

Congress Must Stop Biden's Misuse of U.S. Foreign Aid to Impose His Radical Social Agenda on the World

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

U.S. foreign aid should focus on alleviating global poverty and increasing prosperity, not implementing a radical political agenda.

The Biden Administration weaponizes foreign aid programs to fund abortion, gender and identity ideology, and climate alarmism.

Congress must prohibit taxpayer funds from supporting a divisive, political agenda and work to hold the U.S. foreign aid industry accountable.

Under the Administration of President Donald Trump, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) pursued an agenda based on traditional American values that avoided injecting divisive socio-political issues into its humanitarian, global health, and development responses. In doing so, it maintained traditional bipartisan support for foreign aid. The Administration also pursued a taxpayer-focused restructuring of the agency that improved the efficiency of its programs and management and centered it on a philosophy that made “ending the need for aid” its *modus operandi*, a vision that drew strong support across party lines.

In sharp contrast, during its first year in power, the Biden Administration has dispensed aggressively with bipartisan comity, treating the U.S. foreign aid apparatus as a global platform from which to implement

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overseas a rigidly ideological and domestically divisive agenda to promote abortion, climate action, “gender equity,” and “racial justice,” goals that are likely to undermine the economic prospects and self-reliance of USAID’s beneficiaries, while also likely undermining the long-standing bipartisan congressional support for continued foreign aid funding.

The Biden Administration’s foreign aid focus on such divisive social issues is unacceptable. Congress must act to stop this taxpayer-funded leftist activism that does not enjoy the broad support of the American people. This paper will analyze the most toxic of the Biden Administration’s foreign aid policies and recommend possible steps Congress can take to eliminate them.

Abortion Internationalism

Just one week into his term, President Biden issued new policies¹ undoing his predecessor’s restrictions on federal funding of abortion services overseas and advancing an unprecedented global pro-abortion campaign even as the abortion debate remains deeply polarizing at home. A recent poll revealed that almost 73 percent of Americans oppose or strongly oppose using taxpayer funding to support abortion services overseas, including 59 percent of those who identify as pro-choice.² Nevertheless, President Biden revoked his predecessor’s Presidential Memorandum that expanded the 1984 “Mexico City Policy” to prevent the performance or promotion of abortion overseas by any nongovernmental recipient of U.S. taxpayer funds; withdrew the United States from the Geneva Consensus Declaration, supported by a coalition of governments representing 36 countries that reject abortion as an international “right” and oppose the inclusion of abortion in family-planning and women’s health programs;³ waived those restrictions on current as well as future grants; resumed funding for the pro-abortion United Nations Population Fund; and dramatically expanded the scope of programs that are now authorized to pay for abortion services. Biden explicitly and expansively has tied access to taxpayer-funded abortion services internationally to the “United States’ efforts to advance gender equality globally,” “women’s health and programs that prevent and respond to gender-based violence,” and “efforts to confront serious health challenges such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, among others.”⁴

In the summer of 2021, the United States government joined the Generation Equality Forum,⁵ a global coalition of “progressive” nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that marked the 25th anniversary of the United Nations (U.N.) Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 by pledging to implement an aggressive agenda on “sexual

and reproductive health and rights” (code for abortion on demand) to the world stage. It seeks to advance these “rights” through a number of global initiatives—a global financial boon to the abortion industry—including the Build Back Better World Partnership; the Compact on Women, Peace, and Security and Humanitarian Action; the 2016 *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence*; the Fourth Trilateral Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls (composed of the United States, Mexico, and Canada); the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation’s “2X” commitment; the Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) Fund; the Inter-American Foundation; and Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 USAID funding destined for the countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America⁶

The FY 2022 international affairs budget for the U.S. Department of State and USAID that was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in July 2021⁷ made history by repealing the Helms Amendment that previously restricted U.S. foreign aid from paying for abortions. As enacted by Congress, the \$62.2 billion foreign aid legislation is a 12 percent increase over the previous fiscal year and relies upon the U.N. system to carry out the President’s abortion agenda.⁸ Funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), cut off by the previous Administration, is now \$70 million—\$14 million more than was requested by President Biden. The White House instructs the UNFPA to “directly support the provision of sexual and reproductive health services in fragile contexts,” meaning the most disempowered communities, most of which view abortion as anathema to their moral codes and religious and cultural traditions. Under the banner of “international efforts to protect and expand sexual and reproductive health and rights,” the Biden Administration is facilitating abortion overseas through partnerships with the Gender Equal Healthcare Workforce Initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP), the U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the WHO/UNDP/World Bank Programme for Research in Human Reproduction, the U.N. General Assembly, and the World Economic Forum.

