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RENEWING MOMENTUM AROUND THE GLOBAL FRAGILITY ACT

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Renewing momentum around the Global Fragility Act

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List of acronyms

CCF – Complex Crises Fund

CDCS – Country Development and Cooperation Strategy

CPS – USAID Bureau of Conflict Prevention and Stabilization

CSO – State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

CSSM – Coastal States Stability Mechanism

CWA – Coastal West Africa

DFC – U.S. Development Finance Corporation

DoD – U.S. Department of Defense

FAM – Foreign Affairs Manual

FCV – Fragility, Conflict and Violence

GBC – Gender-Based Violence

GFA - Global Fragility Act

ICS – Integrated Country Strategy

IOM – International Organization for Migration

MCC – Millenium Challenge Corporation

MEL – Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

PSF – Prevention and Stabilization Fund

SPCPS – U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability

TDY – Temporary Duty Tours

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

USAID – U.S. Agency for International Development

VE – Violent Extremism

Executive summary

The 2019 Global Fragility Act (GFA) represented an ambitious attempt to improve the U.S. approach to fragile and conflict-affected countries and prioritize conflict prevention. Five years later, the administration has taken some noteworthy steps to “do business differently” in a handful of GFA pilot countries. However, the administration and Congress must renew momentum around the initiative and recalibrate their efforts if they hope to realize the original ambitions of the legislation and the administration strategy that followed. A surge in violent conflicts globally and the reemergence of major power competition only underscore the importance of these ambitions.

In this three-part paper, we summarize the most significant components of the GFA and the administration strategy, assess early implementation, and provide recommendations for Congress and the administration. We encourage Congress and the administration to use the five-year anniversary of the GFA and the first congressional progress report, due in March 2025, to 1) Recommit to the core objectives of the GFA, 2) Provide the resources necessary for “doing business differently,” and 3) Improve operationalization of some key GFA principles. This includes:

Recommit to the core objectives of the GFA: The GFA called for a whole-of-government initiative to improve the U.S. approach in all fragile countries, but the initiative is currently operating primarily as a foreign assistance initiative, and the impact is limited to a handful of pilot countries. Reversing this requires the following:

- Developing a plan for expanding the impact of the GFA beyond the pilot countries.
- Getting serious about integrating diplomatic and defense tools.
- Strengthening policymaker buy-in.

Provide the resources necessary for “doing business differently”: While both the GFA and the administration strategy focus on changing how the U.S. government operates, Congress has only appropriated foreign assistance resources at a minimal level and has not provided the kind of operational resources necessary to strengthen the inherently governmental operations the legislation seeks to improve. Congress and the administration should ensure the GFA pilot countries have the necessary operational resources, such as via a statement in the State Department’s Diplomatic Programs account calling for the allocation of dedicated operational resources to GFA priority countries.

Improve operationalization of key GFA principles:

- **Local leadership:** Develop a more realistic approach to local leadership and adjust or consider pausing implementation in countries without credible local leadership.
- **Donor collaboration:** Ensure embassies have the resources and support necessary to move beyond just coordination to collaboration.
- **Credible objectives:** Identify more credible, nearer-term objectives to guide U.S. interventions in the pilot countries and develop flexible implementation plans.
- **Learning and adaptation:** Complement complex, long-term monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) frameworks with rigorous learning processes that can better inform policymaking while mitigating the bureaucratic burden on staff.
- **Private sector partnership:** Improve integration of USAID and Development Finance Corporation (DFC) investment tools, set a DFC investment target in fragile countries, and deploy investment officers to select fragile countries to proactively identify viable projects.
- **Transparency:** Establish transparency as the default for the GFA.

Introduction

In 2019, Congress enacted the Global Fragility Act (GFA), legislation based on lessons from decades of the U.S. failing to anticipate or respond effectively to crises. It is strategic and forward-looking legislation—the big lesson being it is more effective and efficient to prevent a crisis, rather than trying to restore a country to stability once a crisis has escalated. As we near the five-year anniversary of the GFA, it is an appropriate moment to review progress on GFA implementation and look forward to the next five years.

Since 2019, there have been four major milestones related to the GFA:

- The Global Fragility Act, signed into law December 2019.¹
- The U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (SPCPS), published in December 2020.²
- Selection of the pilot countries—Haiti, Libya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea (PNG), and Coast West Africa (CWA—Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Togo) in April 2022.³
- Public release of the 10-year plans for the five pilot countries/regions, first in summary form in March 2023 and in more complete form in March 2024.

This paper has three purposes: to inform, assess, and offer guidance to policymakers. Section one summarizes the key components of the first two milestones—the GFA and the SPCPS. We focus on the most significant elements of these foundational documents and those that represent a shift from how the United States has operated in the past. The second section assesses early implementation of the GFA in the pilot countries and seeks to understand how the United States is executing against the principles of the GFA and SPCPS. The final section provides targeted recommendations to Congress and the administration for strengthening implementation of the GFA.⁴ The paper can be read in its entirety or as separate pieces. Our research is based on over 70 interviews with U.S. government officials, congressional staff, and experts.

¹ U.S. Code, Title 22, Chapter 105, accessed October 8, 2024,

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title22/chapter105&edition=prelim>.

² U.S. Department of State, United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability, accessed October 8, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/united-states-strategy-to-prevent-conflict-and-promote-stability/>.

³ U.S. Department of State, The U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability: 10-Year Plans for Haiti, Libya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, and Coastal West Africa, March 22, 2024. Respective documents are available through the U.S. Department of State website.

⁴ The recommendations in this paper are targeted toward officials serving in the current administration, as well as any new officials entering as part of the incoming administration in January 2025. Any administration will have obligations under the legislation, and the GFA has already demonstrated its ability to withstand changes in administration.

The primary audience for this paper are the officials and experts who contributed to the creation of the GFA and are supporting its implementation. In addition, this paper can provide useful lessons for officials in other countries and institutions who are seeking to implement more effective approaches to reducing conflict and fragility globally.

It is too soon for a full assessment of GFA implementation, particularly an assessment of progress toward stabilization and conflict prevention goals in the pilot countries. After a series of delays, implementation in the pilot countries began in 2022, and prevention and stabilization are long-term endeavors. But, the GFA also seeks to change how the United States operates in fragile countries. This effort is largely captured in the third and fourth goals of the SPCPS, related to partnership and management reforms. It is an appropriate moment to examine early progress toward these goals, as the process of establishing GFA structures and processes began four years ago, and partnership must begin early if it is to be effective.

An early assessment of GFA implementation will help the administration renew momentum around the initiative and demonstrate that it is upholding the principle of learning and adaptation. The GFA is approaching two new milestones: The funding provisions in the Act will expire in October 2024, and the administration is beginning to prepare its first progress report to Congress, due in March 2025. This progress report comes at a time when violent conflict and fragility continue to surge globally, underscoring the importance of the GFA and the need for further improvements in the U.S. approach to conflict.⁵ The administration and Congress, led by the senior officials and experts currently overseeing the GFA, should use the upcoming report to recommit to core GFA objectives, identify the resources necessary for “doing business differently,” and improve operationalization of key GFA principles. This paper provides recommendations for accomplishing these goals.

⁵ UCDP - Uppsala Conflict Data Program.” Accessed January 16, 2024. <https://ucdp.uu.se/> and “ACLED Conflict Index: 2024.” <https://acleddata.com/conflict-index/>. Accessed June 4, 2024.

Section I: Key components of the GFA's foundational documents

Together, the GFA legislation and the Biden administration strategy, the SPCPS, represent the foundational documents of the initiative. Below, we summarize the most significant and unique elements of both texts:

Global Fragility Act (December 2019)

Prevention: The Global Fragility Act is uniquely foresightful in elevating prevention as a strategic priority. However, it is not wholly focused on prevention: The legislation was borne out of Congressional interest in improving U.S. efforts to counter violent extremism and post-conflict stabilization, and these two objectives are also prominent throughout the text.

Whole-of-government approach: The Act focuses on the need to better integrate and align all U.S. efforts in fragile states to promote a more coherent, whole of government approach. It gives the State Department the lead in drafting and implementing the administration strategy, in collaboration with USAID and the participation of the Defense Department and other relevant Federal departments and agencies.

Long-term planning: The Act promotes a long-term approach by requiring a 10-year Global Fragility Strategy. The Act elaborates that the strategy must address long-term causes of fragility and violence; be developed with stakeholder consultations; establish a mechanism for interagency coordination and coordination with other governments and international organizations; leverage private sector investment; establish metrics for monitoring and evaluation; and assign specific roles to the Department of State, USAID, and the Defense Department.

The strategy is to be updated on a “regular basis” (as are the plans for the pilot country/regional programs), guide U.S. policy at a senior level, and be incorporated into relevant strategies and plans across the U.S. government.

Partnership: The GFA focuses on the need for locally led efforts and stronger coordination with international partners, including the World Bank and United Nations, as well as public-private partnerships. It specifically calls on the Executive Branch to describe how it will use “compact style” partnerships with the targeted countries to promote local ownership and mandates consultation with a range of local and national partners in the development of the U.S. approach.⁶

⁶ Compact-style partnerships is an allusion to the model used by the Millenium Challenge Corporation in which the recipient country submits a proposal for assistance, the MCC and the

Focus on U.S. capacity: The GFA seeks to “strengthen the capacity of the United States to be an effective leader of international efforts to prevent extremism and violent conflict.” This focus on U.S. capacity is noteworthy, as Congress frequently imposes policy mandates without recognizing they require operational capabilities. The legislation further calls on the administration to identify legislative changes that may be necessary to enable the United States to realize more adaptive and responsive policy, thus creating an opening for meaningful reforms.

Priority countries: The GFA directs that the strategy be tested in a minimum of five “priority” (elsewhere referred to as “pilot”) countries or regions, selected on the basis of U.S. national interests, indicators of levels of violence or fragility, and the commitment/capacity of government and civil society to work with the U.S. 10-year plans are to be written for each pilot.

