

- **[New! WHO Failures and US Leadership During the Pandemic: USAID Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick](#)** (*Epoch Times*). -- “President Trump’s call for reform” of the World Health Organization (WHO) “is so key at this moment,” said Bonnie Glick, deputy administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in an interview with The Epoch Times for the “American Thought Leaders” program. On May 18, President Donald Trump sent a letter to the WHO warning that the United States would permanently cut its funding in 30 days and reconsider its membership if the organization didn’t “commit to major substantive improvements” to demonstrate its “independence from China.” President Donald Trump has been criticized for threatening to withhold funds from the WHO during a global pandemic. But in Glick’s view, this was “the perfect time” to demand change “because we have captured the world’s attention and in so doing, we are shining light onto the way that WHO as an international organization should operate.” “In no way is the United States withdrawing from its role as the leader of the free world and as the leader of the international community,” Glick said. “In fact, by calling for this review, we are exercising that leadership.” Trump’s letter to WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus highlighted the WHO’s “failed response” to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus outbreak in Wuhan, China.
- **[New! White House pandemic proposal would 'dismember' USAID, says former administrator](#)** (*Devex*) -- A draft White House plan for a new pandemic initiative would “dismember” USAID and “gut” the agency’s international disaster response office, a former administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development warned on Tuesday. “There are a couple proposals before us,” said Andrew Natsios, who led USAID during the George W. Bush administration, during an online event at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “The one before the [White House National Security Council] basically would dismember AID and move the largest bureau with the most funding with the most success record ... to the State Department,” he said, referring to USAID’s Bureau for Global Health. Natsios warned that the same proposal “would gut the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance” at USAID by shifting its emergency health programs to the State Department and that separating public health from USAID’s emergency food and nutrition programs would — unintentionally — “kill a lot of children.”
- **[New! The Overmilitarization of American Foreign Policy](#)** (*Foreign Affairs – Robert Gates*) --U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to go it alone in responding to the coronavirus pandemic is but the latest manifestation of the United States’ waning global leadership. Even before the virus struck, there was broad bipartisan agreement that Washington should reduce its commitments abroad and focus on problems at home. The economic and social toll of the pandemic will only reinforce that position. Many Americans—and not just the president’s supporters—believe that the United States’ allies have taken advantage of the country. They think that the costs associated with international leadership have been too high. They have lost patience with endless wars and foreign interventions. The United States remains the most powerful country in the world, in both economic and military terms. Yet nearly three decades since its victory in the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, it faces challenges on multiple fronts... The Trump administration has also tried to slash foreign aid.*

- [Emerging 'dis-ease': US foreign assistance needs to focus on the root causes of pandemics](#)(The Hill – Steve Osofsky) -- [The U.S. Agency for International Development](#) has been investing in the fight against pandemics for more than 15 years. In fact, I worked on the first such project the government helped create in 2005, focused on H5N1 avian influenza, wherein we looked at the roles of wild birds versus poultry in the global spread of this zoonotic disease. There were important questions related to where and how one could intervene to stop the spread of this viral scourge, and we very much took a “One Health” approach, which recognizes that the health of people, wildlife and domestic animals are all inextricably linked and impacted by how well — or not — we steward environmental and socioeconomic policies. Since that time, much important work has been supported by USAID’s Emerging Pandemic Threats (EPT) program. Nonetheless, here we are in the midst of a global pandemic despite at least \$1 billion invested to date, and it seems prudent to ask ourselves if we should be looking at other approaches to prevent such catastrophes based on lessons that have been learned. Rather than emphasizing virological research in places where people and wildlife come into dangerously close contact, investments should be dramatically shifted to focus on making such human-wildlife contact much less likely in the first place. We know enough to act boldly, but we need a much broader mix of disciplines at the table. Preventing pandemics is ultimately a numbers game in terms of how easy — or not — we make it for new viruses to find us.
- [Exclusive: State Department makes bid for US global pandemic response powers](#)(Devex) --The U.S. Department of State has circulated a document proposing a major new global health security initiative called the President’s Response to Outbreaks, which would consolidate international pandemic preparedness under a new State Department coordinator and establish a new central fund to fight pandemics. The effort — referred to as PRO in the documents — includes two elements, according to the proposal documents, which Devex obtained. The first is a whole-of-government unit overseen by the State Department coordinator called America’s Response to Outbreaks, or ARO. This initiative appears to model that of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and would appoint the coordinator to “oversee a unit with whole-of-government reach, bringing to bear the tools of the interagency and U.S. private sector.”
- [Trump administration might consolidate pandemic response at State Department](#) (*Politico*) -- Aides to President Donald Trump are considering a plan to shift the government’s global response to future infectious disease outbreaks to a new unit inside the State Department, according to documents obtained by POLITICO. The proposal, discussed during a National Security Council deputies committee meeting on Thursday, already has set off a turf battle between the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development. USAID officials were surprised and perplexed by the idea, which could lead them to lose control of significant funds and authorities.
- [USAID Provides Food Assistance to Help Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts](#) (*USAID*) - This week, Secretary Pompeo announced more than \$162 million in additional assistance to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, **bringing the total U.S. commitment to more than a billion dollars**. This new funding includes critical food assistance that will help the world’s most vulnerable stave off hunger and disease.
- [Americans want global engagement on fighting COVID-19](#) (*Brookings – George Ingram*) -- Lest the Congress and the White House have any doubt, the American people

