



Integrated Country Strategy

Saudi Arabia

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The United States values the strength and durability of our relationship with Saudi Arabia. Over the next four years, we will continue to sustain our bilateral relationship to address a range of regional, economic, and security developments.

Mission Saudi Arabia's Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) will guide our continuing engagement in two central ways. First, our ICS will define our priorities for our engagement in Saudi Arabia. Second, our ICS will outline the initiatives we will undertake in pursuit of these priorities, providing a working plan for the next four years. To achieve the strategic vision set forth in our ICS, we will commit ourselves to the energetic pursuit of several key initiatives.

We will enhance U.S. security and regional stability by maintaining a strong security partnership with the Kingdom.

First, we will aim to advance regional stability within a security framework in which the United States is Saudi Arabia's preferred partner. We will encourage Saudi Arabia's role as a helpful and constructive partner in the prevention and resolution of regional conflicts. We will work with Saudi officials to address emerging threats, and support the strengthening of Saudi security institutions to enhance their operational and strategic capabilities.

Second, we will expand our robust counterterrorism relationship to ensure the safety of both U.S. and Saudi citizens, as well as to protect energy and other infrastructure crucial to the global economy. Through cooperation with our Saudi partners, we will disrupt and degrade terrorist groups, including their efforts to finance their activities, and reduce the threat posed by terrorists in Saudi Arabia, the United States, and around the world.

Third, we will facilitate legitimate travel to the United States while protecting national security through enhanced visa vetting procedures, fraud detection efforts and cooperation with our Saudi law enforcement partners.

We will strengthen our bilateral economic and commercial partnership with Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Arabian government's ambitious Vision 2030 socioeconomic reform program is a significant opportunity to advance the U.S. interest in Saudi Arabia's long-term economic and social stability. As the Saudi Arabian government aims to rapidly grow the Saudi private sector and develop entirely new economic sectors, we will advocate for and support U.S. companies as partners in this endeavor. Through engagement with Saudi authorities and the U.S. and Saudi private sectors, we will aim to create opportunities for deeper and broader investment, trade, and commercial relationships. Furthermore, we will work with the Saudi Arabian government to improve the investment climate for American companies, to strengthen intellectual property protections for American products, and to ensure a level economic playing field so that U.S. companies can compete effectively in local markets.

We will cooperate closely with the Saudi Arabian government on its leading economic priorities so that the Kingdom can sustain the economic prosperity upon which long-term stability depends. With the active participation of American businesses, we will support private sector-led growth to diversify the Saudi economy, create new jobs, and encourage women's entrepreneurship and participation in the economy. We will intensify our energy dialogue with Saudi Arabia to ensure that it remains a stable, reliable supplier of oil to global markets. Finally, we will work with Saudi authorities to develop new, alternative domestic sources of energy and introduce energy efficiency measures, and do so in a way that maximizes the participation of U.S. companies in the evolution of these sectors.

We will reinforce Saudi efforts to build institutions and develop civil society in a manner that encourages U.S. partnerships and supports U.S. interests.

We will encourage good governance and the recognition of individual freedoms in the Kingdom. To that end, we will support increased space for civil society and improved mechanisms for public participation by historically marginalized groups and voices of tolerance and moderation. We will also support judicial reforms and engage with Saudi officials to increase transparency and accountability in the legal and judicial system.

The U.S.-Saudi partnership is rooted in more than seven decades of close friendship and cooperation. We will strengthen these connections by continuing to provide student counseling services and market U.S. educational opportunities to the tens of thousands of Saudis who study in the United States. Furthermore, we will encourage Saudis and Americans to take advantage of exchange and speaker programs to discuss topics of shared interest and promote mutual understanding. Finally, we will encourage American performers, artists and athletes to perform in public venues in the Kingdom through cooperative programs with the Saudi government and Saudi private sector.

We will support moderate narratives in Saudi society, including narratives supportive of relationships with the United States, that blunt and discredit extremist language. We will aim for such narratives to become the predominant discourse in Saudi society. To that end, we will seek out opportunities for engagement in both traditional and social media. We will encourage Saudi educational institutions to promote examples of tolerance and moderation in textbooks and class materials. Mission Saudi Arabia staff will embrace their public diplomacy roles as representatives of the United States and we will take advantage of opportunities to explain and promote the United States and our policies.

Finally, Mission Saudi Arabia's consular operations will continue to provide American citizens with the fast, friendly, and efficient services they need in order to effectively conduct business, study, visit, and reside in the Kingdom.

We will maximize our resources and improve our efficiency.

