

A Blueprint for America to Win in the World

The world is entering a new era, where growing threats, geopolitical rivalries, and worsening humanitarian disasters pose grave challenges to American interests at home and abroad. To meet the moment, the United States is poised to return to a Peace Through Strength approach – leveraging international assistance and diplomacy, alongside defense, as essential tools for navigating the complexities of today’s world and promoting America’s national security, economic prosperity, and values.

This Blueprint outlines ten practical recommendations that Congress and the Trump Administration can implement to ensure U.S. international assistance delivers for the American people and makes our nation stronger, safer, and more prosperous.

10 Practical Ideas to Ensure U.S. International Assistance Delivers for the American People

1. Unleash the Private Sector: Support American Businesses

One of America’s greatest strengths is the talent, agility, and innovation of our nation’s business community. It’s time to ensure the private sector has a meaningful seat at the table, alongside government, to drive economic growth globally that benefits America and helps us compete with China and other rivals. This means more effectively leveraging U.S. tax dollars, tapping into U.S. capital markets and engaging the private sector to scale their boldest, most transformative ideas.

Winning Ideas:

- **Strengthen U.S. government-led programs that de-risk private investment and create markets, promote the rule of law, combat corruption, reduce poverty, and pursue conflict resolution.** These efforts stabilize tumultuous regions and prevent rivals from gaining footholds, while building confidence among private investors that their capital is secure and impactful.
- **Bring to scale public-private sector co-creation**, which was effective during President Trump’s first Administration. To achieve this, agencies leading international assistance need a single connection point with effective and capable U.S. personnel with private sector experience to drive enhanced collaboration.
- **Ensure U.S. diplomatic posts have the expert capacity** to integrate economic statecraft and commercial diplomacy with U.S. international assistance to support U.S. business and economic interests abroad.
- **Expand America’s development financing tools, debt swaps, and smartly leverage World Bank Group financing.** As an example of a strong return on U.S. investment: by leveraging the capital markets as well as contributions from other sovereign donors and philanthropies, U.S. contributions to World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA) [generates](#) \$4 for every \$1.

2. Ensure Burden Sharing and Pathways to Self-Reliance

Burden sharing with our allied donors ensures every U.S. dollar is maximized and delivers the greatest return for American taxpayers – all while reinforcing America’s leadership on the global stage.

Winning Ideas:

- **Urge donor countries** – from Europe to the Gulf to regional players that have graduated from aid – **to increase their commitments** alongside U.S. investments in overseas development assistance, global health, and humanitarian response.
- **Use upcoming multilateral replenishments as high leverage moments** to invest in these impactful programs, while pressing for greater burden sharing from fellow donors.
- **Leverage the multilateral development banks**, pressing other countries to also step up their contributions, while preserving U.S. influence in these critical platforms.

3. Align U.S. International Assistance with Strategic Interests

As [reported](#) by the U.S. intelligence community, Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea are increasingly and collectively challenging U.S. interests at home and abroad. At this pivotal moment, it is critical U.S. international assistance is aligned with U.S. foreign policy priorities to make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Winning Ideas:

- **Focus U.S. international assistance on critical strategic priorities**, including competing with rivals, **securing access to critical minerals, fortifying supply chains** including global health, promoting economic growth, advancing energy solutions, and saving lives.
- **Leverage U.S. international assistance to bolster security cooperation and partnerships with key countries**, including connections to security assistance, narcotics control, and law enforcement.
- **Bolster longstanding U.S. priorities** – including international religious freedom, women’s economic empowerment, and democratic values and freedom – alongside emerging strategic interests.
- **Align the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, Millennium Challenge Corporation, U.S. Trade and Development Agency, Export-Import Bank of the U.S., and other investment tools** to fully leverage each agency’s unique assets and deliver even greater impact for U.S. national interests.
- **Remove technical barriers and adjust budget rules to treat equity investment** as assets to ensure our investments are strategically impactful. Restrictive eligibility rules and outdated statutory constraints prevent our most impactful agencies from operating in strategic countries and at full scale.

