure you follow them.
3. Write your letter, usually approximately 100-150 words (see below)
4. Find the name and email address that your newspaper uses to receive letters to the editor and send it off according to the instructions provided.

Note: don't send attachments, instead copy-paste your op/ed into the body of the email, below your pitch.

5. Make a plan for how you will use your letter - whether it's published or not!

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## Writing Tips

- Start with your first reaction to the article you are responding to. Did you spot an error or misinformation? Did you feel that part of the story was missing? Do you have a specific experience or expertise to add to the conversation?
- Write from your own perspective, in your own voice and in your own words. Letters are less formal than an Op/Ed but they can be just as powerful.
- You are allowed to express emotion in a letter to the editor, more so than with an Op/Ed, because letters generally prioritize reader reactions whereas Op/Eds are about making an argument.

### Structure your LTE carefully:

- Open by identifying the article to which you are responding and identifying any special connection you have to the topic.
- Directly refute or counter anything in the article that needs correcting - briefly cite your source if you can.
- Use a few sentences to back up your argument or claim, again briefly citing any sources whose data you use.
- Issue a call to action - for your community, the newspaper, or your Members of Congress

*Note: it's ok to name them directly - it increases the chances they will see it!*

- Sign the letter with your name and, if you want, your job title or other relevant information that gives you credibility on the topic.

*Note: don't worry if you aren't professionally tied to USAID or to the research community, being a reader of the newspaper is enough justification for writing a letter!*

**Want some help drafting an op-ed or letter to the editor? [This group](#) has your back!**

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## Basic Facts about USAID

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Established by Congress and President Kennedy in 1961, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the world's premier humanitarian and development agency. In 1998, Congress passed a law making USAID an independent agency of the Federal government.

USAID's 10,000+ employees work along-side America's diplomats and service members overseas, as a key part of national security and 'soft power'. As one former Marine General said, 'If we do not fund USAID we'll need to buy more bullets'. USAID's non-political career workforce and partners respond to crises in people's greatest hour of need, help uplift communities to become free from poverty and hunger, and support human rights for people living under repressive regimes.

The Agency's mission contributes to America's prosperity as many of our key trading partners were once aid recipients, and it opens markets to U.S. business and farmers. It keeps America safer by preventing the spread of infectious diseases from reaching our shores. And, it wins over hearts and minds by demonstrating America's values abroad. Its annual budget of \$38 Billion (2023) accounts for less than 1% of all federal spending.

Since USAID's creation, 99 of its employees (Americans and local nationals) have died in the line of duty while carrying out its mission.

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## Key Arguments

There are many resources available to help you research or develop key arguments. They can also be used as “leave behinds” - a document you bring to your meeting and give to staffers to provide them with additional information, or one you email afterwards to answer any questions they might have had. Great resources include:

- **USAID Stop Work [state level resources](#), including lost funding and [agricultural impacts](#):** State-level data and documents summarizing economic cost to states of the foreign aid freeze, such as USAID-funded agricultural commodity purchases, research, and other partnerships.
- **OneAID Community [fact sheets](#)** on issues such as national security and food aid.
- **US Global Leadership Council [rapid response hub](#)**, a collection of fact sheets similar to the above and a collection of op-eds by prominent figures (including military, faith-based organizations, Republicans) that may be useful for formulating talking points, especially for more skeptical offices.
- **[Kaiser Family Foundation](#) fact sheets and analysis** on the impacts of cuts to global health programs.

*Note: If a staffer is interested in speaking to a former USAID specialist on any topics below, or would like to learn more about USAID's programming or ways of working, please reach out to [congressaidletters@gmail.com](mailto:congressaidletters@gmail.com) to be connected with the appropriate person in Washington D.C.*

### Why USAID matters now more than ever:

- **Foreign assistance = national security:** unstable states become footholds for authoritarian regimes, armed conflict and wars, and terrorist groups. Creating more stability ultimately keeps Americans safer, at home and abroad.
- **Economic development today = market access tomorrow:** If we want to win the competition for the 21st-century global economy, we need USAID at the table helping countries create strong markets that can grow the global economy and trade with American companies.
- **Soft power = smart power:** USAID is America's soft power machine. Every dollar invested in USAID pays dividends in stability, partnerships, and global goodwill. Trust and goodwill lead to political alliances, economic partnerships, and improved safety for Americans at home and abroad.