Funding: The GFA authorizes a Prevention and Stabilization Fund (PSF) to support stabilization of conflict-affected areas and mitigate fragility. The fund is authorized at a level of \$200 million annually for five years (fiscal years 2020-2024) and administered by State and USAID.

The GFA also authorizes the Complex Crisis Fund (CCF) at \$30 million annually for fiscal years 2020-2024. The fund is intended to prevent or respond to emerging or unforeseen events, including (but not limited to) GFA activities. The text includes a waiver authority so funds can be programmed without delay.

Global Fragility Strategy—United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (April 2022)

Goals: The United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (SPCPS) establishes four goals—prevention, stabilization, partnerships, and management—all of which are mandated in some form in the GFA. The strategy’s underlying assumption is that fragility is a threat to U.S. interests as it provides fertile ground for violent extremists and criminal organizations; undermines economic prosperity (violence in 2017 is estimated to have cost \$14.76 trillion, 12.4% of global GNP); erodes international peace; destabilizes partner countries; and enables authoritarianism, external exploitation, and increased influence for U.S. competitors.

country jointly assess the proposal and reach agreement on its final construct, and the country is responsible for implementation, with the MCC exercising oversight.

The SPCPS prioritizes defined outcomes, host country political will, respect for democratic norms and human rights, mutual accountability, cost-sharing, and compact-style partnerships with key stakeholders.⁷ The strategy seeks to align the 3Ds—diplomacy, development, defense. However, as one of the authors describes in a separate report, the text of the SPCPS (as well as the country plans) tends to focus on foreign assistance as the predominant tool.⁸

Goal 1—Prevention: Leveraging foreign assistance that is sensitive to conflict dynamics and reinforces inclusive governance, the SPCPS seeks to advance the following prevention objectives: develop early warning systems and early action plans; address vulnerabilities and structural risk factors; promote meaningful reforms of governance, essential services, natural resources management, and security and justice systems; promote the rights of marginalized groups; strengthen civil society organizations and the private sector; support inclusion of women, youth, and faith communities; and, bolster the capacity of public and private organizations to counter disinformation.

Goal 2—Stabilization: By supporting inclusive political processes, the SPCPS seeks to help broker locally-led peace agreements or ceasefires, expand civilian security; promote inclusion of women and girls in peace processes, build support for peace processes in the target countries, promote inclusive post-conflict economic recovery, and reduce the destabilizing impact of non-state actors.

Goal 3—Partnership: By helping local and regional partners promote stability and private-sector led growth, the SPCPS will establish compact-style partnerships with mutual accountability and agreed-upon reforms; secure commitments from regional, bilateral, multilateral partners; mobilize private sector investment and conflict-sensitivity; address cross-border security threats, disinformation, and propaganda.

Goal 4—Management: The United States seeks to improve prioritization, integration, and efficiency of U.S. operations in fragile states, including by conducting joint analysis and planning across the U.S. government; streamlining funding processes; recruiting and deploying diverse staff; improving monitoring, adaptation, and learning of all efforts; and strengthening the coherence and conflict sensitivity of all activities.

⁷ Allison Minor, “Implementing prevention: A practical guide for improving the U.S. approach to violent conflict in a changing world”, Brookings, August 2024.

⁸ Minor, Allison, “Implementing prevention: A practical guide for improving the US approach to violent conflict in a changing world.” Brookings working paper. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Minor_Implementing-Prevention_2024.pdf.

Roles and responsibilities: The Strategy identifies the roles and responsibilities of U.S. government agencies:

- State—Leads implementation of foreign policy; oversees planning and implementation of targeted justice sector, law enforcement, and other security sector assistance; and chairs the interagency GFA secretariat, with USAID and DOD leading their respective areas of responsibilities.
- USAID—Leads implementation of development, disaster, and non-security prevention and stabilization assistance and program policy.
- DOD—Plays a supporting role through specialized activities, including civil affairs, psychological operations, information operations engagements, institutional capacity building, and security cooperation. DOD also provides requisite security and reinforces civilian efforts, where appropriate and consistent with available authorities.
- NSC—Convenes the senior-level GFA steering committee, to meet on a quarterly basis to review progress and conduct oversight.
- Chief-of-mission—Leads field-level planning and coordination in the pilot countries.
- Embassies and USAID missions—Establish coordination mechanisms for engaging stakeholders and incorporates plans into State Department’s Integrated Country Strategies (ICSs), USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs), and DOD Campaign Plans, Operational Plans, and Regional Strategies.

Pilot countries: The GFA Steering Committee committed to selecting at least five countries and regions based on the following criteria: risk of or current fragility, level of violent conflict and national resilience to conflict, country political will and capacity for partnership, potential for U.S. impact, other international efforts in the country, and U.S. national security and economic interests.

Country implementation plans: The United States will develop multi-year implementation plans for the pilot countries and regions to align and sequence all relevant tools with the identified objectives, based on consultation with government and civil society partners.

Compact-style partnerships: The United States will establish unique compact-style partnerships with local and national actors in the pilot countries based on specific metrics on government performance, mutual accountability, and resource contributions. These partnerships will seek to incentivize transparent and accountable governance and, if governments fail to meet their commitments, resources will be shifted.

International cooperation and public-private partnerships: The Strategy calls for international collaboration, including through multilateral pooled funding and with the private sector.

Staffing, authorities, resources: The executive branch will review authorities, staffing, resources, and work with the Congress to address constraints and ensure the flexibility of implementation, including procurement processes, budget limitations, programming authorities, security, and staffing. The executive branch will invest in the expeditionary capacity of the civilian workforce.

Policy integration: The SPCPS goes into some length about integrating the Strategy across the 3Ds and all tools of U.S. statecraft, specifically referencing the United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security; Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocity Prevention Act of 2018; 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review; and 2018 National Strategy for Counterterrorism.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL): The Strategy calls on the Department of State, USAID, and DOD to develop plans for MEL, to develop an evidence base, and to incorporate lessons learned.

Section II: Early assessment of GFA implementation

This section assesses early implementation of the GFA, with a focus on progress in reforming the way the U.S. operates in the pilot countries, or to “do business differently.” It is organized by the core principles articulated in both the GFA and SPCPS: local leadership, collaboration with partners, private sector engagement, interagency coordination, dedicated funding, long-term planning, adaptation and learning, and transparency.

This assessment is based on over 70 interviews with officials overseeing and supporting GFA implementation in both Washington and the pilot countries, non-governmental experts, as well as an assessment of publicly available documents, including the ten-year GFA country plans.

Local leadership

The United States has struggled to achieve the goal of establishing compact-style partnerships and mutual accountability with the governments of the pilot countries, and it appears unlikely it will achieve this goal in the coming years. Rather than a failure of U.S. implementation, this is more likely an indication that compact-style partnerships and mutual accountability are not realistic objectives in the current GFA pilot countries. The term “compact” is a reference to an approach used by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). Only governments that meet a certain threshold of commitment and capability are eligible for MCC programs.⁹ Those governments then play a leading role in setting the goals of the program, designing the approach, and overseeing implementation.

In most GFA countries, host-country government officials are not assuming an actual leadership role in GFA implementation. While some embassies in the GFA pilot countries describe greater consultation with the host-country governments during the strategy development and project design stages than was typical prior to the GFA, those government officials are not themselves driving goal-setting, or program design, or implementation.¹⁰ While the GFA country plans point to some areas of alignment between the plans and existing host-country development plans, it was U.S. officials who developed the goals and approach, rather than a joint effort with the host country. It is not clear if that level of national government leadership is feasible or advisable in some of the GFA countries. For example, U.S. objectives in Libya, Guinea, and Haiti are to seek major changes to the government itself—in Libya as part of a peace process, in Guinea as part of a

⁹ Millennium Challenge Corporation, “Scorecards,” accessed September 22, 2024, <https://www.mcc.gov/who-we-select/scorecards>.

¹⁰ Interview with State Department and USAID Officials, May 20, 2024, virtual; AND Interview with State Department and USAID Officials, June 17, 2024.

democratic transition following the 2021 coup, and in Haiti as part of an emerging political agreement.

In some places, local governments may provide a more practical partner for GFA implementation. Capacity issues can impede this approach, however, especially because GFA interventions are often targeted toward areas that are fragile in part because of weak local government presence and capacity, such as the Cabo Delgado province in northern Mozambique. Local civil society can play a critically important role in informing U.S. efforts and implementing projects, but they typically lack the power or authority necessary to assume a leadership role or credibly affect the kind of broad changes envisioned in the GFA country plans, especially because civil society has been repressed in some GFA pilot countries. Limited U.S. presence in those areas (due to security restrictions) further undermines the U.S. ability to form strong, local-level partnerships, especially with civil society actors. In Libya and Papua New Guinea, officials have sought to leverage intermediary organizations that can help build such partnerships on behalf of the U.S. government, but this is ultimately not a replacement for official U.S. presence and partnership.¹¹

Rather than true local leadership, the most effective, early instance of host-country collaboration has occurred in a handful of the Coastal West African countries, via a new assistance project, the Coastal States Stability Mechanism (CSSM). CSSM is a local-level stabilization project working in areas of northern Benin, Togo, and Ghana that are vulnerable to violent extremist expansion. Representatives of each government provided substantive input on the design of the CSSM program within their country, and government officials from these countries continue to play an active role in shaping implementation, though they do not formally oversee the projects.¹² CSSM's approach is only feasible in countries where national and local governments meet a basic minimum threshold of both capacity and commitment, and where those governments already prioritize the objectives being pursued by the United States.¹³ CSSM is frequently cited as an illustration of GFA principles in action, but it is not yet clear how broadly replicable this approach is in other GFA countries, especially those that may not meet that minimum threshold. While CSSM builds on the model used by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (which uses a flexible, small-grants model and rapidly adjusts programming in highly dynamic settings), no other project in

¹¹ Brian Harding, USIP Senior Expert, Interview by the Author, virtual, December 13, 2023; Interview with State Department Official, November 1, 2023, virtual; Mehdi Bchir, USIP Country Director, interview with the Author, December 8, 2023, virtual.

