

Liz Schrayer Reports, and THE GLOBAL GAB: America Stepping Back, Rivals Stepping In, and Growing Action for International Assistance. USGLC, 3 Apr 2025

From Liz Schrayer -

Last week, I had the honor to walk the halls of Congress with some of America’s **most respected military leaders**—retired 4- and 3-star Generals and Admirals who are part of USGLC’s National Security Advisory Council. We met with top Senators and Representatives from both sides of the aisle, including the House Speaker’s and Senate Majority Leader’s offices, to make the case for **preserving and modernizing international assistance**.

Our leaders were clear: **reform is needed**, but if we’re serious about outcompeting China, keeping threats from reaching our shores, and defending the homeland, then we **cannot abandon the playing field to our rivals**.

Here is former SOUTHCOM Commander **General Laura Richardson** on [Newsmax](#) and [CNN](#) saying “**International assistance is not charity**,” but rather a deeply strategic lever of American power.



Much more to share below:

- Details of Secretary Rubio’s plans on **merging USAID into the State Department**;
- **Rivals stepping in** as America steps back;
- **Impacts of the aid cuts** to our economic and security interests;
- Groundswell of bipartisan voices that have already generated over **300,000 phone calls and letters to Congress**; and
- Flurry of op-eds in the national and local press, like former Trump-appointed Ambassador and Virginia **Governor James Gilmore** in [Newsmax](#) who wrote, “If we

remain on this course of abandoning foreign assistance, [the] world will be run by China and our adversaries.”

I also **submitted my testimony yesterday** to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs outlining an **affirmative reform agenda** that advances America’s national interests ([read it here](#)).

More on that soon, and in the meantime, we’re continuing to update [USGLC.org](#) with talking points, fact sheets, and op-eds.

Read on for more from our latest **Global Gab**.

Best,
Liz
Liz Schraye, USGLC

THE GLOBAL GAB: America Stepping Back, Rivals Stepping In, and Growing Action for International Assistance

April 3, 2025

RESTRUCTURING AID: The Administration moved on Friday to formally fold USAID into the State Department – transmitting a 12-page Congressional Notification that offers the first fulsome black and white insight into the Administration’s thinking on restructuring U.S. foreign assistance – and differs significantly from previous leaked proposals – while also leaving a lot of questions.

- The notification asserts what has been known for some time, that the Administration intends “to undertake a reorganization that would involve realigning certain USAID functions to the Department by July 1, 2025, and discontinuing the remaining USAID functions that do not align with Administration priorities.”
- On structure, the plan is to streamline and subsume USAID’s organizational chart into the most relevant corresponding State Department bureaus and offices (e.g. moving USAID’s regional bureaus into their corresponding State Department regional bureaus.)
- On personnel, the notification states that “substantially all” USAID personnel will be separated from federal service but will have the opportunity to compete for future

jobs. Notably, at this point the Administration says it cannot “accurately project its needs or the exact numbers of USAID personnel to be hired in connection with the realignment.”

RIVALS STEPPING UP. The U.S. intelligence community recently released its unclassified [Annual Threat Assessment](#), sounding the alarm on the increasing coordination of America’s rivals: **“Russia, China, Iran and North Korea—individually and collectively—are challenging U.S. interests in the world** by attacking or threatening others in their regions, with both asymmetric and conventional hard power tactics, and promoting alternative systems to compete with the United States, primarily in trade, finance, and security.”

- In the report, our intel community specifically warns that as the U.S. pulls back support for global health programs, “[China] might look to uniquely provide such supplies and medical aid to countries, more cheaply and at scales competitors cannot match, as a way to **boost its global influence at the expense of the United States.**”

AMERICA’S SHRINKING FOOTPRINT. Over the past couple weeks, additional tools of American diplomacy and development have been downsized while our competitors look to fill the void. (see fact sheet: [If America Doesn’t Lead, China Will](#))

- **U.S. Disaster Response Muted:** As the death toll continues to grow following the tragic 7.7 magnitude [earthquake](#) in Burma (or Myanmar), several regional [countries](#) – including **China and Russia** – **have stepped in to deliver disaster relief while the United States is largely absent.** In stark contrast from America’s historical [role](#) deploying quick-reaction **Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART)** for rescue operations, in the face of cuts, this time it was Chinese teams that arrived just 18 hours after the quake with more than 400 personnel and \$14 million in aid.
- **Freedom Broadcasts Switched Off:** America’s journalistic voice abroad is going silent at a time when our adversaries are getting louder. The shuttering of Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and Radio Marti has been met with cheers from authoritarian regimes that thrive on controlling the narrative.
 - **Chinese state-owned media** *The Global Times* [said](#), “The so-called beacon of freedom, VOA, has now been discarded by its own government like a dirty rag.”