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*When USAID shows up, the world is safer—and America is stronger and more prosperous.*

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## *Impact on Lives Around the World*

- **For less than 1% of the Federal budget, the United States has an outsized impact on the lives of people worldwide. From disasters to disease and everything in between, America has a moral imperative to help. In turn, USAID efforts build goodwill with countries and communities that creates an unparalleled return on investment for Americans.**
- **According to recent [modeling](#), a complete cessation of US funding without replacement by other sources of funding would lead to dramatic increases in deaths from 2025-2040: 15.2 (9.3-20.8) million additional AIDS deaths, 2.2 (1.5-1.9) million additional TB deaths, 7.9 million additional child deaths from other causes, and 40-55 million additional unplanned pregnancies. There is still time to reverse this.**
  - **HIV and Tuberculosis:** USAID stop work orders have left HIV and tuberculosis patients in a lurch, unable to access essential medicines that can save their lives. When people don't finish their course of treatment, drug resistance becomes more likely - and so does death.
    - It is estimated that more than 2,000 people have already contracted HIV since the foreign aid freeze began, because they can no longer access prevention services and information once provided by USAID.
    - If USAID and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) are dismantled, the HIV pandemic could fully resurge within four short years.
  - **New Diseases:** In January, a "mystery disease" began killing people in Democratic Republic of Congo. Without USAID support, it will be more difficult for public health officials to identify and contain this illness before it crosses borders.
    - As with the 2012 Ebola outbreak, diseases that start in remote corners of sub-Saharan Africa eventually make their way to American communities.

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- **Starvation:** In Bangladesh, one million refugees are now missing essential food provided by USAID humanitarian operations. In Sudan, two million people dependent on USAID-supported food pantries are now having to look elsewhere to eat.
- **Child Survival:** As many as 28 million children under the age of 5 would go without nutrition support each year if USAID is dismantled. These children could face physical stunting, cognitive delays, and even death without support.
- **Clean Water:** If USAID is not protected, we miss out on the chance to provide nearly 2 million people per year with clean drinking water, which not only keeps them alive but provides a return of \$4 for every \$1 invested.
- **Violence against Women and Children:** Without USAID programs to prevent gender-based violence, lives will be lost, societies and economies will be further disrupted, and migration to the United States may increase. This is especially true of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, which have some of the highest rates of femicide in the world.

## *Impact on American Farmers*

- **American farmers, food producers, and universities are proud partners in work to fight hunger at home and around the world. The stop work order on USAID partnerships combined with the near-total elimination of USAID staff will hit farm communities in their pocketbooks, and cost an estimated 200,000 jobs and \$65 billion in exports nation-wide.**
  - More than 450 large-scale American farmers across the country have lost funding partnerships to provide humanitarian aid with USAID.
  - USAID's inspector general estimated that nearly \$490 million worth of American-grown food is currently stuck in U.S. ports, rotting instead of increasing American economic returns and saving lives worldwide.
  - If American farmers can no longer sell their surplus to do good, they will lose. For example:
    - In **Iowa**, 8 large scale farmers fulfill direct orders for humanitarian assistance, while private sector partner Almaco is working with USAID to modernize soybean production - benefiting farmers everywhere.

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- In **Missouri**, 12 large scale farmers fulfill direct orders for humanitarian assistance, while the University of Missouri researches ways to modernize irrigation systems - benefiting farmers everywhere.
- In **Texas**, 9 large scale farmers fulfill direct orders for humanitarian assistance, 8 public and private universities receive funding from USAID to support agricultural research that benefits farmers in America and worldwide, and 6 companies, including Kerurig Dr. Pepper, are USAID partners.
- Kansas State University found that USAID's partnerships with American farmers, agriculture businesses, and universities returns \$8.52 for every one dollar of foreign aid invested.

***More state level agriculture partnership data is available [here](#). National level data are [here](#).***

## *Countering Terrorism*

- **In critical countries around the world, USAID initiatives to prevent terrorists from gaining ground are currently frozen globally, suspending essential U.S. national security activities that train local security personnel and law enforcement, combat the smuggling of weapons, and work with local institutions to detect terrorism financing that could ultimately be used to target Americans.**
  - According to USAID's own [Inspector General](#), the dismantling of USAID creates a risk of U.S. dollars falling into the hands of terrorist groups.
  - USAID stabilization programs are critical to supporting the transition from violent conflict and instability to democratic leadership and growth.
    - Just as Syria's new government takes shape, critical civilian stabilization programs – that work alongside the U.S. military – to hold back an ISIS resurgence were suspended in the region. At the Al Hol and Al Roj camps, where close to 10,000 ISIS fighters and 40,000 women and children remain detained and displaced, security guards walked off the job at the camps following the initial freeze.