America Exports Identity Ideology

As a result of the Biden Administration’s 2021 *National Gender Strategy*, taxpayer-funded foreign aid now uses “an intersectional approach that considers barriers and challenges faced by those who experience intersecting and compounding forms of discrimination,”⁹ a Marxist-inspired racial theory according to which overlapping layers of “oppressed” identities

confer greater victimhood to select categories of people. Now backed with substantial funding from the Biden Administration, it has become an explicit criterion for “economic growth and development, democracy and political stability, and security of nations across the globe.” Intersectionality now dictates the manner in which USAID designs its programs and who receives funding. The Gender Strategy even projects *Roe v. Wade*, a domestic judicial opinion, onto the global arena as the basis for “promot[ing] access to sexual and reproductive health and rights both at home *and abroad*.”¹⁰

Injecting identity politics and abortion into America’s foreign aid apparatus is meeting with vigorous opposition abroad. The French Government, for example, criticizes “American wokeness” as an unwanted export that is “weakening democracy, weakening the republic” and “looking at everything through the prism of wanting to fracture and divide.”¹¹ Biden’s foreign aid agenda clashes with the developing world’s conservative values, which are incompatible with the idea that gender can be untethered from biological sex and which reject the atheism that undergirds progressive ideology. According to the Pew Research Center, strong majorities in developing countries accept that “belief in God is necessary to be moral.”¹² The trend is towards stronger conservative religious values in these countries even as adherence to faith withers in the West. In 1900, Africa was home to about two million Catholics, but today Catholics in Africa number 200 million, and the numbers are increasing rapidly, while evangelical churches are growing swiftly as well. In Communist China, some estimates place the number of Christians as high as 100 million.¹³ Even though the United States pulled out of the Geneva Global Consensus, the global coalition remains intact and even added two more member states last year.

USAID’s programming now fully incorporates the Administration’s political radicalism. In a November 23, 2021, request for information (RFI) regarding an anticipated multi-year global program on democracy, human rights, and governance entitled “Powered by the People—Strengthening Peaceful Collective Action,” USAID said that it will create a global platform to provide “civic actors, donors, and researchers who will collaborate online and offline to build relationships and help equip civic actors with knowledge, skills, and resources to advance their democratic development goals.”¹⁴ This sounds benign enough, but the program is not your traditional democracy promotion that enjoys bipartisan support. In a footnote, USAID reveals that the “democracy” theory behind this program is the work of Donatella della Porta, an Italian intellectual and author of *Social Movements: An Introduction*, a foundational work among global progressives. In a 2015 roundtable discussion topic on “Marxism(s) in Social Movement, Is Marx

Back in *Social Theory*,” della Porta spoke about “why Marxism should speak to social movement studies.”¹⁵ This is the first time the U.S. government explicitly endorsed Marxism as the guiding principle for foreign assistance. Specific topics for funding under USAID’s forthcoming program include “Climate Justice,” “Re-envisioning Civil Society,” “Promoting Gender and Social Inclusion in Movement Building,” and “Civil Action.”¹⁶

DEI’s Anti-Conservative Cancel Culture

The Biden Administration has made fear of “white supremacy” in America a key political theme not only at home but also overseas, along with the need to root out alleged “structural racism” embedded within U.S. institutions. For example, U.S. Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield referenced the controversial 1619 Project when she told a world audience that “slavery is the original sin of America. It’s weaved white supremacy and black inferiority into our founding documents and principles.”¹⁷ This approach affects every federal government department and agency, including USAID. In response, the agency has established Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) advisers and DEI committees “in all of its bureaus, offices, and [overseas] missions,” as well as “an agency-wide dashboard and DEI scorecard for all bureaus, offices, and missions” to track compliance.¹⁸ A Chief DEI Officer who sits in the Administrator’s office oversees this politicized apparatus of DEI commissars, creating a highly toxic and racialized work environment that demands public fealty to the Administration’s identity politics as a requirement for career advancement and constitutes a blatant political litmus test for anyone seeking to participate in U.S. taxpayer-funded global work.

DEI is to be incorporated in all agency policy frameworks. For example, action plans for the Trump Administration’s New Partnership Initiative (NPI), an innovative tool to provide direct funding to local partners, will now “require all missions to describe the approaches they will use to diversify their partner bases.”¹⁹ This is an overt attempt at funding only like-minded, leftist international and local partners.

Applying this domestic DEI obsession globally is absurd. Most beneficiaries of U.S. foreign aid are “people of color” (mis)governed and mistreated by other “people of color.” Given the wide consensus that global change agents should respect local cultures and transfer more programmatic responsibilities and funding decisions to local actors,²⁰ USAID faces a dilemma. As a condition for aid, USAID is requiring “communities of color” to accept an alien value system that runs counter to their firmly held values and belief

systems that regard religion as sufficient grounds to ensure equity and sustainable development, the antithesis of the Administration's progressive theology. It suggests that the Administration views global institutions created by the West as irredeemably racist. In contrast, Pope Francis accuses rich nations of "ideological colonization" in which, "under the guise of defending diversity," cancel culture ends up eliminating "all sense of identity."²¹

Global Climate Action—Imposing Permanent Underdevelopment

Nowhere are the Administration's efforts to re-engineer global institutions more apparent than in its climate change agenda. Its crusade to end global financing of fossil fuel projects represents the most serious threat to global development. After President Biden rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change, USAID was mobilized into action. In January and February of 2021, he issued executive orders to "put the climate crisis at the center of U.S. foreign policy and national security," address "the devastating impact [climate change] has wreaked on almost every aspect of our lives, from food and water insecurity to infrastructure and public health," and mitigate "the devastating inequalities that *intersect* with gender, race, ethnicity, and economic security."²² By November 1, 2021, USAID grandiosely committed "to support more than half a billion people in developing countries to adapt to and manage the impacts of climate change through locally-led development."²³ America's foreign aid infrastructure is now in the service of an aggressive agenda to cancel the fossil fuel industry.

