



# Functional Bureau Strategy

# Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

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## 1. Executive Statement

The mission of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) is to anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict that undermines U.S. national interests. This mission supports Administration priorities articulated in the National Security Strategy (NSS), such as pursuing threats to the U.S. homeland and people at their source, preserving peace through strength, assuring civilian security, and expanding burden sharing.

CSO takes a strategic approach to prevention and stabilization assistance. The bureau prioritizes U.S. national security interests by judiciously using U.S. taxpayer dollars and realizing effective and measurable outcomes. This approach builds upon recent whole-of-government initiatives such as the Global Fragility Act (2019); the Strategic Prevention Project (2019); the Elie Wiesel Act (2018); the Stabilization Assistance Review (2018); Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 (2018); and the U.S. National Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (2019).

Our bureau priorities also reflect global conflict trends. Violent conflict is at its highest levels in decades and has become more complex, protracted, and virulent across the globe. It involves a range of non-state armed groups, and regional and international actors targeting fragile states. These states are fertile ground for great power competition, terrorist groups, and organized narco-crime. The People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia capitalize on fragile states by gaining strategic access, exploiting weakness, and shaping future political outcomes against U.S. interests. Malign state actors such as Iran and North Korea also use fragile states to advance their interests by instigating political instability through proxies and hybrid threats.

Violent conflict undermines stability and economic prosperity. In parts of Africa, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, violent conflict has fueled internal displacements and mass migration that destabilizes neighboring states. Russian aggression against and occupation of parts of Ukraine and Georgia threatens European security. PRC malign actions in the Indo-Pacific, including the South China Sea, disrupt free trade and fuel regional instability.

Effectively addressing these threats to U.S. national interests requires an agile team and targeted assistance. CSO deploys stabilization advisors and harnesses data analytics to inform and execute U.S. policy, strategy, and programs on conflict prevention and stabilization. Our expertise focuses on three lines of effort that address different components of the conflict cycle: strategic prevention, conflict resolution, and security sector stabilization. These efforts include programs that provide early warning for violent conflict and potential mass atrocities; offer technical support to peace process negotiations; encourage defections, de-radicalization, and re-integration of ex-combatants; and prevent the recruitment and radicalization of potential terrorists. CSO ensures that its programs are rigorously monitored and evaluated based on metrics of success.

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## 2. Bureau Strategic Framework

**Mission:** To anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict that undermines U.S. national interests.

**Bureau Goal 1. Deploy Stabilization Advisors to execute U.S. policy, strategy, and programs on conflict prevention and stabilization.**

Objective 1.1: Deploy stabilization advisors to key regional missions and Geographic Combatant Commands to coordinate, plan, and allocate resources in strategically important conflict-prone regions.

Objective 1.2: Deploy stabilization advisors as TDY rapid response to provide short-term technical support in line with CSO's lines of effort.

**Bureau Goal 2. Harness data analytics to anticipate sources of violent conflict and instability, and enable agile foreign policy decision making.**

Objective 2.1: Strengthen CSO's Instability Monitoring and Analysis Platform's (IMAP) role as a primary Department and interagency hub for forecasting, tracking, and understanding global instability and conflict trends, and using data-driven analysis to inform foreign policy decision-making on conflict prevention and stabilization.

Objective 2.2: Incorporate rigorous, evidence-based analysis of conflict dynamics into program design, monitoring, and evaluation both within CSO and in support of other Bureaus.

**Bureau Goal 3. Develop policy initiatives and targeted programming to prevent violent conflict and help stabilize conflict-prone regions of U.S. national priority.**

Objective 3.1: Design, implement, monitor, and evaluate programs pursuant to CSO's three lines of efforts (LOEs): strategic prevention, conflict resolution, and security sector stabilization, with outcomes clearly linked to U.S. policy objectives.

Objective 3.2: Build and lead coalitions that coordinate conflict prevention and stabilization programs, policies, and resources.

Objective 3.3: Convene and lead working groups in the Department to coordinate legislation and policies related to state fragility, conflict prevention, atrocity early warning, and stabilization.

### **Cross-cutting Management Objectives:**

Management Objective 1: Recruit and retain a highly trained and diverse workforce available for timely worldwide TDYs or deployment, often in rapid response.

Management Objective 2: Meet the growing demand for CSO's advanced analytics and programs by hiring necessary staff and enhancing technological capabilities.

