

**AMERICA LAST: HOW FOREIGN AID UNDERMINED U.S. INTERESTS
AROUND THE WORLD**

**Testimony Before
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency Name
United States House of Representatives**

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Madam Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to testify before this critical subcommittee.

My name is Max Primorac. I am a Senior Research Fellow at The Heritage Foundation and previously served at the U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Department of State. I've dedicated 35 years to international work. The views I express in this testimony are my own.

Over the past few weeks, we have been treated to a daily litany of [examples](#) of waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer funded foreign aid. USAID and the State Department used foreign aid as a [global platform](#) to push radical and even obscene ideas that have shocked and angered the American people. One cannot help but ask, “was there anyone in the room raising their hand to say, “maybe this is not a good idea, maybe this will risk our bipartisan support in Congress, maybe this will lose us the trust of the American people?”

Yes, foreign aid should be a tool to advance our national security interests. In the [past](#) it did. Today it doesn't. Frankly it has been doing harm. While spending more on aid, there is [more](#) world poverty and hunger today, more political instability, and developing countries are more beholden to our adversaries.

At USAID I co-chaired an inter-agency working group that put all aid projects through a counter-China lens. That was dismantled. Instead, the Biden administration wasted billions of dollars on a global [green agenda](#) that forced poor countries to rely on China for its energy needs. These countries sought more trade with and investment from America to bind our countries together but instead they got transgender, diversity, and abortion programs that have alienated billions of people.

Despite what we hear in the media, there is no linkage between how we do aid and our national security. [South Africa](#) has received billions of American aid dollars yet is China's main African partner (South Africa is the “S” in BRICS). It supports Hamas and Iran and [opposes](#) us at every turn at the United Nations. Last summer, Mozambique and Tanzania, other large aid recipients, conducted two-week military [exercises](#) with the Peoples Liberation Army, expanding China's power projection to the lip of our Atlantic Ocean. 19 of the top 20 USAID recipients are members of China's Belt & Road Initiative.

While Acting Chief Operating Officer at USAID I approved strong vetting policies for our humanitarian assistance in countries swarming with terrorists. That too was [ignored](#) by the Biden administration. Vast sums of U.S. money were diverted to fund terrorists in [Gaza](#), [Syria](#), [Yemen](#) and [Afghanistan](#). NGOs have been hit with heavy fines for violating our anti-terrorism financing laws, but closer scrutiny is warranted for the problem is endemic within our foreign aid culture.

Last year, USAID launched its \$45 million global [civil society](#) program, based on the social theories of an Italian [Marxist](#). Literally we have been funding radical NGOs around the world that oppose capitalism, democracy, NATO, and Christianity. None of this is counter-China, this is counter-America.

Again, a resounding YES that foreign aid can be a powerful tool of diplomacy to promote freedom, prosperity, and peace in accordance with our national interests and values. But not as an [instrument](#) of progressive imperialism.

Regardless of which party controls the executive branch, aid officials must ensure that every single foreign aid program can pass the middle America smell test on waste, fraud and abuse. Aid decisions must always secure bipartisan support. There must be full [transparency](#) on who is being funded and for what, not only for all Members of Congress but especially for the American people.

The fiduciary failure of our aid officials over the past four years has done tremendous [damage](#) to foreign aid's credibility and America's standing in the world. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

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