On November 8, 2021, USAID announced it would "mobilize \$150 billion in public and private climate finance by 2030" with "the majority of funding coming from private sector investors"²⁴ in collaboration with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), another U.S. government agency. In an all-hands-on-deck approach, the President's climate agenda is integrating with other global initiatives: the WHO's Initiatives on Climate Resilient Health Systems and Sustainable Low Carbon Health Systems, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate and Weather Ready Nations program, and the multibillion-dollar U.S. Presidential Malaria Initiative's new "End Malaria Faster" five-year strategy. What had been USAID's private-sector engagement strategy—to team up with America's corporate sector to help move countries off foreign aid via free-market-based reforms—has been redirected to support the Administration's global industrial policy juggernaut to "transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy."²⁵ Development metrics previously set up by

the past Administration to help countries and donors track their “Journey to Self-Reliance” are being replaced with politically determined markers such as “preventing six billion metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030, managing 100 million hectares for carbon sinks, and investing in green city strategies.”²⁶

The problem, however, is that USAID’s approach on global energy ignores the damage done to developing countries by these green policies. The Administration’s climate agenda consigns these countries to a permanent state of poverty and long-term dependency on foreign aid handouts as compensation for the economic losses they must incur in order to meet the developed world’s demand for quick transition from fossil fuels to renewables. In effect, through its aggressive climate action mobilization, USAID has dispensed with its historic commitment to “end the need for foreign aid” and alleviate global poverty through free-market solutions and, in its place, promotes *in perpetuity* foreign aid dependency—and poverty—as an acceptable cost to beneficiaries (and U.S. taxpayers), just to advance the Administration’s ideological climate agenda.

At the international climate summit in Glasgow, host government United Kingdom called on participant countries to “consign coal power to history.” The United States and the European Union have banned state financing of overseas coal projects through multinational development banks they control, with commercial lenders following suit. In addition, Western governments are poised to impose tariffs on imports based on the amount of carbon emitted. This is a disastrous prospect for developing countries’ manufacturing sectors that lack the capital and technology to meet such stringent export criteria. Take South Africa as an example, “which gets more than 80 percent of its electricity and nearly one-fifth of its liquid fuel from coal.”²⁷ The impact of eliminating coal fuel on its economic growth would be massive. South Africa claims it needs over \$26 billion to transform its power system, while the United States and Europe have committed \$8.5 billion to help the country make the transition.²⁸ Multiply this by the needs of other poor nations around the world, and the financial costs are mind-boggling, with estimates ranging in the trillions of dollars.²⁹ That level of donor funding is simply not going to be forthcoming given donors’ financial constraints. Ignoring the damage to Africa’s economic prospects, the Biden Administration openly threatens “regulatory and financial action” on Western companies investing in Africa’s oil and gas sector.³⁰ Concern all across sub-Saharan Africa has prompted African organizations to call for the boycotting of companies in Africa that shun Africa’s oil and gas sector, accusing “Western elites [of] disrupting African progress.”³¹

Africans, in particular, are decrying the West's climate crusade, which it is prioritizing above all other global challenges, including poverty and hunger. Nigeria's vice president claims the West's banning of fossil fuel investments "would crush Africa" and see "Africa's progress...undone by the rich world's efforts to curb investments in all fossil fuels" despite the fact that "curbing natural gas investments in Africa will do little to limit carbon emissions globally."³² Uganda's president has decried the green energy obsession that "will forestall Africa's attempts to rise out of poverty," noting that "agriculture will suffer if the continent can't use natural gas to create synthetic fertilizer."³³ An African civil society leader denounced Western NGOs (which stand to receive billions in donor funding to execute "climate" programs) for lobbying against the use and production of fossil fuels in Africa, highlighting that "more than seven percent of children in sub-Sahara die before they turn five years old" due to poverty," and adding that while Africa is sympathetic to global efforts to curb the negative effects of climate change, they should not be forced "to pay [for it] with our lives."³⁴ There is a negative U.S. national security consequence to USAID's mobilization, too. China has already built 30 percent of Africa's power stations. If the West does not support Africa's development of fossil fuels, China will, further consolidating Beijing's strategic foothold on the continent.

Meanwhile, reality has reasserted itself. Energy shortages and price surges in Europe and the United States have forced governments to scale back their climate ambitions at home.³⁵ Yet, they continue to coerce financial institutions into denying governments and private companies in poor countries access to investment in their own oil and gas projects that would generate the revenues to help them adapt to climate change and to finance basic social services in health, education, infrastructure, and nutrition. In effect, the White House is pursuing diametrically opposed global objectives of decarbonization and alleviating world hunger, favoring the former at the expense of the latter.