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### 3. Goals and Objectives

#### **Bureau Goal 1. Deploy Stabilization Advisors to execute U.S. policy, strategy, and programs on conflict prevention and stabilization.**

##### **a. Description.**

CSO deploys stabilization advisors to posts and Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) to help prevent violent conflict and stabilize conflict-prone regions. Stabilization advisors also provide a “surge” capability to other posts upon request. Their main responsibilities are to conduct targeted programing, engagements, and deep-dive analyses along three lines of effort: strategic prevention, conflict resolution, and security sector stabilization. Advisors activities include providing early warning for violent conflict and potential atrocities; giving technical support to peace process negotiations; supporting the defection, de-radicalization, and re-integration of ex-combatants; and preventing the recruitment and radicalization of vulnerable populations to terrorism.

#### **Bureau Objective 1.1: Deploy stabilization advisors to key regional missions and Geographic Combatant Commands to coordinate, plan, and allocate resources in strategically important conflict-prone regions.**

##### **a. Justification and Linkages.**

CSO’s Stabilization Advisors support NSS Pillar III’s Priority Actions (p. 33) by enabling fieldwork beyond the confines of diplomatic facilities. At embassies, CSO’s stabilization advisors employ their expertise to prevent violent conflict and help stabilize conflict-prone regions by collaborating with national and local governments, civil society, and like-minded partner embassies. At GCCs and subordinate units, they advance civ-mil coordination through analysis, planning, training, and joint operations for conflict prevention and stabilization. These activities support implementation of the Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR), DoD Directive 3000.05 on stabilization, and the forthcoming Global Fragility Strategy. Temporarily deployed staff manage CSO’s and other U.S. government funded targeted programs, support embassies’ diplomatic engagements, and monitor and evaluate programs.

##### **b. Risk Considerations.**

Absence of CSO stabilization advisors in priority countries undermines CSO’s mission and ability to prevent violent conflict and build resilience in support of Strategic Objective 1.4 of the Department of State and USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP SO 1.4), and engage civil society in prevention and stabilization in those priority countries (JSP SO 3.3).

#### **Bureau Objective 1.2: Deploy stabilization advisors as TDY rapid response to provide short-term technical support in line with CSO’s lines of effort.**

##### **a. Justification and Linkages**

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CSO deploys its personnel temporarily to help missions and posts address instability, violent conflict, or malign influence from the PRC, Russia, Iran, or North Korea. This effort aligns with JSP SO 1.3 to counter these threats, and focuses on CSO's three LOEs that advance strategic prevention, conflict resolution, and security sector stabilization. By deploying stabilization advisors during the early stages of conflict, or before malign influences can tip into instability or violent conflict, CSO can realize NSS Pillar I and protect the American people and its friends and neighbors.

**b. Risk Considerations**

Failure to deploy stabilization advisors in a timely manner can undermine strategic prevention, increase violence, cost additional resources, and risk the security of the American people. This failure also threatens the ability to defeat threats in priority countries (JSP SO 1.3).

**Bureau Goal 2. Harness data analytics to anticipate sources of violent conflict and instability, and enable agile foreign policy decision making.**

**a. Description.**

Data-driven analysis is the cornerstone of competitive diplomacy and information statecraft, two key priorities identified in NSS Pillar III (pp. 33-34). CSO's data-driven analysis forecasts global conflict trends, identifies causes of state fragility, violence, and potential atrocities, and provides a nuanced understanding of sub-national conflict. This capability is essential to creating targeted programs, strengthening diplomatic engagements, and developing investments. CSO also aims to adapt and improve existing methodological approaches, including the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence, and enhance analytical collaborations with partners and allies. This effort will enable CSO to identify and anticipate conflict through data sharing, methodological collaboration, and integration of qualitative field assessments with analytics.

**Bureau Objective 2.1: Strengthen CSO's Instability Monitoring and Analysis Platform's (IMAP) role as a primary Department and interagency hub for forecasting, tracking, and understanding global instability and conflict trends, and using data-driven analysis to inform foreign policy decision-making on conflict prevention and stabilization.**

**a. Justification and Linkages.**

Data-driven analysis supports effective diplomacy by tailoring data from the information-rich open-source environment, as called for in NSS Pillar III (p. 33). CSO's IMAP provides the Department regular access to updated global, regional, national, and subnational conflict trends that are critical to conflict prevention and stabilization efforts. Its products include early warning assessments of potential atrocities and violent conflict across the globe, deep-dive analyses of fragility, instability, and conflict, and interactive conflict story maps. IMAP supports efforts to "upgrade our diplomatic capabilities" by making more efficient use of limited resources through interactive tools, and synthesizing multi-domain information to support competitive diplomacy (JSP Performance Goal (PG) 1.3.1). IMAP connects CSO's data-analytics to the needs of the Department and interagency, and to related activities such as the Global Engagement Center GEC-IQ data analytics platform.

