



Functional Bureau Strategy

Bureau of Political-Military Affairs

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1. Executive Statement

The mission of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) is to build enduring security partnerships worldwide to advance U.S. national security objectives.

The National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2017, the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) of 2018, and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) of 2018 make clear that the central challenge to U.S. security and prosperity is the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition with revisionist powers, namely China and Russia. In addition, the destabilizing influence and actions of rogue regimes and violent extremist organizations (VEOs) continue to threaten the United States. Of relevance to PM's core mission, these strategies recognize the criticality of strengthening security relationships worldwide in order to magnify our power in protecting our shared interests. At the same time, these strategies emphasize the importance of increased burden sharing and transitioning assistance recipients to new and deeper forms of partnership. America is not stepping back from the world; rather, we are asking our partners and allies to step up.

Summary of Goals and Objectives: Over the next four years, PM will prioritize activities that make the United States the global security partner of choice. We will empower allies and partners to collectively deter aggression, reduce threats, and sustain favorable regional strategic balances. We will cut red tape to put our defense industrial base on a fair and competitive international footing and to maintain America's status as the preeminent global defense producer. We will optimize our security sector assistance (SSA) resources alongside our Department and Agency colleagues to achieve the highest return on investment to the American taxpayer. We will reinforce the effectiveness of U.S. forces in tandem with foreign policy objectives and ensure that U.S. military operations complement diplomatic activities. We will work to keep conventional weapons out of the hands of our enemies and prevent them from harming innocent civilians. We will build partner security sector capacity to enable their interoperability, professionalism, and long-term sustainability. Central to these objectives will be PM's resolute application of American values such that we enable enduring peace and security and work towards "a world free from the scourge of war and the dangers and burdens of armaments, where the use of force is subordinate to the rule of law, and change is achieved peacefully."¹

PM's goals and objectives reflect the NSS and JSP priorities of increasing the capacity and resilience of partners and allies, promoting American prosperity and job creation, establishing equitable burden sharing, and strengthening the effectiveness of our investments. The Bureau fulfills its mission by providing the Secretary of State with global and trans-regional political-military perspectives while regulating arms transfers and defense trade, directing security assistance, building partner capacity, ensuring DoD strategies and plans are informed by foreign policy, negotiating security agreements, mitigating the threats of poorly secured conventional weapons and explosive hazards, and exchanging personnel with DoD to strengthen the State-Defense relationship.

Risks: As PM pursues its goals and objectives, we will be challenged by the need to balance foreign policy and national security concerns with building partner capacity and interoperability.

¹ Arms Export Control Act of 1976
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We will face difficult choices between short-term security gains and longer-term institutional development and sustainability. As we elevate defense trade promotion, we must do so consistent with the Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) policy goals. We must also be mindful of risks to our credibility on human rights and/or inadvertently creating sustainment and effective employment deficiencies that undermine the long-term capacity or capability of partner forces. We will be challenged by competitors who do not follow the same international norms and rules, so we must apply pressure through bilateral and multilateral fora while staying true to our arms export control principles. We must communicate clearly the enormous value our allies and partners contribute to our collective security even as we transition partnerships by increasing burden sharing, as well as dissuade them from pursuing other partners, particularly Russia and China.

Implementation and Review: The Bureau's Strategy and Resource Coordination (SRC) Team will be responsible for overseeing the communication, implementation, and review of the FBS and its application to the annual Bureau Resource Request (BRR) and other resource allocations.

2. Bureau Strategic Framework

The mission of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) is to build enduring security partnerships worldwide to advance U.S. national security objectives.

GOAL 1: Advance American national security and foreign policy interests and economic prosperity through judiciously managed conventional arms transfers and by supporting a whole-of-government approach to defense trade promotion.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Empower and equip allies and partners to promote regional stability and interoperability, shoulder a more equitable share of collective security, build defensive capacity, and counter aggression from competitor nations, rogue regimes, and terrorist organizations while preventing transfers that undercut U.S. security, interests, or values.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Maximize the competitive advantages of the U.S. national security innovation base by modernizing and streamlining the defense exports architecture while protecting U.S. Conventional Arms Transfer Policy goals and the integrity and security of defense trade.

