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GLOBAL UP-TO-DATE

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The world around us is changing rapidly. Wars, new turn in global politics, human rights issues are occurring every day, posing new challenges and concerns. Global Up-to-Date is an initiative by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) which will work as a hub for explaining the contemporary global issues.

The regular briefs will focus and explain the issues related to International Politics, Economy, Security, Human Rights, and Development. There will be a monthly printed version newsletter containing briefs of all the contemporary global important issues. The online version contains regular updates of the pressing issues along with the PDF version of the news letter.

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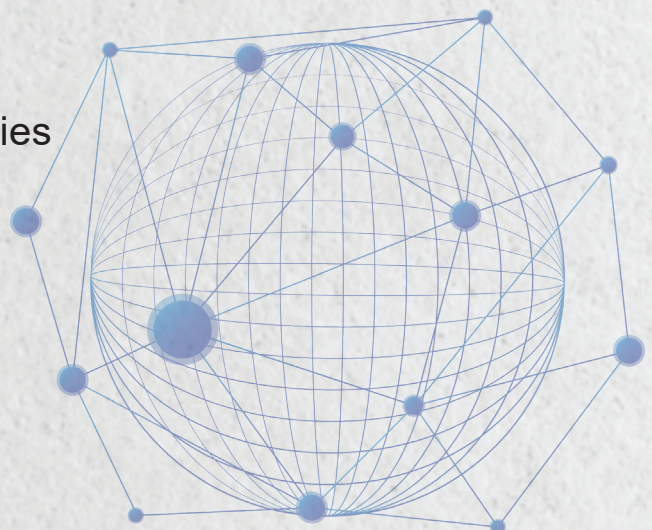


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The Fall of US Humanitarian Power

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In a sweeping policy reversal that has sent shockwaves across the international development community, the Trump administration, emboldened by its return to power in 2025, has launched an unprecedented assault on U.S. foreign aid. Under the guise of “realigning national interest,” President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14169 in January 2025, freezing nearly all U.S. development assistance. This marked the beginning of a deliberate and ideologically motivated dismantling of America’s global humanitarian and development apparatus, culminating in March with the cancellation of 83 percent of USAID programs and the planned dissolution of the agency itself.

While previous administrations have debated the scale and scope of foreign aid, none have gone so far as to eviscerate the very institutions responsible for implementing it. The Trump administration’s rationale is steeped in nationalist rhetoric, framing foreign aid as a wasteful enterprise that benefits “other countries” at the expense of American taxpayers. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, now a loyal executor of Trump’s agenda, claimed that many USAID programs did not serve U.S. interests and in some cases actively undermined them. Yet this broad and vague assertion masks a deeply partisan effort to eliminate programs that promote gender equality, reproductive rights, climate resilience, and global health areas consistently criticized by Trump-aligned conservatives.

The consequences were immediate and devastating. By March, over 5,000 USAID contracts were terminated, halting projects across more than 80 countries. Clinics funded by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in southern Africa began closing their doors. In Kenya and Haiti, the World Health Organization warned that stockpiles of antiretroviral drugs could run out within

weeks, potentially reversing decades of progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Food distribution systems in Yemen and Somalia, previously supported by the World Food Programme (WFP), began scaling back, leaving millions in limbo. The abrupt withdrawal of U.S. support also forced the Millennium Challenge Corporation to cease nearly all its operations, despite ongoing infrastructure projects in Asia and Africa. The United Nations and its agencies, including, UNICEF, UNHCR, and OCHA, faced steep operational challenges as they scrambled to fill the void left by the world's largest donor.

Around the world, the reaction was a mixture of disbelief, condemnation, and despair. The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres issued a rare public rebuke, calling the move “a humanitarian and diplomatic crisis manufactured by choice.” Several African governments, including those of Liberia, Senegal, and Zambia, sent formal appeals to the U.S. administration, urging it to reconsider its course. Faith-based organizations, some of which had supported Trump’s conservative agenda, held vigils outside the White House to protest the indiscriminate harm caused to vulnerable communities. In Europe, diplomats voiced concern that the United States was surrendering its leadership role in humanitarian governance, creating a vacuum that would likely be filled by less transparent or less democratic powers.

Domestically, the decision prompted legal challenges and public outcry. Members of Congress from both parties questioned the constitutionality of dismantling USAID, an agency created through legislative mandate. Several lawsuits, including one filed by the American Foreign Service Association and personal contractor unions, argued that the executive branch overstepped its authority. Meanwhile, civil society organizations scrambled to cover basic services that had previously been funded by U.S. aid, only to find themselves overwhelmed by the scale of need. Many programs supporting maternal health, gender-based violence prevention, and education for displaced children were left in disarray.

