



2020

# United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability





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This Strategy was submitted to Congress in line with Section 504(a) of the Global Fragility Act of 2019, which requires development of a ten-year Global Fragility Strategy.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) affirms that the United States will work to strengthen fragile states “where state weakness or failure would magnify threats to the American homeland” and “empower reform-minded governments, people, and civil society” in these places. The President affirmed this commitment when he signed the Global Fragility Act of 2019 (Title V of Div. J, P.L. 116-94) (GFA) into law in December 2019. This Strategy meets the law’s requirement for a “Global Fragility Strategy.”

The United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability seeks to break the costly cycle of fragility and promote peaceful, self-reliant nations that become U.S. economic and security partners. The United States will pursue a new approach that addresses the political drivers of fragility and supports locally driven solutions. The United States will engage selectively based on defined metrics, host country political will, respect for democracy and human rights, defined cost-sharing, and mechanisms that promote mutual accountability with national and local actors.

This Strategy outlines four goals to guide United States efforts across priority countries and regions:

**Prevention:** The United States will establish and support capabilities to engage in peacebuilding and anticipate and prevent violent conflict before it erupts;

**Stabilization:** The United States will support inclusive political processes to resolve ongoing violent conflicts, emphasizing meaningful participation of youth, women, and members of faith-based communities and marginalized groups, respect for human rights and environmental sustainability;

**Partnerships:** The United States will promote burden-sharing and encourage and work with partners to create conditions for long-term regional stability and foster private sector-led growth; and

**Management:** The United States will maximize U.S. taxpayer dollars and realize more effective outcomes through better prioritization, integration, and focus on efficiency across the U.S. government and with partners.

The United States will achieve these goals by aligning U.S. Government operations, setting clear priorities, and integrating all tools of U.S. foreign policy: diplomacy; foreign assistance; defense support and security cooperation; trade and investment; sanctions and other financial pressure tools; intelligence and analysis; and strategic communications. The United States will recruit and train staff to work more effectively in fragile environments. The United States cannot and should not pursue these efforts alone. Accordingly, this Strategy outlines a commitment to forge new partnerships with civil society, the private sector, regional partners, and bilateral and multilateral contributors who can provide expertise and share the financial burden.

This Strategy prioritizes learning, data-driven analysis, diplomacy, and information-sharing to understand local dynamics, target interventions, and hold actors accountable. It lays out a clear process to systematically monitor policy outcomes, not just program outputs. If changing dynamics require alterations in approach, if programs are not showing results, or if partners are not living up to their commitments, the United States will change course. The success of this Strategy will require discipline and commitment by the whole U.S. government and our partner governments, the creation of dynamic and forward-leaning country-level strategies, and flexibly and timely resources to power change. Through this new approach, the United States will seek to avoid past mistakes and better advance America's national security interests in fragile environments.



## INTRODUCTION

This Strategy aims to strengthen United States efforts to break the costly cycle of fragility<sup>1</sup> and promote peaceful, self-reliant nations that become U.S. economic and security partners. It advances the aims of the 2017 National Security Strategy, which affirms that the United States will work to strengthen fragile states “where state weakness or failure would magnify threats to the American homeland” and “empower reform-minded governments, people, and civil society” in these places.

The President affirmed this commitment when he signed the Global Fragility Act of 2019 (Title V of Div. J, P.L. 116–94) (GFA) into law in December 2019. The GFA calls for the United States Government to create a unified U.S. strategy that is intentional, cross-cutting and measurable, and harnesses the full spectrum of United States diplomacy, assistance, and engagement over a 10-year horizon. The goal is to help countries move from fragility to stability and from conflict to peace. This Strategy builds upon reforms initiated by the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review, 2018 Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act, 2018 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, and 2019 U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security.

Through this Strategy, the United States will pursue a different approach from previous efforts. Rather than externally driven nation-building, the United States will support locally driven political solutions that align with United States’ national security interests. Rather than fragmented and broad-based efforts, the United States will target the political factors that drive fragility. Rather than diffuse and open-ended efforts, the United States will engage selectively based on national interests, host-nation political progress, and defined metrics. Rather than implementing a disparate set of activities, the United States will strategically integrate its policy, diplomatic, and programmatic response.

The United States government will pursue reforms to use taxpayer dollars judiciously and achieve measurable results. This Strategy prioritizes data-driven analysis, diplomacy, and information-sharing to understand local dynamics, target interventions, and hold actors accountable. It requires rigorous monitoring and evaluation and periodic reviews to assess policy outcomes, not just program outputs. The Strategy also requires greater insistence on host-nation political will, defining burden-sharing, leveraging a broader range of financing tools, and holding actors accountable. The United States will modify or end programs that are not producing sufficient results or where partners are not fulfilling their commitments.

The United States should not address these challenges alone. The United States is committed to partnerships and burden-sharing with other nations and partners, including civil society and the private sector, to support local ownership and deliver cost-effective outcomes. In developing this Strategy, the United States Government has consulted with more than 200 civil society experts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and bilateral partners and multilateral organizations to date. The United States Government will continue to consult stakeholders, including the Congress, as it implements this Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Fragility refers to a country’s or region’s vulnerability to armed conflict, large-scale violence, or other instability, including an inability to manage transnational threats or other significant shocks. Fragility results from ineffective or and unaccountable governance, weak social cohesion, and/or corrupt institutions or leaders who lack respect for human rights.



## SECTION 1: STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

The world faces growing risks from conflict, violence, and instability. International armed conflict and state instability, in particular, pose threats to the American people, United States interests at home and abroad, and United States allies and partners. Amid this instability, adversaries and malign actors can prey on weak governments, exploit their populations, build influence, and advance their own narrow interests or extremist ideologies.

For decades, the United States has helped partner countries—including those recovering from or at risk of conflict—become more self-reliant and democratic. Many of those countries now rank among the most prosperous economies in the world and are important economic and security partners for the United States. They are essential in helping to address shared challenges.