GOAL 2: Optimize diplomacy and defense coordination to promote integrated national security policymaking, planning, and implementation.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Coordinate security sector assistance resources with other agencies and leverage other donors' assistance in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for U.S. foreign policy, national security, and American taxpayers.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Reinforce the effectiveness of U.S. forces and defense efforts by negotiating security agreements; providing foreign policy expertise and guidance to plans, strategies, exercises, and posture decisions; protecting the technological edge of warfighters; and supporting State-Defense personnel exchanges.

GOAL 3: Contribute to the security conditions and capacities necessary for enduring peace, prosperity, and stability.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Prevent terrorists and criminals from illicitly acquiring small arms and light weapons and reduce barriers to stabilization, public safety, essential services, and economic development caused by explosive hazards.

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Build security sector, including peacekeeping, capacity of partner and ally nations to ensure their effectiveness, long-term sustainability, and professionalism.

GOAL 4: Build an increasingly capable, connected, and accountable cadre of political-military practitioners.

OBJECTIVE 4.1: Prioritize workforce staffing and development such that personnel have the skills, knowledge, and connectivity to strategically inform and implement political-military policies and priorities.

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Improve the PM Bureau's ability to identify and articulate substantial outcomes and return on investment resulting from political-military activities to facilitate decision-making and external engagement.

3. Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Advance American national security and foreign policy interests and economic prosperity through judiciously managed conventional arms transfers and by supporting a whole-of-government approach to defense trade promotion.

Description and Linkages

Against the backdrop of a competitive environment for security partnerships and international defense sales, PM seeks to make the United States the global security partner of choice and to maintain America's status as the preeminent global defense exporter. Conventional arms transfers support these goals in numerous ways. They enhance allies and partner capabilities and increase their interoperability with U.S. forces. They build long-term relationships and open up access for basing of, and overflight by, U.S. forces and assets. They strengthen the U.S. defense industrial base, expand U.S. manufacturing, and create high-wage, high-skill jobs. A vibrant defense technology sector increases our ability to produce, sustain, and innovate, critical to keeping the United States and partner nations equipped to meet global security challenges. Moreover, international arms sales help lower the per-unit costs to our own military. U.S. leadership in arms transfers also ensures that we are able to influence the standards for non-proliferation and technology transfer.

PM will use its central role in international arms transfers to improve partners' capabilities, magnify our power, protect our shared interests, and enable favorable balances of power to safeguard the free and open international order. We will facilitate the competitiveness of U.S. industry while ensuring the responsible export of arms.

Objective 1.1 : Empower and equip allies and partners to promote regional stability and interoperability, shoulder a more equitable share of collective security, build defensive capacity, and counter aggression from competitor nations, rogue regimes, and terrorist organizations while preventing transfers that undercut U.S. security, interests, or values.

Justification

Through effective oversight of arms transfers, PM will prioritize and promote arms acquisitions and associated assistance that help us strengthen security relationships and promote the United States as the partner of choice, particularly over China and Russia. We will face difficult choices between short-term security gains and longer-term institutional development and sustainability. We are challenged by partners who have demonstrated in some instances a lack of sufficient technical or institutional capacity to effectively employ and maintain U.S.-provided arms. PM must continue to focus on providing the training and technical expertise necessary for effective and appropriate employment, particularly with respect to laws of armed conflict and the prevention of civilian casualties.

Objective 1.2: Maximize the competitive advantages of the U.S. national security innovation base by modernizing and streamlining the defense exports architecture while protecting U.S. Conventional Arms Transfer Policy goals and the integrity and security of defense trade.

Justification

In June 2018, the President approved the Framework and Implementation Plan he requested as part of the CAT Policy (NSPD-11). In line with the NSS, these documents lay out a whole-of-government initiative to align conventional arms transfers with foreign policy, national security, and economic interests. When the U.S. government decides a sale is in our interest – by applying the criteria of the CAT Policy – the U.S. government will ensure that decisions are not unnecessarily delayed, and that we advocate for and follow through with that sale as effectively as possible. PM will fulfill this objective by implementing the Arms Transfer Initiative, including improvements to the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) systems, refreshing export policies, proactive engagement with industry and Congress, and strategic advocacy. As we streamline processes, we will continue to faithfully implement the CAT Policy, including those provisions that would lead the United States to refrain from making a sale.

Goal 2: Optimize diplomacy and defense coordination to promote integrated national security policymaking, planning, and implementation.

Description and Linkages

The NSS recognizes that our security environment can no longer be conceived as either “at peace” or “at war,” but rather is an arena of continuous competition. This means there is now a greater premium placed on the alignment of military and non-military activities to achieve and sustain desired outcomes. Positioned at the nexus of diplomacy and defense, PM is uniquely situated to facilitate this integration and harmonization between the Pentagon and Foggy Bottom.

The JSP calls upon the PM toolkit to strengthen our alliances and partnerships, including security assistance, arms sales, securing access and legal protections for U.S. forces, and ensuring that foreign policy goals fundamentally guide security sector decision-making. Through effective coordination, PM amplifies the effectiveness of U.S. forces and defense efforts, facilitates U.S. operations access and influence, builds partner capacity, promotes stable and secure sovereign partners, and fosters support for America’s interests.

Objective 2.1: Coordinate SSA resources with other agencies and leverage other donors’ assistance in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for U.S. foreign policy, national security, and American taxpayers.

Justification

Given the vast array of SSA stakeholders within the Department, among USG agencies, and the international donor community, it is imperative to organize, inform, and discipline coordination

toward strategic consonance at all levels. Since 2001, the amount of SSA has nearly tripled (~\$15 billion annually in recent years), driven in large part by expanded authorities and appropriations for DoD to build the capacity of foreign security forces in support of ongoing counterterrorism and Coalition operations. This has made it increasingly important that we work closely with DoD in particular to ensure a unified approach. Related, international donors must share the burden on mutual security objectives, and PM plays an important role in coordination, especially with respect to humanitarian mine action. PM will work in close coordination with the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F), and other State, regional, and functional stakeholders to fulfill this objective through joint planning and guidance, facilitating timely and transparent concurrence on DoD programming and chairing the mine action international donors group.

Objective 2.2: Reinforce the effectiveness of U.S. forces and defense efforts by negotiating security agreements; providing foreign policy advice to plans, strategies, exercises, and posture decisions; protecting the technological edge of warfighters; and supporting State-Defense personnel exchanges.

Justification

PM plays an active role in reinforcing the linkages between State and DoD and promoting complementarity between diplomatic and military activities. PM's efforts help ensure that a wide array of DoD efforts and activities, such as strategies, plans, posture, and exercises, are aligned with, and informed by, foreign policy. It also facilitates military posture and enables burden sharing to defray costs of DoD's footprint abroad. PM will accomplish this objective by negotiating bilateral security agreements; facilitating personnel exchanges; coordinating Department input to a range of DoD plans, training events, exercises, and posture decisions; and by helping protect technology security through judicious arms transfers and end-use monitoring. Often times, this cooperation is driven by informal mechanisms, especially personal relationships. To sustain cooperation, it is important to formalize processes where possible and strengthen institutional muscle memory.

Goal 3: Contribute to the security conditions and capacities necessary for enduring peace, prosperity, and stability.

Description and Linkages

PM seeks to address security conditions that, if left unchecked, breed volatility, undermine development and prosperity, and create space and fuel for violent extremism and criminal networks. PM counters these threats by strengthening partners' defense institution capacity, peace operations capabilities, and mitigating the threat of at-risk conventional weapons. The collective results are partner nations who are able to responsibly and effectively employ their forces, choke off sources of violence, end internal or regional conflicts, re-establish democratic political processes, spur economic development, and develop their own capacities to protect their people.

Building partner nation security capacity promotes their effectiveness, professionalism, and long-term sustainability which extends the rule of law as a bulwark against trans-regional threats and enables improved burden sharing for the maintenance of global security. Keeping conventional weapons out of the hands of our enemies and preventing their use to harm civilians reduces transnational crime and instability, facilitates economic development. Improving stability and security conditions overseas produces environments that are more accepting of U.S. engagement in the short-term and more hospitable to our interests in the long-term.

Objective 3.1: Prevent armed groups, insurgents, terrorists and criminals from illicitly acquiring small arms and light weapons and reduce barriers to stabilization, public safety, essential services, and economic development caused by explosive hazards.

Justification

U.S. national security is strengthened by reducing threats and increasing partner capacity to establish and maintain security following conflict and instability created by armed groups, insurgencies, and terrorists. To accomplish this, PM works to reduce the availability of the weapons and munitions that enable terrorists and criminal networks to conduct lethal attacks and prolong conflicts. PM manages programs that improve physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) to reduce illicit proliferation of small arms; dispose of excess, poorly secured, or otherwise at-risk conventional weapons and munitions stockpiles; provide emergency response to help partner countries mitigate risks from potentially dangerous depots, and safely remove and dispose of materials following catastrophic detonations; clear explosive hazards that delay post-conflict recovery; and promote the development of legitimate, sustainable, and enduring capabilities of our partners to assume these responsibilities for themselves. Explosive hazards clearance can also build trust and influence in countries where we previously had very little. These programs benefit from an inherent flexibility that can make them effective across a range of fluid conditions, applied proactively in pursuit of longer-term goals and reactively to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. This flexibility, along with the unpredictable nature of the fragile and conflict-affected environments in which such efforts are necessary, complicates planning processes and has direct bearing on programmatic duration and cost.

Objective 3.2: Build security, including peacekeeping, capacity of partner and ally nations to ensure their effectiveness, long-term sustainability, and professionalism.

Justification

PM efforts build self-sustaining, rights-respecting security institutions, accountable to civilian authorities, in partner nations capable of addressing challenges that could otherwise destabilize their regions and threaten U.S. interests. PM's activities enable partner nations, including aspiring partners seeking to contribute to international stability, to deploy forces or resources beyond their borders in support of multilateral actions, fostering burden-sharing. PM will accomplish this objective by providing training, equipment, advisory and technical assistance, and deployment support to partner nation security forces. Major funding accounts include

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Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). Terrorist threats and internal conflicts around the world continue to pose security risks and create complex environments in which partner nations operate. This increases the imperative for PM to help build partner nation capacity to confront these threats and requires PM to adapt our programs to the changing realities on the ground.

Goal 4 (Cross Cutting): Build an increasingly capable, connected, and accountable cadre of political-military practitioners.

Description and Linkages

The political-military environment has changed significantly in recent years, increasing and diversifying the challenges to State pol-mil practitioners both domestic and overseas. The White House has emphasized the economic aspects of defense trade as a means to promote American prosperity and jobs in addition to its role in strengthening our security relationships. This shift is emblematic of the new challenges faced by pol-mil practitioners, which is comprised of Foreign Service officers, civil servants, POLADs at military commands, and military detailees at State. Continued changes to DoD authorities and a tripling of resources since 2001 (mostly accruing to DoD), the increased emphasis on defense trade promotion at posts, and the need to keep State and DoD closely coordinated in their planning and implementation of security cooperation highlights why pol-mil practitioners must be more consistently prepared to oversee and advance State's prerogatives when engaging with allies, partners, and DoD personnel.

The imperative to improve accountability through evaluation and learning in both our assistance and diplomatic engagement comes from several fronts. The JSP prioritizes efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of our investments. Additionally, in accordance with the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016, the Department issued new requirements for program design and performance management. Improved identification of outcomes and accomplishments will facilitate decision-making and external engagement.

Objective 4.1: Prioritize workforce staffing and development such that personnel have the skills, knowledge, and connectivity to strategically inform and implement political-military policies and priorities.

Justification

This objective asserts PM's recognition of people – whether in Washington, Combatant Commands, or Posts - as our most important asset. This objective is not meant to imply that officers have not been meeting mission but rather that the strategic environment has changed and demands from officers a higher, deeper, and more integrated level of skill and knowledge than ever before. PM will focus on developing a suite of training tools, professional development opportunities, and communication mechanisms to ensure all pol-mil practitioners have the breadth and depth of knowledge and the ability to exchange information that they need to succeed. We are challenged by the scheduling demands of adding training requirements and rapid changes in legislative authorities and guidance for implementation.

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Objective 4.2: Improve the PM Bureau’s ability to identify and articulate substantial outcomes and return on investment resulting from political-military activities to facilitate decision-making and external engagement.

Justification

Drawing the connection between PM activities and foreign policy outcomes is often challenging due to the long-term and diplomatic nature of security relationship building, the separation of PM from the on-the-ground implementation of the activities it enables, and the global and broad scope of its activities. The intent of this objective is to prioritize bureau efforts to identify, measure, articulate, and report the impact of its activities, particularly security assistance and arms sales. PM’s established monitoring and evaluation programs are central to this effort. PM would further like to encourage a bureau-wide emphasis on identifying specific outcomes and accomplishments in order to better inform pol-mil practitioners and articulate a narrative that would facilitate engagement with external audiences such as Congress, think tanks, and the general public.