¹² Interview with State Department and USAID Officials, May 20, 2024, virtual.

¹³ Interview with USAID Official, June 6, 2024, virtual.

any of the GFA countries has taken as intensive an approach to collaboration as CSSM.

Distinguishing more clearly between compact-style partnerships, local leadership, and collaboration is more than a rhetorical issue. Setting unrealistic expectations regarding the role of local actors can create misunderstandings that undermine the goal of partnership. For example, some pilot country officials believed that U.S. commitments to “local leadership” implied that the United States would provide budget support directly to the national governments. However, this is not how GFA funding was intended, nor how it has operated in practice.¹⁴

Many fragile countries lack strong local partners that the United States can work with. This is particularly problematic in GFA pilot countries, where the United States is seeking to support long-term, transformational reforms. CSSM and U.S. efforts in places like Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Papua New Guinea demonstrate that collaboration is possible in fragile settings. In settings where credible local leadership is absent—whether from the national government or community-level governments and civil society—transformational, national-level change will be extremely difficult. In these cases, the United States may be able to pursue local-level change, as officials have sought to do in southern Libya, specifically in the case of Murzuq discussed later in this section.

Collaboration with partners

The SPCPS and GFA commit to partnership with regional and international partners. In the SPCPS and the country plans, partnership is mostly described as donor coordination, suggesting partnership will primarily take the form of aligning U.S. and partner development assistance, rather than broader strategic or policy alignment with bilateral partners, international organizations, or regional bodies. Donor coordination structures already exist in all the GFA pilot countries, providing a ready-made platform. U.S. officials largely continue to rely on these existing structures and have not established new, dedicated coordination platforms. Some of the GFA country plans stress the need to move from donor coordination to collaboration, recognizing that in practice many of these platforms simply involve sharing information about countries’ respective projects to minimize duplication or allow other forms of deconfliction, rather than actual partnership. Donor collaboration, on the other hand, implies that institutions are working together to identify and advance shared goals, leveraging the unique value-add of each partner, building on other partners’ investments, and co-investing in or co-managing projects.

¹⁴ Interview with State Department and USAID Officials, June 17, 2024.

Bilateral donor coordination

The GFA has helped expand opportunities for bilateral donor coordination and—in a few cases—collaboration in the pilot countries. For example, in Coastal West Africa and Papua New Guinea, the interagency GFA teams have used GFA funding to conduct donor mapping exercises to improve deconfliction and identify opportunities for alignment in GFA programming.¹⁵ In Papua New Guinea, officials are conducting joint analyses with other donors that can foster a common operating picture and alignment of donor priorities. This is particularly important in places like Papua New Guinea where other countries—in this case Australia—are the major donor, with a longer development presence. Further, the existence of GFA coordinators in the pilot countries who can speak to all U.S. programming—rather than that of a single office or agency—can strengthen U.S. participation in donor coordination structures.¹⁶ In some pilot countries, the emphasis on burden sharing has also encouraged U.S. officials to prioritize efforts to attract funding from other donors that can expand the impact of U.S. investments. In Libya, for example, the United States has helped mobilize other donor support for local-level reconciliation efforts, including as part of a jointly funded project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹⁷

However, practical constraints continue to impede the most intensive forms of collaboration, particularly joint programming. The United States has different procurement timelines and unique oversight and accountability requirements that impede joint projects, unless the United States is able to drive the procurement process from the beginning.¹⁸ In some countries, security constraints and the cross-sectoral nature of stabilization and conflict prevention programming can make coordination very challenging. This is the case in Mozambique, where most donor coordination platforms are currently divided by sector and restrictions on travel to the targeted province of Cabo Delgado due to insecurity mean that donors are coordinating from a thousand miles away.¹⁹

The best example of donor collaboration is again the CSSM project. In addition to collaboration with the host country governments, CSSM is being implemented jointly with the German government. The project was designed with the Germans. The United States and Germany both have a dedicated officer overseeing implementation of the project, and the project implementer—the International Organization for Migration (IOM)—reports jointly to the United States and

¹⁵ Interview with State Department Official, May 28, 2024, virtual; AND Interview with State Department and USAID Officials, June 17, 2024.

¹⁶ Interview with State Department and USAID Officials, May 20, 2024, virtual.

¹⁷ Interview with USAID Official, October 3, 2023, virtual.

¹⁸ Interview with State Department and USAID Officials, June 17, 2024; AND Interview with USAID Official, June 6, 2024, virtual.

¹⁹ Interview with USAID Officials, May 29, 2024, virtual.

Germany. This approach is unique for the United States; while USAID sometimes receives funding from other donors for projects that it oversees or contributes to multilateral trust funds, it does not typically collaboratively manage individual projects. In the case of CSSM, this collaborative approach has allowed the United States to better leverage the unique value-add of other donors. For example, Germany has different capabilities for its support to security services than USAID, which means it can fund activities like strengthening border security and rehabilitating police stations that are important to the stabilization goals of the project but that fall outside of USAID's purview. This joint approach was possible because Germany proactively sought to build on their previous experience with multi-donor mechanisms and replicate a U.S. programming model it had witnessed in other Sahel countries.²⁰ Expanding this approach elsewhere would require a similarly willing and flexible partner, in addition to the host country partnership considerations noted above. The U.S. and Germany have socialized the program with other donors via the annual meeting of the Stabilization Leaders Forum, and the Netherlands and the U.K. are actively considering investing in the program.²¹

Collaboration with the World Bank

Collaboration with the World Bank is particularly important, as it is the top donor in each of the nine pilot countries.²² But collaboration with the Bank is uniquely challenging, recognizing that it operates differently than most bilateral donors. Given the Bank's size and the complexities of coordinating the 189 countries that make up its shareholders, the World Bank has its own rigorous policy and program planning processes, and it has proven difficult to align these with the United States' own policies and procedures. The World Bank's strategy and program plans are determined several years in advance via negotiations with the host country government and approval from the Board of Directors.²³ In practice, this makes it difficult for the Bank to adjust its plans down the road, particularly to align with the priorities of a single member country such as the United States. In most of the GFA pilot countries, the World Bank's approach, memorialized in its Country Partnership Frameworks, was finalized before the United States finalized its strategy, so U.S. officials did not have an opportunity to try to advocate for a stronger focus on conflict prevention and stabilization, or alignment with U.S.

²⁰ Interview with USAID Official, June 6, 2024, virtual.

²¹ Interview with Rob Jenkins, Public Policy Fellow at the Wilson Center and Former USAID Assistant to the Administrator, July 22, 2024, virtual.

²² George Ingram, "International Aid Transparency Initiative", Brookings Institution, July 15, 2024. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/international-aid-transparency-initiative/>.

²³ "World Bank Project Cycle." World Bank. Accessed July 11, 2024.

<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/brief/projectcycle>.

priorities.²⁴ A recent World Bank mid-term review of its work in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) suggests that current Bank processes are not doing enough to ensure such a focus: The review concluded that its country partnership frameworks seldom integrate conflict-related issues. While Bank activities are increasingly incorporating conflict sensitivity, this is happening primarily in active conflict settings rather than fragile ones.²⁵

The World Bank has increased its focus on FCV-affected countries in recent years, and in 2020, it unveiled a dedicated FCV strategy. This emphasis reflects the Bank's recognition that, by 2025, half the world's extreme poor will be living in FCV-affected situations.²⁶ Still, practical and policy constraints have complicated the Bank's ability to realize the goals of the FCV strategy. The World Bank typically provides loans and grants directly to governments who themselves are members of the Bank. In the (frequent) cases where actions of the government play a significant role in exacerbating conflict risks or when the primary conflict drivers are highly political, the Bank's model does not allow it to address those drivers.²⁷ During times of major political upheaval, the Bank's Operational Policy 7.30 is triggered, which precludes it from working with de-facto governments or governments who have lost effective control over the country.²⁸ In accordance with its FCV strategy, the World Bank has updated its operational policies to permit it to work through non-state actors in such settings and to support activities along the humanitarian-development nexus.²⁹ In practice, the Bank has worked almost exclusively through the U.N. and ICRC in such contexts, supplementing those agencies' humanitarian-focused work.³⁰ These modalities

²⁴ The Libya, Mozambique, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana frameworks were approved between 2022 and early 2023, before the United States finalized its GFA country plans. The Guinea, Papua New Guinea, and Benin frameworks are several years old. The Bank is currently developing a new framework for Haiti. See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/>, on the Overview/Strategy pages for each country.

²⁵ The World Bank Group. *Mid-Term Review of the World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (2020–25)*. October 20, 2023. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099102523150028132/bosib00eef97e208a0937700f5b7e85e393>. 4, 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁸ The World Bank. 1994. "Operational Policies 7.30: Dealings with de Facto Governments." World Bank. Accessed July 11, 2024. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099556205052231930/>.

²⁹ "Updated Bank Policy: Development Cooperation and Fragility, Conflict, and Violence." August 2021. World Bank. Accessed July 11, 2024. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/498771628797344998/>.

³⁰ The World Bank, *World Bank Engagement in Situations of Conflict: An Evaluation of FY10–20 Experience*, Chapter 4, March 3, 2022,

differ significantly from those of the United States, which typically works through non-governmental implementing partners and is increasingly focused on working with and through local organizations as part of its localization agenda. While these different modalities limit opportunities for joint U.S.-World Bank programming, they do create valuable opportunities for complementarity, if there is stronger collaboration at the strategy-setting phase.