4. Expand Winning Model of Negotiated Compacts

Pioneered by a Republican President and bipartisan leaders in Congress, the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s negotiated compact model has demonstrated that tying U.S. international assistance to measurable and tangible results is a win for America and partner countries. A compact model empowers our diplomats to ensure every dollar spent delivers tangible outcomes for American interests.

Winning Ideas:

- **Require country partners to have “skin-in-the-game”** to invest in their own citizens alongside the U.S. through their own resources and/or domestic resource mobilization to drive self-reliance.
- **Incorporate U.S. priorities in country compact negotiations** such as anti-corruption, legal and regulatory reforms, and pro-business policies, while tailoring solutions to each country’s needs.
- **Include specific outcome benchmarks, clear accountability metrics, and “sunset” exit strategy planning** with an agreed upon compact end date when using the compact model approach.
- **Incorporate greater funding flexibility** to respond to emerging threats or opportunities including humanitarian crises, or shifting geopolitical conditions.

5. Reduce Redundancy, Bolster Capacity in Global Health and Biosecurity Preparedness

The world has learned the hard way that the deadliest infectious diseases – such as Ebola – are only a plane ride away. Global health programs save lives and keep Americans and the world safer. Now is the time to streamline programming, remove bureaucratic and funding stovepipes, and drive smart investments in what’s working to keep us safe.

Winning Ideas:

- **Build on successes** by supporting investments that save lives abroad and protect Americans’ own health – **including PEPFAR, The Global Fund, Gavi, PMI, and bilateral Global Health Security** and infectious disease programs.
- **Invest in strengthening health system preparedness**, disease monitoring, and outbreak response to detect, prevent, and help stop biothreats at their source before they reach our shores.
- **Press for increased coordination through country-led health sector planning** to leverage U.S. investments, promote burden sharing, and enhance cooperation across these financing mechanisms.

6. Prioritize Life-Saving Humanitarian Assistance

At a time of rising global threats, it is critical for America to remain a leading first responder to humanitarian crises around the globe. When the U.S. leads with speed, strength, and generosity, we save lives, advance our national interests, and project the best of American values to the world. Our leadership brings unmatched goodwill and strengthens America's position on the global stage.

Prioritizing humanitarian effectiveness is not just a moral imperative – it is essential to U.S. national security. Swift, strategic action prevents today's crises from spiraling into tomorrow's instability. When America fails to act, adversaries like China and Russia step into the vacuum to expand their influence at our expense, as seen in Burma and beyond.

In addition, at a time when food security is national security, the vital work of American farmers helps feed those on the brink of starvation and stabilizes communities, while delivering a return for Americans.

Winning Ideas:

- **Increase the effectiveness and impact of lifesaving efforts** by decreasing redundancies and focusing investments on highly cost-effective programs.
- **Prioritize lifesaving humanitarian operations such as food assistance** (including food grown by American farmers), clean water and sanitation, shelter, and health responses.
- **Ensure U.S. humanitarian operations have the capacity to respond to multiple rapid onset disasters simultaneously** with expeditionary teams – supported by highly capable technical staff – and unhindered by internal bureaucracy.
- **Include early, proactive, and preventive efforts** in life-saving interventions to reduce long-term costs to the American taxpayer. Resilience must be built into programming so that communities hit by multiple natural and man-made disasters do not require multi-year operations.
- **Push for smart reforms** to streamline and improve the efficiency of the global humanitarian system.

7. No More Wars: Target Drivers of Instability

As Congress and the Administration advance the Global Fragility Act, U.S. international development programs can be further leveraged to address major threats to U.S. national security emanating from beyond our borders – including migration, civil unrest, drug trafficking including fentanyl, famine, and lack of economic opportunity. Getting this right can help avoid costly wars and save significant U.S. taxpayer dollars. Studies have found that every \$1 invested in conflict prevention can save \$16 in response costs. These fundamental investments are the best and most effective way to ensure stronger and more stable communities – and bolster U.S. security in the long-run.

