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TASK FORCE REPORT



The Future of U.S. Foreign Aid: Comparisons
& Recommendations

2018



The Future of U.S. Foreign Aid Policy

Comparisons & Recommendations

Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies
University of Washington, Seattle
Task Force, Winter 2018

Advisor

Mark Ward

Career Minister in the U.S. Foreign Service (Retired)

Evaluator

James Kunder

Former Acting Deputy Administrator of USAID

Research Team

Henry Milander, *Editor*

Tania Arciniega, *Coordinator*

John Carlo Carandang

Beatrice Breckheimer

Leonard Alden Santoso

Alex Eppenauer

Kunat Sangcharoenvanakul

Caroline Kasman

Kuan-Yu Chen

Nabilla Gunawan

Danica Person

Elizabeth Lapham

Saddiqullah Faizi

Sam Fiore

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Glossary of Terms

AFA	American Freedom Agenda
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
BRM	Office of Budget and Resource Management
CBJ	Congressional Research Service
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CNCS	Corporation for National Community Service
CRGE	Climate Resistant Green Economy
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DA	Development Assistance
DAC	Development Assistance Committee, OECD
DAH	Development Assistance for Health
DFA	Director of Foreign Assistance
DFID	U.K. Department for International Development
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOAG	Development Objective Grant Agreement
DOC	Department of Commerce
DOD	Department of Defense
DOL	Department of Labor
DOS	Department of State
DOT	Department of Treasury
ESF	Economic support fund
EU	European Union
FA Act	Foreign Assistance Act of 1961
FFP	Food for Peace (P.L. 480 Title II)
FK	Fredskorpset
FTF	Feed the Future
FY	Fiscal Year
GCCI	Global Climate Change Initiative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHAI	Global Health/AIDS Initiative
GNI	Gross National Income
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
HHS	Health & Human Services
IDA	International Disaster Assistance
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International NGO
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISLA	Initiative to Strengthen Local Administration
IWA	Integrity Watch Afghanistan

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce, China
MRA	Migration and Refugee Assistance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOK	Norwegian Krone
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NOREPS	Norwegian Emergency Preparedness System
Norfund	The Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGAC	Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator
OHDACA	Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Assistance
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PCD	Procurement and Commercial Department, DFID
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief
PMI	President's Malaria Initiative
PSC	Professional Service Council
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SME	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise
SOAG	Strategic Objective Grant Agreement
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USG	United States Government
WB	World Bank
WBG	World Bank Group
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

Foreign assistance constitutes a key instrument in the United States' foreign policy, and how the U.S. government provides aid significantly impacts both other donor and recipient countries. The donor countries of primary focus in this report are the U.K., Norway, China, and the U.S., and the recipient countries are Afghanistan, Egypt, Indonesia, and Ethiopia. This report discusses the current state of U.S. foreign aid, its impact on recipient countries, and how effective it is overall in comparison to other donor nations.

Budget authority for U.S. foreign aid originates from Congress in the annual appropriations process, at which point conditions to the aid are imposed which do not necessarily align with the priorities of recipient countries. Moreover, these conditions are one primary contributor to the predominantly short-term nature of many U.S. foreign aid projects and initiatives, a nature that can and does conflict with long-term developmental goals.

Although the U.S. has remained the largest foreign aid donor in terms of gross dollars, there is an ongoing debate about the overall effectiveness of the aid it provides. U.S. bilateral aid objectives range from national security and commercial interest to humanitarian aid, but the focus of this report is on the effectiveness of bilateral development aid. This Task Force has found that U.S. foreign assistance – as well as that of other donor nations – can be inflexible and unpredictable, thus causing them to lose credibility with their recipients.

To address these issues, we the Task Force believe that local governments and stakeholders should be more involved in the planning and implementation process of foreign aid in order for donor countries to better align their priorities and regain credibility with recipient countries. In doing so, donor countries will benefit from an increased effectiveness of their own foreign aid, and consequently a better use of taxpayer money in furthering security and well-

being for their citizens. Our six areas for improvement are enumerated below.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Involve recipient country officials in the budget formulation process.
2. Discourage initiatives (pet projects) that do not accurately reflect recipient government needs.
3. Use to its full extent the flexibility provided by the U.S. Congress in the annual appropriations process to move money between accounts for the most urgent needs.
4. Improve informal coordination among donor countries in the field in order to cover shortfalls in funding long-term challenges.
5. Award more small contracts (under \$10 million) so that more local organizations have the opportunity to bid competitively, while simultaneously hiring more local personnel (as opposed to costly foreign service officers) to help with the additional workload of awarding and monitoring more contracts.
6. Use social media as a safer and more cost-effective method to monitor project progress, measure locals' satisfaction, and increase local community buy in.

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Introduction

Debates Around U.S. Foreign Aid Policy, and the Way Forward

United States foreign assistance is viewed by many as an indispensable instrument in U.S. foreign policy, and by many others as an expense the U.S. government cannot afford. With objectives ranging from national security and commercial interests to humanitarian principles, the U.S. has remained the largest foreign aid donor in the world in absolute terms. How the U.S. government proceeds with its policy on foreign aid impacts not only other donor nations' foreign aid policies, but also the tangible outcomes in many developing countries.

Throughout the post-WWII period, Cold War, and 9/11, aid levels have fluctuated with policymakers and key constituencies advocating and opposing its expansion and effectiveness at achieving objectives such as national security, poverty reduction, health care, and disaster assistance, among others.¹ Today's U.S. Foreign Assistance is authorized under the broad auspices of The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961,² which President Kennedy enacted after citing the "undependable short-term financing of programs and the resulting disincentive for long-term efficient planning." Kennedy thus sought "to organize and implement U.S. foreign assistance programs with a commitment to long-range economic assistance to the developing world."³

Despite such a mandate and the general bipartisan agreement on the moral *and* strategic significance of foreign aid, U.S. foreign assistance funding is widely viewed as vulnerable in the annual federal budget process. The Obama Administration elevated foreign assistance to a pillar

¹ McBride, 2017 "How Does the U.S. Spend Its Foreign Aid"

² P.L. 87-195; 22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.

³ Rennack and Chessner, 2011 "Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 Authorizations and Corresponding Appropriations"

of foreign policy, defending foreign aid as “vital to U.S. national security” and “a strategic, economic, and moral imperative.”⁴ The Trump Administration has argued foreign assistance should be made contingent on countries’ support for U.S. global objectives, a sentiment President Trump articulated when he requested from Congress that “American foreign-assistance dollars always serve American interests, and only go to America’s friends, not enemies of America.”⁵ Notably, the FY2018 CBJ did not in any of the objectives or priorities it enumerated mention long-term development in any sense.⁶ However, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has argued for addressing “security and development issues side by side” in the region because “you cannot expect to have one without the other.”⁷

President Trump is not the first president to threaten (or actualize) cuts to foreign aid, or give aid to promote American interests. Former U.S. official Exnia Wickett, now working at the Chatham House, stated that “in practical terms the U.S. has always been giving aid based on U.S. interests and needs.”⁸ Balanced with these needs, has also been the varying use of non-strategic foreign assistance, such as the Reagan Administration’s justification to provide humanitarian assistance to famine-affected Ethiopia – “a hungry child knows no politics”– or the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative which the George W. Bush Administration helped establish.⁹ While these debates are fundamental to the U.S.’ democracy, their uncertainty and resulting policy directives nevertheless have tangible outcomes for the effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance.

This report seeks to add to this debate on the future of U.S. foreign policy by providing a

⁴ Arieff et. al., 2014 “U.S. Foreign Assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa: The FY2012 Request”

⁵ Trump, 2018 “State of the Union Address”

⁶ Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 2018 “Budget of the U.S. Government, Fiscal Year 2018”

⁷ Bermeo, 2018 “Reserving foreign aid for ‘friends’ who agree with the US misses the mark”

⁸ Erlanger, 2018 “Trump Wants to Aid Only ‘America’s Friends.’ If Only It Were That Easy”

⁹ MEMO, 2018 “Leading humanitarian groups urge US to rethink cuts to UNRWA”

synopsis on motivations for foreign aid, the various pressures that drive its allocation and obligation, and the various barriers this report views to be limiting the effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance. The scope of this report, given time and length constraints, will focus primarily on official USG bilateral aid in terms of analysis and policy recommendations. The report utilizes a comparative framework of three other donor countries (The United Kingdom, Norway, and People's Republic of China) in order to better analyze the strengths and weakness of U.S. Foreign Aid policy, and identify viable alternatives and areas for reform therein. It also focuses on four recipient countries (Afghanistan, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Indonesia) to provide a consistent lens when comparing foreign aid's effectiveness. The report especially considers the degree of conditionality tied to funds as it traces the U.S. and other donor countries' systems from allocation to obligation, and finally to implementation.

The last section of the report concludes with a series of three broad policy goals and six policy recommendations this report's Task Force advises the USG to implement in order to reform U.S. foreign aid policy and increase the effectiveness of its bilateral foreign assistance programs. While there is no specific answer to many of the questions its authors and the challenges of foreign assistance pose, the report seeks to expose, analyze, and compare multiple viewpoints in order to provide a foundation for actionable recommendations on USG foreign aid policy. Though the report illuminates many areas for reform, the Task Force has limited itself to only recommending policy reforms it believes are implementable in practice.

Chapter I

Introduction to Donor Nations, Their Constituents, and Recipient Nations

Introduction

This chapter introduces the foreign aid policies and systems of the United States, United Kingdom, Norway, and China, and provides an important background for subsequent chapters to build upon. Section I will explore the varying motivations that drive each donor nation's foreign aid policy, introduce the agencies responsible for dispensing aid, and discuss the foreign aid budget and areas of interest in each nation in comparison to one another. Section II will analyze each donor nation's constituencies to better understand the rationales, support for and opposition to aid in each nation. Lastly, Section III will analyze the aid environment in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Egypt, and Ethiopia. It will explore each recipient nation's history with foreign aid from each donor nation, local opinions on foreign aid, and example projects from each donor nation within the recipient nation.

Section I. Introduction to Donor Nations

John Carlo Carandang

United States Foreign Aid – Overview

The United States is the single largest aid-providing nation in the world in terms of gross USD. The U.S. disbursed \$22.2 billion in foreign aid in 2017¹⁰ of a planned \$43.8 billion, and leads projects world-wide in varying areas of interest. Examples of programs include the

¹⁰ Foreign Assistance, 2018 "Explore | ForeignAssistance.Gov."

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a program supporting the fight against HIV/AIDS, alongside several programs for promoting democracy, such as the American Freedom Agenda (AFA).

United States foreign aid operates under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FA Act). Under the FA Act, U.S. foreign aid strives to improve U.S. security, liberty, and economic prosperity, which are best served in a community of nations that respects individual civil and economic rights.¹¹ This entails the emphasis of poverty reduction, promotion of economic growth, development of individual civil and economic rights, integration into the international economic system, and good governance within recipient countries. Under this framework, all U.S. foreign aid serves the dual purpose of improving recipient nations while also ensuring the prosperity of the United States. The AFA is an example of a program that serves the dual purpose of both political and development ends, and which served to promote the development of democracy in several nations, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹² The AFA not only assists with reconstruction in Afghanistan, but also with winning over the hearts and minds of the Afghan people to counter Islamic radicalism and insurgencies through the use of restrictive measures against the violation of human rights during U.S. peacekeeping operations.¹³

Despite foreign aid being a tool for U.S. foreign policy, altruism and genuine support for the well-being of others also motivates the continued funding of foreign aid. PEPFAR demonstrates a more humanitarian aspect to aid, and has helped 13.3 million people receive antiretroviral treatment.¹⁴ Tackling not only HIV/AIDS, but also malaria and tuberculosis,

¹¹ Foreign Assistance Act Of 1961, 2017

¹² Oz Hassan, 2013 "Constructing America's Freedom Agenda for the Middle East"

¹³ Paul, 2007 "Text - H.R.3835 - 110th Congress (2007-2008): American Freedom Agenda Act of 2007."

¹⁴ Inc n.d

PEPFAR has sought to address these diseases since 2002, and has continued to be renewed today given its strong bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress.

U.S. foreign aid falls under the guidance of the U.S. Department of State (DOS), which prioritizes the uses of assistance. Under the DOS is the United States Assistance for International Development (USAID), which is the agency largely responsible for the disbursement of funds and program management for U.S. foreign aid. USAID remains relatively autonomous, and is monitored by the Office of Foreign Assistance Resources.¹⁵ Many other USG departments also dispense foreign aid for their own goals and projects, such as the DOS and the Department of Defense (DOD), although USAID remains the largest dispenser of aid, totaling \$19.7 billion in 2017.¹⁶ Some departments have department-specific interests, such as the DOD and its objective of building foreign military capacity,¹⁷ and dispense aid using their own budget allocations in collaboration with other aid programs.¹⁸

U.S. foreign aid has several categories that projects fall under: Peace & Security, Democracy & Governance, Health, Education & Social Services, Economic Development, Environment, and Humanitarian Assistance. The largest target areas in 2017 were Health (\$6.62 billion), Humanitarian Assistance (\$3.34 billion), and Economic Development (\$2.66 billion).¹⁹ Humanitarian Assistance has two sub-categories: Protection, Assistance, & Solutions; and Disaster Readiness. Most of Humanitarian Assistance has gone to Sub-Saharan Africa and for disaster relief in the Middle East, particularly Iraq and Syria. Economic Development programs

¹⁵ Bureau of Resource Management, 2012 “Department of State Program Evaluation Policy.”

¹⁶ Foreign Assistance n.d.

¹⁷ Serafino, 2008 “The Department of Defense Role in Foreign Assistance: Background, Major Issues, and Options for Congress.”

¹⁸ USAID, 2018 “U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES & MILITARY”

¹⁹ Ibid., 16

are much more evenly spread out in the world, though a few places receive larger sums than average, most notably Afghanistan with \$5.06 billion disbursed in 2015.²⁰

Despite a gross amount of \$43.8 billion being obligated into U.S. foreign aid, as a percentage of the U.S.' GNI it is only 0.17 %.²¹ The U.S. lies in the lower third of all donor nations in percentage terms of GNI despite having the highest absolute amount of foreign aid. In 1970, the United Nations outlined a clear path in its Millennium Development Goals to targeting 0.7% of GNI allocated towards Official Development Assistance (ODA).²² However, only a handful of nations have meet this target today, including Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark and the U.K.²³ Norway spends roughly 1% of its GNI on ODA, similar to other Scandinavian countries, while the U.K. spends roughly 0.7% in accordance with the UN target.²⁴ Gross amounts tell a much different story: using data from the OECD in 2015, U.S. ODA was by far the largest at \$31.07 billion, with Norway as the median of all donor nations with \$5.81 billion in ODA, and the U.K. as the second largest donor with \$18.7 billion in ODA.²⁵

Norwegian Foreign Aid – Overview

The Nordic model for international development follows the UN Global Goals and 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability.²⁶ Norway's foreign aid is categorized by its large humanitarian efforts globally, where it has national and commercial interests. With roughly 1%

²⁰ Ibid.,16

²¹ OECD, 2015 "Development Aid in 2015 Continues to Grow despite Costs for In-Donor Refugee"

²² Booth and Lunn 2016

²³ Ibid., 21

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ OECD, 2018 "Norway High up the Aid Donor Table but Could Improve Allocation"

of GNI for foreign aid,²⁷ totaling approximately \$4.78 billion in aid in 2016,²⁸ Norway is the world's 2nd largest donor nation as a percentage of GNI. Unlike U.S. foreign aid, Norwegian foreign aid has been *primarily* channeled through multilateral organizations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and World Food Programme (WFP).²⁹ Over 50% of Norwegian foreign aid goes into multilateral and civil society organizations.³⁰

Much of Norwegian foreign aid falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) which oversees three organizations specialized in handling different forms of Norwegian foreign aid: the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), and Fredskorpset (FK). Norfund assists nation development through the use of grants and loans to fund small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Norad handles the allocation of funds for projects concerning target areas, such as climate change and education, as well their monitoring and evaluation. Lastly, FK acts as a mediator between Norway and other countries for exchanging employees and members for businesses and organizations.

Norway often funds projects in areas it has had no history dealing with, which juxtaposes with the U.S. model of foreign aid which usually (though not always) directly addresses areas of geopolitical strategic importance or those affected by U.S. intervention. Norwegian foreign aid seeks to promote close ties with other nations and development in accordance with international agreements such as the Paris Climate Deal, and purposive areas such as asylum seeker assistance and the development of nations.³¹ Notable nations that Norway provided support to in 2016 are

²⁷ OECD, 2015 “Development Aid in 2015 Continues to Grow despite Costs for In-Donor Refugee”

²⁸ Norwegian Aid Statistics, 2018

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ NoradDev, 2018, “Selected Thematic Areas 2018”

Afghanistan (NOK 694 million), Indonesia (NOK 405 million), and Ethiopia (NOK 442 million).³²

In Indonesia, Norway is dedicated to developing Indonesia's energy sector and promoting the sustainable management of marine resources.³³ The project serves to create a demand for Norwegian oil and supply of Indonesian fish for a growing Norwegian demand, as well as the development of Indonesia and implementation of long-term sustainable fish farming practices. In Ethiopia, Norway supports the Climate Resistant Green Economy (CRGE) for tackling climate change. Norway helps to provide funds for Ethiopia's plans without direct control over the project, and has created an incentive-based system for sustainable practices.³⁴

U.K. Foreign Aid – Overview

The U.K. boasts the 3rd largest aid budget among donor nations, with \$13.4 billion provided in foreign assistance in 2016,³⁵ or 0.7% of its GNI. The Secretary of State for International Development directs U.K. foreign aid and is primarily disbursed by the Department for International Development (DFID). In contrast to Norway, the U.K.'s aid has aspects similar to other former colonial empires in Western Europe. Under the Secretary of State for International Development, DFID handles a majority of foreign aid and is a tool with which the U.K. has helped to maintain close ties with many of its former colonies and support the development of peace and security in destabilized regions. This is in part due to the large number of migrants from the U.K.'s former colonial holdings. The top aid recipients in 2017 were Pakistan (£463 million), Jordan (£175 million), Syria (£352 million), Ethiopia (£334 million),

³² Norwegian Aid Statistics, 2018

³³ Norwegian Foreign Ministry, 2018 "Energy and Marine Resources"

³⁴ Norwegian Foreign Ministry, 2018 "Forestry/REDD+"

³⁵ DFID, 2017 "Statistics of International Development 2017 – UKAID"

Nigeria (£320 million), and Afghanistan (£234 million).³⁶

U.K. foreign aid is delivered through both multilateral and bilateral channels, with 36.8% going through multilateral channels (such as International Development Association and the European Union) and 63.2% through bilateral channels. In 2016, over 75% of bilateral aid was spent in six target areas: humanitarian, multi-sector, government and civil society, health, education, and economic and infrastructure services. The remaining 25% went to administrative and logistical costs.³⁷

DFID was established in 1997 as a replacement to its predecessor, the Ministry of Overseas Development. DFID follows the guidelines of the International Development Act of 2002 and 2006. The International Development Act of 2002 classifies the provision of U.K. foreign aid under development assistance, development assistance for British Overseas Territories, humanitarian assistance, and supplementary purposes. Under supplementary purposes, the U.K.'s foreign aid is expanded to any organization that is relevant to U.K. foreign aid interests and the reduction of poverty. The International Development Act of 2006 prescribes transparency and recordings of all foreign aid to be recorded for public record, while also reporting progress for the UN MDG.

Similar to Norway, the U.K. follows the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and UN MDGs, and prioritizes peace and security, development, crisis management, and countering poverty. The U.K. is one of a handful of nations that meet the UN target goal of 0.7%, with over 50% of aid going to humanitarian goals.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid., 35

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid

U.K. foreign aid is similar to U.S. foreign aid in many aspects, in particular their similar efforts to help maintain global security and pursue the development of nations heavily afflicted with poverty and hunger. The U.K. supports both EU and UN military operations, providing equipment and people in efforts to maintain peace in the Middle East and North Africa.³⁹ However, key differences arise with the approaches each nation takes when deploying foreign aid. In part because the U.K. and Norway fall under the EU, both nations support multilateral organizations that employ foreign aid at a greater percentage relative to their foreign aid budget than the U.S. does.

Chinese Foreign Aid – Overview

The Chinese foreign aid model presents a system noticeably different from the aforementioned Western approaches to foreign aid. While the U.S.' foreign aid partly addresses humanitarian issues combined with its global objectives, Chinese foreign aid is almost exclusively commercial and business-oriented. This is best seen by where China's foreign aid falls under, that is, the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM). Chinese foreign aid seeks to create ties with nations in a business-like manner more than any other Western donor countries, thus expanding its "soft power" and the ability to persuade others without the use of coercion or bribery internationally in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.⁴⁰ In a report lead by former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, "since 2000..., there has been a steady increase in the PRC's courting of foreign governments, including high level diplomatic exchanges, trade initiatives, investment agreements, and tourism and cultural

³⁹ UN, 2016 "Keeping Britain Global: Peacekeeping."

⁴⁰ Wolf, Wang, and Warner 2013

understandings.”⁴¹

China has recently sent particularly large amounts of aid to Indonesia in the form of the construction of a large high-speed railway and shipping ports.^{42,43} In Egypt, China has agreed to assist in financing Egypt’s central bank up to \$1 billion, along with a further \$15 billion for projects on electricity, infrastructure, and transportation. China sees Egypt as a necessary partner and is willing to help stabilize the area. In Ethiopia, China has invested \$4 billion in expanding the new Ethiopian National Railway Network.⁴⁴ The development of transportation infrastructure in Ethiopia will boost China’s own economic development through increased movement of Chinese goods.

