THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Voices on US foreign assistance under challenge, part 2: Measuring effectiveness, private sector financing, and foreign aid success stories

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(MUSIC)

BUSH: Ladies and gentlemen, seldom has history offered a greater opportunity to do so much for so many.

We have confronted and will continue to confront HIV/AIDS in our own country. And to meet a severe and urgent crisis abroad, tonight I propose the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a work of mercy beyond all current international efforts to help the people of Africa. This comprehensive plan will prevent 7 million new AIDS infections, treat at least 2 million people with life-extending drugs, and provide humane care for millions of people suffering from AIDS and for children orphaned by AIDS.

DEWS: Welcome to the Brookings Cafeteria, the podcast about ideas and the experts who have them. I'm Fred Dews.

You've just hear President George W. Bush in his 2003 State of the Union Address, in which he proposed a program, now called PEPFAR, to treat millions of people afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

Since World War II, the United States has been a global leader in improving the lives of the world's neediest people, and has used its resources to help other countries improve governance, reduce poverty, and spur development.

Today, U.S. foreign assistance programs are increasingly under challenge, due to changing budgetary and political realities, growing concerns over fragile states, increased calls for effectiveness of aid programs, and concerns about the shifting roles of multilateral institutions and the private sector.

This episode of the Brookings Cafeteria is the second of two episodes that examine the challenges and opportunities facing US foreign assistance. The first focused on what Americans think about foreign assistance programs and America's role in the world; on US leadership in an increasingly multipolar world; concerns about fragile states; and consensus ideas for reforming the US foreign aid architecture.

In this episode, you'll hear foreign assistance success stories, learn about the importance of the private sector in aid financing; the role of China; measuring effectiveness; and finally, thoughts on general principles about why we should, and do, support global development.

The analysis and ideas in both episodes draw from top voices in the development community, people who are leaders in government, academia, NGOs and the private sector. The experts featured here and in the first episodes were some of the participants at the 14th annual Brookings-Blum Roundtable, a three-day conference held in August that included nearly 50 prominent policymakers, practitioners, academics and industry leaders. The Roundtable was hosted by Richard C. Blum and the Global Economy and Development Program here at Brookings. You can learn more about the Brookings-Blum roundtable in the conference report now published on our website.

Before taking you into the discussions on US foreign assistance, I first want to present a new installment of our regular feature, What's Happening in Congress, with Molly Reynolds. She is an expert on congressional rules and procedures and how those affect policy outcomes, and is the author of the book, "Exceptions to the Rule: The Politics of Filibuster Limitations in the US Senate," recently published by Brookings Institution Press and featured on this podcast.

REYNOLDS: My name is Molly Reynolds and I'm a fellow in the Governance Studies program at the Brookings Institution. The Senate may be on recess this week, but even with Senators back home in their states the chamber has still been in the spotlight thanks to pointed criticisms levied at President Trump by Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee.

What should we make of this emerging public conflict between a Republican committee chair and a president of their own party? It's highly unusual, especially in the current period of strong partisan teamsmanship. We simply don't expect influential senators to go on the record about the fitness of the President of their own party to lead and to suggest that he might put the country in danger. In this way Corker's comments are certainly newsworthy.

Some have argued that Corker's comments are worth little, they are not followed up by concrete steps whether that be voting against Republican policy priorities or withholding support for Trump nominations. Many of his critics are likely to be disappointed about what comes next. Republican members of Congress got elected to Congress to pursue Republican Party goals and when opportunities emerge to pursue those ends Republicans will continue to seize them. On the possibility of increased oversight, work in political science tells us that investigations are generally less frequent under unified party control of Congress and the White House. Given the tenor of Corker's comments, Trump could prove an exception to this pattern, but it would require a number of Republicans who Corker says share his view coming out of the shadows.