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**b. Risk Considerations.**

Without technological and analytical infrastructure, CSO cannot deliver timely products that help the Department make agile foreign policy decisions. It would also result in missed opportunities to anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict. Failure to diagnose conflict dynamics means that policy and programmatic interventions are more likely to fail or exacerbate instability.

**Bureau Objective 2.2: Incorporate rigorous, evidence-based analysis of conflict dynamics into program design, monitoring, and evaluation both within CSO and in support of other Bureaus.**

**a. Justification and Linkages.**

CSO must evaluate viability and efficacy throughout the programming process in alignment with JSP PG 4.1.1. CSO tests new technologies and pilots best practices, such as implementing conflict documentation and analysis platforms. This unique civilian monitoring mission improves State's information statecraft in line with the NSS Pillar III (p. 34).

**b. Risk Considerations.**

Without an understanding of the role of analytics in assessment, diplomats may fail to address the root causes of conflict and achieve desired policy goals. Failure to enable diplomats to effectively understand the underlying causes of conflict may result in policy failure and the spread of malign influence in a country or region.

**Bureau Goal 3. Develop policy initiatives and targeted programming to prevent violent conflict and help stabilize conflict-prone regions of U.S. national priority.**

**a. Description.**

CSO's targeted programming focuses on three LOEs: strategic prevention, conflict resolution, and security sector stabilization. These LOEs support Administration priorities as articulated in the National Security Strategy (NSS) and key legislation, such as the Global Fragility Act (2019) and the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (2018). CSO programs provide early warning for violent conflict and potential mass atrocities; offer technical support to peace process negotiations; encourage defections and re-integration of combatants; and prevent the recruitment and radicalization of potential terrorists. CSO employs staff with diverse academic expertise and on-the-ground experience to design, implement, and support these programs. The bureau also helps prevent and respond to specific conflict risks through deep-dive analyses, table-top exercises, and co-leadership of Department-wide task forces focused on issues such as the SAR and the Global Fragility Act. CSO collaborates with a wide range of domestic and international institutions in support of these objectives. It leads the Council on Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CCPS) and co-leads the Stabilization Leaders Forum (SLF) and the International Atrocity Prevention Working Group (IAPWG). CSO also serves as the Secretariat for the NSC-led Atrocity Early Warning Task Force.

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**Bureau Objective 3.1: Design, implement, monitor, and evaluate programs pursuant to CSO's three lines of efforts (LOEs): strategic prevention, conflict resolution, and security sector stabilization, with outcomes clearly linked to U.S. policy objectives.**

**a. Justification and Linkages.**

CSO designs, implements, monitors, and evaluates programs related to its three LOEs, assuring they support U.S. policy objectives. It conducts targeted analyses, provides strategic advice and real-time diagnostics, builds networks, and contributes to diplomatic efforts to improve the implementation of U.S. foreign policy and assistance. It also designs, monitors, and evaluates programs with a prevention or stabilization component for regional and functional bureaus. Taken together, these capabilities allow CSO to support senior decision-makers and diplomats in preventing violent conflict and stabilizing conflict-affected areas of priority U.S. national interest. They also position CSO to quickly develop effective responses to external shocks to fragile states – such as the 2020 Coronavirus crisis – that can undermine stabilization efforts and potentially trigger renewed conflict. For example, in support of JSP SO 1.4, CSO collaborates with the Bureau of Counterterrorism by providing research, analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of CVE programs to reduce the radicalization and recruitment of violent extremists and terrorists.

**b. Risk Considerations.**

Failure to realize this objective threatens resilience within priority countries, undermining JSP SO 1.4 efforts to address authoritarianism, the re-emergence of great power competition, and the rise of hostile non-state actors. This increases the possibility for malign actors to meddle with fragile governments, leverage and exploit resources against the population, and fuel and instigate extremism. Failure in this objective also risks CSO's ability to support JSP SO 3.3 initiatives to engage civil society in stabilizing at-risk communities. If CSO programs cannot provide a "benefit" to paramilitary, militia or non-state armed actors, though they are frequently part of the "locally legitimate authorities" incorporated into peace negotiations and defection programming, CSO's impact on strategic prevention and security sector stabilization could be limited.