Despite many major projects employed internationally, no accurate figures have been released to quantify the exact amount China has spent on foreign aid. However, it is estimated that China spent \$350 billion on development assistance between the years 2000-2014,⁴⁵ with roughly \$37 billion on total aid in 2014 alone. Since 2008, China has ramped up its aid significantly from just \$12.8 billion in commitments to \$37.3 billion in 2014.⁴⁶

Section II. Constituents of Foreign Aid in Donor Countries

Beatrice Breckheimer

Given the different systems of foreign aid each donor country has been illustrated in the previous section to have, it is no surprise that each is under pressure from various constituencies and to differing degrees. Included among these groups are domestic populations, NGOs, private

⁴¹ Joseph R. Biden, 2008 “China’s Foreign Policy and “Soft Power” in South America, Asia, and Africa”

⁴² Perlez and Huang, 2017 “Behind China’s \$1 Trillion Plan to Shake Up the Economic Order.”

⁴³ Kynge, 2017 “Chinese Purchases of Overseas Ports Top \$20bn in Past Year.”

⁴⁴ Kaiman, 2017 “China Says It Built a Railway in Africa out of Altruism, but It’s More Strategic than That.”

⁴⁵ Aiddata, 2018 “China’s Global Development Footprint 2018”

⁴⁶ Ibid.

contractors, political parties, and independent government agencies. Examining the various constituencies (both pro and contra) in each donor country and their primary motivations will help identify the key stakeholders that must be included in reform efforts.

United States – Constituencies

Domestic public support of U.S. foreign aid has been roughly stable throughout the last four presidencies, stretching 25 years, suggesting that public perception of aid is largely independent of political party.⁴⁷ Despite this, many Americans are unaware of the amount the U.S. spends on foreign aid each year. While foreign aid comprises just 1% of the annual budget approximately, many Americans mistakenly perceive this number to be much higher, oftentimes estimating the amount to be as high as 20 to 30%.⁴⁸ This increasingly common misconception of the U.S. foreign aid budget is likely one contributor to the lessened domestic public support by some for U.S. foreign aid under the current Administration.⁴⁹

Two key organizations who support a substantial foreign aid budget are USAID and the DOS. Together the agencies make up a considerable proportion of the size of the United States' foreign aid budget, given that a critical part of their jobs is accomplished through the implementation of aid programs overseas. These agencies and the funding accounts utilized to fund programs will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter II of this report.

USAID's contracting to private contractors and development companies has led to both groups forming large proponents for U.S. foreign aid. In 2016, the largest recipients of contracts from USAID were Chemonics International, Tetra Tech, and DAI respectively, which together

⁴⁷ Ferrarello, 2017 "What 'America First' Means for US Foreign Aid, Brookings Institution"

⁴⁸ Foreign Affairs, 2017, "How Does the US Spend its Foreign Aid?"

⁴⁹ Report, 2017 "American public support for foreign aid in the age of Trump"

represented more than one-third of contracts in that year.⁵⁰ The contracts awarded vary annually, and there is stiff competition among primarily U.S.-based private companies. In an effort to alleviate domestic competition among aid allocation, U.S. contractors founded the Council of International Development Companies in 2011. This organization lobbies against foreign aid funds given directly to non-U.S. based companies, and instead encourages that increased funding be given to U.S. companies to contract out accordingly.⁵¹

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) is another prominent constituent for U.S. foreign aid as it lobbies for increased use of domestic products and resources for foreign aid purposes. The DOA receives roughly \$350 million for Food for Peace (FFP) programs under Title II funds, a program related to other UN and international partner efforts for providing emergency relief and long-term development of food security and related services.⁵² However, FFP programs tend to operate with restrictions that are reported to reduce the efficiency of foreign aid up to 40%.⁵³ Restrictions such as the use of domestic products, workers, and even U.S.-flagged shipping vessels remain in place despite the fact it is widely-reported to often be more cost-efficient and result-oriented to utilize foreign resources in the regions foreign aid is supplied to. However, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) noted in its report strong opposition to reform coming in large part from the DOA and its constituents, including farmers, farming associations, and U.S. shipping businesses.⁵⁴

Additional independent agencies such as the African Development Foundation and the Peace Corps are also proponents of an increased U.S. foreign aid budget given their reliance on it

⁵⁰ US Foreign Aid, 2017 “Top USAID Contractors for 2016”

⁵¹ Council of International Development, “PSC” n.d.

⁵² USAID, 2016 “Food For Peace Act, Section 202(E)”

⁵³ CRS, 2016 “Does Foreign Aid Work? Efforts to Evaluate US Foreign Assistance”

⁵⁴ Ibid.

for funding. Similarly, numerous NGOs based both domestically and abroad are funded in part by the U.S. foreign aid budget, and are thus in favor of a stable or increasing ODA budget.⁵⁵ Both NGOs and independent agencies are incentivized to lobby for funding for their respective missions, as resources are scarce and competition is high. At the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition in 2013, U.S. lawmakers agreed across party lines to encourage development agencies and NGOs to lobby lawmakers on which organizations should receive contracts and where aid should be implemented.⁵⁶

Norway – Constituencies

The government of Norway is a key supporter of a robust foreign aid budget, which according to a report by Norad, is primarily because it receives international recognition for its humanitarian aid.⁵⁷ International humanitarian causes make up the largest portion of the nation's foreign assistance budget, allowing Norwegian aid administrations to claim their altruistic attitude resonates with the population.⁵⁸ However, researchers have noted that the Norwegian system of aid disbursement more closely resembles a 'feel good' rather than 'do good' mentality, which appears less altruistic in its nature.⁵⁹

Within the Norwegian government, there is disagreement over where the majority of foreign aid should be allocated. Norway's third-largest right-wing group, the Progress Party, argues that more of the Norway's foreign aid should be allocated in the national interest. However, this runs opposite that of other groups; for example, the large, predominantly Christian

⁵⁵ USAID, 2017 "Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)"

⁵⁶ Devex, 2013 "How to Lobby US Lawmakers for More Foreign Aid Spending"

⁵⁷ Norad "Record-High Development Assistance" n.d.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Journal of Development Effectiveness, 2014 "To 'Feel Good' or to 'Do Good'? Why We Need Institutional Changes to Ensure a Results Focus in Norwegian Development Assistance"

left-wing group in the Norwegian government prefers aid to be purely humanitarian.⁶⁰

This disagreement is echoed in public opinion, as those who support right-wing parties generally approve of national-interest oriented aid, whereas those supporting left-wing groups tend to support purely humanitarian aid. While the majority of the Norwegian public supports foreign aid, a growing number feels the budget should be reduced. Similarly, data trends over the past decade show that less than half of the Norwegian public feel the outcomes of foreign aid are beneficial.⁶¹ This sentiment is reflected in the current balance of power, as Prime Minister Erna Solberg of the Conservative Party leans toward commercial interests in aid allocation.⁶²

A key constituency supporting Norway's foreign aid budget is the Norwegian Emergency Preparedness System (NOREPS), an umbrella organization founded by the Norwegian government in the early 1990s that supports numerous NGOs. NOREPS receives part of the nation's foreign aid budget, which is then allocated to NGOs according to need, primarily for purely humanitarian projects. Examples of NGOs it supports include the Red Cross of Norway, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Church Aid, and Norwegian People's Aid, all of which support the foreign aid budget and in turn, receive significant funding each year through NOREPS.⁶³

United Kingdom – Constituencies

In 2015, the U.K. maintained its 0.7% of GNI annual goal in foreign assistance, which prompts the question as to which constituencies have ensured both the U.K.'s yearly commitment and planned aid increases for the next decade – although the magnitude of the

⁶⁰ Global, 2017 “What Right-Wing Populists Look Like in Norway”

⁶¹ Public Sector, 2013 “Attitudes towards and knowledge about Norwegian development aid, 2013”

⁶² The Government, 2007 “regjeringen.no”

⁶³ NOREPS “Norwegian NGOs, Red Cross, and DSB” n.d.

increase is said to depend on the domestic economy at the time.⁶⁴ According to collaborative research from the University of Leeds and the London School of Economics, the proposed increase sparked public dissent because a significantly larger portion of the British public supports giving aid in accordance to national interest as opposed to purely humanitarian aid.⁶⁵

Public support within the U.K. tends to vary by political alliance, as those belonging to left-wing parties are more likely to support purely humanitarian aid, and vice versa. Most notably, the U.K. Independence Party, Conservative Party, and Labour Party are greater proponents of foreign aid benefiting national interests, whereas the Green Party, Liberal Democrat Party, and Scottish National Party support purely humanitarian aid, following a trend similar to their civilian constituents.⁶⁶

Within the British government, primary support for a large foreign aid budget comes from DFID. On an annual basis, DFID spends on average about 81% of the U.K.'s development aid budget. Because they decide where to allocate most of the nation's foreign aid budget, they tend to advocate for an increased budget for the latter.⁶⁷ Roughly 93% of the DFID's contracts go to U.K.-based companies, the top two being GM International and Adam Smith International. These private contractors within the U.K. are large proponents of the proposed increase to the foreign aid budget as they receive the majority of the contracts.⁶⁸

China – Constituencies

In 2016, data from the Pew Research Center showed that 62% of the surveyed Chinese

⁶⁴ 2016 “The 0.7% Aid Target: June 2016 Update”

⁶⁵ Political Studies Association (PSA), 2015 “UK Foreign Aid: what do the British public think aid should be for?”

⁶⁶ Political Insight, 2011 “Our Aid’: UK International Development Policy under the Coalition”

⁶⁷ Gov.uk, 2010 “DFID Statistics on International Development 2010 - Total DFID Bilateral Expenditure by DFID Division and Country and Policy/ International Programmes 2009/10”

⁶⁸ UK Department for International Development, 2011 “Major Contracts and Agreements Since January 2011”

public supported increasing the country's ODA to developing nations. This statistic is notably higher than the U.S., Norway, and U.K.'s public perception of increased ODA, all of which are roughly 50%.⁶⁹ However, Chinese ODA has been widely criticized as primarily protecting Chinese investments abroad and seldom benefitting developing nations without some set of conditions. As MOFCOM has argued, however, the country does give aid to Africa solely for humanitarian purposes,⁷⁰ though there remains a dispute over the motivations behind China's aid allocation.

A key supporter for Chinese foreign aid projects are Chinese workers. When China invests in infrastructure or development projects overseas, it sends its own contractors, laborers, and construction workers instead of employing local citizens. According to research from the John Hopkins School of International Studies, there were close to 227,000 Chinese workers in Africa in 2016 alone, which brought in approximately \$50 billion in revenue from construction projects.⁷¹ Additional information regarding major constituencies for and against foreign aid in China was difficult to find. Of the several studies on Chinese ODA currently available to the public, most just examine the amount of aid or type of project that China invested in.⁷²

Section III. Motivations for Receiving Aid and Local Perception

Leonard Alden Santos

Afghanistan

Afghanistan receives the most foreign assistance from the United States, which since 9/11, has grown annually until decreasing after 2013.⁷³ In 2017, Afghanistan was obligated \$977

⁶⁹ Pew Research, 2016 "China and the World. Pew Research - Global Attitudes Project"

⁷⁰ Ministry of Commerce - People's Republic of China, 2017 "Bi- and Multi-Lateral Relations"

⁷¹ Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 2018 "Data: Chinese Contracts in Africa"

⁷² College of William and Mary, 2014 "AidData"

⁷³ USAID, 2018 "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country"

million, a significant drop from \$5.1 billion in obligations the previous year.⁷⁴ Afghanistan currently suffers from a weak government and is very dependent on aid to finance its budget and country's development. It was this weakness of government that allowed the Taliban and other militias to develop.⁷⁵ The primary reason behind the U.S.' foreign assistance to Afghanistan post-9/11 has been to improve security in Afghanistan by stabilizing the government eradicating terrorism.⁷⁶

Afghanistan was also Norad's biggest recipient of foreign assistance in 2014, receiving over NOK 758 million.⁷⁷ In 2017, the U.K. sent £155 million⁷⁸ in foreign assistance, and while China did not specify how much they are giving, there are reports of \$4.4 million in foreign investment for resources like copper deposits.⁷⁹

Aside from security, Afghanistan's natural resources also constitute a motivating factor for donor countries. It was recently reported that U.S. President Trump is targeting the extraction of mineral resources estimated at \$1 trillion to help pay for war reconstruction.⁸⁰ The U.K. in 2013 also reported a desire for a market share of Afghanistan's mineral resources.⁸¹ Since 2007, Norway had been engaged with the Afghan Ministry of Mining for building capacity and providing technical support.⁸²

The Afghan public has criticized the U.S. and other donors for the short-term nature of

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Samim, 2016 "Afghanistan's Addiction to Foreign Aid."

⁷⁶ Felbab-Brown, 2011 "Afghanistan Ten Years after 9/11: Counterterrorism Accomplishments While a Civil War Is Lurking?"

⁷⁷ NORAD, 2015 "A continuing high level of aid"

⁷⁸ DFID, 2017 - The British uses semester system which starts on middle of year and end in the next middle of year

⁷⁹ Downs, 2012 "China Buys into Afghanistan." pg. 65

⁸⁰ Mackenzie, 2017 "The victor, the spoils? Trump eyes Afghanistan's elusive mineral riches"

⁸¹ Jamasmine, 2013

⁸² Strand et al., 2010 "Afghan Hydrocarbons: A Source for Development or for Conflict?"

donor countries' development projects. There is a history of unfinished projects and failure to monitor and evaluate the success and maintenance of the programs over time.⁸³ The Afghan public has demanded transparency from its government and an end to corruption regarding donor aid.⁸⁴ Foreign aid has been reported to not reach its intended beneficiary, fall short of meeting its purpose, or worse, be intercepted by the Taliban.⁸⁵

One of the most successful NGOs in Afghanistan is Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which owes its success primarily to its long-term provision of education programs.⁸⁶ It's staff of 1,645 employees serve approximately 30,000 primary and secondary school students.⁸⁷ AKDN also runs programs for civil society and market development, among others, and enjoys a strong partnership with the Afghan government.⁸⁸

Indonesia

Indonesia receives both foreign assistance and foreign investment, the latter of which is often directed to its natural resources. U.S. foreign assistance to Indonesia dropped significantly from \$772 million to \$197 million after the transition from President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to President Joko Widodo in 2014. Since 2014, U.S. foreign assistance has never exceeded \$222 million, far below the levels under the previous Indonesian regime.⁸⁹ The U.S. suffers from poor public opinion in Indonesia because of local suspicion that the Freeport company (funded by the U.S.) exploited Indonesian resources unfairly.⁹⁰ DFID has a planned

⁸³ Samim, 2016

⁸⁴ Transparency International Secretariat, 2017 "Corruption Risks in Afghanistan's Humanitarian Sector Prevent Aid from Reaching Those In Need"

⁸⁵ Ibid., 83

⁸⁶ Aga Khan Development Network, 2017 "Center for Education Innovations"

⁸⁷ Devex, 2018 "Aga Khan Foundation (Afghanistan)"

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ USAID 2018

⁹⁰ Michaels, 2011 "Is a U.S. Mining Company Funding a Violent Crackdown in Indonesia?"

budget for 2018/19 of approximately £13 million, compared to its 2017/2018 amount of £14m.⁹¹ Norad reported NOK 451.4 million in foreign assistance to Indonesia in 2015, NOK 432 million of which was targeted at the environment and energy sector.⁹²

Indonesia has recently pivoted to receiving foreign aid from other donor countries such as China, which has carried out infrastructure projects such as power plants, roads, bridges, and railway projects, all of which are important for President Joko Widodo and have resulted in⁹³ better relations between China and with the Widodo regime.⁹⁴ One reason is because President Joko Widodo wants Indonesia's economic growth to begin with infrastructure, and not the environmental and energy-related programs other donor countries have implemented.⁹⁵

Egypt

Egypt occupies a geopolitically-strategic position in North Africa in which its Suez Canal has attracted foreign investment as well as featured as an important motivator for maintaining peace in the Middle East. The Camp David Accords of September 17, 1978 were signed between Israel and Egypt in an effort to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. Egypt as a signatory party received annual foreign assistance from the United States, and continues to do so outside of the treaty to this day.⁹⁶

DFID gave £1,629,889 in foreign assistance to Egypt in 2015/16, though this dropped significantly to £369.252 in 2017.⁹⁷ Norway has published no data on foreign assistance to

⁹¹ DFID Indonesia, 2017 "UK Climate Change Unit - GOV.UK"

⁹² NORAD, 2015 "Indonesia"

⁹³ Van der Eng, 2017 "Why Does Indonesia Seem to Prefer Foreign Aid from China?"

⁹⁴ Choiruzzad, 2014 "Indonesia Forges Stronger Ties with China to Boost Economy."

⁹⁵ Ibid., 93

⁹⁶ CNN, 2017 "Camp David Accords Fast Facts"

⁹⁷ UKAID, 2018 "DevTracker Country Egypt Summary Page"

Egypt, and China reported sending \$1 billion to Central Bank of Egypt and \$700 million to the state-owned National Bank of Egypt.⁹⁸ A large percentage of the foreign aid the U.S. and U.K. provided to Egypt went to Conflict, Peace, and Security, and Government-related sectors, similar to foreign assistance to Afghanistan. In 2016, Egypt received \$1.2 billion in foreign assistance, \$1.1 billion of which went to the through Conflict, Peace, and Security sector, with the DOD as its top partner.⁹⁹

Similar to the Indonesian government, the Egyptian government has reported a preference for Chinese foreign aid over other donor countries.¹⁰⁰ A 2012 public opinion survey showed that 80% of the Egyptian people oppose U.S. foreign aid.¹⁰¹ One reason Egyptians relegate U.S. foreign assistance to a lower preference is because of U.S.-Israeli relations.¹⁰² The recent visit of Vice President Pence to Egypt was in part an attempt to mend damage caused by President Trump's recent policy decision regarding the U.S. embassy in Israel.¹⁰³

Ethiopia

Sub-Saharan Africa is a unique place for foreign aid given its general lack of geopolitical-strategic significance. Unlike in other recipient countries where there are often political motives behind foreign assistance, Sub-Saharan African countries usually receive aid based more on humanitarian grounds, a point evidenced by the areas where aid flows and who provides it. USAID's top implementing partner in Ethiopia in 2017 was Catholic Relief Services,

⁹⁸ Noueihed and Abdelaty, 2016 "China's Xi Visits Egypt, Offers Financial, Political Support"

⁹⁹ USAID, 2018 "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country"

¹⁰⁰ Wagner and Cafiero, 2012 "Is the United States Losing Egypt to China?"

¹⁰¹ Younis and Younis, 2012 "Egyptian Opposition to U.S. and Other Foreign Aid Increases."

¹⁰² Su and Hendawi, 2018 "Pence Visit Showcases Dilemma Facing Egypt, Jordan Leaders."

¹⁰³ Ibid.

and of the \$1.1 billion in aid provided to Ethiopia, \$524 million was for Emergency Response.¹⁰⁴

In contrast to the largest implementing partners in recipient countries like Afghanistan (see Chapter III),¹⁰⁵ there are almost no MNCs listed by USAID as top implementing partners in Ethiopia. Instead, the main partners for USAID are usually religious organizations and food-oriented NGOs.¹⁰⁶ DFID has a planned budget of £332 million for Ethiopia for its 2017/18 and 2018/19 terms, out of which 62% flows to human development.¹⁰⁷ China has released no official data on how much it has provided in foreign assistance or investment in Ethiopia; however, China has targeted Ethiopia as part of its One Belt One Road initiative.¹⁰⁸ Ethiopia's location is critical to China for delivering resources from Sub-Saharan Africa,¹⁰⁹ and as a result its relationship with China has increasingly grown stronger.¹¹⁰ Foreign assistance is generally received happily by the Ethiopian public,¹¹¹ with over 49% of Ethiopians responding that they need more aid according to a 2015 survey.¹¹²

Conclusion

Each donor nation enjoys varying support for its aid programs, both domestically and abroad in recipient countries. Some recipient countries, such as Indonesia, have recently begun to turn away from U.S. foreign aid, while others like Ethiopia remain receptive. In contrast to U.S. foreign aid, Chinese foreign aid has been well-received for its infrastructure projects, which often address commercial interests rather than development purposes. The U.K. and Norway

¹⁰⁴ USAID, 2018 "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country"

¹⁰⁵ Wolferson, 2007 "Beltway Bandits"

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 104

¹⁰⁷ DFID, 2017 "Ethiopia"

¹⁰⁸ Kaiman, 2017

¹⁰⁹ Amusa, Monkam, and Viegi, 2016 "How and Why China Became Africa's Biggest Aid Donor"

¹¹⁰ Abdella, 2016 "Ethiopia Is on a Path to Become Africa's China in More Ways than One"

¹¹¹ Abugre, 2010 "Why Foreign Aid Is Important for Africa - CNN.Com."

¹¹² Guo, 2015 "4 Findings on Attitudes towards Foreign Aid in 17 Donor Countries."

follow similar models to the U.S. in terms of foreign aid, but diverge in key respects including: a larger portion spent on multilateral aid relative to bilateral channels, greater utilization of NGOs, and a generally more humanitarian motivation behind their foreign assistance. An equally important difference in donor country systems, however, occurs in each country's aid allocation process, the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter II

Overview of U.S. Foreign Aid Allocation Process and Comparison of Other Donor Country Systems

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the U.S. foreign aid allocation process and compares it to that of other donor countries. Section I examines the U.S.' three major foreign aid accounts: Humanitarian Assistance (HA), Development Assistance (DA) and the Economic Support Fund (ESF). Section II focuses on funding and allocation processes of three other major donor countries – Norway, the United Kingdom, and China –and compares their accounts to their respective U.S. counterparts. Section III compares how the U.S. congressional allocation process influences the effectiveness of U.S. accounts in addressing long-term global problems, with particular emphasis on the ESF account, and primarily DA-funded initiatives: Feed the Future (FTF), the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCCI).