That doesn't mean that conflicts between Trump and members of Congress of his own party also isn't going to jeopardize Republicans' ability to make progress on the party's legislative agenda. Republicans hold only 52 seats in the Senate meaning that for things they want to do on a party line basis—like adopting a budget resolution that would set the stage for a filibuster protected tax bill— they can lose at most two votes.

Alienating one or more of those votes certainly doesn't help Trump get what he wants out of a legislative process, but a rift would also make life harder on the congressional end. The Republican Party is divided on a number of key issues including important parts of potential tax legislation. We would usually expect a president of the same party to help bridge these divides. Trump, however, is not well equipped to do so. His low approval ratings give him little political capital to use to offer members political cover for choices they may not want to make. His disengagement with policy substance means he's unlikely to be able to persuade members on the merits. Adding an open conflict between members and the president only makes this problem worse. Then issues with the threat of a filibuster in the Senate requires cooperation with Democrats like a future bill to keep the government open passed early December. Republican intraparty divisions only increase Democrats leverage.

If the rift continues and deepens from here, there may well be consequences outside the chamber as well. The public nature of the conflict means that members of the press will ask many other congressional Republicans about whether they agree with

Trump or Corker. Some following Corker's footsteps, though as many observers have emphasized, Corker's politically well-positioned to levy these kinds of criticisms since he has recently announced that he is retiring next year. Others may remain behind Trump, especially those who fear primary challengers in 2018, a threat that former White House strategist Steve Bannon has recently been escalating. Still others will carefully try to split the difference with comments that focus on ending the feud.

These statements, especially any that echo Corker's sentiments, may have ripple effects on public opinion. Political scientists have long documented how voters often take cues from partisan elites like members of Congress. Much has been made of Trump's vaunted base, who say they will continue to support the president no matter what, but his victory also relied on more reluctant voters who supported him because he was the Republican candidate and they too are Republicans.

It's this latter group of voters who are most susceptible to any emerging messages critical of the president and who are most critical to Republicans efforts to stave off the electoral consequences of Trump in the 2018 midterms. The president's party almost always loses seats in midterm elections, even when its members in Congress are united behind their party's standard bearer, and it is these more marginal Republican voters who will be key in maintaining Republican control of vulnerable House and Senate seats.

Congress has a busy fall ahead of it with continued work on the budget resolution, coming tax bill, and the spending fight that's likely to include conflict over immigration policy on tap for early December. Working through these and other issues will present challenges even without high profile conflicts between members of Congress and the White House, but divisions between the two ends of Pennsylvania Avenue don't make things easier. That's what's happening in Congress.

DEWS: And now on with part two of our series on US foreign assistance under challenge. In a conversation with me, Senior Fellow and co-director of the Global Economy and Development program Homi Kharas details the impact of US foreign assistance over the past ten years.

KHARAS: When you look at the contributions in terms of the improvements that have been generated in people's lives over even just the last decade it's quite considerable.

So by some estimates there have been just with vaccinations probably three million lives saved each year because of US funding for vaccinations. There have probably been 12 million children that have received better nutrition. Stunting which is a form of under-nutrition is something that has been a scourge of the developing world for years; with U.S. leadership that's been dramatically reduced over the last decade. The U.S. has contributed to tremendous improvements in primary school enrollment of both boys, and importantly, girls. Today in the world we have almost equal enrollment rates between boys and girls.

Of course the U.S. has always been the largest provider of humanitarian assistance so every time there is a flood, or a drought, or an earthquake, it's the U.S. that's always in the lead. They have the capabilities, often the logistics capabilities, the military helicopters and other kinds of things, and have always led the world support to people who suffer from these kinds of disasters.

DEWS: Kharas also mentioned the PEPFAR, about which you heard from President George W. Bush at the start of this episode, noting that the program has over a million people receiving treatment.

KHARAS: And all of these efforts of U.S. assistance have been underpinned by core U.S. values of democracy, of gender equality, of human rights, of better governance. So it's really spreading, I would say, U.S. values around the world. And that might ultimately be the most lasting source of improvement that the U.S. brings to people around the world.