**Bureau Objective 3.2: Build and lead coalitions that coordinate conflict prevention and stabilization programs, policies, and resources.**

**a. Justification and Linkages.**

CSO collaborates with a wide range of partners and institutions on state fragility, preventing violent conflict, atrocity early warning, and stabilization in support of NSS Pillar IV (p. 40). CSO's Council on Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CCPS) and Stabilization Leaders Forum (SLF) represent key domestic and international partnerships that enhance burden sharing and harmonize strategies in support of JSP SO 3.2. CSO also collaborates with domestic and international partners to host conferences, security dialogues, and UN General Assembly events, as outlined in JSP SO 3.2 and NSS Pillars III *Information Statecraft* and IV *Leadership in Political and Security Bodies*. Additionally, CSO seeks dedicated dialogues with the UN, the European Union, the World Bank, and regional development banks to enhance coordinated approaches and investment in conflict-affected areas (JSP SO 3.2). CSO leads the U.S. government's participation in the seven-member International Atrocity Prevention Working Group (IAPWG). At an operational level, CSO engages international donor countries to mobilize resources, building on best practices for risk-mitigation, local government support,

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accountability, and monitoring. CSO coordinates closely with the Bureau of Global Public Affairs and the Global Engagement Center on outreach.

**b. Risk Considerations.**

Without these key reciprocal partnerships, the United States may not be able to achieve the full potential of strategic prevention, conflict resolution and security sector stabilization. Absence of coordination risks duplication of efforts, programming gaps, and inefficient use of taxpayer dollars that can result in increased instability, violence against civilians, and corrupt governance. Ultimately, this may result in openings for malign outside influence (JSP SO 3.3).

**Bureau Objective 3.3: Convene and lead working groups in the Department to coordinate legislation and policies related to state fragility, conflict prevention, atrocity early warning, and stabilization.**

**a. Justification and Linkages.**

CSO plays important roles in shaping and implementing U.S. foreign policy relevant to conflict prevention and stabilization, in collaboration with USAID and DoD, supporting JSP SO 1.3. CSO co-leads with the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F), the Department task forces to implement the Global Fragility Act of 2019 (GFA) and the SAR. The GFA effort requires developing a 10-year Global Fragility Strategy and effectively programming the \$200 million authorized annually for the Prevention and Stabilization Fund, alongside strategic-level monitoring and evaluation, and diplomatic efforts. SAR implementation includes monitoring and evaluating eleven country-specific SAR annexes. Other CSO-led initiatives include the Elie Wiesel Atrocity and Genocide Prevention Act (2018), where CSO serves as the Secretariat for the National Security Council-led interagency Atrocity Early Warning Task Force, and supporting the 2019 Women, Peace and Security Strategy.

**b. Risk Considerations.**

Implementing the GFA will require effective, coordinated action among Department and interagency stakeholders in spite of restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus crisis. Realizing this objective may be limited without well-developed and sustained relationships among all actors.

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## 4. Cross-cutting Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1: Recruit and retain a highly trained and diverse workforce available for timely worldwide TDYs or deployment, often in rapid response.**

**a. Justification and Linkages.**

Maintaining relationships through diplomacy and statecraft is an essential obligation according to NSS Pillar III (p. 33). A well-led, trained, and diverse workforce that maintains strong relationships with key counterparts ensures the high level of performance, leadership, engagement, and accountability needed to execute CSO's mission, as required by JSP SO 4.3. Recruiting highly qualified staff further allows for a broader outreach to recruit, based on established relationships.

**a. Risk Considerations.**

Failing to recruit and retain the proper level of highly trained staff, and to develop critical skills, would reduce the ability of CSO to support the mission of the Department and implement its duties under NSS Pillar III, to preserve peace through strength.

**Management Objective 2: Meet the growing demand for CSO's advanced analytics and programs by hiring necessary staff and enhancing technological capabilities.**

**a. Justification and Linkages.**

Departmental and interagency demand for CSO's products and expertise is increasing, requiring additional resources. The Bureau must be fully resourced to provide data-driven approaches and strengthen partner governments and civil society to fulfill JSP PG 1.2.3. As JSP SO 4.2 states, our dispersed staff require technological tools to work *from anywhere at any time*. Without budget growth for new equipment and software, CSO cannot effectively support the JSP SO 1.4 requirement to build enduring security partnerships, collectively deter aggression, and help allies sustain favorable regional balances, nor can it degrade terrorism threats, as in JSP SO 1.1.

**b. Risk Considerations.**

A lack of funding/resources for technology, such as modern communication tools, IT hardware, and technical software, would seriously hinder CSO staff in the effective and timely analysis of conflict prevention and stabilization. Without additional funding, the ability to support field efforts in CSOs three lines of effort will be eroded and weakened.