Worse, the Administration's apocalypticism about the impact of climate change is not even evidence based. The trend in weather-related damages worldwide from 1990 to 2020 has *declined* in rich *and* poor countries, the number of hurricanes has *decreased* during that time, and the estimated number of climate-related deaths for 2021 is expected to *drop* to 6,600, or "99 percent less than the death toll a century ago."³⁶ This multibillion-dollar foreign-aid juggernaut is more about justifying a massive progressive-run and centrally planned global strategy that rewards a politically connected foreign aid industrial complex.

Afghanistan: A Journey to Perpetual Reliance on Aid

President Biden’s disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan—preceded by 20 years of botched multibillion-dollar aid programs—has left the country a failed state. Afghanistan is addicted to international assistance but is still the poorest country in Asia. Of 39 million Afghans, nearly half require emergency food and non-food assistance; nearly one-quarter face potential famine, including three million children; and 14.5 million need emergency health care. The farmers upon whom the country relies cannot feed themselves. Despite a large-scale international effort, only 6.9 percent of the population was fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by August 2021.³⁷

Prior to the Taliban takeover, the entire economy of Afghanistan depended on foreign aid, which comprised 80 percent of the government’s budget and 40 percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP). The United Nations reports that Afghanistan’s expected economic contraction following Biden’s pullout will be 20 percent within a year, “one of the worst economic meltdowns in history.”³⁸ In comparison it “took five years of civil war in Syria to achieve [that level].” The U.N. further asserts that “even if [Afghanistan’s foreign] assets are unfrozen, [and] humanitarian aid doubles and triples, it will not be enough to mitigate let alone avert the crisis that we’re seeing.”³⁹ The state’s collapse—despite massive aid transfers—is a hard lesson that aid is no substitute for the market-based economic reforms any government must implement if it is to achieve national self-sufficiency. For years, the foreign aid community justified massive aid transfers to maintain the stability of fragile states. The Afghanistan debacle upends the credibility of that approach and forces the West to admit that unending aid is itself destabilizing.

This has not stopped contractors and international organizations from lobbying the U.S. government to continue these programs under Taliban control and amid the disintegration of the country’s infrastructure.⁴⁰ USAID’s partners are calling for not only “maintain[ing] the humanitarian aid spigot,” but also for “find[ing] ways to salvage the Afghan banking sector,” “allow[ing] private-sector supply chains to operate,” “[restarting] longer-term development assistance by injecting liquidity into the Afghan banking sector as a form of humanitarian disaster prevention,”⁴¹ and even paying the salaries of Afghan civil servants. Others want USAID “to work with the Taliban-controlled state to preserve its basic function: health care, education, central banking, electricity provision, and social programs.”⁴² The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees averred that “sending money directly to the Afghan government, as well as NGOs and international organizations,

is a risk worth taking to avoid complete collapse,” though Afghanistan was already in a state of collapse.⁴³ In effect, they are advocating that Afghanistan remain a foreign-aid protectorate through collaboration with a terrorist regime that is highly likely to divert assistance for its own purposes. So far, the Biden Administration has resisted such calls and limited its Afghanistan aid policy to narrowly defined humanitarian assistance.⁴⁴

The Humanitarian Aid Trap

The Trump Administration pursued proven approaches to address world hunger by relying on market forces, private investment, and technological innovation. Past technological innovation allowed India, which faced mass starvation in the 1960s, to transform into a food exporter four decades later and allowed China to lift hundreds of millions out of rank poverty. Today, many countries have become permanently addicted to emergency aid, leaving America and other Western donors in the unenviable position of effectively taking over the basic social services functions in countries that threaten America’s national security, such as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen. Trump Administration political appointees created new bureaus at USAID to help countries transition away from endemic food aid towards food self-sufficiency, end religious discrimination in aid practices,⁴⁵ and institute vetting systems to halt the diversion of aid to terrorist and criminal networks, especially in parts of Yemen under the control of pro-Iran proxies that were demanding a cut of all donor assistance.⁴⁶ Amid bureaucratic resistance and false claims that “babies will die,” the Trump Administration ceased funding to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which is responsible for more than 60 years of multi-generational aid dependency among some five million people in Gaza, the West Bank, and neighboring countries.⁴⁷

After taking office, President Biden restored aid to the UNRWA and removed the Houthi rebels in Yemen from the U.S. list of designated terrorists, reopening aid deliveries absent adequate controls to prevent aid diversion. Since then, the Houthis have attacked and occupied the U.S. Embassy compound in Sana’a, taking local personnel hostage. They have renewed attacks on Saudi Arabia, intensified their war against the internationally recognized Yemeni government, expanded their cyberwar operations to mobilize support from other radicals around the world, and are mining cryptocurrency to finance their terrorist operations.⁴⁸

As its global climate agenda impoverishes the developing world, the Biden Administration’s response to increasing malnutrition counts on a

massive, government-heavy, three-year, \$11 billion public “investment” program “to overcome setbacks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, global climate crisis, and recurring conflict.”⁴⁹ In effect, more aid. The initiative places no responsibilities on host-country governments to adopt the kinds of market-based reforms that would encourage private investments in food production, innovation, and infrastructure needed to end reliance on international food aid. In Latin America, four out of 10 people—or roughly 267 million people—suffer from food insecurity not due to climate change but rather to food wastage resulting from poor management, infrastructure problems, and inflation.⁵⁰ Food aid itself often hampers local food producers, who cannot compete with free food from international donors, ruining local farmers and creating an unending cycle of food dependency.⁵¹