DEWS: Throughout these two episodes, you will hear from a number of experts, most of whom were interviewed by my colleague Merrell Tuck-Primdahl, the director of Communications for the Global Economy and Development Program. She was at the Brookings-Blum roundtable in Aspen, where most of these interviews took place. So, I thank her for this collaboration.

And now here's some foreign aid and development success stories that not only showcase positive results, but also illuminate some of the ideas discussed at the Brookings-Blum roundtable, particularly in regard to foreign aid effectiveness, partnerships, and catalyzing development.

One of these themes is the vital role in development played by NGOs and multilateral institutions, that is, not just the US government. Here's Merrell on the phone with Richard Blum, host of the Brookings-Blum roundtable and also an honorary (and former) trustee of the Brookings Institution. He is chairman and president of Blum Capital Partners, founder of the Blum Center for Developing Economies at UC Berkeley, and also founder and chairman of the American Himalayan Foundation. In episode one, Mr. Blum talked about starting the Brookings-Blum roundtable. And now, he talks about his work in Nepal.

BLUM: Well just educating Sherpas has made a huge difference. We now have Sherpas who, 50 years ago all they did was carry loads up and down the mountains, where they are now professionals either in Nepal or elsewhere. The granddaughter of my oldest Sherpa friend is in her senior year in high school and she was just ranked in India one of the three brightest kids in all of India. Her brother now has graduated from the University of San Francisco and is a CPA and wants to go back and help reform the finance sector of Nepal. And they become pilots, they become every profession you can name.

And there was only one small school when we started which was at Hillary's school up in the Khumba Solo where the Sherpas live. And we've also tried to do the same for so many Tibetan refugees, there's probably 50,000 Tibetan refugees or more just in Nepal alone. And way more than that in India. We've also, whenever we could, try to aid them both in terms of education, health care, and protecting religious institutions in Tibet.

DEWS: In the first episode of this series, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala spoke about US leadership with respect to multilateral institutions in development, one of the key themes of the Brookings-Blum roundtable. She was previously finance minister of Nigeria, managing director of the World Bank, and a senior fellow at Brookings, and now is chair

of the board of GAVI, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations, also called the GAVI Alliance.

GAVI is an independent, public-private partnership and multilateral funding mechanism that focuses on health by increasing access to immunizations in poor countries. It's an example of how a private institution works with the US and other governments to deliver effective aid programs. Okonjo-Iweala explains why GAVI's support from the United States has been so strong, and emphasizes the alliance nature of the organization.

NGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA: GAVI is the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, the GAVI Alliance, and it's has a very straightforward goal: to immunize children in the world and save lives. And GAVI's results have been very spectacular in the last 16 years of its existence. It's immunized five hundred eighty million children and it has saved eight million lives, and its objective is to immunize another 300 million by 2020 thereby saving about 5 million lives.

So the objectives are clear, they're measurable. We're saving lives and I think this is one of the reasons why the U.S. has safeguarded its contributions to GAVI for which we're very, very grateful.

The US has been a leader in the area of health and of child mortality and its efforts with GAVI, its GAVI's third largest donor supporter, at paying off. And this is one of the reasons we think that GAVI has been safeguarded.

Secondly we have strong bipartisan support. I think legislators on both sides of the aisle really understand the importance of what their money does and how measurable the results and so they strongly support GAVI. However, we are an alliance, so the very fact that we have support does not make us sanguine because we work with WHO, we work with UNICEF, we work with other members with the private sector organizations, the pharmaceuticals. It's an alliance that delivers. We work with the World Bank. So to the extent that these other organizations are to be effective as part of the alliance we would strongly also argue and support making sure that they get the resources that they need.

