

Congress starts summer recess: what happened + what's next. The Global Gab, USGLC, 5 Aug 2025

With the threats and unrest on the global stage not letting up, Congress heads into its summer recess having wrapped up a swirl of actions on the international front. I wanted to share my readout on what just happened and a sneak peek of what to expect when policymakers return in September in terms of foreign policy and national security:

- Before leaving for recess, Congress passed a rescissions package that cancels nearly \$8 billion in previously approved funding for America's diplomatic and international assistance programs.
- I'll say bluntly that while this will not balance our budget, it will sadly undermine our security.

At the same time, I am proud of the successful effort our community made during the debate on this package – supporting a group of bipartisan Senators to make some important improvements including saving critical funding for PEPFAR and adding vital protections for life-saving global health, food aid, and security assistance for strategic partners.

- When Congress returns in September, they will turn their attention to next year's budget battle where the Administration has requested the smallest national security footprint since the lead up to WWII – particularly dangerous at a moment when China is increasing its diplomatic budget by 8.4% this year and our other rivals from Iran to Russia are looking for ways to undermine America's influence.
- That's one of the many reasons USGLC launched a new report '[***Economic Security is National Security***](#)' – with fresh research on the risks of American retreat against the benefits of deploying our full economic toolkit to grow export markets and add to the 40 million jobs already supported by international trade (Full report: [USGLC.org/Global-Economic-Hub](https://usglc.org/global-economic-hub)).

Read the GLOBAL GAB below for more on:

- **New USGLC Report:** Economic Security is National Security
- **Rescissions Recap:** Revised rescissions package passes
- **Budget Look-Ahead:** Look ahead to FY 2026 appropriations process
- **Gaza and Ukraine:** The latest as the President weighs in
- And former **Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL)** takes over as USGLC's Florida Co-Chair

I hope you are enjoying your summer and welcome your take on any of the items in this week's Global Gab.

Many thanks as always,
Liz Schroyer, USGLC

THE GLOBAL GAB: Congress starts summer recess: what happened + what's next, August 5, 2025

ECONOMIC SECURITY IS NATIONAL SECURITY. USGLC's [Global Economic Hub](#) released a marquee report exploring how policymakers can harness both defensive and offensive economic tools to outcompete China and Russia, win the technology and artificial intelligence race, and secure American interests on the global stage. Some highlights:

- Among the chorus of reactions to the report from bipartisan officials, military leaders, and business owners, retired Army **General Keith Alexander**—the decade-long director of the National Security Agency (NSA) – probably said it best: “As we go forward in the future contest, it can’t be just the military. What are the other elements of national power? The one that I think has been missing is our economic power... the publication that [USGLC] put out **helps set that framework for where we need to go.**”

» [Read the full report here](#)

RESCISSIONS PASS. For the first time in decades, Congress approved a rescissions bill to claw back billions in previously appropriated funding – most of which had just been approved in March. With narrow margins in both chambers, the final Senate vote was 51-48 to approve the rescissions, with Appropriations Committee Chair **Susan Collins** (R-ME) and Senator **Lisa Murkowski** (R-AK) voting against final passage, while the House cleared the measure by just 3 votes, with Representatives **Brian Fitzpatrick** (R-PA) and **Mike Turner** (R-OH) voting ‘no’.

- The package cancels **nearly \$8 billion for America’s international assistance programs**. These are programs that help fight global disease, feed the hungry, strengthen our allies and partners, confront our adversaries, and ultimately make our nation safer and more prosperous.
- After a 13-hour vote-a-rama in the Senate, only one amendment was adopted to alter the bill which eliminated the \$400 million rescission to PEPFAR and included protections for several other priority areas – including Maternal and Child Health (with senators calling out Gavi), Tuberculosis, Malaria, Polio, Nutrition, Feed the Future Innovation Labs, commodity-based food assistance, support for Jordan and Egypt, and the Countering PRC Malign Influence Fund. This came after an enormous outpouring by community leaders, military and farmer voices, on the

value of international assistance programs to save lives and protect American interests.

- “In a dangerous world where our rivals are playing to win, it’s self-defeating for America to unilaterally take critical tools off the playing field – including essential global health, food security, international development, humanitarian resources, and programs with allies and partners that leverage greater burden sharing, that deliver for the American people,” said **Liz Schroyer**, USGLC President & CEO.

