



# NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

## Overview of Western Hemisphere Strategic Framework

### Purpose of the Framework

The Western Hemisphere is a geo-political priority for the United States, as articulated in the President's 2017 *National Security Strategy* (NSS). The Western Hemisphere Strategic Framework, which is summarized here, articulates United States policy priorities and a comprehensive vision for engagement to ensure democracy, prosperity, and security in the Western Hemisphere.

### Strategic Context

The Western Hemisphere is our neighborhood. Our deep geographic, economic, and cultural ties make the region critical to United States national security, peace, and prosperity. Shared values are key drivers for security, peace, and prosperity throughout the region. The Hemisphere has abundant natural resources, including fuels and precious metals, and several countries have become agribusiness powerhouses. The Western Hemisphere is largely urbanized and most of its population is technologically adept. We remain closely aligned on issues regarding Hemispheric security, trade, and foreign policy. We cooperate on health security, as the COVID-19 pandemic underscored, and work together to prevent, contain, mitigate, and respond to such threats. Most states in the region are building on democracy, resilient institutions and infrastructure, and rule of law to achieve greater security, peace, and prosperity. A dozen countries held peaceful elections in the past two years — while just three decades ago much of the Hemisphere suffered under dictatorships, civil war, and insurgencies.

Although the region has made great strides, challenges remain on multiple fronts that threaten the region's ability to sustain progress. Repressive dictatorial regimes threaten regional security, a situation exacerbated by the encroachment of both transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and adversarial countries exerting malign influence. Throughout the region, these external actors seek to align themselves with sympathetic regimes, exploit the region's abundant resources for their own gain, and target their investments and donations to expand their own political and economic influence, all while contributing to widespread corruption and the systemic deterioration of the rule of law. Additionally, economic instability, insecurity, and weak governance contribute to the scourge

of illegal drugs, as well as human trafficking and illegal and uncontrolled migration. Low economic growth and mobility can cause social friction, political instability, and discourage needed and mutually beneficial foreign investment. The region remains vulnerable to political and economic shocks and stresses from corruption, mass migration, natural disasters, disease, and international financial or economic downturns, all of which can spill across borders and affect the United States.

These challenges present the United States with opportunities to work with our regional partners to develop greater self-reliance. Focus areas include reinforcing democracy and the rule of law; fostering economic growth; improving fiscal and corporate transparency; increasing individual, community, and infrastructure resilience; and promoting inclusive and sustainable development. Our continued strong and positive engagement reduces the space for thugs, gangs, drug cartels, TCOs, and adversarial countries to engage in predatory activity in the region.

### **Desired End State**

The principal goal of United States engagement with the Western Hemisphere is to support a prosperous, safe, and democratic region with which the United States can partner to advance shared interests. This end state includes a strong coalition of governments that are capable and willing to address individual and shared Hemispheric and global responsibilities constructively. Despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Western Hemisphere trends toward faster, more inclusive, and sustainable economic development, with improved mobilization of domestic resources and a high degree of energy and security integration. This end state reflects a future in which all citizens are represented by leaders elected through free and fair elections, and democracy and the rule of law have peacefully returned to Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba. Additionally, this is a future in which bilateral and regional partnerships are strong, and criminals and malign actors are denied a permissive environment.

### **Lines of Effort**

#### **I. Secure the Homeland**

(U) As laid out in the *NSS*, the United States Government is responsible for protecting American citizens, the homeland, and the American way of life. We will continue to strengthen bilateral and regional partnerships and cooperation on numerous security-related fronts. This includes working to modernize shared North American homeland defense warning systems, maritime capability investments that allow for persistent presence in the Arctic region, and innovative solutions to reduce gaps in technology and barriers to intelligence-sharing in the region. The United States will also continue to respond with our international partners to natural disasters and health emergencies and to counter transnational criminal networks, as well as to diminish narcotics trafficking and the illicit flow

of people, money, goods, and weapons. This includes working with regional actors to address the underlying drivers of these challenges at their points of origin. We will apply the Frameworks for Engagement with Mexico and Central American countries to guide our efforts to advance governance, security, and economic priorities.

***Priority Actions:***

1. Prevent illegal and uncontrolled human migration, smuggling, and trafficking through effective control and monitoring of borders, and by addressing the drivers of out-migration;
2. Combat TCOs and the production and trafficking of narcotics and precursor chemicals, strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks to reduce money laundering, corruption, and other illicit activities that enable TCOs to operate with impunity;
3. Ensure effective bilateral law enforcement relationships with like-minded partners and support capacity building for police and customs officials;
4. Advance defense and security relationships with our allies and like-minded partners that match military capabilities to shared defense challenges, limit the influence of malign actors, support counter-trafficking efforts within legal boundaries, promote defense reform and military professionalization, and defend the homeland; and
5. Enhance information sharing and fortify cyber and critical infrastructure security.