Critics have pointed out that this strategic retreat from foreign aid is not merely an administrative choice. It is an ideological campaign against global liberal values. The Trump administration has framed diversity, gender equity, and climate action as threats to its nationalist agenda, and in doing so, it has effectively declared war on the very foundations of modern development cooperation. The decision to exclude funding for “gender or DEI ideology programs,” “transgender surgeries,” and “family planning conferences” was less about fiscal efficiency and more about enforcing a cultural rollback that mirrors domestic policy shifts. By targeting these areas, the administration is not just reshaping American aid, it is attempting to reshape the global development discourse.

The longer-term impact of these cuts may prove catastrophic. Beyond the immediate suffering, the collapse of U.S.-funded development programs undermines the very conditions that foster global security and stability. Fragile states that rely on aid for health services and education may experience surges in preventable diseases, malnutrition, and political unrest. Migration pressures are likely to increase as basic services crumble, potentially fueling instability across borders. From a geopolitical standpoint, America's withdrawal from development leadership opens doors for rivals like China and Russia to extend their influence, often through loans and infrastructure projects that lack transparency and ethical safeguards.

In a world grappling with overlapping crises, from pandemics to climate change to mass displacement, America's retreat from foreign aid is both short-sighted and self-defeating. The Trump administration may view its actions as a reaffirmation of sovereignty and fiscal prudence, but in reality, it is undermining decades of bipartisan consensus that recognized foreign aid as a critical tool of soft power, diplomacy, and global responsibility. What we are witnessing is not simply a bureaucratic shift, but a collapse of moral leadership. The costs will not only be borne by the global poor, they will ultimately come home to roost.

The End of American Dependence? London Summit Signals Europe's Strategic Awakening

Shamsul Arif Fahim



The London Summit of 2025, held on March 2 at Lancaster House, marked a critical geopolitical juncture described by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer as "at a crossroads in history." The summit came shortly after a difficult meeting between Ukrainian President Zelenskyy and U.S. President Donald Trump, which strained U.S.-Ukraine relations. Fearing a weak deal with Russia, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer warned Europe must act firmly to secure Ukraine's sovereignty. After Convening this summit, Sir Keir Starmer proposed a four-point plan: first, keep military aid flowing and pressure on Russian's military predominance; second, ensure any peace deal that fully protects Ukraine's sovereignty and security; third, continue supplying Ukraine with arms even after the war ends; finally, create a 'coalition of the willing' to defend any peace deal, possibly involving military deployment.

However, leaders agreed that American support remains indispensably essential, even as Europe steps up its own leadership in the face of U.S. uncertainty. The summit highlighted a major shift: Europe can no longer rely completely on the U.S. for security. Following the summit, the European Commission announced a new "ReArm Europe" plan, aiming to raise up to €800 billion to boost European defences and support Ukraine's resilience. Ideas include setting up a joint fund for weapons production and using private investments, creating a "war economy" model.

Britain also announced major military aid, including a £1.6 billion air-defence missile deal and a £2.2 billion loan backed by seized Russian assets. These actions blend geopolitics with political economy, using aid to both defend Ukraine and strengthen European industries. Beyond weapons, leaders stressed the importance of Ukraine's economic future. The EU established a €50 billion Ukraine Facility to keep Ukraine's government running and help rebuild its economy. However, they warned that Ukraine must avoid becoming permanently dependent on aid. Instead, Ukraine should aim for self-sufficiency and global economic integration. President Zelenskyy, for example, promoted Ukraine's mineral resources to attract future investments, including a potential minerals trade deal with the U.S.

Geopolitically, the summit showed new alliances taking shape. Post-Brexit, Britain is leading efforts to strengthen European security alongside France and other countries. France even suggested deploying its nuclear forces to protect allies, showing Europe's growing independence in defence matters. Meanwhile, Turkey's participation showed how countries are carefully balancing between supporting Ukraine and maintaining ties with Russia.

Moreover, NATO Chief Mark Rutte, mentioned that "more European countries will ramp up defence spending." He also emphasised the shared military hegemony with the U.S. in the world order and reiterated the need for "more of a fair balance." Also, the summit sent a clear message: Europe and its allies will continue to support Ukraine both militarily and economically for as long as needed.

In conclusion, the London Summit not only reinforces Ukraine's immediate geopolitical importance but symbolizes a broader shift from a global economy centered on free trade towards a future marked by strategic protectionism and economic nationalism, significantly influenced by America's shifting role and Europe's increasing drive for security and economic self-reliance.

