

International assistance package moves forward in Congress. From US Global Leadership Coalition President Liz Schrayer, 16 Jan 2026

Happy New Year! We are only a few weeks into 2026, and I already have big news to share:

- On Wednesday, the House voted overwhelmingly 341-79 to approve a FY26 National Security and State Department funding bill (the legislation that funds America's diplomacy, global development, global health, and humanitarian assistance programs).
- **This is an unmistakable bipartisan statement that diplomacy and international assistance matters to how America wins in the world.**

Look, this outcome was certainly not guaranteed. It's a testament to the **tireless efforts of bipartisan Congressional leaders** and the **work of the USGLC community from across the country** who raised their voices to say these investments are critical to the security and prosperity here at home. Your efforts truly made a difference – thank you!

Obviously, with any compromise legislation, there are unmet needs, especially given the global challenges, yet the impact of this bill should not be underestimated:

- ✓ It rejects earlier proposals that would have cut resources in half for America's global footprint;
- ✓ It preserves resources for key programs; and
- ✓ It reasserts Congress's power of the purse.

With so much at stake – from Venezuela to Iran to Sudan – this bill could not come at a more urgent moment for our nation's ability to win in the world. In the GLOBAL GAB below, we cover this and more:

- Congress's Bipartisan Stamp of Approval
- New International Assistance Announced
- DFC and AGOA Move Forward
- Venezuela Watch

As we head into this MLK weekend, I am struck by the extraordinary beauty of patriotism displayed on the Washington Monument as part of the launch of our nation's 250th celebration. Wishing you a meaningful holiday weekend.

With thanks,

Liz
Liz Schrayer, USGLC

THE GLOBAL GAB: House Passes National Security and State Department Funding Bill, plus more

January 16, 2026

CONGRESS'S STAMP OF APPROVAL. Fresh off the holiday break, Congress returned to Washington with a looming January 30 deadline to keep the government open. This week saw the culmination of months of difficult negotiations when House and Senate leadership jointly released a bipartisan, bicameral compromise **FY26 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs (NSRP) Appropriations Act**, which the House overwhelmingly passed on a bipartisan basis on Wednesday.

The deal was significant, rejecting major cuts to diplomacy and U.S. international assistance tools, instead providing a 16% reduction while protecting critical programs, enhancing oversight and transparency, and reasserting Congress's role over spending.

The bill now heads to the Senate, where lawmakers are expected to begin consideration following their return from the MLK recess.

» **Read USGLC's [full statement](#) in support of this important bipartisan bill.**

Key highlights:

- **While the bill includes real cuts**, it still preserves critical resources for economic, humanitarian, and global health programs including addressing food insecurity, combat HIV/AIDS, support maternal and child health, and fight human trafficking.
- Supports America's global economic tools to ensure U.S. businesses can compete and win around the world.
- Bolsters U.S. allies and partners, including to counter Chinese competition and Russian malign influence.

Pressing their final bipartisan bill on the House floor, Appropriations leaders urged support ahead of Wednesday's vote (check out USGLC's video [here](#)):

- Appropriations Chairman **Tom Cole (R-OK)**: "Bottom line: we counter our foes and stand with our friends and ensure investments are focused on security, keeping Americans safe and enhancing our global edge. Taken in its entirety, the package serves a clear purpose: safety, strength, and freedom."
- Appropriations Ranking Member **Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)**: "I am proud of the work that was done in a bipartisan fashion to produce this funding package... that is imperfect, but it is one that we can all support."
- NSRP Chairman **Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL)**: "The bill makes sure that the Secretary has the resources that he needs to counter our adversaries like

China and Iran and cartels in our hemisphere... It protects our national security. It protects our hard-earned tax dollars."

- NSRP Ranking Member **Lois Frankel (D-FL)**: "This legislation affirms a simple truth: foreign assistance is not a charity. It's a strategic investment at just a small fraction of our federal budget, it delivers outsized returns for our national security, our economy and our global influence."
- NSRP Vice Chairman **Chuck Edwards (R-NC)**: "This bill reflects a clear understanding that putting America first also means leading abroad with strength, accountability, and purpose."

Be on the lookout for USGLC's full analysis of the bipartisan deal soon!

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS ON AID. The Administration recently made new global health and humanitarian assistance announcements.