Section I. ESF, DA and HA Accounts: The Big Three

Alex Eppenauer

The U.S. foreign aid system is complex and while there are certainly other accounts for foreign aid, the HA, DA and ESF accounts are extremely important and create a picture of what types of bilateral aid the U.S. provides. In order to determine the effectiveness of these accounts, the following section discusses the purpose, implementers, trends, and budget determination processes of each account respectively. Additionally, this section discusses how congressional

conditionalities impact each account throughout the annual budget process.

Purpose, Managers, and Implementers

Humanitarian Assistance (HA) is used for immediate, short-term responses to natural and man-made emergencies and disasters. HA is used, “to save lives, alleviate suffering, and minimize the economic cost of conflict, disasters and displacement.”¹¹³ This type of aid is typically divided into different sectors such as general aid, disaster readiness, migration management, and protection assistance and solutions. HA obligations and disbursements vary from year to year based on emergencies.

Development Assistance (DA) differs from HA in that it is mainly used for long-term programs and prevention. The “programs are designed chiefly to foster sustainable broad-based economic progress and social stability in developing countries.”¹¹⁴ Development programs support a variety of issues such as agriculture, small businesses, the environment, democracy, and education. The largest sector DA funds is usually global health issues such as HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. A portion of the DA account is also used for non-emergency climate and agricultural development initiatives such as GCCI and FTF.

The Economic Support Fund’s primary purpose is to promote special U.S. economic, political, or security interests. Programs that are funded by ESF are similar to DA in that they aim to promote economic and political stability, but differ in that decisions are made strategically to further U.S. interests. This account funds programs usually made on a country-by-country basis that reflects U.S. foreign policy goals. The complexities of this account will be discussed later in this section as it is by far the most earmarked of these three core funding accounts.

The HA, DA, and ESF accounts are primarily managed and implemented by the DOS and

¹¹³ "Humanitarian Assistance Categories ForeignAssistance.gov," n.d.

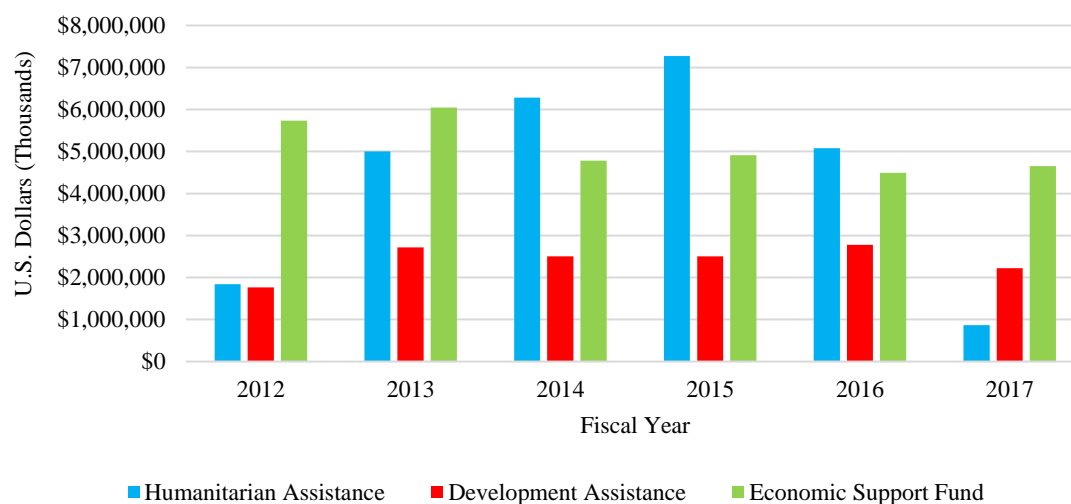
¹¹⁴ Tarnoff and Lawson, 2016 "Foreign Aid An Introduction to U.S. Programs and Policies"

USAID. The HA account is managed by both agencies, with the DOS managing the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account, and USAID managing the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account. The DA account is mainly managed and implemented by USAID with less involvement from the State Department. In contrast, the ESF is managed by both USAID and the DOS, and “for [this] account, the State Department largely sets the overall policy and direction of funds, while USAID implements the preponderance of programs.”¹¹⁵

Funding Trends

In order to further analyze these accounts, trends in funding over the past several years will be briefly discussed. Figure 1 below shows the general steadiness in funding for the DA and ESF accounts in recent years.¹¹⁶ Additionally, it demonstrates that the HA account receives different funding in response to natural disasters and crises, such as the giant spike in 2015.¹¹⁷

Figure 1: HA, DA, and ESF Gross Funding Levels for FY2012-2017



Source: Data sourced from FY2007-2018 Congressional Budget Justifications, Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. Adjusted for inflation using CPI-All Urban Consumers (Series id: CUUR0000SA0L1E)

HA obligations steadily rose from FY2012-2015 before dropping in FY2016-2017. The

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 114

¹¹⁶ “Data Security Assistance Monitor,” n.d.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 113

countries that receive the most assistance are typically located in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Northern Africa. DA funding has slightly increased since FY2012 and now receives between \$2-3 billion in funding.¹¹⁸ Although not wholly demonstrated by this figure, funding for the ESF has decreased since FY2010. In FY2010, the ESF account totaled almost \$8 billion, but since FY2014 it has remained closer to \$5 billion,¹¹⁹ demonstrating its significant variation, primarily due to changing national priorities and interests.

Budget Determination Process

Since FY2008, the State Department and USAID have jointly submitted their Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ).¹²⁰ The CBJ contains detailed information on requested amounts for the HA/DA/ESF accounts and is influenced by Executive Branch priorities. Various Administrations have attempted to implement their own initiatives (or pet projects) into the CBJ and many have succeeded, such as PEPFAR, which will be discussed below. Once the CBJ is submitted, the House and Senate's Committee on Appropriations evaluate it before eventually passing it in the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act. This act determines DOS funding which makes up a third of the bill, as well as the Foreign Operations portion or "foreign aid" bill that provides annual funding for most foreign aid programs except food aid.¹²¹ The appropriation of funds is a Congressional power, "[but] the two-step authorization/appropriations process is established by House and Senate rules."¹²² This means that in addition to presidential and agency pressure on annual foreign aid budgets, the House and Senate State, Foreign Ops, and Related Programs subcommittees weigh in as well.

¹¹⁸ Figure 1: HA, DA, and ESF Gross Funding Levels for FY2012-2017

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Tarnoff, 2015 "U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)"

¹²¹ Tarnoff and Gill, 2017 "State, Foreign Operations Appropriations"

¹²² Ibid.

Account Conditionalities

Each account has varying levels of congressional conditionalities and earmarks to determine exactly where and how the money will be spent. In general, the HA account has few conditionalities which allows it to respond to the changing and often unforeseeable nature of disasters and emergencies. In contrast, the DA and ESF accounts contain more conditions and earmarks. To identify changes in earmarking in these accounts, the text of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Acts from FY2013-2017 have been examined.

The DA account differs from HA in that Congress appropriates funds based on specific programs or problems. The programs that received relatively consistent funding from FY2013-2017 include women, peace and security, trafficking of persons, reconciliation, and trade capacity in Latin American countries. Interestingly, in FY2017 the list of programs that received funding was expanded to include seven new programs, perhaps signaling a shift to greater earmarking in the DA account, making it more similar to ESF.¹²³ The ESF account contains the most conditions and earmarks of the three accounts. Congress earmarks how much money is to be spent on specific countries and programs both within these countries and in general. The list of countries and programs with specific earmarks varies, but certain countries have received earmarks on an annual basis. These countries include Egypt, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza, Burma, Tibetan communities, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Colombia, and Cuba. Several programs also received more consistent funding than others such as women, peace and security, trafficking of persons, trade capacity in Latin America, and global internet freedoms. Similar to the DA account, in FY2017 the number of earmarked countries and programs increased. However, the

¹²³ Graham, 2016 "Text S.3117 114th Congress (2015-2016)"

increase in ESF earmarks was even more substantial increasing from an average of 15-20 specific earmarks to nearly 70. As is demonstrated in the figure above, overall funding for DA and ESF has not varied too substantially during this time period, but in contrast, earmarking increased in FY2017.

Based on this evaluation, it is possible to conclude that Congress conditions funding for ESF more than it does for the HA and DA accounts. This earmarking allows for tighter control on the accounts and less Executive Branch power over the foreign aid budget. While this limitation on power is not inherently bad, it limits the flexibility for agencies such as USAID. Earmarking and determining a set budget for each account annually makes it difficult to transfer funds between accounts in times of crisis or if one project needs more attention than another. For example, if a sudden earthquake occurred and USAID was in charge of the crisis response and in need of more funds, searching for money in one of the other accounts to transfer to the HA account would not be a time-effective option. More on the effectiveness of these accounts at responding to global issues will be discussed in depth in Section III, but first, a comparative analysis and evaluation of other donor countries' foreign aid systems and structures.

Section II. The Foreign Aid Systems of other Donor Countries

Kunat Sangcharoenvanakul

After examining the United States' foreign aid accounts, we turn to three other major donor countries: Norway, the United Kingdom, and China. Each of these countries has significantly different approaches and definitions of foreign aid compared to the United States. This section examines how funds are disbursed and allocated directly to the agencies responsible for bilateral aid, and investigates each country's equivalent accounts of DA, HA, and ESF (or lack thereof).

Norway – Foreign Aid System

Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), with its solemn commitment to alleviate global poverty, is arguably one of the most renowned aid departments in the OECD countries. In recent years, Norway's pledge for ODA as a percentage of GNI has been one of the highest in the world, comfortably exceeding the UN set 0.7% target with even a planned increase in their 2018 budget.¹²⁴ All foreign aid budget appropriations in Norway must be approved by its parliament. In contrast to the U.S.' *annual* appropriations process, the MFA has the responsibility and authority to make a *four-year* expenditure proposal to the parliament as well as the administering of all humanitarian and multilateral aid.¹²⁵

Norad is MFA's subordinate directorate, and is assigned to work purely on the development and humanitarian sectors of aid. Norad's involvement in the MFA is described as an "integral part of Norway's aid management system."¹²⁶ Their main responsibilities include: to provide technical advice to the aid administration which includes the MFA and embassies, to assist the aid administration in its quality assurance of Norway's aid. As well as the management of the funds in accordance with the annual appropriations letter from the MFA, which includes the financial allocations and responsibilities, policy priorities to follow, and performance targets.¹²⁷

Norfund is another subordinate directorate of MFA, and is responsible for an investment fund sanctioned by the government. The fund's main purpose is to establish profitable and sustainable enterprises in poor countries to stimulate economic growth, as well as alleviate

¹²⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017 "NOK 1.3 billion increase in aid budget for 2018"; NoradDev, 2017 "Record-high development assistance"

¹²⁵ Wilhelmsen, 2017 "Guide to Norwegian Aid Management"

¹²⁶ Palmer, 2011 "Regulation of Foreign Aid: Norway"

¹²⁷ Wilhelmsen, 2017 "Guide to Norwegian Aid Management"

poverty. It is aimed at investing in high-risk ventures that others will not, making it unique in this regard.¹²⁸ This fund is comparable to the U.S.' ESF as it tends to have more conditions when compared to the development assistance provided by Norad.

The MFA earmarks their aid budget and divides it by sector in its annual budget. These earmarks are to achieve policy goals such as addressing poverty, global health, and climate change issues. A part of the fund is allocated to MFA partner countries for long-term bilateral assistance, a majority of which goes to Africa, Asia and the Middle East. These countries are chosen by assessing their political governance, possible poverty reduction strategies, and macroeconomic stability.¹²⁹ The MFA also has a sincere commitment to budget support, in which the recipient country can expect to receive predictable funding for 3-5 years; although, there is a maximum time limit of one year for fragile states. If the country is found to have "good practice," Norway can extend the period of funding.¹³⁰ Other countries not receiving Norway's long-term bilateral assistance are still able to receive transitional and humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, Norway's humanitarian aid is not earmarked at the country level, but is earmarked by the sector it is allocated to.¹³¹

Unlike the United States' practices in its ESF and DA accounts, Norway as well as the U.K. do not tie any of their aid. Conditionality in Norwegian aid does exist; however, it is done through Norway's Performance Assessment Framework, which focuses on high-level issues in an attempt to avoid other international donors' tendency to micro-manage.¹³² The MFA not only works within its own agency, but coordinates with other government departments as well,

¹²⁸ Palmer, 2011 "Regulation of Foreign Aid: Norway"

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Development Finance International, 2008 "Norway Profile"

¹³¹ OECD, 2008 "NORWAY - Development Assistance Committee (DAC)"

¹³² Development Finance International, 2008 "Norway Profile"

depending on the issue. Norad's evaluation process follows a special "Agreement Manual" and a "Cooperation Development Manual" to increase the efficiency in the process and precautionary procedure against fraud or corruption.¹³³ However, Norfund's evaluation and oversight relies on the Office of the Auditor General of Norway.

The Norwegian government works closely with various NGOs in providing grants and funding. Major NGOs that work closely with the MFA on both humanitarian and development aid are the Norwegian Red Cross, CARE Norway, and Caritas Norway. Overall, private involvement in Norwegian aid is unclear. However, statistics from the Norwegian Red Cross showed \$29 million in donations from private organizations in 2016 for humanitarian aid and international human rights efforts.¹³⁴

United Kingdom – Foreign Aid System

The United Kingdom has recently increased its priority that its ODA contributions comply with the legally binding International Development Act of 2015 and meet the 0.7% of GNI as ODA target.¹³⁵ Prior to the U.K.'s commitment to the 0.7% of GNI as ODA target, its spending on ODA was only 0.36% of GNI. This vast improvement is noted by the U.K. government as a method for creating a "safer, wealthier and more secure world" by treating ODA as a fight against the root cause of terrorism and disease epidemics. According to the DFID and HM Treasury, this is firmly in the U.K. government's interests and justifies their 0.7% spending on ODA.¹³⁶ This is evident from the increased budget appropriation for bilateral ODA to DIFD of approximately \$11.7 billion in FY2016, of which half went to recipients classified as

¹³³ Ibid., 128

¹³⁴ Norwegian Red Cross, 2017 "Annual Report 2016"

¹³⁵ Booth and Lunn, 2016 "The 0.7% aid target"

¹³⁶ Ibid., Manji, 2016 "The International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015: Legislative Spending Targets, Poverty Alleviation and Aid Scrutiny; Provost, 2016 "Everything you need to know about UK aid and the 0.7% spending pledge"

fragile states.¹³⁷

The process of foreign aid appropriation in the U.K. is through the Chancellor of the Exchequer who proposes the budget allocation to the parliament for approval. The responsibility of administering the U.K.'s development assistance budget falls on DFID, which also bears the responsibility of U.K. policies involving ODA, including environmental policies, trade, and conflict prevention.¹³⁸ The main purpose behind the creation of DFID was to provide the U.K. government with an agency that voices long-term policy goals rather than short-term political and commercial interests.¹³⁹

Dissimilar to the U.S.' CBJ, DFID is assigned the budget approved by the parliament. However, the parliament has no input in the allocation of the ODA fund, as all allocations that are assigned to DFID are allocated by the Secretary of State of the DFID. Moreover, DFID is provided by the parliament a reserve budget of \$160 million annually as discretionary aid for unforeseen humanitarian emergencies. DFID also considers the importance of aid harmonization as a major part of the U.K.'s goal to better coordinate with other donor countries. Moreover, when deciding which countries to assist, DFID will consider the extent of poverty and ability to use aid effectively, meaning that even fragile states that are unable to commit to a "good" long-term partnership can still receive humanitarian aid to assist in alleviating poverty in such areas. If the country is weak or uninterested in development, DFID will work with the government to ignite and build the government's interest in development, and strengthen its capacity.¹⁴⁰

In general contrast to the U.S., DFID creates bilateral partnerships with recipient countries that often encourage the input and feedback of the recipient countries. The bilateral

¹³⁷ DFID, 2017 "STATISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2017"

¹³⁸ Feikert-Ahalt, 2011 "Regulation of Foreign Aid: United Kingdom"

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ DFID, 2013 "Partnerships for poverty reduction: rethinking conditionality"

partnerships are set up in accordance to the Partnership Principles published by DFID in March 2014.¹⁴¹ In regards to tied aid, the U.K. government expressed its opposition to the tying of aid in a White Paper published in 2000, which noted that the tying of aid had reduced the value of aid by 25% and is thus a much less efficient method of providing ODA.¹⁴² Consequently, the U.K. enacted the International Development Act of 2002, which stated that the tying of aid for political or commercial purposes is challengeable in courts, and in 2014, the U.K. reported that all ODA disbursed was untied.¹⁴³

Conditionality is still part of U.K. foreign aid policy, as the U.K. government can restrict development assistance if the recipient country does not adhere to the conditions imposed. Nevertheless, the DFID stated that these conditions are not to impose policy choices, which departs from the U.S.' tendency to emphasize policy choices. This 'fiduciary' conditionality is tailored to suit the recipient countries, and includes the extent of its poverty, respect for human rights and international obligations, and the accountability and the risk of the funds being misused by a weak or corrupted administration. If the conditions are not met, DIFD can hold the country accountable and may reduce or interrupt their aid funding.¹⁴⁴

Similar to Norway's MFA, DFID also works with other U.K. government agencies, and frequently engages in providing funding to various NGOs, both for humanitarian and development aid. Notable NGOs that the DFID works with are Oxfam GB, Save the Children, and Christian Aid.¹⁴⁵ Almost 40% of U.K. ODA allocated to NGOs is used for humanitarian aid activities.¹⁴⁶ DFID's oversight is thorough, and includes various mechanisms and both external

¹⁴¹ DFID, 2014 "DFID Guidance Note - The Partnership Principles"

¹⁴² Ibid., 138

¹⁴³ OECD, 2014 "Development Co-operation Peer Reviews"

¹⁴⁴ DFID, 2013 "Partnerships for poverty reduction: rethinking conditionality"

¹⁴⁵ Parmanand, 2013 "Top DfID NGO partners: A primer"

¹⁴⁶ Krutikova and Warwick, 2017 "The changing landscape of UK aid"

and internal audits. To increase the transparency of DFID's operations, the Secretary of State is also required by the Development Act of 2006 to report all of DFID's financial transactions and how effective its foreign aid funds were in achieving the UN's MDGs.

China – Foreign Aid System

China's approach to foreign aid differs considerably from that of the U.K., Norway, and the U.S. Its definition of ODA is undoubtedly different in that it permits military assistance to be classified as ODA, which is usually not reportable as ODA in the aforementioned donor countries. The Chinese government's focus on the One Belt One Road initiative has led to many infrastructure projects managed and created for the benefit of the Chinese. According to Aid Data, Chinese ODA has been increasing significantly in recent years, and was estimated at \$6.9 billion in 2017 – though number varies from different sources.¹⁴⁷ The reporting by the Chinese government on its ODA lacks transparency, and it is difficult to find reviewed data.¹⁴⁸

As mentioned in Chapter I, the government agency responsible for Chinese foreign aid is the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM). MOFCOM is tasked with drawing up China's foreign aid plan, mapping and implementing foreign aid policy and programs, updating the pattern of foreign aid, determining aid programs, organize implementation, and managing Chinese government funds for foreign aid. However, these functions concerning foreign aid are usually delegated to the Department of Aid to Foreign Countries. The oversight of foreign aid in China is done internally and includes the supervision of the management of its financial accounts.¹⁴⁹ It must be noted that the foreign aid operations of the Chinese government lack transparency and external audits.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Aid Data, "China's Global Development Footprint" n.d.

¹⁴⁸ Hadara, 2018 "Chinese local governments rush to admit fake data"

¹⁴⁹ Xiang, 2012 "Regulation of Foreign Aid: China | Law Library of Congress"

¹⁵⁰ Olson and Bernanke, 2016 "China's transparency challenges"

The distribution of Chinese foreign aid has two main dimensions: a geographic dimension and a sectoral dimension. According to the Chinese government, China's foreign aid extends to 123 developing countries, and its sectoral dimension covers various sectors including industry, economic infrastructure, education and responsive solutions to climate change.¹⁵¹ The major forms of foreign aid that China provides are complete infrastructure projects, goods and materials, technical cooperation, human resource development, medical teams, humanitarian aid, debt relief and an overseas volunteer program. China's focus on infrastructure projects has been scrutinized by many, with critics condemning its actions to build unnecessary, extravagant infrastructures that the recipient country does not need, such as the railway in Kenya and the Gwadar port in Pakistan.¹⁵² As mentioned in Chapter I, however, in Indonesia there seems to be a mixed reception for Chinese aid, although some critics mention the temporary nature of growth from Chinese investments and Chinese contractors' exclusive use of Chinese labor.¹⁵³ Thus, it is less beneficial for Indonesia, while, others say that it could help them engage more in trade. This could lead to more economic growth.¹⁵⁴ With all these infrastructure projects, some argue that Chinese aid is disregarding other priorities such as improving the recipient government institution is the more important aspect of development. Therefore, it seems that these largely projects align with Chinese interests, and not those of the recipient country.¹⁵⁵

In terms of actual monetary assistance, China's central government is focused on providing finances, grants, and both interest-free and concessional loans. Grants are mostly to support social welfare projects such as the construction of schools and hospitals, but may also

¹⁵¹ Xiang, 2012 "Regulation of Foreign Aid: China"

¹⁵² Freytas-Tamura, 2017 "Kenyans Fear Chinese-Backed Railway Is Another 'Lunatic Express'"; Shakil, 2017 "Bad terms: Pakistan's raw deal with China over Gwadar port"

¹⁵³ Kong and van der Eng, 2017 "Mixed messages of Chinese investment in Indonesia"

¹⁵⁴ Siniwi and Yuniarti, 2016 "The Only Way is Up for Indonesia in China's One Belt One Road Initiative"

¹⁵⁵ India Times PTI, 2018 "Gwadar port about China's interests, not Pakistan's"

flow into human resources development projects and humanitarian aid. Interest-free loans are granted to public facilities and usually contain conditionality similar to the U.S.' DA account. Concessional loans are for long-term projects that are profitable for the recipient country and that stimulate the exportation of Chinese goods, similar to the U.S.' ESF account.¹⁵⁶ The next section focuses on which U.S. account is best structured at addressing long-term global problems.

