

----- Original Message -----

From: "Liz Schraye, USGLC" <liz.schraye@usglc.org>

To: Alex Shakow <ashakow@comcast.net>

Date: 11/09/2024 12:16 PM EST

Subject: my takeaways from the 2024 election

Hi Alex –

After a wild campaign season, 158 million Americans went to the polls to elect our next set of leaders up and down the ballot. Come January, a new Administration and new Congress will have to tackle an enormous inbox of global threats and challenges from our rivals.

**Please read below for USGLC's takeaways and click for our full 2024 Election Analysis** – *our take on how the issue of foreign policy impacted the elections, and how the elections could impact foreign policy.*



Remember, USGLC is not about a "red wave" or a "blue wave" but rather about ensuring an "engaged wave" of bipartisan policymakers championing American global leadership. That's why since 2008, we have led a nationwide initiative to meet hundreds of candidates running for office across the political spectrum, to educate and engage them on the importance of America's role in the world to our kitchen table issues.

Without question, there will be challenges ahead – the global threats are not letting up, and political uncertainties remain. We address the opportunities and challenges in our takeaways, and as always, I welcome your thoughts.

Wishing you a meaningful Veterans Day weekend as we thank our fellow citizens for their unwavering service to our country and our freedom.

As always, I thank you for your partnership,

Liz  
Liz Schraye, USGLC

---

# 2024 Election Analysis: Top Takeaways

November 9, 2024

» [Click here for full analysis](#)

USGLC's top takeaways on the nexus between foreign policy and the 2024 elections, with particular focus on international diplomacy and development, and what it could mean for the future of America's global leadership:

## 1. Huge Inbox of Global Threats.

- **Threats from America's rivals:** Regardless of the election outcome, it was always clear that active wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, growing humanitarian crises, and converging threats from America's rivals in Russia, Iran, China, and North Korea would ultimately land on the desks of our newest tranche of policymakers come January.  
» Check out [USGLC's own polling](#) showing vast majority of voters concerned about global threats
- **Economic concerns still most salient for voters:** While pre-election Pew data found more than 6 in 10 voters viewed "foreign policy" as "very important" to their vote, exit polling reinforced the truism that voters' primary focus was on the economy: when asked to prioritize the *most* important issue from a list of options – "foreign policy" was at the bottom at only 4% – well behind domestic priorities like democracy (34%), economy (31%), abortion (14%), and immigration (11%).
- **Joining a global trend:** In this "year the world votes" where billions of people across the globe went to the polls in over 70 nations, the U.S. now joins a wave of similar races where incumbent candidates were rejected. Richard Haass, former President of the Council on Foreign Relations, summed it up this way, "Incumbents of every political stripe have lost nearly everywhere around the world in this year of elections, and Kamala Harris was the incumbent here."

## 2. President Trump's Return... On Foreign Policy, it's Complicated.

- **Welcome back:** With the re-election of President Trump in non-consecutive terms for the first time since President Grover Cleveland won in 1884 and 1892, we are faced with both new opportunities, and also old anxieties when it comes to complexities on foreign policy positions overall, and on funding levels for development and diplomacy in particular.
- **On the one hand:** At the beginning of President Trump's first term, his then-OMB Director proposed a 32% cut to the U.S. International Affairs Budget. A bipartisan majority in Congress quickly rejected it as "dangerous for American interests". But with a different political landscape today, it is less likely that the new 119th Congress would respond in the same way to a significant round of proposals to cut resources for development and diplomacy. Additional anxieties, including over America's commitment to alliances and multilateral engagement, have already resurfaced.
- **On the other hand:** President Trump's first term also included significant policy achievements in global development and diplomacy, which could be building blocks in a second Administration: creating the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to amplify private sector investment in less-developed nations; the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative led by Ivanka Trump to empower millions of women entrepreneurs around the world; the Abraham Accords to normalize relations between Israel and a series of Arab nations for the first time in decades; and promoting locally-sustainable development programs through USAID's innovative Journey to Self-Reliance.
- **His vision:** During his victory speech from the Palm Beach Convention Center at 2:30AM on Wednesday, President-elect Donald Trump didn't say much about foreign policy, but he did say, "I'm not going to start a war, I'm going to stop wars," and mentioned his plans to impose tariffs.

