



Joint Regional Strategy

Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

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1. Executive Statement

The principal goal of U.S. engagement with the Western Hemisphere is a prosperous, safe, and democratic region with which the United States can partner to advance shared interests globally and regionally.

By virtue of geography and history, the national security of the United States is more directly affected by events in the Western Hemisphere than any other region. Crises of governance, natural disasters, and lack of opportunity drive migration and enable transnational criminal networks whose trafficking in narcotics, arms, and people threaten our borders and citizens. Conversely, enduring cultural and economic ties, and a regional commitment to liberty undergird our security and provide a platform for projection of U.S. interests.

While the region enjoys relative stability compared to many other parts of the world, our Hemisphere faces gathering threats, including a historic migration crisis in South America caused by Venezuela's implosion, and unceasing flows of migrants from Central America fleeing violence and poverty. A triangle of tyranny formed by Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba defies the regional preference for freedom. China, meanwhile, is aggressively expanding in every corner of the Hemisphere, exerting economic and political influence throughout the region.

The United States is well-positioned to win the great-power competition in the Western Hemisphere. Since the beginnings of the modern Inter-American System after World War II, the region has embraced individual rights as the foundation of state legitimacy. The 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter further specified the obligation of governments to promote and defend democracy and reflects the region's remarkable political transformation since the Third Wave of democratization in the 1980s. In 1980, less than half of Latin American and Caribbean countries had an elected government; in 2017, all but one did. The 2017 response of the Lima Group to the breakdown of democratic order in Venezuela, and recent statements by the OAS condemning political violence in Nicaragua, only underscore how extrinsic authoritarian government has become in this hemisphere. This ideological convergence has paid a dividend by reducing the potential for conflict. In the post-war era, Latin America and the Caribbean had a lower level of interstate violence than any other region of the world.

Demographic and economic trends likewise augur potential success. Over twenty percent of the region's population is between fifteen and twenty four years old. Young, tech-literate populations will unleash new waves of entrepreneurial energy. Internet penetration in Latin America and the Caribbean is nearly twice the level of Africa. These young populations will cluster in vibrant urban centers. Latin America is among the world's most urbanized regions, with about 80 percent of the population living in cities. By contrast, only 49 percent of Asians and 41 percent of Africans live in urban areas. The region's cities have millions of connections with great U.S. cities, where diaspora communities are woven deeply into the civil fabric.

The integrated North American economy is a global juggernaut that creates jobs and new businesses. This North American economy has grown increasingly intertwined with the rest of the Hemisphere. The United States trades almost \$2 trillion worth of goods and services annually with the Western Hemisphere, and is the top trading partner for approximately two-thirds of the Hemisphere's countries. This supports over three million American jobs. The

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United States trades more than twice as much within our own hemisphere as with China. Moreover, trade in the Western Hemisphere is freer and fairer than most other regions. Twelve of our 20 global free-trade agreements are with Western Hemisphere countries. The United States runs trade surpluses with most of its partners in the Americas.

The Western Hemisphere is the energy powerhouse for the new century. South America and the Caribbean have significant undeveloped oil and natural gas resources ready to meet surging global demand. At the same time, once tightly restricted national energy markets are opening to international trade in U.S. energy products and investment by U.S. companies. Since 2016, 36 percent of U.S. liquefied natural gas exports have gone to Latin America. Between now and 2030, Latin America is expected to invest \$70 billion in new electrical power generation.

Yet for all the region's comparative advantages, the Western Hemisphere faces three imposing deficits—in economic opportunity, state capacity, and social trust—that threaten to erode the progress of recent decades and impede the trajectory toward self-reliance in many nations. Since the democratic transitions of the 1980s, economic performance has not kept pace with the heightened expectations of Latin American citizens, or the needs of a growing population.

Unemployment in Latin America and the Caribbean increased for the third consecutive year in 2017, affecting more than 26 million people and contributing to a rise in informality. One in five young people are not employed and not in school, leaving them vulnerable to crime and violence. Lackluster economic performance also disproportionately affects women, whose unemployment rate is 1.4 times that of the region's men. Wealth inequality is among the worst in the world and remains a cause of social friction and a vulnerability for political instability. The region's continued overreliance on commodities exports and inability to manage public debt leaves national economies vulnerable to external shocks, credit crises, and aggressive economic behavior by China. A shortfall in infrastructure investment amounting to three percent of GDP drags on economic growth and makes it more difficult for Latin American economies to climb the value chain from resource extraction.

