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# Prioritizing America's National Interests One Dollar at A Time

**MEDIA NOTE**

**OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON**

JANUARY 29, 2025

Americans are a hardworking and generous people, who have sacrificed their blood and treasure to help their fellow man across the globe. But no foreign nation is entitled to those benefits, and no foreign aid program is above scrutiny.

The previously announced 90-day pause and review of U.S. foreign aid is already paying dividends to our country and our people. We are rooting out waste. We are blocking woke programs. And we are exposing activities that run contrary to our national interests. None of this would be possible if these programs remained on autopilot.

Every dollar we spend, every program we fund, and every policy we pursue must make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. And that is exactly what we are doing right now – prioritizing America's core national interests one dollar at a time.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

*How much does the United States spend annually on foreign aid?*

Even setting aside generous support for Ukraine over the past several years, the U.S. is spending roughly \$40 billion in foreign aid annually. That is more than the GDP of multiple U.S. states and accounts for four out of every 10 dollars in global humanitarian aid. Americans deserve transparency and accountability for every dollar we spend, especially when it is spent abroad instead of at home.

### ***Why did the U.S. State Department initiate a 90-day pause on foreign aid?***

It is impossible to evaluate programs on autopilot because the participants – both inside and outside of government – have little to no incentive to share programmatic-level details so long as the dollars continue to flow. A temporary pause, with commonsense waivers for truly life-threatening situations, is the only way to scrutinize and prevent waste.

### ***What type of spending has been prevented by the pause?***

Without the pause, U.S. taxpayers would have provided condoms (and other contraceptive services) in Gaza, climate justice marketing services in Gabon, clean energy programs for women in Fiji, support for gender development programs, family planning throughout Latin America, sex education and pro-abortion programs for young girls globally, and much more. These types of programs do not make America stronger, safer, or more prosperous.

### ***What type of funding is permitted to move forward?***

The original order, dated January 24, 2025, contained several important exceptions, including “emergency food assistance,” and outlined the process to secure additional exceptions. Requests were reviewed and, where needed, approved within hours. Subsequently, the Secretary approved a broad waiver on January 28, 2025, for humanitarian aid, which is defined as “life-saving medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence assistance, as well as supplies and reasonable administrative costs as necessary to deliver such assistance.”

### ***Have any waivers been granted for non-humanitarian assistance?***

Critical national security waivers have been granted, including to ensure the protection of U.S. personnel overseas, facilitate the repatriation of illegal aliens, enforce non-proliferation obligations, and much more. As mentioned, exceptions were reviewed and, where needed, approved within hours.

### ***What is the process to secure a waiver?***

The Department provided straight forward guidance on January 24, 2025, encouraging bureaus that manage foreign assistance to send waiver requests with the following information:

Bureau/Office/Mission Name

Program Name

Program Description

Program Location(s)

Intended Programmatic Outcome

Justification for Waiver

Fiscal and Earmark information

That process was used successfully dozens of times in the first several days alone; however, many requests failed to provide the level of detail necessary to allow a thorough evaluation. Subsequent guidance, sent on January 28, 2025, encouraged implementing partners and NGOs to work through their U.S. government agency partners on any additional requests.

### **How much has this process saved U.S. taxpayers?**

In just a few days, the Department received billions of dollars in waiver requests. Many of those requests are still under a merit-based review as they are not considered emergency or life threatening; however, even at this early stage, over \$1,000,000,000 in spending not aligned with an America First agenda has been prevented.

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