DEWS: Another voice at the Brookings Blum Roundtable, Carolyn Miles, is president and CEO of Save the Children USA, an organization that helps children in 120 countries, including the United States, in areas that include health, education, and hunger. Here she is talking about how innovation is critical to the organization's programs.

MILES: We're trying to do big things like end the preventable deaths of children and make sure every child gets to school and protect them from harm. So if we don't do that in a different way than what we've done for the past almost 100 years, we actually aren't going to get to that last mile, to those hardest to reach kids. And one of the things we've said is that we have to go for the most deprived children in order for us to be successful.

So innovation is really key to that and doing things in a different way. And so within Save the Children we've set up a way to actually lift up the innovations that are happening all the time, give them a little bit more light, and some more resources.

So some of the examples, as I said, one of our biggest goals is saving the lives of kids under 5. And the thing that kills children, actually the one disease that kills the most children in the world right now is pneumonia, which is usually kind of surprising to people.

The hardest thing about pneumonia in rural areas is diagnosing it--making sure that a child actually has pneumonia and then making sure that we have the antibiotics and the treatment. But that diagnosis in functioning health systems, it's quite easy, there's diagnostic tools, there's X-rays, there's MRIs. But in low resource settings out in the middle of a village somewhere you don't have any of those things.

So we've developed for example a new diagnostic tool with Philips that strapped to the baby's chest and counts the number of breaths that the baby or the child is taking and makes a diagnosis. And it does it with little pictures which sometimes community health workers are not literate so they're not going to be able to read a diagnostic tool unless it actually has a picture that shows them, OK this is a child that actually does

have pneumonia and needs to be treated. So that's one example. It’s a really simple little tool.

Another example: we have humanitarian workers all around the world, and when we have a crisis so a rapid onset like an earthquake right in Haiti you need to get people from all over the world that will get mobilized and get to that response. And so we're developing an app that actually will allow people to put in, prescreen everybody who might be available, the language they speak, the specialty that they have, the availability that they might have. So when an emergency hits you can send an alert to all of the people who have already signed up to be responders and you can very quickly fill that roster and get people on the way to that emergency because most times in a very large scale emergency the country office kind of gets overwhelmed. They can't do it all themselves.

So those are just two simple examples of how we're thinking about innovation, using technology and those two examples, and we've got to be able to do that and do it in a different way or we won't get to the most deprived kids.

DEWS: Here’s another example.

FEELEY: One project that we've done that is absolutely sort of something I personally get into quite a bit is a small community center and a boxing gym. There's a couple that has spent 25 years on shoestrings, offering up small, in their gym, boxing lessons for little kids in a gang-riddled community. And they've never figured out how to make it sustainable, so they literally go from good samaritan to good samaritan.

I'm John Feeley, I’m the American ambassador in Panama.

So I became involved through a whole series of happy coincidences, and what we decided was, we're not going to give you a huge amount of money. First off I had to go out and find it. And what did I do? I found it with the Rotarians, the Rotary Club of Panama which is a marvelous organization but had never really worked in this area. We got them to commit to putting money in, and its small scale, very small scale stuff, we’re talking about $30,000. But to improve the physical structure of this community center/boxing gym.

But then perhaps the most important part was to get my Canadian colleague down there and the Canadian mission in Panama to provide through their ODA, a local NGO, to give the business skills training to this couple who have basically been chicken soup and boxing gloves for the last 25 years. But to give them an ability to do budgeting, to do all of the things you would need to make this a sustainable organization and with a view towards having an entrepreneurial side.

And of course because it sort of has caught on and their success, through that success we have attracted the interest of local government. They now want a piece of this or they want to be seen as supporting it. And we've been good in orchestrating that sort of dance whereby they don't come in and take it over. But when we need them we can call on them, we can use the bully pulpit of the local mayor, all of those things are pretty easily accomplished as long as you get the bandwidth of committed people and a good public private partnership.