Section III. U.S. Accounts and Long-Term Global Problems

Henry Milander and Caroline Kasman

This section compares the budgetary trends and congressional pressures during the allocations process of the ESF account and various, primarily DA-funded, initiatives, in order to determine whether funds from one account are more effective at long-term development and addressing global problems. This section accepts that responding to long-term global issues requires predictable funding and sufficient flexibility in the appropriated funds for implementing agencies in order to adapt to the changing nature of the global landscape.

Economic Support Fund (ESF)

Funding Trends

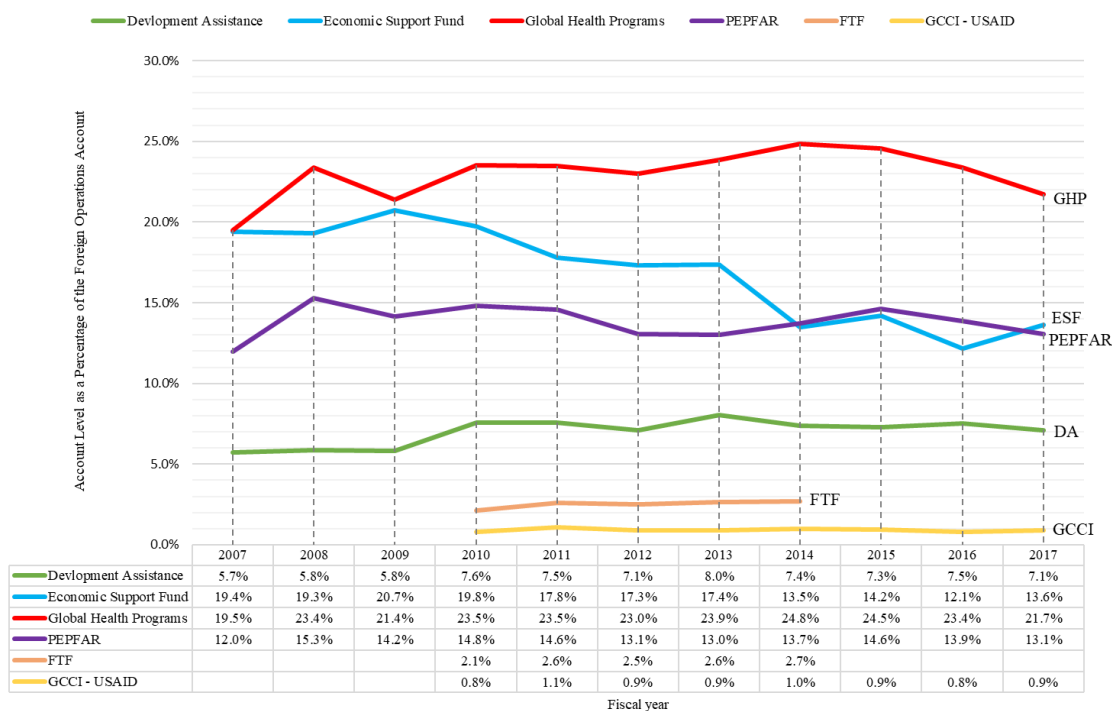
Congressional Budget Authority for ESF has in general seen consistent decreases in funding since FY2009 relative to the Foreign Operations account, as illustrated in Figure 2 below. The final FY2011 CR, for example, included \$5.96 billion for ESF, a 20% decrease from FY2010. It was speculated that the dramatic cuts made to ESF were due to Congress' desire to reduce funding for "frontline states," such as Afghanistan.¹⁵⁷ Over FY2016-2017, appropriated funds have increased by roughly 1.5% of the Foreign Operations account (an 18.6% increase

¹⁵⁶ Xiang, 2012 "Regulation of Foreign Aid: China"

¹⁵⁷ Ho and Hanrahan, 2011 "U.S. Global Food Security Funding, FY2010-FY2012"

from FY2016). Since FY2010, the magnitude of ESF account's percentage changes have generally been greater than the Foreign Operations account as illustrated in Figure 3 on the following page.¹⁵⁸

Figure 2: Annual Percent Changes in Select Accounts as a Percentage of the Foreign Operations Account



Source: Data sourced from FY2007-2018 Congressional Budget Justifications, Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. Adjusted for inflation using CPI-All Urban Consumers (Series id: CUUR0000SA0L1E)

Congressional Allocation

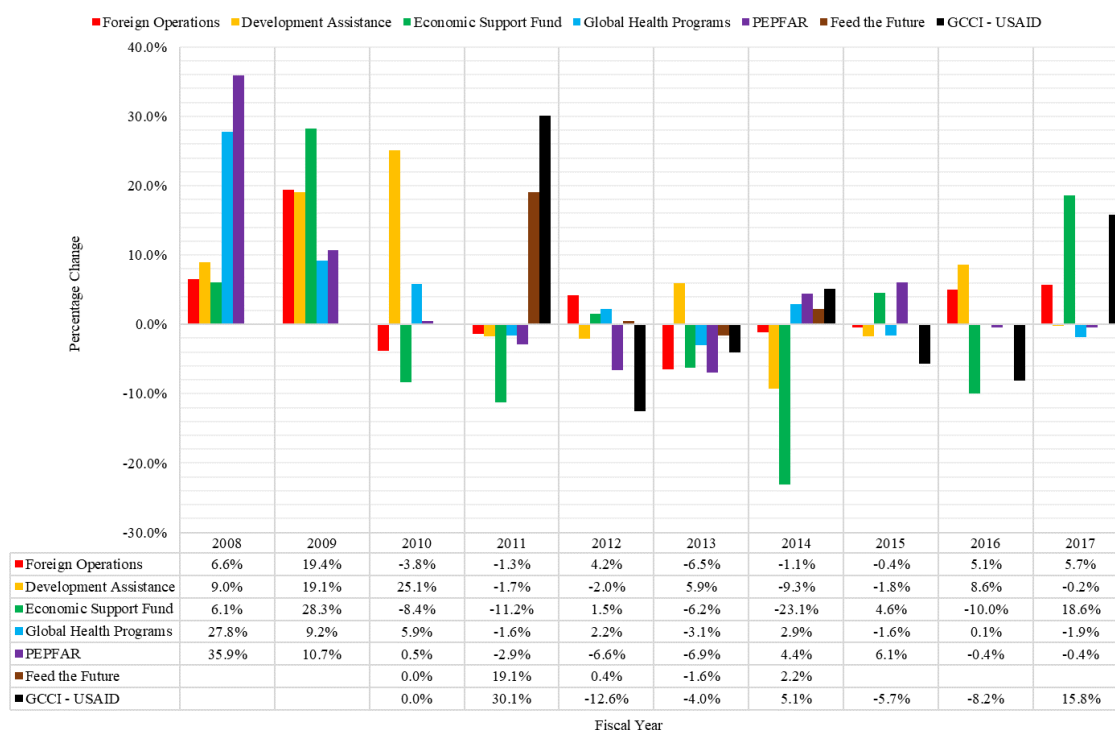
ESF funds are characterized by the country-by-country allocation that Congress sets annually. Because there is less emphasis on development outcomes for ESF monetary assistance given the accounts' primary criterion of with supporting to political allies forming the primary criteria for its use,¹⁵⁹ aid levels higher than necessary from a development standpoint can be used to communicate political messages. Moreover, the country's political relationship largely

¹⁵⁸ See Figure 2: Table on Annual Percent Changes in Select Accounts as Percentage of the Foreign Operations Account

¹⁵⁹ Harris, Gramer, and Tamkin n.d.

governs its eligibility to receive ESF funds, leading to a lack of an overall formula to determine the aid's composition, and funding terms that "are not consistently based on per capita income."¹⁶⁰

Figure 3: Percent Changes in Select Accounts and Magnitude Relative to The Foreign Operations Account



Source: Data sourced from FY2007-2018 Congressional Budget Justifications, Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. Adjusted for inflation using CPI-All Urban Consumers (Series id: CUUR0000SA0L1E)

Conditionality on ESF funds for Egypt reveals how Congress goes further than country-level restrictions in the ESF account by mandating certain types of assistance including development credit facilities as part of the \$250 million Congress appropriated in FY2014.¹⁶¹ This practice of not only country-level, but also sectoral and purpose-level conditionality is replicated for most other recipient countries of ESF funds.

The evolving nature of the U.S.' geopolitical interests which drive ESF funds appear to

¹⁶⁰ US General Accounting Office, 1983 "Political and Economic Factors Influencing Economic Aid"

¹⁶¹ Arieff et al., 2014 "US-Africa Leaders Summit Frequently Asked Questions"

make this account somewhat unreliable for long-term projects. The massive influxes of funds to address national security interests, such as those that went to Afghanistan and Iraq, can lead to an obligation and disbursement rate that may run counter to the needs of the recipient government and contrary to their absorptive and accountability capacity. In circumstances of internal conflict and political instability, funds for development purposes are more wisely provided in “gradual tranches as their appropriate use is certified.” The sometimes short-notice rollouts for ESF programs in Afghanistan led the USAID Inspector General to identify certain projects that lacked the prospect of sustainability because they were taken on too quickly due to policy objectives that didn’t align with the government’s capacity to maintain it. He went on to say that “constant demands for immediate results prevented implementation of programs that could have met long-term goals and would now be bearing fruit in Afghanistan.”¹⁶²

The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)

The U.S. provides the most funding for global health-related issues in the world, apportioning roughly one third of its foreign aid budget for health assistance, 80% of which is implemented through bilateral channels. The government’s concentration on HIV/AIDS began in 2004 when the Bush Administration implemented the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to treat HIV-infected people and children orphaned due to AIDS, a move which included the five-year Global Health/AIDS Initiative (GHAI).¹⁶³

Funding Trends

HIV/AIDS-related accounts are the cornerstone of U.S. Development Assistance for

¹⁶² Lawson, 2012 "Does Foreign Aid Work Efforts to Evaluate US Foreign Assistance"

¹⁶³ U.S. State Department, 2018 "About PEPFAR,"

Health (DAH), receiving high levels of funds from Congress as shown in Figure 2.¹⁶⁴ In FY2017, 49% of the health-related foreign aid budget went to HIV for bilateral assistance.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the presidential focus on AIDS and bipartisan support throughout different administrations have resulted in predictable funding trends.¹⁶⁶ From FY2012-2017, HIV-related bilateral aid expenditure experienced just an overall change of 2%.¹⁶⁷ In recent years, however, changing presidential priorities have led to a decrease in foreign aid relevant to HIV. The Administration's CBJ for FY2018 proposes an 18% decrease in spending for PEPFAR from the previous year. Notwithstanding this, Congress has still elected to reauthorize PEPFAR.¹⁶⁸

Congressional Allocation

PEPFAR's reliable and high allocations derive not only from bipartisan support of the HIV/AIDS relief but the success of the program itself. PEPFAR is generally considered a success story of U.S. foreign aid, effectively reducing the HIV pandemic.¹⁶⁹ Some researchers draw a correlation between the PEPFAR's success and its unique multiagency structure with an overseeing power. With the birth of PEPFAR, a Global AIDS Coordinator was also established in the Department of State to manage and administer the program's aid to the various DA agencies enacting HIV programs.¹⁷⁰ This coordinator, receiving allocations primarily through DOS, funnels resources through a series of channels to eventually distribute resources to USAID,

¹⁶⁴ Epstein et. al., 2007 "Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of U.S. Foreign Policy?"

¹⁶⁵ Kaiser Family Foundation, 2017 "U.S. Federal Funding for HIV/AIDS: Trends Over Time"

¹⁶⁶ See Figure 2

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Kates and Moss, 2017

¹⁶⁹ Kuntz et. al., "Deploying the whole of government: How to structure successful multi-agency international programs" pg. 11.

¹⁷⁰ "The United States Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief," (n.d).

HHS, NIH, the CDC, DOD, DOL, Peace Corps, and other agencies.¹⁷¹

According to some members of the government and PEPFAR's agencies themselves, the coordinator's power frees them from Congress's influence and allows them to use their expertise to more effectively prioritize goals.^{172,173} However, there are varying opinions on PEPFAR's hierarchical structure. Paul Grove, a staffer for the Senate Committee on Appropriations, maintains that while PEPFAR has overall been effective, the interagency rivalry to acquire funding hinders the efficiency of the program.¹⁷⁴ Other recipient-agency members support this, explaining how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and USAID often publish competing funding announcements.¹⁷⁵

Throughout PEPFAR's existence, discretionary funds for health have been increasingly earmarked by Congress for specific agencies, programs, and countries.¹⁷⁶ The 2008 Lantos-Hyde Act required greater reporting by its agencies to Congress, with the intention of overseeing the use of funding.^{177,178} In 2013, President Obama proposed the PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act, which expanded Congress's powers to oversee budget appropriations.¹⁷⁹ Despite these conditionalities and increased pressure for transparency, some researchers attest that the required public hearings and reports presented to Congress have actually encouraged informed support, leading to two HIV-specific congressional caucuses that propose and back HIV-related

¹⁷¹ Institute of Medicine, 2013 "Evaluation of PEPFAR"

¹⁷² "Evaluation of PEPFAR" 2013

¹⁷³ Mark Ward, 2018 "Interview with Mark Ward, Career Minister in the Foreign Service"

¹⁷⁴ Paul Grove, 2018 "Task Force Interview with Paul Grove: Professional Staff, Senate Committee on Appropriations"

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 171

¹⁷⁶ Shelling, 2006 "AIDS Policies and Programs"

¹⁷⁷ Kates and Moss, 2017 "The U.S. Congress and Global Health: A Primer"

¹⁷⁸ "H.R. 5501," 2008

¹⁷⁹ Lawson and Tarnoff, 2016 "Foreign Aid: An Introduction to US Programs and Policy"

budgeting legislation.¹⁸⁰ Grove seconds this theory, stating that PEPFAR receives predictable funding partially due to its transparency with Congress.¹⁸¹

Grove further attests that PEPFAR has long-term sustainability despite the recent change in presidential administration due to its history of bipartisan support.¹⁸² However, while PEPFAR continues to be one of the most highly-funded programs for DAH, HIV is no longer one of the top ten causes of global deaths.^{183,184} This discrepancy between need and spending prompts the question as to whether the concentration on HIV for DAH is justified, and the degree to which the politics and structure of U.S. foreign aid should play a role in congressional accounts.

Feed the Future (FTF)

Feed the Future (FTF) is a whole-of-government initiative launched in 2010 under the Obama administration to prevent long-term hunger, poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition by sustainably boosting agricultural development, food security and expanding agro-value chains.¹⁸⁵ The FTF's principal mechanism for reducing extreme hunger and poverty is agricultural-led growth. Funding for FTF comes from DA, ESF, and IDA accounts among others,¹⁸⁶ and the bulk of FTF funding supports 19 "focus" countries, including Ethiopia,¹⁸⁷ with USAID acting as the lead agency for its activities.

Funding Trends

Agricultural programs used to receive the bulk of DA until losing out in the competition

¹⁸⁰ Kates and Moss, 2017

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 173

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ World Health Organization, 2017 "HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet,"

¹⁸⁴ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017 "HIV in the United States: At a Glance"

¹⁸⁵ Arieff et al., 2014 "US-Africa Leaders Summit Frequently Asked Questions"

¹⁸⁶ Ho and Hanrahan, 2011 "U.S. Global Food Security Funding, FY2010-FY2012"

¹⁸⁷ Lawson et al., 2016 "The Obama Administration's Feed the Future Initiative"

for funding in the 1970s and 1980s, after which they rebounded due to support from both the Bush Administration's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative,¹⁸⁸ and its expansion by the Obama Administration into FTF.¹⁸⁹ Agriculture-related programs under FTF have consistently received between 2.1% and 2.7% of the Foreign Operations account between FY2010-FY2014, reflecting continued support of the presidential food security. Except for a 19.1% increase in the FTF account funds in FY2011, the FTF initiative funding has increased or decreased by greater magnitude than the Foreign Operations account in percentage terms.

Congressional Allocation

Congress does not specify a funding level for FTF as a whole, but rather allocates funding for bilateral food security and agricultural development on a 'purpose' basis within the FTF framework. This makes FTF funding patterns difficult to determine based on appropriation acts,¹⁹⁰ given that much of the budget authority is merely a relabeling of activities that formerly dealt with food security but under a different name. The FY2011 CBJ included \$1.84 billion for FTF activities, which was only 40% more than "the estimated FY2010 allocation to similar activities."¹⁹¹

In comparison to the ESF account, Congress refrains from imposing its own criteria or interests on FTF's country selection, with USAID in charge of setting the five criteria in its Focus Country selection and internal funding process.¹⁹² The short-term nature of congressional allocation, however, conflicts with the five-year investment strategies called Country Investment Plans (CIP), which FTF utilizes when developing and implementing programs in focus

¹⁸⁸ Elliott, 2016 "Five Years In, Still More Questions than Answers"

¹⁸⁹ Tarnoff and Lawson, 2016 "Foreign Aid An Introduction to U.S. Programs"

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 186

¹⁹¹ Ho and Hanrahan, 2011 "U.S. Global Food Security Funding, FY2010-FY2012"

¹⁹² Ibid., 186

countries.¹⁹³ This complicates budgeting and realistic probability analysis for the CIP. Only once did Congress allocate multi-year funding for FTF as part of authorizing the Global Food Security Act, choosing to allocate \$1 billion annually to FTF for *two* years.¹⁹⁴

Congress does exercise more pressure on other U.S. government food security programs, such as its Food for Peace program which was until recently allocated a minimum percentage of Title II Funds (7.5%, about \$350 million, and no more than 20%).¹⁹⁵ As discussed in Chapter I, however, FPF funds are subject to interest groups under the DOA, making FTF potentially less politicized in its congressional oversight and allocation sub-committees.

Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCCI)

Climate Change has always been addressed either explicitly or implicitly through USAID and DOS funding, though recent analyses of its threat to national security and build-up to the Paris Climate Deal spurred the Obama Administration to explicitly expand efforts in 2010. This was done primarily under the Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCCI), one of the three main pillars of the Obama's 2010 Policy Directive on Global Development. GCCCI's bilateral arm aims to integrate climate change considerations and climate resilience into all foreign assistance with the goal of "foster[ing] low-carbon economic growth, and reduc[ing] greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and land degradation." Its core implementing agencies are DOS, DOT, and USAID.¹⁹⁶ Its projects can take the form of USAID's PRIME project in Ethiopia which seeks to improve pastoralists' incomes while also heightening their ability to adapt to climate change, or its land management project in Indonesia which seeks to reduce degradation of forests and

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Elliott, 2016 "Five Years In, Still More Questions than Answers"

¹⁹⁵ USAID, 2016 "Food For Peace Act, Section 202(E)"

¹⁹⁶ Lattanzio, 2012 "The Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCCI) Budget"

peatlands for oil palm cultivation while also sequestering CO₂e with better planning.¹⁹⁷

Funding Trends

The U.S. has contributed to international climate assistance for many years, although before GCCCI these contributions were accounted for and defined differently, making a comparison of spending patterns difficult and many ‘GCCCI’ activities a mere re-labeling exercise.¹⁹⁸ GCCCI funding has been relatively stable since the increased pressure from the Obama Administration in 2010, which saw a doubling of GCCCI-related funding from FY2008¹⁹⁹ to FY2010.²⁰⁰ Subsequent budget authority for GCCCI-USAID²⁰¹ funding fluctuated between 0.8% and 1.1% of the Foreign operations account between FY2010-FY2017 (c.f. Figure 2), though the magnitude of its percentage changes were generally greater than those of the Foreign Operations account (c.f. Figure 3).

Congressional Allocation

Many GCCCI activities are funded by allocations at the sub-account level, with Congress leaving account-level allocations undefined and up to the discretion of the implementing agencies. This allows agencies to “change from the enacted budget authority as offices, bureaus, and/or missions update priorities in their operational budgets.”²⁰² Congress does, however, include purposive conditionality on GCCCI-related foreign assistance. In the FY2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act,²⁰³ Congress specified that “up to” \$1.26 billion could be used

¹⁹⁷ Department of State, 2016 "Overview of the Global Climate Change Initiative"

¹⁹⁸ White House Archives, 2011 "Federal Climate Change Expenditures Report to Congress"

¹⁹⁹ Tarnoff and Lawson, 2016 "Foreign Aid An Introduction to U.S. Programs".

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 195

²⁰¹ DOS data was found inaccessible by this report’s author

²⁰² Ibid., 195

²⁰³ P.L. 111-117, Division F, Title VII, Sec. 7081

for the following purposes: “(1) reduce, mitigate, and sequester greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change; (2) support climate change adaptation; (3) protect forests and other critical landscapes; and (4) protect biodiversity, subject to various further provisions.”²⁰⁴ Similar to ESF, DA-esque initiatives like FTF and GCCCI are also under pressure from Congress to obligate and outlay funds in a timely fashion, since leaving unobligated funds targets them for repurposing or future budget reductions.²⁰⁵

Conclusion

There is not sufficient evidence to conclude unequivocally whether one U.S. account or type of initiative is more effective than the others in addressing long-term global problems, however this report finds that DA-funded programs (or programs funded by accounts similar to DA) tend to outperform ESF-funded programs. The pressure Congress exerts in its appropriation process has both positive and negative impacts on each account’s effectiveness, and while ESF might achieve other goals more effectively in the realm of national security objectives, DA-funded or similar accounts seem to better achieve development objectives.