overwhelmingly understand that the U.S. response to COVID-19 must be not just within our borders, but global. To put the message in brief, Congress has so far spent 0.1 percent—that's not one percent, but one-tenth of one percent—of its total COVID-19 response on international actions, roughly \$2.4 billion out of \$2.4 trillion. But a recent poll shows that the American people understand the need for more robust international engagement and that foreign assistance is a key instrument in attacking the pandemic. They overwhelmingly endorse international engagement and support for other countries as being in our national interest and a crucial piece to bring the pandemic under control. The U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (of which I serve as chair emeritus) recently released a poll that reveals the American people, across all political affiliations, understand we are part of an interdependent world and only by working collectively will we move past the most dire international conflagration since World War II—with the same collective effort that restored the world to peace and prosperity after that war ended. It is not an overstatement that COVID-19 has aroused in the American people an understanding of our global interdependence, to a level never before recorded. In response to the two questions of how important do you think it is for the United States to work (1) with other countries to fight diseases that could spread globally and (2) to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in other countries, "important" polled 96 percent and 93 percent, respectively—unheard of levels.

- **['Disgraceful': US accused of using coronavirus to promote 'pro-life' agenda in letter telling UN abortion is not 'essential'](#)** (*Independent*) -- A US foreign aid agency has warned the United Nations to stop "promoting" abortion and has denied that sexual and reproductive health is "essential" care. In a letter to UN secretary-general António Guterres, the acting administrator for the US Agency for International Development (USAID) said that the UN should not use the coronavirus pandemic "as an opportunity to advance access to abortion as an 'essential service'" during the crisis. John Barsa accuses the UN of "cynically placing the provision of 'sexual and reproductive health services' on the same level of importance as food insecurity, essential health care, malnutrition, shelter, and sanitation" in a Covid-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. Mr Barsa also criticised the plan's "egregious" call "for the widespread distribution of abortion-inducing drugs and abortion supplies, and for the promotion of abortion in local country settings" in the plan.
- **[Building the next 'American century' in the age of COVID-19](#)** (*the Hill*) -- ...The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) also needs a hard reset. There has been bipartisan support for USAID for years, with a consensus that targeted aid is more effective in advancing core American interests than additional soldiers. But, the U.S. is now \$25 trillion in debt and the Trump administration is borrowing from future generations in order to respond to COVID-19 today. USAID, along with the State Department, must align its \$40 billion budget much more tightly so that there are tangible results that benefit not only the communities served, but American interests.
- **[Coronavirus Map: Tracking the Global Outbreak](#)** (*New York Times*) -- The coronavirus pandemic has sickened more than 4,167,200 people, according to official counts. As of Tuesday morning, at least 286,200 people have died, and the virus has been detected in at least 177 countries, as these interactive maps show.
- **[Trump eyes federal retirement plan investments as part of showdown with China over coronavirus](#)** (*WashPost*) -- President Trump's intensifying showdown with China

over its handling of the [coronavirus](#) pandemic is expanding to a new battlefield: the retirement portfolios of 5.9 million federal employees and U.S. service members. In recent days, White House officials have moved to seize control of a little-known board that administers the \$557 billion federal retirement program for most active and retired federal employees and military members, with some aides eager to halt the flow of billions of dollars into an index fund that includes Chinese companies, according to two White House officials and an outside Trump adviser involved in the discussions.

