

Trump's top aide criticizes how USAID was dismantled in Vanity Fair interview. By [Humeyra Pamuk](#), Reuters, 16 Dec 2025

- Summary

- USAID's dismantling halted life-saving aid globally, Wiles says
- But she calls Vanity Fair article a "hit piece" lacking context
- Aid groups report deaths due to halted U.S.-funded programs

WASHINGTON, Dec 16 (Reuters) - President Donald Trump's top aide Susie Wiles was "aghast" over the rapid dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development, she told Vanity Fair magazine, criticizing the abrupt halting of billions of dollars in assistance including life-saving humanitarian aid.

In an interview published on Tuesday, Wiles, the White House chief of staff, said it was "horrifying to others" how billionaire Elon Musk, who operated as a Trump aide in the initial months of the administration and was tasked with shrinking the federal government, dismantled USAID, Washington's premier humanitarian aid agency.

NYTimes reference to same article: "

Mr. Musk's [demolition of the U.S. Agency for International Development](#) including its lifesaving aid to impoverished people around the globe upset Ms. Wiles. "I was initially aghast," she told Mr. Whipple. "Because I think anybody that pays attention to government and has ever paid attention to U.S.A.I.D. believed, as I did, that they do very good work."

Mr. Musk's approach was "not the way I would do it." She said she called Mr. Musk on the carpet. "You can't just lock people out of their offices," she recalled telling him. She said that Mr. Musk was a disrupter. "But no rational person could think the U.S.A.I.D. process was a good one. Nobody."