The Rise of Mark Carney and a New Political Direction in Canada

Kazi Nishat Aunjum

In the final days of March 2025, Canada entered a new political era defined by a leadership transition, renewed questions of national sovereignty, and intensified friction with the United States. The departure of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who had led the country since 2015, marked the end of a chapter characterized by progressive social policies and a strong emphasis on multilateralism. Trudeau's resignation on January 6, 2025, came amid mounting domestic dissatisfaction and escalating external



pressures, most notably a resurgent trade conflict with U.S. President Donald Trump. Faced with this crisis, the Liberal Party turned to Mark Carney, an internationally respected economist and central banker, to lead both the party and the country through a period of extraordinary uncertainty.

Mark Carney's elevation to Prime Minister was a highly symbolic moment, signaling a shift in both tone and substance in Canadian politics. Though he had never held elected office, Carney brought with him a formidable reputation built as the former Governor of the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England. His technocratic pedigree, global experience, and crisis management credentials appealed to a Canadian electorate increasingly anxious about the economic fallout from trade tensions with the United States. Carney's approach to governance represents a marked departure from Trudeau's less ideologically progressive and more grounded in institutional expertise and economic pragmatism. Where Trudeau led with a message of inclusive social transformation, Carney's leadership is defined by a call for national resilience, strategic autonomy, and a sober recalibration of Canada's economic relationships.

Central to Carney's vision is the strategic disentanglement of Canada's overdependence on the U.S. market. At the time of his swearing-in, over 75% of Canada's exports were U.S.-bound. Trump's re-imposition of tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminum, and key consumer goods in early 2025 jolted the Canadian economy and exposed the vulnerabilities of this economic reliance. Carney responded with a comprehensive plan to diversify trade partnerships, strengthen the domestic manufacturing base, and increase investments in strategic sectors such as renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, and defense. His emphasis on rebuilding domestic supply chains and expanding export routes through the Atlantic and Pacific reflected both a national security imperative and an economic strategy grounded in diversification and risk management.

Compounding the complexity of Carney's early tenure was the political arithmetic of a minority government. Following Trudeau's departure and Carney's internal selection as party leader, the Liberals held only 167 seats in the House of Commons, three short of a majority. The legitimacy of Carney's mandate, though strengthened by his appointment, required electoral affirmation. This urgency led to the dissolution of Parliament and the calling of a federal election scheduled for April 28, 2025. In the interim, Carney moved swiftly to assemble a cabinet that reflected both experience and renewal. Notably, his selection of Anita Anand as Canada's first Hindu Foreign Minister symbolized a commitment to diplomatic sophistication and cultural inclusivity, even as his economic policies charted a more centrist and cautious course. Carney's strategy toward the United States has been characterized by firmness tempered with pragmatism. In contrast to Trudeau's more conciliatory tone with past U.S. administrations, Carney has been unequivocal in defending Canadian sovereignty. His now widely quoted declaration, "Canada is not for sale", delivered in response to Trump's inflammatory suggestion that Canada consider annexation, underscored a new posture in Ottawa: assertive, economically defensive, and diplomatically measured. His upcoming bilateral meetings, particularly his early May visit to Washington, are aimed at resetting the bilateral dialogue while preparing Canada for a longer-term strategic pivot.

Domestically, Carney's initial policy moves suggest a careful balancing act. A proposed tax cut for middle-income earners, offering up to C\$800 in relief for dual-income households, signals an attempt to soften the economic blow of U.S. tariffs while stimulating demand. Simultaneously, the government is proceeding with reduced immigration targets, originally announced under Trudeau, suggesting continuity on population planning but with more attention to economic integration. Where Trudeau's social agenda had sought bold expansion of services and rights, Carney's is likely to be more cautious, prioritizing fiscal discipline and economic competitiveness in an increasingly hostile global environment.

Internationally, Canada's posture under Carney is expected to shift toward strategic hedging. While reaffirming alliances with NATO and traditional partners, Carney's foreign policy will emphasize trade diversification with Europe, Latin America, and key Indo-Pacific economies. As Canada prepares to host the G7 summit in Alberta in June 2025, Carney is poised to use the platform to showcase a redefined Canadian diplomacy, one that blends firm national interest with selective globalism and economic statecraft.

Canada's political transformation in March 2025 signals more than just a change in leadership; it marks a recalibration of the country's priorities at a time of intense domestic and international flux. Mark Carney's rise reflects a popular appetite for competence, calm, and strategic thinking. His government faces the formidable task of navigating economic turbulence, securing electoral legitimacy, and redefining Canada's place in a shifting global order. Whether Carney's pragmatic centrism can hold in a polarized political climate remains to be seen, but for now, he embodies a national project rooted in resilience, realism, and renewal.