

# USAID: the Empire reinvents itself

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Musk and Trump

Elon Musk, sworn in as Secretary for Government Efficiency, thundered: “The time has come for USAID to die.” His words resonated like the harbinger of an imminent storm. Shortly afterwards, Donald Trump, on his first day back in the White House, ordered the suspension of almost all US foreign assistance for three months, especially that of the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

The closure was abrupt and forceful: dozens of senior officials were sent on forced leave, thousands of contractors were laid off and the USAID headquarters in Washington closed its doors without warning. As if they had never existed, the agency’s website and its X account disappeared from the digital world, leaving behind a vacuum that was soon filled with speculation and rumors on the Internet.

The confusion increased when, from the Dominican Republic and at the end of his first tour of Latin America, the Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, announced that his department would take over the functions that the agency had been performing until then. Rubio, appointed as acting administrator of USAID, assured that Washington's foreign aid would continue, but with one condition: "It must make sense and align with our national interests."

This move, which some want to see as a mere administrative restructuring, is a strategic shift that augurs profound changes in US foreign policy aimed at greater efficiency and new repressive measures. The aim is not to park the objectives of the agency recognized as a front for the CIA, but quite the opposite, to adjust them and perfect the empire's system of international influence. As Dr. Vergerus would say in Igmarr Bergman's film *Das schlangenei*, "anyone can see the future here, it's like a snake's egg. Through the thin membrane you can make out a reptile already formed".

USAID, born in 1961 during the *Cold War*, had become a colossus of interference, covert operations and destabilization networks. While doing charity work in some countries, they tried to dismantle any opposition to Washington's allies. It has also been the scene of scandalous cases of corruption. Without going any further, last week the Federal Bureau of Investigation revealed that it is investigating Juan Guaidó, the short-lived interim president of Venezuela, and his ambassador in Washington, Carlos Vecchio, for embezzling one billion dollars, managed between 2018 and 2020 under the guise of "humanitarian aid". These funds, channeled through USAID, vanished in a whirlwind of opaque spending.

In the case of Cuba, the covert program known as ZunZuneo, the failed "Cuban Twitter," is notorious. Funded by USAID and designed to stoke "dissidence" on the island. Millions of dollars were funneled into shell companies, while violating the legislation of several countries, including that of the US.

Trump, pragmatic and ruthless, seems to have understood that USAID's covert operations are not only ineffective on the ground, but also difficult to control and counterproductive. It is foreseeable that the millions of dollars that fed these failed operations will be redirected towards more subtle and effective channels. For example, they will cease to flow to Spanish-language propaganda websites operating out of Florida which, although useful for spreading toxic content against Havana on social networks, lack the legitimacy and reach necessary to reach US public opinion.

It is likely that the money will be allocated to media and spokespersons with greater weight in US and international public opinion. It will also go to the coffers of private contractors, as analysts warn. In a sort of "Gattopardism", the "regime change" programs do not disappear with USAID's subordination to the State Department, but rather the immoralities of the interventionist and anti-democratic methodologies of USAID and other international "aid" agencies will deepen the control of the "deep state" and the austerity policies of the new Trump administration.

The closure of USAID and the transfer of its functions to the State Department are more than a bureaucratic maneuver. It is the prelude to a more aggressive foreign policy, more aligned with the interests of the ultra-conservative sectors of the US, and much more refined in communicational and political terms. In this new scenario, the manipulation of information and the use of funds to promote ideological agendas could intensify, with direct consequences in countries such as Cuba, where the media battle is just another aspect of the economic, financial and diplomatic blockade that the island has endured for decades.

Thus, the disappearance of USAID marks the end of an era, but also the beginning of a new phase in US interference, more sophisticated, more covert and, perhaps, more dangerous.

Source: [La Jornada](#), translation [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)