» [Read USGLC's full statement here](#)

LEADERS SPEAK OUT. Military and national security leaders voiced strong opposition to rescissions and cuts to U.S. international assistance in recent op-eds:

- **Former Senator Norm Coleman** (R-MN) in the [Washington Times](#): "At a time when our rivals – China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea – are doubling down to threaten our citizens and undermine our interests around the world, this proposal would undermine the very tools America needs to compete and win on the global stage."
- **Former Senator Saxby Chambliss** (R-GA) in [Fox News](#): "From President Ronald Reagan’s Cold War diplomacy to President Donald Trump targeting Iran’s illicit nuclear program, one truth has never changed: when the United States shows up, the world is safer, and America is stronger... That’s why the rescission proposal being considered by Congress should concern every American who values national security, global stability and the economic well-being of communities right here at home."
- **Retired Admiral William H. McRaven** in the [Washington Post](#): "In my experience, those who served in USAID, the Foreign Service and the diplomatic corps... are as courageous, as heroic and as patriotic as any soldier I ever served with... and I have seen firsthand how they advance our national interests... **Underfunding the State Department will put every American, both at home and abroad, at risk.**"

LOOKING AHEAD TO FY26. With action on the rescissions package complete, Congress has made some progress on Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) spending bills ahead of a September 30th deadline to fund the government.

When it comes to resources for America’s diplomatic and international assistance programs, the House took action first – with the Appropriations Committee approving a 23% cut compared to last year. While still a significant cut, this is a far cry from the 49% cut proposed by the Administration and clearly moving in a more thoughtful direction.

» [For more details on the House proposal, read USGLC’s latest budget update HERE.](#)

Importantly, during the House Appropriations Committee mark-up, both Republicans and Democrats spoke out on the importance of protecting international assistance programs:

- **Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK):** “We champion American leadership in the face of bad actors, confronting Communist China, cutting off terrorist financiers in Iran and standing firm against the evil of Putin. And we reaffirm our steadfast support for our great ally Israel.”
- **Chairman Diaz-Balart (R-FL):** “Africa remains a key focus for our national security interests. Opening new markets for the United States, supporting faith-based organizations and trusted local partners creates stability and counters extremism and builds goodwill towards the United States... Our strategic competitors, whether it's China, Russia... are aggressively expanding influence across the continent, undermining democracies, destabilizing markets, and also cutting United States access to critical mineral supplies.”
- **Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT):** “We also do these things because they are in our own interest. They build influence, boost our global standing, and strengthen our national security. When we retreat from the global stage, China and Russia fill the gaps, and the world becomes a more dangerous place. Whose name is on that sack of flour? Whose name is on the door of the clinic? Whose name is on the schoolbook? The United States of America. It must remain that way.”
- **Rep. Lois Frankel (D-FL):** “I speak as the proud mother of a U.S. Marine veteran... When we cut aid, we risk increased war... The cost is not hypothetical. It hits our soldiers and their families the hardest. And let me remind you, the international budget was already less than 1% of our federal funding, but it delivers exponential return for our safety, prosperity, and moral standing—markets for American goods, stability abroad, protection from pandemics, fewer troops sent into harm's way.”

As we look ahead to September, we are waiting to see how the debate around resources for America’s international affairs tools unfolds in the Senate. Stay tuned for more on this front.

ON GAZA AND UKRAINE. USGLC hosted a timely and complex discussion with humanitarian assistance implementers in Gaza to discuss the latest after 20 months of war since Hamas’s barbaric attack on October 7, the hostages still being held, and the painful humanitarian crisis that led **President Trump** to warn about “**real starvation**” and the need for America “to be even more involved.”

- The White House’s Middle East envoy, **Steve Witkoff**, visited Rafah, Gaza on Friday alongside U.S. Ambassador to Israel **Mike Huckabee** to assess the humanitarian

situation. That day, the State Department confirmed a \$30 million dollar pledge for the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

- Over the weekend on PBS NewsHour, **Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)** said: “I think the humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire. All you have to do is watch the news reports coming out of Gaza to see the people who are desperate for food... We need to see many more aid convoys, and we need to make sure that the food gets distributed in a way that doesn't have Hamas or some other group taking that food away from the people who really need it, who are starving.”

Meanwhile, President Trump has shortened the **50-day deadline for Russia to reach an agreement with Ukraine** before imposing punishing new tariffs to just “10 or 12 days” after a meeting with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer. USGLC’s National Security Advisory Committee member, **Lt. General Richard Newton** penned an [op-ed](#) in the Washington Examiner explaining how “**supporting Ukraine and our partners is not an act of charity**; it is a strategic imperative and a matter of national interest.”

FLORIDA FRIENDS. Longtime Florida **Congressman Ted Yoho** (R-FL) has joined USGLC as the new Co-Chair of the [Florida Advisory Committee](#), alongside Florida’s former Chief Financial Officer **Alex Sink**. Yoho initially came to Congress as part of the 2012 Tea Party wave, skeptical of foreign aid spending, until congressional trips to Africa and Latin America led him to see international assistance as “a uniquely powerful soft diplomacy tool to strengthen the nation’s economy and national security.”

“Congressman Yoho is an important addition to our leadership, providing a powerful fiscal-conservative voice amplifying how targeted investments in international assistance make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous,” said **Liz Schroyer**, USGLC President and CEO.

» [Check out the full announcement here](#)

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