- [USAID issues new restrictions for NGOs on buying PPE amid pandemic](#) (*The Hill*) -- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has notified some grant recipients that they can't use donor dollars to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary to protect against COVID-19, hurting key operations abroad. USAID has put a “pause” on allowing NGOs to use U.S. funds to buy PPE, including a wide range of filtering respirator masks, like N95 masks, surgical masks and surgical gloves, according to an email from a USAID officer to NGOs operating abroad that was obtained by The Hill. USAID grantees were advised they can continue to purchase sanitizing products like bleach, soap and hand sanitizer, the email said. The directive impacts grant recipients helping communities in lower-income countries who are vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19.
- [‘Very difficult and emotional’: Pandemic expert leaves Trump administration](#) (*Politico*) -- A disaster response official who previously led a global health directorate disbanded by the Trump administration is leaving the government. Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator at USAID Timothy Ziemer’s departure robs the Trump administration of another expert as it tries to battle the coronavirus pandemic. Ziemer, who was sent to USAID after the National Security Council’s global health security directorate was dismantled, informed colleagues of his decision Tuesday. In a note obtained by POLITICO, he wrote that it was “very difficult and emotional.”
- [Supreme Court again considers requirement for groups fighting HIV/AIDS](#) (*WashPost*) -- As the court held its second day of oral arguments via [teleconference](#) Supreme Court justices on Tuesday sounded skeptical that the government may force foreign affiliates of U.S.-based health organizations to adopt policies opposing prostitution if they wanted money to fight HIV/AIDS. In 2013, the court ruled that it violated the free speech rights of the health organizations to force them to “pledge allegiance” to the government’s point of view by having a policy “explicitly opposing prostitution and sex trafficking.” In the view of the groups, that hindered their effectiveness, because combating HIV/AIDS meant engaging with sex workers.
- [Covid-19 Has Consequences for U.S. Foreign Aid and Global Leadership](#) (*CSIS*)— The United States is undergoing an unprecedented domestic crisis in confronting and controlling the spread of the coronavirus. Faced with both a public health crisis and significant economic disruptions, Congress has now passed three supplemental spending bills meant to provide emergency support. The last supplemental contained nearly \$2 trillion worth of support; Congress has indicated that there may be more supplementals in the work if this package does not have its intended impact. Meanwhile, there are rising calls for the United States to also turn its attention externally—to play a leading role in blunting the impact of Covid-19 in developing countries; the supplementals contained approximately \$2.25 billion in initial spending to support the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in responding to Covid-19. This

amount will not be enough if Covid-19 spreads across developing countries as it already appears to be.

- [Exiting USAID Chief On The Pandemic, Foreign Aid, Trump's Policies](#) (*NPR*) – For nearly three years, Mark Green led the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in delivering foreign aid to countries in need during times of crisis, including the coronavirus pandemic. NPR’s Rachel Martin spoke with Green about the value of US foreign assistance, his outlook on how developing countries will face the pandemic and what the future may hold for USAID.
- [With WHO funding on hold, USAID looks to alternate partners](#) (*Devex*) -- With U.S. funding to the World Health Organization frozen for 60 to 90 days while the White House conducts a review of the international body’s response to COVID-19, the U.S. Agency for International Development is looking for alternate partners to carry out health programs that it previously supported through WHO. Speaking to reporters Wednesday, U.S. officials could not confirm who will lead the review of WHO that President Donald Trump announced along with the pause on funding last week, nor could they say what conditions WHO will have to meet in order to see its funding resumed.*
- [After COVID-19 evacuations, Volunteers fear for future of Peace Corps](#) (*Amy Lieberman – DEVEX*) -- One month after COVID-19 prompted the Peace Corps to temporarily halt operations, former and prospective volunteers are wondering how the organization can regain its footing. Funding challenges could continue to complicate a return to normal, even once international travel and nonessential work resume, they said. “A lot of us, when we saw the news of the worldwide evacuation, we immediately worried about the long-term survival of the Peace Corps. Peace Corps is one of those programs of soft diplomacy, based on partnership and the belief that development rises the tide and that rising tide helps communities empower themselves,” said Greg Emerson, a member of the New York City Peace Corps Association board and a former volunteer in Morocco and Peru.
- [USAID ships COVID-19 supplies from Dubai to Oregon](#) (*Devex – Michael Igoe*) -- For the first time since Hurricane Katrina struck the southern U.S., the US Agency for International Development is deploying its overseas disaster relief supplies — generally intended for international crises — to support domestic response efforts.
- [Trump hobbles foreign aid as coronavirus rips around the world: Confusion at the top has crippled USAID at a critical time for the global battle against the pandemic](#) (*Politico*) -- Earlier this week, a group of officials with USAID, an agency on the front lines of the rapidly escalating global battle against the coronavirus, found themselves in an increasingly bizarre conversation with some of their colleagues inside the Trump administration.
- [A Writer Writes—Living with Africa for a Lifetime by Mark G. Wentling](#) (*Peace Corps Worldwide*) -- Former Peace Corps volunteer, USAID Senior Foreign Service member, and USAID Alumni Association Member, Mark G. Wentling shares his recollections from a lifetime working in Africa. He would welcome any feedback from readers.
- [Trump, Congress scramble to revive virus-hunting agency that was marked for cuts](#) (*LATimes*) -- It’s an obscure U.S. government bureau with many missions, including this vital one: hunting down viral diseases like COVID-19 that spill over from animals to the human world. But in late 2019, it found itself without a permanent leader, and

squarely in the Trump administration's budget-slashing sights. That all changed with the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 20,000 Americans and more than 100,000 people across the world. Now, the Global Health Bureau of USAID has abundant government support. Congress and President Trump have agreed to multiply the budget for the bureau's activities that can support "global health security" and related efforts as much as fivefold, to more than half a billion dollars. And its top leadership position — left empty for three years by the White House and a plodding Senate confirmation process — finally was filled in late March.*