



# Integrated Country Strategy

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Samoa

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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..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The United States territory of American Samoa lies only 78 miles from Samoa, making the United States the Independent State of Samoa's closest neighbor. For this very reason, it is in the United States national interest to enact policies that promote stability in Samoa. The United States is Samoa's second largest trading partner, the two nations share a sea border, and the Samoan diaspora in the United States naturally promotes socio-economic interaction. Thousands of Samoan work legally in American Samoa and their remittances contribute significantly to Samoa's economy.

Samoa is located in a part of the South Pacific strategically vital for American national security. Besides being part of the same island grouping as American Samoa, Samoa is located about halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand. Air and sea freight going between the United States and two of its most important trading partners, Australia and New Zealand, transit through or near Samoa. Samoa also lies across increasingly important lanes of communication between Asia and South America. The surrounding waters are rich in seafood resources. In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the United States secured its interests in the region against European powers looking to colonize Samoa and in World War II the United States, at the invitation of New Zealand, deployed forces to Samoa to defend it from a Japanese attack and later used Samoa as a staging area for a counteroffensive.

Since the conclusion of World War II, no existential national security threats toward the United States have emanated from the South Pacific. The balance of power, however, is subtly shifting as rising powers seek to expand their footprint in the region. Samoa is no exception. Non-traditional development partners are increasing their levels of foreign assistance, in the form of grants and concessional loans. Although this is largely a positive development, Samoa runs the risk of taking on too much debt for projects that offer limited return on investment and which may contribute to degradation of good governance.

The Chief of Mission's priorities in Samoa are to expand the existing United States-Samoa maritime domain awareness partnership to secure the two countries sea border; increase reciprocal trade to create jobs for American workers; and assisting the Samoan government take advantage of the recent installment of a submarine cable to provide modern, efficient public administration to the Samoan people and business sectors.

Embassy Apia is minimally staffed. The Ambassador is resident at Embassy Wellington. Post has one United States Direct Hire (USDH) position serving as Deputy Chief of Mission and 20 locally employed staff responsible for providing public diplomacy, consular, management, political, economic, and security responsibilities. To achieve its objectives, Embassy Apia has Memorandums of Understanding with Mission New Zealand to provide the bulk of management services and consular services. Consulate General Auckland's public diplomacy officer serves concurrently as Embassy Apia's public diplomacy officer. The Regional Security

Office at Embassy Wellington is also responsible for Embassy Apia. Interagency personnel assigned to Mission New Zealand are generally responsible for covering Samoa as well.

The Chief of Mission believes this staffing arrangement is working well and that Embassy Apia would most benefit if any additional positions would be established in Mission New Zealand. Mission New Zealand regularly sends personnel to Embassy Apia for temporary duty and Mission New Zealand's two posts have the resources to most fully utilize any new personnel. Embassy Apia's management section, for example, would greatly benefit if Mission New Zealand attained a Financial Management Officer position.

One of the primary rationale behind Congress' establishment of Embassy Apia was to provide consular services, due to its relative isolation in the South Pacific and the fact thousands of Samoans and other third country nationals reside in American Samoa. American Samoa, although an American territory, is responsible for its own immigration system; therefore, aliens resident in American Samoa must obtain a visa before traveling to the United States and its other possessions. Mission New Zealand sends a consular officer every eight weeks to Embassy Apia to adjudicate routine visa applications. The Deputy Chief of Mission adjudicates visa cases in the interim for humanitarian or United States government interests reasons. Other consular workload is split between Mission New Zealand and Embassy Apia. This arrangement is achieving United States goals and should not be changed.

## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1:** Protect America's South Pacific National Security Interests

**Mission Objective 1.1:** Military and police law enforcement ties with Samoa are further strengthened; increasing U.S. access, influence, and interoperability with Samoa law enforcement and border security; bolstering Samoa's maritime security; and increasing its promotion of maritime safety, freedom of navigation, and rule of law at sea.

**Mission Objective 1.2:** Samoan democracy and governance practices are further strengthened; increasing the likelihood government policy is responsive to the people, in Samoa's long term interests, and implemented efficiently.

**Mission Goal 2:** Expand United States and Samoan Trade and Investment

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Samoa decides American and Western technology companies are its partners of choice to help it fully take advantage of the recently acquired broadband internet capacity to develop its economy and public sector services.

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Expand upon Samoa's agricultural and renewable energy economy to boost mutually beneficial trade; the United States becomes Samoa's largest single trading partner; creating good paying jobs in both countries.

**Mission Goal 3:** Provide Consular services more efficiently and effectively.

**Mission Objective 3.1:** Improve crisis preparedness and evacuation issues for U.S. citizens.

**Management Objective 1:** In cooperation with Mission New Zealand, obtain an additional USDH in Embassy Wellington's management section to ensure continued sound administrative oversight, future engagement and active U.S. diplomacy in Samoa.

