

Two Officials Who Helped Dismantle U.S. Aid Agency Are Named as Its New Leaders.

By [Karoun Demirjian](#) and [Mattathias Schwart](#), *The New York Times*, 19 Mar 2025

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he had canceled 83 percent of U.S.A.I.D.'s programs. A federal judge found that efforts to shutter the agency were likely unconstitutional.

Pete Marocco, the State Department official who oversaw the Trump administration's efforts to dismantle the main government agency distributing foreign aid, announced in an email on Tuesday night that he would be replaced at the agency by two officials who had been involved in making the cuts.

Mr. Marocco said in the email that he would remain at the State Department as director of foreign aid, but that two other officials would handle what remains of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Those officials are Jeremy Lewin, who has been working for the cost-cutting task force led by the billionaire Elon Musk, and Kenneth Jackson, a State Department official who was named the acting president of [the U.S. Institute of Peace](#) this week.

Mr. Lewin will be the aid agency's deputy administrator for policy and programs, and function as its chief operating officer. Mr. Jackson will be deputy administrator for management and resources, and serve as its chief financial officer.

The changes were effective immediately, according to the email, a copy of which was seen by The New York Times and several people who received it. A State Department spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Mr. Marocco's tumultuous tenure at U.S.A.I.D. was marked by drastic cuts as Mr. Musk's team tried to shut down the agency. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said last week that he had canceled 83 percent of the agency's programs. What used to be a staff of roughly 10,000 is now down to a skeleton crew.

On Tuesday, [a federal judge found](#) that the efforts to shutter U.S.A.I.D. were most likely unconstitutional.

But the changing of the guard may have little practical effect. State Department officials, including Mr. Rubio, have signaled that they [intend to move](#) U.S.A.I.D. programs that survive the administration's review to the State Department, where Mr. Marocco, as the director of foreign aid, is likely to have significant influence over how they will be run.

The State Department plans to reconstitute U.S.A.I.D. as the U.S. Agency for International Humanitarian Assistance and abolish its status as an independent agency, according to an

internal planning memo reviewed by The Times. Because of the way U.S.A.I.D. was established, Congress would have to approve changes the Trump administration makes to the agency.

If the planned changes take effect, the Trump administration intends to designate the leader of the renamed agency as the government's special coordinator for international disaster assistance, the memo said.

Wherever U.S.A.I.D. ends up being housed, it is expected to go through a significant reorganization, according to people briefed on the administration's plans, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss strategies still in development. At least some programs that focus on delivering lifesaving assistance, such as medicine, are likely to be preserved, as well as some programs that focus on national security, the people said. Most development assistance, however, has already been canceled.

Mr. Marocco's email also noted that Joel Borkert, who has been serving as U.S.A.I.D.'s acting chief of staff, would assume the role permanently. Marcus Thornton would serve as his deputy.

Mr. Borkert served in the Army before holding various roles at the State Department under President Trump and President Joseph R. Biden Jr., including positions in offices focused on crisis management, peacekeeping and hostage operations.

Mr. Thornton, a diplomat, [clashed](#) with senior Biden administration officials over his [anti-vaccine activism](#). He became prominent in conservative circles when he helped found Feds for Freedom, a group that fought mandatory Covid-19 vaccinations and supported Project 2025, the Heritage Foundation blueprint for overhauling the federal government.