



Regional Bureau Strategy

Bureau of International Organization Affairs

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1. Executive Statement

The United States prioritizes efforts in multilateral organizations that serve American interests, recognizing that the United Nations (UN) and other related organizations can contribute to solving many of the complex problems in the world. The United States helped to found the United Nations in 1945 to maintain international peace and security and achieve international cooperation in resolving international problems. Through multilateral venues, the United States shapes responses, including addressing challenges to international peace and security, advancing a shared vision of global economic prosperity, and managing threats to global health, and much more. Strategic U.S. investment in the multilateral system allows us to strengthen the effectiveness of international organizations, set the agenda to advance U.S. priorities, and share the burden of action among member states.

The Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO), with its six diplomatic missions (Geneva, Montreal, Nairobi, New York, Rome, and Vienna), develops and implements U.S. policy in the United Nations system and a range of other multilateral organizations. IO's mission statement is to **employ multilateral diplomacy as a tool for advancing U.S. interests through a more effective and efficient UN and multilateral system**. Strong, sustained U.S. leadership at the UN and in other multilateral venues is important to pursuing national interests and pushing for urgently needed institutional reforms.

In the period of 2018-2021, IO and our missions will work in concert to advance key U.S. national interests and priorities through multilateral diplomacy according to three broad strategic goals and one crosscutting management objective. First, in support of Pillar I of the 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) and Goal 1 of the 2018 Department of State-U.S. Agency for International Development Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), we will employ the convening power of the UN and other organizations to **protect the American people by addressing challenges to international peace and security**. Active conflicts, post-conflict environments, and other dangers to global stability and the welfare of U.S. citizens demand nimble and sustained responses. International organizations can be useful tools to support those responses, demonstrated by efforts in the UN Security Council to pursue more effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and recent successful action by the World Health Organization to help end an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. IO works with UN development agencies to counter instability through poverty alleviation, good governance, and crisis and conflict prevention and recovery.

Coordinated multilateral action will be crucial to achieving IO's second strategic goal – **promote American prosperity and values** – in line with NSS Pillar II and JSP Goal 2. By supporting U.S. delegations to specialized and technical agencies, IO influences policies and activities, for example protecting American economic interests through robust protection of

patents, copyrights, and intellectual property at the World Intellectual Property Organization. Additionally, working closely with the U.S. private sector and organizations supporting the humanitarian-to-development continuum, IO encourages expanded opportunities for U.S. implementers of humanitarian and development aid.

Achieving maximum success on any of the aspirations outlined under Goals 1 and 2 of this plan will require unrelenting U.S. attention and energy to **improve return on investment by driving reform of the United Nations and other international organizations**, aligned to NSS Pillars III and IV and JSP Goals 3 and 4. The Bureau builds and leads coalitions to promote American values and reinforce U.S. influence in multilateral settings. The Bureau pursues initiatives to institute reforms and improve organizations' capacities to prepare for and respond to challenges, including by supporting the implementation of UN Development System Reform. The Bureau emphasizes shared responsibility among members, promotes efficient financial and administrative management, and requires organizations to be transparent and accountable. Additionally, IO advocates for the adoption of sound policies, processes, and practices so organizations deliver results based on comparative advantages and strengthen their overall organizational and development effectiveness. IO uses findings from independent assessments to engage bilaterally with organizations, jointly with allies and partners, and collectively through governing bodies to address areas of weakness within organizations, advocating for needed changes.

Finally, global challenges, current, projected, and unforeseen, will require a continuous effort to **align and strengthen the Bureau workforce and its internal operations to maximize realization of U.S. goals**. Prioritizing scarce resources enables the Bureau to achieve its highest priorities on behalf of the American taxpayer.

The IO Bureau Strategy articulates IO's efforts to engage continuously to advance U.S. interests in the United Nations and other organizations. IO will periodically review achievement of U.S. objectives detailed in the Strategy.

2. Bureau Strategic Framework

Goal 1: Protect the American people by addressing challenges to international peace and security.

Objective 1.1: Employ the authorities of the UN Security Council and the convening power of other UN bodies and international organizations to identify and address challenges to U.S. interests.

Objective 1.2: Elevate U.S. counterterrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE) priorities in relevant UN venues.

