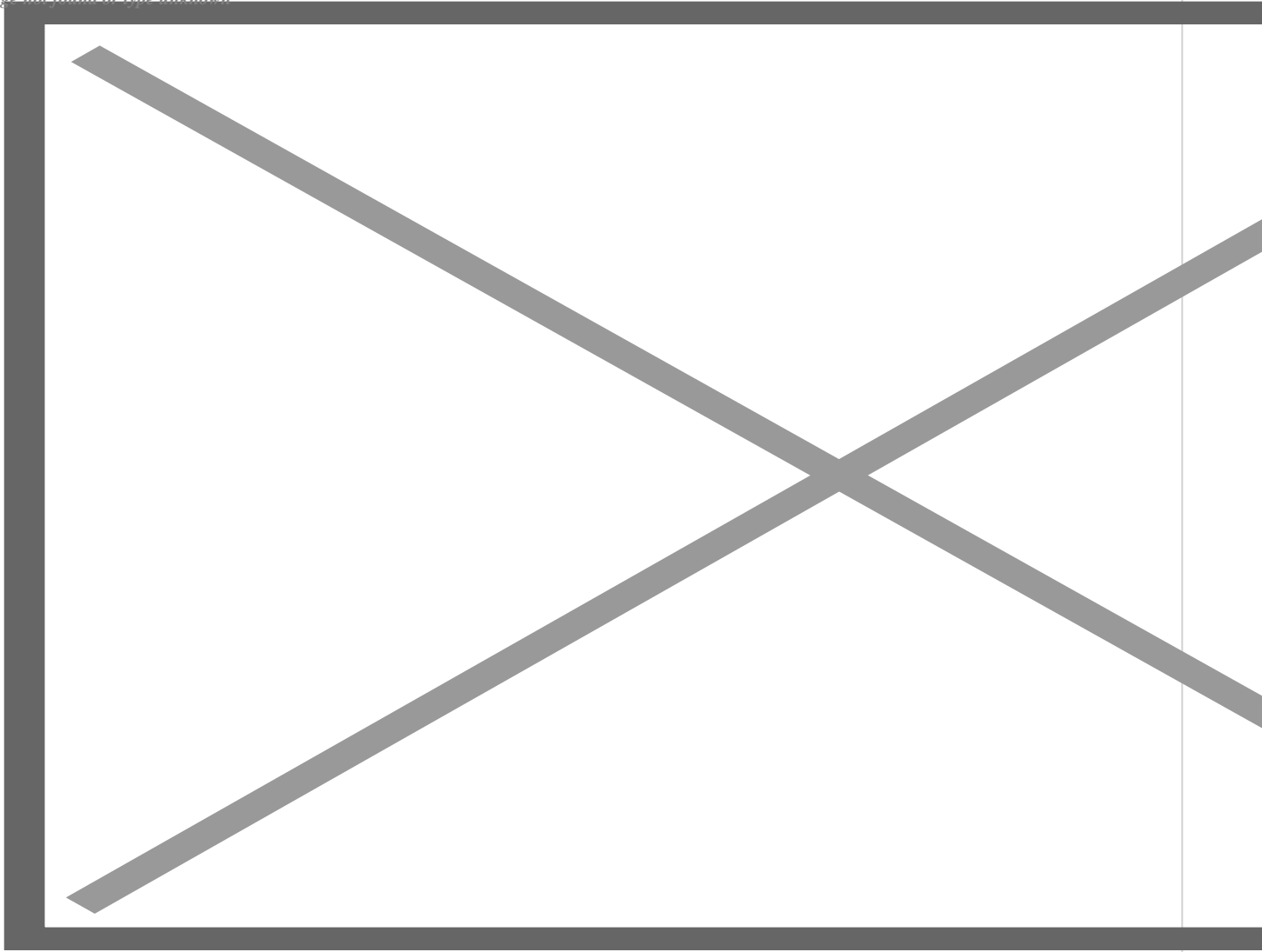


USAID website goes offline to comply with Trump's orders

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While established as an "aid" organization, USAID has strong links to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

Washington, February 3 (RHC)-- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has gone "offline" as the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump follows up on his campaign promise to cut

all aid to foreign countries.

USAID, an independent agency of the U.S. government responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance to men and women who have served the country, is the latest target of the Trump administration's war against government overspending and bureaucracy.

USAID's website went offline over the weekend without explanation. U.S. media reported that the move resulted in thousands of furloughs, layoffs, and program shutdowns.

USAID workers, who wanted to remain anonymous, expressed concerns about the purpose of the move, which they said could be anything from a restructuring to an effort to significantly downsize, if not eliminate, the federal agency.

Anonymous USAID employees, who work in the Washington headquarters and spoke on condition of remaining unknown because of an order barring employees from discussing any changes to the agency, said that they were working under an atmosphere of fear and chaos and that half of the agency's workforce had been eliminated in the last week.

Since USAID's establishment in 1961, it has received foreign policy guidance from the State Department but otherwise functioned as an independent entity.

People familiar with the changes at the agency said that Pete Marocco, a State Department official who held multiple roles in the first Trump administration, appeared to be overseeing the changes to USAID. Also, USAID employees said an AI program had been installed on their email accounts. They feared that the Department of Government Efficiency, run by Elon Musk, was trying to monitor their activities.

In the meantime, USAID's new page appeared on the U.S. State Department's website Saturday afternoon, suggesting that the agency's responsibilities had been brought under the State Department's umbrella.

Reports on Friday said Trump had decided to issue an executive order to dismantle USAID, giving its work and responsibilities to the State Department.

Trump, a Republican, claims that spending American taxpayers' money on foreign aid by the U.S. government is against his America First agenda. Trump ordered a freeze on nearly all foreign aid programs right after he took office last month.

Lawmakers also expressed concerns about the purpose of the move by the Trump administration. Democratic lawmakers already knew that at least some of the USAID signs at the agency's headquarters in downtown Washington had come down, and rumors were circling that mission directors around the world were being called back to the United States.

Democratic Senator Chris Coons, who sits on the Senate panels on foreign relations and appropriations, said on Saturday that the recent developments at USAID indicate that it is being shut down.

"All the signals of how the senior staff have been put on administrative leave, many of the field staff and headquarters staff have been put on a gag order," Coons said. "It seems more like the early stages of shutting down than it does of reviewing it or merely retitling it," Coons added.

Democratic lawmakers have opposed Trump's move. They say he does not have the authority to shut down an independent agency created by Congress.

Chris Murphy, a Democrat Senator from Connecticut, wrote on social media on Saturday, "Trump isn't satisfied just to close programs and fire staff. He is now planning to ELIMINATE THE ENTIRE AGENCY. Maybe this weekend."

“That would be illegal. He cannot unilaterally close a federal agency. Another assault on the Constitution.”

Also, Democratic lawmakers say cutting U.S. foreign aid will enable rivaling countries like Russia and China to gain strategic footholds overseas that would compromise U.S. security. “Eliminating USAID — which prevents famines, counters extremism, and creates more markets for US exports — would make the world a more dangerous place for Americans and be a gift to China and Russia,” Democrat Senator Amy Klobuchar wrote in a social media posting on Saturday.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/375720-usaid-website-goes-offline-to-comply-with-trumps-orders>



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