

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 8, 2025

Secretary Rubio
United States Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20520

Secretary Rubio,

On March 28, 2025, the State Department sent a Congressional Notification indicating its intent to fold USAID into the Department of State. The proposal, if implemented, and action taken to date to gut USAID, are clearly an unconstitutional violation of the separation of powers. The executive branch may not eliminate a congressionally created and funded agency without congressional authorization. Such action would be incompatible with the express will of Congress. The administration's plan to permanently dismantle USAID and fire all of its employees will not only render it impossible for any retained USAID programs to be implemented, but will also cause significant disruption to the State Department's core mission. The actions outlined in this proposal are unconstitutional, illegal, unjustified, damaging, and inefficient.

In addition, we have seen reports on additional restructuring that would include dozens of U.S. embassies and consulates being closed, a fifth of the State Department's workforce slashed, career positions being reclassified into political "Schedule P/C" positions, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) being absorbed into separate divisions under the DFC.¹ This reorganization would have dramatic U.S. national security implications, constitutes an unjustified seismic shift in the U.S. foreign policy enterprise, and includes many proposed measures that would be illegal without congressional action.² We demand that you follow the law and engage with the relevant committees before the State Department begins to execute any such plans, including you testifying before the relevant

¹ Nahal Toosi and Daniel Lippman, "Trump aides circulate plan for complete revamp of foreign aid programs," *Politico*, March 19, 2025; Scott Patterson and Kristina Peterson, "Trump Officials Circulate Plan That Would Overhaul USAID," *Wall Street Journal*, March 19, 2025; Nahal Toosi, "Trump wants to shrink the State Department's size, reach and focus," *Politico*, February 27, 2025.

² Section 34 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 ([22 U.S.C. § 2706](#)) requires the State Department to notify Congress 15 days in advance of a proposed reprogramming of appropriated funds to, among other actions, relocate an office or employees or, separately, reorganize offices, programs, or activities. Section 48 of the same law ([22 U.S.C. § 2720](#)) provides for similar requirements with respect to the closure of consular and diplomatic posts abroad. Further, Section 7015(a) of the FY2024 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations act (Division F of [P.L. 118-47](#), as carried forward by [P.L. 119-4](#), the FY2025 full-year continuing resolution) provides that no funds shall be available for obligation for several purposes, including to "create, close, reorganize, downsize, or rename bureaus, centers, or offices" unless Congress is notified 15 days in advance of such obligation. Section 7063 of this same law states that no funds may be used "to implement a reorganization, redesign, or other plan" without prior consultation with and notification to Congress.

committees to explain and defend these plans to restructure the country's premier diplomatic agencies.

According to the congressional notification we received, the administration would eliminate USAID's status as an independent establishment in the executive branch, abolish multiple USAID bureaus and offices, as well as "realigning certain USAID functions to the Department." As you know, Congress mandated that USAID be established in statute.³ Some reporting about the State Department's plans also suggest an attempt to dissolve certain State Department bureaus that focus on functional and bilateral assistance, which could potentially result in the dissolution of multiple bureaus already authorized in law. Any attempt to dissolve those bureaus requires congressional action to modify or repeal the relevant authorizing statutes.

It is also our understanding that the State Department is considering substantially shrinking its workforce and diplomatic footprint around the world. This includes a potential major cut in staffing and the closure of multiple embassies and consulates abroad. If carried out, these plans would undermine our ability to conduct diplomacy abroad at a time when China is increasing its presence globally and outpacing the U.S. presence in multiple regions.

Beyond the immediate structural and personnel changes, these proposed reforms could have a severe deleterious impact for U.S. global leadership and influence. The State Department, USAID, and its diplomatic corps are the backbone of American foreign policy, advancing U.S. interests, strengthening alliances, and responding to global crises. Slashing their workforces, closing embassies, consulates, and missions, and dismantling key bureaus would severely weaken America's ability to conduct diplomacy, support democracy, and counter the growing influence of strategic competitors like China and Russia. At a time when global challenges are increasing, from conflicts and humanitarian crises, such as the recent earthquakes in Myanmar, to economic instability, the United States cannot afford to undermine its own diplomatic capacity.

Given the gravity of these potential consequences, we expect that the administration will immediately engage with Congress before taking any further steps toward implementing these plans, as required by law.

Sincerely,

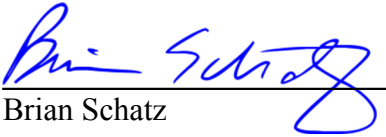


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

³ See 5 U.S.C. § 104.



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



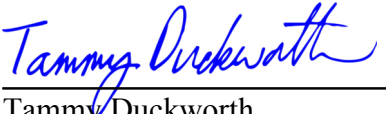
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



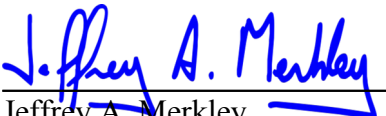
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
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Jacky Rosen
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