Many other countries experiencing high levels of fragility have not achieved these gains. Highly fragile countries and regions struggle with a

combination of ineffective and unaccountable governance, weak social cohesion, and/or corrupt institutions or leaders who lack respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as due process and freedom of religion or belief. Fragile countries and regions are vulnerable to armed conflicts, large-scale violence, or other instability, including an inability to manage transnational threats or other significant shocks.

Fragility poses threats to the United States and U.S. interests, allies, and partners. Specifically:

- Fragility provides fertile ground for violent extremists and criminal organizations that threaten the security of Americans and U.S. allies. Terrorists continue to operate and find safe havens in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere, despite reductions in global deaths from terrorism. Transnational organized criminals use fragility to advance their operations, including illicit drug trading, environmental exploitation, and human and wildlife trafficking.

- Fragility undermines economic prosperity and trade. Fragile countries and regions have the potential to become sizable future markets and future trading partners for the United States, but trade and investment are stymied by violence and corruption. In 2017, the estimated economic impact of violence was \$14.76 trillion, the equivalent to 12.4 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) lost. Further, research shows that investment in highly corrupt countries is substantially less than in countries that are relatively corruption-free.
- Fragility erodes international peace and destabilizes partner countries and regions. A rising number of countries are experiencing protracted violent conflict and/or high levels of organized violence, including violence against civilians and civilian infrastructure. The average internal armed conflict now lasts more than 20 years. More than one-half of armed conflicts that achieve peace lapse back into violence within 7 years and too often result in costly long-term peacekeeping operations. Humanitarian needs, driven primarily by more complex and longer-lasting conflicts, have reached historic levels, outpacing available resources by billions of dollars annually. At the same time, armed conflict obstructs humanitarian assistance and directly harms humanitarian personnel. In addition, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are further stressing global humanitarian assistance.
- Fragility can enable authoritarianism, external exploitation, and increase the influence of the United States' competitors in both physical and digital realms. Weak states are much more susceptible to Russian and Chinese coercion. Through its Belt and Road Initiative, China has saddled many states with unsustainable debt, environmental degradation, increased long-term

dependencies, and perpetuated fragility. China concertedly markets and promotes surveillance technology to client states and undermines democratic values of privacy, freedom, and equality.

Fragile countries typically struggle to assure basic security, territorial sovereignty, and the rule of law, lacking a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Fragility may manifest in the state's relative inability to control violence, and/or the illegitimate or excessive use of force against civilians. Weak institutions may instead serve the narrow political ends of elite coalitions and factions, whose interests are served by structural weaknesses in governance, oversight, and accountability.

Fragility increases when citizen-responsive governance breaks down. It is exacerbated by institutions that are unable or unwilling to respond to periodic stresses or crises and protect their populations in a legitimate, inclusive, and effective manner. Over the long-run, fragile countries tend to see slower, uneven, and unsustainable development. They may become reliant on external actors to prop up governance systems, provide security, and deliver essential services to their population.

The United States and other international contributors have allocated substantial assistance to conflict-affected and fragile countries and regions, achieving mixed results. Health, education, food security, humanitarian, and justice and security sector assistance save lives and disrupts threats. U.S. support, however, has not sufficiently addressed the political causes of fragility or ended costly cycles of recurrent crisis. Externally driven nation-building undermines local responsibility and distorts local economies. In some conflict areas, corrupt officials exploit external assistance to gain advantage and exacerbate conflicts.





## SECTION 2: STRATEGIC APPROACH AND GOALS

This Strategy outlines a new framework for the United States' response to global fragility. It elevates prevention, addresses the political drivers of fragility, and supports locally-driven solutions. The United States, through this Strategy, will focus on the most vulnerable countries and regions that meet a clear set of conditions, consistent with the National Security Strategy. Namely, this Strategy applies to those states and regions in which fragility poses or magnifies a threat to the United States and U.S. interests, allies and partners. The United States will focus efforts and resources at a sufficient scale to achieve the Strategy's goals and avoid dissipating effort across too many countries.

The Strategy emphasizes selective United States engagement based on defined outcomes, host country political will, respect for democratic norms and human rights, mutual accountability, and cost-sharing, including through compact-style partnerships with key stakeholders. The United States will create windows of opportunity, where possible and if needed, and engage with credible local partners committed to inclusive political solutions, meaningful reforms, and lasting peace.

To implement this new approach, the United States will recognize the complexity of each fragile environment, be nimble and adaptive, prioritize building resilience,<sup>2</sup> and ultimately build toward peace, across interventions. Patterns of conflict, large-scale violence, and instability are often cyclical; they fluctuate geographically and over time; and each has a unique context.

<sup>2</sup> Resilience is the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and wider systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability, facilitates inclusive growth, and ends cycles of recurrent crisis.

Given this complexity, the United States will adopt a multi-pronged, multi-sectoral approach to strengthen the resilience of partner nations. Fragile countries face an array of often compounding shocks and stresses that can include civil unrest, complex humanitarian emergencies, natural disasters, and economic volatility. The United States will align diplomacy (including public engagement), assistance, investment, defense engagement, and other tools to help partners end protracted or recurrent crises and absorb, adapt to, and recover from such shocks and stresses.

The United States will also incorporate peacebuilding approaches to address the drivers of conflict, violence, and instability, such as, *inter alia*, exclusionary politics, entrenched corruption, impunity, or capacity deficits. The United States will support partners to build durable mechanisms to resolve conflicts, undertake difficult reforms where needed, enhance social cohesion, build critical institutions, deliver crucial services such as energy, create inclusive political coalitions, and mobilize domestic resources that can enable lasting peace, stability, and ultimately prosperity. This support will include advancing women's leadership and participation in all aspects of conflict prevention, stabilization, and peacebuilding.