DEWS: These case studies, if you will, of assistance from GAVI, to Save the Children, to the US Embassy in Panama reflect major themes from the Brookings-Blum Roundtable, including the idea that aid is increasingly catalytic, that new partnerships are needed, and that local government engagement and ownership in countries where the US provides aid can improve effectiveness, build government capacity, and establish relationships with people on the ground. Here’s Homi Kharas again on how aid is often akin to seeding the ground -- a sort of catalyst for development.

KHARAS: In 1961 most countries were really very poor indeed and couldn't make much headway just using their own resources. Today there are only about 30 countries that we classify as being low income. In most of the other countries, where the vast majority of the world's population now lives, they are middle income countries and so they have their own domestic resources which they're using to apply towards their own development. That's changed aid from being the center of development to being a catalyst for development. It's something that has to complement country's own resources.

And at the same time we now have much more participatory processes and development cooperation. It's not just an intergovernmental process it also involves civil

society in both the north and the south doing very important work. And increasingly it also involves businesses. So one of the last major pieces of U.S. engagement was through Power Africa where it's American businesses in conjunction with U.S. development assistance which has undertaken this great challenge of bringing electricity to millions of Africans.

DEWS: A key component of catalyzing for development, and a focus point of the Brookings Blum Roundtable, is that aid should also catalyze private investment, the scale of which, as Kharas explains, far exceeds government aid. He calls this the most important recent trend in development assistance today.

KHARAS: We have to understand that foreign direct investment is a 700 billion dollar a year enterprise into developing countries compared to aid which is now running at about 140 billion dollars. So foreign investment, private investment, is five times the size. If that can be made sustainable--meaning in cooperating issues of environmental sustainability, of better governance, of better social and labor practices, then of course the impact on development is going to be massive.

And there was a really important study done by the commission—business commission for sustainable development—called “Better business a better world” that identified 12 trillion dollars of opportunity for business in the sustainable development area. They identified 60 subsectors and they said the market here is 12 trillion dollars. This is not about let's do things differently so that we can help others, and you know yes it will cost us a little bit. This is, let's do things differently because there's a massive market opportunity here. We can really make money, and at the same time help improve people's lives. That's the new thing about business and sustainable development that's really exciting.

DEWS: Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the Inter-American Development Bank, a leading source of development financing for Latin America and the Caribbean, offered his thoughts on this, as he put it, very important question for development.

MORENO: There is always going to be limits as to the amount of public resources one can put to good use around development challenges. And the bigger

question is how do you really crowd in the private sector to do so many of the development needs that we have today. We used to have a number of private sector arms in the IDB. They were all small and we consolidated all of them into one and put more capital. That was a long complex process but we were fortunate to get a lot of support from all our shareholders. In our first year and a half or operations we are now almost doubling the amount of what currently the IFC is doing in Latin-American.

DEWS: The IFC is the International Finance Corporation, an affiliate of the World Bank Group that focuses exclusively on the private sector in developing countries. President Moreno continues.

MORENO: This is not about a competition of who is more, but more importantly it is a question of how you can look at gaps in development that exist that an institution that is focused on development to try to unlock the possibilities for the private sector to come in. So let me explain that. Imagine a private public partnership in infrastructure. The very early stages of financing typically is where you have less attractiveness. Of course when a project is finished and operating many hedge funds, asset managers, or any kind of a pension fund will be more than happy to invest in those kinds of assets. But to get to that point you've got to start early, and so that means establishing long term financing in local currency, for instance, where you don't think a foreign exchange risk. Or developing a small or medium enterprises. Or working beyond financial institutions to support women entrepreneurs. Those are the kinds of things that have huge development impact.

DEWS: China, too, is part of this transformation in development assistance. The Brookings Blum Roundtable conference report asks, Is China friend or foe? Is it a competitor and threat to US interests or a potential ally? The answer, the report says, may be both. I asked Homi Kharas to talk about how the US and other entities can work alongside China.

