



Thursday, August 8, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN), a bipartisan reform coalition comprised of international development and foreign policy practitioners and experts, we thank you for your commitment to advancing effective U.S. foreign assistance. We write, however, with grave concern regarding the August 3rd apportionment action by the Office of Management and Budget and urge your utmost attention and commitment to preserving stable and effective funding for U.S. foreign aid.

MFAN advocates for more effective and accountable U.S. foreign assistance that will deliver greater results for people in need and U.S. taxpayers, including evidence-based decision making and evaluation of the effectiveness of assistance programs. Any review or changes to U.S. foreign assistance programs should rely on robust program evaluations to assess effectivenessⁱ, follow legal channels through the congressional appropriations process, and minimize disruptions to critical American efforts abroadⁱⁱ. These are fundamental criteria for efficiently spending American taxpayer money and effectively advancing American interests and values abroad.

An unprecedented, unilateral move by the Trump administration to cancel already appropriated funds without Congressional review would work againstⁱⁱⁱ shared development objectives and yield sub-optimal outcomes for U.S. interests long-term. Funding decisions that are not evidence-based exacerbate funding instability and interruptions, which limit the effectiveness^{iv} of programs designed to save lives and further American interests. An uncertain and chaotic funding process, including highly disruptive and unplanned cuts such as rescissions, can have detrimental effects^v on critical programs. U.S. assistance programs are most effective when they are carefully planned, budgeted for, and funded.

Further, as with last year's attempt to rescind lawfully appropriated funds for foreign assistance, we remain concerned that OMB is seeking to circumvent Congress' power of the purse. The proposed review covers a broad set of foreign assistance accounts, suggesting that OMB is attempting widespread cuts without detailed review of the success or failure of potential spending.

We urge you to act swiftly and decisively on this matter in order to preserve the integrity and effectiveness of our foreign aid programs. As you are aware, foreign assistance plays an important role in achieving America's national security objectives abroad; at a time of increased great power competition, this sends the wrong message to our global partners. MFAN stands alongside the foreign affairs community, including our partners at InterAction and the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, in opposing any potential rescission.

We look forward to working with you to advance U.S. values and economic and national security interests by supporting a more just, prosperous, and secure world through effective foreign assistance. MFAN Executive Director Conor Savoy (csavoy@modernizeaid.net) is available to answer any questions you or your staff may have.

Sincerely,



George Ingram
MFAN Co-Chair
Senior Fellow, Brookings
Institution



Lester Munson
MFAN Co-Chair
Principal, BGR Group



Tessie San Martin
MFAN Co-Chair
President & CEO, Plan International USA

CC:

The Honorable John Sullivan, Deputy Secretary of State
The Honorable Mary Elizabeth Taylor, Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs
Mr. Jim Richardson, Director, Office of Foreign Assistance
The Honorable Michael Mulvaney, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Michael P. Duffey, Associate Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Lindsay Graham, Chairman, State Foreign Operations and Related Programs
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Hal Rogers, Ranking Member, State Foreign Operations and Related Programs

ⁱ <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/CARSI IE Executive Summary.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://modernizeaid.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Effective-Assistance.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.usglc.org/faq-violence-migration-and-u-s-assistance-to-central-america/>

^{iv} <http://modernizeaid.net/2018/12/budget-instability-development-effectiveness/>

^v <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/projects/us-foreign-assistance/>