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Functional Bureau Strategy

Bureau of Global Public Affairs (GPA)

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1. Executive Statement and Mission Statement

Mission: To serve the American people by effectively communicating U.S. foreign policy priorities and the importance of diplomacy to American audiences and engaging foreign publics to enhance their understanding of and support for the policies and values of the United States.



The Bureau of Global Public Affairs (GPA) leads the Department's communications and engagement with domestic and foreign audiences. In a rapidly changing media and information environment where other actors are constantly competing for the attention of people around the globe, GPA must bring the latest tools, techniques, and approaches for successfully communicating and amplifying the Department's policies and priority messages.

GPA leads and coordinates Department messaging on policy priorities, and the work of our diplomats around the globe. It is the conduit for foreign and domestic media and digital engagement and coordinates with public diplomacy and policy experts to deliver accurate messages to intended audiences with maximum impact.

In addition, GPA supports and empowers communicators across the Department, whether they are at posts overseas or in Washington, D.C. GPA develops and disseminates impactful content including articles, videos, and other digital materials. It enables Department communicators by providing powerful support tools and connecting them with subject matter experts in areas such as data analytics, audience research, and social media strategy.

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2. Bureau Strategic Framework

Bureau Goal 1: Solidify GPA's role as the U.S. Government's preeminent communicator on foreign policy issues.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1:** Drive and coordinate Department communications through clear and nimble priority messaging efforts.
- **Bureau Objective 1.2:** Deepen trust with foreign and domestic audiences by providing accurate, authoritative, and transparent communication.
- **Bureau Objective 1.3:** Create and distribute content that is timely, data-informed, and tailored to engage and inform key target audiences.
- **Bureau Objective 1.4:** Assess the performance of priority messaging efforts and utilize results to inform future efforts.

Bureau Goal 2: Empower Department communicators.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1:** Develop and disseminate actionable research and analytics insights in a way that enables Department officials to more effectively communicate with their audiences.
- **Bureau Objective 2.2:** Increase support to Department leaders and public diplomacy practitioners through content, tools, resources, guidance, and expertise.
- **Bureau Objective 2.3:** Improve the strategic coordination and implementation of Department communications and events to ensure that messages are consistent, aligned, and focused on top priorities.

Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Goal 3: Resource and equip GPA to operate as an agile, collaborative, diverse, and modern workforce.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.1:** Strengthen GPA/EX processes and systems in order to better serve GPA professionals.

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- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.2:** Improve our ability to recruit, develop, retain, and sustain a diverse, talented workforce capable of achieving the mission and goals of GPA.
- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.3:** Maximize bureau efficiency and collaboration by identifying, adopting, and supporting modern, secure, mobile, and resilient information technology and services and best of class content creation and distribution tools.

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3. Bureau Goals and Objectives

Bureau Goal 1: Solidify GPA's role as the U.S. Government's preeminent communicator on foreign policy issues.

- **Bureau Goal 1 Description:** The modern communications environment requires a focused and nimble approach and therefore an organization that can react quickly to evolving media cycles while concurrently addressing established policy priorities. GPA acts as the primary conduit between senior department leaders and the communication nodes available to reach key audiences with our messages in the most timely and effective manner. As the communications leader for the Department, and the preeminent communicator on foreign policy issues for the U.S. Government, GPA coordinates communication activities across the organization to ensure that messaging is consistent and aligned with priorities. This includes developing communications to inform domestic audiences and, separately, to influence foreign audiences. GPA develops tailored, audience-driven content that is informed by our research and analytics capabilities for use across various distribution platforms to get the most value from our limited resources. Effective communication also requires understanding and responding to audiences. This "listening" component of communication is informed by collecting feedback from audiences, observing how messages are received and shared, and using this information to inform future messaging. Through its leadership on communications, GPA seeks to more broadly harmonize the Department's critical communications efforts to present a cogent, impactful, and unified voice for advancing U.S. foreign policy.

Bureau Objective 1.1: Drive and coordinate Department communications through clear and nimble priority messaging efforts.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1 Justification and Linkages:** GPA seeks to advance U.S. foreign policy, national security, and American values by communicating Department priorities and engaging media in the United States and around the world. We seek to increase support for and deepen understanding of foreign policy priorities among foreign audiences, while also communicating the Department's work and why it matters to domestic audiences.

