

II. Strategic

USAID Flap

Trump, Musk Target U.S. Funding for Regime Change

by Harley Schlanger

March 2—According to an internal memo circulating within the Trump administration, the Associated Press reported on February 27 that United States President Donald Trump intends to slash \$60 billion from the U.S. foreign aid budget, as part of a plan to “eliminate waste.” The largest component of the cuts will hit the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), eliminating 90 percent of its foreign aid contracts. The memo was revealed in legal documents filed in a case aimed at preventing the cancellation of USAID contracts in programs which employ over 10,000 workers in more than 60 countries. A court ruling temporarily halted the cancellations. However on March 5, the Supreme Court ruled that workers must be paid, rejecting the Trump administration’s plans of cancellation, though details remain to be worked out as to when the payments must be made.

Opponents of the cuts argue that shutting down these programs will cost lives, as the funds go to humanitarian assistance, which includes programs which provide medicine, vaccines and health care facilities, food security and housing. The cuts target 5,800 of the 6,200 USAID contracts, totaling \$54 billion, and will affect operations in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. The plan calls for the Agency to be merged into the State Department,



CC/G. Edward Johnson

One of the signs at the entrance to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Washington that were taped over Feb. 7, 2025.



CC/ Niccolò Caranti, 2018

George Soros, regime changer for the CIA and MI6.

and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, as interim director, will oversee a thorough review of its global operations, with waivers issued to exempt cuts in emergency food aid and “life-saving” programs.

Elon Musk, whose Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) was mandated by Trump to reduce federal spending and eliminate waste, has called for shutting down USAID, which he said is a “criminal organization.” A February 3 White House release criticized USAID as “unaccountable to taxpayers as it funnels massive

sums of money to the ridiculous—and, in many cases, malicious—pet projects of entrenched bureaucrats, with next-to-no oversight.”

In commenting on this, Trump pointed to \$260 million given by USAID to various funds tied to George Soros in the last 15 years. Soros’s network has been identified as heavily involved in collaborating with CIA and MI6 regime-change operations, under the guise of “promoting democracy.” This begins to get to the real issue behind the attack on USAID, which is that it operates as a central funding source for covert operations against governments, parties and leaders which refuse to submit to the demands of the U.S. “deep state.” Some of the larger recipients are known, such as National Endowment for Democracy, Project Democracy, and the International

Republican Institute, for coordinating covert ops for the purpose of regime change. By spreading out funds to those among the 6,200 contractors which engage in parallel operations with the CIA, it makes it harder to track.

USAID and ‘Soft Power’

Defenders of USAID point to the “humanitarian” programs it funds, to justify the expenditures. It is certainly true that grants to poorer countries are helpful and do save lives. But such grants come with strings attached, such as access to mineral deposits, providing land for military bases and transport corridors, and running surveillance programs and counter-terrorism operations, which extend the global reach of the Anglo-American corporate empire.

A deeper look into who actually benefits from USAID food programs provides an insight into the hypocrisy of those who defend the agency for its “humanitarian” efforts. USAID was established in 1961 under President John F. Kennedy, which amalgamated functions of relief agencies already in operation under President Eisenhower, such as the Food for Peace program.

The initial USAID mandate was seen as praiseworthy: to supply food and humanitarian support to poor, newly independent nations, during their transition to modern, self-reliant economies. But the reality is different, as development was suppressed for decades, in large part due to the effects of “conditionalities” imposed by the International Monetary Fund, which forced recipients of food aid to sell the bulk of the food they produced to earn revenue to pay growing debt—what might be called the imperial “debt trap”—making those nations more dependent on USAID and international aid. The continuing U.S. food aid operations became permanent bureaucracies, providing guaranteed profits for the food cartel companies that sell the commodities to USAID, or to the U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies that collaborate on food aid purchasing. As a result, it is the big vendors, such as Cargill, ADM, Bunge and cohort agribusinesses, which are the main beneficiaries of USAID food aid!