Ultimately, U.S. intervention to address fragility will not be successful without the active engagement of critical local partners. Breaking the costly cycle of fragility and promoting peaceful self-reliant nations must be secured through the action and agency of host-country leaders, organizations, and communities. This effort cannot be imposed from the outside. The United States' role is to support those local partners committed to positive change.

## Goals and Objectives of the Strategy

This Strategy has the following goals and subordinate objectives, which will inform subsequent country and regional implementation plans.

### **Goal 1: Prevention<sup>3</sup> – Anticipate and Prevent Violent Conflict and Large-Scale Violence**

Strategic investments in prevention can save billions of U.S. dollars and achieve better outcomes over the long run. The United States' efforts will establish and support capabilities to anticipate and prevent instability and large-scale violence before it erupts, and engage in peacebuilding. The United States will invest in both short-term efforts to mitigate escalating conflict risks and longer-term efforts to address underlying vulnerabilities of violent conflict and other large-scale violence. The United States will ensure its assistance is sensitive to conflict dynamics and reinforces inclusive, participatory, and legitimate governance. This may include critical efforts to improve the protection and promotion of human rights; mitigate health, education, economic, environmental, and food security dimensions of conflict; strengthen oversight, accountability, and administration in the security and justice sectors; and monitor and mitigate the impacts of disinformation, propaganda, and incitement to violence.

#### **Objectives:**

- Develop and/or reinforce local, national, and regional early warning systems and early action plans, backed by preventative diplomacy.
- Address vulnerabilities and structural risk factors that fuel violence and conflict and undermine civilian security by enhancing partner nation prevention, peacebuilding, and related counterterrorism efforts.

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<sup>3</sup> Prevention refers to deliberate efforts to reduce fragility, strengthen institutions, and increase cohesion in states and regions to disrupt likely pathways to violent conflict, instability, or political subversion. Strategic Prevention can include efforts related to atrocity early warning and prevention, conflict prevention, and countering violent extremism.

- Promote meaningful reforms of governance, essential services, natural resources management, and security and justice sector institutions to increase legitimacy and reduce corruption and meaningfully engage women and youth in decision-making.
- Protect and promote the rights of members of marginalized groups, including women and girls, religious and ethnic minority groups, and other communities at risk, including by increasing their participation in public life and protection.
- Strengthen local civil society and private sector networks, inclusive of women, youth and members of faith-based communities and marginalized groups, in order to meaningfully participate in conflict prevention, governmental reform, and peace building efforts.
- Bolster the capacities of public and private organizations and institutions monitoring, countering, and mitigating the impact of disinformation and propaganda by actors who threaten peace and stability.

**Goal 2: Stabilization<sup>4</sup> –  
Achieve Locally-Driven Political  
Solutions to Violent Conflicts and  
Large-Scale Violence**

Stabilizing conflict-affected areas is an inherently political endeavor. The United States will support inclusive political processes to resolve ongoing violent conflicts, emphasizing meaningful participation of women, youth, and members of faith-based and marginalized groups; respect for democracy and human rights; compliance with international law, including humanitarian law and principles; institutional transparency and accountability; and environmental sustainability. The United States will integrate and sequence diplomatic, development, and military-related efforts, understanding their potential political

impact. The United States will support efforts by legitimate local authorities to reduce violence, establish stability, and peaceably manage conflict.

**Objectives:**

- Assist national and local actors, including, *inter alia*, civil society and women leaders, to broker and implement durable and inclusive peace agreements or ceasefires and related transitional justice and accountability provisions.
- Secure support from local, national, and regional partners to bolster peace processes and stabilize conflict-affected areas.
- Expand civilian security in conflict- and violence-affected areas by building legitimate, rights-respecting justice and security institutions capable of countering the full range of threats to stability (e.g., terrorist groups).
- Promote the meaningful inclusion of women and girls in brokering and implementing peace agreements.
- Augment media, communications, and outreach efforts to engender public support for peace and stabilization processes.
- Promote inclusive post-conflict economic recovery and reforms, including equitable management of natural resources, to reinforce stabilization and peace.
- Reduce the destabilizing impact of non-state armed actors.

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<sup>4</sup> Stabilization is a political endeavor involving an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence.

**Goal 3: Partnership –  
Promote Burden-Sharing, Coordination,  
and Mutual Accountability**

National and regional leadership are essential to achieve sustainable solutions to fragility and conflict. The United States will encourage and assist partners to create conditions for long-term regional stability and foster private sector-led growth. The United States can achieve better outcomes by marshalling contributions from other public and private donors.

**Objectives:**

- Establish compact-style partnerships with national and local partner governments that promote mutual accountability and advance agreed-upon reforms to reduce fragility.
- Secure commitments from regional, bilateral, and multilateral partners to advance necessary governance, essential services, security, justice, humanitarian, and economic reforms and build resilience to shocks.
- Mobilize private sector activity in high-risk areas to help improve the investment climate, advance transparency, build capacity to manage natural resources effectively, and combat corruption.
- Enlist the international private sector to promote conflict-sensitive and environmentally sustainable investments in fragile states and increase the number of beneficial public-private partnerships.
- Address cross-border security threats, disinformation, and propaganda efforts by malign actors, and regional challenges by developing and/or enhancing regional mechanisms for economic, security, information transparency, humanitarian, and/or justice cooperation.

**Goal 4: Management –  
Enable an Effective, Integrated U.S.  
Government Response**

Creating alignment within and across United States departments and agencies to tackle global fragility is a difficult task, but one that will be crucial to the success of this Strategy. Working with Congress, the executive branch will achieve better results in fragile states and regions by improving how the United States Government conducts operations. The United States will improve prioritization, integration, and efficiency in all planning, diplomatic, foreign assistance, defense engagement, and other operations in fragile states and regions, both across the department and agencies, as well as with partners. The United States will pursue integrated civil-military resourcing and planning to advance shared objectives, collaboration, and information-sharing. The United States will create and pursue a learning agenda, capitalize on lessons learned in implementing adaptive management techniques, and assure that analysis and reporting are linked to desired policy outcomes.