Through its priority messaging efforts, GPA will bring policy leaders and communications leaders together to develop messaging strategies that leverage the expertise of both groups. GPA will work to align and orient communicators across the Department towards priority messaging campaigns established by senior Department leadership. These messaging priorities may include planned messaging campaigns as well as responsive messaging efforts focused on addressing emerging world events or other leadership priorities.

GPA will take the lead on identifying target audiences as well as researching, developing, and distributing content designed to have maximum impact. It will coordinate planned priority messaging efforts primarily through its Global Campaigns Strategy (GCS) unit and also through GPA leadership initiatives. Responsive messaging efforts will be identified, tasked, and managed by the GPA Assistant Secretary through coordination with the Secretary and other Senior Department Officials.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 1.5 – Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1 Risk Considerations:** If this objective is not achieved the Department risks not effectively communicating with audiences due to fractured or unfocused messaging efforts that are not able to compete with rapidly changing media priorities. To mitigate this risk, GPA has constructed an organization that supports ongoing proactive messaging campaigns while also allowing surge capacity for regular and irregular activities, including responsive messaging efforts.

Bureau Objective 1.2: Deepen trust with foreign and domestic audiences by providing accurate, authoritative, and transparent communication.

- **Bureau Objective 1.2 Justification and Linkages:** Deepening trust begins with promoting regular and transparent communications with the American people and the world. The importance of regular press engagements with open question and answer sessions are a hallmark of engaging with stakeholders and GPA will facilitate these engagements.

This is not just the responsibility of press teams. The State Department must also do a better job of telling the American people how U.S. foreign policy connects to their sense of security and prosperity at home. GPA will connect leaders and policy makers across the Department with Americans across the country, and work to help the American people understand what our foreign policy means for them and how what we do around the world makes us stronger at home.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 1.5 – Enhance foreign publics’ understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- **Bureau Objective 1.2 Risk Considerations:** Deepening trust is a process that takes time and repetition. Risks to achieving this objective include the receptivity, or lack thereof, from stakeholder audiences. Additional risks include combating both international and domestic misinformation and disinformation and accessing targeted audiences. We can mitigate some of these risks by collaborating with the Global Engagement Center (GEC) on countering misinformation and disinformation efforts, as well as strengthening our international and domestic networks to reach audiences. By leveraging efforts already underway in the Department we can avoid redundancy and maximize resources.

Bureau Objective 1.3: Create and distribute content that is timely, data-informed, and tailored to engage and inform key target audiences.

- **Bureau Objective 1.3 Justification and Linkages:** Engaging audiences in today's modern, technology-driven world requires a multi-faceted approach. No single content medium, platform or format is capable of reaching a global audience. GPA employs an integrated communications approach that utilizes a mix of content types, including videos, social media, infographics, short-form articles, advertisements, media briefs, events, and press releases, on a variety of paid, earned, shared, and owned platforms to engage intended audiences. To achieve this objective, GPA will continue to monitor evolving best practices in media engagement and look for opportunities to innovate and experiment with new content development and distribution approaches.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 1.5 – Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- **Bureau Objective 1.3 Risk Considerations:** Risks associated with this objective include institutional reluctance toward utilizing new and unproven communications approaches. Cyber security concerns for new platforms may also need to be considered. In addition, current Department and bureau clearance processes and procedures often impact the timeliness of content distribution.

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Bureau Objective 1.4: Assess the performance of priority messaging efforts and utilize results to inform future efforts.

- **Bureau Objective 1.4 Justification and Linkages:** Determining the effectiveness of the communications the bureau leads and supports is a never-ending and daunting challenge. GPA's content development and delivery methods are informed by insights from its Research and Analytics team and therefore continuously evolve to ensure GPA continues to target the right audiences for the right messages at the right time and place.

To achieve this objective, GPA will utilize its research and analytics capabilities to help shape priority messaging efforts and messaging on Department platforms. Rigorous research and analytics activities will help us better understand which messages resonate with which audiences. GPA will utilize insights from this activity to improve its messaging effectiveness, while also providing this information to other Department communicators to help them better persuade audiences with messages that resonate and achieve communications objectives. GPA will regularly re-assess the effectiveness of communications efforts to help Department communicators learn and adjust their work to realize the most impact.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 1.5 – Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- **Bureau Objective 1.4 Risk Considerations:** Bureau leaders recognize challenges inherent to measuring the effects of a message or messenger on audience awareness, attitudes, and behaviors. Measuring the true effects of a messaging campaign on an identified audience is difficult and expensive. Even small shifts in audience or messaging can have outsized and sometimes unanticipated consequences, and many exogenous factors contribute to observed changes. The bureau will seek to research, analyze, measure, and evaluate messaging performance using rigorous approaches that inform but that are not too costly or cumbersome to enact. In addition, existing legal restrictions limit GPA's ability to survey certain audiences, such as domestic stakeholders, using certain resources. GPA will operate within the existing legal and regulatory frameworks.