Samantha Power, President Biden’s USAID director, inadvertently acknowledges this, in her defense of the agency as an essential tool in advancing U.S. “strategic interests,” by which she means a defense of the Unipolar Order. Power is unapologetic about this

more nefarious, subversive side of USAID, and its role in what she sees as the current geopolitical contest for global power. “It’s hard to be a great competitor if you don’t show up,” she told *Politico*, in an interview days before Trump’s inauguration.

While Power has crafted a self-image as a defender of human rights, she has served as a leading proponent of Tony Blair’s attack on national sovereignty known as the “Responsibility To Protect.” As a member of Obama’s National Security Council, she was a vociferous advocate of the U.S./NATO armed intervention against Colonel Muammar Qaddafi and Libya in 2011, which plunged that nation into chaos. In her farewell interview with *Politico*, she was clear about how USAID functions as an arm of U.S. strategic power, engaged in



U.S. Coast Guard

USAID packages, delivered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

“competition” and geopolitical provocations:

...in this world of geostrategic competition, USAID has teams...where the PRC [People’s Republic of China] may already have established access to critical minerals, who have won trust over generations with the very ministries that are making decisions every day about who to partner with next.”

Power has been an advocate of using the government-funded USAID to bring private partners in on regime-change operations. She bragged that, due to “private sector partnerships,” for every \$1 of U.S. taxpayer money spent in Ukraine, there has been \$6 of private sector investment. Such “investment” comes with a steep cost, as Ukraine will discover when BlackRock,

one of the major private sector “donors,” comes seeking its pound of flesh in repayment, as well-connected “economic hitmen” invariably do.

One example of how USAID attacks nations targeted for regime change was Power’s visit to Hungary in February 2023, some months after Viktor Orbán and his party won a decisive election victory, much to the dismay of the Brussels-based Eurocrats. She announced that she had come to relaunch “new, locally-driven initiatives to help independent media thrive and reach new audiences, take on corruption and increase civic engagement.” Youth are particular targets for social media ad campaigns, appealing to them to attend workshops for training to be field organizers in anti-government activities. In some of the nations targeted, such as North Macedonia, Saul Alinsky’s manual on civil disobedience was distributed by activists from several USAID-related Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Color Revolutions, Hybrid Warfare

Power’s intervention in Hungary followed the pattern of previous attempts to remove governments considered to be hostile to U.S. security and economic interests. Portrayed as a campaign for American-style “democratization,” funds pour in after charges are made by opposition networks—often funded by USAID or one of its allied NGOs—of “election fraud” by the party in power. Youth are recruited and trained to engage in “democracy-promoting” civic actions; “anti-corruption” investigations; setting up social media and internet outposts to promote “press freedom” and counter “external media disinformation”; and election security measures to protect against “meddling” in future elections.

This approach to the use of “soft power” to overthrow governments was defined as the “new realism” by President Clinton’s Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who called for “promoting democracy” using



U.S. State Department
Samantha Power, USAID Administrator under President Biden.

hybrid warfare techniques: “By enlisting international and regional institutions in the work, the U.S. can leverage our own limited resources and avoid the appearance of trying to dominate others.”

The overthrow of the democratically-elected Viktor Yanukovich government in Ukraine in 2014 is an example of this method, though the U.S. hand was clear, with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland handing out cookies to demonstrators in Maidan Square—on top of the \$5 billion she admitted was paid out through USAID affiliates, such as the NED, to finance the

“people’s” uprising.

According to a February 11 story in the *Detroit Free Press*, all funding for the NED is being cut by Trump. It was scheduled to receive \$315 million for fiscal year 2025.

The use of color revolutions to cover up the role of the U.S. government does not fool the Russians, according to a paper written by the late Anthony Cordesman, a security analyst who held numerous government positions in addition to his role at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. In his 2014 paper, “Russia and the Color Revolution,” he wrote that Russian military leaders view “color revolutions” as a “new U.S. and European approach to warfare that focuses on creating destabilizing revolutions in other states as a means of serving their security interests at low cost and with minimal casualties.”

The exposure of, and shutdown of the government funding of this kind of blatant regime-change strategy, is an important step toward regaining trust in the

American government. The corporate media attempt to portray this as a liberal “goody-two-shoes” humanitarian effort being thwarted by a nasty budget-cutting Republican opposition, should be seen for what it is—an attempt by the flailing empire to use its media stooges to provide cover for anti-democratic regime-change operations run on behalf of the badly damaged Unipolar Order.