Winning Ideas:

- **Return to the first Trump Administration's "Journey to Self-Reliance"** that required partner country buy-in by prioritizing development programs that not only improve the economic outlook in a country but also lay out a path to graduation.
- **Prioritize international development programs that address the causes of instability** and make Americans safer, including in fragile and conflict-affected countries. For example, low- and middle-income countries with low levels of food insecurity are three times less likely to be crisis zones with violent conflict.
- **Leverage U.S. support for UN peacekeeping to avoid costly wars**, promote stability in fragile environments, and help keep U.S. service members out of harm's way.
- **Strengthen capacity at the local level** by implementing U.S. assistance, when possible, through local organizations in partner countries that can be properly vetted and deliver successfully.

8. Focus on Strategic Regional Priorities and Partnerships

At a time when U.S. resources are increasingly stretched, prioritizing investments through data and evidence can drive meaningful change, strengthen alliances, and counter rivals in critical regions.

America needs a coordinated effort in emerging economies and developing countries focused on economic security and prosperity, integrating international assistance, trade, and strategic communications. Critical support in fragile and conflict-affected countries to ensure that young people are not drawn into violence and terrorist-related entities should be prioritized. Special efforts should be implemented in strategic regions where rivals are playing to win and the U.S. cannot afford to cede ground, including Ukraine, Africa, the Indo-Pacific, and our own hemisphere.

Winning Ideas:

- **In the Western Hemisphere**, reducing migration, strengthening the rule of law, countering drug trafficking including fentanyl, and bolstering supply chains will be critical.
- **In Africa**, as the youth bulge explodes, it is critical to sharpen America's economic focus to counter China, bolster U.S. exports, confront terrorist threats, defend against disease, and secure access to critical minerals essential to U.S. supply chains and national security. Strengthening programs including Prosper Africa, Power Africa, the Lobito Corridor effort, and AGOA (the African Growth and Opportunity Act) will be key.
- **In the Indo-Pacific**, countering China's expansionism, bolstering Taiwan's democracy and defense, diversifying supply chains, and protecting key security interests will be essential.

9. Up Our Tech Game, Drive Accountability and Transparency

As Congress and the Administration work together on the future of U.S. international assistance, strengthening transparency and accountability to ensure continued U.S. leadership and investment abroad is necessary to demonstrate economic and security benefits at home. Harnessing new technology tools will improve our ability to predict crises and respond appropriately.

Winning Ideas:

- **Pursue clear goals and rigorous progress tracking with evidence-driven data** to ensure cost-effective, strategic outcomes for the American people. Expanding public accountability mechanisms will highlight successes, expose inefficiencies, and ensure continuous improvement.
- **Leverage AI and technology to anticipate and respond quickly** to the most intractable global threats – including hunger and disaster prediction – and to support program design, including market data and mapping.
- **Pursue simplified procurement processes and systems** to secure necessary technical expertise, oversight, and in-country capacity for successful U.S. programs.

10. One Brand – “From the American People”

For too long, the image and impact of U.S. international assistance projects have been diluted by far too many accompanying logos. In this era of great power competition – when our rivals do not shy away from taking credit – the United States can no longer afford to downplay the quality and impact of its investments. No country does more for the world or does it better than America.

Winning Ideas:

- **Brand U.S. international assistance with one identity and one logo** – the American flag. And we should keep the old tagline from USAID: “**From the American People.**” Where necessary, partner agency logos can be listed on brochures.
- **Continue the waiver practice** for branding exceptions for security reasons – in line with past practice – but, whenever possible, America should get credit.

Conclusion

In a world where our rivals are seeking to undermine America’s interests and values, it is time for our nation to go on both offense and defense. This means modernizing, retooling, and strongly deploying U.S. international assistance programs alongside our diplomatic and military toolkits to protect our national and economic security.

- **American taxpayers deserve confidence that every dollar spent on programs is accountable, transparent, and results-driven** in the interest of the American people. Any waste, fraud, or abuse should be surgically eliminated.
- **At the same time, American taxpayers deserve to know that sufficient resources – both financial and personnel – are being invested to protect their security and economic interests.** President Reagan had a deep understanding of how to win on the global stage. During the height of President Reagan’s Peace Through Strength agenda, the U.S. invested 0.6% of GDP on U.S. international assistance programs. Today, our nation spends just 0.2%.

Today’s challenges are no less complex and demand that we back up America’s team with the resources and capacity required to match the scale of threats to make America stronger, safer, and more prosperous.