



Integrated Country Strategy

Malaysia

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur aims to advance U.S. foreign policy, economic, and security goals by having the United States continue to be a reliable, consistent partner for Malaysia through our effective use of security cooperation, economic prosperity and resilience, and people-to-people ties. The recent release of the new Info-Pacific Strategy offers a clear framework with which to engage with Malaysia, as it is a significant partner for many of our top economic, regional security, and diplomatic priorities. As the United States is Malaysia's third largest trade partner – and Malaysia is a major source of U.S. imports and a key player in the global supply chain -- we will continue to broaden investments, trade, and economic linkages with Malaysia to increase shared prosperity. We will also deepen and strengthen law enforcement and security relationships, promote democracy and human rights, and expand cooperation on addressing climate change, health threats, and environmental issues.

As this ICS cycle begins, I note the challenge we face rebuilding connections and relationships with the host government, the private sector, and other non-governmental organization after almost two years of COVID-19 lockdowns, which significantly impacted our outreach and initiatives, and strained our Embassy community. As a community of embassy staff and family members, we are fully committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. As Chief of Mission, I promote a flexible, collaborative, family-friendly workplace where employees feel valued and heard and treat each other with respect and civility. I aim to advance our Mission's goals, while also putting the safety and well-being of our Mission community first as we go forward.

The U.S. Embassy will pursue four primary goals in the coming years. First, we will promote peace and mutual security in Malaysia, the region, and globally. Second, we will foster shared interests in democracy, good governance, human rights, and open and transparent institutions. Third, we will expand U.S. and Malaysian prosperity by advancing and deepening our bilateral economic and commercial partnerships to support the American

people. Finally, we will innovate together with Malaysia on health, climate, conservation, science, and technology initiatives. Internally, we will press forward with efforts to improve the overall infrastructure and physical footprint of the Embassy, promote diversity and inclusion, and increase resiliency within the Embassy community by deepening professional development, such as the mentoring program, enhancing Embassy-wide recruitment efforts, and facilitating community integration events.

The breadth of our engagements with the Malaysian government, civil society, and private sector is key to achieving our goals. With respect to promoting peace and security, we will continue to build on our robust military-to-military, law enforcement, and counterterrorism cooperation. Expanding bilateral dialogues and developing new defense cooperation agreements, as well as institution building with the Ministry of Defense and bilateral exercises will remain high priorities. We will continue to prioritize capacity building through International Military Education and Training initiatives and build up the alumni network of national security professionals that graduate from U.S. training. We will continue delivery of U.S. military equipment and increase interoperability between our forces. We will promote greater law enforcement coordination among stakeholders on both sides and increase cooperation in pursuing transnational financial crimes, cybercrime, and combatting international organized crime. We will coordinate closely on counterterrorism activities and counter-proliferation initiatives, and support Malaysia's whole-of-society approach to implementing the National Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism. We will support U.S. citizens and U.S. interests through the development of an American Liaison Network and ensure that our travel guidance is regularly reviewed with an eye toward the security of Americans traveling and living in the country.

Our embassy will encourage shared interest and build capacity on good governance, transparency and fighting corruption, and protecting human rights. Through our International Visitor Leadership program, we will engage and encourage the best and brightest of the next generation of Malaysian leaders in the executive, judiciary, education, business and academic sectors. We will support efforts to have the police, judges and

prosecutors work together to build cases based on Malaysia's legal framework and in the best interests of the Malaysian people. We will work with civil society and to support efforts for the government to reform to improve services and governance. We will support and press for more action to protect the rights of the marginalized and most vulnerable parts of the population to ensure that Malaysia continues to evolve as a defender of human rights and internationally recognized values. The Embassy will continue to engage to build capacity, particularly in the judicial and law enforcement sectors, and with respect to the fight against terrorism, organized crime, and the trafficking of persons, weapons, wildlife and drugs. With Malaysia beginning this ICS cycle at Tier 3 in the Trafficking-in-Person's (TIP) report, we will urge and support Malaysian counterparts to increase efforts to counter trafficking and forced labor using a variety of tools and programs. Our Public Diplomacy efforts will continue to support and promote key Mission goals through our Young Southeast Asia Leaders Initiative, English language teaching programs, social media outreach, promotion of a free and open media, and targeted people-to-people engagements.

