



# Integrated Country Strategy

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**KUWAIT**

**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

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## **1. Chief of Mission Priorities**

Much work remains in the next few years to ensure that Kuwait remains a strong and stable partner, particularly as a new generation of youth rises through the ranks with no memory of the U.S. role in liberating Kuwait. Maintaining depth and longevity in the bilateral relationship will require employing the full range of diplomatic tools to protect U.S. citizens, increase American influence by engaging with the next generation of Kuwaiti leaders and citizens, counter support for violent extremists, improve regional stability and security, deepen economic ties, and strengthen Kuwait's domestic stability and security. We use the annual Ministerial-level U.S.-Kuwaiti Strategic Dialogue, launched in October 2016, to achieve tangible results on all these priorities and more.

### **Protecting U.S. Citizens**

The primary mission of the Embassy is to protect U.S. citizens living in Kuwait. This includes more than 30,000 private U.S. citizens working in Kuwait as military contractors, teachers, and private businessmen and women, and thousands of U.S. government and military personnel stationed in Kuwait.

In the coming years, we will engage with the Kuwaiti government to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and challenges affecting the lives of private U.S. citizens resident in Kuwait. We will engage the Kuwaiti government to ensure equitable treatment of U.S. citizen prisoners by the judicial system, to improve consular notification of arrests and deaths of U.S. citizens, to enhance our partnership to prevent and resolve international parental child abductions, and to encourage accession to and the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention prisoner treaty. The Embassy will work with the U.S. military and Kuwait government to improve training and coordination to bolster emergency preparedness.

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**Increasing American Influence**

As memory of the U.S. role in Kuwait's liberation in 1991 fades, we will endeavor to expand and deepen our commercial, educational, and research ties to reach out to young Kuwaitis.

Approximately 6,000 Kuwaiti students studied in the United States in 2021, mostly through Kuwaiti government scholarships, collectively spending nearly \$1 billion on education.

However, this number is diminishing. Sustained engagement across the Mission will be required to improve the promotion of study in the United States. We will also work to improve the perception of the United States among future Kuwaiti leaders through training programs; support for civil society, youth, and women; and exchange programs that build increased understanding of, and affinity towards, U.S. culture and values.

**Deepening Economic Ties**

Holding six percent of the world's known oil reserves, Kuwait invests hundreds of billions of dollars of its oil wealth in the United States. Kuwait's enormous U.S. investments and imports of American goods create American jobs. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases to Kuwait total \$26.3 billion and support thousands of American jobs. Kuwait's need to diversify its economy, currently dominated by the oil sector, presents an opportunity for the U.S. government to provide expertise and support for economic and regulatory reform and expansion of its private sector.

However, legal ownership restrictions and a cumbersome and opaque bureaucratic process are barriers to a better business climate in Kuwait. The Mission will advocate for more transparent processes and favorable regulations to encourage U.S. companies to increase and broaden investment in Kuwait. Improved transparency and regulations will open more sectors of the Kuwaiti economy to U.S. investment and U.S. companies that have expertise in the critical sectors of healthcare, information, and communications technology (ICT), oil and gas, and aerospace and defense. The Mission will also encourage the Kuwaiti government to strengthen its commitment to cybersecurity to protect its critical infrastructure. Strengthening our

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commercial ties in ICT, defense, and cybersecurity is critical to the national security of both the United States and Kuwait.

**Improving Regional Stability and Security**

Counterterrorism cooperation remains a focal point of our bilateral relationship, and the United States will continue to help Kuwait develop its capabilities at combating terrorist financing, to include improving oversight of the charitable sector. While the public has a favorable view of the United States, not all Kuwaiti citizens and government leaders agree with U.S. policies or support our close relationship. The Mission will continue outreach and engagement with political leaders and influencers to reduce support for extremist ideology. We plan to enhance information sharing agreements with Kuwaiti government law enforcement and customs authorities so that we can improve the safety of both our countries.

