



Integrated Country Strategy

Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and
Tuvalu

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Table of Contents

1. Chief of Mission Priorities 2

2. Mission Strategic Framework 4

3. Mission Goals and Objectives 5

4. Management Objectives..... 10

1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Accredited to five diverse and geographically distant Pacific island nations, Embassy Suva promotes U.S. interests on issues ranging from regional security and UN peacekeeping to the multi-billion dollar tuna industry, from shared efforts to promote economic development to confronting environmental challenges and strengthening people-to-people ties. Recognizing the need for effective and accountable governance, Embassy Suva maintains an active interest in reinforcing the five countries' still-fragile democracies. In addition to observing and supporting democratic elections, the Embassy works to promote a vibrant civil society and free press. This is particularly true as China and, to a lesser extent, Russia seek to displace traditional Pacific partners, including the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Key to this effort – particularly in Fiji, with its history of coups – is enhancing an already-strong security relationship that promotes civilian governance and the rule of law. Charged with safeguarding our consular, immigration, and refugee systems, the Embassy is also working with the governments of Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu to shore up their passport regimes; entry, exit, and visa procedures; and port security.

In addition to its bilateral responsibilities, Embassy Suva serves as a regional platform for achieving U.S. interests in the South Pacific. While Post is bilaterally accredited to five countries, the Embassy's regional offices have wider areas of responsibility, providing consular, environmental, and military-to-military support to up to 21 other Pacific countries and territories, spanning four million square miles. Embassy Suva hosts the Regional Pacific Environment Office, which has a broad mandate for advancing environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH) goals throughout the region. The five nations to which this mission is accredited form a subset of that region. Embassy Suva is the principal interface with major regional organizations such as the Pacific Islands Forum, Pacific Community, and Pacific Islands Development Forum, which provide the United States opportunities to amplify our influence. We use these institutions to build a durable foundation for improved security cooperation, strengthened democratic institutions, and sustained and open economic development receptive to U.S. investment.

Of Post's five countries of accreditation, Fiji and Tonga – the only countries with militaries – have proven to be reliable partners and staunch supporters of U.S.-led efforts to promote regional maritime awareness, international peacekeeping, and Coalition operations in Iraq and elsewhere. Since the resumption of democratic governance in 2014, Post, in coordination with Australia and New Zealand, has strengthened ties with these countries' militaries, to ensure that the United States and its allies remain the security partners of choice. Post makes use of regional Public Diplomacy; USAID; and ESTH programs to promote healthy, educated, well-governed, and prosperous Pacific populations, friendly to the United States, committed to democratic values, and receptive to U.S. influence and investment.

Enhanced political stability should contribute to economic growth and increased opportunities for U.S. firms. However, a poor investment climate in Post's five countries of accreditation (especially in Fiji, by far the largest economy) has impeded economic performance. In addition to promoting market-based economic policies, the Embassy regularly acts on requests from U.S. firms for advocacy and dispute resolution. Economic growth, driven in large part by tourism, is also increasing the number of applications for U.S. visas, and more

U.S. tourists are visiting the Pacific. Post seeks to promote U.S. business interests, improve border security, and protect U.S. citizens, but we face human resource constraints that hinder effective commercial services and advocacy for U.S. business interests as well as economic diplomacy efforts that would lead to the creation of U.S. jobs.

In sum, Post is pursuing four central goals, which together work to reinforce a strong U.S. commitment to the region: (1) to improve regional security and the security of U.S. borders and citizens; (2) to advance a democratic, regional rules-based order, both bilaterally and multilaterally; (3) to foster sustainable, mutual economic prosperity; and (4) to promote careful stewardship of island states' ecologies and natural resources. Working with our allies and partners, we will further deepen our relationships with our five countries of accreditation, even as competitors increase their efforts, as well as garner favor for U.S. priorities in regional and international institutions.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Bolster U.S. security and regional security, as well as protect U.S. citizens.

Mission Objective 1.1: Stronger partnerships and enhanced bilateral and regional security arrangements, through building cooperation, interoperability, and information-sharing, including in the maritime and cyber domains.

Mission Objective 1.2: Successful protection of U.S. borders and U.S. citizens, including the growing number of U.S. citizens traveling, conducting business, or living in our consular district.

Mission Goal 2: Foster a free and open Indo-Pacific region by promoting a rules-based order, both bilaterally and multilaterally, by supporting responsive, democratic governance and an independent media.

Mission Objective 2.1: An informed, participating, and inclusive public in the South Pacific emerges, served by a strong civil society that has space to advance democratic development, human rights, and social cohesion.

Mission Objective 2.2: Strengthened democratic institutions through improved cooperation with Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, Tuvalu, and resident multilateral agencies.

Mission Goal 3: Promote sustained economic prosperity driven by open-market economic policies and high-standard investment; increased connectivity; improved natural resource management; and free, fair, and reciprocal trading relationships.

Mission Objective 3.1: Improved economic connectivity – including through regional multilateral organizations – to reinforce high standards, create business opportunities for U.S. companies, and level the playing field.