U.S. Embassy, Kyiv, Ukraine
Former Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland.

Without the USAID, Neo-Nazis Would Not Have Taken Over Ukraine

by Gretchen Small

March 4—“Without years of funding from U.S. and European agencies and foundations, radical Ukrainian nationalism and neo-Nazism would still be a marginal phenomenon in Ukraine.” That was the conclusion reached by Ukrainian dissident Dmitri Kovalevich after reviewing the reports of the programs which USAID had been funding in Ukraine before that funding was frozen by the Trump administration in January.

USAID poured nearly \$30 billion into Ukraine, from the February 2022 start of the war to the end of July 2024, according to Ukraine’s public broadcasting company, Suspilne. “It’s hard to think of a sector in Ukraine, where we have not had at least some involvement,” Biden’s USAID Director Samantha Power [bragged](#) to Suspilne. Of that,, “we’ve contributed close to \$23 billion in just cash to the government,” she added.

[EIR](#) has exposed USAID’s role in financing and coordinating the Ukrainian thought-police apparatus established in Ukraine, in which the government’s [Center for Countering Disinformation](#) and private intelligence agencies such as [Molfar OSINT](#) coordinated their operations to identify people who oppose the drive for war against Russia or Ukraine’s Nazification, either inside Ukraine or internationally, so they can be silenced, politically or physically. As documented, that entire USAID apparatus are fanatic followers of the tradition of Nazi collaborator, Stepan Bandera.

The “Countering Disinformation Guide” jointly issued in Sept. 2021 by the National Endowment for Democracy and USAID, proudly reported that the “Media Program” which USAID initiated in Ukraine in 2018 to “empower local media,” had become “the largest media development activity in Ukraine’s history.”

Kovalevich’s [review](#) of USAID funding in Ukraine fills out the picture of what has resulted from those operations. Published Feb. 19 by the Delphi Initiative, which describes itself as “a network of mainly ... European intellectuals who oppose the attempt of international Finance and big international corporations to impose a dictatorship all around Europe,” the full article is worth reading.

He takes the case, for example, of USAID

funding of Yevhen Karas, a straight-out [neo-Nazi killer](#), who heads one of the groups used to terrorize Ukrainians who oppose the Banderite regime the U.S. government installed in Kyiv. In March 2022, [EIR](#) published a profile of [Karas](#), the leader of the neo-Nazi “C14” group founded in 2010 as the youth group of the openly Hitlerite, anti-Semitic Svoboda party (formerly named the “Social Nationalists”). Karas proudly boasted on a Feb. 5, 2022 panel ([still available](#)), that C14 had “been given so much weaponry” by the West, “because we perform the tasks set by the West, because we are the only ones who are ready to do them. Because we have fun, we have fun killing and we have fun fighting.... We have started a war that has not been seen for 60 years” against Russia.

Kovalevich reports that Melaniya Podolyak, project manager of the Institute of Education, itself an ultra-nationalist organization that exists solely thanks to USAID funding, he notes, [laments](#) that “now, because of the funding suspensions, there will be no further podcasts by Karas.”

Kovalevich points out that most Ukrainians did not know until the USAID funding was shut down that “many officials and journalists in Ukraine [are] little more than paid agents of the United States government,” because information was totally controlled by the USAID-funded media, after the Zelensky regime shut down independent or dissident media in 2021.

The revelations of USAID control over their country poured out when the recipients of its largesse began squealing over being cut off. The Judicial Administration of Ukraine received \$16 million during 2023 and 2024, for example, he points out. Almost 90% (ninety percent!) of the government-allowed media “survives thanks to foreign grants”—the Institute of Mass Information, itself a USAID “grant-eater,” reported after surveying who had been hit.

Understandably, the revelations have stirred “a flurry of angry writings on social networks in Ukraine.” And especially so, because “all employees of Western-funded foundations in Ukraine enjoy rare exemptions from obligatory military conscription,” while being paid to promote the war against Russia.