Bureau Goal 2: Empower Department communicators.

- **Bureau Goal 2 Description:** While a significant part of GPA's focus is devoted to leading Department communications on priority issues (GPA FBS Goal 1), it also allocates significant time and resources towards supporting, equipping, and enhancing the capabilities of other communicators across the Department.

GPA provides best practices, proven tools, resources, and access to powerful research and analytics capabilities that help Department communicators develop, distribute, and assess the impact of their messaging efforts. Examples of this support includes media engagement training, priority messaging campaign playbooks, daily media analytics reports, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools, social media training, and more.

GPA supports both regional and functional bureaus in Washington while supporting overseas posts primarily through its regional media hubs.

Bureau Objective 2.1: Develop and disseminate actionable research and analytics insights in a way that enables Department officials to more effectively communicate with their audiences.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1 Justification and Linkages:** GPA professionals develop large amounts of information and provide a wide array of tools, resources, and support to communicators across the Department. Effectively creating, packaging, and distributing this information is a critical component of our success. Furthermore, managing the large amounts of information collected and understanding how it can best be used by consumers is a constant challenge.

GPA will work to better manage and coordinate the information and resources it provides to others across the Department in order to provide the most value possible to its customers.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 1.5 – Enhance foreign publics’ understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1 Risk Considerations:** GPA seeks to help communicators across the Department. However, demands for support exceed the bureau’s ability to respond to and meet all requests. In order to address this risk, we will utilize robust project management information systems and prioritization processes while also working to communicate expectations with stakeholders.

Bureau Objective 2.2: Increase support to Department leaders and public diplomacy practitioners through content, tools, resources, guidance, and expertise.

- **Bureau Objective 2.2 Justification and Linkages:** GPA equips communicators across the Department with new and powerful tools to collect, manage, share, and use critical information. This includes social media training and tools support, press media engagement training as well as leveraging GPA Forward in our Hubs. Beyond this, it includes the deployment and support of powerful contact relationship management (CRM) tools to help PD officers and others better track and engage their contacts. This effort supports a primary goal within the Department's PD strategy to build networks of individuals, organizations, and states who share American values and support U.S. policies.

GPA's support to Department communicators also includes developing innovative solutions such as the Talking Points Application (TPA), a mobile device application providing key officials with the most up-to-date, coordinated, and approved Department messaging on key issues.

Finally, this objective involves supporting a team of professionals dedicated to exploring emerging digital approaches and building innovative engagement tools and platforms enabling the Department to reach global audiences more effectively.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 1.5 – Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- **Bureau Objective 2.2 Risk Considerations:** Like other objectives in its strategy focused on supporting and enabling others across the Department, this objective faces the risk of increasing demand signals and demand volume GPA is not able to address with its current resourcing. The competition for finite resources will likely result in some requestors feeling supported, while others will feel deprived. To address this risk, GPA will rely on Senior Leadership to clearly articulate top priorities while also utilizing robust project management information systems to manage demands. We will also seek to communicate with stakeholders early and often to clearly align expectations with the capabilities and capacity of the bureau.

Bureau Objective 2.3: Improve the strategic coordination and implementation of Department communications and events to ensure that messages are consistent, aligned, and focused on top priorities.

- **Bureau Objective 2.3 Justification and Linkages:** GPA is the Department's leader in external communications. This responsibility requires close coordination and alignment of messaging across all parts of the Department, which includes regional bureaus, functional bureaus, and overseas posts. A lack of message coordination undermines the Department's ability to effectively communicate U.S. foreign policy objectives and thus weakens American leadership globally.

GPA seeks to build and promote a department-wide communications approach that is closely coordinated, aligned with key U.S. foreign policy priorities, and that actively leverages key events to amplify its messaging.

While various communicators across the Department will have differing priorities, GPA seeks to coordinate these many voices, facilitate their alignment to strategic priorities, and ensure an organized and consistent approach for communicating with external audiences.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 1.5 – Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

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- **Bureau Objective 2.3 Risk Considerations:** GPA is the Department's lead communications body. However, it is often difficult to coordinate and align communications across such a large and complex organization. The cooperation of other bureaus is a key risk that is mitigated through regular intra-department communications, various planning and coordination meetings, and established clearance processes.