Mission Goal 4: U.S. commitment to the region is reinforced through efforts to improve island states' resiliency to natural disasters and access climate change financing, and build regional maritime security partnerships.

Mission Objective 4.1: More healthy, educated, and resilient populations are fostered through assistance aimed at promoting sustainable and resilient economic and social systems.

Mission Objective 4.2: Partnerships (including Shiprider agreements) and cooperative initiatives improve protection of ocean resources, increase disaster response capabilities, and advance regional environmental goals, including climate change adaptation.

Mission Objective 4.3: Professional exchanges and cultural and educational programs reinforce the United States as a partner of choice in the Pacific.

Management Objective 1: Effective management of limited resources to best promote efficiency and capability.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 Bolster U.S. security and regional security, as well as protect U.S. citizens.

Description and Linkages: Only through cooperative, coordinated, and concerted efforts can the United States counter transnational security threats across the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. Post relies on partner countries to do their part, but most lack the necessary resources to effectively do so. This goal seeks to bolster security in furtherance of Pillars I (Protect the Homeland) and III (Preserve Peace Through Strength) of the National Security Strategy as well as Joint Strategic Goal 1 (Protect America's Security) and Joint Regional Strategy Goal 1 (Enhanced Security at Home and Abroad).

Mission Objective 1.1 Stronger partnerships and enhanced bilateral and regional security arrangements, through building cooperation, interoperability, and information-sharing, including in the maritime, port and aviation security, and cyber domains.

Justification: Embassy Suva covers five countries with significant exclusive economic zones (EEZs), including Kiribati, which has the 12th largest zone in the world at 1,328,890 sq. mi. despite having just 313 sq. mi. of land area. Limited financial, human, and technical resources constrain these countries' maritime domain awareness and their ability to respond to incidents. Fiji has recently encountered difficulty with maintaining minimum required capabilities. Similarly, after several arduous deployments, Tonga's military is in a reset period. Given these constraints and the proximity to Hawaii, Post seeks to work with our countries of accreditation through bilateral and multilateral engagements to increase regional security, which, in turn, further strengthens U.S. borders. Trainings and capacity-building efforts will also strengthen our relationships, inject U.S. values, and reinforce the United States as the region's partner of choice. Failure to achieve this objective provides an enormous gap in security that can be exploited by malafide actors.

Mission Objective 1.2 Successful protection of U.S. borders and U.S. citizens, including the growing number of U.S. citizens traveling, conducting business, or living in our consular district.

Justification: Embassy Suva covers the largest geographic consular district in the world – roughly four million square miles. In addition to the Embassy's five countries of accreditation, the Consular Section also provides services to travelers to and from the French territories in the Pacific – French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and New Caledonia. With a proven vulnerability to natural disasters combined with infrequent, unreliable, and often unsafe travel connections, U.S. citizens living or traveling in the South Pacific often need emergency assistance. Malevolent actors also seek to exploit

consular processes to improperly obtain travel documents. Post will counter these threats through crisis management planning, improved communication methods, and increased fraud prevention efforts.

Mission Goal 2 Foster a free and open Indo-Pacific region by promoting a rules-based order, both bilaterally and multilaterally, by supporting responsive, democratic governance and an independent media.

Description and Linkages: While Post's five countries of accountability are unique in many ways, all five have been independent countries for 50 years or less. Together with our allies, the Embassy seeks to leverage influence as the traditional partner of choice to further develop and help mature these countries' democratic and governance efforts. Achieving this goal will further Pillar IV (Advance American Influence) of the National Security Strategy as well as Joint Strategic Goal 3 (Promote American Leadership through Balanced Engagement) and Joint Regional Strategy Goal 5 (A Rules-Based Order in the Indo-Pacific). Failure to achieve this objective undermines efforts under other strategic goals and could lead to erratic or unpredictable behavior.

Mission Objective 2.1 An informed, participating, and inclusive public in the South Pacific emerges, served by a strong civil society that has space to advance democratic development, human rights, and social cohesion.

Justification: In the age of social media and the 24-hour news cycle, it is necessary to build support for policies with the public as well as with the host government. Post will emphasize the importance of rule of law, genuine political dialogue, and diverse opinions for economic prosperity and political stability, including amplifying the voices of vulnerable populations. Post will seek to use Public Affairs cultural and educational programming to project a positive U.S. image and will utilize social media as communication vehicle for advocating U.S. positions in support of key issues such as women's participation in the political process, LGBTI rights, and freedom of expression.

Mission Objective 2.2 Strengthened democratic institutions through improved cooperation with Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, Tuvalu, and resident multilateral agencies.

Justification: Genuine political dialogue, press freedom, and an active civil society will be crucial for Fiji to sustain the restoration of democratic governance following a succession of coups, the last in 2006. The period during and immediately after Fiji's 2018 national elections will be crucial. The Kingdom of Tonga has made progress toward a more representative form of government but is still struggling to overcome a legacy of non-elected hereditary noble leadership. Kiribati and Tuvalu have functioning but fragile democratic systems. Though a democracy, rights including freedom of

expression have come under attack in Nauru. Post will consistently engage to bolster democratic values.