- Margarita Simonyan, the head of **Russia’s state-controlled RT**, gloated, “Today is a holiday for me and my colleagues at RT and Sputnik... We couldn’t shut them down unfortunately, but America did so itself.”
- **Representative Young Kim** (R-CA-40), Chair of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, warned in a *National Review*[op-ed](#) that “gutting Radio Free Asia and other U.S. Agency for Global Media platforms counters the principles of freedom our nation was founded on and **cedes leverage to the Chinese Communist Party, North Korea, and other regimes.**”
- **More Cuts Coming:** Last week, the Administration notified Congress that it is seeking to cut nearly \$3 billion in fiscal year 2025 non-defense funds from the continuing resolution that Congress recently enacted and the President signed into law.
 - » **Read USGLC’s Full March 19 Budget Update [Here](#)**
 - This includes nearly **\$2.5 billion for the International Affairs Budget** designated as emergency funding under a 2023 two-year bipartisan spending deal. This move raised serious concerns from Republican Senate Appropriations Chair **Susan Collins** (R-ME) and her Democratic counterpart, **Patty Murray** (D-WA), who wrote a [letter](#) to the Administration challenging the power of the purse.
- **Embassy and Mission Closures:** An interagency review has been launched for other departments and agencies – including **DOD, DHS, DOJ**, and the **CIA** – to review U.S. embassies by region on a scale of 0 to 10, with a requirement that at least 25% of embassies in a region be marked as a 2 or lower. POLITICO [reports](#) that “while it’s not clear yet how many embassies would be closed, Secretary of State Marco Rubio is on board with cutting a significant number.”

SPEAKING UP FOR A #SaferStronger AMERICA. Over the past few weeks, USGLC’s network of bipartisan leaders across the country, small-business owners, farmers, faith leaders, and veterans have taken part in a **groundswell of action that has sparked over 300,000 phone calls and letters to Congress** sending a strong message that U.S. international assistance makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous here at home. You can watch [USGLC’s briefing here](#). Some highlights:

- **General Mark Hertling**[said](#): “International aid isn’t a charity—it’s a strategic investment in our national security.”

- **Governor David Beasley**[said](#): “Food is the pathway to peace... the lack of food is the pathway to war... If you're not going to [provide international food assistance] out of the kindness of your heart, then you'd better do it out of your national security interest and your financial interest.”

OP-EDS and QUOTABLES. Across the country, national leaders, military leaders, local business and community leaders, and more GOP leaders on Capitol Hill, have drawn attention to the dangers of America ceding the playing field to our rivals. Here’s just a snapshot of dozens of op-eds and quotes from the past couple weeks:



National Leaders:

- “From its beginning, U.S. development aid has been designed to advance U.S. interests... rooted in America’s greatness and goodness, and American strength.”
– **John R. Block**, President Reagan’s Secretary of Agriculture in [The Hill](#)
- “If we remain on this course of abandoning foreign assistance, [the] world will be run by China and our adversaries.”
– **Gov. James Gilmore**, President Trump’s first-term Ambassador to the OSCE in [Newsmax](#)
- “Foreign aid isn’t a globalist slush fund — it’s a lever of American might... As China stalks our hemisphere, we can’t ditch or minimize the use of that tool.”
– **Ronald Glass**, former U.S. Army Officer and State Department official in [DC Journal](#)



GOP Hill Leaders:

- **Congressman Don Bacon (R-NE)**: “Together we should work toward reforms that protect our farmers, ensure responsible spending, and maintain American leadership in the world.” ([Omaha World-Herald op-ed](#))
- **Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS)**: “I think we’re going to start hearing about disease-related assistance that not only affects hundreds of thousands of people but affects us on this continent pretty quickly... I think that once that’s brought to the attention of the Administration, that will be corrected.” ([source](#))
- **Senator Dave McCormick (R-PA)**: “I served in several senior roles in the government, in the national security arena, and I saw firsthand the importance of foreign assistance for our national security... I’m interested in foreign aid and

investment as an important arrow in the quiver for combating China's Belt and Road Initiative.” ([source](#))

- **Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK):** “Although I support measures to find inefficiencies within the agency, USAID’s mission to keep people healthy and safe in even the most remote corners of the world should not be eliminated.” ([source](#))



Military Leaders:

