

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20451

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We are writing with grave concern regarding your decisions this week to fire or place on leave virtually all USAID staff, and to terminate more than 90 percent of USAID awards and more than 60 percent of State Department awards, including hundreds of millions of dollars for programs you exempted as critical to our interest or lifesaving. These actions are in contravention of the law, costly, inefficient, and will harm U.S. national security.

As the Ranking Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, we are currently beholden to information gleaned from news reports, court filings, and whistleblowers. This is in lieu of the Administration's compliance with the law regarding required consultation, notifications, and reports, or other routine engagements that have long been the norm no matter which political party controls the Congress or White House.

We also note that the letter you submitted to Congress on February 3 communicated your "intent to initiate consultations" consistent with appropriations law, but that the actions you have taken followed no such consultation or required notification.

The lack of compliance with the law, and the lack of communication and transparency, is unprecedented and not representative of the collaboration you professed, and we expected, when we confirmed you as Secretary of State.

Specifically, to date we have not received information or briefings we and our committee staff have requested, or responses to our letters. Additionally, regularly occurring briefings on critical foreign policy issues, like the humanitarian crisis in Sudan and the war in Ukraine are not taking place. This is even more critical now given reported terminations of programs impacting government and nongovernment partners across the world. We reiterate our request for the full list of programs retained, as well as programs and staff terminations and associated justifications, and your assessment of how such actions advance U.S. national security interests and comply the law.

Our other outstanding requests for information and briefings include, but are not limited to, the following:

Letters

- Our letter dated January 31 with Ranking Members Meeks and Frankel
- Our letter dated February 2 with all Democratic Senators on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- A private letter we signed with several colleagues dated February 13

Information and Briefing Requests

- 1/21: Information Request on Personnel Statistics and Related Matters Relevant to Executive Order 14169
- 1/23: Briefing on Status of New Hampshire National Passport and National Visa Centers
- 1/24: Briefing on the status of Afghan SIVs stranded at platforms overseas and contracts associated with the Enduring Welcome Program
- 1/26: Information Request on the status of certain classified programs
- 1/29: Briefing on State Department Post closures
- 1/30: Briefing Update on Haiti Multinational Security Support Mission
- 1/30: Status of Reoccurring Committee Briefings with the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts
- 2/1: Briefing on Venezuela Policy and Readout of Richard Grenell's Meeting with Nicolas Maduro
- 2/3: Request to meet with the Pakistan Desk
- 2/3: Briefing by State and USAID on PEPFAR Waivers and Ebola/ Marburg Responses
- 2/5: Briefing on the Administration's Review of U.S. Engagement at UN agencies, pursuant to the Executive Order
- 2/6: Multi-prong information request on the waiver process, stop-work orders, impacts on USAID overseas personnel, compliance with appropriations law, definition of lifesaving aid, and impact on other agencies
- 2/6 & 2/13: Briefing on domestic and overseas personnel and training changes
- 2/7: Follow up information request on leadership changes in the Bureau of Consular Affairs
- 2/7: Briefing on NYT Article about USAID clinical trials
- 2/12: Briefing on Organization of American States Secretary General Elections
- 2/12: Information on your involvement in program terminations
- 2/13: Briefing on the security situation at Embassy Juba
- 2/14: Multi-prong request to USAID for information and briefings on the status of USAID Personnel; status of payments and reimbursements related to the foreign assistance freeze; briefing on the status of global food security programming; status of monthly recurring briefings on Ukraine, Sudan, Gaza, and humanitarian assistance; plans to archive USAID's website consistent with the Federal Records Act; status of the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) website; status of processing for outstanding FOIA requests

- 2/18: Additional Request for list of and briefing on waivers and program terminations, and Criteria
- 2/19: Information Request on the impact of the “15 day pause on grants disbursements” on educational and cultural exchange programs and American citizens studying overseas
- 2/21: Briefing and information request on the suspension of assistance for South Africa
- 2/22: Briefing and information request regarding the DHS memo authorizing DS agents to perform immigration enforcement functions

As a former member of both Committees, you are keenly aware that Congress’ Constitutional oversight and appropriations mandates require regular engagement with Executive Branch Departments and Agencies about activities and expenditures. We ask that you provide responses to our time-sensitive correspondence and set expectations with State Department and USAID staff about timely and regular engagement with Congress in response to the inquiries from our committees.

Lastly, we request that you appear for hearings before our Committees on these actions and their implications for U.S. national security.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations



Brian Schatz
Ranking Member
State, Foreign Operations, & Related
Programs Subcommittee
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations