

FIGHTING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC REQUIRES A GLOBAL RESPONSE

Admiral James Stavridis (Ret.) and General Anthony Zinni (Ret.), March 21, 2020

“No matter how successful we are in fighting the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic at home, we will never stop it unless we are also fighting it around the world.”

Liz Schroyer, USGLC President and CEO, December 5, 2020

“A robust COVID-19 response is incomplete without international resources... [W]e fail to protect America’s health, safety, and security by leaving out critical, targeted investments for international efforts such as GAVI, the Global Fund, and CEPI, the international economic and humanitarian response, and frontline operations for U.S. civilian agencies overseas.”

President Biden’s platform to combat COVID-19 and prepare for future global health threats

“The only way to stop the threat from infectious diseases like COVID-19 is to detect them early and contain them effectively in communities around the world. Even as we take urgent steps to minimize the spread of COVID-19 at home, we must also help lead the response to this crisis globally. In doing so, we will lay the groundwork for sustained global health security leadership into the future... Biden will empower the State Department to ensure the U.S. plays a major role in all global decisions about the outbreak and our experts have the access they need to COVID-19 hotspots. Staying on the sidelines or deferring to other nations ultimately makes us less safe and secure.”

The U.S. International Response is an essential part of America’s COVID-19 response toolkit. The emergency COVID-19 relief bill passed at the end of 2020 included \$4 billion to support global vaccine distribution through GAVI and President Biden has proposed an \$11 billion investment in global health investments. These funds are critical to:

- **Combating COVID-19 & preparing for vaccine distribution:** Greater surveillance, equipment, personnel, testing, and laboratory capacity will support USAID in saving lives and combating the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, support for the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Initiatives (CEPI) will ensure vaccines will be deployed effectively worldwide to help those most vulnerable.
- **Supporting urgent global health needs:** Essential health services support will ensure PEPFAR and PMI will help address ongoing epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Disruptions in these critical programs could cause up to one million excess deaths in Africa alone, [according to the World Economic Forum](#).
- **Providing emergency international food assistance:** The World Food Program (WFP) has outlined emergency needs of \$2 billion for international food aid programs funded through the Agriculture Appropriations bill. WFP’s new estimates show that the number of hungry people could increase to 270 million, an 82% increase from before the pandemic outbreak.
- **Maintaining mission operations around the world:** The frontline operational response by U.S. diplomats and development professionals helping Americans abroad and maintaining mission operations around the world has been challenged by a severe shortfall in revenue due to the disruption of State Department and USAID consular operations and services during the pandemic response.

Emergency international resources are needed to advance American interests overseas and protect U.S. economic, health, and national security at home.

- In today’s interconnected world, a major pandemic only takes 36 hours to spread around the globe. The U.S. will not eradicate the virus until everyone has and mutations from the UK, South Africa, and most recently Japan making their way around the world make this priority all the more urgent to America’s own public health security.
- The global pandemic has exacerbated health, humanitarian, and economic needs around the world, threatening to devastate countries with fragile health systems with spillover effects on hunger, conflict, disease, and extreme poverty.
 - Without additional resources, COVID-19 could push as many as 160 million more people into extreme poverty in 2021 [according to the World bank](#).
 - The number of people going hungry has increased from a record 135 million in 2019 to more than 270 million in 2020, according to the World Food Program. WFP Executive Director David Beasley has warned that the famines in 2021 are likely to be worse than in 2020.
 - U.S. exports to top trading partners are down as much as 50% in the developing world since the global shutdown from COVID-19.
- Global instability caused by COVID-19 is a drag on U.S. economic growth and prosperity.
 - The World Trade Organization (WTO) [forecasts](#) a 9.2% decline in global trade in 2020, and the IMF estimates the pandemic erased more than half a billion jobs worldwide in the first half of 2020 alone.
 - COVID-19 is expected to cost the global economy over \$28 trillion by 2025, and there are risks of an additional \$9 trillion in costs if vaccines aren’t distributed equitably around the world.

SUPPORT FOR U.S. INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO FIGHT A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

There is broad, bipartisan support in Congress for strategic global resources.

- In 2020, [over 200 lawmakers from both sides of the aisle called for a global response](#), with most urging at least \$20 billion for an economic and humanitarian response and support for programs that have a direct impact on our security and health like Gavi - the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund, CEPI, and the World Food Program.
- **One-third of the U.S. Senate** – including **leading Republicans – Senators Rubio, Risch, Lankford, Cassidy, Collins, and Tillis** – also [called](#) for increasing these critical programs.
- **Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA):** “I am committed to robustly funding vital global health initiatives to defeat COVID-19 & improve response capacity worldwide.”
- **House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD):** “A global challenge requires a global response, which is why we must work across borders to protect our planet and safeguard the most vulnerable from climate change and natural disasters... It’s why we must also push for America to work in concert with the rest of the world in combatting coronavirus and ensuring that critical, life-saving resources are available to all those who need them.”
- **Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Ranking Member, Senate State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee:** “You cannot fight problems like this by yourself, you need partners, you need to get involved over there so the virus doesn’t spread anymore here than necessary.”
- **Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee:** “It’s clear that even if we stop the spread of the disease here... without a serious global effort to understand and confront it, COVID-19 can and will return to our shores. If ever there was a need for the United States to be an active leader in an international coalition to respond to a common threat, it is now. We simply cannot safeguard American lives without one.”
- **Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Chairwoman, House Appropriations Committee:** “As a global leader in the international community, the United States has a duty to support global health... our work for global health cannot stop once we stop this pandemic. Let us not lapse in complacency. Instead, let us honor the sacrifice of those frontline workers fighting to save our humanity, the courage of those overcoming this illness, and the grief of those who have said goodbye too soon. Let us invest in global health. Otherwise, we risk American health.”
- **Rep. Mike McCaul (R-TX), Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee:** “Globally, almost 80 million people are currently displaced around the world – that number is expected to rise because of COVID-19. The World Food Program is estimating that 270 million people will need urgent food assistance due to COVID-19 – an 82 percent increase from last year. And COVID-19 is already erasing hard fought gains to reduce extreme poverty and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases. As expected, authoritarian regimes and terrorist organizations are looking to exploit this chaos for strategic gain, such as in areas like the Sahel. So as the disease spreads in the Middle East, Latin America and across Africa, existing economic hardships, political challenges and humanitarian emergencies will worsen. In other words, it is now not the time to cut this key aid.”
- **Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS), Bob Casey (D-PA), John Boozman (R-AR) and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI):** “As COVID-19 continues to spread here at home and around the world, it is increasingly clear that we are experiencing a global health emergency on an unprecedented scale that threatens global economic prosperity. The novel coronavirus especially threatens to frustrate efforts to reduce global hunger, rolling back hard-fought gains from the past decade and exacerbating already troubling trends in the last three years. This will ultimately have direct impacts on the economic and security interests of the United States.”
- **Senator Chris Coons (D-DE):** “It is in the U.S. national interest to lead the rest of the world in combatting COVID-19 everywhere it exists.”
- **Reps. Lois Frankel (D-FL), Francis Rooney (R-FL), & 123 bipartisan colleagues:** “We write to request robust funding for the international response to COVID-19 be included in the next phase of emergency funding. As we were harshly reminded when this pandemic rapidly spread from Wuhan to Washington, infectious disease threats know no borders; as long as the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading anywhere in the world, Americans everywhere are at risk.”
- **Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI) and six House Republicans and Democrats:** “As we work to respond to the pressing needs in our own districts, we must do so with a global perspective in mind. Shoring up the gains we are fighting for against this emerging infectious disease will mean defeating COVID-19 in every community around the globe. Innovation is our exit strategy for this pandemic: investing now in critical research and development programs to respond to the full range of global needs is a down payment on ensuring that in the coming months American health workers are safe, American children return to school, and the American economy begins to rebuild.”
- **Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA):** “There is a practical reason why we need to help these countries—because if we don’t, we run the risk that both this virus and the economic shock will fester, creating more risks for us here at home. But more importantly, we need to help because of the moral imperative, the fact that an America that seeks to

be just and moral needs to play a leading role in making sure that every country can weather this crisis. America serves both our interests and our values when we act in service of our common humanity.”

- **Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX):** “I’ve been advocating for \$20 billion in foreign assistance, and I was encouraged to see in this last Heroes Act in the House of Representatives, there was \$10 billion that would have been appropriated. In the Senate, there was about \$4.4 billion in their version in July. I think it’s important, because there’s a great need, not only in the United States, but across the world. People are suffering and nations are reeling from the effects of COVID-19. And the United States for generations has been a leader among nations of the world in terms of global health.”
- **Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA):** “But no matter how successful we are in fighting the pandemic here at home, we will never defeat it unless other parts of the world are equipped to prevent outbreaks from occurring in the first place and to contain them when they do occur. Left unaddressed globally, COVID-19 will find its way back to the U.S....Now, more than ever, the U.S. must continue to lead on global health.”

Following Congressional approval of \$4bn for global vaccine distribution through Gavi, the vaccine alliance, in last year’s final emergency spending bill, Congressional leaders pressed for more.

- **Former House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey:** “the \$4 billion for GAVI will help children across the world receive the coronavirus vaccine, though far greater investments are needed to support international COVID-19 response.”
- **House Foreign Affairs Committee Republican Lead Michael McCaul:** “More must still be done to address the indirect impacts of the pandemic, particularly the damage it’s done to stabilization efforts in fragile states and on the food security of vulnerable populations around the world.”
- **Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS):** “Supporting international efforts to curb the COVID-19 pandemic helps to save lives & ensures the U.S. does not backslide on previous investments. It also protects the American people by helping to identify health emergencies early, before they become a global problem.”
- In releasing the final spending deal, **global health was specifically called out as a priority** in the summary released by **Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer**.

Military, faith, non-profit, and business leaders agree the U.S. needs a global response to fight the global pandemic.

- **General Joseph Votel, U.S. Army (Ret.) and Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, III, U.S. Navy (Ret.):** “Confronting COVID-19 and strengthening our global health security is critical for our national security because what happens in other countries will undoubtedly echo back into our own. This will require strong leadership from Washington and resources that look at the challenges around the world that are coming — and coming quickly.”
- **Admiral James Stavridis (Ret.) and General Anthony Zinni (Ret.), March 21, 2020** “No matter how successful we are in fighting the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic at home, we will never stop it unless we are also fighting it around the world.”
- **Former Majority Leaders Frist and Daschle and 24 former U.S. Cabinet Officials, Senators, and Representatives:** “If we neglect the global dimension of our pandemic response, a second wave of the disease could rebound to our shores. We have the tools to prevent this: America’s global health security investments in the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the CDC – as well as key global players like the Global Fund, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis have the unique capabilities and track record to mitigate the impact in the developing world.”
- **Faith leaders from Ralph Reed to Russell Moore to the Bishops:** “At this critical moment, we cannot turn our back on our brothers and sisters around the world. As a nation, we have both the ability and obligation to provide resources which will prevent the worldwide spread of this disease and alleviate the suffering of those afflicted – and in so doing, we are certain it will also protect us here at home as well.” ([Read the full letter here](#))
- **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** has repeatedly pointed to the importance of an international response and called on Congress to “Include emergency resources to respond to the global economic, health, and humanitarian consequences of the pandemic. Recognizing the global reach of COVID-19 and the grim reality that its toll elsewhere will directly impact Americans in all walks of life, these additional resources are needed to assist in the prevention, identification, and treatment of COVID-19 overseas. As we chart a path toward economic recovery, these funds will help ensure American companies continue to have access to consumers abroad, maintain their global competitiveness, and don’t lose market share to our global competitors.”