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- USAID's programs to provide basic services, such as water, toilets, schools, and health clinics, have been almost entirely terminated. This creates an opening for extremist groups and terrorist organizations to offer a solution for people to meet their basic needs. In turn, this makes America less safe.
- General violence, traditional power dynamics between men and women, and vulnerabilities built into government, financial, and social systems have [strong linkages to violent extremism](#). USAID's work with women, families, and marginalized groups introduces new perspectives that help to counter those harmful narratives.
  - In [Mindanao, Philippines](#), USAID helped build out the Filipino economy fairly so that insurgency groups were less likely to hash out grievances through violence. Without USAID interventions, post-pandemic economic growth will remain unsteady and more likely to re-open old wounds.
- USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) pushes countries out of conflict and onto a positive development trajectory. OTI's model is meant to be quick, flexible, and brief by design. OTI supports key political transitions and post-conflict stabilization in countries like Bosnia, Nigeria, and Pakistan; OTI has also worked regionally to prevent conflict in Coastal West Africa, using taxpayer resources more efficiently than waiting to respond to humanitarian crises after they explode.
  - These programs found success in countering violent extremism by engaging youth, improving government effectiveness, and addressing the economic drivers of violence. Without these programs, the threats to U.S. national security increase and can spark new regional conflict.

**For more information you can use to develop key arguments or share with Congress, see this [OTI toolkit on countering violent extremism](#).**

## *Outcompeting China, Constraining Russia, and Securing America's Future*

- **Investing in USAID and foreign assistance is one of the smartest and most cost-effective ways to make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.--and our best chance to outcompete China on the global stage.**

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**The dismantling of USAID and the termination of foreign assistance projects is a gift to our adversaries.**

- It is creating a vacuum for the People's Republic of China (PRC) to reshape the global order in their favor, undermining American soft power, strategic interests, and national security.
- Russia is openly celebrating the collapse of USAID, viewing it as a strategic win in its campaign to stifle democracy, silence independent voices, and expand authoritarian influence from Eastern Europe to Central Asia to sub-Saharan Africa. By removing a critical pillar of U.S. support for civil society, human rights defenders, and election monitoring, we are handing Vladimir Putin a propaganda victory and making it easier for the Kremlin to suppress dissent and manipulate foreign elections unchallenged.
- **The China Challenge:**
  - **China isn't wasting time:** Since January, the PRC has made overtures to countries like Nepal and Colombia—promising to fill the gaps USAID left. ([Beijing 'ready' to fill the void left by US in Nepal](#), [Sin Usaid: el hueco enorme que dejaría Trump en la sociedad civil](#))
  - **CIDCA is copying our playbook:** The China International Development and Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) is funding projects almost identical to USAID's. See Cambodia, where USAID funded a demining program ([How is China Capitalizing on the Dismantling of USAID?](#)) and Uganda, where USAID funded a program to reduce vulnerability to famine and drought ([USAID Disengages, China Gains Ground](#))
  - **The PRC shows up when we don't:** China has also provided disaster response and humanitarian assistance to Burma after the recent earthquake, while the US response was glaringly absent. ([After devastating earthquake in Myanmar, China filling vacuum left by USAID's absence](#))
  - **Giving up on foreign assistance is a lose-lose:** Without USAID, critical, life-saving programs vanish—and China doesn't need to match our investments dollar for dollar to win hearts, minds, and influence.
  - **Countering China is a bipartisan imperative:** *"I have felt for a long time that USAID is our way to combat the Belt and Road Initiative, which is China's effort to really gain influence around the world, including Africa and South America in the*

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*Western Hemisphere,"* - Republican Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi ([February 2025](#)).

