

On State Reorg, "gutting of development expertise." By Helen Murphy, *Devex Newswire*, 23 Apr 2025

Diplomats in, experts out

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has dropped a sweeping plan to revamp the [State Department](#) into an ["America First State Department"](#) that will "make the State Department Great Again." **The reorganization cuts 17% of offices**, shuffles leadership, and sidelines what's left of USAID.

The biggest shake-up? **A new Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance**, aka F bureau, to coordinate foreign aid, but most funding decisions would shift to regional bureaus. **Critics say that will gut development expertise.** "We will have diplomats making deals and signing checks," says former USAID official Rob Jenkins.

The plan also folds or ditches offices focused on conflict prevention, criminal justice, and civil society. "From a foreign assistance point of view, it is an abomination," Jenkins adds.

Rubio insists this is about trimming "bloat and bureaucracy," posting on the social media platform X: "Today is the day. ... We are reversing decades of bloat." But the restructuring also **draws fire for potentially sidelining humanitarian priorities.** Former staff warn that the Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration, or PRM — which may take on much of USAID's role — lacks the capacity. "They aren't technical specialists," Jenkins says.

Rubio criticized bureaus like PRM and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor for promoting "radical causes" and promised they'll be brought "back to their original mission."

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen vowed to scrutinize the changes: "I will hold Secretary Rubio to his pledge to appear before our Committee."

Read: [State Department releases new 'America First' reorganization plan](#)