

# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRADE

*The United States has become increasingly involved in international issues that range from advancing and protecting U.S. political and economic interests to responding to global market forces and national and worldwide security threats. International Affairs and Trade helps Congress address these issues by evaluating economic, political, and security problems worldwide.*

## Our Work

International Affairs and Trade analyzes the effectiveness and management of U.S. foreign aid programs, evaluates the efficiency and accountability of the United Nations and related multilateral organizations, and assesses the strategies used to manage U.S. foreign affairs functions and activities. We also evaluate how trade agreements and programs serve U.S. interests and assess how the United States can influence improvements in the world's financial systems and address crises. Another of our key efforts is to determine how effective federal agencies are in combating terrorism and preventing the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

Our oversight responsibilities primarily include the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, some Department of Defense functions, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and the U.S. role in the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations (U.N.).

We focus on achieving the following outcomes:

- enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of foreign aid;
- providing options for improving overseas operations, reducing costs, and decreasing security vulnerabilities;
- providing analysis and recommendations to improve the implementation of trade agreements, trade adjustment assistance, and trade promotion;
- recommending strategies to improve accountability at multilateral organizations;
- offering analysis and options for Congress to consider in debt relief funding requests;
- suggesting methods of enhancing controls over exports of U.S. technologies that could facilitate the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- providing better protection of U.S. borders against illegal entry and potential terrorist threats;
- improving the current process for planning, executing, and coordinating U.S. conflict interventions;
- improving the quality and sustainability of prevention and treatment of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria; and
- increasing congressional understanding of the role of multilateral organizations in international development and finance.

### KEY CONTACTS

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## *Accomplishments and Key Projects*

Examples of our recent accomplishments include

- encouraging the Department of State to control costs on overseas embassy construction projects, thereby avoiding more than \$90 million in unnecessary expenses;
- helping U.S. agencies improve their management of staff with foreign language skills and address likely shortages in needed foreign languages;
- reprogramming more than \$600,000 in U.S. assistance to Caribbean and Central American nations devastated by Hurricanes Mitch and George;
- prompting the U.S. government to revise development plans for Colombia, redirecting more than \$31 million to activities and regions that offer a greater likelihood of success;
- encouraging the Department of Defense to enhance its controls over Stinger missiles it has sold to foreign governments;
- improving federal efforts to assist small businesses in obtaining foreign patent protection for their products;
- working with the United Nations and the Department of State to reduce the risk of U.N. peacekeeping staff contracting HIV/AIDS; and
- encouraging the Department of State to help stem the flow of “conflict diamonds” while protecting the legitimate diamond industry.

Currently, we are also working to

- assess U.S. public diplomacy programs designed to counter anti-American sentiment in Muslim-majority countries;
- review the coordination, management, and implementation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s efforts to disburse U.S. foreign assistance;
- analyze U.S. and international efforts to train and equip police and military units in Afghanistan and Iraq;
- review U.S. programs to help rebuild Afghanistan and Iraq;
- assess State Department controls over visa issuance since the September 11 attacks;
- evaluate U.S. efforts to prevent 7 million new HIV infections and streamline the approach to combating global HIV/AIDS;
- monitor ongoing trade negotiations, including those of the current round at the World Trade Organization;
- assess U.S. government attempts to control access to sensitive technologies that can be used to help create weapons of mass destruction;
- review State Department’s efforts to right size the U.S. government presence overseas;
- assess U.S. disaster relief assistance for countries struck by the devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean and tsunami in south Asia; and
- review the roles and responsibilities of U.N. and U.S. entities involved with the Oil for Food program in Iraq.