As part of the Biden administration's Multilateral Development Bank reform agenda, USAID and Treasury are trying to improve awareness among U.S. officials of the Bank's planning timelines and to encourage officials to seize windows of opportunity to shape the Bank's approach at the country level.³¹ For embassy staff who are already overwhelmed and managing extensive bilateral donor coordination structures, it can be difficult to adapt to and seize these windows, especially because effective coordination with the Bank requires balancing field-based and headquarters-based engagement. Because of the Bank's structure, more decisionmaking about its policies and strategy resides at headquarters than is the case with many bilateral donors. Further, U.S. engagement with the World Bank in Washington, D.C. is formally managed by the Treasury Department, rather than the USAID or State Department offices overseeing bilateral foreign assistance, requiring an additional layer of U.S. interagency coordination. Ultimately, the difficulty of improving U.S. alignment and collaboration with the World Bank is an example of the ways bureaucracies struggle to prioritize collaboration with outside entities unless there is a compelling imperative for doing so or strong prioritization from leadership.

Private sector engagement

Despite the GFA's directive to leverage private sector resources, expand public-private partnerships, and improve coordination with private sector organizations, work with the private sector under the GFA has been extremely limited. Private sector financing is critical to address the development challenges facing GFA pilot countries, and to help generate the economic opportunity that is cited as a top priority in almost every GFA country plan (see Table 2 in Appendix II). The State Department and USAID offices most engaged in GFA implementation are not well-suited to mobilize private sector investment around GFA objectives. The primary tool available to those offices are grants. While such grants can promote small-scale economic activity and access to finance, they are not appropriate for supporting large-scale private sector investments. Instead, these tools reside with

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/763341635963907114/text/World-Bank-Engagement-in-Situations-of-Conflict-An-Evaluation-of-FY10-20-Experience.txt>.

³¹ Janet L. Yellen, "Remarks by Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen on Multilateral Development Bank Evolution in Ben Guerir, Morocco," U.S. Department of the Treasury, October 2023, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1785>.

the Development Finance Corporation, which uses loans, guarantees, political risk insurance, and limited equity investment and technical assistance to promote private sector projects that address development challenges, with a focus on low-income and lower-middle-income countries. DFC engagement in GFA implementation has been limited to date, but officials are exploring ways to increase DFC investment in the GFA pilot countries, one option for which would be collaboration with the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), which is part of the World Bank Group.

While the DFC prioritizes investments in lower-income countries and has adapted its tools to suit investments in those contexts, it has not prioritized investments in fragile countries in the same way and continues to face significant impediments to investments in those contexts. The DFC sets a target for its investments in lower-income countries and closely tracks its progress, reporting that 73% of its investments in fiscal year 2023 were in lower-income and lower-middle-income countries.³² It has not set a dedicated target for investments in fragile countries and does not track these investments. The fact that many fragile countries are characterized by weak regulatory environments and political instability means that many projects will face a degree of risk that undermines their ranking in the DFC project selection process.³³ For this reason, DFC will likely struggle to expand its investments in fragile states unless it specifically prioritizes those investments, just as it struggled to expand investments in low-income countries until it set a target.

Further, DFC's demand-driven model is subject to a vicious cycle when it comes to the private sector appetite to invest in fragile settings: DFC generally relies on private sector partners to come to it with bankable projects, rather than seeking out those projects proactively. State Department and USAID staff deployed to U.S. embassies abroad could technically help connect the DFC with private sector partners but lack the private sector expertise and understanding of what makes a project bankable to effectively perform such a role. Because the private sector already has a lower appetite for investment in fragile contexts, especially among the large financial entities that make up a significant portion of DFC clients, DFC is less likely to receive project proposals in these settings and thus is less likely to

³² DFC. "DFC Annual Report: 2023." <https://www.dfc.gov/sites/default/files/media/documents/DFC%20FY23%20Annual%20Report.pdf>, 5.

³³ "Eligibility Checklist | DFC." Accessed July 11, 2024. <https://www.dfc.gov/what-we-offer/work-with-us/eligibility-checklist>.

deploy its tools for mitigating the risk of private sector investment in those settings.³⁴

DFC leadership recognized it was facing a similar vicious cycle when it came to investments in sub-Saharan Africa, and in 2020 launched a team of investment advisors based across the continent who could help the DFC more proactively advance investments in the region, consistent with the agency's strategic priorities.³⁵ This approach has been effective, with DFC's investments in Africa surging from \$635 million in fiscal year 2020 to over \$3 billion two years later—the largest of any region.³⁶ Absent greater prioritization of investment in fragile countries by the DFC and a similar, proactive approach to expanding DFC's portfolio and client base in the areas targeted in the GFA country plans, it is unlikely the United States will be able to leverage significant private sector resources to advance its conflict prevention and stabilization objectives.

Interagency coordination and a “3D” approach

Many officials cite improved coordination between different offices and agencies at the U.S. embassies in the pilot countries (called interagency coordination) as one of the most significant successes of early GFA implementation and a major focus of their day-to-day work in implementing the GFA. This includes cooperation to address common operational challenges, closer coordination between USAID and the embassy political offices, and tighter alignment of foreign assistance projects across different offices and agencies. For example, the GFA process has encouraged U.S. officials in Guinea to work together to identify new types of projects that are feasible in the context of continued U.S. restrictions associated with the 2021 coup. In parts of Coastal West Africa, DoD has significantly increased its capabilities, including adding new civil affairs teams and increasing security cooperation programs that complement the work of State Department and USAID to combat the spread of extremism across borders. Further, AFRICOM has begun incorporating the GFA Country and Region Coordinators into their regular resource planning conferences, recognizing that different planning and budget timelines can impede alignment of DoD programs with State Department and USAID foreign assistance.

³⁴ “DFC Project Data Drop Alert! Our Key Takeaways.” August 8, 2023. Center For Global Development. Accessed July 11, 2024. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/dfc-project-data-drop-alert-our-key-takeaways>.

³⁵ “DFC to Launch Regional Team Based in Africa | DFC.” 2020. July 14, 2020. <https://www.dfc.gov/media/press-releases/dfc-launch-regional-team-based-africa>.

³⁶ “DFC Project Data Drop Alert! Our Key Takeaways.” August 8, 2023. Center For Global Development. Accessed July 11, 2024. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/dfc-project-data-drop-alert-our-key-takeaways>.

The most impactful examples of stronger interagency coordination thus far have come from instances where the GFA has promoted integration of U.S. diplomatic engagement with specific U.S. development projects. In Ghana, the U.S. ambassador seized upon USAID-funded efforts to promote inclusion of the Fulbe ethnic group, in part due to GFA coordination structures. The ambassador recognized that Fulbe exclusion and land competition was a significant driver of instability in the region and thus the extremist threat.³⁷ She asked embassy officials to develop a Fulbe inclusion strategy and began raising the issue with relevant officials in the government of Ghana. As a result, the Minister of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs met with Fulbe chiefs for the first time and announced a new sub-chieftaincy for Fulbe during a visit by a senior U.S. government official.³⁸

In Libya, similar engagement by the U.S. ambassador has greatly expanded the impact of USAID-funded local reconciliation efforts in the town of Murzuq, in southern Libya. In 2019, a military campaign by one of Libya's warring factions led to a major outbreak of violence and displacement between the town's Arab and non-Arab populations. When local mediators began to make progress on a reconciliation effort in 2021-22, USAID surged flexible funding toward these efforts, helped negotiate a formal agreement between the populations, and then supported a reconstruction effort to cement the gains. Absent the GFA, the U.S. impact may have ended there. In part because of tighter coordination between USAID and the embassy political staff, the U.S. ambassador became engaged in the Murzuq reconciliation efforts and began amplifying the efforts in his engagements with national government leaders and international counterparts. His participation and advocacy helped lend greater legitimacy to the reconciliation efforts. In particular, he helped secure official recognition of the Murzuq reconciliation committee as the official municipal governing body by the Libyan Government of National Unity, thereby unlocking much-needed government funding for local services and providing a valuable peace dividend to the community. The U.S. ambassador continues to help secure government and international support for reconstruction efforts in Murzuq.³⁹ The embassy's efforts to identify counterparts in Libyan government institutions supportive of GFA principles from the outset of the initiative also played a role in securing government support for Murzuq reconciliation efforts, demonstrating the value of

³⁷ "Strengthening Fulbe Inclusion in Ghana's Upper West Region Through Advocacy and Mediation Committees | Our Stories | Stabilization and Transitions." 2023. U.S. Agency for International Development. September 5, 2023. <https://www.usaid.gov/stabilization-and-transitions/our-stories/strengthening-fulbe-inclusion-ghanas-upper-west-region-through-advocacy-and-mediation-committees>.

³⁸ Interview with State Department and USAID Officials, May 20, 2024.

³⁹ Interview with USAID Official, October 3, 2023, virtual.

investing in such cooperation even when more ambitious forms of local leadership are not feasible.

It is important to note that not all GFA pilot countries have witnessed the same integration of diplomatic efforts and development assistance. While there is a rhetorical commitment to integrating diplomacy, the GFA country plans fail to describe how they will do so. Diplomacy refers to the use of relationships and a variety of means of communication to align the goals and approaches of different bodies and organizations, minimize areas of conflict, and—in the case of governmental diplomacy—advance national interests.⁴⁰ It can be wielded at multiple levels: foreign service officers fostering relationships with technocrats in a partner government to enhance U.S. understanding of and influence on how policies are implemented, ambassadors using formal and informal processes to forge consensus with their counterparts from around the world to collectively advocate for a given policy with a partner government, a spokesperson using public statements to apply pressure or condemn a decision by another government, or an envoy using quiet talks to build trust with a formerly hostile group.