- Even as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) growth slows and countries face debt hangovers and “buyer’s remorse” from flashy infrastructure projects, China’s sights are set on the developing world. **This is our moment to act.**

**More information on the China threat is available in these fact sheets:**

[USAID Disengages, China Gains Ground](#)

[How is China Capitalizing on the Dismantling of USAID?](#)

[Chinese Assistance Won’t Replace USAID. That’s the Problem](#)

[Into the Breach: Will China Step Up as the U.S. Retreats on Global Development?](#)

- **The Russia Risk:**

- **The Russian government celebrated USAID’s demise**, which was a critical part of bringing democracy to Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain, and state media has called for Russia to fill USAID’s void, allowing it to court key diplomatic and economic relationships in the Middle East and elsewhere.
  - Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman [Maria Zakharova called USAID](#) “...a machine for interfering in internal affairs, it is a mechanism for changing regimes, political order, state structure.”
  - Former Russian president Dmitri Medvedev, currently the deputy chairman of the country’s security council also cheered, [calling it a “smart move.”](#)
- **The United States is rapidly losing influence, as Russian state media is left to dominate the information space and countries are turning to Putin for development support and economic partnerships:**
  - **USAID [support to alternative Russian-language media](#) has been terminated.** Such media is the only alternative to Russian state-sponsored media outlets, part of US efforts to ensure that alternative reporting on the war against Ukraine and on political developments in Russia reaches a Russian audience.

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- It also limits Russian exposure to sympathetic depictions of the United States, increasing our country's vulnerability to attacks from those who wish us harm.
- **Allies of Putin have [praised](#) the dismantling of USAID**, which only strengthens Russia's presence in Africa and the Middle East..
- **In West Africa, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso's military juntas have cut ties with American and European allies and turned toward the Kremlin.** [Russia recently signed a partnership](#) with them to strengthen security, manage natural disasters and improve internet access—in exchange for access to critical minerals and gold, which they need to circumvent global economic sanctions.
  - Instability in these countries as well as the Sahel fuels jihadism, illegal migration, and trafficking, providing fertile ground for recruitment by terrorist groups.
- **Russia is in the mix alongside China in the competition for critical minerals, such as those needed to produce cell phones. The more ground and alliances the United States cedes, the greater the chance of America being edged out by countries that have economic support to offer - like USAID used to do.**
  - The US, France, Germany, and the UK have all been seeking [rare minerals in Central Asia](#). Kazakhstan is a major producer of several critical minerals, including uranium, titanium, zinc, and lead, and possesses significant reserves of rare earth elements like lithium, beryllium, and tantalum. However, given Russia and China's deep political, financial, trade, and infrastructure investments in Kazakhstan, and the US cancellation of all USAID energy, water, and health programs in Kazakhstan, we will be hard-pressed to compete against our key adversaries for these resources crucial to US economic growth.

## *Countering the Flow of Narcotics Into the United States*

- **Civilian programs in Central and South America that combat transnational criminal organizations and drug trafficking have been halted, which risks opening the door for more illegal narcotics, including fentanyl and other synthetic opioids that are killing thousands of Americans.**
  - As one example, funding for narcotics interdiction in Colombia is paused, which totals \$380 million annually. This suspension is relieving pressure on cocaine-funded transnational criminal organizations and gangs, and risks driving increased chaos and mass migration to the U.S. southern border.
  - USAID's work with the Government of Colombia on land titling, licit development, and supporting farm workers into alternative livelihoods has been terminated even though it has been effective in transitioning people away from coca production. Evidence shows that after receiving a land title in exchange for voluntarily giving up coca farming, replanting drops to 10%.
  - Alongside the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and INTERPOL, USAID programs work against the interests of transnational crime networks. These networks rely on the illicit economy like [trafficking in persons \(TIP\)](#) and [wildlife trafficking](#) as sources of funding, both of which USAID programs were designed to counteract. In 2025, with the USAID cuts, young people are more likely to be sex trafficked or sold into slavery, and rare animal species are more likely to end up in wet markets that lead to disease outbreaks.

## *Protecting US and Allied Troops*

- **USAID and the Department of Defense are long-time partners because the American Armed Forces know that USAID's humanitarian, health, and development programs build goodwill that prevents conflict and extremism, and protects soldiers' lives.**