DA-funded or similar initiatives such as FTF and PEPFAR seem to have more predictable funding than ESF programs, and by and large allow agencies more flexibility in determining which countries to target and how best to achieve the purposive conditionality Congress requires. This is born out in FTF’s strategic reserve component of its budget.²⁰⁶ The initiatives appear to receive bipartisan congressional support (with the exception of GCCCI), and thus predictable funding despite a de jure lack of statutory multi-year funding. In contrast, ESF-

²⁰⁴ Cook et al., 2011 "US Foreign Assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa"

²⁰⁵ Tarnoff, 2015 "US Agency for International Development (USAID)"

²⁰⁶ Department of State, 2010 "Executive Budget Summary Function 150 & Other International Programs FY2011"

funded programs fluctuate in terms of country focus due constantly shifting U.S. geopolitical interests. While these initiatives may not survive in name, due to a long history of bipartisan congressional support the *type* of programs they implement will likely continue. After all, it makes little long-term sense to talk about palm oil development in Indonesia without also considering its implications for forest management and carbon sequestration.²⁰⁷

The analysis of other donor countries' foreign aid systems illustrated the different processes and methods by which foreign assistance can be appropriated. Some differences such as funding timelines are actually not foreign to the U.S. system. For example, each Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member, including the U.S., is reviewed every five years in order to monitor its performance, hold it accountable for past commitments and recommend improvements.²⁰⁸ Within the U.S.' system there are accounts that undergo a similar timeline, such as the MCC account, which has its compacts fully funded up front enabling it to more easily take a mid-term strategy than other accounts' year-to-year funding.²⁰⁹ The next chapter, however, deals with conditionality later on in the foreign aid process: obligation and implementation.

²⁰⁷ Kunder, 2018 "Dots Unconnected: The Trump Administration National Security Strategy and American Foreign Assistance"

²⁰⁸ OECD, 2016 "US push to make its development aid more effective is paying off"

²⁰⁹ Lawson, 2012 "Does Foreign Aid Work Efforts to Evaluate US Foreign Assistance"

Chapter III

USAID Funding and Implementation Modalities

Introduction

The implementation process of U.S. foreign aid is another stage in which conditionality and agency practices can limit foreign assistance's effectiveness. Section I will discuss the process behind bilateral agreements, the primary mechanism for channeling USAID bilateral foreign aid to recipient countries. Within these agreements, safeguards and conditions imposed by USAID often hinder the effectiveness of the project, prevent its performance, and impair long-term sustainability by failing to secure the commitment of local stakeholders. Section II will examine USAID's different modalities in the implementation process. Section III will compare the modalities of other donor countries in order to synthesize overall trends in the challenges for bilateral aid modalities and opportunities for reform.

Section I. The Bilateral Agreement

Kuan-Yu Chen

The language within a USAID bilateral agreement and negotiation required between USAID and a recipient country to form the agreement dictate the tone for U.S. foreign aid programs.

Overview of USAID Bilateral Agreement Structure

Foreign aid is usually included as a package of binding conditionality into agreements made between two governments (bilateral agreements). Bilateral agreements are usually conducted in two broad forms: 1) Framework Bilateral Agreements and 2) Implementing Agreements. Framework Bilateral Agreements establish the USAID Mission as a special

Mission, which identifies the privileges and immunities for the aid assistance personnel, and exempts USAID-financed supplies and services (and USAID contractors and recipients) from host government taxes and duties.²¹⁰ It is mainly structured to lay the guidelines for the second type of bilateral agreement – Implementing Agreements.

USAID implements specific programs and activities through a variety of Implementing Agreements. These differ from Framework Bilateral Agreements in that the Implementing Agreements directly provide the aid toward specific projects and activities. Development Objective Grant Agreements (DOAG), formerly known as Strategic Objective Grant Agreements (SOAG), are the most common form of Implementing Agreement provided by the U.S. government, and will thus be the emphasis of this section.

A DOAG is composed of three parts: Principal Text; Annex 1, Amplified Description; and Annex 2, Standard Provisions. Below is a brief overview of the composition of a DOAG (for further details of the outline, see Appendix A).

Article 1: Purpose

Article 2: Strategic and Objective Results

Article 3: Contributions of the Parties

Article 4: Completion Date

Article 5: Conditions Precedent to Disbursement

Article 6: Special Covenants

Article 7: Miscellaneous

Annex 1, Amplified Description

Annex 2, Standard Provisions

²¹⁰ See Appendix A: Full Outline of a SOAG

USAID Bilateral Agreement Language Can Contribute to Inefficiencies

The language and negotiations process required to form a bilateral agreement between a donor and a grantee set the tone for U.S. ODA programs. It is to the question of how language in bilateral agreements contributes to the shortcomings of U.S. foreign aid that is explored below.

The concept of conditionality, also known as tied aid, can be a key contributor to U.S. foreign aid's effectiveness. This concept means that conditions are usually imposed by the donor when granting aid to its grantee. For example, a donor might grant \$800 million to a recipient country, while simultaneously requiring the recipient country to only procure goods and services produced and performed by the donor country. In other words, conditions are inseparable from the aid granted. A real example of this in practice is the DOAG made between USAID and Indonesia. Section C.1 within Annex 2, Standard Provisions, specifies:

Disbursements under this Agreement will be used exclusively to finance the costs of goods and services required for the Agreement having, with respect to goods, their source and origin and, with respect to the suppliers of goods and services, their nationality, in countries included in Geographic Code 935 as in effect at the time orders are placed or contracts entered into for such goods or services.²¹¹

This specification is under "Article C: Procurement Provisions," and requires that the recipient government only purchase products, services, and supplies that originate from countries in Geographic Code 935. This type of geographic code is similar in principle to the conditionality imposed by Congress for FFP funds as mentioned in Chapter I, and when tied to a bilateral agreement, can cause issues and hinder progress towards achieving its objective.

Geographic codes are rules that USAID commonly imposes to provide for the sourcing and

²¹¹ USAID and Government of Republic of Indonesia, 2006 "Indonesia, 11-17-2006, Health Population"

nationality requirements for procurement of commodities and services financed by USAID. Geographic Code 935 is actually defined as any area or country including the recipient country, but excluding any country that is prohibited.²¹² Even though USAID does not currently have any prohibited countries on the list, when prohibited countries are added every time the list is revised, issues can arise due to this imposed condition. Firstly, utilization of these geographic codes in some cases may foster partiality in carrying out the bilateral agreement and give leverage to certain countries. For instance, there may be incentive for the donor country to initiate a relationship with a recipient country that will more easily become a stable consumer of the former's exports.²¹³ This is why a donor country may favor certain countries, which tend to be higher-income countries or elite groups in low-income countries. Secondly, this geographic conditionality can also disrupt the recipient country's domestic market and increase the costs for the grantee. By requiring that the money be spent on a certain countries' goods, international competition is eliminated, which gives suppliers the opportunity to charge noncompetitive prices, resulting in excess costs of between 15-30%.²¹⁴ Furthermore, Section C in Annex 1, Amplified Description, writes:

In consultation with the Grantee, USAID will select the Implementing Partners and will ensure that the Implementing Partners carry out the implementation of the Program in conformance with this Agreement. Implementing Partners will provide reports directly to USAID and Grantee under the terms of their individual agreements with USAID. Each agreement between USAID and an Implementing Partner that is an organization will be consistent with this Agreement and will include a monitoring and evaluation plan,

²¹² USAID, 2012 "ADS Chapter 310: Source and Nationality Requirements for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID"

²¹³ Ehrenfeld, 2004 "Foreign Aid Effectiveness, Political Rights and Bilateral Distribution"

²¹⁴ Ibid.

including indicators, targets and outputs.

This section in Annex 1 enables USAID to select contractors or other implementing agencies to carry out the implementation of the program. Although it is stated that this process is conducted with the consultation with the Grantee and in conformance with the bilateral agreement, the Grantee still has limited participation in the decision-making process. Firstly, this provision allows USAID to select implementing partners based on an agreement mainly created by the USAID. This means USAID can select contractors for the bilateral agreement based on its requirements, which are well-known for being too onerous such that that only large, internationally-established contractors can compete in the selection process.²¹⁵ This exclusion of local contractors can increase the inefficiency of the agreement, and will be analyzed in Section II of this chapter.

Throughout the formation and execution of the bilateral agreement, recipient governments are encouraged to propose their own strategy for development, but in practice these proposals are neglected or unrecognized.²¹⁶ As a result, USAID listens to the priorities of the recipient government, without actually allowing the recipient government to decide on how to implement its strategy. This imbalance of power relates back to the previous discussion on how USAID geographic codes could favor certain countries and increase recipient government's costs by allowing large contractors to charge uncompetitive prices. In the same way, when USAID selects Implementing Partners, the above clause enables it to favor certain firms without keeping the well-being of recipient country as its premium concern.²¹⁷ When the interests of the recipient country become secondary to the interests of USAID, the latter is able to select contractors with

²¹⁵ Lundsgaarde, 2013 "The Domestic Politics of Foreign Aid"

²¹⁶ Geberegiabher, 2006 "Impact of conditionalities on aid effectiveness in Ethiopia"

²¹⁷ Ehrenfeld, 2004 "Foreign Aid Effectiveness, Political Rights and Bilateral Distribution"

negative impacts on the recipient country. The negative impact of this partiality for contracts will be the focus in Section II of this chapter.

Benefits of Conditionality

Despite the above section's focus on the drawbacks to certain conditions in USAID bilateral agreements, this is not to say that imposed conditions by USAID always lead to negative outcomes. Many imposed conditions are often regarded as tools used to promote the effectiveness of foreign aid spending and the efficiency of bilateral aid programs. Why imposed conditions can be good and ensure a certain level of foreign aid effectiveness is where this report leads next.

Those that are in favor of imposed conditions hold the opinion that aid conditionality is an appropriate mechanism not only as a criterion to improve efficient utilization of funds, but also as a way to introduce new policies or other development programs, which the recipient country would otherwise not have introduced or implemented. According to the experience of Karen Turner, a retired USAID contract lawyer, "...it was difficult for USAID to impose stringent conditions on project-based aid" because both countries had to agree on the conditions settled. "If the recipient country was not in agreement with the conditions, it usually meant the project/program agreement was not concluded or the agreement, if signed, got stuck at the very beginning..."²¹⁸ Another contract lawyer who currently works for USAID (and wants to remain anonymous), notes that "in [her] experience, agreement conditions were not often an obstacle to successful program implementation. There are many obstacles to successful implementation—delayed contracting, poor oversight, project equipment stuck in customs...you name it."²¹⁹ To

²¹⁸ Ramsey et al., 2018 "Email Interview with USAID Employees"

²¹⁹ Ibid., 217

these USAID officials, imposed conditions began as a way to facilitate the execution of the bilateral agreement, and avoid implementation or logistical problems such as delayed contracting, post-signature disagreements between the governments, and poor oversight. Therefore, to some, conditions are imposed in a bilateral agreement as tools for promoting the effectiveness of foreign aid.

As the second USAID contract lawyer (mentioned above) phrased it, “we would not want money tied up in an agreement that was unlikely to be implemented.” Her remark speaks to not only USAID, but also the millions of U.S. taxpayers who do not want their money to continue going into a program shown to have futile progress. To some extent, then, imposed conditions by USAID put safe guards on the bilateral program to generate effective progress and assure U.S. taxpayers and Congress their money is well-spent.

Overview of the Negotiations Process in Bilateral Agreements

From the above discussion, imposed conditions could both negatively and positively impact the progress and effectiveness of bilateral aid programs. As to whether imposed conditions swing one way or the other, the answer depends on what issues are negotiated, and what issues are not open to negotiation.

The focus of a bilateral agreement, as remarked by the same anonymous retired USAID contract lawyer, should “reflect inputs on priorities from recipient country institutions, including any implementing ministries.”²²⁰ However, she continues, “in practice, USAID’s ability to respond to recipient country development priorities is heavily constrained by the types of funding made available to it through Congressional appropriations and executive branch

²²⁰ Ibid.

budgeting processes.”²²¹ She recalls an instance in which the recipient country officials asked for assistance in dealing with their most pressing national health problems, which stemmed from smoking and motorcycle accidents. To everyone’s dismay, the only health-related funding available was for anti-HIV/AIDS programming.²²²

All three of the interviewed USAID officials remarked, “USAID listens to the recipient’s priorities.” One of the officials, Michael Williams, even made it clear by saying:

It is fair to say that the conditions are the product of negotiations between the parties. The USG proposes reforms that it wants to see accomplished. The recipient responds with its possible terms. The parties settle on what is realistically achievable. The conditions must be achievable or else future delays and renegotiations become necessary.²²³

Conditionality Can Harm Both the Grantee and Bilateral Agreement

Although it has been indicated that USAID listens to the priorities of the recipient government,²²⁴ this does not necessarily translate into on-the-ground implementation. If USAID accepts too many unilateral rights to impose conditions, poorly negotiated agreements can happen. As recounted by Michael Williams, the former USAID official, “sometimes the USG is unfamiliar with what is practicable or the recipient is eager to obtain the obligation and accepts unrealistic commitments.”²²⁵ In the latter case, the recipient commits to whatever USAID has imposed just to ensure they obtain the funds. As illustrated in the case of the recipient country’s national health issues not being addressed due to congressional conditionality, sometimes

²²¹ Ramsey et al., 2018 "Email Interview with USAID Employees"

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

recipient country's real needs are not met because of limitation on the channel of funding. Furthermore, excessive spending by the grantee on commodities and services based on imposed conditions like geographic codes can hinder overlook local government capacity and result in less effective spending on the aid program.

Section II. The Modalities of USAID Implementation

Nabilla Gunawan

The previous section indicated that the conditions imposed in the bilateral Objective Agreement can make the participation of the local government difficult in the implementation stage. This section moves downstream from bilateral agreements by examining the current modalities by which USAID implements foreign aid, and the implications for its effectiveness therein.

In the last fifty years, USAID has been subject to a shrinking personnel staff, a process which has coincided with a dramatic increase in the number and size of contracts it awards. The diminishment of the agency's size, including its technical capabilities, has arguably contributed to the agency's tendency to contract out work and prefer a funding model that relies on accountability, reporting and detailed requirements. Peter McPherson, a former USAID administrator testified during a hearing that staffing cuts had also contributed to the agency's tendency to be "risk averse and bureaucratic."²²⁶ This model of outsourcing and reporting requirements has had the unintended consequence of disproportionately benefitting large contractors, and excluding other stakeholders critical to the effectiveness of USAID projects.

²²⁶ Frumin, 2009 "Equipping USAID for Success"

USAID's Market-Based Model of Delivering Aid

The overarching trend of decentralization of USAID implementation has partially led to the increase in the size of its development contractors.²²⁷ Due to these staffing cuts, USAID suffered from a lack of capacity, a sentiment Andrew Natsios, a former head of USAID echoed in his statement that the “reduction of USAID administrator in the past 30 years has been so severe.”²²⁸ A shortage of human resources, particularly in technical staff, has thus been cited as one of the primary factors that led USAID to outsource its projects, viewing this method as one that would “get the job done.”²²⁹ Outsourcing projects has since been a hallmark of USAID’s modalities for disbursing and delivering funds.

Over a period of 21 years from 1980 to 2001, USAID staff was cut by 45% overall, dropping from 4,058 permanent employees to 2,200 and prompting USAID to seek other means by which it could implement projects on the ground.²³⁰ As USAID staffing declined, each employee increasingly oversaw more projects. The dollar amount of each USAID employee’s oversight spiked from \$385,947 in 1963 to \$1,421,053 in 2006.²³¹ The same number of staffers now oversee almost four times the number of dollars they once did over sixty years ago. The USAID’s trend towards utilizing private services might also have been motivated in part by the desirable perception of the U.S.’ economic sovereignty. The FA Act included a provision that extended the 1933 Buy American Act. This act encourages U.S. government agencies such as USAID to source goods and services of American origin, which according to Stranger in *One Nation Under Contract*, made utilizing the private sector desirable for the

²²⁷ Roberts, 2014 “Development Capital: USAID and the Rise of Development Contractors”

²²⁸ Stanger, 2014 “One Nation Under Contract”

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Frumin, 2009 “Equipping USAID for Success”

²³¹ Ibid., 227

agency.²³²

The confluence of both an increase in outsourcing and need for USAID to maintain accountability over its projects (partially motivated by congressional pressure) has resulted in extensive indirect control through contract and grants agreements. The conditions attached to the grants and contract agreements, which will be discussed thoroughly later in this section, were intended to minimize risk of misused funds and to ensure the effectiveness of U.S. taxpayers' money. However, the overwhelming administrative and reporting requirements, which will be apparent later in this section, position large and established contractors and NGOs as the most capable to receive USAID awards. This process has arguably added a rigidity to USAID programs and has on occasion deleteriously affected on-the-ground implementation.

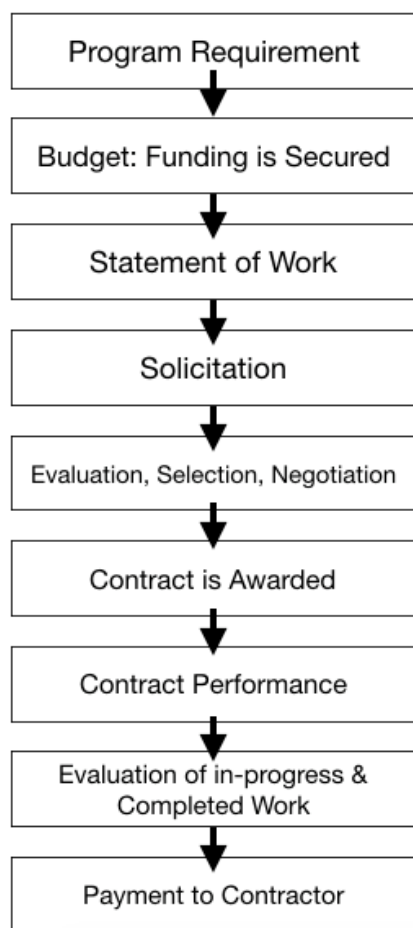
Compliance in Contracts, Cooperative Agreements and Grants

U.S. international development projects are primarily carried out by contractors and grantees. This is achieved by USAID through awarding Contracts, Cooperative Agreements and Grants, each of which constitutes a different set of requirements for the grantees or contractors. Contracts tend to be highly prescriptive, whereas Cooperative Agreements and Grants generally lend higher autonomy to the grantees. However, prescriptive criteria imposed by USAID to ensure accountability and minimize risk is almost entirely and consistently applied. According to Peter McPherson, risk adverse tendencies can be problematic because risk is “in the nature of developmental work,” and that because of this, “USAID staff are cautious and often work more slowly because of the lack of technical staff and high workloads.”²³³ In addition, each modality of implementation entails substantial involvement by USAID in aspects such as setting work

²³² Stanger, *One Nation Under Contract*, 2014

²³³ Frumin, *Equipping USAID for Success*, 2009

plans, the program’s objectives, and monitoring its progress. The majority of the time USAID prefers the aforementioned level of control, evidenced by the percentages of aid types it awards: in 2015 only “6% of all USAID awards [were] made in the form of traditional grants to NGOs.”²³⁴



The process involved in awarding contracts and grants is complex and highly regulated, placing established organization at an advantage over smaller organizations. The sequential process involved in selecting contractors and grantees is illustrated by the diagram on the left.²³⁵ The process begins with the availability of the budget, which is predetermined by congressional appropriations in a manner such as Chapter II discussed. Next, procurement details are established depending on the organizational mission and requirement. Solicitation breaks down the evaluation and requirement from the contractors or grantees. Determination of award is evaluated according to factors such as “technical excellence,

management capabilities and professional experience,” with contractors and grantees being selected according to the best value they could provide the government.²³⁶ Other factors include past performance as well as the organization’s capacity to conduct monitoring and evaluation. In

²³⁴ Ohlbaum, 2015, “Betting on the Poor”

²³⁵ Berrios, 2000 “Contracting for Development”

²³⁶ Grant and Nijman, 1998 “The Crisis of Foreign Aid”

2010, it was reported that it can take up to 2.5 years for a project to be approved, by which time conditions on the ground might have already changed and plans might need to be revised.²³⁷

Accountability requirements mandated in the above process often marginalize smaller organization and NGOs aside because of their inability to meet the time and compliance procedures.²³⁸ For instance, contractors or grantees are required to submit a Bi-monthly Status Report on progress “within five days after the midpoint and end of each month.”²³⁹ Grantees and contractors are required to comply with the deadline quarterly and compile a report involving laborious technicalities, and requirements as detailed as the language, accounting and specific formatting, to name a few. These requirements may distract the contractors and grantees from performing effective implementation on the ground. This problem is expressed by former president of OxFam, Raymond C. Offenheiser, who said during his experience in Afghanistan “it is no wonder that USAID contracting officers are overstressed and overstretched. Instead of deepening their knowledge of the culture, politics, language and priorities of the Afghans,”²⁴⁰ they must comply with such requirements. This is not a new sentiment, as accountability requirements prescribed in U.S. foreign aid were reported “extensive but ineffective,” according to Hamilton’s 1989 Task Force on Foreign Aid.²⁴¹

USAID’s risk averse tendencies and excessive control is further illustrated by its ability to “terminate the funding [for a project] at any time,” as well as its hiring requirements for a specific position such as a Quality Control Manger, who is “required to have a minimum of 10 years of experience in construction quality control and to be trained in three-phase quality

²³⁷ Adams, Gordon, and Williams, 2010 "Buying National Security"

²³⁸ Goldsmith and Eggers, 2005 “Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector”

²³⁹ USAID Contract Agreement, 2012 “USAID-Mashriq Engineering Construction Company (MECC)”

²⁴⁰ Offenheiser, 2008 "Hearing on House Committee of Foreign Affairs"

²⁴¹ Ibid., 236

control management system.”²⁴²

Accountability and Monitoring: A Question of Sufficient Control

USAID’s accountability measures could be viewed as a shortcut to display aid efficiency, in that they are used to demonstrate to Congress its prudent oversight over funds and the merits of aid in the long-run. In reality, however, as expressed by a former deputy director of USAID, Diana Ohlbaum, “more control does not mean better outcomes.”²⁴³ As discussed previously, USAID lacks the resources to oversee its projects personally, though in the past it was not that seldom that project evaluations include reports on malfeasance or gross misuse of fund by contractors.²⁴⁴ The current modality of USAID implementation, however, strongly suggests that the controls and measures have not been accompanied by sufficient staff to oversee projects.