Again, the Administration strangely blends its domestic and global agendas such as “policy action to advance nutrition security in the United States,” which includes “health equity...and reduce[d] intake of excess sodium and added sugars,” absurdly placing the United States on the same footing as, say, Somalia. The approach promises to consolidate a global welfare system that keeps the poor and the U.S. taxpayer on the hook for billions of additional dollars in countries controlled by regimes with little incentive to care for their own citizens.

The Failed COVID-19 Global Vaccine Response

The Biden Administration departed from its predecessor on overseas vaccine policy by relying more on global organizations to distribute American-made vaccines. Of the 500-million doses of vaccine that the U.S. had committed to distribute, the Administration sent 75 percent to COVAX (the U.N.-backed global consortium overseen by the WHO and GAVI, the global vaccine alliance), thereby allowing international organizations to receive the credit instead of credit going to the American people. This diluted the public diplomacy impact of the United States, the largest donor of vaccines. In sharp contrast, China and Russia’s aggressive public relations campaigns have touted the distribution of their (much inferior) vaccines.

Also, in a gut punch to American ingenuity, the Administration is considering foregoing intellectual property protections for U.S. pharmaceutical companies that invested heavily from their own resources to produce COVID-19 vaccines in record time. This would risk future private investments in promising new vaccine research and development.⁵² Predictably, overreliance on global institutions and underfunded and corrupt host-government delivery systems has resulted in low vaccinate rates in many developing countries.

Touted as “a multibillion-dollar alliance of international health bodies and nonprofits that would ensure through sheer buying power that poor countries received vaccines as quickly as the rich,” COVAX—beset by logistical lapses, short vaccine shelf-lives, bureaucratic infighting, and delays—has flopped.⁵³ By early December, the vaccination rate in Africa stood at only 7.5 percent of the continent’s population, hampered by shortages of staff, equipment, and funds, public distrust, and vaccine wastage stemming from supply problems created by COVAX and GAVI.⁵⁴

These failures could have been avoided by tapping into pre-existing and trusted faith-based and local private networks in addition to these global institutions. For example, many parts of the world boast well-established, large networks of private pharmacies through which COVID-19 vaccines can reach beneficiaries. In fact, Latin American countries, which have largely utilized their networks of pharmacies to distribute vaccines, are leading the United States and Europe on vaccination rates, managing supply-chain concerns, and experiencing plummeting fatality numbers from the pandemic.⁵⁵

Half of the health sector in sub-Saharan Africa is in the hands of churches that are trusted local actors with existing delivery platforms.⁵⁶ Since 2003, the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has delivered over \$100 billion in vaccines and medicines to poor countries, saving millions of lives.⁵⁷ As a result of the Trump Administration’s localization strategy, over 60 percent of PEPFAR partners are now local, mostly faith-based organizations, which are trusted by the public and can deploy their own logistical platforms to reach the most isolated communities.

In a blow to developing countries, President Biden issued a discriminatory travel ban on eight South African countries⁵⁸ after South African health officials dutifully shared information about their discovery of the new, but less-virulent, Omicron variant. Punishing such transparency will discourage other governments from being so forthcoming with the WHO and the United States.

Cancelling International Religious Freedom

The Biden Administration has done a complete turnaround on international religious freedom, previously a core pillar of bipartisan U.S. foreign policy, secularizing its approach towards development, democracy, and human rights. In March, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken repudiated the prior Administration’s elevation of religious freedom as a U.S. priority, declaring “there is no hierarchy that makes some rights more important

than others,” and placed religious freedom as “co-equal” to LGBTQI+ and abortion rights.⁵⁹ Although Secretary Blinken has affirmed the previous Administration’s designation of China’s persecution of its Muslim minorities as genocide, Climate Czar John Kerry has sought to temper the Administration’s human rights criticism of Beijing to facilitate cooperation with China on climate action.⁶⁰

The demotion of religious freedom presents a dilemma to USAID Administrator Samantha Power, who made her name as a genocide expert at an agency that, under the Trump Administration, strengthened its genocide response capability. Nevertheless, the agency proceeded to dismantle its genocide response and atrocity prevention apparatus, elevating climate change and DEI over concerns regarding persecuted religious minorities.⁶¹