**Staffing, Resources, and Security for Mission Personnel**

None of the Mission goals can be accomplished without adequate staffing, resources, and security for our Mission personnel. As a historically difficult-to-staff Post, the Mission will fill vacancies and staffing gaps, and is expanding and intensifying its efforts to recruit and retain the most qualified staff. The Mission will actively seek to recruit and retain a diverse team and ensure candidates of all backgrounds are given equitable consideration for vacant positions. We will prioritize the importance of exercising and training Mission staff to respond to security threats and emergencies as well as to complete upgrades to our security infrastructure on the compound. The Mission also plans to finalize permission from the Kuwaiti government to expand the boundaries of the Embassy compound to accommodate new building and construction plans.

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## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1:** Improve the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens in Kuwait and ensure we are well-prepared for any crisis.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** The Mission engages the Kuwaiti government to improve its policies affecting U.S. citizens, which in turn enhances the Embassy's consular services.

**Mission Goal 2:** Strengthen and broaden U.S.-Kuwait bilateral cooperation to improve regional stability and security.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Meet the U.S. military's changing needs for access, basing, and overflight in Kuwait and increase joint and combined military capacity, including interoperable missile defense.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Critical infrastructure, capacity, and communications networks, including cybersecurity, are in place to deter and defend against threats to the security of Kuwait and the region.
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Increase key leader engagements, exercises, and professional development opportunities to support the U.S.-Kuwait strategic relationship for the next generation.
- **Mission Objective 2.4:** Build increased public support among the younger generation of Kuwaitis for the U.S. military presence in Kuwait while countering Chinese inroads into the Kuwaiti economy, media, and circles of influence.

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**Mission Goal 3:** Strengthen national stability through political reform, economic development, and an improved legal framework.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Political reforms strengthen national stability and internal cohesion, encouraging Kuwaiti citizens and long-term residents to engage in and remain committed to the process of political dialogue and compromise.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Economic development and environmental preservation in Kuwait strengthens its ability to play a constructive economic role in the region while promoting trade and enhancing political stability.
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Law Enforcement cooperation improves Kuwait's capacity to counter extremism and improves national security. Anti-corruption and anti-money laundering reforms improve stability and legitimacy by providing greater transparency and public trust in government institutions and financial oversight. U.S. Treasury and U.S. Justice Department's collaboration with Kuwaiti government and private sector stakeholders strengthens Kuwait's AML/CFT regime.

**Mission Goal 4:** Deepen bilateral economic ties and encourage Kuwait to improve its business and investment environment by streamlining government processes, promoting bilateral trade and investment, and diversifying its economy.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** An improved business environment encourages the development of the private sector, fosters confidence in Kuwait for U.S. businesses and professionals, levels the playing field for U.S. participants, and creates trade and investment opportunities for U.S. business.

**Management Objective 1:** Ensure staffing levels are adequate to meet Mission needs.

**Management Objective 2:** Expand and build Embassy facilities to meet Mission needs.

**Management Objective 3:** Mission staff and family members enjoy a secure environment both on and off the Embassy compound.

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### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Mission Goal 1:** Improve the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens in Kuwait and ensure we are well prepared for any crisis.

**Description:** The Mission will strive to enhance the security of U.S. citizens in Kuwait through outreach, capacity building, crisis coordination and response, and reciprocal treatment. All U.S. citizens should receive needed consular services and protections through the development and strengthening of Mission relationships with U.S. military, interagency and Kuwaiti officials, and through information sharing, training, and briefings tailored to bolster emergency preparedness, security, and cultural awareness.

**Mission Objective 1.1:** The Mission engages the Kuwaiti government to improve its policies affecting U.S. citizens, which in turn enhances the Embassy's consular services.