## 3. Bipartisan Pro-Engagement Congress Set to Return.

- **Senate Flipped Red, House Likely to Follow:** While Republicans have flipped control of the Senate, as was predicted, and they appear poised to secure control of the House with a razor-thin margin, compromise and bipartisanship will remain important – including when it comes to foreign policy. And with pro-engagement Members in both chambers and on both sides of the aisle, USGLC

is optimistic on continued support for U.S. global leadership when the 119th Congress is sworn-in come January.

- **Friends in High Places:** From party leadership to the top posts on key committees to influential voices within each party, the 119th Congress will see the return of Members who share a deep commitment to America's role in the world, and the imperative of diplomacy and global development. Importantly, this includes the "big four" Appropriations Committee leaders – **Senate Chair Susan Collins (R-ME)** and **Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-WA)** and **House Chair Tom Cole (R-OK)** and **Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)** – who will be at the center of all-important spending decisions.
- **Bipartisan Champions Ascend:** This cycle saw several familiar faces from the House elected to the upper chamber, all of whom are longstanding champions of America's global engagement, and who have worked closely with USGLC during their tenure in Congress – including **Senators-Elect Andy Kim (D-NJ)**, **Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)**, **Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)**, **John Curtis (R-UT)**, **Adam Schiff (D-CA)**, and **Elissa Slotkin (D-MI)**. Expect these experienced legislators, many with national security expertise, to hit the ground running and have outsized influence despite their Freshman status.
- **USGLC Leaders Head to Congress:** Our coalition will see two more former USGLC State Advisory Committee members sworn in as members of the House in January – **Yassamin Ansari (D-AZ-03)** and **Michael Baumgartner (R-WA-05)** – joining a growing list of 14 bipartisan former USGLC State Advisory Committee members who now serve in both chambers of the Congress.
- **Policy Snapshot:** As Congressional Republicans prepare to implement a conservative agenda and address what House leadership views as “out of control government spending,” non-defense budget cuts are expected. However, there is sure to be powerful pushback from bipartisan leaders who support cost-effective investments in America’s civilian development and diplomacy toolkits and want to focus on efforts to outcompete China, counter foreign malign information, grow export markets critical to our economy at home, enhance transparency of foreign assistance, and boost support to U.S. partners from Israel to Taiwan.  
» [Download the full PDF report](#) to view the detailed analysis of the 119th Congress.

#### 4. Foreign Policy Emerges on Campaign Trail.

- **Global instability pushed its way onto the campaign trail:** In hundreds of candidate meetings across the country, USGLC advocates noticed a tangible increase this cycle in candidate interest on foreign policy topics: especially Russia and Ukraine, as well as the Middle East in the aftermath of October 7. Unlike the 2022 election cycle where some candidates wouldn’t even meet, saying “I’m not a globalist,” we heard the contrary this cycle with some candidates going out of their way to say, “I’m not an isolationist.”
- **Senate debates highlighted foreign policy:** Across the more than 30 U.S. Senate debates in two-dozen states, foreign policy was a featured topic in the overwhelming majority, with more than 2.5 cumulative hours of discussion on global competition with China; threats from rivals, like Iran sowing disarray in the Middle East; support for partners like Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan; concern for global humanitarian needs, including in Gaza; and even the international dimensions of the fentanyl crisis.
- **Candidates’ platforms too:** More than two-thirds of all candidates running for U.S. Senate, profiled a national security or foreign policy platform on their campaign web sites. Senator-Elect Jim Justice (R-WV) opened his platform, stating “like President Reagan, Governor Justice believes in peace through strength.” Winning incumbent Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) titled his platform, “Keeping America Safe and Strengthening Diplomacy.”
  - Across Republican and Democratic candidate national security platforms for the House and Senate, many were pro-engagement and expressing how “America must lead on the world stage, or someone else will.” The top foreign policy topics to emerge on the Republican and Democratic candidate platforms were not dissimilar, but their emphases were slightly different:

Most Mentions	Republican	Democratic
#1	Israel	Israel
#2	China	Allies

#3	Allies	Ukraine
#4	Russia	Russia
#5	Iran	China

- **Broadcast ads:** While some in Congress vocally opposed support for Ukraine and other foreign assistance measures during debate on the National Security Supplemental earlier this year, a comprehensive review of general election political ads found that negative views on foreign assistance was not even remotely a focus of broadcast political advertising. In fact, out of close to 1.2 million general election ad runs on the airwaves in the 2024 race—in the most expensive race in history—USGLC’s research team, in partnership with MediaRadar CMAG, identified just 5 general election ads (0.01% of ads run) that criticized support for Ukraine or other U.S. foreign assistance programs.
- **On the trail:** Elevating critical national security issues, former Trump Administration State Department Spokesperson **Morgan Ortagus**, **Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)**, and America First Policy Institute’s **Chad Wolf** traveled the country with Polaris National Security in the final days of the election hosting candidate forums in battleground states, including in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and Wisconsin. And at one of these town halls with now **Senator-Elect David McCormick (R-PA)**, **Senator Graham** discussed how “Food Security is National Security” stating that “we need a strategy to help Africa – that’s literally starving – to come up with technology from the United States to... develop seeds that will be drought resistant.”