Low state capacity and weak institutions undermine faith in democracy generally and create opportunities for transnational criminal organizations and corruption to flourish, further weakening the state and retarding economic growth. Nowhere is the consequence of state weakness more clear than in the inability to provide security to citizens. Despite all efforts, crime and violence continue to exact a heavy toll on the region, costing up to eight percent of GDP according to one estimate. Recent public opinion surveys show a strong correlation between levels of crime and perceived democratic legitimacy. Personal experience with crime or corruption has a powerful erosive effect on citizens' perception of government efficacy and trust in national governments. This leads to a dynamic in which the government's inability to address corruption and crime causes people to lose trust in the government, which further undermines its ability to address these security challenges.

The gap between expectation and delivery, particularly in the area of security, is a source of frustration and cynicism in many countries, which in turn opens opportunities for democratic backsliding and the rise of personalist authoritarians who exploit economic divisions and unmet expectations for non-democratic ends. In Venezuela, the slide into electoral authoritarianism is complete and is impacting the entire region. Political violence in Nicaragua has likewise led to curbed freedoms and degraded civic institutions, with implications for all of Central America.

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Weakening of presidential term limits elsewhere threatens established democratic norms. The Odebrecht corruption scandal has shaken the political establishment to its foundations in Brazil and has rippled throughout the region. In multiple Caribbean nations, politicians have been driven by popular demand to make anti-corruption a primary focus of their electoral platforms. Political elites have been swept aside and the parties that perpetuated their power through corruption have found their legitimacy damaged, perhaps fatally. In a number of countries, populists have stepped into this vacuum.

Latin American publics have limited insight into their leaders' priorities or actions. A paucity of reliable information leads to less informed electorates vulnerable to manipulation by either domestic or extra-regional actors. The weakening bonds of trust within societies has implications for both the region's security and economic prospects. Disillusionment with calcified political parties and institutions has also opened the door to external actors, including Russia and China. Finally, this deficit in social trust has implications for the health of democracy in the region. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2017 ranking, Latin America rated particularly low for citizen confidence in democracy.

To address these deficits, promote self-reliance and burden-sharing, and ensure the Western Hemisphere remains a friendly neighborhood for the United States, free of coercive influences from external actors, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean must pursue four goals: a secure Hemisphere; a prosperous Hemisphere; stronger democratic institutions; and receptiveness to U.S. leadership.

2. Bureau Strategic Framework

Strategy Outline

Goal 1

A secure Hemisphere

Objective 1.1

Counter TCOs and illicit networks

Objective 1.2

Protect U.S. borders and prevent illegal immigration

Objective 1.3

Counter Russia and malevolent cyber actors

Objective 1.4

Counter terrorism threats

Goal 2

A prosperous Hemisphere

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Foster growth through fair and reciprocal trade and investment

Objective 2.2

Improve climate for U.S. businesses, including through IPR protection, innovation, and connectivity

Objective 2.3

Counter predatory behavior by China

Objective 2.4

Promote energy security and regional energy integration

Objective 2.5

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Goal 3

A democratic Hemisphere

Objective 3.1

Support efforts to restore democracy where it is threatened

Objective 3.2

Counter corruption and impunity to strengthen democratic institutions

Objective 3.3

Strengthen rule of law and judicial systems

Objective 3.4

Deepen respect for human rights and spur inclusive development through empowerment of vulnerable populations

Goal 4

A Hemisphere receptive to U.S. leadership and values

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Engage publics and influence opinion to advance U.S. policies and values

Objective 4.2

Bolster support for U.S. positions working with hemispheric institutions

Objective 4.3

Expand connections between U.S. and foreign institutions, organizations, businesses, and people

Cross-Cutting Management Objective

Advance diplomatic effectiveness and accountability to the American taxpayer in WHA diplomatic support platforms

3. Goals and Objectives

Bureau Goal 1 A secure Hemisphere

a. Description and Linkages

In the Americas, we rely on strong partnerships to fight transnational criminal organizations. We will protect the homeland by disrupting illicit networks and cutting off trafficking routes that lead to the United States while remaining vigilant of threats posed by extra-regional state and non-state actors. We will prioritize the safety and security of our citizens by working to address the drivers of transnational crime and irregular migration. We will work with the Mexican government to implement migration protection protocols and holistically address the flow of illegal migrants. At the same time, Central American governments must do more to stop the flow of migrants bound for the U.S. border.