**Objectives:**

- Institutionalize joint U.S. department and agency research, analysis, planning, messaging, prioritization of funding, and execution of activities toward prevention and stabilization.
- Streamline and expedite funding processes to enable more adaptive, integrated, and agile implementation and informed risk management in fragile environments.
- Recruit, train, and retain diverse staff, including U.S. military veterans, with relevant skills for fragile environments, and deploy diplomats and development professionals alongside U.S. military operational and tactical elements where needed and where security conditions permit.



- Improve field-level rigorous monitoring and evaluation, risk assessments, and feedback loops to assess progress, adapt strategic approaches, or shift diplomatic, security, and assistance efforts where appropriate and consistent with Secretary of State and Chief of Mission authorities and responsibilities.
- Strengthen coherence among humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities to meet emergency needs while breaking cycles of crisis.
- Mainstream conflict-sensitivity standards for all U.S. diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance to fragile areas to reinforce political and social cohesion, while upholding humanitarian principles.
- Align and continuously adapt development, security, and justice sector assistance to stabilization and peace process implementation by using data driven analysis and adaptive strategic approaches.



### SECTION 3:

## ADVANCING THE STRATEGY

The United States will realize better outcomes by improving the ways in which departments and agencies address fragility, in line with the above management goal. This Strategy defines roles and responsibilities, department and agency integration and coordination mechanisms, and priority-setting processes. The United States will also review and pursue additional or different authorities, staff, and resources as needed to achieve this Strategy's goals and objectives.

#### Department and Agency Roles and Responsibilities

The executive branch has established clear roles and responsibilities for advancing this Strategy, specifically:

- The Department of State (State) is the lead Federal agency for executing this Strategy and overseeing and implementing United States foreign policy under direction of the

President to advance diplomatic and political efforts with local partners, relevant bilateral parties, and multilateral bodies. State oversees the planning and implementation of targeted justice sector, law enforcement, and other security sector assistance to stabilize conflict-affected areas, and prevent violence and fragility globally.

- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) serves as the lead implementing agency for international development, disaster, and non-security prevention and stabilization assistance and program policy in support of United States policy objectives under this Strategy. USAID works to strengthen coherence among development, humanitarian, and other non-security assistance in fragile countries and regions.
- The Department of Defense (DoD) serves in a supporting role to manage and prevent conflict and address global fragility through specialized activities including Civil Affairs, psychological operations,

information operations engagements, institutional capacity-building, and security cooperation. DoD utilizes the defense support to stabilization (DSS) process to identify defense stabilization objectives in concert with other United States departments and agencies; convey them through strategic documents; organize to achieve them; and prioritize requisite defense resources. DoD also provides requisite security and reinforces civilian efforts, where appropriate and consistent with available authorities.

Other Federal departments and agencies, including the Department of the Treasury (Treasury), Department of Justice, Department of Commerce (DOC), Department of Energy, and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), support United States efforts to prevent violence and fragility globally and stabilize conflict-affected areas, as appropriate and authorized, based on their unique mandates, capabilities, and relationships.

### **Department and Agency Decision-Making and Coordination**

The GFA makes clear that prevention and stabilization requires a joint, integrated approach across State, USAID, DoD, and other federal departments and agencies. A senior-level GFA Steering Committee, convened by the National Security Council (NSC) or its designee, comprising State, USAID, DoD, Treasury, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), will meet quarterly to review GFA implementation progress and conduct oversight. Other departments and agencies will participate as relevant and as appropriate.

State will chair a working-level secretariat,<sup>5</sup> inclusive of other departments and agencies, coordinate execution of the Strategy, and update the Steering Committee as needed.

Departments and agencies will implement the strategy and secretariat's tasks through an inclusive, collaborative process with other vested stakeholders. USAID and DoD will lead aspects of the secretariat's work in line with their respective agency and department roles and responsibilities. The secretariat will work together to address inevitable challenges that will arise in implementing the new approach outlined in this Strategy.

Chiefs of Mission in priority countries and regions will lead field-level planning, decision-making, and coordination. Chiefs of Mission, with input from the USAID Mission Directors as appropriate, will designate a representative to be responsible for coordinating and integrating the full spectrum of GFA activities across the Country Team and with the relevant Combatant Command and agency stakeholders. Chiefs of Mission or designee will lead bilateral engagement on security and justice sector reform to ensure United States support for such efforts is properly elevated to a central policy objective. They will be responsible for directing the planning and implementation of security and justice sector assistance resources to appropriately leverage political objectives.

United States embassies and missions will establish coordination mechanisms for engaging regularly with national government counterparts, local civil society, and other stakeholders. They will review, align, and adapt plans and programs based on ongoing partner engagement and iterative conflict analysis, keeping other United States Government stakeholders periodically informed. As practical and appropriate, U.S. embassies and missions will incorporate plans to implement the Strategy into State Integrated Country Strategies (ICSSs), USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSSs),

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<sup>5</sup> The Secretariat will provide administrative functions for department and agency activities to advance the Strategy, under the guidance of the GFA Steering Committee. Specific roles, actions, and outputs will be formalized in a Secretariat Terms of Reference, approved by the Steering Committee and updated as needed.



and DoD Campaign Plans, Operational Plans, and Regional Strategies.

United States departments and agencies will develop internal communications plans and ensure this Strategy informs and is incorporated into other relevant strategies, plans, and initiatives in priority countries and regions. They will integrate this Strategy's goals and objectives with other United States policies to combat malign foreign influence, win the great power competition, counter authoritarianism, and promote a democratic, rules-based international order as the basis for global peace and security.

### **Country and Regional Prioritization and Planning**

The United States will prioritize countries and/or regions to implement this Strategy over a ten-year time horizon, starting with no less than five countries and regions. These countries and regions will be assessed, through the senior-level Steering Committee, based on objective criteria, consistent with the factors identified in Section 505 of the GFA. These factors include: assessed levels and risks of fragility, violent conflict and associated national resilience, political will and capacity for partnerships, opportunity for United States impact, other international commitments and resources, and United States national security and economic interests.