Objective 1.3: Pursue or strengthen tough, targeted UNSC sanctions to isolate and deter malign actors.

Objective 1.4: Propel meaningful reform of the UN's peacekeeping and peacebuilding toolkit to improve sustainable political solutions to conflict, prevention, and response.

Objective 1.5: Strengthen multilateral mechanisms to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, and conventional weapons that may pose threats to the United States and pursue disarmament where it enhances U.S. national security.

Goal 2: Promote American prosperity and values.

Objective 2.1: Support the interests of American business at international standard-setting bodies.

Objective 2.2: Promote stable global economies and predictable markets for American products and jobs.

Objective 2.3: Promote and defend American values in all relevant venues, including on matters related to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Objective 2.4: Strengthen the international rules-based order to ensure the safety and security of Americans working and/or traveling abroad.

Objective 2.5: Maintain U.S. leadership at relevant international organizations to catalyze effective responses to humanitarian crises and to foster resilience.

Goal 3: Improve return on investment by driving reform of the United Nations and other international organizations.

Objective 3.1: Achieve improved financial burden sharing among UN member states.

Objective 3.2: Expand and improve oversight and accountability of multilateral organizations through increased transparency and improved administrative and financial management.

Objective 3.3: Continue work on the adoption of system-wide strategic coherence that targets threats to global peace, security, and economic stability.

Objective 3.4: Maximize coalition building and U.S. diplomatic prowess in international organizations to promote American values and reinforce U.S. influence.

Cross-cutting Management Objective: Align and strengthen the Bureau workforce and its internal operations to maximize realization of U.S. goals.

3. Goals and Objectives

Bureau Goal 1 Protect the American people by addressing challenges to international peace and security.

a. Description and Linkages

With Goal 1, IO advances key U.S. national interests and priorities, including, inter alia, pursuing more effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, addressing pandemics threats, and countering instability. Specifically, IO supports execution of the 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) Pillar I through coordinated U.S. action in response to threats before they reach the United States. IO employs the convening power of the UN system to counter terrorism, violent extremism, and instability, and to safeguard and prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. IO pursues UNSC sanctions that effectively isolate and deter malign actors, and propels meaningful reform of UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations to facilitate solutions to conflict. As noted in the NSS, transnational actors who threaten the United States “thrive under conditions of state weakness and prey on the vulnerable.” IO, by promoting fundamental freedoms and human rights in collaboration with international partners, builds resilience and strengthens governance in at-risk nations, who are then able to deny terrorist organizations the spaces they seek to operate with impunity and recruit new members. Correspondingly, IO contributes to achieving U.S. Department of State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Goal 1 through efforts to prevent, mitigate, and respond to threats to American security.

Bureau Objective 1.1 Employ the authorities of the UN Security Council and the convening power of other UN bodies and international organizations to identify and address challenges to U.S. interests.

a. Justification

The UN Security Council (UNSC), along with other UN bodies, is a vital tool for identifying challenges to U.S. interests and garnering the support needed to push U.S. policy forward. The UN system also provides both the ability and the mechanism to address emerging challenges to U.S. interests. Through these multilateral forums, the United States can garner support from likeminded countries for U.S. policy interests.

The United States uses UNSC resolutions and debates to address women, peace, and security issues, which several IO offices have equities in. We use UNSC and UN General

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Assembly (UNGA), including the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Affairs (“Third”) Committee to advance key thematic and country-specific human rights priorities and to counter efforts by other nations to either undermine human rights and fundamental freedoms or redefine them in their own terms.

The World Health Organization (WHO), for example, has the power to bring together numerous response partners to work on preparedness and response to pandemic or other infectious threats that could spread internationally. The United States can work through the WHO to address these threats before they have a chance to impact the United States or its allies.

Bureau Objective 1.2 Elevate U.S. counterterrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE) priorities in relevant UN venues.

a. Justification

The Bureau promotes UN efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism, including by supporting efforts in UN forums and with Member States to facilitate and strengthen implementation of the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism as well as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. IO engages with a variety of UN actors engaged in efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism, including the UN Office of Counterterrorism, the UNSC Counterterrorism Executive Directorate, the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the UNSC ISIS-al-Qaida and Afghanistan Taliban Sanctions Monitoring Team.