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4. Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Goal and Objectives

Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Goal 3: Resource and equip GPA to operate as an agile, collaborative, diverse, and modern workforce.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Goal 3 Description:** To achieve the goals in this Functional Bureau Strategy, GPA will provide its professionals with the management and administrative support required to succeed. The Bureau will plan, manage, and evaluate business operations within GPA to ensure success as well as compliance with Department and Federal mandates. GPA will work to strategically manage its resources and strive for continuous improvement to carry out its mission effectively. GPA's Executive Office will work to improve services for GPA employees. This includes human capital management, information technology, and other business-operations support. Further, GPA will work internally to increase cyber security across our digital platforms, improve coordination among IT owners and managers, and address both hardware and software shortfalls. GPA will execute these goals while fostering an environment that values diversity and inclusion across the entire workforce.

Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.1: Strengthen GPA/EX processes and systems in order to better serve GPA professionals.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.1 Justification and Linkages:** GPA's Executive Office oversees a variety of critical management functions that enable the bureau to execute GPA's mission in an effective manner while remaining responsible stewards of U.S. taxpayer resources. GPA/EX will conduct and support human capital management, IT management, resource planning and management, policy coordination, strategic planning, program evaluation, and communications, to ensure GPA is using its resources in an effective way.

This objective aligns to JSP Goal 4 – Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure.

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- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.1 Risk Considerations:** Changing customer expectations, dependence on IT tools and resources outside the control of the bureau, cyber security challenges, and limited support staff and resources are all risks that could impact GPA's ability to succeed in this area. To mitigate these risks, GPA hired a customer experience specialist; coordinates closely with IRM, A Bureau and other support platform owners; and follow a continuous process improvement approach that identifies opportunities for improvements.

Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.2: Improve our ability to recruit, develop, retain, and sustain a diverse, talented workforce capable of achieving the mission and goals of GPA.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.2 Justification and Linkages:** GPA's core asset and key enabler of its success as a bureau is its professional workforce. The Bureau relies on its cadre of skilled employees to generate, communicate, and assess Department of State public pronouncements advancing American foreign policy and national security interests. The sourcing of qualified talent, the retaining and development of talent, and the sustaining of talent is crucial to the internal operations of the Bureau. In addition, creating flexible staffing systems that provide the right level and type of expert staff to deliver on policy priorities aligns with the Department's PD Strategy. GPA strives to include diverse perspectives and experiences to produce quality products worldwide. Workplace diversity increases employee morale and causes employees to desire to work more effectively. Diversity in leadership within a bureau allows managers to bring in new skills and methods for achieving unity within their teams.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 4.1 – Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

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- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.2 Risk Considerations:** GPA, like other bureaus, faces the risk of not being able to effectively recruit, sustain, and retain the top professionals and experts it needs to effectively execute its mission. Challenges in the ability of GPA to hire the staff necessary to do the job, coupled with challenges in training and development, could lead to a workforce that is less capable in their jobs and too stretched to prosper in a dynamic, global communications environment polarized by great power competition. To mitigate these challenges, GPA is pursuing permanent delegated hiring authority to more quickly and easily fill mission-critical vacancies. Furthermore, the Bureau is looking to strengthen its ability to retain and sustain a talented and diverse workforce through its recent establishment of a full time Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator.

Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.3: Maximize bureau efficiency and collaboration by identifying, adopting, and supporting modern, secure, mobile, and resilient information technology and services and best of class content creation and distribution tools.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.3 Justification and Linkages:** GPA's ability to succeed is contingent on the availability, security, and capability of the information technology it utilizes. The continued rapid evolution of technology as it relates to both tools that support our people as well as those that we increasingly rely on to communicate necessitate the need for close and continued attention and resourcing in this area. As we plan for increased telework and mobility needs for our people, we must also consider the additional security requirements needed to effectively secure information and the right tools to foster collaboration in a hybrid and changing environment.

This objective is in direct support of JSP Strategic Objective 4.2 – Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.

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- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.3 Risk Considerations:** Without sufficient IT support, GPA staff are not able to be as productive as possible and their ability to succeed with their work is inhibited. In addition, cybersecurity threats pose both internal security concerns and hurdles in communicating with external audiences to GPA.

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