None of the GFA country plans articulate a roadmap for how such diplomatic engagement will be used to advance the stated objectives. The absence of diplomacy in GFA implementation has been underscored during the process of developing monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans, as officials realized they were unable to identify specific diplomatic interventions supporting the GFA objectives.⁴¹ Instead, many officials feel that the only relevant diplomatic contribution to GFA efforts are small public diplomacy projects implemented by some embassy public affairs offices, such as scholarships and media training activities, rather than actual diplomatic engagement.

Similarly, integration of DoD tools has been most effective in countries DoD otherwise identifies as a priority, as the GFA itself has not brought the kind of resources or authorities necessary to establish it as a high priority for the department. Still, DoD has taken steps to shift its programming to support GFA objectives in Coastal West Africa, as noted previously, and several ongoing DoD efforts align with GFA objectives in the pilot countries, such as DoD support the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in Haiti and to efforts to deepen

⁴⁰ This definition borrows from multiple sources, detailed in this literature review on diplomacy: GOV.UK. “Defining and Measuring Diplomatic Influence.” Accessed February 6, 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/research-for-development-outputs/defining-and-measuring-diplomatic-influence>.

⁴¹ Interview with State Department Official, October 26, 2023, virtual.

U.S.-Papua New Guinea security cooperation.⁴² These contributions can play an important role in supporting GFA implementation, especially if they are structured to promote long-term conflict prevention goals.

In contrast to State Department and USAID, DoD has implemented only a small fraction of the GFA's Prevention and Stabilization Funds, making the GFA a largely unfunded mandate for DoD. Further, the current National Defense Strategy and DoD policy directive on stabilization do not explicitly reference the GFA or provide a strong basis for DoD prioritization of conflict prevention efforts.⁴³ However, last year DoD included the GFA in its guidance on significant security cooperation initiatives.⁴⁴ While AFRICOM's 2024 theatre strategy does not explicitly reference the GFA or SPCPS, it does call on DoD to support unity of effort with State Department and USAID efforts in North and West Africa.⁴⁵

Finally, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC) provides policy oversight of GFA implementation, stabilization, and peacekeeping policy for DoD. However, the office does not exercise policy oversight of U.S. security cooperation, which is arguably the most powerful DoD tool in affecting conflict. A strong preference for U.S.-made military equipment and expertise makes U.S. security cooperation a particularly valuable tool, but it can either exacerbate or mitigate the risk of conflict, depending on how it is wielded, making it particularly relevant to any conflict prevention initiative.⁴⁶

GFA interagency coordination structures and the other mandated processes associated with GFA implementation can be time-consuming and resource-

⁴² U.S. Southern Command, "DoD Support to Haiti." September 2024, <https://www.southcom.mil/Media/Special-Coverage/DoD-Support-to-Haiti/>. U.S. Department of Defense, "Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Statement on U.S.-Papua New Guinea Defense Cooperation Agreement." May 22, 2023. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3403683/>.

⁴³ DoD published its Department of Defense Directive No. 3000.05, *Stabilization* in 2018, prior to the GFA law in 2019. However, the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy is currently conducting a Stabilization Biennial Assessment – a requirement of DoDD 3000.05 – which will inform the Directive's forthcoming update and will hopefully include stronger policy support for the GFA and conflict prevention.

⁴⁴ Interview with DoD Official, September 24, 2024, virtual.

⁴⁵ U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Africa Command Theater Strategy 2024-2033, 7, <https://www.africom.mil/document/35545/usafricom-theater-strategy-2024-2033.pdf>.

⁴⁶ The United States has the largest security cooperation program globally and preference for U.S.-made assets provides the United States with significant strategic advantage. See Mazarr, Michael J., Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, Jonah Blank, Samuel Charap, Michael S. Chase, Beth Grill, Derek Grossman, et al. "Security Cooperation in a Strategic Competition." RAND Corporation, April 6, 2022. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA650-1.html. "Taking Stock of RAND's Security Cooperation Research." Accessed February 7, 2024. <https://www.rand.org/ard/topics/security-cooperation.html>.

intensive. Most of the GFA pilot countries have hired dedicated GFA coordinators to help oversee implementation and offset the burden on existing embassy staff. In Coastal West Africa, these coordinators are placed within the embassy's Political Office and report directly to the Deputy Chief of Mission to promote tighter integration in policymaking and access to embassy leadership.⁴⁷ However, the type of funds appropriated by Congress for the GFA—Economic Support Funds—are intended to support foreign assistance projects and cannot be used to pay government staff. These funds can be used to hire contractors, but such contractors are barred from performing “inherently governmental functions,” which could limit their ability to shape policy decisions, diplomatic engagement, or budget strategy.⁴⁸ To help address this challenge, State/CSO has dedicated a small number of their foreign service officer positions to some GFA pilot country embassies to serve as coordinators, but CSO only has a limited number of these positions and most of them are needed to support other CSO functions.

Enhancing interagency coordination is an important objective. It is understandable that officials have dedicated much of their focus in the early years of GFA implementation to establishing coordination processes. As the Fulbe inclusion and Murzuq reconciliation examples demonstrate, stronger interagency coordination can result in meaningful impacts on the ground. Getting a large bureaucracy like the United States government to “do business differently” is no small feat. At the same time, officials must ensure these internal-facing efforts do not consume too much of their bandwidth as the initiative progresses, such that the GFA becomes more about process than substance and loses its focus on impact in the pilot countries.

Dedicated funding

Even if embassies wanted to use the additional Economic Support Funds allocated under the GFA to hire additional contractors, doing so would come with significant trade-offs with programming. The amount of additional funding available to each GFA pilot country has been relatively limited. While the administration has not published actual funding allocations from the dedicated GFA fund, the PSF, appropriation levels mean that each pilot country is likely receiving an additional \$10-15 million annually from the PSF, which is hardly a transformational amount in most contexts. Further, overall funding for the pilot countries, presented in Table I, has at best risen modestly and in the case of Libya has declined.

Overall, embassies are being asked to do more with a similar amount of funding. Embassies must weigh the value-add of additional programming with the

⁴⁷ Interview with State Department Official, May 28, 2024

⁴⁸ “Subpart 7.5 - Inherently Governmental Functions | Acquisition.GOV.” Accessed June 4, 2024. <https://www.acquisition.gov/far/subpart-7.5>.

operational needs of the initiative and program management while also considering the expectations of Congress and partner country governments, who have assumed that the GFA would come with additional foreign assistance resources.

There are many drivers of the level of assistance to a country, so one must be cautious in drawing conclusions from what lies behind funding levels. However, the combination of the modest assistance increases for the pilot countries along with the absence of strategic use of the other two Ds—diplomacy and defense—would indicate that GFA implementation has not received the priority that was expected when the Congress enacted the Global Fragility Act and the administration issued the SPCPS.

Table I. Trends in foreign assistance levels in GFA pilot countries (in millions USD)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 estimate	Average levels Pre-GFA Selection	Average levels Post-GFA Selection
Haiti	293	265.4	290.9	309.2	379.2	283.1	344.2*
Libya	59.9	71.6	76.3	59.9	57.2	69.3	58.6
Mozambique	755.6	567.9	538.4	755.6	580.6	620.6	668.1**
Papua New Guinea	7	19	35.6	26.9	41.5	20.5	34.2
Coast West Africa							
Benin	51.5	71.5	63.1	52.7	74.9	62.0	63.8
Cote d-Ivoire	170.1***	132.8	183.2	158.4	182.4	162.0	170.4
Ghana	140.5	63.7	139.2	211.1	182.4	114.5	196.8****
Guinea	48.2	45.2	58	51.5	53.4	50.5	52.5
Togo	24.8	5.3	45.2	19	80.4	25.1	49.7*****
Total Coast West Africa	435.1	318.5	488.7	492.7	573.5	414.1	533.1

Source: ForeignAssistance.Gov

* Humanitarian assistance to Haiti surged in FY2023 but is not directly related to the GFA, so the post-selection increase in funding is exaggerated here.

** HIV/AIDS assistance to Mozambique surged in FY2022 in response to the crisis but is not directly related to the GFA, so the post-selection increase in funding is exaggerated here.

*** We have removed a \$484.4m MCC project because it is an exceptional program not directly relevant to this analysis.

**** Basic health funding in Ghana doubled in FY2022 but is largely unrelated to GFA efforts, so the post-selection increase in funding is exaggerated here and in the CWA total amount.

***** Togo received a surge in food assistance in FY2023 that is largely unrelated to GFA efforts, so the post-selection increase in funding is exaggerated here and in the CWA total amount.

The lack of dedicated operational funding for GFA implementation is a significant impediment to achieving the goals of the legislation. Effective GFA implementation requires other staff from embassies, Geographic Combatant Commands, Joint Staff, and OSD to dedicate significant time to the initiative, including to participate in coordination structures and planning meetings, aligning existing programming and other tools with the GFA objectives, and supporting evaluation and learning processes. This can be quite taxing since the fragile countries targeted by the GFA tend to face acute staffing constraints. Because Congress has only appropriated limited foreign assistance funding for GFA countries and has not provided additional operational funding that can be used to hire staff performing the inherently governmental functions associated with the legislation, much of the initiative can be considered an unfunded mandate. The Congress intended the

modest PSF fund to be catalytic, to incentivize administration attention and kick-start resources for the GFA countries. The administration's failure to boost personnel resources for the GFA countries is a sign it has not prioritized GFA implementation. Still, a more explicit signal from Congress that additional personnel resources were critical to the success of the initiative would have encouraged the administration to allot additional operational resources to the GFA.