Two days after President Biden’s inauguration, USAID abruptly rejected a \$2 million proposal supported by the Trump Administration to strengthen the legal capacity of Nigerian Christian NGOs to document attacks on their communities by Islamic terrorists. That cancellation reflected strong resistance by USAID staff, their contractors, and the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria to admit any religious basis for the conflict in Nigeria.⁶² In November 2021, the Administration reversed then U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s designation of Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern for its violations of religious freedom, prompting a sharp rebuke from the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom as “unexplainable that the U.S. Government did not redesignate Nigeria as a [CPC] and treated it as a country with no severe religious freedom violations.”⁶³ The policy reversal came in spite of the State Department’s 2020 Country Report on Terrorism, which stated that “deaths attributed to ISIS-affiliated attacks in West Africa alone almost doubled...to nearly 5,000,” and in Nigeria such attacks “have displaced more than 2 million people and left roughly 10 million in need of humanitarian assistance.”⁶⁴ The crescendoing terrorist violence prompted the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Early Warning Project to place Nigeria eighth on its list of countries most vulnerable to genocide.⁶⁵

In addition, in October 2021, USAID defunded Iraqi Christians, a community nearly wiped out by ISIS. The Iraq Community Resilience Initiative was a key tool of former Vice President Mike Pence’s genocide recovery initiative of 2018–2021 that helped Yazidi, Christian, and other religious minorities return home and recover from ISIS’s campaign of terror.⁶⁶ The program targeted four geographic areas: Sinjar, Mosul, the Nineveh Plain, and Anbar province. The follow-on program drops genocide recovery as a stated goal and only excises Christian-populated Nineveh Plain while continuing funding for the other areas. That same month, USAID flubbed

its election minority support program. Iraq's national elections saw pro-Iranian political factions take a drubbing at the voting booth, yet four of five parliamentary seats reserved for Christians were "won" by an Iranian proxy, the leader of which was sanctioned by the Trump Administration, via illegal crossvoting by Muslim Arabs.⁶⁷

At its vaunted two-day Summit for Democracy in February 2021, the Administration excluded discussion about global persecution of religious minorities: No religious delegates were among its 275 participants, even though China's Uyghur and Burma's Rohingya Muslim populations continue to face genocide; Christian minorities in sub-Saharan Africa continue to face systematic persecution, murder, and expulsion by radical Islamic terror groups; and the Indian government and its proxies harass Christians and Muslims. The summit's topics did include climate, social equity, systemic racism in sports, collective bargaining, and LGBTQ issues. President Biden committed \$424 million to fund his Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal. In another example of President Biden's polarizing politics, the only Republican participant in the summit was Governor Phil Scott of Vermont, a pro-abortion advocate who had announced publicly that he voted for Biden in the 2020 presidential elections.⁶⁸

Localization or Neo-Colonization?

Reducing reliance on contractors and international organizations to deliver U.S. foreign aid by expanding partnerships with more cost-effective local entities is a bipartisan goal. Early in her tenure, Administrator Power pledged to keep up "a steady and familiar drumbeat for the need to shift USAID's funding to local partners"⁶⁹ and "expand strategic ties with foundations and major philanthropies" to draw in private funds. In 2021, U.S. Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) introduced bipartisan legislation to strengthen NPI, created by the Trump Administration to reduce red tape for local organizations seeking USAID funds. Administrator Power promised to increase contracting staff, empower local foreign nationals at USAID missions to provide contracting support, and loosen the agency's risk appetite towards funding of local partners, all initiatives begun by the past Administration. Underscoring her commitment, Power set an ambitious 25 percent target for funding to local organizations (which totaled only 5.6 percent of USAID's budget in FY 2020).⁷⁰

But which local organizations? Faith-based organizations (FBOs) that provide the bulk of basic social services to the global poor have been erased from her localization strategy. USAID's draft Local Capacity Development

Policy makes no mention of FBOs.⁷¹ “Faith leaders” and “religious populations” score a few mentions, but FBOs none at all. This is fatal to the goal of making U.S. foreign aid more cost-effective. Former World Bank President James Wolfensohn noted that “half the work in education and health in sub-Saharan Africa is done by the Church.”⁷² In Venezuela and Nicaragua, the Catholic Church is at the forefront of opposition to dictators while delivering critical emergency food and non-food assistance to millions left destitute by political violence and economic collapse.⁷³ PEPFAR, launched by President George W. Bush in 2003 and credited for saving millions of lives in Africa, relies on FBO infrastructures to deliver life-saving services. For example, 40 percent of health care facilities in Kenya are church run, but by late 2020, these same partners were being blasted by “progressive” NGOs for blocking abortion services and allegedly discriminating against the LGBTQ community.⁷⁴ De-emphasizing the role of the faith-based community as foreign aid partners reflects the Administration’s effort to secularize foreign aid as a global platform to advantage overseas partners sharing its political ideology.

Last November, Power signed a strategic partnership Memorandum of Understanding with the left-wing Rockefeller Foundation, run by President Obama’s USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, to highlight its Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet. At the signing ceremony, all five U.S. Senators in attendance were Democrats. No Republicans were cited.⁷⁵ The Bezos Earth Fund, set up by billionaire Jeff Bezos, is USAID’s “anchor partner in the alliance.” In the United States the Bezos Fund has provided \$434 million in grants⁷⁶ to support “women of color” and “address the intersecting climate, gender, and racial justice crises,” “transitioning to a just and fossil-free world” and “uproot[ing] white supremacy and colonial institutions.” In November 2021, Bezos pledged \$100 million to the Obama Foundation.⁷⁷

In the mindless (and reckless) pursuit of its climate agenda, the Administration is strengthening China’s hand. Bezos Fund CEO Dr. Andrew Steer is a member⁷⁸ of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development, the Chairman of which is a member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China. Steer also co-chairs the Chinese government’s Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition (BRIGC)⁷⁹ of 140 partners that serves as a platform to advance Beijing’s interests. China practices debt diplomacy by which it exploits the financial needs of poor countries by trapping them into loans they cannot repay and forcing them to cede strategic assets, such as ports. China is an existential threat to the United States, seeking to impose its communist value system onto the rest of the world.