KHARAS: China has expanded its development collaboration along two distinct pathways. One pathway has been through its own institutions, in particular the China Development Bank and the China Ex-Im Bank, but the other instrument has been through setting up of multilateral institutions, one of which is called the Asian

Infrastructure Investment Bank and the other is called the New Development Bank. In these multilateral agencies, I think the Chinese have really tried to learn the lessons of what has constrained the other multilateral development banks and designed institutions that are fit for purpose for the 21st century.

There was a concern that this might lead to lower standards. Probably the reality is they will lead to higher standards. They are more agile, they have better decision-making processes, they are respectful of countries' own programs, and so they're actually moving extremely rapidly and extremely fast. And I think that already there's a lot of cooperation between these multilateral banks and the older multilateral banks in co-financing of the same operation.

So I think that there were some real opportunities for collaborating with these Chinese-headquartered new multilateral institutions, and they are providing a much needed boost to the firepower of the multilateral development banks system as a whole.

DEWS: But I wanted to explore this issue of China a bit deeper. The roundtable conference report notes that 10,000 Chinese firms are operating in Africa, 90 percent of them privately owned, and in the words of one roundtable participant, the roads China builds in Africa are roads back to China. Should this be concerning?

KHARAS: Well I think one of the beauty of networks and connectivity is that in a network when you have roads they actually serve the entire network so the roads don't just lead back to China; or the roads in the ports lead countries to actually become connected to the global economy. Of course China is an important player in the global economy but so is the United States, so is Japan, so is Europe and other countries. So the more that we can build networks and connectivity the better we all are. So this is not something that is just aiming to benefit China. This is really something that can benefit the global economy and bring prosperity to all.

DEWS: On this question, the conference report concludes that there needs to be deeper understanding of how China operates in the development arena and where there are opportunities for collaboration.

The effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance is a critical challenge for U.S. assistance programs. Taxpayers want to be assured that their dollars are being put to good use, in programs that help other people, that catalyze the private sector, that complement the work of NGOs and other governments, in other words, what are the measures of success? You heard earlier from Homi Kharas, Richard Blum, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Carolyn Miles, and John Feeley about development success stories.

Miles, of Save the Children USA, said that building the evidence base of what works and what doesn't is really important.

MILES: If you don't know did it really work and what parts of the program actually really worked and what didn't, It's going to be hard to improve it the next time around. So the strategy that we take is, we don't do a really rigorous evidence based measurement of every single program because frankly it's expensive, and it's very time consuming for our staff. So what we'll do is we'll take programs that are representative of a whole set of programs, like on education. So the example would be, we want to measure whether or not kids are actually learning how to read by the time they get to the fifth grade. And most kids that we work with in developing countries, the fifth grade is as far as they get. So if they don't know how to read by the time they get out of the gate they get to the fifth grade, they probably won't.

So we don't measure every single program in terms of reading capabilities. What we do is we take representative programs and we measure those quite rigorously and then we look at making sure that the same things, and we see whether those programs resulted in kids actually learning how to read or they didn't, and we have randomized controlled trials and so we matched that against a school that's doesn't have that program, and then we look at what the key success factors were and we take those key success factors into other programs. And then a couple of years later we'll go measure another program to make sure that we try to measure most of the programs in an area. But if you did that kind of rigorous evidence base with every single program it would be cost prohibitive and donors won't pay for it. So we usually take funding out of our own funds to be able to do that. Sometimes they will, but a lot of times they won't.

But it gives you this base of evidence and then you also match that evidence. So that that example I gave of literacy, we actually then work with other partners, like World Vision for example has a huge literacy program and we compare our results with other organizations that are doing similar work and we build this evidence base in a cost effective way and in a way that doesn't have our staff spending every minute measuring results versus trying to deliver the programs. And that's a way you can build evidence base that really shows the effectiveness of the programs and most importantly shows us what works and what doesn't. So we can make the program better each time we go.