UN development agencies’ work addresses some of the socio-economic conditions to which a rise in radicalization and violent extremism is attributed, and can be channeled to areas to help achieve U.S. Preventing Violent Extremism/Countering Violent Extremism objectives. Working with agencies such as the UN Development Program (UNDP) and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) IO sets an agenda in line with key U.S. interests to address the drivers of instability. IO engages with organizations through annual strategic dialogues and regular executive board meetings.

Bureau Objective 1.3 Pursue or strengthen tough, targeted UNSC sanctions to isolate and deter malign actors.

a. Justification

UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions, including those related to North Korea, ISIS, al-Qaida, and affiliates are an effective reflection of international will on peace and security issues.

The United States works continuously to ensure that sanctions regimes evolve appropriately and garner the support needed to maximize their impact, including through listings, delistings, exemptions, and adjustments to mandates in relevant UN Security Council resolutions, as well as through development of “Implementation Assistance Notices” and support for capacity building projects to ensure states know what is expected of them and have the tools to implement UNSC sanctions.

Bureau Objective 1.4 Propel meaningful reform of the UN’s peacekeeping and peacebuilding toolkit to improve sustainable political solutions to conflict, prevention, and response.

a. Justification

UN peacekeeping operations are among the most evident and effective mechanisms of burden-sharing to address the global challenges to international peace and security. However, reform is needed to achieve better, smarter peacekeeping operations that are able to more effectively and efficiently promote sustainable political solutions to conflict. Mission reviews are essential to identifying needed changes, shaping the U.S. strategy for UN Security Council negotiations, and leading reform efforts within the UN. To help guide ongoing peacekeeping mission reviews, the United States has identified five principles against which to assess all missions: 1) missions must support political solutions; 2) host country strategic consent is critical; 3) mandates must be realistic and achievable; 4) clear sequencing and exit strategies are required; and 5) missions and mandates must be adjusted where UN Security Council objectives are not achieved.

Bureau Objective 1.5 Strengthen multilateral mechanisms to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, and conventional weapons that may pose threats to the United States and pursue disarmament where it enhances U.S. national security.

a. Justification

Keeping weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery and conventional weapons out of the hands of terrorists or rogue states requires a concerted effort by the entire international community. Strengthening the ability of international institutions to monitor and respond to such threats complements U.S. responses to the threat and underscores the universal norm against proliferation of WMD and conventional weapons.

Multilateral mechanisms provide wide-reaching apparatuses to help contain and restrain weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. These mechanisms also provide assistance in the pursuit of disarmament so that the United States does not stand alone

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in these efforts. Preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction is a global effort that requires a multilateral response and security guarantees.

Bureau Goal 2 Promote American prosperity and values

a. Description and Linkages

In pursuit of this goal, IO engages with UN funds and programs, specialized and technical agencies, and other organizations to protect American economic interests and encourages expanded opportunities for U.S. implementers of humanitarian and development aid. In particular, IO supports execution of National Security Strategy (NSS) Pillar II through concerted action to preserve American economic security. IO strengthens international rules and standards to protect U.S. businesses and fortify their market and global commons access, and aligns standard-setting practices with American interests. IO promotes global economic stability and innovations in partnership with U.S. companies, and presses for needed institutional reforms to foster resilience through effective humanitarian crisis response. To reinforce these efforts, IO bolsters aviation and maritime security to protect American citizens and companies abroad in line with NSS Pillar I. Additionally, in line with NSS Pillar IV, IO forcefully champions U.S. values in multilateral forums by using all of the diplomatic tools at our disposal to call out and isolate nations whose systematic abuse of human rights runs counter to our principles. We leverage our status within these organizations to support our ideals, including the empowerment of women and girls, the protection of religious freedom, and the prevention of mass atrocities. Similarly, IO contributes to achieving the U.S. Department of State_USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Goal 2 through efforts to improve American economic opportunities. IO reinforces this with efforts to advance American security and leadership, in line with JSP Goals 1 and 3, respectively.