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- General Anthony Zinni, USMC (Ret.) [stated](#) of the pause on U.S. foreign assistance: *"I worry that the call for a freeze on all U.S. foreign assistance – at a time when our rivals are playing to win – takes the U.S. off the playing field and diminishes U.S. strength around the world. America's military leaders understand that Peace Through Strength rests on the three-legged stool of our defense, alongside diplomacy and development. This is a moment to use a strategic approach to strengthen all our tools of U.S. national security, so we are as effective as possible to help protect the security of American people."*
- **USAID programs enhance the safety and security of American troops around the world by reducing the number of weapons and mines in threatening environments, providing key information about emerging threats due to unique access in hostile zones, and reducing potential hostility to our troops by building positive relationships with communities worldwide, on behalf of the American people.**
  - U.S. efforts to properly **dispose of weapons** in conflict zones are currently frozen or cancelled, jeopardizing fragile ceasefires and peace agreements in places like Lebanon, which is critical to protecting Israel.
  - **Demining programs** have also stopped globally, putting thousands of people at risk including U.S. military personnel. Program halts include Cambodia, Laos, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vietnam – all in a region where the U.S. is vying for influence and partnership as we compete with China.
  - USAID often has **better access to areas of the world that are in or near conflict than Department of Defense** counterparts. This presence has provided early warning of emerging conflicts and with a much lower footprint and cost compared to military expenditures, and has also paved the way for goodwill for American troops if they arrive in the region.
  - USAID had led for implementation of the **Global Fragility Act** - bipartisan legislation signed in 2019 - that specifically called for better integration of US development, defense, and diplomatic efforts in conflict zones.
    - USAID's demise - combined with the sunseting of the State Department's Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations announced on 22 April - effectively guts implementation of this law,

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leaving the Executive branch unable to implement programs Congress has deemed critical to protecting Americans.

- **USAID and the U.S. Armed Forces collaborate regularly to bring the best of each to the most critical places in the world, because the military knows that USAID has skills and relationships no other government agency can match:**
  - Led by U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa (SETAF-AF), the Justified Accord exercise brings together 20 countries, alongside USAID, to increase readiness for peacekeeping missions and crisis response that protect Americans, enhance humanitarian response that demonstrates American goodwill, and build the capacity of partner governments to disrupt activities that would hurt America and our allies.
  - Through the Joint Humanitarian Operations Course, USAID trains the U.S. Armed Forces, including the Army Reserves, to understand and coordinate with government and civilian responses to disasters and crises. The U.S. Department of Defense is often the first representative of the United States to reach the scene; this knowledge keeps them safer and more effective, protecting U.S. tax dollars and our troops alike.

## *Loss of American Jobs*

- **When a major U.S. Government Agency goes out of business, the consequences ripple across the country. As of April 2025, all of USAID's employees and many partner employees have received Reduction in Force notifications or lost their jobs, totalling an estimated 51,000 jobs lost in 43 states across the country, and an estimated 171,000 jobs lost worldwide. The longer the Administration is able to continue its cuts to USAID staff and programs, the more this number will grow, taxing state unemployment benefit coffers and reducing local consumer power.**
  - USAID's entire 10,000+ person staff around the world has been terminated with immediate effect, or received Reduction in Force or termination notices. By September 1, no one will be left, unless Congress acts now. Job losses continue to grow as a result of program cancellations and the ripple effect on the U.S. economy won't be far behind.

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- **Despite multiple court cases that are considering the legal merits of these actions to dismantle USAID, nearly all judges hearing related cases have reinforced a common message: Congress controls the purse, Congress must exercise its authority to prevent actions that are illegal under current law.**
- In addition to USAID staff, whose jobs are currently threatened, universities, non-profit organizations, and businesses across the country have contracts with USAID that pay for staff as well as activities.
  - In **Alabama**, a \$5 million grant to Tuskegee University is now on hold - threatening jobs and the local economy.
  - **Colorado** stands to lose \$34 million in frozen USAID contracts and grants. Everyone who implements those activities now faces a risk of unemployment.
  - Last year, USAID partnerships in **Louisiana and Nebraska** contributed \$6 million to each state's economy.
  - The University of **Utah** is facing the loss of a \$19 million grant to improve Pakistan's education system.

***More information on state-level impacts can be found [here](#) and [here](#). These documents also make great leave-behinds for your Congressional meetings.***

## *Upholding the Will of the American People*

- **USAID's budget last year was \$40 billion. This is less than 1% of the federal budget. It's approximately the same amount of money that Americans spend on pet food each year. Eliminating USAID will *not* balance the Federal budget. But it will threaten the American economy. And it goes against the will of the American people.**
  - [Polling](#) indicates that most Americans (68%) believe that the U.S. foreign assistance budget should, at least be maintained at its current levels, if not increased.
  - Moreover, a recent [poll](#) found that 89% of Americans - Democrats, Republicans and Independents - believe that the United States should spend at least 1% of its budget on foreign aid.

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