The Mission will strive to be more integrated in its reporting and management – pursuing collaboration across sections, constituent posts, and other U.S. missions in the region. To that end, we will invest in our people and our infrastructure to provide an operational platform in support of the Mission. We will promote Mission staff effectiveness by reinforcing leadership and mentorship as professional development necessities, and we will boost morale and pride in our work by committing to a renovation of our facilities and ensuring sufficient resources are available to do so. Finally, we will support VIP U.S. visitors to Saudi Arabia and promote exchanges at all levels.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: U.S. security and regional stability enhanced by a strong U.S.-Saudi security partnership.

Mission Objective 1.1: Advance regional stability within a security framework in which the United States is the preferred partner.

Mission Objective 1.2: Terrorist groups and networks disrupted and degraded through increased counterterrorism cooperation, strengthened security institution capabilities, and disruption of terror finance, resulting in a reduced terrorist threat level both in Saudi Arabia and in the United States.

Mission Objective 1.3: Facilitate legitimate travel to the United States while protecting national security through enhanced visa vetting procedures, fraud detection efforts and cooperation with Saudi law enforcement partners.

Mission Goal 2: U.S.-Saudi bilateral partnership strengthened through a broad, robust economic and commercial relationship.

Mission Objective 2.1: Increased bilateral trade and investment create jobs and contribute to economic growth in both the United States and Saudi Arabia by leveraging the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) and opportunities created by Vision 2030 reforms.

Mission Objective 2.2: Supported by Mission advocacy, U.S. companies contribute to Saudi Arabia's economic diversification, job creation, and GDP growth in order to support U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia's long-term economic and social stability.

Mission Objective 2.3: Saudi Arabia aligns its energy policies more consistently with U.S. energy security, adopts a sustainable course to meet domestic demand, and continues as a leading energy supplier to global markets.

Mission Goal 3: Institution building and social development in Saudi Arabia reinforced in a manner reflecting U.S. interests and encouraging U.S. partnerships.

Mission Objective 3.1: Good governance and recognition of individual freedoms are enhanced by increasing space for civil society and improving mechanisms for public participation by marginalized groups and voices of tolerance and moderation.

Mission Objective 3.2: U.S.-Saudi ties are strengthened through greater interaction between the Saudi and American peoples, including through education and cultural exchanges.

Mission Objective 3.3: Moderate and tolerant narratives, including messages supportive of relationships with the United States, become the predominant discourse in Saudi society, blunting and discrediting extremist and intolerant language.

Mission Objective 3.4: American citizens receive the consular support and services they need to conduct business, study, visit, and reside safely in Saudi Arabia.

Management Objective 1: Improve human capital resources by providing additional professional development opportunities for local staff and by targeting an emerging generation of Saudi professionals for open positions.

Management Objective 2: Better support record numbers of ICASS customers by optimizing the use of available facilities and infrastructure, including reallocating space within the Embassy's Chancery and incorporating into it the Yemen Affairs Unit.

Management Objective 3: Increase the efficiency and quality of service deliverables by streamlining management controls, including in the provision of frequently used services such as support for VIP visitors and travel by Mission personnel.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: U.S. security and regional stability enhanced by a strong U.S.-Saudi security partnership.

Description and Linkages: In order to advance U.S. security and regional stability interests, including a Middle East free from terrorists, not dominated by powers hostile to the United States, and that contributes to a stable global energy market, the Mission will work to promote a security framework that is enhanced by a strong U.S.-Saudi security partnership. U.S. military strength is a vital component of the competition for influence in the region. Through security and defense partnerships, the Mission will continue to support Saudi efforts to transform their security and defense institutions through modernization and acquisition of necessary capabilities. The Mission will also continue to partner with Saudi Arabia to advance efforts to disrupt, degrade, and defeat terrorist groups and networks through increased counterterrorism cooperation. Finally, the Mission will advance U.S. border security through enhanced vetting processes, information sharing with Saudi law enforcement partners, and work with international and private sector partners to raise security standards. *Linkages: National Security Strategy (2017), Pillar I, Pillar III and Regional Context; U.S. Department of State / U.S. Agency for International Development Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2018-2022), Goal 1 and Goal 3.*

Mission Objective 1.1: Advance regional stability within a security framework in which the United States is the preferred partner.

Justification: The Saudi Arabian government has shown increasing willingness to take on a more direct role in regional security issues, while remaining open to U.S. input and guidance. Notably, Saudi Arabia has been a leading member of the international coalition to defeat ISIS. In support of U.S. objectives for a stable and prosperous region, we will continue to urge the Saudi Arabian government to allocate appropriate resources to support national and regional security initiatives, and to remain actively engaged with U.S. government and multilateral organizations.