Bureau Objective 2.1 Support the interests of American business at international standard-setting bodies.

a. Justification

U.S. businesses do not have decision-making power in international standard-setting bodies. In a few cases, the private sector may be accredited as part of an official U.S. delegation, but even then they are subordinate to U.S. government policy, and to the U.S. government representatives heading the delegation. Since decision-making in these bodies is done by governments, it's critical that the U.S. government represent and promote the interests of American businesses since many of the decisions affect the markets, production, distribution, trade, and other activities of the private sector.

International standard setting bodies, such as food safety standard CODEX Alimentarius (a joint committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health

Organization (WHO)), set standards that are often adopted by developing countries that do not have the capacity to develop their own standards. U.S. engagement is vital in these bodies in order for U.S. businesses to be able to access foreign markets and to protect the health and safety of U.S. consumers. At the WHO, the United States advances sound public health objectives while ensuring WHO technical guidelines and policies are evidence-driven and do not undermine U.S. economic and private sector interests.

Bureau Objective 2.2 Promote stable global economies and predictable markets for American products and jobs.

a. Justification

IO will drive multilateral action to address present and future challenges by promoting global economic development and improving the development and humanitarian architecture. Development agencies work to stabilize economies, enhancing their purchasing power and making predictable marketplaces. Additionally, standards setting by international organizations helps to level the playing field for American businesses, thereby creating markets for U.S. products and U.S.-based jobs.

Bureau Objective 2.3 Promote and defend American values in all relevant venues, including on matters related to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

a. Justification

The United States promotes and defends American values on a range of human rights, social, and humanitarian issues covered by the UN General Assembly's Third Committee. We work to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, and belief, across the international human rights treaties to which the United States is a party. We also participate in and report to treaty bodies and otherwise honor our legal commitments. We work to advance the human rights of women, older persons, youth, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples, and other groups across the UN system, including UN General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Commission for Social Development (CSocD), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), UN Women, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), Conference of States Parties (COSP) for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. The United States also promotes the nexus of human rights and security through the UN Security Council.

Bureau Objective 2.4 Strengthen the international rules-based order to ensure the safety and security of Americans working and/or traveling abroad.

a. Justification

It is critical to work with international and industry partners to raise security standards on behalf of American citizens. Strengthening standards and promoting the implementation of best practices for aviation and maritime safety and security help protect the lives and livelihood of American people and American companies who are operating, working, living, or travelling overseas.

Bureau Objective 2.5 Maintain U.S. leadership at relevant international organizations to catalyze effective responses to humanitarian crises and to foster resilience.

a. Justification

As the single largest provider of humanitarian assistance bilaterally and multilaterally, U.S. leadership in relevant international organizations helps to ensure that those bodies are effective partners in U.S. humanitarian response and are managed in an efficient and transparent manner. In coordination with interagency partners, IO will promote internal reforms within UN organizations that improve coordinated humanitarian action. The timely and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance can deter large-scale population movement, mitigate significant economic damage, including the loss of livelihood and productive assets, and substantially improve recovery times.

Bureau Goal 3 Improve return on investment by driving reform of the United Nations and other international organizations.

a. Description and Linkages

Under this goal, IO builds and leads coalitions to promote American values and reinforce U.S. influence in multilateral settings, and pursues initiatives to institute reforms while emphasizing shared responsibility among members. Specifically, IO supports execution of National Security Strategy (NSS) Pillar IV through American leadership to reform multilateral forums. IO leverages U.S. participation to improve burdensharing and fiscal responsibility, and calls upon organizations to increase preparedness, coherence, and capacity to deliver more efficiently and effectively. As a force multiplier, IO advances relations with bilateral and multilateral actors through both internal and external coordination mechanisms, including targeted engagement with public diplomacy audiences, in line with NSS Pillar III. IO also recognizes that we must maintain our position of leadership in multilateral forums or risk ceding it to nations whose interests and objectives run counter to our own, while also taking a principled stand

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on the crucial need for budgetary and operational reforms in these organizations. Concurrently, IO contributes to achieving the U.S. Department of State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goals 3 and 4 through strategic engagement and reform initiatives, respectively.

