

Secretary of State Marco Rubio
Statement Before the
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

May 21, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and distinguished members of this Committee for inviting me to address you today.

The State Department is our first line of defense and offense on the world stage, and I am proud that in just a few short months, we have already implemented President Trump's vision of an America-first foreign policy.

Today, America is back.

Secure borders, safe communities, and zero tolerance for criminal cartels are once again the guiding principles of our foreign policy.

We've deepened partnerships with Mexico, El Salvador, and others to intercept illegal migration at the source and break the back of foreign terrorist organizations like MS-13 and Tren de Aragua.

We are working with law enforcement to revoke the status of foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality, threaten our citizens, and express support for this nation's enemies.

The Department has taken President Trump's policy message across Europe, securing the NATO Secretary General's commitment to increased defense spending, recalibrating transatlantic political and economic relations to better serve American interests, and alongside Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, moving decisively to end the Ukraine war.

Last month, I hosted the foreign ministers of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo at the State Department to initiate the preliminaries of a peace agreement facilitated by Senior Advisor Boulos in coordination with the White House National Security Council. That agreement will end years of conflict and open the way for American investment.

In the Middle East, the Administration's maximum pressure campaign has secured the release of the last living American hostage held by Hamas, a pledge by the Houthis to abandon attacks on American ships and forced Iran to beg for talks with the United States.

We are resetting America's trade relationship with the world through pro-growth tariffs to balance trade and raise revenue. On every continent, except perhaps Antarctica, where the penguins are proving difficult, we are supporting USTR's work to negotiate trade deals that protect American workers and secure investment that will grow our economy.

The Department is confronting China's nefarious influence from the Indo-Pacific to Africa to Latin America. The era of indulging the Chinese Communist Party as it abuses trade practices to steal our technology and floods our nation with fentanyl is over.

Today, I present the President's Fiscal Year 2026 Budget request for the Department of State.

This Budget, totaling \$28.5 billion, will allow the Department to fulfill its mission while also proposing the rescission of \$20 billion in duplicative, wasteful, and ideologically driven programs.

Last month, I announced a department-wide reorganization, the principles of which are reflected in our fiscal year 2026 budget request.

Henceforth, every bureau and office will have a clear mission. The Department will speak with one voice, guided by our statutory mandates and national interests—not fads or fringe academic theories.

A core principle of this reorganization is the belief that what matters is not the size of budgets but the agility with which they can be deployed.

That is reflected in the new America First Opportunity Fund, or A1OF—a \$2.9 billion flexible account that consolidates numerous fragmented and inefficient foreign assistance programs.

It will allow the Department to respond rapidly to crises, engage proactively with critical partners like India and Jordan, support essential repatriation efforts, and confront strategic threats from near-peer competitors like China.

The A1OF builds on the lessons we learned from USAID, the Department's existing foreign aid award system's failures, and the few significant successes.

Consistent with the President's executive order, the Department has been reviewing our more than 15,000 foreign aid awards; we have already found billions diverted to ideological causes, including climate activism, diversity, equity, inclusion, and LGBTQ initiatives in foreign nations.

These programs were counterproductive to American interests, wasting taxpayer money and provoking resentment abroad.

They reflected State Department culture, where the creation of new offices and programs became a pathway to career advancement, and dedicated public servants were discouraged from finding ways to improve or streamline existing programs.

A State Department where everything took too long, cost too much money, involved too many individuals, and failed the American people.

It is time to show how foreign assistance can be an accountable and effective component of an America First Foreign Policy.

Going forward, the America First Opportunity Fund, the consolidated Global Health Programs Account, and the new consolidated Humanitarian Assistance account, will become models for delivering life-saving and strategic assistance that advances US diplomatic, security, and economic goals.

As Secretary, I have the honor of leading the world's most talented diplomatic workforce.

They deserve better.

They deserve clear responsibilities and chains of command.

They deserve a State Department that unleashes their full potential from the ground up, harnessing the capacities of every embassy, consulate, and bureau to set a course for a new American century.

One where the power and prestige of the United States are unequaled by any other force in the world.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.