We will engage the business community, including through the American Chamber of Commerce and the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council, to promote the private sector as the driver of economic growth and mutual prosperity of the United States and Malaysia. We will also strive to initiate regular policy exchanges with the Malaysian government to ensure U.S. investors have a voice in decision-making and encourage and highlight the advantages to Malaysia of advanced products and investments in high-tech sectors. We will also facilitate bilateral arrangements to lock in supply chain resilience, given the critical role of Malaysia in global supply chains. We will also continue our robust support of U.S. companies' corporate social responsibility programs that underscore how businesses can positively affect the communities in which they operate. We will continue to advocate for U.S. companies engaged in selling U.S. products and services and expanding U.S. job opportunities through exports. American business plays a crucial developmental role in Malaysia, and we intend to ensure that it continues to enjoy a prominent place in the Malaysian and larger Southeast Asian regional marketplace.

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With respect to our objectives in advancing public health, climate, environment and conservation efforts, we will build stakeholder communities – including state level officials, scientists and public health practitioners, conservationists, civil society, and private sector with financing and green technologies – to create public and official momentum to collaborate on climate change goals, pandemic response, and environmental preservation.

We will continue to develop the capabilities, skills, and leadership potential of our colleagues. We will do this by ensuring that our first and second tour officers are imbued with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the mid-ranks, that our mid-ranked officers are prepared to carry out the core duties of supporting the President's foreign policy and national security strategy and that our senior leadership is structured in a way to provide guidance and oversee the effective use of our resources in support of everything we do. We will promote diversity and inclusion and restore resilience within the Embassy community by deepening professional development, such as the mentoring program, enhancing Embassy-wide recruitment efforts, and facilitating community-integration events. We will continue our emphasis and morale/wellness outreach to all employees, specifically locally employed staff feel valued and appreciated and will continue to empower them to realize their full potential and individual career goals.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Promote peace and mutual security in Malaysia, the region, and globally.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Build partnerships and capacity to protect the security interests of the United States and American citizens.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Support Malaysia's efforts to build its capacity to promote regional security and stability.
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Promote mutual security through law enforcement partnerships and through participation in the rules-based international order.

Mission Goal 2: Foster shared interests in democracy, good governance, human rights, and open and transparent institutions.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Partner with Malaysian entities to promote open and transparent institutions committed to good governance and respect for human rights.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Partner with Malaysia's government and civil society on programs and initiatives that reinforce a more stable and inclusive democracy.

Mission Goal 3: Expand U.S. and Malaysian prosperity by advancing and deepening our bilateral economic and commercial partnerships to support the American people.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Partner with Malaysia to secure transparent and predictable engagement on trade, regulatory, and policy matters for U.S. companies and exporters.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Partner with U.S. industry to demonstrate the benefits of market-based, market-friendly policies.
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Promote and facilitate expanded U.S. exports to Malaysia and Malaysian investment into the U.S. economy.

Mission Goal 4: Innovate together with Malaysia on climate, health, conservation, science, and technology.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Place the climate crisis at the center of global trade and energy policy, supporting Malaysia to lead regionally on environmental, science, technology, and health (ESTH) challenges with innovative solutions.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Support Malaysia's pandemic preparedness to predict, prevent and be ready for the next domestic, regional, or global infectious disease outbreak.

Management Objective 1: Continue to work with OBO to move forward with the construction of a NEC on existing Embassy land that meets overseas policy board standards to provide a secure and collaborative environment.

Management Objective 2: Promote diversity and inclusion and restore resilience within the Embassy community by deepening professional development, such as the mentoring program, enhancing Embassy-wide recruitment efforts, and facilitating community-integration events.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Promote peace and mutual security in Malaysia, the region, and globally.

Description | As one of the states with territorial claims in the South China Sea, Malaysia has an important role to play assuring rights of claimants are respected and in the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes. Also, the Strait of Malacca, which flows between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, connects the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean through the South China Sea. It is the shortest sea route between Persian Gulf suppliers and key Asian markets. Malaysia seeks U.S. partnerships in law enforcement, maritime security cooperation, countering terrorism, and broad security cooperation. Mutual areas of interest include maritime security, counterterrorism, information sharing, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief preparedness, peacekeeping operations training, and leader development. To achieve this objective, we will continue to enhance our exercises, engagements, and training programs; building partner capacity; and expand defense trade. We will continue to build on our military-to-military and counterterrorism cooperation through institution and capacity building, expanded dialogues and exchanges, and increased law-enforcement coordination. We will also continue to leverage our engagement with civil society actors to develop their capacity to address the root causes of radicalization.

Objective 1.1 | Build partnerships and capacity to protect the interests of the United States and American Citizens.

- **Justification** | Malaysia is an important destination for U.S. business and investment interests. Malaysia is also a major travel hub, with large maritime borders. As such, the U.S. Embassy partners with Malaysia authorities and members of the American community to protect American lives and interests. We accomplish this objective by recruiting and maintaining networks of Citizen Liaison Volunteers. We are also establishing strong partnerships to enhance the capability for Malaysia to surveil and

enforce borders, and implement programs and collaborative efforts to counter violent extremism and detect and disrupt terrorist threats. We will continue to strengthen our security cooperation partnership and advancing U.S. interests, which includes preserving a rules-based international order to peacefully resolve disputes and to protect the lives of U.S. and Malaysia citizens.

