

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 2025

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write with grave alarm regarding the recent unlawful actions of your administration against the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP). These include illegal trespass by personnel of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) on USIP property, the purported removal of USIP Board members, and ongoing efforts to reduce and ultimately shut down USIP. We demand that your administration immediately restore control of USIP property to the USIP Board, cease unlawful actions against USIP, and respect USIP's role and status as an independent, nonprofit organization consistent with the law and Congress's direction.

The U.S. Institute of Peace was created in 1984 by Congress thanks to the bipartisan work of Senators Mark Hatfield and Spark Matsunaga. President Ronald Reagan signed the United States Institute of Peace Act (22 USC Ch. 56), formally establishing USIP as "an independent, nonprofit corporation." Congress explicitly laid out its intent for USIP to be an independent entity numerous times in this statute. In addressing the new USIP Board of Directors on February 26, 1986, President Reagan recognized USIP as "a valuable source of scholarly research and information on ways in which we can promote peace with freedom."<sup>1</sup>

Instead of adhering to Congress's intent and the law, your administration has launched an unprecedented and unlawful assault on USIP. Your Executive Order 14217 includes USIP on a list of federal entities to be "eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law," even though USIP is not a federal agency.<sup>2</sup> On or about March 14, 2025, your White House Presidential Personnel Office attempted to terminate certain members of the USIP Board. Shortly thereafter, DOGE personnel presented a resolution purporting to remove USIP's president and install an acting president, Mr. Kenneth Jackson.

These actions run contrary to the USIP Act, which states that members of the USIP Board may only be removed by the President either "(1) in consultation with the Board, for conviction of a felony, malfeasance in office, persistent neglect of duties, or inability to discharge duties; (2) upon the recommendation of eight voting members of the Board; or (3) upon the recommendation of a majority of the members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and a majority of the members of the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Labor and Human

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<sup>1</sup> "Remarks at a White House Meeting with the Board of Directors of the United States Institute of Peace," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, February 26, 1986, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/remarks-white-house-meeting-board-directors-united-states-institute-peace>.

<sup>2</sup> "Executive Order 14217 of February 19, 2025, Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy," *Federal Register* 90, no. 36 (February 25, 2025): 10577. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-02-25/pdf/2025-03133.pdf>.

Resources of the Senate.”<sup>3</sup> None of these conditions have been met in your administration’s attempt to purge the USIP Board.

We also strongly object to your administration’s use of federal law enforcement to trespass on USIP property. Attempts by DOGE personnel to unlawfully remove USIP Board members on March 14, 2025, were accompanied by other individuals who identified themselves as special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).<sup>4</sup> According to public reporting and court documents, DOGE officials on March 17, 2025, threatened to target federal contracts held by USIP’s former security contractor, Inter-Con, if Inter-Con did not permit DOGE personnel to enter USIP’s headquarters.<sup>5</sup> The March 17th trespass of USIP’s headquarters culminated in the removal of USIP’s president and other personnel from the building at the direction of or with the assistance of the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, the FBI, and the Metropolitan Police Department.

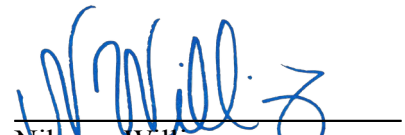
These actions are both unacceptable and unlawful, and they reflect your administration’s weaponization of federal law enforcement to target and infringe on constitutionally protected rights and protections. We demand that you direct the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and the FBI to immediately cease their trespass of USIP physical and personal property and restore access and control of all USIP property to the duly appointed USIP Board.

Lastly, we demand that you cease your administration’s unlawful actions against USIP by respecting the authority of the duly appointed USIP Board members and recognize USIP’s status as an independent, nonprofit organization established by Congress. For over 40 years, USIP has advanced our country’s understanding of and commitment to peace around the world. Days after your inauguration, you echoed that same commitment to global peace and prosperity in your address to the World Economic Forum.<sup>6</sup> We believe that USIP has played and can continue to play a crucial role in our nation’s and your foreign policy.

We look forward to your swift response.

Sincerely,

  
Jim Tokuda  
Member of Congress

  
Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

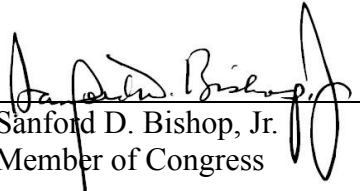
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<sup>3</sup> *United States Institute of Peace Act*, 22 USC §4605(f).

<sup>4</sup> Karen DeYoung and Derek Hawkins, “DOGE plays hardball in U.S. Institute of Peace takeover,” *The Washington Post*, March 19, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/03/18/doge-institute-of-peace-takeover-musk-trump/>.

<sup>5</sup> Ben Johansen, “DOGE enters Institute of Peace amid staff resistance,” *Politico*, March 19, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/03/19/doge-institute-peace-staff-resistance-00238488>.

<sup>6</sup> “Remarks by President Trump at the World Economic Forum,” The White House, January 23, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/01/remarks-by-president-trump-at-the-world-economic-forum/>.



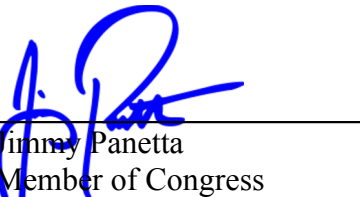
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress



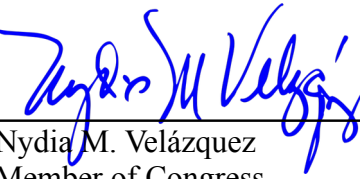
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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress




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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress




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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



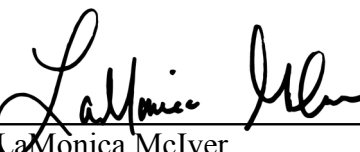
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Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress




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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



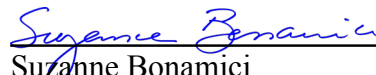
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CalMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



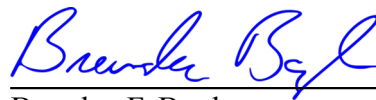
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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



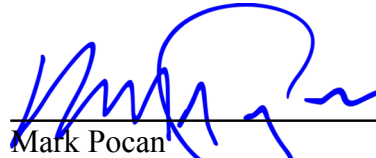
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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



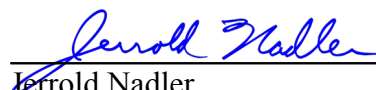
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Ed Case  
Member of Congress



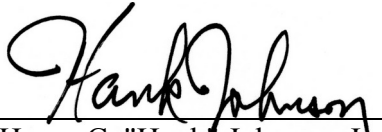
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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



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Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress




Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson  
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress

CC:           The Honorable Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State  
              The Honorable Pete Hegseth, Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense  
              The Honorable Pam Bondi, Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice  
              Ms. Amy Gleason, Acting Administrator, U.S. Department of Government  
              Efficiency Service