As part of consultations, United States departments and agencies will weigh options for regional approaches to address identified challenges and maximize resources. Given the central importance of security and justice sectors to long-term stability, prospects for security and justice sector reform will be a primary criterion for selecting priority countries.

Wherever feasible, United States departments and agencies will include third-party data sources and indicators to help inform selection of priority countries and/or regions and monitor overall progress. These will

include the Armed Conflict and Location Event Data Project, Fragile States Index, Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index, Legatum Institute's Prosperity Index, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Early Warning Project, Varieties of Democracy Project, UNDP's Gender Inequality Index, World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, and World Justice Project Rule of Law Index.

Following consultation with Congress, the United States Government will finalize and transmit to the relevant congressional committees the list of priority countries and regions and update as needed. The Steering Committee will meet periodically, not less than once per year, to review the list of priority countries and regions, commitment of host countries, availability of resources, and status of burden-sharing efforts. The Steering Committee will assess whether new countries or regions meet the established criteria and should be added to the list. The Steering Committee will review implementation progress in priority countries and regions and will consult with other stakeholders as needed.

Once priority countries and regions are selected, the United States will engage national and local government and civil society partners and develop and implement multi-year implementation plans. The United States will explore new mechanisms to solicit stakeholder input into those plans to ensure mutual accountability. The United States will align and sequence all relevant U.S. tools and resources to advance agreed objectives. Time horizons for each country/region implementation plan will be set based on the best available risk analysis, contextual information, and a reasonable estimate of when measurable outcomes can be achieved.



### **Compact-Style Country and Regional Partnerships**

Another innovative component of this Strategy is the development of new models for compact-style partnerships. The United States will promote mutual accountability in collaboration with national and local actors by applying international best practices and defining roles and responsibilities, resource contributions, and intended outcomes.

These partnerships will be based on specific metrics that ensure adequate institutional progress and political commitment. Metrics will focus on demonstrated political progress to advance peace processes, inclusive and accountable governance, access to essential services, economic reforms, justice and security sector reforms, media independence, respect for democratic norms and human rights, and defined cost-sharing.

The United States will reinforce these compact-style partnerships by facilitating policy dialogue among national and local leaders and other international partners, planning for scenarios in which milestones are not met, and managing change. Through these partnerships, the United States will incentivize government partners to institute transparent and accountable governance systems and address corruption. If partners fail to meet their commitments, the United States will shift resources and increase diplomatic and economic pressure.

### **International Cooperation and Public-Private Partnerships**

The United States will pursue bilateral and multilateral partnerships to implement this Strategy. The United States will work with other donors to share and track information on respective programs, avoid duplication, and optimize assistance toward shared objectives. This includes greater coordination within the Group of Seven, Group of Twenty, World Bank, United Nations, Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and

Development, and other bilateral and multilateral official contributors and private-sector partners. The United States will also coordinate with official bilateral and multilateral contributing partners to ensure consistent messaging to host-nation partners and efforts to confront malign actors and spoilers.

The United States is also developing approaches for related multilateral pooled funding mechanisms, which could potentially include the Global Fragility Fund authorized by the GFA. Multilateral funds can be effective mechanisms for leveraging additional financial and technical support for activities from likeminded official and private partners and achieving economies of scale. As these funds may have limited host-nation inclusion in decision-making, the United States is assessing ways to maximize success of such funds in fragile environments. Multilateral funding mechanisms must be structured appropriately to incentivize effectiveness and accountability and used in the context of a diplomatic and outreach strategy.

The United States will work with the private sector to achieve greater scale, sustainability, and effectiveness of development and humanitarian outcomes. Domestic and international firms can prove powerful development partners where they share common cause, values, and development objectives. The United States can leverage its expertise and tools, including development finance, to promote such alignment, de-risk, and accelerate economic activity, and promote transparency and adherence to international standards. Strategic United States investment—if coordinated with broader United States and partner efforts and pursued in a conflict-sensitive manner—can unleash significantly greater and more sustainable resources to address challenges driving fragility and promote durable peace and recovery. The potential for such investments can also be leveraged to incentivize and build a domestic constituency for critical government reforms.

The United States will pursue new and more effective partnerships with private sector entities, including philanthropies and corporate social responsibility entities. The United States will seek to integrate those entities into planning efforts to better understand and incorporate the private sector's interests and capabilities and mobilize associated resources. The United States will employ novel financing arrangements such as open innovation or challenge models where appropriate. Public-private partnerships will employ conflict-sensitive standards to ensure they contribute directly to this Strategy's goals and objectives.

### **Authorities, Staffing, and Resources**

The United States Government will review authorities, staffing, and resources that enable the United States Government's ability to respond quickly to complex fragile and unstable environments. The United States Government will incorporate this Strategy into future budget requests to Congress and seek more flexible authorities and staffing as needed.

While existing bilateral and regional funding accounts and activities can provide consistency over time, foreign assistance funding directives, earmarks, and other requirements can be constraints in dynamic, complex, and fragile contexts. The United States Government will work with Congress to advance the United States Government's ability to assess and respond to emergent stabilization requirements and the flexibility to align policy and programmatic interventions for implementing this Strategy across development, stabilization, and security sectors, consistent with the purposes described in section 509(a)(3) of the GFA regarding the Prevention and Stabilization Fund.

The United States Government will also work with Congress to ensure DoD has authorities and funding to implement this Strategy in concert with United States national security objectives. Security conditions dictate that State and USAID stabilization efforts are often constrained or delayed in less-permissive operating

environments, leading to a significant gap in the United States Government's ability to execute stabilization activities.

During Strategy implementation, the executive branch will rigorously monitor, in real time, the bureaucratic, legislative, and other constraints facing Chiefs of Mission as they adapt. The executive branch will work with Congress to make any necessary reforms to existing statutory authorities and requirements. This effort will include a review of procurement processes, budget limitations, and programming authorities.