DEWS: Ambassador Feeley says that monitoring, evaluation, and measures of effectiveness are getting a lot of attention now. He emphasizes the importance of developing effectiveness metrics with communities and people on the ground.

FEELEY: One of the things that I've seen in terms of how we develop the metrics, both in Washington and previous jobs that I've had, and in the field, is that those metrics are often written by folks who are not on the ground. They may be informed, slightly, but what we tend to do, and where I've seen this begin to change, and I think it's a very encouraging development, what we really need to do is get the measures of effectiveness and the goals and objectives—the very concrete goals and objectives we want to see—from the very communities that we are trying to assist. So in the early years we ended up with all kinds of, you know, quinine you know how many angels dancing on the head of the pin you know how many policemen did you train how many children received you know vaccinations. And those are all metrics that are good.

But when you talk to people on the ground, and when you talk to the communities that you're looking to implement, when you talk with local providers who may be working with official development assistance from the United States or any government for that matter of fact, what you find are they describe things that are not quite as neatly measured. You find that they describe states of being socioeconomic well-being, political well-being, a sense of enfranchisement that they currently lack that they would like to see in their future. And one of the things I think we would do very well to continue to do is to factor in what they want and get it as much as we can in language

that's going to get through the CBJ, the Congressional Budget justification, that we can take and our colleagues in Washington can explain to authorizers and appropriators.

But not get so wrapped up in the inputs and outputs of a specific program. It's easy to do. It's also very frequently the shortest road by which you can hang yourself because if you don't make X number of teachers trained, well, somebody who doesn't like that program can very easily come along and say it's a failure.

So what I encourage all people who are working at the implementing end of any kind of U.S. ODA is to take the time to do the sort of perception surveys as a baseline, and very specifically design the desired outcomes of the target community that you're looking to work with.

DEWS: Ambassador Feeley adds that getting country ownership, and ownership by those whom you are trying to help, is absolutely essential to the legitimately needed monitoring and evaluation and measures of effectiveness exercise.

Sharing success stories, measuring effectiveness, catalyzing aid in the private sector—all of these and more are vital components of the development agenda, and factored into the discussions conducted by Brookings-Blum roundtable participants in Aspen.

But there is a final theme I'd like to introduce in this series about foreign assistance, and that has to do with the reasons why we have foreign assistance programs in the first place. Why do people, especially the American taxpayers, support foreign assistance and why should they? I asked Liz Schrayer, president and CEO of the US Global Leadership Coalition, to address the question of why Americans support foreign assistance. In the first episode of this series, she said that America is a compassionate nation, and that we know that engaging this way with the world is the smart thing to do for national security and economic interests. As to what resonates with the American public, she said:

SCHRAYER: People have to feel like it's relevant to their lives. Today people get on planes and they fly across the world and they can feel how quickly a pandemic in an instant like Ebola, like Zika, can affect them and that makes it real. And so that connects

to them. It's not everybody travels around the world as much as others. And so something like Ebola and Zika when it hits the news they can understand it. And so I think that's why it has traction and people understand it. Women and girls is an issue that people also can understand, they can understand the idea of if you can invest in a girl—and the statistics all bear out—that you invest and you add an extra year or two in their education it's going to come back and make a difference, 10, 20 percent in their economic income in that girl's life for every one year of school. So people understand something very, very tangible that it will make a difference. I think those issues really resonate with them.

What I find I travel a lot around the country and I talk to people and there is an understanding that 95 percent of the world's consumers don't live inside the United States, they live outside the United States. And they understand there's only so many Starbucks we can put on every corner of this country, so they have to understand how we can make sure that we have and are connected to the rest of the world if we're going to have an economy that's strong here.

DEWS: Schrayer also said that we can't look at these issues just as humanitarian issues, but also as national security ones, because, as she said, "if we don't engage, somebody else will."