Mission Goal 3 Promote sustained economic prosperity driven by open-market economic policies and high-standard investment; increased connectivity; improved natural resource management; and free, fair, and reciprocal trading relationships.

Description and Linkages: To varying degrees, Post's five countries of accreditation remain reliant on donors. To help assistance programs reach a natural endpoint, Post will advocate for improved economic connectivity, sustainable resource management, and market-driven policies that break down barriers to open trade. Doing so will foster private-sector investment and create business opportunities for U.S. firms. Achieving this goal will further Pillar II (Promote American Prosperity) of the National Security Strategy as well as Joint Strategic Goal 2 (Renew America's Competitive Advantage) and Joint Regional Strategy Goal 3 (Sustained and Inclusive Growth and Prosperity). Failure to achieve this objective hinders commercial opportunities for U.S. firms, keeps partner countries reliant on development assistance, and leaves the South Pacific vulnerable to predatory and coercive economic practices.

Mission Objective 3.1 Improved economic connectivity – including through regional multilateral organizations – to reinforce high standards, create business opportunities for U.S. companies, and level the playing field.

Justification: Without economic prosperity, partner countries are unwilling to engage on higher-order issues such as security and democracy. To foster mutually beneficial development, Post will continue to generate commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses by advocating for free, fair, and reciprocal trade and investment and by providing commercial services to interested U.S. firms. Post will also seek to promote governance practices that use market competition, development finance standards, environmental and social sustainability safeguards, and open and fair market access to develop high-standard infrastructure. To reduce dependency on foreign aid, Post will encourage high-standards for infrastructure projects and transparent development finance standards.

Mission Goal 4 U.S. commitment to the region is reinforced through efforts to improve island states' resiliency to natural disasters and ability to access climate change financing, and build regional maritime security partnerships.

Description and Linkages: Post's five countries of accreditation view climate change as the primary threat to their security. By assisting them build resilience, develop

adaptation management plans, gain access to climate change financing, and improve disaster response capacity, Post simultaneously deepens our bilateral relationships, reinforces U.S. commitment to the region, and fosters sustainable economic development. Achieving this goal will further Pillar IV (Advance American Influence) of the National Security Strategy as well as Joint Strategic Goal 3 (Promote American Leadership through Balanced Engagement) and Joint Regional Strategy Goal 5 (A Rules-Based Order in the Indo-Pacific). Failure to achieve this objective undermines our credibility with host governments, hindering progress on other strategic goals.

Mission Objective 4.1 More healthy, educated, and resilient populations are fostered through assistance aimed at promoting sustainable economic and social systems.

Justification: Healthy, educated, and resilient populations contribute to sustainable economic development, as well as regional stability and prosperity. Post will continue to promote climate adaptation and resilience efforts. South Pacific island nations are among the countries most affected by degradation of coastal areas, acidification of the ocean, and the loss of fish populations. These consequences of climate change have disproportionate financial impact on economies reliant on marine resources. Maritime resource management is inherently a transnational issue, requiring international solutions to effectively address local threats. Post will continue an active dialogue and advocate bilaterally and work in partnership with regional institutions including the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) to address climate change issues.

Mission Objective 4.2 Partnerships (including Shiprider agreements) and cooperative initiatives improve protection of ocean resources, increase disaster response capabilities, and advance regional environmental goals, including climate change adaptation.

Justification: The Embassy will work with U.S. commercial fisheries and relevant regional organizations to support long term sustainable fishing goals. We will support palliative measures to ease the pressure on coastal ecosystems, such as reef restoration, programs to reduce marine pollution, and ridge-to-reef projects which take a holistic approach protecting some of the richest environmental resources upon which local communities depend. We will seek to highlight the move to renewable energy in the United States and our own commitment to reducing greenhouse gasses to promote a positive image of the United States.

Mission Objective 4.3 Professional exchanges and cultural and educational programs reinforce the United States as a partner of choice in the Pacific.

Justification: Bilateral relationships with our five countries of accreditation are historic and were cemented during our cooperation during World War II. However, those memories are fading. In the age of social media and the 24-hour news cycle, it is necessary to build support for policies with the public as well as with the host government. Post will seek to use Public Affairs cultural and educational programming to project a positive U.S. image and maintain the United States's status as partner of choice in the Pacific.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 Effective management of limited resources to best promote efficiency and capability.

Justification: Historic understaffing, particularly given the mission's multi-country responsibilities, and the resulting strains on existing staff inhibit Post's ability to achieve ICS goals. Post's limited travel budget is inadequate to cover five countries, particularly given the amount of time needed to travel, and the limited and expensive flights that result from a near monopoly on routes within Fiji and between Fiji and our other countries of accreditation. While the Embassy continues to advocate for new USDH, EFM, and LE Staff positions and additional travel funding, Post will continue to capitalize on technological improvements and build productivity. Management will continue to analyze and lower operation costs by using more energy efficient practices, both in the Embassy and in the residences.