- **Justification:** Our top Mission priority is the well-being and protection of the over 30,000 private U.S. citizens and thousands of U.S. government and military personnel stationed in Kuwait through prompt and efficient consular services. While Kuwait is a relatively safe and stable country, it is situated in a dangerous region with neighboring countries of concern.
- **Linkages:** NSS; Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) 5.1, JSP 5.2, 22 KUWAIT 246.
- **Risks:** The risk of not improving the Kuwaiti government's policies affecting U.S. citizens will allow for threats against private Americans, Mission personnel, and deployed U.S. military service members to materialize unabated.

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**Mission Goal 2:** Strengthen and broaden U.S.-Kuwait bilateral cooperation to improve regional stability and security.

**Description:** A longstanding defense partnership with Kuwait makes possible unique strategic access for U.S. forces in the Arabian Gulf, a region of enduring importance to U.S. national security. Generational and technological changes require continued investment in the relationship to keep it strong against emerging threats.

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Meet the U.S. military's changing needs for access, basing, and overflight in Kuwait and increase joint and combined military capacity, including interoperable missile defense.

- **Justification:** Kuwait's generous access, basing, and overflight grants are crucial for supporting enduring and contingency U.S. posture in the region.
- **Linkages:** NSS; 22 STATE 24856, JSP 1.4, Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) Bureau Goal 2.
- **Risks:** The inability to meet the U.S. military's changing needs for access, basing, and overflight in Kuwait and increasing joint and combined military capacity will hamper the U.S. military's goal of ensuring regional security and U.S. national security goals.

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Critical infrastructure, capacity, and communication networks, including cybersecurity, are in place and modernized to deter and defend against threats to the security of Kuwait and the region.

- **Justification:** Kuwait hosts the largest U.S. military presence in the region. As Kuwait hosts the fourth largest overseas U.S. military presence, this Mission Goal supports priorities of the President's National Security Strategy to retain the necessary American military presence in the Middle East Region to protect the United States and our allies from terrorist attacks and threats in the region.
- **Linkages:** NSS, 22 STATE 24856, JSP 1.4, JSP 2.3, JSP 4.3.
- **Risks:** The risk of not establishing critical infrastructure, capacity, and communication networks, including cybersecurity, to deter and defend against threats to the security of Kuwait and the region would make Kuwait vulnerable for cyberattacks that would hamper its financial systems and its oil infrastructure, as well as weaken its national security.

**Mission Objective 2.3:** Increase key leader engagements, exercises, and professional development opportunities to support the U.S.-Kuwait security relationship for the next generation.

- **Justification:** Fewer and fewer Kuwaitis remember the liberation of Kuwait by coalition forces led by the U.S. back in 1991. Public polling shows that U.S. favorability ratings in Kuwait are low compared to other GCC countries, while China's favorability rating in Kuwait is the highest among eight Arab nations surveyed by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in a July 2019 report.
- **Linkages:** 22 KUWAIT 268, JRS Bureau Goal 3, 22 STATE 24856, JSP 1.4, JSP 1.5
- **Risks:** The risk of not increasing engagements, exercises, and professional development opportunities to support the U.S.-Kuwait security relationship for the next generation would allow other countries to play a larger role in influencing future Kuwaiti leaders who would possess less shared values with the United States, and therefore negatively affect our standing in Kuwait and shrink support for the U.S.-Kuwait security relationship.

**Mission Objective 2.4:** Build increased public support among the younger generation of Kuwaitis for the U.S. military presence in Kuwait while countering Chinese inroads into the Kuwaiti economy, media, and circles of influence.

- **Justification:** As younger generations of Kuwaitis have no memory of the U.S. role in liberating Kuwait in 1990, they may be less likely than older generations to support the continued U.S. military presence. Promoting engagement between military representatives and Kuwaitis will promote increased goodwill towards the U.S.-Kuwait relationship and a better understanding of the importance and benefits of our security relationship. China is continuing to make inroads into the Kuwaiti economy, media, and circles of influence.
- **Linkages:** NSS, 22 KUWAIT 268, JRS (Bureau Goal 1), JRS (Bureau Goal 4).
- **Risks:** The risk of not building increased public support among the younger generation of Kuwaitis for the U.S. military presence in Kuwait and countering Chinese inroads into the Kuwaiti economy, media, and circles of influence would weaken U.S. influence in the region.