- **Linkages** | This objective is consistent with and supportive of the interim national security strategy which stresses defending and nurturing the underlying sources of American strength, including our people, our economy, and our national defense. It also links to the EAP Joint Regional Strategy and Indo-Pacific Strategy

Objective 1.2 | Support Malaysia's efforts to build its capacity to promote regional security and stability.

- **Justification** | Malaysia is well positioned to partner with the United States to promote our mutual interest in maintaining regional stability, including the promotion of international law and peaceful resolution of disputes, and preserving freedom of navigation and free movement of commerce. Moreover, Malaysia continues to increase its capacity to protect its maritime sovereignty and ongoing cooperation with the U.S. shows our commitment to supporting Malaysia's economic and national security goals. Our military-to-military partnership will continue to support the Malaysian military through Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Building Partner Capacity Programs (BPC) and the Maritime Security Initiative (MSI), as well as various bilateral exercises and other security cooperation activities. Fully developed and operationally tested maritime domain awareness capabilities are critical to Malaysia's maritime security and American interests in the region, as is increasing information sharing and interoperability.
- **Linkages** | Strengthening defense relations also directly supports the Interim National Security Strategy, and the Indo-Pacific Strategy, which together position the United States to lead and sustain a stable and open international system, underwritten by strong democratic alliances, partnerships, multilateral institutions, and rule.

Objective 1.3 | Promote mutual security through law enforcement partnerships and through participation in the rules-based international order.

- **Justification** | Malaysia combats the threat of transnational crime, including cybersecurity, corruption, sanctions evasion, money laundering and other financial crimes, trafficking-in-persons, and illegal maritime activities. Malaysia also faces some economic coercion by state actors. A more empowered, able, and independent law enforcement and judiciary will allow officials to build cases based on the country's legal framework and in the best interests of its people. The Embassy will work with the police, coast guard, judiciary, and financial authorities to enhance partnerships, boost capacity, and improve the willingness to take on these threats.
- **Linkages** | This objective is consistent with and supportive of the interim national security strategy, the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the EAP Joint Regional Strategy, which stress defending and nurturing the underlying sources of American strength, including our people, our economy, and our national defense.

Mission Goal 2 | Foster shared interests in democracy, good governance, human rights, and open and transparent institutions.

Description | There is significant public desire in Malaysia for reforms, such as countering corruption, making economic and social policy-making more transparent, widening the scope of fundamental freedoms, enhancing the independence of the judiciary, and deepening democracy.

Objective 2.1 | Partner with Malaysian entities to promote open and transparent institutions committed to good governance and respect for human rights.

- **Justification** | We will continue to work closely with civil society actors—from journalists to activists to non-governmental organizations—to support the freedoms of speech and association. These efforts will support the rights of all Malaysians and will

help Malaysia develop into a human rights leader and defender of internationally recognized values.

- **Linkages** | This goal supports the objectives of the Summit for Democracy, as well as National Security Study Memorandum 1 establishing the fight against corruption as a national security priority and executive orders prioritizing human rights including the Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Persons Around the World.

Objective 2.2 | Partner with Malaysia’s government and civil society on programs and initiatives that reinforce a more stable and inclusive democracy.

- **Justification** | Malaysia has an engaged and active civil society which carved a new role for itself after the 2018 election that it has maintained through the successive changes in government including developing stronger working level contacts with government ministries and more effectively learning how to advocate for reform within the existing legal framework.
- **Linkages** | This objective aligns with the FY 2022 – 2026 Department of State and USAID Joint Strategic Plan which prioritizes strengthening democratic institutions, upholding universal values, and promoting human dignity. It also links to the EAP Joint Regional Strategy.

Mission Goal 3 | Expand U.S. and Malaysian prosperity by advancing and deepening our bilateral economic and commercial partnership to support the American people.