The United States will review existing processes and make changes as needed to achieve this Strategy's goals and objectives. In line with their roles and responsibilities, United States departments and agencies will review their current staffing, skills, capabilities, research, and data analytics requirements to ensure they are positioned to implement this Strategy. United States embassies and missions have highlighted the need for additional diverse staff skilled in working on prevention and stabilization. The United States will develop short- and long-term staffing options to support U.S. embassies and missions in GFA priority countries and regions.

The United States will continue to invest in the expeditionary capacity of its civilian workforce to advance this Strategy within priority countries and regions. In accordance with Secretary of State security responsibility and Chief of Mission authorities, the United States will assess options to deploy civilian-led teams into fragile and conflict-affected areas to assess local conditions, engage local authorities, and direct and monitor programs. Options include deploying civilians with DoD operational and tactical elements to achieve United States national security objectives. State, USAID, and DoD will seek to integrate and streamline relevant human resources, training, knowledge management, and operational support platforms where possible.



## SECTION 4: STRATEGIC INTEGRATION OF U.S. GOVERNMENT TOOLS AND POLICY INITIATIVES

### Tools

The executive branch will marshal all available tools to advance this Strategy's goals and objectives. Specifically:

#### *Diplomacy*

Diplomatic engagement fosters unity of purpose and galvanizes collective action, which is essential to help broker and support political solutions to violent conflicts. State will invest in preventative diplomatic efforts that promote dialogue, mediation, reconciliation, respect for human rights, and conflict resolution. Embassies will target diplomatic efforts based on data-driven analytics, coordinate external messaging, and

provide a platform for collaboration across United States Government departments and agencies. This platform will help understand the complex, local, national, and regional political dynamics in fragile states and regions, including windows of opportunity and emerging risks.

The United States will upgrade its diplomatic capabilities to address risks of violent conflict, violence, and fragility. This effort includes engaging proactively with partner nations, regional leaders, allies and partners to prevent violent conflict by strengthening early warning and response efforts. The United States will also work with like-minded partner nations to focus on common approaches and enhance burden-sharing, including by bolstering existing mechanisms such as the Stabilization Leaders Forum. The United States will expand training and tools for U.S. diplomats engaging in fragile countries and regions.



## **Foreign Assistance**

Foreign assistance—including humanitarian, development, and security sector assistance—is a critical tool to address fragility, respond to and mitigate conflict and crises, and promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. In fragile contexts, needs are often most acute, but so too are the impediments to effectively delivering assistance.

The United States will enhance specific foreign assistance programs that address fragility directly, including those that seek to strengthen social cohesion, combat corruption, protect human rights, promote reconciliation, mobilize investment and engage private-sector actors in peacebuilding, and reinforce critical governance reforms. More broadly, the United States will mainstream and implement guidelines to ensure the conflict-sensitivity of all foreign assistance programs in fragile areas. The United States will empower Country Teams to strategically use foreign assistance to address fragility, inclusive of both field- and Washington-managed activities. United States development professionals on the ground will use their convening power, strategic communications, technical expertise, and local relationships to support prevention and stabilization objectives. State and USAID, including through the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Council, a senior-level mechanism launched by the Secretary of State, will continue to advance important reforms to strengthen coherence and collaboration to align with the “humanitarian-development-peace nexus,” with a new focus on Relief, Response, and Resilience (R3).

To ensure sustainable, impactful assistance programs in fragile contexts, State, USAID, DoD, and other assistance agencies, as relevant, will jointly establish planning, implementation, monitoring, and coordination mechanisms that deliberately layer, sequence, and integrate complementary types of assistance; promote close and constant coordination with diplomacy and

other capabilities; employ data-driven decision-making, adaptive management, and complexity-aware monitoring; and implement a clear-eyed approach to partnership, placing a premium on engaging and empowering local government, civil-society, and private-sector actors who demonstrate agency and ownership, shared values, a commitment to mutual accountability, and who can affect meaningful change.

## **Defense Support and Security Cooperation**

Basic security is essential for broader stabilization and strategic prevention gains. Defense support provides security for civilian, diplomatic, development, and humanitarian efforts, particularly in conflict-prone regions. In certain settings, the United States military can play a critical role in facilitating basic public order, responding to immediate needs of the population, and building the capacity of foreign security forces. These efforts contribute to longer-term stability in concert with United States national security objectives.

The United States military will enhance its ability to support this Strategy through small-footprint, coordinated, partner-focused activities in line with DoD Policy Directive 3000.05 “Stabilization” and United States national security objectives. Section 1210A of the fiscal year 2020 NDAA (“Department of Defense Support for Stabilization Activities in National Security Interest of the United States”), as well as the SAR, has greatly increased department and agency communication and synchronization at relevant Combatant Commands and Embassies.

State and DoD will develop security assistance and related programs and initiatives to improve governance of the security sector, build partners’ institutional capacity, professionalize partner-nation security forces, and build long-term relationships with key host nation security officials consistent with U.S. national security and economic interests. The United States will align



security sector assistance activities in priority countries and regions with political objectives and non-security assistance to address fragility and conflict where applicable. The United States will incorporate good governance and respect for democratic norms and human rights in security cooperation and capacity-building efforts, in line with the 2019–2020 *Guidelines for Effective Justice and Security Sector Assistance in Conflict-Affected Areas*. The United States will continue to restrict assistance to foreign security forces that engage in gross violations of human rights, in accordance with United States law.

Beyond traditional forms of defense capacity building (e.g., technical assistance, military education, training, and equipment), United States support for the security sector will include fostering relationships with reform champions within security institutions, empowering civil society to serve as a source of public oversight, and elevating security governance.