**Mission Goal 3:** Strengthen national stability through political reform, economic development, and an improved legal framework.

**Description:** This goal seeks to improve Kuwait's internal political cohesion to allow the government and National Assembly together to address Kuwait's long-term political, economic, and human resource challenges, and for Kuwait to continue its role as an effective regional stabilizer, mediator, and partner in regional issues of mutual concern.

**Mission Objective 3.1:** Political reforms strengthen national stability and internal cohesion, encouraging Kuwaiti citizens and long-term residents to engage in and remain committed to the process of political dialogue and compromise.

- **Justification:** Kuwait's population is divided politically, culturally, tribally, and religiously, undermining Kuwait's internal cohesion and political resilience. Large numbers of expatriate workers reside in Kuwait, some in marginal circumstances, trafficked into the country and illegally deprived of their basic rights. Calming of Kuwait's fractious internal politics have distracted leadership from critical long-term reform efforts.
- **Linkages:** 22 STATE 26614, JSP 1.4, JSP 3.2, JSP 3.4, JSP 3.5, JRS (Bureau Goal 1), JRS (Bureau Goal 4).
- **Risks:** Not implementing political reforms would weaken national stability and internal cohesion, leading some Kuwaiti citizens and long-term residents to abandon the process of political dialogue and compromise, thereby leading to societal fissures that cause political instability.

**Mission Objective 3.2:** Economic development and environmental preservation in Kuwait strengthens its ability to play a constructive economic role in the region and enhances political stability.

- **Justification:** A strong economy positions Kuwait to continue as a positive and stabilizing presence in the region. Economic diversification and environmental preservation will make Kuwait more fiscally resilient during times of decreased oil revenues. A stronger economy will help the U.S. export more to a population that prefers premium U.S. products.
- **Linkages:** 22 STATE 24896, 22 STATE 24896, 22 KUWAIT 268, JSP 1.2, JSP 1.3, JSP 5.2.
- **Risks:** Lack of economic development and environmental preservation in Kuwait would weaken its ability to play a constructive economic role in the region and threaten political stability.

**Mission Objective 3.3:** Law Enforcement cooperation improves Kuwait's capacity to counter extremism and improves national security. Anti-corruption and anti-money laundering reforms improve stability and legitimacy by providing greater transparency and public trust in government institutions and financial oversight. U.S. Treasury and U.S. Justice Department's collaboration with Kuwaiti government and private sector stakeholders strengthens Kuwait's AML/CFT regime.

- **Justification:** Through cooperation with U.S. law enforcement agencies, Kuwait develops better systems to deter and catch potential terrorists and prevent the growth of radicalized members in its society who will become violent extremists. Assisting Kuwait with strengthening strategies and mechanisms to address governmental corruption will assist in ensuring that laws and regulations are independent of political influence. Relatedly, addressing a strengthened and effectively implemented AML/CFT regime in line with international standards and with input from private sector stakeholders can mitigate abuse of Kuwait's financial system by malign actors, including terrorist financial facilitators and corrupt individuals.
- **Linkages:** NSS, JSP 1.4, JSP 3.3, JRS (Bureau Goal 1), JRS 4.1, JRS 4.4, 22 STATE 24896.
- **Risks:** The risk of little or no law enforcement cooperation would weaken Kuwait's capacity to counter extremism and threaten national security. The risk of not having anti-corruption and anti-money laundering reforms, along with a weak AML/CFT regime, would erode the public trust in Kuwait's law enforcement institutions and the government.



**Mission Goal 4:** Deepen bilateral economic ties and encourage Kuwait to improve its business and investment environment by streamlining government processes, promoting bilateral trade and investment, and diversifying its economy.