- “If Americans want to win... then we need international development, global health, and humanitarian assistance programs.”
– **Generals Anthony Zinni & Laura Richardson**, former CENTCOM and SOUTHCOM Commanders and Co-Chairs of USGLC’s NSAC in [The Hill](#)
- “Scaling back on aid potentially weakens our global credibility and national security.”
– **Lt. General Richard Newton** in [The Washington Times](#)
- “You’ve heard over and over again that nature abhors a vacuum; if we are not engaged, someone else will be.”
– **General Philip Breedlove**, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander in [Washington Post](#)
- “Gutting international assistance programs weakens our national security, eroding global influence, increasing strain on the military, and reducing the United States’ ability to help shape strategic outcomes.”
– **Vice Admiral Mike LeFever** in [The Cipher Brief](#)
- “Like smart preventative medicine, the work of USAID nips problems in the bud before they need very expensive major surgery.”
– **Admiral James Stavridis**, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander in [Bloomberg](#)
- “Aligning foreign aid with U.S. interests is common sense. But I’m concerned that we are weakening our status as a world leader by pulling the plug on critical programs.”
– **Admiral Timothy Ziemer**, former Trump NSC Global Health Director in [The Epoch Times](#)
- “Anytime that we the United States depart an area that we used to be in... it’s China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, are filling that void.”
– **Lt. General Mick Bednarek** in the [NY Post](#)



Local Leaders:

- **Alabama:** “[American foreign aid strengthens Alabama’s economy](#)” (Al.com)
“Businesses and employees depend on stable markets that foreign aid creates. In Alabama alone, organizations stand to lose a total of \$101 million.”
– **Anne Burkett**, Chair of the National Association of District Export Councils
- **Maine:** “[Maine’s economy depends on smart foreign aid](#)” (Portland Press Herald)
“While there is an ongoing debate on the role of government in int’l affairs, one thing is clear: Maine businesses, farmers, and families rely on int’l assistance programs.”
– **Captain Jim Settele**, USN (Ret.), University of Maine
- **Utah:** “[International assistance safeguards American values](#)” (Deseret News)
“My decades of service in the military taught me that foreign assistance and diplomacy are, in fact, profoundly important.”
– **Lt. Colonel Bruce Roberts**, USA (Ret.), CEO of August Mission
- **North Carolina:** “Make no mistake, foreign aid is not charity. It’s a strategic investment in our national security and a key driver of economic opportunity.” ([link](#))
– **Brianna Clarke-Schwelm**, Executive Director of the NC Global Health Alliance
- **Minnesota:** “All the food that we send overseas is raised right here locally within Minnesota. It’s directly coming from family farms.” ([link](#))
– **Gary Wertish**, Minnesota Farmers Union President
- **Ohio:** “International assistance creates ongoing goodwill toward the United States, saves lives, and contributes to our national security.” ([link](#))
– **Heather Hodges**, former U.S. ambassador to Moldova and Ecuador
- **New Mexico:** “In small U.S. embassies in Africa, where I served as an ambassador, Foreign Service officers work with local law enforcement to counter terrorism and international crime, and to safeguard vital maritime shipping lanes.” ([link](#))
– **Mark Asquino**, former U.S. Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea
- **Pennsylvania:** “Foreign assistance, done well, benefits Americans & American interests here at home and abroad... [it] represents less than 1% of the entire federal budget, while paying important dividends to every single American.” ([link](#))
– **Bob Hollister**, superintendent of the Eastern Lancaster County School District

COST OF CUTTING ASSISTANCE. The termination of thousands of USAID and State Department programs is already having [consequences](#) on lifesaving global health and food security initiatives, and is placing America’s own security and economic interests at risk:

- Two flagship U.S. global health programs – **PEPFAR and the Presidential Malaria Initiative (PMI)** – **have been severely curtailed** jeopardizing lifesaving care for tens

of millions of people to prevent the spread of HIV and malaria, along with America's earned goodwill and efforts to combat instability in fragile regions.

- Meanwhile, **China is taking full advantage of the U.S. stepping back**, with the Chinese Communist Party already stepping in to [replace](#) American support for demining programs in Cambodia, [working](#) on a \$3 billion deep-water port on Grand Bahama, signing new [contracts](#) across Africa, and signaling plans to [increase](#) its diplomatic programs by another 8.4% this year.
- US.-based companies, universities and non-profit organizations also [stand to lose](#) up to **\$28.9 billion and thousands more jobs** from the cuts to U.S. international assistance programs. Including:
 - In **Georgia** and **Rhode Island**, [factories](#) that manufacture and ship lifesaving therapeutics to 400,000 severely malnourished children had their **contracts abruptly canceled**, only to have them un-cancelled a couple days later, [leading to](#) “unparalleled uncertainty that is spreading... [for] American suppliers and farmers across 25 states.”
 - **13 American universities** have [shut down](#) their Feed the Future Innovation Labs – halting development of cutting-edge innovations that both benefit American farmers and help save lives around the world.
 - **KansasState** has [suspended work](#) on agricultural research valued up to **\$137 million**, one of the largest research grants in the school's history, that were helping Kansas farmers improve their resilience and productivity.
 - In **Florida**, aid contracts and grants [contributed](#) **\$13 million** to the state's economy last year alone, benefiting the University of Florida, Florida A&M, and Florida International University.

» Read the fact sheet “[Cuts Hurt American Farmers, Workers, and Businesses](#)”

U.S. Global Leadership Coalition

1120 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036

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