The NSS and JSP both prescribe strengthening U.S. borders and countering instability and violence in order to protect the American people and homeland. In the Western Hemisphere, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and gangs pose the most immediate security threat to the United States. Illegal drugs trafficked by these groups, including fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine, killed 35,000 U.S. citizens in 2016. Insecurity in our Hemisphere can quickly metastasize into threats to our borders, either in the form of migrants fleeing violence or illegal drugs or weapons flowing into our country. To address these challenges, we catalyze regional efforts to bolster the rule of law and confront transnational crime through strong diplomatic engagement, supporting local efforts to professionalize justice, police, and security forces. We also target crime and violence prevention efforts at geographic areas and demographic groups that are at the highest risk, strengthening communities to resist violence and the lure of migration, as well as countering competitors and malign actors who undermine our collective security. Our Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, the Caribbean 2020 strategy, the U.S. Strategy for Central America, the Central America Regional Security Initiative, our cooperation with Mexico, and our historic partnership with Colombia guide these efforts.

We will remain vigilant to any terrorist recruitment or movements in the Hemisphere. Increasing engagement by China and Russia in the region also poses a nascent but serious challenge to U.S. national security interests.

Bureau Objective 1.1 Counter TCOs and illicit networks

a. Justification

U.S. engagement confronts the threat of TCOs and illicit networks by enhancing the political will and capacity of partner governments to address the permissive environment that allows these groups to operate. Our engagement also builds stronger institutions, strengthens law enforcement, improves economic development, and builds community resilience. Judicial reform and anti-corruption efforts under Objective Three also weaken the permissive environments that allow illicit networks to operate. Given the deadly consequences of the drug

trade on the United States and its role in sustaining transnational crime, our strategies place special emphasis on counternarcotics. Efforts to reduce heroin and cocaine production couple eradication and interdiction with alternative development programs in a proven path for success. U.S. engagement in Latin America and the Caribbean seeks to disrupt illicit networks along the entire criminal supply chain, including wildlife trafficking and illegal mining from which these groups profit; and to stem the flow of future recruits for such networks through youth crime and violence prevention efforts. To make progress, we rely on local partners' will and capacity to effect change. A risk potentially affecting U.S. efforts is that a lack of political will or state presence could potentially open new ungoverned space for criminal networks to take root. To bolster less capable states, we must also leverage the willingness and ability of key partners, such as Colombia and Mexico, to lead regional and sub-regional operations and capacity building.

Bureau Objective 1.2 Protect U.S. borders and prevent illegal immigration

a. Justification

Through the U.S. Strategy for Central America, we address the security, governance, and economic drivers of illegal immigration and illicit trafficking in Central America. U.S. efforts complement the Northern Triangle's own reform initiative, the Alliance for Prosperity, as well as mobilizing private sector funding through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Security programs in Mexico help disrupt transnational criminal organizations, strengthen rule of law institutions, and improve our shared border security to prevent illicit trafficking. The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative helps address the causes of violence and migration along the southern U.S. maritime border. Risks include natural disasters or economic or political factors that drive outward migration and risk destabilizing neighbors. To counter this, we focus on building resilience to externalities. We will also continue to engage with nations throughout the region to ensure that all countries have in place a repeatable process for timely acceptance of their nationals subject to final orders of removal from the United States.

Bureau Objective 1.3 Counter Russia and malevolent cyber actors

a. Justification

Russia seeks operating space in the Western Hemisphere by expanding military linkages through arms sales across the region, offering limited regional training from a police academy center in Nicaragua, and using soft power outreach through programming of television and online content through RT and Sputnik. In addition to maintaining strong ties with historical allies, including Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Cuba, Russia is a patron of the Maduro regime in Venezuela. Democratic institutions and publics throughout the Hemisphere are susceptible to misinformation campaigns by both internal and external actors that seek to manipulate existing social divisions and institutional weaknesses to sow discord. This is a risk both to the internal stability of our neighbors and to U.S. interests in the region. To counter disinformation campaigns and increase resilience, we will continue and expand efforts to support independent media, media literacy, educational exchanges, and economic development. To bolster nascent cooperation on cybersecurity, improve infrastructure resilience, and counteract state actors that seek to develop

and deploy offensive capabilities, we will primarily work through the existing mechanisms of the Organization of American States to develop a regional approach of confidence-building measures and deterrence of aggression. We will also work within the Department and the interagency to identify strategic opportunities to increase and enhance bilateral technical training and improve capabilities of key regional cyber partners.