Mission Objective 1.2: Terrorist groups and networks disrupted and degraded through increased counterterrorism cooperation, strengthened security institution capabilities, and disruption of terror finance, resulting in a reduced terrorist threat level both in Saudi Arabia and in the United States.

Justification: The United States and Saudi Arabia enjoy a longstanding security relationship, and counterterrorism cooperation remains strong. The Saudi Arabian government works closely with the United States to disrupt and degrade terrorist groups and networks, supporting enhanced bilateral cooperation to ensure the safety of both U.S. and Saudi citizens. The Saudi Arabian government continues to build its counterterrorism capacity and seeks assistance from the United States to transfer technical knowledge, skills, resources, and best practices to protect critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks, especially in the energy sector, and to enhance public security, including border protection and cyber security. Saudi authorities continue to arrest suspected militants, develop domestic security forces, implement improved border security measures, and strengthen controls on terror finance. Prominent officials and religious leaders make public statements against extremist ideology and behavior, and the Saudi Arabian government has launched several efforts related to countering violent extremism, including the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (also known as “Etidal”). The Mission continues to focus on enhancing U.S. and Saudi counterterrorism coordination, as Saudi Arabia refines its capacity to prevent and counter terror finance through the development of regulatory, investigative, and enforcement entities.

Mission Objective 1.3: Facilitate legitimate travel to the United States while protecting national security through enhanced visa vetting procedures, fraud detection efforts and cooperation with Saudi law enforcement partners.

Justification: Facilitating the travel of Saudi citizens to the United States promotes U.S. economic interests and greater understanding between the Saudi and American peoples. Exposure of Saudis to American values through study and personal travel to the United States contributes to greater openness and tolerance between our nations. The Mission has an obligation and interest in providing prospective Saudi visa applicants with accurate, readily-accessible information about U.S. visa requirements and access to visa appointment services within reasonable wait times. The U.S. passport and visa documentation process is of great importance to the Mission and directly impacts U.S. national security. A significant percentage of applicants for both nonimmigrant and immigrant visas at Mission posts are subject to supplementary vetting procedures. Close, effective cooperation between the Mission, U.S. government agencies, and Saudi law enforcement partners, is critical to U.S. national security.

Mission Goal 2: U.S.-Saudi bilateral partnership strengthened through a broad, robust economic and commercial relationship.

Description and Linkages: The U.S.-Saudi economic and commercial relationship is a fundamental pillar of the overall bilateral partnership. Broadening our economic ties – through increased trade and investment and other means – therefore contributes to closer bilateral relations and collaboration with a key regional partner. We will leverage more robust economic and commercial ties to advance U.S. national interests in a broad variety of ways – by opening new markets, increasing U.S. exports, improving the local investment climate, securing contracts for U.S. companies, creating jobs for American citizens at home, and increasing U.S. prosperity. We will promote a free, fair, and reciprocal trade relationship with Saudi Arabia that contributes to a robust and secure U.S. economy. Moreover, our robust economic and commercial partnership with Saudi Arabia will advance the U.S. interest in ensuring that Saudi Arabia remains a prosperous, stable partner in a volatile region and a reliable supplier of energy to global markets. *Linkages: National Security Strategy (2017), Pillars II and III; U.S. Department of State / U.S. Agency for International Development Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2018-2022), Goals 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.*

Mission Objective 2.1: Increased bilateral trade and investment create jobs and contribute to economic growth in both the United States and Saudi Arabia by leveraging the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) and opportunities created by Vision 2030 reforms.

Justification: Saudi Arabia has the 20th-largest economy in the world and it is the only Arab country in the G-20. Saudi Arabia is the United States' largest goods trading partner in the Middle East and North Africa region, and our 22nd largest goods trading partner in the world. The statistics reflect a rich, diverse economic relationship with Saudi Arabia that serves as a fundamental pillar of our overall partnership with the Kingdom. There is great potential to strengthen our economic relationship even further over the next four years as the Saudi government pursues its ambitious Vision 2030 economic reform plans. The scale and breadth of this program will open tremendous trade and investment opportunities for U.S. businesses and carries the potential to create jobs and wealth in both nations. Saudi Arabia is still adjusting its trade policies and practices to international norms, providing the United States with ample opportunity to shape Saudi rules, standards, and procedures in a manner that facilitates U.S. exports, increases market access for U.S. goods and services, and improves the local investment climate. We will leverage our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) and other avenues of dialogue to improve conditions for trade and investment,

thereby enabling the private sector to increase trade, investment, job creation, and overall prosperity in both nations.