## 5. GOP’s Reagan-Era Mantra Takes Root: Peace through Strength.

- **Channeling Reagan:** While there are clear differences and headwinds on foreign policy that will remain within the GOP, President Ronald Reagan’s “Peace Through Strength” foreign policy mantra was heard loud and clear as a rallying cry on the campaign trail. President Trump’s former national security advisor **Robert O’Brien** often points out that Reagan’s commitment to “peace through strength” was not only about military strength, but also about the integration of “smart diplomacy and hard power and soft power” to keep Americans safe.
- **The GOP Platform:** The chapter on foreign policy in the GOP platform was titled “Return to Peace through Strength” and included calls to “strengthen alliances” and “strengthen economic, military, and diplomatic capabilities to protect the American way of life from the malign influences of countries that stand against us around the world.”
- **The Republican Convention:** At the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, USGLC [hosted](#) a panel with more than a dozen top national security and foreign policy leaders making the conservative case for international engagement, including top officials from President Trump’s first term who said:
  - “We want that peace through strength... And this is where diplomacy is really important.”  
– Elbridge Colby, former DoD Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense and Strategy
  - “If you want peace through strength, that’s a moment to celebrate the State Department... a whole bunch of people at the State Department who would die for their country.”  
– Ric Grenell, former Acting Director of National Intelligence
  - “What I see in the future is free men and free women and free markets being promoted...I see a country that’s confident and an economy that’s booming and working with our neighbors and our friends and our allies, and I see freedom back on the march.”  
– Robert O’Brien, former National Security Advisor
- **America First, Not America Alone:** In the first Trump Administration, President Trump’s foreign policy leadership team were the first to often say “America First does not mean America alone.” The America First Policy Institute’s book on national security has an entire section that builds on “Peace through Strength” and “Bold Diplomacy” as a critical tool to advance America’s interests. When USGLC [hosted](#) AFPI’s Executive Director Chad Wolf at the annual Global Impact Forum, he stated clearly that “America First is not America alone, and certainly not isolationism.”
- **Project 2025:** Meanwhile, there are other GOP voices with more inward-looking views, including from the Project 2025 Playbook lamenting how “US foreign aid has been transformed into a massive and open-ended global entitlement program captured by – and enriching – the progressive left” and calling for “deep cuts to the international affairs 150 Account.”

## 6. Unfinished Agenda Looms Large in Lame Duck Session.

- **Lame Duck Decisions:** The 118th Congress returns next week with a pressing to-do list for the lame duck session. On the docket – approving emergency disaster aid and the defense authorization bill as well as avoiding a government shutdown when the current stopgap funding bill expires on December 20th. With just five short weeks before the Congress is set to adjourn, Members will be faced with tough choices on a tight timeline – ramping up the pressure at a time when post-election tensions will be running high.
- **Finding Consensus on the International Affairs Budget:** When it comes to spending decisions, policymakers have major differences to sort through – including on funding for America's civilian development and diplomacy tools. While Senate Appropriators proposed a 6% (\$3.4 billion) increase for the FY25 International Affairs Budget, the House approved a steep 12% (-\$7.3 billion) cut. It remains to be seen if a bipartisan deal can be struck in the lame duck and how resources for diplomacy and development will ultimately fare.
- **Key Reauthorizations Hang in the Balance:** Action on a number of important foreign affairs authorizations remain uncertain – despite many having strong bipartisan support. From a clean five-year reauthorization of PEPFAR to combat HIV/AIDS, to important reauthorizations of global development tools like the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which both expire next year, to the State Department's Global Engagement Center to counter foreign malign influence – the current Congress has several opportunities to take bipartisan action to strengthen our development and diplomacy toolkit.

» [Download the full PDF report.](#)

---

**U.S. Global Leadership Coalition**  
1120 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036  
[Unsubscribe](#) | [USGLC.org](#)

Not on our list yet? [Subscribe Here](#)