Biden Administration Says Yes to Bipartisan Funding, No to Bipartisan Spending

Americans of all political persuasions and parties pay taxes, and the U.S. development assistance industry accepts them eagerly. As this paper has argued, however, USAID officials and their private-sector partners are reluctant to dedicate taxpayer funds to foreign aid projects that garner wholehearted bipartisan support—or to make efforts to even appear bipartisan—and systemically discriminate against American organizations and individuals that do not subscribe to the woke agenda.

A review of the first 50 USAID employees, chosen alphabetically, who made political contributions during the 2020 federal election cycle shows that 48 of them donated to Democratic candidates and causes, with just two giving to Republicans, a 12 to 1 ratio. Of the estimated \$48,000 donated, only \$600 went to Republicans, less than 2 percent of the total.⁸⁰ Following the slaying of George Floyd in late May 2020, an election year, over 1,000 USAID staff demanded that the agency “make a public statement affirming that Black Lives Matter,” accused USAID “of structural racism,” and insisted USAID design a plan to address “systemic injustice, racism, colonialism, and police brutality,” echoing liberal and progressive talking points just months before national elections.⁸¹

A cursory look at USAID partners demonstrates a similar partisan slant. For example, at the Rockefeller Foundation, which signed a strategic partnership with USAID, all 238 individual political contributions went to progressive campaigns.⁸² As mentioned, the Rockefeller Foundation’s president is the former USAID administrator under President Barack Obama. Its chairman is retired Admiral James Stavridis, a potential vice presidential candidate for Hillary Clinton in 2016.⁸³

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has received hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer funding despite its intimate and intertwined connections with partisan figures. The IRC’s former co-chair, Timothy Geithner, was President Obama’s Treasury Secretary. His fellow board members are major funders of the Democratic Party and NGOs that support its policy goals: Sally Susman, chair of Pfizer’s Political Action Committee;⁸⁴ investment banker Eduardo Mestre, who contributed only to Democrats during the past two election cycles; and corporate lawyer Ricardo Castro,⁸⁵ who previously served as General Counsel to the Clinton Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and George Soros’ Open Society Foundation. During the Trump Administration, the IRC sued⁸⁶ the President for his refugee policy, denounced his border

wall as “a manufactured crisis,”⁸⁷ and opposed Vice President Mike Pence’s genocide recovery program in Iraq that specifically aided persecuted Christians.⁸⁸ In February 2021, the IRC accused former President Trump⁸⁹ of “attempts to codify prejudice, white supremacy, and xenophobia into the nation’s immigration system.”

CARE International is another example of a top recipient of taxpayer-funded foreign aid that is closely tied to Democratic elites. In 2014, CARE’s CEO Michelle Nunn ran for the U.S. Senate in Georgia as a Democrat. Shortly before the 2020 presidential elections, CARE organized its first virtual summit on global women’s policy featuring former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, failed Democratic candidate for the governorship of Georgia Stacey Abrams—at the time a possible vice presidential candidate for President Biden—House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, former President Obama Senior Adviser Valerie Jarrett, and other prominent Democrats with few Republicans invited to speak.⁹⁰ The following November, at its 2021 Impact Awards,⁹¹ CARE honorees included Hillary Clinton, now Chair of its 75th anniversary campaign; Nona Sinha of the Equal Rights Amendment Coalition; and Darren Walker, president of the left-wing Ford Foundation and a former vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation. Of the six individuals honored, only one might not be a Democratic supporter. CARE’s Chief Operating Officer Samantha Power joined the Biden Administration to serve as Acting USAID Administrator from January to May 2021, and then returned to her position.⁹² There are no comparable examples of “nonpartisan” NGO foreign aid recipients tied to Republicans.

Recommendations:

Congress should:

- **Pledge to restore the Helms Amendment.** It should enshrine the prohibition permanently in the Foreign Assistance Act, not just as a rider to appropriations legislation that must be renewed each fiscal year, and it should terminate U.S. funding of the UNFPA.
- **Pass legislation to define, authorize, and institutionalize the NPI without reference to DEI as a criterion for eligibility or funding decisions.** The prohibition on DEI should extend to all contracts, grants, and hiring. Congress should reject funding USAID’s radical “Powered by the People” global platform.