Long-term planning

The administration operationalized the GFA's commitment to long-term planning by developing ten-year plans for each pilot country. This approach differed from the one articulated in the SPCPS, which says the administration will develop shorter-term implementation plans that are updated over time. The ten-year time frame means that the plans far exceed the length of U.S. budget and political cycles, which seems to have exacerbated a tendency seen in some other U.S. government strategy documents to articulate extremely broad, lofty goals and objectives that are divorced from the ways and means available to the United States. Appendix II provides further detail on the goals and objectives of each country plan.⁴⁹ The goals articulated in the Haiti and Libya plans are particularly unrealistic, identifying ideal conditions touching on all aspects of Haitian and Libyan society, despite the extreme instability facing both countries. Such objectives may be useful to signal U.S. values and support, but they are not effective for planning: When a plan is too broad or does not effectively connect ways and means to an identified end, it fails to fulfill the basic function of providing direction to U.S. efforts.⁵⁰

The country plans also articulate a "theory of change" for achieving the identified objectives. Theories of change are a concept used in the foreign assistance field to describe how specific interventions will help transition from the current state to

⁴⁹ Hal Brands, "The National Security Strategy Is Not a Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, December 19, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-12-19/national-security-strategy-not-strategy>.

⁵⁰ It is worth noting that there is ambiguity regarding the nature of the plans. While the SPCPS refers to them as implementation plans, some of the documents themselves refer to themselves as "strategies." This is not just a rhetorical distinction; strategies and implementation plans serve fundamentally different purposes: while a strategy identifies goals and objectives, an implementation plan provides detailed guidance on specifically how tools will be used to achieve these goals. This confusion regarding the purpose of the GFA country plans has practical consequences, as the documents do not provide either the operational detail needed for implementation, nor and do they consistently provide clear, realistic goals and objectives to guide U.S. efforts.

State Department's 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 301.2, USAID's Automated Directive System (ADS) 200, and DoD's Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 2-19 all reflect this distinction between strategies and implementation plans.

the desired outcome.⁵¹ Theories of change can clarify if there is a viable pathway toward a goal and provide direction to efforts. The theories of change in the GFA country plans largely fall short of this function. Rather than describing how U.S. interventions will result in the desired change, they largely re-state the relationship between the identified objectives and the goal, without clarifying how those objectives will be achieved. Because those objectives also tend to articulate ideal conditions, it does not provide a realistic pathway for realizing the desired change.⁵²

Adaptation and learning

The GFA and SPCPS articulate a strong commitment to adaptation and learning, but operationalizing these principles has proven difficult. Officials have dedicated significant bandwidth toward developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks both for the pilot countries and for the initiative as a whole. These frameworks use a range of indicators to track progress (or the lack thereof) toward U.S. objectives, and then seek to determine the degree to which U.S. interventions contributed toward that progress. The frameworks were finalized in spring 2024; the administration intends to make these frameworks public but has not yet done so. Because the data collection process is so intensive and because officials assume most of the outcomes will take time to manifest, data will only be collected three times during the ten-year initiative, hardly frequent enough for the intended ongoing learning process. The pilot country embassies have additionally committed to holding annual “learning sessions,” some with local stakeholders, where officials are encouraged to reflect on what has and has not worked over the prior year.⁵³

The techniques associated with monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) were developed to assess the impact of foreign assistance. It is not clear if these techniques are appropriate for other types of interventions, including diplomatic engagement and security cooperation. This is one reason why officials have struggled to figure out how to incorporate diplomatic indicators into the GFA MEL frameworks.⁵⁴ The GFA MEL frameworks also differ from traditional foreign assistance MEL in that they are attempting to assess progress across multiple sectors and types of interventions and—for both the Coastal West Africa MEL plan and the initiative-wide MEL framework—across several countries. Some

⁵¹ USAID Learning Lab, Theory of Change Workbook: A Step-by-Step Process for Developing or Strengthening Theories of Change, <https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/theory-change-workbook-step-step-process-developing-or-strengthening-theories-change>.

⁵² It is worth noting that the Haiti plan includes a more detailed description than the other plans of how specific U.S. interventions could partially contribute to the identified objectives using a phased approach.

⁵³ Interview with State Department Official, February 29, 2024, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁴ Interview with State Department Official, October 3, 2023, virtual.

officials are calling this approach “strategic MEL,” to distinguish it from program or project-level MEL. USAID has applied a strategic MEL approach in other cases in recent years, including as USAID examined the consequences of COVID-19 and the corresponding response of U.S. programs globally, across health, economic, and other sectors. Strategic MEL is a new approach that could improve how the United States thinks about and assesses the impact of its programs, but officials are still very much in the process of refining the concept. While USAID and State Department have not developed a formal definition of strategic MEL, USAID officials describe it as a process that supports adaptation at the level of policy or an agency initiative and involves multiple countries or regions.⁵⁵

In practice, it is still not clear whether the strategic MEL approach will yield meaningful, empirical evidence in the GFA context, or how this evidence will be applied. Officials must combine wildly different types of data together across drastically different contexts, where there are an overwhelming number of intervening variables. Because officials decided to track progress toward objectives, rather than the impact of U.S. interventions, it will be particularly difficult to draw conclusions about the specific impact of U.S. interventions and any causal relationship with the outcomes. This is especially true given the highly aspirational nature of the objectives in the country plans, as discussed above. Almost all the objectives in the GFA country plans are dependent on factors beyond U.S. influence, so assessing progress toward these objectives will not necessarily say much about what the United States is doing or how it should change its approach (see Appendix II for a list of these objectives). Finally, MEL techniques depend on a limited number of standard indicators that may not effectively capture the complex, highly dynamic and unpredictable factors driving conflict in the pilot countries nor capture all the elements that should contribute to U.S. decisionmaking.

Further, the MEL frameworks are designed to inform future U.S. programming, rather than to provide real-time feedback on U.S. policy in the pilot countries. The fact that data collection will happen every few years and a reliance on lagging indicators means the results will be of little utility for officials actively trying to make tough decisions in rapidly shifting environments. For this reason, officials in the pilot countries dedicating scarce bandwidth to developing and applying the MEL frameworks are unlikely to benefit directly from the outcomes. This creates legitimate questions regarding the value-add of GFA strategic MEL that should be examined as the initiative progresses.

The learning sessions provide a more flexible opportunity to reflect on the impact of U.S. interventions and U.S. policy in the pilot countries. In practice, however,

⁵⁵ Interview with USAID Officials, April 4, 2024, Washington, D.C.

there is a risk that these sessions will become focused on process rather than policy or impact, especially if they are managed entirely by working-level officials not empowered to examine issues of policy. Further, the officials overseeing U.S. programs will have a natural tendency to highlight examples where their programs have been successful, rather than looking more comprehensively at U.S. interventions and seeking to learn from failures. Some focus on process and the SPCPS's management goals can be useful—for example, discussing whether the current interagency coordination structures are effective and efficient. But focusing exclusively on such procedural elements could obscure the fact that the purpose of the GFA is to improve the impact of U.S. policies and programs in the pilot countries.

Finally, in order to influence U.S. policy, program, and resource decisions, these learning sessions would need to involve not just the leadership within the pilot country embassies, but also officials in Washington who have authority over such decisions. This includes the assistant secretaries overseeing State Department regional bureaus, the State Department Undersecretary for Management, the Office of Foreign Assistance, USAID leadership, and the relevant regional combatant commands. So far, only some of the pilot country ambassadors have participated in the formal learning sessions, and there are no feedback loops with formal policymaking processes in Washington.⁵⁶

Transparency

The GFA's experience with transparency has been mixed, but on balance receives a failing grade. The initiative goes further than many other U.S. government efforts to embrace dialogue with both Congress and the think tank and advocacy community that supported the original GFA legislation. Officials meet periodically with this narrow community and have sought substantive input, including on the MEL frameworks. At the same time, the government waited a full year after the country plans were completed to release them publicly (with some redactions). Given the emphasis on transparency in the plans themselves, such poor transparency is ironic. It also has practical consequences. The plans call for partnerships with local stakeholders and collaboration with other donors, yet such collaboration is not feasible if local, international, and private partners do not have sufficient information about U.S. efforts to determine if they want to engage, and how. While the plans are relatively anodyne, they signal to potential partners and allies the goals, intentions, and methods of U.S. engagement, and therefore are useful to others in determining whether and how they might collaborate with the U.S. efforts. The administration also has not made public the terms of reference

⁵⁶ Interview with State Department Official, October 26, 2023, virtual.

for the GFA secretariat and has not disclosed the level of PSF funding to each country, as is standard with other sources of U.S. assistance.

There are certain instances where full transparency is not feasible. For example, there may be instances where releasing information could inflame tensions with the host country government, or where it might create risk for local actors involved in implementation. In highly contested political situations like Libya, sharing too much information could unintentionally empower spoilers. In many instances, however, it is cumbersome bureaucratic procedures that impede U.S. transparency, triggering an overly cautious and slow approach to information sharing that undermines partnership, local leadership, and learning and adaptation.

Section III: Conclusions and recommendations

The five-year anniversary of the GFA later this year and the first progress report to Congress early next year provide valuable opportunities for officials to recalibrate and renew momentum around the initiative.

The process of operationalizing the initiative as well as early implementation experience in the pilot countries has generated valuable lessons. In keeping with the GFA principles of adaptation and agility, it is important that officials learn from these lessons, rather than succumbing to the bureaucratic tendency toward entrenching existing processes and decisions. A surge in violent conflict globally underscores the imperative of a more thoughtful approach to improving GFA implementation. We do not recommend wholesale reforms—the GFA is a long-term endeavor, and we must provide the initiative with the time and space to have impact. Further, there are some instances where the administration is already taking steps to improve implementation, such as around donor collaboration and private sector investment. However, we have concluded that realizing the ambitious goals of the GFA will require recommitting to the core objectives of the GFA, ensuring officials have the resources necessary to “do business differently,” and strengthening the operationalization of key GFA principles.

We encourage Congress and the administration to use the five-year anniversary of the GFA and the upcoming congressional progress report to renew momentum on the initiative and recalibrate implementation. We provide recommendations on what this would entail and why it is needed below. These recommendations are elaborated further in Appendix I, which provides an action plan for officials in the administration and Congress.