The challenge in maintaining accountability across a vast USAID network of projects can be further delineated using the dilemma between network and accountability. Contracting is used to contrive a broader network and to achieve the benefit of comparative advantage, but USAID also needs to demonstrate accountability without foregoing flexibility.²⁴⁵ USAID contracts exercise the traditional practice of accountability, i.e. through standardization, which defeats the purpose of network and outsourcing which is to provide a decentralized system to solve problem. As mentioned previously, grants and contract requirements prescribe specific reporting methods including reporting frequency and style.²⁴⁶ In addition, the broad dispersion of technical capability throughout this network is not accompanied by the proportional decentralization of

²⁴² Ibid. 238

²⁴³ Ohlbaum, “Betting on the Poor”

²⁴⁴ Stanger, 2014 “One Nation Under Contract”

²⁴⁵ Goldsmith and Eggers, 2005 “Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector”

²⁴⁶ USAID Fixed Obligated Grant, 2012 “USAID-Welfare Association for the Development of Afghanistan”

authority to manage the billions of dollars in projects.

Unfortunately, flexibility in USAID’s network for implementing aid still remains a key challenge, as cited in a 2016 USAID Evaluation Report.²⁴⁷ The network’s flexibility is especially compromised when accountability demands are greatly prescriptive. This can be particularly burdensome for smaller organizations and grassroots network members, given their limited capacity. The Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) corroborates this claim when it testifies that due to requirements, “staff became overwhelmed in detail and unable to distinguish real fraud or structural problem from technical issues.”²⁴⁸ Inevitably, this limits the opportunity for qualified (albeit smaller) organizations to partner with USAID, thus narrowing the scope of its partnerships to organizations that are able to keep pace with the rigid and intricate reporting criteria set by USAID.

The Beltway: The Rise of Large Contractors

U.S.-based large contractors consequently dominate an enormous proportion of the total amount of U.S. contracts, as shown in the table to the right.²⁴⁹ To put the magnitude of U.S. contractors into perspective, if “*Chemonics* were a country, it would have been the third-largest recipient of USAID funding in the world in 2011, behind only Afghanistan and Haiti.”²⁵⁰ The rise of development contractors has been dramatic, with “Beltway Bandits” now a term used by critics to refer to these

USAID Top 10 for-profit Contractors in 2011
1. Chemonics International
2. Partnership for Supply Chain Manager
3. John Snow Inc.
4. Development Alternative Inc.
5. The Louis Berger Group
6. ABT Associates Inc.
7. Management for Sciences and Health
8. Research Triangle Institute (RTI)
9. ARD, Inc.
10. Creative Associates International

²⁴⁷ Evaluation Learning From Experience USAID, 2016

²⁴⁸ Goldsmith and Eggers, *Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector*, 2005

²⁴⁹ Rohde, *Beyond War*, 2013

²⁵⁰ Steele and Shapiro, “Subcontracting State-Building.” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 28 (4–5), 2017

large development contractors.

The “10 largest USAID contractors received more than \$3.19 billion in 2011,” which indicates that more than 27% of agency’s overall funding was directed to U.S. for-profit contractors that year.²⁵¹ This casts USAID as a “fund-dispensing” agency that only provides marginal management in projects, and relies almost exclusively on grantees and contractor to do on-the-ground work.²⁵² This current system was not inevitable, and neither is it immutable. It rather came about mainly due to USAID’s decision under pressure from staffing cuts that they cannot conduct implementation directly, but must contract out more and more.²⁵³ Andrew Natsios, a former head of USAID, noted this trend in his observation that the “US now not only contracts out technical projects, but also new things including program design, management and oversight.”²⁵⁴

During the period of personnel cuts, USAID reoriented itself towards private contractors by issuing large types of contracts known as the Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC), which are typically multiyear and multi-million-dollar agreements.²⁵⁵ Modalities such as IQC are designed to enable agencies to call on vendors that have been previously shortlisted through competitive bidding to supply goods and services at a very short notice for a certain number of years. IQCs are complex and it is reported that each takes over one and a half years to be issued, indicating that small firms might find it difficult to survive a delay that long.²⁵⁶

Illustrative of the complexity and demands for institutional, logistical, financial and

²⁵¹ Roberts, 2014 “Development Capital: USAID and the Rise of Development Contractors”

²⁵² Berrios, 2000 “Contracting for Development”

²⁵³ Creative Capitalism: Can It Meet the Needs of the World’s Poor, Development Research Institute

²⁵⁴ Stanger, 2014 “One Nation Under Contract”

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 250

²⁵⁶ Brookland, 2012 “A Game of Stop-and-Go”

human resources capacity was Chemonics' decision to partner with "the Food Economy Group, Intana, Michigan State University and WebFirst for its US\$ 100 Million in the Famine Early Warning System IQC."²⁵⁷ Even large international non-profits often lack the resources and capabilities to be compete, making them less fitting as a recipient of contracts or grants given the current aid modalities.

The "Beltway" is not only home to the largest development companies, but also interest groups such as lobbying professionals, trade coalitions, think tanks, societies and clubs. These include groups such as Professional Service Council (PSC), one of the most powerful policy lobbyists that represents these large contracting firms.²⁵⁸ Smaller firms, not to mention grassroots organizations abroad, would not even have the chance to explore the policy arena, let alone consistently lobby. The frustrations harbored by smaller NGOs trying to compete with these large firms were expressed by the president of InterAction Council, a lobbying group for NGOs, during a congressional hearing in 2006:

AID has increasingly relied on large contracting mechanisms, which require more administrative oversight and often exclude grassroots organizations best suited to carry out a given project. For AID truly to change the way it does business, layers of bureaucracy, as well as statutory and regulatory burdens, need to be lifted.²⁵⁹

Contracts and outsourcing can benefit USAID by completing and implementing its job without further strains on its staffing and technical capabilities. However, effective implementation can be challenging to achieve given the current level of rigidity and onerous

²⁵⁷ Nagaraj, 2015 "Beltway Bandits and Poverty Baron"

²⁵⁸ Lundsgaarde, 2013 "Domestic Politics of Foreign Aid"

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

requirements in the agreements. The current level of regulations also restricts the opportunity for entities such as smaller NGOs, local authorities and civil societies to be included in the process. There is a question as to whether the current modalities for implementing U.S. foreign aid provide the most viable mechanism for achieving its effectiveness. The flexibility of USAID's implementing network of organizations is particularly important when discussing reform given that it can at least be partially traced to USAID's shortage of human resources. Improving the flexibility of USAID implementation modalities remains on the agenda for future USAID reform as cited in the 2018-2022 Strategic Joint Agreement.²⁶⁰

Section III. Cross-Country Comparison of Bilateral Aid Modalities

Danica Person

The United States is not alone in its general methodology of giving aid through grants and contracts, with other donor countries utilizing various mechanisms for aid implementation. This section compares the similarities and differences between the United States, United Kingdom, Norway, and China's use of bilateral agreements and methodologies of giving aid.

United Kingdom

The U.K.'s aid tends to be split between Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements in which DFID retains an important negotiating role. While much of the U.K.'s aid is funneled through the UN and the EU, in 2016, 63% was spent through bilateral agreements.²⁶¹ One of the major differences between the U.K. and the U.S. is the length of time for which bilateral agreements are established. While the United States, as mentioned in Chapters I and III, re-focuses the agreements on a fiscal yearly basis, the U.K. tends to create long-term agreements. A good

²⁶⁰ USAID and The Department of State, Joint Strategic Plan FY 2018 - 2022

²⁶¹ Morris, 2017 "Reality Check: How Much Does the UK Spend on Overseas Aid?"

example of this practice is the U.K.'s 10 Year Development Partnership Agreement with the Government of Afghanistan, which was signed in 2005.²⁶² The agreement's purpose is to continue supporting Afghanistan's development toward better governance, and includes three areas of focus: peace security and stability, economic stability, and assisting in providing public services.²⁶³

Even with longer-term agreements such as the one with Afghanistan in 2005, the U.K. is extremely careful about who it contracts out to, so as to maintain good management of taxpayer money.²⁶⁴ Similar to the U.S.' process, the recipient of U.K. contracts is given discretion on how to spend the money, and the outcomes must be made public and subsequently audited by an independent third-party to verify the expense before the funds are dispersed.²⁶⁵

Like the United States, DFID aid is overwhelmingly given to large private contractors. A public release showed PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) ranked first in terms of fees received in 2015 (£92 million), followed by Adam Smith International (£80 million), and DAI (£73 million). Each of these organizations are based in London and are known for their lobbying and massive international enterprises. These large companies constitute a near monopoly on U.K. foreign aid, and recent scandals have appeared throughout the aid community based on reports of Adam Smith International's excessive profiteering off of U.K. Contracts.²⁶⁶ With massive wealth and power going to large private companies, the U.K. struggles with diversifying contractors just as the United States does. In an attempt to diversify and end this de facto monopoly on aid, DFID's Procurement and Commercial Department (PCD) was "one of the first teams in U.K.

²⁶² DFID Afghanistan, 2014 "Operational Plan 2011-2016," 8

²⁶³ Ibid. 5

²⁶⁴ UK Aid: Allocation of Resources. 2017, 3

²⁶⁵ Feikert-Ahalt, 2011 "Regulation of Foreign Aid"

²⁶⁶ Weaver, 2017 "UK Aid Company Bosses Quit"

Government to adopt the new ‘Competition with Negotiation’ EU procurement process in 2015, ensuring that incumbency does not guarantee the winning of future contracts.”²⁶⁷ This process is supposed to help DFID retain an even stronger negotiating position during its procurement and contract process. DFID claims that it wants to expand the market for implementation partners to allow for smaller organizations to enter, yet in a recent report from the House of Commons, “the procurement processes it uses [still] work against this stated aim” to diversify, and there is a lot of room for improvement and considering alternative methods for aid implementation.²⁶⁸

Norway

Unlike both the U.K. and U.S., Norad channels a majority of its aid through multilateral agreements (55%).²⁶⁹ When it does channel aid bilaterally, the conditionality included in Norway’s agreements are strict and “match closely with International Agenda.”²⁷⁰ Parallel with the International Agenda, a report regarding Norad describes its non-negotiable conditionalities in an early agreement with Tanzania, in which the aid was completely dependent on Tanzanian’s ability to reach an agreement to join the IMF.²⁷¹ The IMF’s goal as an international organization is to “foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.”²⁷² It was thought this non-negotiable condition was to assure Norwegians that aid money would be used responsibly and according to international standards agreed upon in the IMF.²⁷³

In regards to the distribution of aid funds, Norway spends 40% on Norwegian,

²⁶⁷ “DFID’s Use of Private Sector Contractors,” 2017

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ ITAD Ltd, Michelsens Institute, and Norway, 2014 “The Difference That Norwegian Aid Makes”

²⁷⁰ Selbervik, “Aid and Conditionality,” 6

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² IMF, 2017 “About the IMF”

²⁷³ Selbervik, 1999, “Aid and Conditionality”

International, and NGO Partners usually in the form of large grants for specific projects.²⁷⁴ In 2010, the NGO that received the largest amount of Norwegian aid was the Norwegian Red Cross, Rode Kors, which received NOK 105 million (approximately \$18 million) in donations during 2010 and spent NOK 61 million (approximately \$10.5 million) on their international human rights efforts alone.²⁷⁵ For Norway's aid to Afghanistan in 2006, the breakdown of modalities was 7% directly to the government, 26% to Norwegian NGOs, 0.9% to local NGOs, 4.7% to International NGOs, 1.3% to Nordic Research institutions and the remaining 59.3% to Multi-Bilateral Assistance channeled through multilateral organizations.²⁷⁶ This focus of aid on Norwegian NGOs is extremely important to the accountability process. Just as the U.S. chooses to contract with reliable large U.S.-based countries, Norway holds those it works with to a high standard of accountability with most of its contracts and grants going to Norwegian-based institutions.

One of the unique aspects of Norway's aid is the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund), the only one of its kind. This state-owned private equity company investment fund to "develop and establish profitable and sustainable enterprises in poor countries."²⁷⁷ Norfund is designed to find investments that theoretically may have the greatest effect on development rather than the profit other investment companies stress.²⁷⁸ As a result, Norfund can make some of the riskiest investments with government aid funds such as the strategic subsidiary SN Power, a company producing hydroelectric power for approximately 11 million people in developing countries.²⁷⁹ This fund also allows for loans to be taken out by local

²⁷⁴ Norwegian Red Cross, 2011 "Annual Report 2010," 15

²⁷⁵ Ibid., pg. 6

²⁷⁶ Palmer, Edith, and Hofverberg, 2011 "Regulation of Foreign Aid: Norway"

²⁷⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997 "The Norfund Act"

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Metcalfe-Hough et al. 2017 "How to Engage in Long-term Humanitarian Crisis"

companies in developing countries, primarily in renewable energy, agribusiness, and financial services. The decision makers are primarily the board of appointed directors, and it is considered a government institution, so it must complete annual financial reports and report to the Riksrevisjonen (Office of the Auditor General of Norway).²⁸⁰ Norway is the only donor country in this report's purview that harbors this alternative form of aid, which is less concerned about accountability and more concerned about successful community development from the grassroots level.

China

Reliable information on China's foreign aid is extremely difficult to come by, as the country does not have transparency laws regarding its developmental aid.²⁸¹ With the information available, however, it appears that China's approach focuses almost exclusively on bilateral agreements in order to retain control over where the money goes.²⁸² This focus places Chinese companies as the prime contractors with goods and services sourced completely from Chinese supply chains.²⁸³ This differs from the U.S. and U.K., notwithstanding their tendency to contract to companies based in their countries, given that competition is technically open to all; once an organization receives a contract, it can use supplies and workers from wherever it pleases so long as they meets the standards of its contracts.²⁸⁴

The Chinese model focuses on aid trade investment deals, donor recipient harmony, as well as overall mutual benefit. This mutual benefit derives from the idea that by assisting in the development of other companies and investing in Chinese companies to spread out and assist in

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 276, pg. 28

²⁸¹ Wolf, Wang, Warner, 2013 "China's Foreign Aid"

²⁸² Chandran, 2017 "China Development Aid."

²⁸³ Matthews, Ping, Ling, 2016 "Learning from China's Foreign Aid Model"

²⁸⁴ Roberts, 2014 "Development Capital." pg. 1032

the training of foreigners, China can create from a bottom-up approach stronger trade partners to support the growing markets of the international world economy.²⁸⁵ While less common, China has been known to provide grants, such as the 2013 agreement entitled “Government of People's Republic of China and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement,” which granted \$32 million to Afghanistan after a series of consultations and negotiations on various projects between the two countries.²⁸⁶ For development programs to be approved and contracted, there is a long bureaucratic process that includes a proposal, application, discussion and analysis of the feasibility, the process of proposed funds, followed by an approved Chinese framework agreement for project specific loan agreement with Chinese bank.²⁸⁷ Each step includes high-level negotiations with political leaders and Chinese corporation officials alongside the recipient government to assure mutually-beneficial outcomes for the economic process.²⁸⁸ This grant process includes loans from Chinese banks for the companies or country receiving the aid, and includes rigorous debt-servicing conditions to effectively pay back the loans.²⁸⁹

Due to the centralization of both China’s government and the sole use of Chinese companies and supply chains, China’s bilateral agreements have a greater tendency to be more long-term than short-term. A unique aspect of Chinese bilateral agreements for aid is that they come with few to no ‘strings attached’ in terms of democratization and human rights.²⁹⁰ On the other hand, the United States, U.K., and Norway all follow guidelines that are derived from an international platform that tends to condition aid on recipient countries agreeing to shift to

²⁸⁵ Matthews, Ping, Ling, “Learning from China’s Foreign Aid Model.” 2016

²⁸⁶ Downs, “China Buys into Afghanistan.” 2012, 7

²⁸⁷ Dreher et al, “Aid on Demand” 2015

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Wolf, “The Strategy Behind China’s Aid Expansion.” 2013

capitalist free-market principles, undertake democratic reforms, and better respect human rights.²⁹¹ Given this criteria, China strongly champions the idea of non-interference.²⁹² With this strategy, China uses aid to develop a form of ‘soft power’ in the countries it invests in. “A clear majority of U.S. spending was in the form of official development assistance (ODA), the ‘strict definition of aid,’ while the bulk of Chinese spending focused on other official flows (OOF) which is primarily intended for commercial projects,” like transportation.²⁹³ With the development of these projects, China is able to build stronger relationships with countries by also increasing their economic reach to include developing communities abutting its shipping routes as a part of China’s supply networks.

Conclusion

USAID’s modalities for implementation share many similarities with other western donors such as the U.K. and Norway, which tend to favor domestic-based, large organizations as implementing partners, and in turn hold their partners to extremely high standards in terms of accountability. Accountability measures are important to ensure that U.S. taxpayer money is well spent. However, rigid mechanisms due to reporting requirements could pose certain challenges for the projects to be completed effectively on the ground. The current mechanism has not provided the most effective approach to ensure the commitment and involvement of local stakeholders, and diverse enactors of USAID projects. USAID currently has an almost authoritative approach over how the money is spent. Addressing the challenges in USAID modalities is extremely important to ensure the effectiveness of USAID assistance in the future.

²⁹¹ Matthews, Ping, Ling, 2016 “Learning from China’s Foreign Aid Model” pg. 6

²⁹² Dreher et al. 2015 “Aid on Demand” pg. 7

²⁹³ Chandran, 2018 “China Development Aid” pg. 13

Chapter IV

Barriers to an Effective U.S. Foreign Aid Policy

Introduction

The United States Congress has often given primacy to geopolitical considerations when appropriating funds for its foreign aid programs. As the “War on Terror” progresses in its many iterations, the United States through its ESF account has shifted many of its foreign aid programs to prioritize security-based strategic areas for aid. As shown in Chapter II, these foreign aid programs are often characterized by sudden shifts in domestic politics, economic reform, and pet projects within the United States. While the U.S. is still an important donor country to developing countries worldwide, the difficulties with its assistance’s efficiency and predictability are significant and threaten its credibility as a donor. Assessing a skewed accountability system is an essential step toward better implementation of U.S. foreign aid programs. A general lack of attention toward utilizing local contractors, involving recipient countries, and targeting lower-income countries has inhibited U.S. foreign aid policy’s success at times. Each section in this chapter will analyze one of the three barriers that have contributed to a lack of effectiveness in the implementation process of U.S. foreign aid policies and programs: 1) prioritization of donor needs, 2) ineffective monitoring and evaluation, and a 3) lack of long-term dependability.

Section I. Prioritization of Donor Country Needs

Elizabeth Lapham

The United States has often worked to advance its own geopolitical interests through foreign aid, including economic and natural resource acquisition, expansion of Western

influence, and enforcement of national and international security norms.²⁹⁴ This approach has been shown in previous chapters to both differ from and share aspects of other donor countries such as China. China has expanded foreign aid at a meaningful rate, and now comes close to rivaling the U.S. in aid allocations annually.²⁹⁵ China, in relation to other major donor countries such as the United Kingdom or Norway,²⁹⁶ differs in priorities regarding methods of delivering foreign aid (e.g. loans) in addition to purposes of delivering foreign aid (e.g. American democracy projects and humanitarian aid).

U.S. domestic criticism directed at its agencies' often low level of collaboration with recipient countries in designing and implementing aid projects has become more relevant as Congress must allocate funding with its constituents in mind. Three USAID lawyers interviewed for this report maintain that "USAID listens to recipient country views on its priorities. However, it must be careful not to create expectations for assistance in areas where there is simply no funding available."²⁹⁷ Creating realistic expectations based on Congressional aid obligations has created a dilemma for donor countries like the United States when trying to effectively implement aid.²⁹⁸ As a result, the United States has often imposed one-way restraints rather than creating two-way communication channels between the donor and recipient countries, which might have prevented the U.S. from achieving 100% success rates in implementing foreign aid projects. A lack of clear coordination in priority setting and project design, and an overemphasis on ideological ties to aid, renders U.S. foreign aid substantially less effective and accessible.

²⁹⁴ See Chapter I, Section I

²⁹⁵ Constantaras, 2016 "Visualizing China's Aid to Africa."

