



Report to Congress Pursuant to Section 504(c) of the Global Fragility Act

Overview

The 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) affirms that the United States will work to strengthen fragile states “where state weakness or failure would magnify threats to the American homeland” and “empower reform-minded governments, people, and civil society” in these places. President Donald J. Trump affirmed this commitment when he signed the Global Fragility Act (Title V of Div. J, P.L. 116-94) (GFA) into law in December 2019. This report describes interagency implementation of the GFA, fulfilling the requirement in section 504(c) of the GFA. These efforts build upon and integrate principles from the 2018 *Stabilization Assistance Review*, 2018 *Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act*, and 2019 *U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security*.

The GFA directs the Administration to create a unified U.S. strategy that is intentional, cross-cutting, measurable, and harnesses the full spectrum of U.S. diplomacy, assistance, and engagement over a 10-year time horizon. The purpose is to help countries move from fragility to stability and from conflict to peace. Under the President’s direction, the Department of State is leading an interagency effort to develop the Global Fragility Strategy (GFS) to break the costly cycle of fragility and promote peaceful, self-reliant nations that become U.S. economic and security partners.

The GFS will differ from previous efforts. Rather than externally driven nation-building, the United States will support locally driven political solutions. Rather than fragmented and broad-based efforts, the United States will target responses toward the political factors that drive fragility: ineffective governance, weak social cohesion, and/or corrupt institutions or leaders that lack respect for fundamental human rights, such as due process and freedom of religion or belief. Rather than diffuse and open-ended efforts, the United States will engage selectively based on national interests, host-nation political progress, and defined metrics. Rather than implementing a disparate set of activities, the United States will strategically integrate its policy, diplomatic, and programmatic response.

Addressing fragility means preventing or mitigating a country or region’s vulnerability to armed conflict, large-scale violence, or other instability, including an inability to manage transnational threats or other significant shocks. A rising number of countries around the world are now experiencing protracted violent conflict and/or high levels of organized violence, including deliberate attacks against civilians. COVID-19 may only exacerbate these challenges and further stress the global humanitarian system. The GFS will strengthen capabilities to anticipate,

prevent, and mitigate persistent and emerging conflict challenges. It will prioritize cost-effective and locally led initiatives that reduce the financial burden on the United States. The GFS will support ongoing efforts to confront terrorist groups, transnational criminal organizations, and other malign actors who threaten U.S. interests and its allies.

In consultation with Congress, the Executive Branch will pursue organizational reforms to use taxpayer dollars judiciously and achieve better results. The GFS will prioritize research, information-sharing, and data analytics to understand local dynamics more fully, target interventions, and hold actors accountable. The GFS will require rigorous monitoring and evaluation and periodic reviews to assess policy outcomes, not just program outputs. The United States will modify or end programs that are not producing sufficient results or where partners are not fulfilling their commitments. The GFS will also emphasize private sector and civil society engagement and burden-sharing to support citizen responsive governance and democracy and deliver cost-effective outcomes. In developing the GFS, the Administration has consulted with more than 200 civil society experts, NGOs, bilateral partners, and multilateral agencies to date. The Administration will continue to consult with stakeholders, including Congress, as it finalizes and advances the GFS.

1. Global Fragility Strategy: Goals & Objectives

The GFS, while still being finalized, will include the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Prevention--Anticipate and Prevent Violent Conflict

The United States will establish and support capabilities to engage in peacebuilding and anticipate and prevent violent conflict before it erupts. Objectives include:

- Develop and/or reinforce local, national, and regional early warning systems and early action plans, backed by preventative diplomacy
- Address underlying vulnerabilities that fuel conflict risks and undermine civilian security by enhancing partner nation prevention and peacebuilding plans
- Support civil society networks, inclusive of the private sector, women, youth, and members of faith-based communities and marginalized groups, to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts

Goal 2: Stabilization--Achieve Locally Driven Political Solutions to Violent Conflicts and Large-Scale Violence