Bureau Objective 1.4 Counter terrorism threats

a. Justification

While the terrorism threat is perhaps less omnipresent than in other regions, proximity to the United States and the availability of illicit pathways for people and goods throughout the region argue for continued vigilance and assistance to governments to address vulnerabilities. A risk is that conflict in the Middle East could induce enemies to unleash proxies in the region and take advantage of weak borders to conduct more direct and destructive acts against U.S. interests. To defend against this possibility, we must build strong intelligence sharing and law enforcement cooperation with partners and enhance the ability of our partners to better control their borders, airports, and seaports. We will work to ensure that all countries comply with the information-sharing requirements laid out in E.O. 13780 and subsequent Presidential proclamations. We will also encourage all U.N. Member States to meet their obligations under UNSCR 2396 to strengthen aviation and border security; improve information sharing, including the use of Passenger Name Record data and biometrics; and make appropriate efforts to prosecute, rehabilitate, and reintegrate foreign terrorist fighters.

Bureau Goal 2 A prosperous Hemisphere

a. Description and Linkages

We will advance the President's trade agenda and foster economic growth in the United States by ensuring fair and reciprocal trade conditions for U.S. firms and exports. Because stronger economies create markets for U.S. businesses and address economic causes of illegal immigration, we will work to strengthen economic, energy, and food security in the region. We will combat the corruption that erodes social trust and political legitimacy and corrodes institutions. Education and health will be important parts of this effort, since educated and healthy citizens help build stronger societies. We also work to support our citizens and neighbors by addressing infectious disease crises and natural disasters as they arise.

This goal serves the NSC directive to promote American prosperity through fair and reciprocal trading relationships and to pursue energy dominance. The United States enjoys a trading surplus with most of the countries in the region, has more free trade agreements in the Hemisphere than in any other region, and is both a supplier and importer of energy products. By deepening economic relationships in the Western Hemisphere, partnering with the private sector in furthering our objectives, and securing fair access for American goods and American companies in a region vital to our economic health, we advance the JSP goal of renewing

America's competitive advantage globally. This also supports the U.S. Strategy for Central America by reducing the economic drivers of migration.

Bureau Objective 2.1 Foster growth through fair and reciprocal trade and investment

a. Justification

We can promote American prosperity by advancing bilateral relationships and leveraging international institutions and agreements to improve market access for U.S. goods and services, secure commercial opportunities, and foster investment and innovation that contribute to U.S. job creation. We will work to support U.S. businesses by modernizing trade agreements, encouraging compliance with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, and supporting public-private partnerships in strategic industries. We will coordinate and focus our advocacy and trade missions on strategic industries. Each of these efforts will help stem corruption and promote economic growth. We will continue to promote entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development, and women in business; formalize economies; and create larger markets for U.S. businesses. Risks include trade retaliation measures and local government resistance or lack of resources for trade facilitation improvements.

Bureau Objective 2.2 Improve climate for U.S. businesses, including through IPR protection, innovation, and connectivity

a. Justification

We will press the region to adhere to more transparent business norms and bidding practices to stem corruption and create openings for U.S. businesses. We will promote engagement among governments, the private sector, and other local actors as a means to increase transparency, and identify and implement business-friendly, job-creating policies in particular utilizing the Americas Business Dialogue. We will continue to address IPR infringement to help protect and create new and larger markets for U.S. businesses and develop an innovative business environment. A more favorable business-enabling environment for local and U.S. businesses in the region, along with an educated and healthy workforce, will also help to address informality, broaden economic opportunity, and expand potential markets for U.S. businesses. Improved connectivity will introduce electronic government and business processes that will increase efficiency and reduce corruption. A primary risk is the continued attractiveness of protectionist measures or state-led development models that could disadvantage U.S. businesses and U.S. products.