²⁹⁶ See Chapter II, Section II

²⁹⁷ Ramsey, Patricia, 2018 "Email Communication with USAID lawyer"

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

Bilateral Special Interests

U.S. policy makers face challenges when creating both bilateral and multilateral aid policies that address priorities of sustainable development, security, and the U.S. government's more recent focus on public health crises and education.²⁹⁹ While the number of people living in extreme poverty has been by more than half since 1990, two thirds of the 127 developing countries continue to be ranked low or medium in the United Nations Human Development Index.³⁰⁰ Lack of basic needs, education, and economic opportunity plagues developing countries. Despite this evident need, the United States has increasingly moved toward middle-income countries in an attempt to achieve a more efficient use of funds given that middle-income countries generally enjoy high institutional quality.³⁰¹ This shift of attention away from lower-income countries to middle-income countries lowers the accessibility of U.S. aid to the former and creates further barriers to development.

It was historically said in Washington D.C. that aid has no constituency, and instead creates a global platform for all countries in need.³⁰² However, the annual appropriations process in Congress and introduction of pet projects has led to some priorities for aid based on special interests rather than development outcomes. As previously mentioned in Chapter II, the Congressional Appropriations Committees receive requests from competing departments within the government (e.g. DOS vs. DOD). Without a constituency, organizations that represent populations with access to more resources receive more funding, similar to the way large U.S. corporations and International NGOs (INGOs) win most implementing contracts as outlined in

²⁹⁹ Lancaster, 2007 "Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics".

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Committee on Appropriations., and William B Inglee, 2012 "State, foreign operations, and related programs appropriations bill," 2013: report together with minority views (to accompany H.R. 5857 (112th) *State, foreign operations, and related programs appropriations bill, 2013: report together with minority views (to accompany H.R. 5857)*). Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O.

³⁰² Jentleson, 2014 "American Foreign Policy"

Chapter III. While the main constituents for foreign aid have traditionally been the White House, the Department of the Treasury, USAID, and the Department of State, special projects by the President or Secretary of State have interrupted ongoing aid projects in the past. These so-called “pet projects” can be traced since the Marshall Plan of 1948 up through this century with former President George W. Bush’s PEPFAR and malaria funding projects, as mentioned in Chapter II.

Special interest projects created on behalf of a politician have in some cases, diverted funding from other projects. During the George W. Bush Administration, democracy building project, the Freedom Agenda, was launched with the goal to create democracies in countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Palestine while also promoting national security.³⁰³ This long-time pet project created by former President George W. Bush had negative effects both on the funding allocated to other aid projects and on the U.S.’ credibility as a donor country with recipient governments.³⁰⁴ According to James Traub in *Foreign Affairs*, “the Bush administration's 'freedom agenda' linked U.S. national security to the spread of democracy worldwide. After years of controversy and policy failure, democracy promotion is now greeted with sober skepticism.”³⁰⁵ Democracy building is often seen as a threat to the sovereignty of the recipient countries, and is something China refrains from attempting to achieve with its bilateral aid.

Not all pet projects, however, are detrimental to the recipient countries as there are some created that do not have the cultural or political motivations of the recipient government in mind.³⁰⁶ One successful instance was former Secretary Clinton’s program for women’s rights in

³⁰³ The White House, George W. Bush, 2009 “Freedom Agenda.”

³⁰⁴ The White House, “Freedom Agenda, National Archives and Records Administration”

³⁰⁵ Traub, 2009 “The Freedom Agenda: Why America Must Spread Democracy (Just Not the Way George Bush Did)”

³⁰⁶ Clinton, 2001 “New Hope For Afghanistan's Women”

Afghanistan, a program that was notably requested by the recipient Afghan government.³⁰⁷ Afghanistan now enjoys at least beginning signs of bilateral efforts for women's rights in the post-Taliban government partially as a result of former Secretary Clinton paying attention to the country's needs.³⁰⁸ The Sub-Saharan Africa-based special project, Power Africa, is another example of a project created in response to national and regional recipient governments' expressed need. Power Africa now works to provide electricity for much of Sub-Saharan Africa.³⁰⁹

Security issues, cultural misunderstandings, and language barriers impact foreign aid's effectiveness even when dispersed aid reaches its target area. Afghanistan is a clear example of the cultural and governmental barriers that can block efficient U.S. foreign aid policy.³¹⁰ Damage to United States' credibility through foreign aid begins with unpredictable priorities and shifting special interest competition that enters the USG's annual aid allocation process.³¹¹ The lack of Afghan governmental stability and accountability has in part led to many abandoned projects, local leaders excluded from the process, and funds directed to areas that do not need as much focus.

Egypt is another country in which security issues, among others, can prevent foreign aid's effectiveness. Egypt relies on the United States upholding its promise in the 1979 Camp David Accords and subsequent peace treaty, as well as the cooperation of the U.S.' changing administrations. The U.S.' renewed focus on Egypt after the 2014 election of Egyptian President Sisi can be viewed as an investment in stability and security in the Middle East.³¹² In the sixteen-

³⁰⁷ UN Women, 2018 "UN Women Afghanistan Country Office"

³⁰⁸ Lemmon, 2011 "Looming Threat to Afghan Women's Rights"

³⁰⁹ USAID, 2018 "Power Africa"

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 300

³¹¹ Sopko, 2016 "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress"

³¹² Congressional Research Service and Sharp, 2018 "Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations"

month period between elections after President Mubarak was forced to step down in 2011, former U.S. President Obama struggled to maintain congressional support for foreign aid allocations to Egypt while anti-U.S. and Egyptian government protests swept through Egypt. Despite the disjointed goals or priorities in Egypt, as the most populous Arab country (94.6 million people) with control of the Suez Canal, the real-time security benefits of providing aid to Egypt outweighed the lack of long-term democratic action in Egypt.³¹³

Egypt is also an example of how changing administrations and personalities can alter bilateral agreements. President Trump is expected to have warmer relations than former President Obama with current Egyptian President Sisi which could expedite or secure the \$12 billion requested by President Sisi from the IMF. Moreover, in the post-Arab Spring era, U.S. aid constituencies could have focused on utilizing local Egyptian contractors, given that they are more efficient and adept at navigating the corrupt and unstable Egyptian government.³¹⁴ Instead, a combination of U.S. domestic opinion of Egypt and fear of disrupting the Israeli-Arab balance of power likely blocked true change in the U.S.' foreign aid implementation policy in Egypt.

U.S. and China's Foreign Aid Efficiency Compared

In analyzing the U.S.' inefficiencies based on project design and prioritization for foreign aid projects, it is useful to compare its case with a competitive donor country such as China. While Chinese foreign aid has its own flaws, including disproportionate aid disbursement based on recipient government leadership bias, corruption, and fewer sustainability measures put in place, China's system does quickly point out several flaws of the U.S. as a donor.³¹⁵ Comparing China's system for setting aid priorities with how the U.S. has been shown to develop its own

³¹³ Jentleson, 2014 "American Foreign Policy"

³¹⁴ Journal of Development Economics, 2009 "Changing aid regimes? U.S. foreign aid from the Cold War to the War on Terror"

³¹⁵ Hatton, 2017 "China's secret aid empire uncovered"

will help illustrate the at least partial absence of efficiency in the current U.S. foreign aid policy. Similar to the U.S., China, uses bilateral agreements with conditionalities in implementing its foreign aid in recipient countries. China is well known for its principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of recipient countries and its alleged desire to let the recipient country choose its own path of development.³¹⁶ In contrast, the United States chooses to get heavily involved in a recipient country affairs, at times threatening the sovereignty of a recipient country in the name of security.³¹⁷ Chinese aid has reshaped the bilateral aid system, but does “not do things out of benevolence, but simply out of strategy.”³¹⁸ Their demand-driven policy works with recipient governments which may be miscommunicating the people’s needs in order to drive forward Chinese global influence. In comparison, the U.S. continues hope that democratizing institutions will promote equality and long-term stability.³¹⁹

China’s impersonal approach to foreign aid is preferred in various respects by many developing countries because of the respect for sovereignty and prioritization of recipient country needs rather than pet projects by a particular administration.³²⁰ China’s focus on emerging markets as opposed to middle-income countries could be seen as very effective, if analyzing by money given to emerging markets, given that China provides resources to 93 emerging market countries. However, China has increasingly been criticized for its lack of attention to reconstruction efforts and local company priorities. In comparison with the U.S.’ aid programs, the lack of on-the-ground interpersonal relations with local contractors is weaker still in Chinese foreign aid.³²¹

³¹⁶ Matthews, Ping, and Ling, 2016 “Learning From China’s Foreign Aid Model”

³¹⁷ Ibid., 312

³¹⁸ Paul Grove, 2018 “Personal Communication in The Text”

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid., 314

³²¹ Constantaras, 2016 “Visualizing China’s Aid to Africa”

The U.S. has been known to intentionally bypass recipient governments that are corrupt or lack strong public sector management, a practice which has made U.S. foreign assistance unpopular with many developing countries.³²² China's so-called "rogue aid" could be interpreted as the recipient country's need for tangible development (e.g. infrastructure) rather than the long-term development impact the United States focus on through establishment of institutions, women's rights, minority issues, environmental work, and rule of law.

Aligning Recipient Needs with Donor Action

Sustaining a successful aid program in a powerhouse donor government such as the United States becomes complicated by the perceived need to consider geopolitical factors. However benevolent and democratic the U.S. may act with its aid programs, continued democracy building and lack of local accessibility have led to a gap in effective implementation. The U.S. differs with other donor countries such as China in that communication with the recipient government is valued and increasingly more present.³²³ Despite this positive trend, the U.S. often fails recipient government's expectations because of monetary constraints due to excessive conditionality on multiple levels as mentioned in Chapters II and III, shifts in domestic attitude, or lack of involvement with local companies. Furthermore, emphasis placed on geostrategic strength and democracy building have at times created barriers for long-term self-sufficiency and mutual trust.³²⁴

According to retired USAID lawyer, Karen Turner, the U.S. generally works to negotiate with recipient government unless strong political motivations interfere with the process. Recipient governments are increasingly concerned with the conditionalities imposed along with

³²² Ibid., 315

³²³ Ibid., 310

³²⁴ Farzam and Seerat, 2016 "The Failure of Foreign Aid in Afghanistan"

agreements, lowering the efficiency of a healthy future aid relationship.³²⁵ Lack of full recipient government participation is not the only hindrance of U.S. foreign aid effectiveness; monitoring and evaluation plays a crucial role as well.

Section II. Monitoring and Evaluation

Saddiqullah Faizi

This section analyzes the various barriers to effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of USAID projects, taking the case of Afghanistan as its main subject due to its representative nature of many of the difficulties facing effective M&E. This section discusses the deleterious effects of donor shortfalls and use of foreign inspectors on the effectiveness of M&E, while also noting the power of social media and local participation in breaking these barriers down.

Advantages of Social Media Monitoring in Assisting with Security Concerns

The use of social media has helped with monitoring and evaluation, as well as with employing locals who face significantly lower barriers to recording and sending evidence of project completion or the need to obtain more funds for future projects.³²⁶

In the context of a humanitarian disaster, the 2004 Indonesia tsunami created an international crisis that ultimately brought in one of the largest influxes of aid to date.³²⁷ The use of social media not only created an online forum for early disaster warnings, but also linked responders to tsunami victims. Text messages, instant messaging, and internet access have now become key pieces to quicker aid response and accessibility in humanitarian disasters. While the actual reliability of information obtained through social media networks is not 100%, its ability

³²⁵ Turner, 2018 “USAID retired, Email Interview”

³²⁶ Frenkel, Schoemaker, Emrys, Himelfarb, Sheldon, & United States Institute of Peace, 2010 “Afghanistan media assessment: Opportunities and challenges for peacebuilding”

³²⁷ Kweifio-Okai, 2014 “Where did the Indian Ocean tsunami aid money go?”

to respond quickly and share information makes it an increasingly important tool in development.

In Afghanistan, where travel for daily tasks can even be difficult, connecting Afghan citizens to public officials for purposes of M&E can be challenging. Security, cultural and geographic barriers can make it nearly impossible for foreign inspectors to travel to remote areas to assess progress of projects and identify the priorities of locals.³²⁸ The access to social media in even remote areas has vastly assisted with the security concerns aid workers were facing daily. The constant uploading of videos to social media documenting one town's development story or local's grievance with the government shows one area where progress in communication on aid has made a vast difference. Despite many years in Afghanistan, the international community has failed to explain its presence of not only international forces, but also NGOs operating throughout Afghanistan. There is a fundamental lack of transparency and understanding within the local Afghan population regarding why the international forces and aid groups are operating in their communities.³²⁹ Citizen engagement through social media is thus a key component in providing transparent and effective aid in Afghanistan. Just as important is its potential bridge the gap between citizens and public officials in order to provide another mechanism for accountability and opportunities for the public to influence and advocate for development projects that meet their needs.

In partnership with USAID, Tetra Tech has implemented the Initiative to Strengthen Local Administration (ISLA) project, which is aimed at increasing local engagement and monitoring in areas of financial and development aid. To date, the ISLA project has supported Provincial Governors in 16 provinces to hold Facebook Live meetings with locals to address

³²⁸ Nixon, 2014 "Social media in Afghanistan takes on life of its own"

³²⁹ Macdonald, 2010 "The good, the bad, and the ugly in Afghanistan"

their concerns. One example was in Laghman Province, located in eastern Afghanistan, where ISLA arranged a Facebook Live Youth Forum in May 2017 that allowed over 11,000 Afghan youths to put their social media skills to use and advocate for issues important to them.³³⁰

Through the use of social media technologies like Facebook Live, recipients of aid are able to reach out to their elected leaders and the international community to express their concerns, and in return the local government as well as the international community are able to witness their aid money and how it is being used by the recipients. Through the use of such technology, Afghans are better able to monitor and provide security intelligence to aid workers as well as donors on providing safe and effective aid where it is needed most.

Donor Shortfalls

Various factors, such as a high-threat working environment and expat inspectors in M&E, challenge U.S. efforts to ensure proper management and oversight of U.S. development efforts, a barrier to aid best illustrated in the case of Afghanistan. The United States' counterinsurgency is widely interpreted as an effort to win a competition for the hearts and minds of the Afghan population. The mindset behind this strategy is that the aid money the United States disperses helps citizens improve their quality of life. By building more wells and schools with U.S. aid money, the more supportive Afghans will be of the U.S. war effort. This strategy has proven difficult to implement, due to shortcomings from donors, contractors as well as recipients.

The international community, including the U.S., has long held serious concerns regarding the mass flow of cash – the majority of which is money intended for development – out of Kabul International Airport, specifically by Afghan citizens and foreign contractors. According to the Congressional Research Service, there was an estimated \$4 billion dollars taken

³³⁰ Cálves, 2017 “Finding Their Voice: Leveraging Social Media To Promote Civic Engagement in Afghanistan”

out of Afghanistan in 2011.³³¹ Although large cash movements are common in Afghanistan due to its cash-based economy, these large cash flows have led to not only the financing of terrorists, narcotics as well as other illegal operations, but also to the loss of millions of foreign aid dollars during disbursement. The same CRS report estimated that 40% of the aid money spent in Afghanistan has found its way back to rich donor countries including the U.S. through channels such as corporate profits, consultants' salaries and other costs, all of which has significantly inflated the cost of U.S. aid projects. One road project between the center of Kabul and the international airport cost over \$2.3 million per kilometer in U.S. aid money, at least four times the average cost of building a road in Afghanistan³³² had it been contracted to a local company.

As discussed in Chapter III, the US government has awarded major contracts, some worth hundreds of millions of dollars, to KBR, the Louis Berger group, Chemonics International, Bearing Point, and DynCorp International. Afghanistan's biggest implementing partner donor agency, USAID, allocates nearly half its funds to five big contractors, none of them locally based or owned. These multi-billion-dollar companies, many of which are based in Washington D.C. with important political military connections,³³³ are not on the ground to oversee the projects to make sure standards and deadlines are being met. The report released by the Center for Public Integrity, a Washington-based research organization that produces investigative articles on special interests and ethics in the USG, concluded that most of the 10 largest contracts for USAID projects in Afghanistan went to companies that employed former high-ranking

³³¹ Katzman, 2015 “Bulk Cash Transfers Out of Afghanistan”

³³² ReliefWeb, 2018 “Integrity in reconstruction: Afghan roads reconstruction - Deconstruction of a lucrative assistance”

³³³ Daily Commercial News and Construction Record, 2003 “Contractors rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan are major campaign donors to Bush: Report”

government officials, or executives with close ties to members of Congress and even agencies awarding the contracts.³³⁴

There has been great concern over the numbers of school enrollments in Afghanistan – one of the most tangible indicators of the effect of millions of dollars in aid spending – which may have been falsified or inflated to continue the flow of foreign assistance. In a letter to USAID, John Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) wrote that “these allegations suggest that U.S. and other donors may have paid for schools that students do not attend and for the salaries of teachers who don’t teach.”³³⁵

Foreign Inspectors in M&E

SIGAR monitors the majority of the \$120 billion in aid given to Afghanistan for reconstruction programs, and reports cases of corruption in Afghanistan,³³⁶ but *only* in regions that are secure enough for foreign inspectors to travel to and evaluate. Attacks against aid workers by the Taliban have risen over the past 10 years, with roughly 400 aid workers killed or kidnapped by insurgents in Afghanistan since 1997. This has caused the majority of the humanitarian aid groups to abandon their projects and flee due to concerns for their safety. Recently, five ISIS gunmen stormed the Save The Children office, a global charity that provides aid in over 120 countries, killing five people and wounding dozens. Save the Children, which had been working in 16 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces and had helped over 700,000 Afghan children, suspended all of its operations in Afghanistan shortly after the attack.³³⁷

The problem with using foreign inspectors, many of whom are assigned to overseeing the reconstruction projects in Afghanistan, is that they are not able to go to most of the areas in order

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Levitz, 2015 “Spectre of 'ghost schools' in Afghanistan doesn't seem to spook Canada”

³³⁶ Sopko, 2016 “Quarterly Report to the United States Congress”

³³⁷ New York Times 2017 “Attack On Save The Children”

to properly monitor projects due to security threats. As mentioned previously, the threat is higher towards foreigners, many of whom are surrounded by shooters, preventing locals from approaching them with complaints or suggestions. The Red Cross was propagandized by Afghan insurgents as “agents of the west,” and subsequently closed two offices in northern Afghanistan due to attacks against its staff. Wais Barmak, Minister of Interior of Afghanistan was asked on Tolo TV, the highly popular Afghan news channel, about the security risk aid workers face daily. The minister replied, “this is all an effort to deteriorate the security by the enemies of Afghanistan so that foreigners may not invest in our great country.”³³⁸

The high levels of corruption in Afghanistan, accompanied by security concerns, make foreign contracting for U.S. aid projects difficult and can reduce their effectiveness. According to one report, the corruption and associated security threats in Afghanistan lead to a questionable bidding process that often favored companies with close government ties as well as vested interested in the funds of the contract rather than the reconstruction of the province.³³⁹ The same report found that there are many cases of no-bid wins on multi-million-dollar contracts linked to government officials who profit at the cost of recipient citizens and US taxpayers.³⁴⁰ Contractors coming from the capital Kabul face significant security barriers and therefore sell the contract for a lump sum of cash to any organization willing to bid, regardless of their capabilities or expertise.³⁴¹ The foreign inspectors are shown Potemkin progress throughout Afghanistan, including “ghost” schools or hospitals, thus contributing to an inaccurate understanding of how effectively the foreign aid has been used.

³³⁸ Tolo News, 2016 “Red Cross aid workers attacked in Northern Afghanistan”

³³⁹ Ibid., 332

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Politi, 2014 “Winning contractors – An update”

Local Contractors

The decade-long experience of the Afghan civil society organization Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) shows that it is critical for the safety of the local communities and for the effectiveness of foreign aid to cooperate with local monitoring groups and address the concerns raised by them.³⁴² The mission of Integrity Watch Afghanistan is to put corruption of aid under the spotlight through increasing transparency, integrity and accountability, all of which are aided by having more local participation in the management and M&E of projects. This local participation in return gains the support of the local population to cooperate with construction companies that are locally-owned and based, knowing the aid will be used for the benefit of the village. This method ensures that the contractors are transparent in using the aid to build infrastructure projects to meet the needs of the locals, and not siphoning funds for their own benefit.³⁴³ Providing contracts to local construction companies helps build the local economy and, by employing locals, deter them from joining insurgents as a means of supporting their family.³⁴⁴ Local monitoring groups also have access to primary resources, such as knowledge of the local language and culture, which assists in prioritizing aid projects and getting the local populace's consensus. In the long-run, the aid will be more effective and transparent since the contractors will likely work towards developing their province or even village. It is the author's personal experience, having grown up and worked in Afghanistan, that any shortcomings by contractors will be held responsible by their family member and villagers.

Tetra Tech, a company contracted by USAID to carry out quality assurance and monitoring of projects, has used an approach proven to be successful in many Afghan provinces.

³⁴² IWA 2017 "NCS Introduction »

³⁴³ Hoffman, 2016 "Kabul City Initiative, Afghanistan"

³⁴⁴ Alikozai, 2015 "Afghanistan's Other Security Threat: Brain Drain"

Tetra Tech has implemented participatory monitoring, with qualified and vetted citizens helping validate local results in over 17 different provinces across Afghanistan. They are tasked to submit project activity feedback through different methods such as real-time reporting from project sites via Skype or other social media applications to ensure the project is ongoing and successful.³⁴⁵ Community-based contracting and monitoring of infrastructure that started in 2008 has covered more than 1160 projects in several provinces. The main goal of Tetra Tech is to monitor the construction of publicly-funded projects with an aim to increase local participation, transparency, and accountability in the construction sector. Following its success in other provinces, the program was expanded to several other provinces.³⁴⁶

Overcoming one major barrier to providing effective aid for the recipients and donors, as well as the safety of aid workers, relies on the support and willingness of the locals, and their consensus in the aid and its conditionality's. If unsuccessful, insurgents will be better able to garner support among the local population by meeting their economic, governance, or security grievances, increasing not only the ineffectiveness of foreign aid, but also insecurity of its environment.