The United States will support inclusive political processes to resolve ongoing violent conflicts, emphasizing meaningful participation of youth, women, and members of faith-based communities and marginalized groups, respect for human rights, and environmental sustainability. Objectives include:

- Assist national and local actors, including from civil society, to broker and implement sustainable peace agreements or ceasefires, including accountability provisions
- Align development, security, and justice sector assistance by using data driven metrics and adaptive strategic approaches on stabilization and peace process implementation
- Establish and/or reinforce local, national, and regional partnerships that bolster peace processes and stabilize conflict-affected areas

Goal 3: Burden-Sharing--Promote Partnerships for Stability, Resilience, and Peace

The United States will encourage and assist partners to create conditions for long-term regional stability and foster private sector-led growth. Objectives include:

- Establish compact-based partnerships with national and local partners to promote mutual accountability for reform efforts
- Engage regional, bilateral, and multilateral partners to coordinate assistance, reinforce necessary governance and economic reforms, and build resilience to shocks
- Mobilize private sector activity to sustain peace by improving the investment climate, combatting corruption, and leveraging development finance tools
- Engage the international private sector to encourage conflict-sensitive investment and beneficial public-private partnerships
- Address cross-border threats and regional challenges by developing and/or enhancing mechanisms for economic, security and/or justice cooperation

Goal 4: Management-- Enable an Effective, Integrated U.S Government Response

The United States will maximize U.S. taxpayer dollars and realize more effective outcomes through better prioritization, integration, and focus on efficiency across the U.S. government and with partners. Objectives include:

- Institutionalize joint interagency research, analysis, planning, messaging, prioritization of funding, and execution of activities toward prevention, stabilization, and resilience
- Recruit, train, and retain diverse staff with relevant skills for fragile contexts and deploy civilian diplomats and development professionals alongside U.S. military operational and tactical elements where needed
- Establish rigorous monitoring and evaluation requirements, risk assessments and feedback loops to assess progress, modify approaches, or shift diplomatic, security, and assistance efforts where necessary

2. Department and Agency Roles and Responsibilities

The U.S. government has established clear roles and responsibilities to ensure effective GFA implementation, specifically:

- The Department of State (State) is the lead Federal agency for executing the GFS. Under the direction of the President, State oversees and implements U.S. foreign policy to advance diplomatic and political efforts with local partners, relevant bilateral parties, and multilateral bodies. State also oversees the planning and implementation of law enforcement, targeted justice sector, and other security assistance to stabilize conflict-affected areas and prevent violence and fragility globally. Within State, the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) and the Director of Foreign Assistance (F) will be responsible for leading and overseeing coordinated aspects of the GFS.
- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) serves as the lead implementing agency for non-security U.S. prevention and stabilization assistance in support of U.S. policy objectives. Within USAID, the Assistant to the Administrator for the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) will be responsible for leading USAID's implementation efforts related to the GFS.

- The Department of Defense (DoD) serves in a supporting role to manage and prevent conflict, and to address global fragility through activities including Civil Affairs, defense institution building, and security cooperation. DoD also provides requisite security and reinforces civilian efforts, where appropriate and consistent with available authorities. Within DoD, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations / Low-Intensity Conflict in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy will be responsible for leading and overseeing DoD efforts related to the GFS.

Other Federal departments and agencies, including the Department of the Treasury and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, serve as supporting elements for U.S. efforts to stabilize conflict-affected areas and prevent violence and fragility globally, as appropriate and authorized, based on their unique mandates, capabilities and relationships. A senior-level committee composed of NSC, State, USAID, DoD, and Treasury will meet quarterly to review GFS implementation progress.

3. Compact-Based Partnerships, Bilateral and Multilateral Engagements, and Burden-Sharing

As one new aspect of the GFS, the United States will pursue compact-based partnerships with national and local actors based on specific metrics. The United States will develop new models for these compact-based partnerships based on international best practices. Metrics will focus on national and local actors' political will to advance peace processes, inclusive and accountable governance, economic and security sector reforms, respect for human rights, and defined cost-sharing. The United States will reinforce these partnerships by facilitating policy dialogue among national and local leaders and other international partners, planning for scenarios, and managing change. If partners fail to meet their commitments, the United States will shift resources and increase diplomatic and economic pressure.