**II. Advance Economic Growth and Expand Free Markets in the Americas**

We will promote a market-friendly culture based on transparency and the rule of law as well as robust anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regimes, which will foster the conditions for sustained economic growth and boost real median incomes. This will address one of the driving factors of out-migration, and, in turn, illegal immigration, and will help counter-balance unfair trade and the predatory economic practices of external actors. The United States will: use the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) as the prevailing framework to promote free, fair, and reciprocal trade in the region, including closing back doors to prevent non-market actors from reaching United States markets; employ *America Crece* as our whole-of-government approach to promote economic growth in the Western Hemisphere and deepen commercial ties in energy and infrastructure; and support women's economic empowerment in the Western Hemisphere to boost economic growth and stability, in line with the objectives of the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative.

***Priority Actions:***

1. Foster free, fair, balanced, reciprocal, and transparent trade and investment practices;
2. Promote energy and infrastructure security and resilience, integration, and financial interdependence;

3. Improve the protection of intellectual property rights, and promote innovation and connectivity;
4. Support growth in jobs and real median income through private sector partnerships and development of supply chains in the Hemisphere to deter illegal and uncontrolled migration and long-term displacement and reduce dependence;
5. Combat corruption and impunity, improve citizen security, and foster transparency;
6. Expand the use of beneficial development finance tools; and
7. Improve the capacity for mobilizing domestic resources to support regional resilience objectives of disaster prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

### **III. Reaffirm the Region's Commitment to Democracy and the Rule of Law**

A democratic Western Hemisphere that adheres to Western values and upholds the rule of law is a United States priority objective. The Western Hemisphere held peaceful elections in a dozen countries in the past two years, and the emergence of new, like-minded leaders provides a chance to highlight joint opportunities for the region, as well as to combat threats and challenges posed by the region's authoritarian outliers. The Organization of American States (OAS) provides a regional forum through which to take public actions and make statements that disavow undemocratic actors. The United States will continue to work with our strong democratic partners in the region to promote fair and transparent elections and challenge the authoritarian regimes in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua and undemocratic practices that emerge in other parts of the Western Hemisphere. The United States will collaborate with our allies and like-minded partners on anticorruption efforts, and push for accountability via the Inter-American Democratic Charter to press undemocratic actors to change their ways.

#### ***Priority Actions:***

1. Promote efforts to restore human rights and democracy in Nicaragua and Venezuela, and enable a transition to democracy in Cuba;
2. Champion respect for human rights and civil society participation throughout the region;
3. Promote transparency, free press, and accountability to citizens;
4. Support free and fair elections — free from malign influence;
5. Strengthen judicial and regulatory systems, and investigative capacity;
6. Provide institution-building with our defense and security partners as a pillar of good governance; and
7. Align asylum policies and harmonize visa and immigration regulations.

### **IV. Counter Economic Aggression and Malign Political Influence**

External actors have increased political and economic influence in the Western Hemisphere through state-driven trade, investment, diplomatic, technology, media, security, and health outreach. Examples include the People's Republic of China's (PRC) aggressive efforts to

expand market share, notably in 5G infrastructure, for Huawei and other state-affiliated technology firms; export surveillance and censorship tools; and increase the region's dependence on debt financing and commodities exports at the expense of sovereignty, fiscal prudence, economic diversification, and local markets. Such activities empower corruption, weaken intellectual property protections, exploit cyber vulnerabilities, unfairly disadvantage United States and host nation businesses, harm the environment, and pressure nations to adopt policies inconsistent with democratic values and the long-term interests of their own people. We will actively encourage our partners to incorporate due diligence and transparency requirements in foreign financing and investment.

***Priority Actions:***

1. Increase awareness of the downsides of non-market-based financing;
2. Build closer ties between the United States and regional private sectors;
3. Promote free, fair, and reciprocal trade in the region;
4. Work with partners to develop frameworks for building responsible commercial relationships that do not undermine United States jobs and investment opportunities or threaten intellectual property;
5. Support development and investment opportunities in the Hemisphere, including through the United States Development Finance Corporation;
6. Promote citizen-centric governance to ensure government decision-making and actions are in a country's long-term interest; and
7. Continue to lead in international organizations and multilateral fora.

**V. Expand and Strengthen the Regional Community of Like-Minded Partners**

The people of the Western Hemisphere widely share our values of liberty, democracy, and free markets. We will encourage more countries to join this growing group who share and promote our values, and will actively seek to empower them to help address regional and global challenges. We will work through and with appropriate multilateral forums — which may include the OAS, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, the Pacific Alliance, and the Lima Group — to build consensus on issues of mutual political, economic, security, and defense concern.

***Priority Actions:***

1. Strengthen regional resilience to threats and hazards posed by human-made and natural disasters, disease, and food insecurity;
2. Foster regional consensus and the development of countermeasures against actors that undermine political and economic stability; and
3. Bolster our partners' efforts to help themselves and each other on their journey to self-reliance and self-security.