Mission Objective 2.2: Supported by Mission advocacy, U.S. companies contribute to Saudi Arabia's economic diversification, job creation, and GDP growth in order to support U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia's long-term economic and social stability.

Justification: The United States has a vital stake in Saudi Arabia's continued economic prosperity and social stability. Pursuant to its ambitious Vision 2030 socioeconomic reform program, Saudi Arabia has taken significant steps to diversify its economy and create private-sector jobs for Saudi citizens to meet the demands of the Kingdom's young and rapidly growing population. Economic diversification will increase Saudi Arabia's resilience to fluctuations in the oil market and foster sustainable private-sector job creation, including for Saudi Arabia's increasingly well-educated female population. U.S. capital and expertise can contribute meaningfully to the diversification of the Saudi economy away from its dependence on oil exports. Supported by Mission advocacy, U.S. companies can provide significant support for the achievement of the Saudi Arabian government's Vision 2030 goals, thereby helping to bolster the long-term social stability of a vital partner in a volatile region.

Mission Objective 2.3: Saudi Arabia aligns its energy policies more consistently with U.S. energy security, adopts a sustainable course to meet domestic demand, and continues as a leading energy supplier to global markets.

Justification: Saudi Arabia's oil exports – and particularly the country's ability to compensate for supply disruptions elsewhere through strategic deployment of its spare production capacity – have long been essential to global oil-market stability and growth of the world economy. Saudi oil will remain important to the global economy over the coming decades. In recent years, however, rising domestic oil consumption has eaten into Saudi spare capacity. By increasing domestic energy prices and the efficiency of energy usage, consumption growth has slowed. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has embarked on ambitious programs in nuclear energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and natural gas to replace the use of oil in power generation. Moreover, oil and the wealth derived from its production undergird Saudi Arabia's ability to act as a valuable U.S. partner on a wide range of political, economic, and security issues. It is in the U.S. interest to support the diversification of the Saudi energy basket (including alternatives) and adoption of energy management, conservation, and efficiency measures, and to do so in a way that maximizes the participation of U.S. companies in the evolution of these sectors.

Mission Goal 3: Institution building and social development in Saudi Arabia reinforced in a manner reflecting U.S. interests and encouraging U.S. partnerships.

Description and Linkages: As the Saudi Arabian government pursues its Vision 2030 plan for economic and social development, the Mission will engage Saudi public and private actors to encourage the development of institutions and practices that support U.S. interests and encourage U.S. partnerships. We will advocate for the rule of law, good governance, and the protection of individual freedoms, which will enable Saudi Arabia to reach its full potential. Through educational, professional, and cultural exchanges, we will build strong relationships between the peoples of the United States and Saudi Arabia, relationships that support our mutual security and economic goals. We will partner with Saudi Arabian public and private organizations to counter violent extremism, and we will support moderate, tolerant narratives to counter extremist and intolerant ideology in order to eliminate the environment in which terrorism thrives. By providing excellent consular services and engaging relevant Saudi Arabian authorities, we will strive to make it possible for Americans to conduct business, study, visit, and reside safely in Saudi Arabia. The presence of a strong American community in Saudi Arabia supports and advances U.S. interests across a variety of Mission goals. By working to ensure that Saudi Arabia's institutions and social development reflect U.S. interests and encourage U.S. partnerships, we will build the relationships and set the stage to achieve our current and future national security priorities. *Linkages: National Security Strategy (2017), Pillar I, II, III and IV; U.S. Department of State / U.S. Agency for International Development Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2018-2022), Goals 1, 2 and 3.*

Mission Objective 3.1: Good governance and recognition of individual freedoms are enhanced by increasing space for civil society and improving mechanisms for public participation by marginalized groups and voices of tolerance and moderation.

Justification: For the promotion of long-term domestic stability within the Kingdom, it is in the U.S. interest to ensure Saudi Arabia balances national security concerns with good governance, respect for individual freedoms, and the rule of law. To support the achievement of this balance, the U.S. government will seek to cultivate a wide range of government and civil society relationships, bolster those who champion tolerance, moderation, and rule of law, and develop the leadership skills of social leaders, influencers, and civil society organizations that seek to advance good governance in the Kingdom.

Mission Objective 3.2: U.S.-Saudi ties are strengthened through greater interaction between the Saudi and American peoples, including through education and cultural exchanges.