Recommit to the core objectives of the GFA:

The SPCPS commits to “converting [U.S.] bureaucratic architecture” to enable more effective conflict prevention and stabilization.⁵⁷ To date, however, GFA implementation has been wholly focused on four pilot countries and one pilot region, and the administration has yet to articulate a clear vision for how to expand the GFA’s impact in the coming years, or the administrative reforms needed for the United States to better operate in fragile environments.

Further, the GFA is operating almost exclusively as a foreign assistance initiative, despite its ambitions to integrate diplomatic engagement and other military tools such as security cooperation. These tools are critical to the success of the

⁵⁷ “2022 Prologue to the United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability.” April 1, 2022. United States Department of State (blog). Accessed July 11, 2024. <https://www.state.gov/2022-prologue-to-the-united-states-strategy-to-prevent-conflict-and-promote-stability/>.

initiative, but in most cases, officials have not even articulated how these interventions could be used to advance the GFA objectives, let alone begun to mobilize these tools.

Only with clear direction from U.S. foreign policy leadership will the United States prioritize conflict prevention over competing policy imperatives, ensure diplomatic and defense tools are used to advance these goals, and push through tough bureaucratic reforms. Mid-level staff and senior officials working in dedicated conflict offices like State and CSO play a critical role in institutionalizing initiatives like the GFA, but they lack the authority to meaningfully change U.S. policy in the pilot and priority countries or make major bureaucratic reforms. Unfortunately, engagement from leadership and senior policymakers in the GFA has been weak, with implementation wholly delegated to dedicated offices like CSO.

To remedy these problems, we recommend the following measures:

- Expand the impact of the GFA: The administration should work with Congress to develop a list of reforms necessary to remove persistent impediments to conflict prevention and stabilization, such as a restrictive diplomatic security posture and staffing constraints; strengthen mandatory professional development around conflict prevention; regularize the process for providing surge staffing support to fragile countries; and develop a more strategic process for selecting future priority countries.
- Get serious about diplomatic and defense tools: Congress and the administration should formally affirm their commitment to integrating diplomatic and defense tools into the initiative, clarifying that this includes all forms of diplomatic engagement, not just public diplomacy programming, and security cooperation. Further, ambassadors should oversee the development of short-term, flexible diplomatic plans in the pilot countries as well as an assessment of how U.S. security cooperation could exacerbate or help ease conflict risks.
- Strengthen policymaker buy-in: the above measures are only feasible with stronger policymaker buy-in. Congress can foster this buy-in by increasing its engagement with senior administration officials on the GFA. The GFA Secretariat can help attract and sustain policymaker interest by improving alignment between the GFA objectives and U.S. national security priorities. Finally, the administration should adjust oversight of the GFA to include relevant policymakers. This could include mandating that the Deputy Secretary of State convenes regular GFA Steering Committee meetings, and that the Undersecretary for Political Affairs send a representative to the GFA Secretariat.

Provide the operational resources necessary for “doing business differently”

The GFA is unique in its appreciation for the fact that better outcomes in fragile and conflict-affected countries require dedicating time and attention to changing how the U.S. government plans, staffs, coordinates, assesses, and adapts its operations in those settings. It is not simply about launching new programs but rather holistic improvements in U.S. operations. Despite this, the GFA only authorizes funding for new assistance projects, offering a type of funding—Economic Support Funds—that cannot be used to fund precisely the kinds of inherently governmental functions the GFA seeks to improve. For this reason, many of the most significant, time-consuming elements of the initiative are unfunded mandates. The offices and embassies working on fragile and conflict-affected countries already face acute staffing shortages and constraints, making it difficult to dedicate bandwidth to the GFA and further undercutting buy-in to the initiative.

To remedy these problems, we recommend the following measures:

- Congress includes a supportive statement in the Diplomatic Programs account of the State Department, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill to promote the provision of dedicated resources for GFA implementation and works with the administration to ensure these resources are available.⁵⁸
- The GFA Secretariat seeks to leverage additional operational resources to secure stronger buy-in from policymakers, such as senior officials in the State Department regional bureaus.

Improve operationalization of key GFA principles:

- **Local leadership:** Transformational change in a country is only effective if there is early and continual leadership from local officials and stakeholders, but the ideal of local leadership articulated in the SPCPS has proven infeasible in practice. The administration should develop a more realistic approach to local leadership and adjust or consider pausing implementation in countries where no credible local partners exist.
- **Donor collaboration:** Bureaucratic and resource constraints are impeding officials’ efforts to shift from donor coordination to collaboration. Congress and the administration should affirm the importance of donor collaboration,

⁵⁸ The diplomatic programs account provides the operating budget for the Department of State and its embassies abroad, including staffing, infrastructure, and security. Schedule B, Foreign Service Limited appointments, and domestic Personal Service Contract authorities can also allow the offices overseeing GFA implementation to quickly hire experts for time-limited appointments.

ensure embassy staff are incentivized and resourced to strengthen collaboration, and continue to improve consistent engagement with World Bank officials focused on the pilot countries, particularly around strategic planning.

- Long-term planning: The ten-year GFA country plans provide highly aspirational, broad objectives that do not assist with prioritization or provide clear direction for implementation. The administration should identify more credible, nearer-term objectives to guide U.S. interventions in the pilot countries. Rather than a formal update to the country plans, the Steering Committee should oversee a strategic implementation review in the pilot countries to identify 1-2 priority conflict prevention or stabilization objectives and a realistic approach for achieving those objectives. The Secretariat should ensure those objectives are integrated into decisionmaking about resources.
- Learning and adaptation: Country and GFA-wide monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) frameworks are time-consuming exercises that could provide long-term lessons about U.S. assistance in fragile countries, but they do not provide tools to help inform real-time policymaking in the pilot countries or support a more adaptive U.S. policy posture. The administration should complement the MEL frameworks with more rigorous learning processes that can better inform policymaking while mitigating the bureaucratic burden on staff. The Secretariat should establish parameters for annual learning sessions in the pilot countries that empower staff to examine policy questions and work with the NSC to establish feedback loops between those sessions and policymaking processes.
- Private sector partnership: Mobilizing private sector investment to support conflict prevention and stabilization will require deeper integration of USAID and Development Finance Corporation (DFC) investment tools; a DFC investment target in fragile countries; and deployment of investment officers to select fragile countries to proactively identify viable projects, building on the successful work of its Africa Investment Advisor program.
- Transparency: Bureaucratic impediments have prevented the kind of transparency needed to realize the GFA's partnership objectives. Congress and the administration should establish transparency as the default for the GFA.

Appendix I. Action plan for renewing momentum on the GFA

Recommit to the core objectives of the GFA:

Expand the impact of the GFA:

- a. Develop a list of priority reforms to address bureaucratic impediments to conflict prevention and stabilization, such as a restrictive diplomatic security posture and staffing constraints as suggested in State Department's Afghanistan After Action report.⁵⁹
- b. Regularize the process for providing surge staff support to fragile countries. For example, instead of ad-hoc details and temporary duty tours (TDYs) that often require lengthy intra-agency negotiations, State Department could employ a small pool of staff whose specific purpose is surge support to embassies and regional bureaus and who have the appropriate expertise for these tasks, similar to the approach used by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives "bullpen." This effort could be integrated into the State Department's ongoing modernization agenda.⁶⁰
- c. Develop a process for selecting new GFA priority countries and graduating existing countries. This process should be driven more strictly by strategic criteria, namely 1) the risk of conflict and impact on U.S. national security interests, 2) potential for U.S. impact, and 3) leadership from the host country government, rather than bureaucratic or tactical considerations. All relevant policymakers, including at DoD, should play a role in country selection.
- d. Formalize new planning and coordination procedures for all fragile countries that seek to replicate the most effective GFA practices in the pilot countries via revisions to policy documents such as the State Department Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) and DoD policy directives.

Get serious about diplomacy and defense tools:

- e. Congress and the GFA Steering Committee clarify their expectation that all forms of diplomatic engagement should be used to advance GFA objectives in the pilot countries, not simply public diplomacy programming.
- f. The White House considers changes to GFA oversight to strengthen authority over diplomatic and defense tools, to include requiring that additional offices

⁵⁹ American Academy of Diplomacy, Changing the Risk Paradigm for U.S. Diplomats, <https://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/publications/changing-the-risk-paradigm-for-u.s.-diplomats>; U.S. Department of State, After Action Review: Afghanistan, June 2023, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/State-AAR-AFG.pdf>.

⁶⁰ The State Department, with oversight by Congress, is currently pursuing a modernization agenda to help it better meet contemporary challenges. See "Secretary Antony J. Blinken on the Modernization of American Diplomacy." October 2021. United States Department of State (blog). Accessed June 20, 2024. <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-on-the-modernization-of-american-diplomacy/>.

send representatives to the GFA Secretariat, such as the office of the Undersecretary for Political Affairs and DSCA, shifting oversight within the National Security Council to the regional directorates, and identifying a more logical institutional home for an NSC “champion” for the GFA than the development directorate.

- g. Ambassadors and regional bureau leadership oversee development of short-term, flexible diplomatic plans that detail how engagement from officials and communication tools will be used to secure specific desired outcomes. This process should be connected to the strategic implementation review. The examples of Fulbe inclusion and Murzuq reconciliation can provide positive examples in this regard.
- h. Embassy and DoD officials in the pilot countries conduct a critical assessment of how security cooperation could be exacerbating conflict risks and opportunities to leverage security cooperation to promote positive change and adjust the U.S. posture in response.