At the same time, the United States will pursue bilateral and multilateral partnerships to reinforce the GFS. The United States will promote donor coordination and work with other donors to share and track information on respective programs, prevent duplication, and align assistance toward shared objectives. This includes greater coordination with the Group of Seven, Group of Twenty, and other donors and private-sector partners. The United States will also coordinate with partners to ensure consistent messaging to host-nation partners and efforts to confront malign actors and spoilers.

The United States is also developing standards for related multilateral pooled funding mechanisms, potentially to include the Global Fragility Fund envisioned by Congress. The United States is assessing ways to maximize effectiveness of such funds in fragile environments, including host-country and international partner participation and oversight. Creating any new multilateral funding mechanisms would have to overcome challenges related to effectiveness and accountability and would also be tied to a diplomatic and outreach strategy.

4. Authorities, Staffing, and Resources

The Administration will incorporate the GFS into future budget requests to Congress and will seek more flexible authorities and funding as needed. Assistance directives, earmarks, and other requirements – although serving specific development purposes – can be constraints in fast-paced complex fragile contexts. Existing U.S. funding accounts provide critical authorities to assess and respond to emergent stabilization requirements and bilateral and regional funds can provide consistency over time. The Prevention and Stabilization Fund authorized by the GFA will serve as a critically important tool to align policy and programmatic interventions for GFS implementation across the development, stabilization, and security sectors.

The United States will review existing organizational processes and structures and make changes as needed to achieve the GFS goals and objectives. U.S. departments and agencies will review their current skills, capabilities, research, and data analytics requirements, and staffing to ensure they are positioned to implement the GFS fully. This assessment includes the ability to recruit, train, and retain diverse staff who are skilled at working in fragile environments on prevention, stabilization, and resilience-building, operating in specific cultural or regional contexts, and working across the U.S. government in these contexts.

The United States will continue to invest in its expeditionary civilian workforce to advance this Strategy within priority countries and regions. This support includes deploying civilian-led teams into conflict-affected areas to assess local conditions, engage local authorities, and direct and monitor programs. State, USAID, and DoD will develop a framework that streamlines roles and procedures as indicated in Goal 4.

5. Process for Selecting Priority Countries and Regions

The United States will select no less than five priority countries and/or regions to implement the GFS. These countries and/or regions will be selected based on objective criteria, consistent with the factors identified in Section 505 of the GFA, including: assessed levels and risks of fragility, violent conflict and associated resilience; political will and capacity for partnerships; opportunity for U.S. impact; other international commitments and resources; and U.S. national interests.

U.S. departments and agencies are using third-party data sources and indicators to help inform selection of priority countries and/or regions. These include the Armed Conflict and Location Event Data Project, Fragile States Index, Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index, Legatum Institute's Prosperity Index, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Early Warning Project, Varieties of Democracy Project, UNDP's Gender Inequality Index, and World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators.

U.S. department and agencies are consulting with U.S. embassies and missions in potential countries, and with relevant Combatant Commands, to assess partner commitment, opportunities for impact, and U.S. capacity in country for implementing the GFS. As part of those consultations, U.S. departments and agencies are weighing options for regional approaches to address challenges and maximize resources. U.S. departments and agencies will consider U.S. national security and economic interests in prioritizing among potential countries and regions.

Following the internal review and consultation with Congress, the Administration will finalize the list of priority countries and regions. Once priority countries and regions are selected, the United States will develop multi-year implementation plans, in conjunction with national and local government and civil society partners. The United States will align and sequence all relevant U.S. tools and resources to advance agreed objectives. Metrics for evaluating the success of the GFS will be outlined in these country and regional plans as well as in specific agency and department implementation plans.