- **"Humanitarian Reset" at UN:** Entering the new year, the State Department and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. pledging an initial \$2 billion to fund life-saving assistance activities in dozens of countries.
 - At a press conference in Geneva, **Acting Under Secretary of State for Foreign Assistance Jeremy Lewin** stated, "This \$2 billion is not the end... It is an initial anchor commitment. We see this as a floor, not a ceiling – the beginning of what we hope will be a longer-term partnership."
 - **USUN Ambassador Michael Waltz** asserted that the new approach provides "more focused, results-driven assistance aligned with U.S. foreign policy."
 - **UN Foundation Vice President and USGLC Board member Peter Yeo** told CNN that "This agreement moves us in the right direction... If you allow these humanitarian hotspots to go unaided, then over the long term that poses a problem for American national security interests and ultimately to the safety of Americans."
 - While Congress has expressed support for the \$2 billion package, expect additional questions given a shift in the spending gap from prior years.
- **Global Health Deals:** As part of the America First Global Health Strategy, the Administration has now signed a total of 15 of 50 expected MOUs with partner governments, prioritizing burden-sharing with them and private sector engagement. These MOUs cover a variety of public health and pandemic preparedness sectors, as illustrated here:
 - **Countering Infectious Diseases:** The State Department signed four landmark agreements with Madagascar (\$134 million), Sierra Leone (\$129 million), Botswana (\$106 million), and Ethiopia (\$1 billion) with investments focused on malaria, maternal and child health, polio eradication, and tuberculosis as well as disease surveillance and health care infrastructure.

- **Stopping Outbreaks Early:** The State Department [signed](#) a bilateral agreement with Cote d'Ivoire, investing \$487 million in targeted assistance over five years to stop disease outbreaks early by modernizing supply chains and strengthening surveillance.
- **Food Security Shift:** Food for Peace, a flagship U.S. international food assistance program, is shifting to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
 - Functions for Food for Peace and previously appropriated resources – roughly \$1.6 billion – will transfer with the program to USDA. **USDA Under Secretary Luke Lindberg**, who has voiced his dedication to the program, kicked off a series of listening sessions with implementers and partners.
 - » *Watch Under Secretary Lindberg at USGLC's Tribute [here](#).*

REAUTHORIZATIONS ADVANCE. Congress advanced two key reauthorizations of legislation that bolster the United States' ability to compete with China and other rivals on the world stage, while advancing America's economic and national security.

- **DFC.** Before the holiday recess, Congress reauthorized the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), which more than tripled the cap on DFC's portfolio size to \$205 billion and established a revolving fund for equity investments, strengthening America's ability to unleash the private sector and compete with China on the global stage.
Read USGLC's [statement on the importance of the DFC](#).
- **AGOA.** This week, the House overwhelmingly passed a three-year extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a cornerstone of growing U.S. exports, creating jobs, and protecting U.S. national security. AGOA has long played a vital role in strengthening U.S. economic and trade relationships across a continent that is home to one-fifth of the world's population and one-third of the world's critical minerals.
With the bill now heading to the Senate, read more about AGOA [here](#).

VENEZUELA WATCH. Following the removal of **Nicolás Maduro**, the stakes are high in Venezuela, especially when it comes to regional stability, migration flows, energy markets, and U.S. competition with China and Russia in the Western Hemisphere.

- With nearly eight million Venezuelans needing assistance and high levels of food insecurity throughout the country, there are several areas of focus for policymakers to consider for leveraging U.S. international assistance tools to deliver for America's security and economic interests, including **Stability and Refugees, Counternarcotics Programs; Food Security and Health Support, and Infrastructure and Rule of Law**.
- A U.S. State Department team [traveled](#) to Venezuela last week as it looks to reopen its embassy in Caracas after six years without a permanent diplomatic presence there.
- USGLC [convened](#) over a thousand leaders from across the country for an exclusive virtual town hall with former SOUTHCOM Commander **General**

Laura Richardson and the Council on Foreign Relations' **Dr. Richard Haass**, focusing on what comes next for Venezuela and how diplomacy and assistance can help secure a prosperous future for Venezuelans, Americans, and the region.

- As conversations around the Administration's strategy in the region intensify, **Under Secretary Lewin** [expressed](#) the State Department's commitment to supporting the people of Cuba: "Working with the Catholic Church, we are proud to be able to deliver life-saving assistance directly to the people. If the regime gets out of the way, we are eager to provide more support in the coming days and months."

ICYMI FROM THE TAR HEEL STATE: Thirty-year U.S. Air Force veteran and member of USGLC's Veterans for Smart Power, **Bill Eckert** [penned](#) an op-ed in the *Raleigh News & Observer* touting strong American global leadership as a key reason for North Carolina's historic economic boom in 2025:

- "Behind these headline numbers is a less visible but equally powerful truth: many of these jobs exist because the United States has strong partnerships and alliances around the world. International diplomacy and global partnerships are not abstract ideals — they are engines of economic growth right here in North Carolina."

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