**Description:** As outlined in the President's National Security Strategy, this Mission Goal supports our role in the Middle East to catalyze positive developments by engaging economically, supporting reformers, and championing the benefits of open markets and societies.

**Mission Objective 4.1:** An improved business environment encourages the development of the private sector, fosters confidence in Kuwait for U.S. businesses and professionals, levels the playing field for U.S. participants, and creates trade and investment opportunities for U.S. business.

- **Justification:** A stronger, more diversified economy will make Kuwait a more receptive market for U.S. goods and services, a stronger contributor to the development of the region, and a better partner for positive social, economic, and political change in a volatile region.
- **Linkages:** 21 KUWAIT 1102, JSP (Goal 2), 22 STATE 24986, JRS (Bureau Goal 3).
- **Risks:** The risk of not creating an improved business environment would prevent the development of a robust private sector and drive away U.S. business and U.S. investment from Kuwait, reducing U.S. business opportunities.

## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1:** Ensure staffing levels are adequate to meet Mission needs.

- **Justification:** Embassy Kuwait accomplishes the work of a large mission on the resource footprint of a medium-sized post, serving as a regional platform to support many U.S. government programs. U.S. military engagement in the region and requests for additional regional positions based in Kuwait require the Mission to make trade-offs to meet the increasing demand for support and interagency collaboration. Embassy Kuwait relies heavily on the experience, expertise, and long-term dedication of its locally employed (LE) staff. Many senior local employees are beginning to plan to apply for and use Special Immigrant Visas; their departure will leave a vacuum of experience and institutional memory in the Embassy. All of Embassy Kuwait's LE staff are third country nationals who receive no benefits from the Kuwaiti government and are hit particularly hard by the rising cost of living, especially in housing, education, and healthcare.
- **Linkages:** NSS; JSP 4.1; Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce (EO 14035); Executive Order on Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council (EO 14020); Memorandum on Revitalizing America's Foreign Policy and National Security Workforce, Institutions, and Partnerships; Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce (EO 14003).
- **Risks:** Not having adequate staffing levels to meet growing Mission needs and candidates of all backgrounds who are given equitable consideration prevents the Mission from attracting and retaining qualified staff and hampers the Mission's ability to accomplish all the Mission goals while maintaining effective management controls.

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**Management Objective 2:** Expand and build accessible Embassy facilities to meet Mission needs.

- **Justification:** Mission Kuwait has been approached by multiple agencies about taking on increasing regional responsibilities, especially as circumstances in the region require realignment of regional functions. Post is unable to entertain these requests or to provide adequate space to meet current needs due to a shortage of office space. The Mission is engaging the Kuwaiti government to obtain formal ownership of land surrounding the Embassy compound. Obtaining this land will allow us to construct a new office building to house the consular operation and free additional office space in the chancery building. Additionally, using this land to build government-owned residential properties will save the USG millions of dollars annually. Embassy Kuwait is a hard-to-fill Post, and this housing would make the Post more attractive to bidders.
- **Linkages:** JSP (Goal 4).
- **Risks:** The risk of not expanding and building accessible Embassy facilities to meet Mission needs would limit the Mission's ability to operate at full capacity and in a manner that is inconsistent with DEIA principles.

**Management Objective 3:** Mission staff and family members enjoy a secure and accessible environment both on and off the Embassy compound.

- **Justification:** While Kuwait is a relatively safe and stable country, it is situated in a dangerous region where the threats to Mission personnel are real. Vigilance in protecting Mission staff and their families is paramount. Exercising emergency response plans and upgrading security infrastructure allows diplomatic, military, and other personnel to perform their essential functions.
- **Linkages:** JSP (Goal 4).
- **Risks:** The risk of not having a secure and accessible environment both on and off the Embassy compound would prevent Mission staff to perform their essential functions and not allow family members to come to post and play an integral part in the Embassy community.