Bureau Objective 3.1 Achieve improved financial burden sharing among UN member states.

a. Justification

The Bureau, in support of the U.S. Mission to the UN in New York, seeks UNGA agreement for a more balanced financial burden at the UN and related organizations. This effort supports a U.S. statutory mandate that limits U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping missions to no more than 25% of the full budget. The Bureau supports diplomatic efforts to obtain agreement on new Scales of Assessment on the UN regular budget, peacekeeping budget, and other organizations' budgets.

Bureau Objective 3.2 Expand and improve oversight and accountability of multilateral organizations through increased transparency and improved administrative and financial management.

a. Justification

The Bureau aims to establish transparency and accountability norms in the use of financial and human resources across a wide range of international organizations to ensure the efficient, responsible, and effective use of U.S. tax payer dollars. The Bureau conducts regular analysis of existing management and financial policies in international organizations benchmarking against international standard-setting entities in the fields of audit, accounting, human resources, and ethics and compliance. With that data, the Bureau works with the secretariats of international organizations and other member states through the governing body process to ensure the policies in effect reflect international best practice, align with U.S. values, and promote a well-functioning institution that can ensure a return on U.S. investment. Success of these objectives is often dependent on persuading other member states in consensus-based bodies that reform on a certain administrative policy or issue is required.

Bureau Objective 3.3 Continue work on the adoption of system-wide strategic coherence that target threats to global peace, security, and economic stability.

a. Justification

Effective multilateral organizations deliver fully and efficiently on their comparative advantages and are better able to leverage synergies within the broader system of institutions and entities working to address global challenges. The potential of individual organizations to deliver has been reduced, and their contributions to the broader system stymied, by outmoded operating methods as well as fragmentation and duplication. IO will help increase the multilateral system's positive effects on areas critical to American national security and economic interests by working with and through organizations to modernize and maximize their impact potential. This can reduce the need for the United States to act alone and decrease the bilateral burden in meeting national security goals.

Bureau Objective 3.4 Maximize coalition building and U.S. diplomatic prowess in international organizations to promote American values and reinforce U.S. influence.

a. Justification

The Bureau connects functions such as peace and security, human rights, and economic development with U.S. foreign policy goals for each region of the world and advocates for multilateral perspectives, objectives, and equities with regional bureaus. By developing strategies, providing policy recommendations, and coordinating the United States' participation in a number of annual multilateral and bilateral strategic dialogues, IO advances issues with bilateral and regional actors. IO leverages its pioneering data science initiative to increase the use of evidence-based analysis, including a UN voting database, to support multilateral foreign policy.

Through engagement in multilateral humanitarian forums such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, International Organization for Migration, ECOSOC, UN High Commissioner for Refugees and more, the United States consistently displays its commitment to humanitarian aid and promotes meaningful reform of the humanitarian agencies. In addition, the United States uses its position to engage with other countries to increase their contributions and improve burden-sharing. We emphasize our global leadership in human rights by forcefully advocating in UNGA, UNSC, and other UN forums for human rights and fundamental freedoms and by countering efforts by other nations to undermine or downplay them. In the context of human rights issues under consideration by UN human rights

forums in which we do not participate, we actively engage bilateral partners to influence votes and outcomes.

Robust and sustained U.S. leadership in international organizations serves as an effective vehicle for strategic public diplomacy outreach targeting global audiences, civil society, and media. With a focus on American values and how they translate into U.S. multilateral priorities, public diplomacy activities will underscore U.S. intent to remain the most important voice on the global stage.

4. Cross-cutting Management Objective

Description and Linkages

Prioritizing scarce resources enables the Bureau to achieve its highest priorities on behalf of the American taxpayer. This management objective supports execution of National Security Strategy (NSS) Pillar III and contributes to achieving the U.S. Department of State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Goal 4, in particular, through IO's efforts to adapt and evolve to meet current diplomatic challenges. As IO supports execution of all NSS pillars and contributes to achieving all JSP goals, efficient use of scarce Bureau resources will be paramount to attaining U.S. strategic aspirations.

Management Objective Align and strengthen the Bureau workforce and its internal operations to maximize realization of U.S. goals.

Justification

Missions and domestic offices have consistently found resources to be only minimally adequate to achieve IO goals. As significant additional resources are unlikely to be available in the short-term, we must ensure that the resources we do have are allocated to the Bureau's highest priority areas.