Justification: Saudi Arabia is the fourth-largest source country of foreign students studying in the United States. Saudi students and the Ministry of Education prefer for Saudi students to study in the United States, and seek to make Saudi students in the United States successful. Concurrently, the Ministry of Education seeks to improve and modernize Saudi teaching practices. The Mission supports Saudi Arabia's efforts to educate young Saudi citizens within the U.S. educational system and with the support of U.S. professionals. Similarly, the Mission identifies nearly 150 Saudi young leaders and professionals each year to participate in U.S. government exchange programs in order to build lasting connections between Saudi and American citizens, and continues to engage alumni of these exchanges to serve as effective advocates for the U.S.-Saudi relationship, to amplify the Mission's engagement on priority issues, and to support alumni as models for active civic, economic, and political participation. As part of Vision 2030's goals to develop opportunities for family recreation within Saudi Arabia, the Government of Saudi Arabia is working to offer public performances of global talent. The Mission supports these efforts in order to familiarize the Saudi public with American performers and culture, and promote commercial opportunities for American and Saudi recreational businesses. These educational, cultural, and exchange activities seek to promote American values and influence, and establish lasting, mutually beneficial relationships between the peoples of Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Mission Objective 3.3: Moderate and tolerant narratives, including messages supportive of relationships with the United States, become the predominant discourse in Saudi society, blunting and discrediting extremist and intolerant language.

Justification: Political and social forces both outside and within the Kingdom generate propaganda in support of violent extremist ideologies. While available polling data suggests that the majority of Saudis reject extremist ideologies, even a small percentage of the population acting in response to this propaganda represents a threat to domestic and regional stability, the safety of American and Saudi citizens, and the safety of people around the world. The Saudi Arabian government is mindful of this threat and is actively engaged in combatting it, both through countering terrorist acts directly and discrediting the ideologies that support terrorism. Prominent Saudi officials and religious leaders make public statements against extremist ideology and behavior, and the Saudi Arabian government has launched several efforts related to countering violent extremism (CVE), including the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (also known as “Etidal”). The Jeddah-based Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has launched a nascent Center for Dialogue, Peace, and Understanding with the Sawt Al-Hikma (The Voice of Wisdom) as its operational arm supporting CVE messaging and delegitimizing extremist discourse. The United States partners with Saudi Arabia to counter extremist and intolerant ideology in order to eliminate the threat of violent extremism and terrorism, while encouraging respect for freedom of expression.

Mission Objective 3.4: American citizens receive the consular support and services they need to conduct business, study, visit, and reside safely in Saudi Arabia.

Justification: The approximately 80,000 members of the resident American community in Saudi Arabia are ambassadors of American values at a time of significant cultural change in the Kingdom. Many of them work in sectors such as energy and defense that are relevant to U.S. strategic and economic interests in the region. Terrorism has long constituted a significant threat to American citizens in the Kingdom and ballistic missile attacks by rebels in Yemen have emerged recently as another potent threat. Providing American citizens with accurate, timely information about potential threats and preparing to assist them in the event of a crisis remain core Mission concerns. The Vision 2030 social and economic reform program is advancing rapidly in some areas that could have implications for demand for consular services, most notably in the opening of the country to tourism. However, the enduring challenges of the Saudi legal system and cultural context mean that American citizens require a high level of consular support. The presence of a vibrant American community in Saudi Arabia supports and advances U.S. interests across a variety of Mission goals and is not possible without the ready availability of top quality consular services.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Improve human capital resources by providing additional professional development opportunities for local staff and by targeting an emerging generation of Saudi professionals for open positions.

Justification: To facilitate ongoing Mission expansion efforts, we will maximize our existing resources by increasing the quantity and quality of training opportunities for local staff, while recruiting an increasing number of Saudi professionals to fill open positions.

Management Objective 2: Better support record numbers of ICASS customers by optimizing the use of available facilities and infrastructure, including reallocating space within the Embassy's Chancery and incorporating into it the Yemen Affairs Unit.

Justification: ICASS continues to serve a record number of customers and Mission ICASS demands stress available workload and space capacities.

Management Objective 3: Increase the efficiency and quality of service deliverables by streamlining management controls, including in the provision of frequently used services such as support for VIP visitors and travel by Mission personnel.

Justification: Given the high level of demand for Mission resources, we must ensure that our management platform operates efficiently and effectively. The management platform must remain an innovative, cost-conscious, and efficient service provider in order to best facilitate our efforts to achieve our Mission goals.