### ***Trade, Investment, and Commercial Diplomacy***

The United States promotes a development model based on free market principles, fair and reciprocal trade, private sector activity, and rule of law. A robust private sector and attractive investment climate help to: create jobs and economic opportunity, detracting from the need to turn to armed groups and illicit avenues or other malign actors for income; increase government resources and revenue available for service delivery, including through tax receipts; and improve stability and transparency by diffusing economic power and empowering individuals when conducted in a conflict-sensitive fashion. Additionally, broad-based private sector growth creates a virtuous circle by signaling stability to other firms and encouraging new investment.

The United States will work with governments, multilateral development banks, and other organizations to improve economic policies and the investment climate and identify investment opportunities. The DFC aims to invest 60 percent of its portfolio in low income,

lower-middle income, and fragile states. The DFC aims to invest more than \$25 billion and mobilize an additional \$50 billion by the end of 2025 across priority sectors. The DFC will catalyze investment through debt and equity financing, political risk insurance, blended finance approaches, technical assistance, and feasibility studies. DFC's Portfolio for Impact and Innovation (PI2) will support early-stage firms who may operate in fragile contexts who lack the track record or scale of traditional finance partners.

Additionally, the United States will implement export controls to prevent persons involved with or enabling human rights abuses from access to United States items to further such malign objectives. The DOC will support this Strategy, through for example, technology and entity-based controls, led by the Bureau of Industry and Security.

### ***Sanctions and Other Financial Pressure Tools***

The United States will use targeted sanctions and other financial measures to advance stability and impose costs on actors that fuel conflict and instability. Financial transparency and regulatory reform measures can increase accountability and adherence to the rule of law, and reduce the risks that human rights abusers and corrupt officials can exploit United States financial systems. Treasury engages with foreign counterparts to strengthen anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing regimes, and to address corruption vulnerabilities through regulatory reform and financial transparency efforts.

Treasury implements a range of authorities to impose financial consequences on those who pillage the wealth and resources of their people, generate ill-gotten profits from corruption, cronyism, and other criminal activity, and engage in human rights abuses. These tools include imposing sanctions on corrupt actors, serious human rights abusers around the world, and corrupt senior foreign political figures; and issuing related advisories to financial institutions. A number of United States sanctions programs

include criteria related to terrorism, human rights, and/or corruption, such as sanctions under Executive Order 13818, which implements and builds upon the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. These programs enable the United States Government to designate persons and entities and block their United States-based property and interests or property in the possession or control of any United States person. Such designations bring human rights abuses to global attention, cut off the perpetrators from the United States' financial system, and often lead foreign financial institutions to stop processing transactions or offering financial services to the designated individuals or entities. The United States continues to enhance its use of such sanctions where appropriate to disrupt and deter the behavior of malign actors, including those who contribute to fragility.

State will continue to implement visa restriction authorities to deny entry to foreign officials involved, directly or indirectly, in significant corruption or gross violations of human rights.

Additionally, the United States will continue to ensure United States financial institutions meet related due diligence and reporting obligations under the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA), which underpins the United States Government's effective anti-money laundering/counter-financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) framework. Compliance with the BSA is essential to detecting, investigating, deterring, and disrupting criminal activity, including the designated categories of offenses: corruption; environmental crime; migrant smuggling; organized crime; and human rights abuses such as human trafficking.

The United States will continue to restrict assistance to foreign security forces that engage in gross violations of human rights, in accordance with United States law. Gross violations of human rights by state security forces, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as violations of international humanitarian law and principles, erode legitimacy and contribute to fragility. Restrictions on assistance and other

financial pressure tools will be accompanied by active United States diplomatic engagement, including on the UN Security Council where obligatory international sanctions regimes reinforce and advance United States foreign policy objectives. The United States will engage with government and civil society partners to promote full implementation of these sanctions and restrictions, investigate alleged violations, promote accountability, and incentivize respect for the rule of law and human rights by rights-respecting security forces.

### ***Intelligence and Analysis***

The United States Intelligence Community (IC) will tailor intelligence collection and analysis to inform appropriate strategies to address fragility and political instability, in particular in the selected priority countries or regions. The IC will continue to assess conflict and mass atrocity trends and risks, drawing on quantitative and qualitative analytic methods. The United States will deepen partnerships with academic, think tank, private sector, and civil society experts who can contribute to these assessments.

### ***Strategic Communications***

The United States will partner with local media in fragile environments using media development and strategic communications tools. The United States will advance partner capacities to refute disinformation and mitigate incitement to violence and malign propaganda through digital and conventional media. The United States will highlight that the United States is a force for good, while reinforcing the voices of local, national, and global partners to promote peace, respect for human rights, and social cohesion. The United States will monitor and seek to counter transnational influence and messaging operations that promote violence or division or otherwise destabilize priority countries.

### ***Laws and Initiatives***

This Strategy provides an overarching strategic prevention and stabilization approach that will

integrate with relevant existing State, USAID, DoD, and Treasury department and agency strategies. This Strategy builds upon reforms initiated by the 2019 *U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security*, the *Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018*, the 2018 *Stabilization Assistance Review*, and the 2018 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*.

### ***Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)***

The United States Women, Peace, and Security Strategy, released in June 2019, focuses on improving the effectiveness of conflict prevention and peacebuilding by proactively integrating the needs and perspectives of women and empowering women to contribute their talents and energies to international peace, security, and prosperity. It endeavors to rectify the disproportionate adverse impacts of armed conflict on women and girls. In line with the WPS Strategy, the United States will encourage partner governments to improve the meaningful participation of women in processes connected to peace and security and decision-making institutions. The United States will promote the protection of women and girls' human rights and safety from violence, abuse, and exploitation. The United States will continue to expand its capacity to use relevant analysis and indicators, including the collection of sex-disaggregated data, to identify and address barriers to women's meaningful participation in the prevention and resolution of conflict. The United States will institutionalize new standards for applying gender analysis of quantitative and qualitative information to identify, understand, and explain gaps between men and women to inform the design and targeting of United States interventions in conflict-affected areas, including defense support and security. WPS principles will be incorporated into all elements of this Strategy's country and regional planning processes.