Bureau Objective 2.3 Counter predatory behavior by China

a. Justification

China and other foreign actors have increased their presence in the Western Hemisphere through significant infrastructure and other investment. We will work to ensure increased Western

Hemisphere investment is not a conduit for China to unfairly obtain access to U.S. technology. We will also strive to mitigate the impact of China's foreign development practices that compromise, rather than promote, economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean and retard sustainable economic development. Lack of action by the United States will ensure foreign actors gain favor with our closest trade partners. Latin America's infrastructure gap, amounting to 2.5 percent of GDP, will continue to make China's state capitalist model attractive to countries hungry for investment, particularly if U.S. firms are unwilling to accept higher risks. Without improving the business climate and reducing corruption in the Western Hemisphere, U.S. companies may still be averse to engaging in large infrastructure projects in the region. The risk is that Chinese investment can become a means to undercut U.S. commercial interests through non-market practices, and can erode local industrial development, ultimately undermining the interests of both the United States and our partners. We must underline the contrast between a Chinese approach that undermines sovereignty and extracts national resources and a U.S. approach that promotes self-reliance.

Bureau Objective 2.4 Promote energy security and regional energy integration

a. Justification

U.S. national security is threatened when our allies lack reliable access to affordable energy, when foreign markets shut out U.S. companies, when poor governance prevents market-based solutions, or when terrorists and rogue regimes seek to exploit energy resources to fund violence and criminal activities. While our Hemisphere has some of the world's largest energy producers, the high cost of electricity, small markets, and dependence on imported oil represent risks to prosperity, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean. Promoting diversification of energy resources and access to affordable, reliable energy necessary for economic development in the Western Hemisphere will create opportunities for U.S. businesses and enhance U.S. security. To improve U.S. energy exports, we will work to reduce barriers to energy development and trade to improve energy security of U.S. allies and partners by diversifying energy sources, supplies, and routes. We will strengthen regional prosperity by working with partners to make energy markets more flexible, transparent, secure, deep, and competitive. We will help new energy markets replicate U.S. legal and regulatory frameworks, and help them adopt U.S. business and finance models.

Bureau Objective 2.5 Build resilience to external shocks

a. Justification

Diversified economies and stronger institutions enable countries to better absorb shocks, including economic crises, natural disasters, infectious diseases, and reduce the need for U.S. aid and support by buttressing national self-reliance. We will work with our neighbors to strengthen their resilience to threats posed by shocks. We will encourage regional innovation to respond to natural disasters and emphasize disaster preparedness. We will work with multi-national organizations and financial institutions to prioritize risks that are higher for particular regions or countries—for example, natural disasters in the Caribbean and commodity price downturns in

South America. Deficiencies in disaster risk reduction and increasingly frequent and destructive severe weather will render the Caribbean particularly vulnerable to future disruptions. We will improve food security in targeted areas of the region and improve regional capacity to detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.

Bureau Goal 3 A democratic Hemisphere

a. Description and Linkages

Working alongside leading governments in the Organization of American States and throughout the Hemisphere, we promote democratic values and seek to end impunity. Much of the Hemisphere has a shared, fundamental respect for democracy and democratic institutions. We work in partnership to address common hemispheric challenges, such as restoring to the Venezuelan people the democratic voice denied to them by the Maduro regime, and by working to protect human rights and democratic institutions wherever they are challenged throughout the Hemisphere. We will aggressively oppose the triangle of tyranny among Havana, Caracas and Managua, and is responsible for so much regional instability and human suffering.

It is no coincidence that the Western Hemisphere is both the world's most peaceful and most democratic region. Strong democracies are both internally more stable and less prone to conflict than authoritarian governments. Well-ordered, non-corrupt governments are also conducive to free enterprise and the creation of wealth and opportunity for their citizens. Supporting democracy and fighting corruption in the Western Hemisphere therefore serves both the JSP goals of promoting America's competitive advantage and protecting the American people and homeland from conflicts and threats caused by instability and transnational crime. Our Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, the Caribbean 2020 strategy, the U.S. Strategy for Central America, the Central America Regional Security Initiative, and our long-standing cooperation with Mexico and Colombia guide these efforts.

Bureau Objective 3.1 Support efforts to restore democracy where it is threatened

a. Justification

Our engagement in the Americas directly supports the core democratic values described in the Inter-American Democracy Charter. As essential components of liberal democracy, we support freedom of expression and association, as well as the role of civil society, independent media, and human rights defenders. A persistent risk to democracy's predominance in the Hemisphere is the erosion of citizen trust due to the failure of state institutions to deliver services, particularly in the areas of rule of law and justice, and corruption. Public opinion surveys show a strong inverse correlation between personal experience with corruption and trust in democracy in the abstract. This disenchantment and cynicism leaves citizens more amenable to seduction by personalist authoritarians or populist demagogues. Eroding trust in democratic institutions also opens space for global competitors promoting alternative models for state-led development. We will work to counter the malevolent influence of regional pariah states that deny their people full expression of their potential and that attempt to export a defunct ideology.