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Mission Goal 1:** Protect America's South Pacific National Security Interests

**Description and Linkages:** Links to Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1, 1.3, 1.5

Mission Objective 1.1 Military and police law enforcement ties with Samoa are further strengthened; increasing U.S. access, influence, and interoperability with Samoa law enforcement and border security; bolstering Samoa's maritime security; and increasing its promotion of maritime safety, freedom of navigation, and rule of law.

**Mission Objective 1.1:** Military and police law enforcement ties with Samoa are further strengthened; increasing U.S. access, influence, and interoperability with Samoa law enforcement and border security; bolstering Samoa's maritime security; and increasing its promotion of maritime safety, freedom of navigation, and rule of law at sea

**Justification:** Sharing a maritime border and direct flights between our two countries brings a shared responsibility to effectively police illicit activity taking place between our borders. Additionally, Samoa serves as host to the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Center (PTCCC), an important regional law enforcement coordination body supported by both the United States, New Zealand, and Australia. Sustaining our engagement with Samoa, a relatively peaceful and stable society, aids in broader regional security and law enforcement initiatives.

**Mission Objective 1.2:** Samoan democracy, bureaucratic effectiveness, and civil society are further strengthened; increasing the likelihood government policy is responsive to the people, in Samoa's long term interests, and implemented efficiently.

**Justification:** Samoans share with Americans a respect for political independence, self-determination, and religious freedom. These shared values underpin a strong public appreciation for the United States and for our goals of promoting human rights and religious freedom internationally. Emphasis on these goals and values is critical to ensuring continued media freedoms, government transparency, respect for the rule of law, and to fighting corruption. These values also promote civic participation and economic entrepreneurship, keys to maintaining a healthy and vibrant civil society and private-sector business community.

**Mission Goal 2:** Expand United States and Samoa Trade and Investment

**Description and Linkages:** Links to Joint Strategic Plan Goal 2 and 3

Mission Objective 2.1 Samoa decides American and Western technology companies are its partners of choice to help it fully take advantage of the recently acquired broadband internet capacity to develop its economy and public sector services.

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Samoa decides American and Western technology companies are its partners of choice to help it fully take advantage of the recently acquired broadband internet capacity to develop its economy and public sector services.

**Justification:** Samoa is on the cusp of upgrading their national ICT connectivity as a result of a new fiber-optic submarine cable, the Tui Samoa Cable, coming online in the second quarter of 2018. Lack of high-speed internet connectivity has impacted business, education, health, tourism and a range of other sectors, with government officials and the private sector indicating strong excitement at the transformative potential for a range of services and industries, and the wider economy. It is in our best interest to play an integral role in ensuring Samoa maintains a stable, secure, and autonomous ICT sector utilizing American/Western technology.

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Expand upon Samoa's agricultural and renewable energy economy to boost mutually beneficial trade; the United States becomes Samoa's largest single trading partner; creating good paying jobs in both countries.

**Justification:** It is critical that Samoa's economy remains vibrant for the sake of U.S. foreign policy in the region. Helping Samoa bolster its export opportunities would pay dividends in improving the bilateral relationship and help reduce Samoa's aid dependency. More imports from Samoa to the U.S. also means more exports of U.S. materials, equipment, and technology, and can lower overall shipping costs. Samoa is also targeting 100% renewable energy nationwide by 2025. This is an opportunity for U.S. businesses to export technology and equipment, deliver services, and directly invest in Samoa's renewable energy future.

**Mission Goal 3:** Provide Consular services more efficiently and effectively

**Description and Linkages:** Links to Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1

**Mission Objective 3.1:** Improve crisis preparedness and evacuation issues for U.S. citizens

**Justification:** Given Samoa's vulnerability to natural disasters, it is imperative that there are evacuation procedures for U.S. citizens, to include establishing closer contacts with local authorities and strengthening post's methods of communication with private U.S. citizens.

## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1:** In cooperation with Mission New Zealand, obtain an additional USDH in Embassy Wellington's management section to ensure continued sound administrative oversight, future engagement and active U.S. diplomacy in Samoa.

**Justification:** Embassy Apia is a minimally staffed embassy. Many tasks which would typically be accomplished by USDH staff have been devolved to the extent possible to LE staff at post. Post relies heavily on Embassy Wellington and Consulate General Auckland's ICASS staff to provide needed assistance on matters across the Embassy spectrum, and especially on the Embassy's USDH ICASS service providers.

While the ideal situation for the Embassy would bring a second officer position to Embassy Apia, the Chief of Mission believes that Embassy Apia's management section would greatly benefit if Embassy Wellington attained a USDH Financial Management Officer position. This position will greatly relieve the Wellington Management Officer position, who serves as FMO for Mission New Zealand and Embassy Apia. The addition of a dedicated FMO would allow both positions to focus much more time on Apia. The benefits to both Mission New Zealand and Embassy Apia would be immediate and lasting.