Along these same lines, I asked Homi Kharas to explain what he meant when, in a policy brief on US global development leadership in a changing world he authored, he said that the basic motives of US foreign assistance can be summarized as "love, trust, and fear."

KHARAS: So we were just trying to indicate that, in fact, when we think about development cooperation many things often go together. Of course there's empathy with individuals who are less well off than we are and who are really suffering often in the most dire conditions, and that's what we have called Love. And it refers to these many of the things that I have just talked about like ensuring that people have adequate nutrition, ensuring they don't go to bed hungry, ensuring that they have an opportunity for a job.

But then there's also a part where the U.S. wants to build relationships with others, and ultimately build trade in investment our relationships with our mutual interest. So this is not just a handout. This is actually an investment in a more prosperous world and you have to have a trusting relationship with partners to do that. And probably the best example is the emergence of South Korea from a country which was heavily dependent on U.S. development cooperation to, now, a major trading partner of the U.S., a contributor to many of the electronic and other items that we buy. And so it's a relationship built on the initial foundation of foreign assistance that is now matured into a much more deeper relationship.

And then finally there are all these set of issues where the U.S. is trying to ward off bad things happening. Whether that is the outbreak of a pandemic disease, whether it is a financial catastrophe, whether it is human and drug trafficking, and narco crimes, and cybersecurity—all of those kinds of things— U.S. development assistance can really help ensure that they don't take root in a country with weak institutions and then gather enough power to be able to negatively impact on the United States.

DEWS: So, what's next for US foreign aid? The Brookings-Blum Roundtable conference report lays out the key takeaways from the discussions in Aspen, and you can read it on our website. Among these takeaways are many of the topics I've shared with you in these two episodes, including the nature of US development leadership; issues of structural reform of AID delivery agencies; multilateral approaches; how aid catalyzes development and partnerships with the private sector; sharing success stories; and making the moral, economic, and national security cases for development assistance.

Here once again is Homi Kharas, with his thoughts on what's next for those involved in thinking about and leading the development agenda now and into the future.

KHARAS: So I think we've got a huge work agenda in front of us. Of course there is work on making the empirical case, the evidence base case, for why aid and development assistance actually works, and what can it do, how it can be made to have an even bigger impact, and how we can allocate it better. But there's also all kinds of discussions now about new opportunities. There is a very active dialogue about creating

a new development finance corporation in the United States that would have a range of different instruments that would allow it to be really effective. That seems to be very promising. I hope that we will be able to contribute to that discussion. There is already draft legislation on the hill being prepared on mechanisms to reduce violence and the root causes of corruption. There's also draft legislation that is calling for a new strategy about dealing with fragile states. There's also a call for a review of multilateral institutions.

I think there are opportunities for thinking about the U.S. taking new approaches towards collaboration with China and new multilateral institutions that are headquartered in China. So just a range of different areas I think quite specific but where we see real opportunities to help the U.S. increase the impact of its already considerable development assistance.

DEWS: You can find the Brookings-Blum Roundtable Conference report on our website, brookings.edu, in addition to a wealth of data and research about U.S. foreign assistance and global development.

I want to offer, again, a special thanks to my colleague Merrell-Tuck Primdahl, communications director for the Global Economy and Development program, who collected most of these interviews and assisted me with the production of these episodes. Be sure to download and listen to the first episode in this series about U.S. foreign assistance.

I'll give the last word to President Bill Clinton, who offered his succinct view of the matter when he addressed the UN General Assembly on September 21, 1998

CLINTON: Developing nations have an obligation to spread new wealth fairly, to create new opportunities, to build new open economies. Developed nations have an obligation to help developing nations stay on the path of prosperity -- and to spur global economic growth.

DEWS: And that does it for this edition of The Brookings Cafeteria brought to you by The Brookings Podcast Network. Follow us on Twitter @policypodcasts. My thanks to audio engineer and producer Gaston Reboredo with assistance from Mark Hoelscher.

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