Bureau Objective 3.2 Counter corruption and impunity to strengthen democratic institutions

a. Justification

Corruption thrives in obscurity; light is the most efficient disinfectant. To shine a light on corruption, we will urge the adoption of more transparent revenue collection and spending processes to provide the public with a window into the workings of government and allow them to oversee its actions. One risk to these efforts is that political actors benefiting from the status quo intentionally undermine anti-corruption institutions or bend them to corrupt purposes. This generates cynicism among citizens and weakens support for anti-corruption measures and even democracy itself. To address this risk, we will focus on strengthening laws that combat corruption, enforcement of these laws, and the protection of independent watchdogs such as civil society and media who identify corrupt actions and actors and who spotlight violations of laws and advocate for proper enforcement of existing anti-corruption legislation. We will work to ensure that criminal justice institutions, particularly in Central America, are strong, transparent, and accountable, especially when tasked with response to violent crimes.

Bureau Objective 3.3 Strengthen rule of law and judicial systems

a. Justification

Improving rule-of-law institutions is the primary long-term solution to ending the impunity that drives crime and emigration in the region. In cooperation with interagency partners, we will work with countries to build strong legal and judicial institutions, as well as with civilian law enforcement, on reforms including professionalization and anti-corruption, human rights, organizational and local system capacity, and community-oriented policing. We leverage U.S. expertise by employing programs like the New York City Police Department's Complaints Statistics (COMPSTAT) management system, which reveals patterns of crime so the police can deploy officers more efficiently and effectively. Our efforts will also help build a more transparent and effective prosecutorial system through better application of forensics; advance safe, secure, and humane prison management systems with a focus on rehabilitation, especially for youth; and improve access to justice. Weak political will remains the most salient risk to strong rule of law and judicial independence, and official corruption threatens to undermine progress in these areas. Diplomatic engagement to mitigate this risk and build political will could include outreach to government and political parties on accountability for impunity and corruption in party affiliates.

Bureau Objective 3.4 Deepen respect for human rights and spur inclusive development through empowerment of vulnerable populations

a. Justification

Human rights and pluralism are foundational to the Inter-American System. By defending these values in our own Hemisphere, we also defend the democratic order that is built upon them and on which U.S. security and prosperity depends. The Department of State and USAID will work

with partner country governments to provide widespread access to fair and citizen-centered governance, particularly for traditionally underserved, marginalized, and vulnerable communities, to promote a culture of respect for human rights. We will continue to work with governments and civil society to expand access to justice services and alternative dispute resolution, support the effective application of justice, strengthen governance, and promote citizen participation and oversight for governments at all levels. The risk to human rights is most acute during civil conflict or political strife or upheaval. We therefore safeguard these values by working to strengthen democratic institutions in general.

Bureau Goal 4 A Hemisphere receptive to U.S. leadership and values

a. Description and Linkages

The Western Hemisphere is interconnected by history, language, and culture, and by a rich web of person-to-person and city-to-city ties. Reinforcing these networks among civil-society organizations, educational institutions, and the private sector shores up support for U.S. positions and builds a positive, nuanced understanding of U.S. policies. Led by key partners in the region who act as models for self-reliance and sharing of regional responsibilities, the Western Hemisphere will rally behind U.S. priorities in multilateral forums, especially the United Nations, the Organizations of American States, and the Summit of the Americas process.

As described in the NSS and 2018-2022 JSP, engaging foreign publics is both an end in itself, and a means to advance U.S. geostrategic interests, including ensuring support for U.S. positions in international organizations. The United States benefits from cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and economic ties with nearly every country in the Western Hemisphere, as well as a long history of cooperation in several countries. Our challenge is to use those ties to realize tangible political goals that amplify U.S. power globally. We must also strive to assertively maintain and strengthen those ties in the face of Chinese and Russian influence campaigns in the region.