### ***Atrocity Early Warning***

Preventing, mitigating, and responding to atrocities, as well as assisting in recovery efforts following mass atrocities, helps reduce fragility.

The executive branch leads this effort through the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force (the Task Force), a White House-led department and agency body established to help further the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act. The Task Force informs policymakers of countries at risk of or experiencing mass atrocities, and coordinates Administration response efforts. The Task Force regularly engages with civil society stakeholders to inform Administration analysis and policy development. The Task Force's work will be integrated into this Strategy's country and regional plans where appropriate.

### ***Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR)***

The SAR framework, approved in 2018, solidified a new framework for how State, USAID, and DoD work together to advance stabilization efforts. State, USAID, and DoD have developed new tools to operationalize SAR principles, including to craft political strategies, partner with other international donors, target and sequence stabilization assistance resources, and monitor and evaluate strategic outcomes. United States embassy teams in certain countries have, with assistance from relevant Combatant Commands, developed integrated stabilization plans and modalities to apply SAR principles. This Strategy will build upon and further these important efforts.

### ***National Strategy for Counterterrorism (NSCT)***

The 2018 NSCT emphasizes the importance of preventing and countering terrorist and violent extremist recruitment and radicalization. State, USAID, and DoD are developing and institutionalizing the "prevention architecture" called for in the NSCT, in addition to other ongoing counter-radicalization and recruitment efforts. This architecture includes efforts to promote disengagement and reintegration of former terrorist fighters and affiliated persons from violent extremist organizations. This Strategy will incorporate and amplify those targeted efforts





## SECTION 5:

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The United States will measure progress of this Strategy to demonstrate accountability to the American taxpayer and ensure impact. Departments and agencies will use a data-driven approach to rigorously assess the progress and impact of United States engagement and the demonstrated progress of regional, national, and local partners toward stated benchmarks and goals. Findings will inform decision-making and re-targeting as needed. Departments and agencies must make necessary adjustments and apply learning on a recurring basis to overcome inevitable challenges in implementing this Strategy.

State, USAID, and DoD will jointly develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Implementation Plan for this Strategy. United States embassies and missions will also develop MEL plans for priority countries and regions. Plans will include a logic model that articulates what

success looks like, maps clear pathways toward reducing risks and achieving policy objectives, and align actions and inputs accordingly. Stakeholders will identify relevant and specific commitments they will take to achieve the mid-term and long-term impact of the plans and propose appropriate metrics to measure progress accordingly. MEL plans will also assess effectiveness, capture learning on department and agency coordination, innovative structures and approaches, engage non-traditional partners, use other tools alongside assistance, and assess how departments and agencies are "doing business differently" in fragile contexts. The United States will regularly revisit the plans to ensure they are in sync with changing conditions on the ground.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation

The United States will monitor, assess, and evaluate progress toward reducing fragility in complex and rapidly changing environments. Initially, the United States will conduct baseline assessments for those priority countries and/



or regions to enable subsequent measurement of changes. Embassies and relevant bureaus will gather data and routinely analyze progress towards defined strategic outcomes. The United States Government will structure monitoring around a framework that allows for systematic assessments of both quantitative and qualitative information, benchmarked against multiple levels of contextually-defined policy and programmatic progress.

The GFA secretariat will conduct periodic department and agency reviews based on clear metrics to determine progress on country and regional plans toward the Strategy. The review process will systematically analyze comparable information across priority countries and regions, recognizing differences across contexts. Reviews will also monitor the potential risks that United States programs, policies, or resources could empower or abet repressive local actors or be exploited by malign actors.

As part of the reviews, department and agency stakeholders will report on their actions and review collective strategic outcomes. Senior leaders will use review findings to inform policy considerations, determine course corrections, and identify areas for increased attention and staff resource allocations.

Departments and agencies will streamline reviews and reporting efforts with other required reporting to reduce the burden on posts. To mainstream this Strategy and prevent duplicative MEL systems, departments and agencies will use existing indicators, where possible and feasible, and will create new indicators for tracking Strategy impacts as needed.

The United States will provide sufficient expertise and training for embassies to conduct required monitoring and evaluation.

## **Consultation, Learning, and Adaptation**

The United States will implement the 10-year Strategy on an iterative basis, building on a cycle of assessment, monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adaptation. As departments and agencies implement the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (The Evidence Act), the United States will institutionalize the use of data analytics, information-sharing, and rapid feedback loops. State and USAID will lead development and management of an integrated learning agenda on breaking the cycle of fragility and conflict. Ongoing learning will allow for course-correction and inform policy discussions and the use of adaptive management good practices. State, USAID, and DoD will incorporate lessons into department and agency training curricula and use information to address knowledge gaps. Headquarters will work with field-based partners, embassies, and missions to share information and learning across global fragility efforts.

The United States will also develop a robust evidence base to address the long-term causes of conflict and fragility. This base will: examine external and internal long-term causes of fragility and violent conflict; determine the effectiveness of policies and interventions across contexts, conditions, and stakeholder groups; establish responsiveness to local systems and locally-defined priorities; examine multi-sectoral approaches to reduce fragility and the causes of violence; and ensure that approaches are conflict-sensitive and do no harm across multiple stakeholder and beneficiary groups. This evidence base will be hosted on a web-based application that will be available to United States departments and agencies. Departments and agencies will share best practices among each other and across multilateral partners to enhance a common and improved understanding of proven tactics and approaches.

United States departments and agencies will continue to engage the Congress, non-governmental and private sector partners, international partner and donor nations, and host-nation and local partners throughout the implementation of this Strategy. Those partnerships are essential for successful learning and adaptation. United States departments and agencies will convene biannual “multi-stakeholder consultations” to provide updates on the progress of the Strategy, discuss challenges and lessons learned, and solicit new research and data-sharing on best practices. ■