Strengthen policymaker engagement:

- Congress elevates engagement with senior policymakers on the GFA through hearings, briefings, and meetings. This should include U.S. national security officials and those overseeing U.S. diplomatic and military cooperation in the pilot countries.
- The White House mandates that the office of the Undersecretary for Political Affairs send a representative to the GFA Secretariat (as noted above).
- The administration elevates the Secretariat coordinator to an independent, senior position capable of engaging directly with relevant ambassadors and assistant secretaries.
- The GFA Secretariat aligns GFA objectives in the pilot/priority countries with U.S. national security goals and demonstrates its ability to make progress toward these objectives.
- The administration formalizes the requirement (e.g., in the FAM) that the Deputy Secretary regularly (1-2 times per year) convenes GFA Steering Committee meetings, and that State Department and USAID regional bureaus conduct an annual policy review in the pilot/priority countries based on the outcomes of the annual learning sessions.

Provide the operational resources necessary for “doing business differently”

- Congress and the administration ensure that the GFA pilot and priority countries have the necessary operational resources to achieve the improvements to U.S. capacity and processes articulated in the GFA, including by considering a supportive statement in the Diplomatic Programs account of the State Department,

Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill and providing the offices overseeing the GFA pilot countries with flexible hiring authorities.⁶¹

- The GFA Secretariat seeks to leverage additional operational resources to secure stronger buy-in from policymakers, such as senior officials in the State Department regional bureaus.

Improve operationalization of GFA principles:

Adopt a more realistic approach to local leadership:

- U.S. officials in the pilot and priority countries determine the feasibility of local leadership on GFA objectives and develop a plan for fostering that leadership.
- In countries where the national government lacks the capacity and commitment to demonstrate leadership on the identified objectives, officials either revise U.S. goals to focus on nearer-term prevention and crisis response or consider pausing GFA implementation. Pausing implementation may make most sense in cases where local-level initiatives are highly vulnerable to national-level instability or where community-level government officials and civil society actors face significant repression from the central government.

Prioritize donor collaboration:

- Congress and the GFA Steering Committee affirm the importance of donor collaboration (vice coordination), including via joint projects and analyses and encourage agencies to adjust processes and requirements as needed to facilitate collaboration.
- The GFA Secretariat, in coordination with Congress, ensures embassies have staff who are focused on and incentivized to strengthen donor collaboration.
- Building on the Multilateral Development Bank reform agenda, Treasury works with USAID to facilitate more consistent engagement with World Bank officials on the pilot and priority countries, including by developing coordinated engagement plans on new country partnership frameworks.
- As officials strengthen the integration of diplomatic engagement and military tools into GFA implementation, the GFA Secretariat explores opportunities for strengthening coordination with like-minded partners beyond the realm of foreign assistance.

Identify more credible objectives to guide U.S. interventions in the pilot countries:

- Senior officials oversee a strategic implementation review in all the pilot countries to identify 1-2 conflict prevention or stabilization objectives as well as a realistic approach that details how the United States will use its available tools to achieve those objectives within the next few years. Officials need not formally update the existing country plans or draft detailed implementation plans, especially because

⁶¹ The diplomatic programs account provides the operating budget for the Department of State and its embassies abroad, including staffing, infrastructure, and security. Schedule B, Foreign Service Limited appointments, and domestic Personal Service Contract authorities can also allow the offices overseeing GFA implementation to quickly hire experts for time-limited appointments.

the bandwidth required to do so risks further distracting away from actual implementation.

- The GFA Secretariat works with other relevant offices to ensure those objectives are integrated into all resource decisionmaking processes, including dedication of staff bandwidth, foreign assistance allocation, and diplomatic engagement by senior officials.

Establish more effective learning processes:

- The GFA Secretariat establishes flexible parameters for annual learning sessions in the pilot/priority countries to ensure the sessions address failures, question existing assumptions, and explore emerging risks and opportunities, leverage strategic foresight tools. This should include requiring that senior officials participate meaningfully in learning sessions.
 - A recent State Department process overseen by the Office of Policy Planning, the Policy Risk and Opportunity Process (PROP) Group, could provide a useful model for these sessions.⁶²
- The NSC works with the GFA Secretariat to establish stronger feedback loops between the learning sessions and policymaking, and the GFA Steering Committee integrates major conclusions/recommendations from the sessions into its meetings.
 - For example, the NSC could host a dedicated interagency policy committee meeting to discuss significant conclusions from the sessions and their implications for U.S. policy and elevate any major new decisions. Requiring regional directorates to host these meetings annually could further help foster regional directorate ownership of the GFA.
- The GFA Secretariat seeks to minimize the burden the MEL frameworks create for embassy staff and continue to assess the effectiveness of this approach.

Provide the tools necessary to mobilize private sector investment:

- Congress affirms that investments in fragile countries are a priority and DFC sets a target for investments in fragile countries, using either the World Bank's list of fragile and conflict-affected settings or the OECD list of fragile states.⁶³
- DFC, in coordination with USAID, deploys a team of investment officers to select fragile countries, building on the successful work of its Africa Investment Advisor program.

⁶² U.S. Department of State, Foreign Affairs Manual, 2 FAM 90, "Ethics in Government—General," <https://fam.state.gov/FAM/02FAM/02FAM0090.html>.

⁶³ World Bank, "Harmonized List of Fragile Situations," <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations>. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), States of Fragility 2022, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/states-of-fragility-2022_c7fedf5e-en.html.

Establish transparency as the default for the GFA:

- Congress and the GFA Steering committee affirm that all elements of GFA implementation should be open and transparent, unless there is compelling national security, privacy, or safety issues preventing it.

Appendix II. Summary of GFA Country Plans

Table 1. Country plan goals

Haiti: Haiti’s citizens and government advance a shared vision and a permissive environment for long-term stability
Libya: Libya is governed by a democratically elected, unified, representative, and internationally recognized authority that is able to ensure human rights, deliver public services, promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, secure its border, and partner with the United States and international community on shared priorities
Mozambique: Mozambican individuals, communities, and institutions are strengthened and empowered to foster enduring stability through the development of open political participation and governance, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, accountable security and justice sectors, and resilient social cohesion.
PNG: communities and marginalized populations in PNG, especially women, are more empowered and included to prevent and resolve conflicts through non-violent means; and are supported by more accountable, responsive, transparent private and public institutions and improved legal, justice, and security sectors.
CWA: Coastal West Africans promote peace and prevent violent conflict and violent extremism (VE) that risks destabilizing the region.

Table 2. Country plan objectives

Country	Economic	Security	Political
Haiti	Prosperous citizenry	Accountable Security	Accountable governance, engaged citizenry
Libya	Economic and business environment fosters sustainable, equitable economic growth; mitigates corruption, government better manages revenue	Civilian-controlled, unified military and security; provides stability in Libya, supports regional stability	Democratically elected political system with broad participation and effective, equitable service provision Integrate the marginalized South
Papua New Guinea	Sustainable, equitable economic growth	Stronger community capacity to prevent violence Improve justice & professionalize security forces	
Mozambique	Economic & business environment fosters inclusive, sustainable development, including private investment in marginalized communities		Individuals, communities, and CSOs are active participants in political, social, and economic processes Institutions strengthened & responsive to local needs
Coastal West Africa		Security forces responsive & accountable to at-risk communities.	Social cohesion strengthened in at-risk communities Government more responsive, inclusive, and accountable to at-risk communities

Table 3. Challenges to stability articulated in GFA country plans

Country	Haiti	Libya	Mozambique	Papua New Guinea	Coast West Africa
Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific threats • Weak security 	*	*	*	*	*
Marginalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific regions • inequality 	*	*	*	*	*
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corruption • political tensions • weak service • justice • weak civic space & democratic backsliding 	*	*	*	*	*
Climate	*	*		*	*
Urbanization				*	
Migration	*				
Foreign interference		*			
Food insecurity	*				

Table 4. Summary of implementation approach in the GFA country plans

Country	Haiti	Libya	PNG	Mozambique	Coast West Africa
Describes drivers of instability?	Partial – describes link between economic inequality and instability and describes how instability manifests	Partial – says will address drivers but does not explicitly identify what the drivers are; lists 9 “challenges” but not clear which are actually drivers	Partial – briefly lists eight drivers but does not describe how they all are driving instability or specify what kind of violence and instability the plan is seeking to address (e.g., communal violence, GBV, national instability)	Yes – distinguishes between drivers of instability and triggers and describes how factors drive instability	Yes – discussion could be more explicit, but description of instability dynamics describes how marginalization, democratic backsliding, and climate drive a specific type of violence (violent extremism)
Commit to alignment with other USG policies	ICS; USAID strategic framework; DOD theater campaign	Democratic strengthening; WPS; Youth, Peace, & Security; atrocity prevention; countering corruption; climate	Indo-Pacific Strategy; Declaration of U.S.-Pacific; countering corruption; democratic renewal; WPS; atrocity prevention; PREPARE; ICS	WPS; atrocity prevention; climate; countering corruption; ICS; USAID CDCS; DOD theater campaign	WPS; climate; food security; water; atrocity prevention; countering corruption; ICS; CDCS; DOD theater campaign
Commit to integrate the 3Ds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Address role of diplomacy	No	Yes, but little detail	No	No	No

Commits to local leadership	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commits to International coordination, partnerships	Yes	Barely referenced	Yes, suggests moving beyond coordination to collaboration; identifies country partners	Yes, identifies mechanisms & multistakeholder platform	Yes
References collaboration with or targeting: a) Women b) Civil society c) Youth d) Private sector investors	a) Yes, GBV b) Yes c) Yes d) Referenced regarding consultations	a) Yes b) Yes c) Yes d) No	a) Yes, GBV b) Yes c) Yes d) No	a) Yes b) Yes c) Yes d) Yes	a) Yes b) No c) Yes d) Yes, references DFC, BII, other DFIs
Mutual accountability with partners	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Compact agreements	No	No	No	No	No
Innovation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Phased approach	Yes, prioritizing security & justice	Yes	Yes	Yes, focusing first on conflict-affected areas in the North	No
MEL—Monitoring,	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, including for diplomatic action

Evaluation, Learning					
Adaptive and iterative approach	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transparenc y—lacking in country and goal of U.S. assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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