Bureau Objective 4.1 Engage publics and influence opinion to advance U.S. policies and values

a. Justification

We will use traditional and innovative tools of public diplomacy to promote U.S. policies and values and to create an environment receptive to that engagement. English teaching and the promotion of entrepreneurship create critical openings with key target demographics. Academic and policy-related exchanges will focus on strategic goals. Direct engagement through traditional and social media and inclusive cultural programs create broad-based mutual understanding and promote social inclusion. Evaluation of effectiveness will be gauged through direct reporting and data-driven analysis of engagement, opinion, and media penetration on our key themes. Misunderstanding and anger over U.S. domestic policies, particularly regarding immigration and ethnicity, constrain our influence on foreign audiences and limit the impact of our programs. We counter this risk by challenging disinformation and by accentuating the mutual benefits of balanced engagement between neighbors.

Bureau Objective 4.2 Bolster support for U.S. positions working with hemispheric institutions**a. Justification**

From the 1948 American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, signed in 2001, the founding documents of the Inter-American System resonate with U.S. principles, including a bedrock commitment to political liberty. Our challenge is to rally the Hemisphere around those principles when they are challenged, as in Venezuela and Nicaragua, and achieve productive outcomes in multilateral forums that advance U.S. goals. To do so, we will engage through regional institutions such as the OAS and CARICOM both to build support for U.S. priorities such as reducing corruption and transnational crime, and to strengthen the institutions themselves, by encouraging like-minded states to share burdens and take leadership roles. The United States is neither a member state nor observer of CARICOM, which may limit engagement. Yet while coordination with CARICOM as a single entity is useful, bilateral engagement with member countries is essential to maintaining our influence. Continued collaboration with the Lima Group will also help in supporting hemispheric coalitions to counter authoritarianism in Venezuela and its disastrous effects on the Venezuelan people. Within the United Nations organizations and bodies, we will continue to seek collaboration with like-minded WHA countries. One risk to effective communication is inconsistent coordination between capitals and their representatives in multilateral organizations. We address this by coordinating our messaging overseas from different agencies and in international organizations so that our partners hear the same U.S. priorities from a single voice. We can use the Summit of the Americas and its process to secure the highest-level commitments to support U.S. priorities, as exemplified in April 2018 with the *Lima Commitment*.

Bureau Objective 4.3 Expand connections between U.S. and foreign institutions, organizations, businesses, and people**a. Justification**

American soft power amplifies our economic and strategic influence in the Hemisphere. In order to use this power to advance our foreign policy goals, we will deepen links between educational institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, and diaspora communities, and use these relationships as vectors for influence. Using the Young Leaders in the Americas (YLAI) program and network, we will increase ties between U.S. and regional entrepreneurs and spread American business models and values. We will expand linkages between U.S. and regional institutions of technical and higher learning through the public-private partnership model exemplified by the 100,000 Strong in the Americas program. One risk in this area is that institutional weaknesses, including corruption, lack of enabling regulation, and inability to provide security, can dissuade U.S. organizations from engaging in exchanges in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean. This opens spaces for global competitors, particularly China, to expand their economic and cultural footprint in the region. Continued support for U.S. institutions promoting rule of law, transparency, and democracy helps to counter this risk.

4. Cross-cutting Management Objectives

Management Objective Advance diplomatic effectiveness and accountability to the American taxpayer in WHA diplomatic support platforms

a. Justification

To accomplish the diplomatic and foreign assistance goals of the JRS, we dedicate our effort to the cross-cutting management objective of enhancing the effectiveness of our support platforms and ensuring accountability to the American taxpayer through the judicious use of WHA resources. Within a constrained budget environment, WHA must strengthen its management platforms to support expanding programs and the growing numbers of overseas staff, many from agencies other than the Department of State and USAID. Achieving our ambitious JRS goals and objectives will require effectively allocating scarce financial and personnel resources without compromising the quality of administrative support services or the ability to staff our missions with highly qualified Civil and Foreign Service staff, and Locally Employed Staff. Successful execution of WHA policy priorities and programs requires a strong management platform, augmented by a workforce that is adequate in size, experience, and training. WHA will keep its people safe and pursue the construction and maintenance of secure and modern diplomatic facilities, incorporating co-location and rightsizing recommendations, where appropriate; pursue staff development and training opportunities; modernized infrastructure and technology for efficient operations; and ensure the effective and efficient delivery of ICASS services. A potential risk to the effectiveness of our operations is that rapid expansion of interagency presence will put untenable strain on our overseas platforms and lead to a degradation in support for core programs or personnel.