Section III. Long-Term Commitment and Dependability of Funds

Sam Fiore

The final barrier to an effective foreign aid strategy addressed in this chapter is the unwillingness or inability on the part of donor countries to make long-term commitments to ensure the continued availability of resources for aid. As this section will demonstrate, billions of dollars in foreign aid have been rendered ineffective because aid programs continue to primarily address problems in the short-term, rather than investing in the long-term prosperity and security

³⁴⁵ Tetra Tech, 2015 "Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund Third Party Monitoring Program"

³⁴⁶ Mashalafrooz, 2018 "Lack of cooperation with local monitors prove too expensive for the construction company"

of the recipient country or region. As discussed in Chapter II, the tendency to only plan for the short-term occurs because funding for aid is largely unpredictable; money for aid fluctuates wildly from year to year and aid programs cannot be sure if they will receive the funds they need from governments to continue operations. These fluctuations occur primarily for three reasons: 1) a shifting international spotlight, 2) changing domestic politics in donor countries, and 3) an inefficient allocation timeline for funding aid in the United States. It should be noted that there are almost certainly more than three reasons foreign aid levels fluctuate, however this section limits its scope to the above three.

Reason 1: Shifting International Spotlight

The first reason foreign aid levels experience fluctuations is a result of the shifting international spotlight. The “international spotlight” refers to the collective attention of the global media and the problem or area they happen to be focusing on. Wherever the spotlight falls, its target will feature prominently on the international news and social media, leading to an increase in the aid money allocated to it. The international spotlight usually shifts as a result of a natural or humanitarian disaster. Examples include the push to fight HIV/AIDs in the 1990s and the earthquake in Haiti in 2011. In both these cases, the global outpouring of support was overwhelming, largely as a result of the intense public focus generated by media coverage. In some ways, the recent global push to combat climate change, as evidenced by the establishment of the GCCI in 2010 by the Obama Administration noted in Chapter II, and overwhelming adoption of the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement, could also be considered an effect of the international spotlight. The international spotlight can be a blessing for areas affected by a sudden disaster. It brings in food, medicine, and other necessities after a deadly event. However, it can also be a curse for long-term aid programs operating around the world. As the spotlight

shifts money to its temporary focus, it draws funds away from aid programs around the world already operating with limited funds.

One case of this phenomenon occurring can be revealed by analyzing aftermath of the devastating tsunami in the Indian Ocean, which ravaged South East Asia in late 2004. When the tsunami first struck, the Tsunami Evaluation Committee, which consists of UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs, described the initial aid commitments as “the most generous and immediately funded humanitarian responses in history.”³⁴⁷ Of the \$6.25 billion donated to assist 14 countries, \$1 billion went to Indonesia, the hardest hit country. However, that money did not simply appear out of nowhere. The influx in aid to Southeast Asia had a negative effect on another sector of aid halfway around the world: HIV/AIDs relief in Africa. In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami in early 2005, aid agencies in Africa working with HIV/AIDs relief began noticing their funding was quickly disappearing as more and more donors around the world turned their focus to the helping the victims of the tsunami. Several articles from 2005 describe the situation for aid workers on the ground in sub-Saharan Africa as they watched funds “dry-up” from their HIV/AIDs programs in the months following the tsunami. One article reported “staff of international-aid agencies...marveling at the outpouring of money and offers of help for Asia” and “wonder[ing] why other problems, particularly the AIDS pandemic, have failed to strike the same chord.”³⁴⁸

One aid worker named in this article as Ms. Otim, “expressed blunt fears that the rush to pour money into Asia will mean even less for AIDS spending” while an unnamed source feared “that both private and government donations will dry up when the tsunami fervour passes.” The article captures the feelings of NGO workers on the ground as they experience firsthand the

³⁴⁷ Kweifio-Okai, 2014 “Where did the Indian Ocean tsunami aid money go?”

³⁴⁸ Nolan, 2005 “Tsunami aid dwarfs African AIDS funds”

fickle power of the international spotlight. Another article flatly reports that aid workers in Africa “are having to cut programmes...because money has been diverted to victims of the Asian tsunami,” leaving all speculation out of it.³⁴⁹ The importance of the international spotlight itself in shaping the way aid is dispersed is highlighted when the author of this article notes that “while attracting funds for high-profile disasters such as the tsunami or Sudan's Darfur region is still relatively easy, attracting funds for longer-term problems such as the AIDS pandemic or chronic food shortages is much harder.” Overall, there seems to be a sentiment reflected in these articles that Africa, which once had its heyday in the international aid spotlight for HIV/AIDS work in the 1990s, is starting to “bore” people. The international spotlight has shifted away. When the spotlight has moved on, it can be even harder to secure funding than before, further inhibiting long-term commitments to development.

Reason 2: Changing Domestic Politics in Donor Countries

The second reason foreign aid levels fluctuate is a result of changes in the domestic politics of donor countries. Most donor countries are democracies, which by their nature must undergo routine changes in government. Constantly changing governments naturally result in the ever-shifting domestic interests and priorities of democratic countries, which decreases the effectiveness of aid if their aid programs are governed less by long-term development goals and more by short-term political interests. Money for foreign aid distributed by these governments will assuredly reflect the priorities of the incumbent administration. In the United States in the 20th century, Republicans traditionally favored increasing foreign aid, while Democrats often wanted to cut it. However, among the last three U.S. presidents, former President Obama, a Democrat, oversaw an increase to the foreign aid budget, while former Republican Presidents

³⁴⁹ Reliefweb. 2005 “Africa aid agency funds dry up despite promises”.

George. W Bush and Trump made significant cuts to foreign aid. Among the main political parties in the United Kingdom, the Labour and Liberal Democratic Parties typically support foreign aid, while the Conservative (Tory) Party opposes it. However, as mentioned in Chapter I, Britain's aid is funded in multi-year spans/agreements, thus partially insulating its foreign assistance from the vicissitudes of changing governments.

The problem routine government turnover inevitably creates for providers of aid on the ground comes when a party which is not in favor of foreign aid suddenly controls its fate. Evolving domestic interests and changing administrations undoubtedly hinder the effectiveness of foreign aid, however it is a difficult problem to address as it is a reflection of the fundamental nature of democracies. In the article, *Why Democracies May Actually Be Less Reliable Allies*, authors Gartzke and Gleditsch write that “periodic replacement of leaders enhances representation, but also separates the actors making commitments from those who ultimately determine whether to honor commitments.”³⁵⁰ They argue that this “exacerbates the problem of commitment, since the actor promising action is likely to differ from the actor who must act.” What this means for foreign aid is that promises made by democratic donor countries are frequently reneged on by a succeeding government that assumes power and feels no commitment to act based upon the promises of their predecessor. As Gartzke and Gleditsch write, this explanation of democratic states runs counter to “contemporary wisdom in international relations,” which holds that democracies generally make reliable allies who stay true to their commitments and obligations.³⁵¹

Of course, not all donors of foreign aid are liberal democracies. One counterexample to the “democratic problem” of foreign aid is demonstrated by the Chinese foreign aid model. In

³⁵⁰ Gartzke and Gleditsch, 2004 “Why Democracies May Actually Be Less Reliable Allies”

³⁵¹ Ibid.

recent years, China has become one of the largest providers of foreign aid, yet the country remains (officially) communist and under control of the Chinese Communist Party. Because of the differing nature of its internal politics, Beijing does not self-adjust in the same manner as Washington. While there are still periodic turnovers of leadership, the guiding goals of the ruling communist party remain relatively fixed. This means that China does not experience unforeseen policy shifts that could result in the dismantling of its foreign aid program. Partly because of this, some countries – particularly in Africa – are turning to China for foreign aid rather than the U.S. and other Western liberal democracies. One report writes that “in 2009, African countries received 47 percent of China’s total foreign assistance.”³⁵² As mentioned earlier in Section I of this chapter, China is willing to work with countries with that the United States will not, because Beijing is not concerned about the whether the country is democratically governed or sufficiently transparent. By instead prioritizing principles of “non-interference and mutual benefit” over the United States strategy of internal interference through conditionalities, China is “more comfortable providing infrastructure packages (e.g., turn-key projects) than many other countries.” These infrastructure projects dominate Chinese involvement in Africa, with 70% of aid funding going to infrastructure.³⁵³ The principle of “mutual benefit” comes into effect when China gets to extract a country’s resources to use for itself. Chinese construction of infrastructure in Africa in order to secure resources was apparent as early as 1976, with “the construction of the Tan Zam railroad in Zambia in part to facilitate China’s access to copper,” and the Chinese view of “resource possibilities in sub-Saharan Africa continues today.” This consistency could be considered a result of a political system far different from that in the United States.

³⁵² Zhang, 2016 “Chinese foreign assistance, explained”

³⁵³ Amusa, Monkam, and Vieg, 2016 “How and Why China Became Africa's Biggest Aid Donor”

While there are some things to be learned from the Chinese method, it is perhaps not a method the United States should strive to fully emulate. To do so would mean abandoning or relaxing the conditionalities in Bilateral Agreements designed to ensure recipient countries are able to distribute aid to the people that need it. Conditionalities that hold governments accountable to internal corruption, honor transparency, and uphold the rule of law would likely disappear in favor of cooperation with authoritarian regimes and deals with dictators. American values of democracy, human rights, and personal freedom should not be overlooked when distributing foreign aid. While the U.S. *can* learn from Beijing's stable policy goals as evidenced by their steady aid assistance activity in Africa over decades, the U.S. approach to aid should still fundamentally reflect American values and the values of its partners.

Reason Three: Inefficient Timeline for Appropriating Aid

The final reason foreign aid levels, specifically in the United States, experience fluctuations that hinder the effectiveness of aid, is a result of inefficiencies in the timeline of funding appropriation for aid. U.S. foreign aid programs regularly fail to provide consistent aid in the long-term because the U.S. Congress only appropriates money for foreign aid on a year-to-year basis, despite aid projects often taking longer than one year to complete.³⁵⁴ This means that at the end of any given fiscal year, NGOs and other aid distributors lack any concrete assurance that they will receive funding for their project for another year, or if they will be suddenly cut off. As discussed in Chapter III, the unilateral right of the U.S. to walk away from its funding commitments for an aid project at any given time is written into the Bilateral Agreements signed by the United States and each of its recipient country.

³⁵⁴ C.f. Chapter II

Short allocation timelines could possibly be viewed as a check used by the legislative branch to restrict the power of the executive branch. The reasoning is that the executive branch cannot be trusted with managing money for such a long time (lest they get too powerful), so the legislative branch will not provide money for long-term purposes. However, this approach can have a detrimental effect on aid programs. The result of this policy – exacerbated by the periodic turnover of USG leadership described in Reason Two – is that projects frequently run out of money halfway through or remain unfinished, because no long-term binding agreement states that funding will be provided by the U.S. Government for the entire duration of the project.

Examples of unexpected shortfalls or termination of projects are numerous in the case of Afghanistan. The U.S. Congress has appropriated upwards of \$100 billion in foreign aid to Afghanistan in the past decade.³⁵⁵ However, projects still regularly run out of funding and remain incomplete because of a lack of continued availability of resources, and the country as a whole continues to be reliant on aid. The audits and inspections records of projects conducted by SIGAR are littered with stories of aid projects shutting down halfway through or remaining uncompleted due to withdrawal of funding (among other reasons). One example, Pol-i-Charkhi prison, Afghanistan’s largest correctional institute, was undergoing renovations that stalled in 2014 due to this reason. The USAID contract with Al-Watan Construction Company was “terminated for convenience” after \$18.5 million had been sunk into the renovation project over five years.³⁵⁶ A follow up report by SIGAR in 2017 found that the project remains unfunded and incomplete.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ Samim, 2016 “Afghanistan's Addiction to Foreign Aid”

³⁵⁶ Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 2014 “SIGAR 15-11 INSPECTION REPORT”

³⁵⁷ Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 2017 “SIGAR 17-46-IP INSPECTION REPORT”

As it has become widely known in Afghanistan that aid projects frequently lose funding, the focus of aid to Afghanistan in particular has been focused deliberately on short-term projects. One source states that “long-term capacity building and initiatives to strengthen the domestic economy were largely excluded from the list of priorities,” and that “more than 80 percent of aid has been spent on short-term projects.”³⁵⁸ The same author finds that for this reason, “after 14 years the Afghanistan economy is still not self-sustaining and the country remains one of the most aid-dependent in the world.” Afghanistan must become self-sufficient quickly, as the World Bank predicts aid to Afghanistan to amount to just 10% of current levels by 2025.

It should be noted that Afghanistan is also home to numerous successful examples of foreign aid projects. One glaring difference between the successful and the unsuccessful projects is that all the successful projects were funded throughout their duration. One example of a successful project is the previously-discussed Ring-road in Section II of this chapter.

Conclusion

Lack of coordination on priorities, faulty monitoring systems, and decreased long-term credibility have resulted in gaps in U.S. foreign aid efficiency. These factors have created difficult political, cultural, and security-based barriers in the aid implementation process. American aid money frequently dries up, is re-appropriated, or simply disappears before any lasting difference is made. If problems continue to only be addressed in the short-term, foreign aid programs will continue to experience difficulties in producing tangible results and recipient countries will remain unable to attain self-sufficiency. As previously discussed in this chapter, foreign aid programs are further hindered by a lack of participation on the part of the recipient

³⁵⁸ Farzam and Seerat, 2016 “The Failure of Foreign Aid in Afghanistan”.

governments, and insufficient monitoring techniques used to evaluate the effectiveness of the aid on the ground.

As a result of these fundamental issues, the U.S. and other traditional donor countries are losing their credibility as reliable providers of aid. Already, traditional recipients of aid are looking elsewhere, many to China. Deep problems lie in the ways and attitudes in which aid is appropriated and managed that have existed and hindered projects for decades. Foreign aid programs from Western countries have developed a reputation for being short-sighted and inconsistent. Western donor countries are increasingly viewed unfavorably because the failures in the modalities of implementation, which have been in place for decades, continue to grind on. For a more effective foreign aid strategy, one or more of these limiting barriers should be reformed, the subject of which this report now concludes with.

Policy Recommendations

Reforming U.S. Foreign Aid Policy

In writing this report, we the Task Force identified numerous areas in the U.S. foreign aid process which could be targeted for reform. However, based on research, input from professionals in the field, and consideration for which recommendations might actually be implementable, this Task Force has identified three main goals for the future U.S. foreign aid, and has aligned our recommendations so as to make tangible progress towards each goal.

Goal I. Alignment of U.S. and Recipient Government Priorities

We the Task Force believe that the future for U.S. foreign assistance will be more effective at achieving long-term development goals if programs are based more on recipient government countries' priorities. In achieving better performance, Congress will have positive results to prove to the American people that their taxpayer dollars are being used effectively, and are ultimately creating a better world for U.S. citizens and their interests to thrive in. In order to achieve this goal, we have created two recommendations. Our first recommendation is for the U.S. to increase the involvement of local officials from recipient countries in the Congressional Budget Justification process. Our second recommendation is that Congress discourage personal initiatives (pet projects) that do not accurately reflect recipient government needs. We the Task Force believe that involving local governments early on in the annual budget process will allow for increased transparency and better communication between the donor and recipient countries, and thus allow U.S. funds to have a greater impact in those areas. Regarding our second recommendation, initiatives put forward by government officials (pet projects) do have a chance

of being successful, however many fail within their first year. Notwithstanding this tendency, the success rates of these initiatives have the potential to increase if projects without proper due diligence of the recipient country's situation and priorities were discouraged by Congress. Beyond providing recipient countries with more targeted aid, money given to more "successful" projects would increase the impact of those aid funds.

Goal II. Improve Predictability of Aid Funding

Our second goal for the future of U.S. foreign aid is to make foreign assistance funding more predictable so as to improve the effectiveness of its projects and increase the trust of recipient governments in the U.S. as a donor. To achieve this goal, we the Task Force have two recommendations. The first recommendation is for USAID and the Department of State to make full use of all the flexibility allowed by Congress in its annual appropriations to make money available for the most urgent needs. Taking advantage of the flexibility currently available would allow for both entities to respond quicker to events, such as natural disasters, and create more certainty for recipients that the U.S. will act decisively. Our second recommendation is to increase informal coordination among donor countries in the field to cover potential shortfalls in funding. By aligning ourselves closer to other donor countries – such as the U.K. and Norway – on certain issues or areas of focus, each nation would be able to spend its aid dollars more effectively on projects that would benefit from greater predictability in funding. Using the issue of agricultural development mentioned in Chapter II as an example, donor country agencies could come together and invest in separate yet related areas: the U.S. channel funds to agricultural extension, the U.K. could invest in drip irrigation technology, and so on. Informally coordinating with other donor country agencies, while difficult, would increase the predictability of their projects and in general remove pressure from any one country funding entire programs.

Goal III. Increase Local Participation in Implementation Process

The third goal this Task Force believes should be a priority when reforming U.S. foreign aid is to increase local participation in the implementation process (using agreements, contractors, and M&E). We believe that in order to successfully involve more locals in the process, USAID should give out smaller contracts (under \$10 million) in greater number so that a greater diversity of organizations can competitively bid and hire more local staff. The authors of this Task Force realize that just providing smaller contracts is unreasonable due to the amount of paperwork and time one contract requires, as well as the limited human resources available in USAID's in-country team and that of the recipient government to keep up with every contractor. To mitigate this, as a part of our recommendation, we believe that USAID and the DOS should hire more local personnel for their embassies to be able to monitor the work of the additional contracts and grants. It is important to note that in large countries or archipelagos with multiple languages and cultures, the right local should be given the assignment (the one with the best understanding and relationship to the region). In addition, while it would be ideal for the U.S. government to accept more risk to personnel (ex. attacks, kidnappings, etc.), especially when working on projects in dangerous areas, we believe that a more realistic recommendation is to monitor progress through social media more. Taking advantage of this technology would save officials on the ground from sending a paid employee to check on a project's progress, increasing personnel safety, costs, as well as the speed at which project feedback is received.

This Task Force aimed for our goals and recommendations to move recipient countries to the center of foreign aid. We believe that each recommendation increases local participation in different phases of U.S. foreign aid planning and implementation processes, and has the potential to increase recipient nations' trust in the U.S. to provide necessary and sufficient funds.

Appendix A: Full SOAG Outline

Article 1 explicitly states the purpose of forming this document for the agreement made between two governments.

Article 2 describes the Strategic Objective and Results. Strategic Objectives are the long-term organizational goals associated with this agreement document that convert the mission statements from a broad vision into more specific plans and projects. Results are the the desired outcomes or objectives that will be achieved as a result of the execution of the conditions in the agreement. The Principal Text must also specify ways for how the Results can be amended; for example, by formal amendment of the SOAG or implementation letter (pg. 5, ADS 350). Normally, the Strategic Objective and Results are agreed to by the two parties, and accommodate the recipient country's needs and desired outcomes. However, there is a minor section on **Annex 1, Amplified Description** attached to the end of Article 2 that provides a detailed description of the objectives and results that the agreement aims to achieve. It must state whether Annex 1 can be amended without formal amendment of the SOAG and any limitations on such amendments.

Article 3 usually contains clause 3.1(c), which provides USAID Unilateral Deobligation. This gives the USAID the unilateral right to reduce the Grant if the amount of it exceeds what can be reasonably committed for achieving the Objective in the current or next fiscal year. However, to prevent that this deobligation does not alter the original scope of the SOAG, the Principal Text must include a provision illustrating that any reduction does not reduce USAID's total estimated contribution to the agreement. This enables USAID to obligate less money in a certain year that has financial difficulty and to obligate more money in the following year that might be more financially available.

Article 4 states the completion date by which all necessary activities should be completed in order to achieve the Objective and Results illustrated in Article 2. Clause (b) of Article 4 states the provision that no Grant is to be authorized for services performed or goods furnished after the Completion Date without the agreement of USAID in writing. Clause (c) of Article 4 even further restricts requests for disbursement of USAID aid by requiring that they be received by USAID no later than 9 months after the Completion Date. Nine months are the default period for the disbursement requests to be received after the Completion Date, but USAID reserves the unilateral right, in writing, to agree on another period. If the recipient country requests disbursements nine months (or any other USAID agreed period) after the Completion Date, USAID has the right to reduce the Grant by part or all of the amount of the disbursement requests made.

Article 5 provides for the conditions that must be met prior to first or additional disbursement. It provides the terminal dates for satisfaction of any precedent conditions and may provide that later terminal dates could be established with the agreement of the USAID before or after the initial terminal dates. Article 5 also clarifies USAID's unilateral right to terminate the SOAG if the conditions precedent to first disbursement are not met by the terminal date.

Article 6 contains any special covenants specified in the management contract. Any responsibilities and deadlines in the covenants must be clearly stated.

Article 7 provides the addresses of both parties for communications, representatives given the rights to execute and amend the SOAG, the rights of those representatives to assign additional representatives with specific limitations, provision that states Standard Provisions Annex is attached to the SOAG, language of agreement, and signatures and dates.

Annex 1, Amplified Description provides a more detailed description of the objectives and results the SOAG aims to achieve, such as a financial plan, list of results to be achieved, means to measure results (indicators, targets, performance guidelines, etc.), specific activities to be financed, roles and responsibilities, and monitoring and evaluation.

Annex 2, Standard Provisions provides the details for the logistics of furnishing the financed activities and delivering goods to the recipient country.

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**THE HENRY M. JACKSON
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies
jsis.washington.edu
Phone: (206) 543-6001 Email: jsis@uw.edu