- **Defund USAID’s climate ambitions and return it to its traditional mission of ending global poverty and world hunger.** The cost to U.S. and other Western donor taxpayers to compensate through more aid the man-made economic dislocations resulting from bad climate policies is prohibitive while being undermined daily by giant carbon emitters China and India. These policies are increasing global poverty.
- **Reject appropriating any foreign aid funding that would empower or finance the Taliban, although America should help the Afghan people avoid mass starvation.** USAID should apply the vetting regime it inherited from the Trump Administration to prevent aid leakage and deploy biometric technology to ensure the integrity of beneficiary lists. As for non-humanitarian aid, these are inherently functions of the state. It would waste more American taxpayer dollars to fund programs the Taliban will not support, especially paying the salaries of Afghan government employees. Providing such aid would create a co-governance arrangement between donors and the Taliban.
- **Only appropriate funds that will restore traditional U.S. policies that prioritize private investment in the local food infrastructure in developing countries, incentivize host governments to institute free-market reforms, and avoid directly or indirectly financing terrorists and criminal networks.** Congress should also demand that USAID apply its current vetting tools to prevent aid diversion to America’s enemies. Congress should act to ensure that the United States of America, its citizens, and its innovative companies receive direct credit for the humanitarian assistance generously provided by American taxpayers.
- **Ensure that USAID uses its existing global platforms, specifically PEPFAR, to deliver vaccines and medicines against COVID-19 overseas.** In addition, USAID should forge direct partnerships with U.S. corporations with global reach, such as UPS and FedEx, and with developing countries’ large networks of private pharmacists. Lastly, USAID should prioritize well-branded bilateral U.S. agreements over agreements with international organizations that conceal America’s leadership in global philanthropy.⁹³
- **Make past and current commitments to religious freedom a criterion for confirmation of all future American ambassadors**

in the U.S. Senate. Congress should fund only those traditional elements of democracy and human rights promotion that garner bipartisan support and direct funding to genuinely local NGOs, especially faith-based organizations, and provide specific assistance to persecuted religious minorities modeled after The Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Lionel Trilling long ago noted that “[t]he characteristic error of the middle-class intellectual of modern times is his tendency to abstractness and absoluteness, his reluctance to connect idea with fact.”⁹⁵ The Biden Administration has certainly tended to absoluteness—confidently promoting falsehoods as truth and exhibiting intolerance of dissent. Its extreme foreign aid focus on sexual reproductive rights (abortion), climate, gender, and racial equity further marginalizes and repels moderates, conservatives, and faith communities that refuse to engage on such socially and politically divisive topics. As noted earlier in this report, the foreign aid industry has repeatedly demonstrated hostility towards faith communities that are at the forefront of assisting poor countries and are often the best positioned partners to deliver effective life-saving aid and achieve development goals.

Given that up to half of the U.S. foreign aid budget, or about \$30 billion annually, stays in the United States to fund overhead, staffing, and program expenses, and the fact that the overwhelming majority of the managers and employees of the U.S. development assistance contractors receiving those funds are liberals or progressives, this represents a massive political advantage for one political party over the other. Although it is predominately liberal and progressive, the foreign aid industry is funded by all U.S. taxpayers, regardless of political affiliation. For conservative administrations, it is particularly difficult to execute conservative policies in such a hostile political environment in which foreign aid bureaucrats, their contractors, much of the media, and liberal and progressive elites collude against it.

America’s great gift to the world is its legacy of freedom. For millions around the world, Americans have stood tall on their values of life, liberty, family, free enterprise, natural rights, self-help, charity, optimism, and at its very core, religious-based pluralism. The United States has been a global beacon of hope. USAID’s congressionally mandated branding of foreign aid as “From the American People” reflects those traits.

Notwithstanding a backdrop of constant political turmoil, the Trump Administration’s foreign aid approach stayed true to those American traits:

pro-life, freedom, religion, free market, self-reliance, equal partnership, and hope for a better future. The bipartisan support it earned was well deserved because its programs reflected those American values. In just one year, however, the current Administration has upended America's foreign aid traditions, transforming it into a global platform to export a culture of death, hostility towards faith, divisive racial and gender identity politics, and climate extremism.

Under the Biden Administration, reducing poverty and expanding freedom and prosperity no longer seem to be the primary goals. Instead, the priority for foreign aid is to advance a dark and angry ideological conformity, no matter its poverty-inducing consequences and disrespect for the inherent conservatism of the developing world. In part because of this toxic export, America is becoming unrecognizable to the rest of the world.

At home, the U.S. foreign aid oligopoly—the federal bureaucracy, development assistance contractors around the Beltway, and the NGOs and global elites it funds—has been captured by a liberal and progressive movement that has politically purged the industry of conservatives, people of faith, and moderates simply seeking to help people in need. It begs for ever-increasing amounts of aid but produces more poverty, while itself becoming richer and more politically powerful.

Unfortunately, U.S. foreign aid has become an appendage of one political party seeking to advance its radical global agenda of ideological indoctrination while simultaneously expanding a domestic political patronage system. That is the definition of corruption.

Until 2025, only Congress can rescue the foreign-aid sector from this malpractice and return aid to its traditional bipartisan role. Yet the prospect of that happening is uncertain, since congressional actions up until now have mostly advanced the liberal and progressive agenda. By implementing the recommendations in the paper, the next Congress could do a better job of reflecting the will of its constituents and holding the U.S. foreign aid industry accountable.

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