Description | As a high middle-income economy seeking high-income status, Malaysia has long been and continues to be an attractive location for U.S. economic and commercial activity. Malaysia is the third largest economy in ASEAN, the second largest U.S. trading partner in Southeast Asia, and the United States is Malaysia’s third largest trading partner. While economic ties are strong and growing, the COVID pandemic, continued political uncertainty, non-transparent business and investment policies create economic challenges. Economic

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growth is expected to be around two percent in 2021, although exports to the United States, led by semiconductors and other electrical products, continue to grow. Many international firms, not just from the United States, often express views that the regulatory and legislative process could improve regarding transparency and stakeholder input. Pressure to hire local workers is also increasing, with most industrial and commodity companies depend, to varying degrees, on migrant labor. The United States remains the largest foreign investor in Malaysia with oil and gas, electronics manufacturing, financial services, and pharmaceuticals being among the many sectors where U.S. firms have invested and expanded for decades. As one of the wealthiest countries in ASEAN, Malaysia can fulfill a greater leadership role in promoting greater economic liberalization and integration in both regional and global organizations such as APEC, ASEAN, and the WTO, and taking part in discussions of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). We will also encourage greater Malaysian investment into the United States to strengthen their economic ties with the U.S.

Objective 3.1 | Partner with Malaysia to secure transparent and predictable engagement on trade, regulatory, and policy matters for U.S. companies and exporters.

- **Justification** | A predictable and responsive business environment is essential to U.S. firms operating successfully here, supporting prosperity locally and supporting jobs in the United States. Given Malaysia's critical role in global supply chains for everything from semi-conductors to medical devices and personal protective equipment, it is imperative to have close and substantive arrangements to ensure supply chain resilience and stability. We will seek a regular mechanism to discuss ongoing policy considerations alongside the U.S. private sector and conduct commercial diplomacy to address standards and policies that may hamper U.S. business. We will work to strengthen our trade relationship to counter increased competition from other nations and leverage opportunities presented by trade agreements through government-to-government, business-to-government, and business-to-business engagement.

- **Linkages** | As underscored in the interim U.S. National Security Strategy, the United States continues to value economic prosperity around the world. This underpins the Indo-Pacific Strategy and holds multiple linkages to the EAP Joint Regional Strategy.

Objective 3.2 | Partner with U.S. industry to demonstrate the benefits of market-based, market-friendly policies.

- **Justification** | Mutual prosperity grows when U.S. firms are able to compete in a free, fair, and open market system. U.S. firms, not only have contributed to Malaysia's prosperity and the resulting pull for more U.S. exports, but have also created corporate social responsibility programs that further increase the value of their presence and investment in Malaysia. To achieve this objective, we will work with U.S. firms operating in Malaysia to emphasize the benefits accruing already to Malaysia, as well as the additional benefits in further investment and job creation that can come from market-based policies. We will continue commercial advocacy for U.S. firms on Malaysian government procurements and pursue continued opportunities to reinforce Malaysia's commitment to a next-generation telecommunications infrastructure free from sovereign technological risks.
- **Linkages** | As underscored in the interim U.S. National Security Strategy, the United States continues to value economic prosperity around the world. This underpins the Indo-Pacific Strategy and holds multiple linkages to the EAP Joint Regional Strategy.

Objective 3.3 | Promote and facilitate expanded U.S. exports to Malaysia and Malaysian investment into the U.S. economy.

- **Justification** | Malaysia's growing middle class presents a ripe market for U.S. exports, including agriculture, media, consumer products, and more. Additionally, as Malaysia seeks to diversify its national investments, not to mention private capital, the United States presents many attractive opportunities in renewable energy, oil and gas, and technology, among others. To achieve this objective, we will work with U.S. firms already operating in Malaysia as well as potential exporters to appropriately market and

sell goods and services. Additionally, we will highlight investment opportunities to the private and public sector, as appropriate, to attract foreign direct investment to the United States.

- **Linkages** | Driving prosperity is one of the pillars of the Indo-pacific strategy and is reflected in the EAP Joint Regional Strategy. As underscored in the interim U.S. National Security Strategy, the United States continues to value economic prosperity around the world.

Mission Goal 4 | Innovate together with Malaysia on climate, health, conservation, science, and technology.

Description | Malaysia's natural resources are a crucial repository of biodiversity and carbon sinks, making the country, its people, and natural resources a significant potential U.S. partner in sustaining environmental conservation and promoting climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Malaysia's rainforests and diverse wildlife, though under stress in some places, are important to the health of the global ecosystem. These resources, including land, minerals, plant, and wildlife, if sustainably managed, can become a pillar of economic growth, decreasing Malaysia's reliance on a few commodities, such as oil and gas and palm oil, leading to a more stable economy less susceptible to shocks. Moreover, Malaysia made a net-zero emissions by 2050 commitment, signed the Global Methane Pledge and the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, and is eager to introduce and spread green and sustainable technologies to preserve the environment and mitigate climate change. Finally, as a country deeply impacted by COVID-19, Malaysia has the resources, know-how, and public and private health institutions to foster the research and development of science-based responses to future pandemics.

Objective 4.1 | Place the climate crisis at the center of global trade and energy policy, supporting Malaysia to lead regionally on environmental, science, technology, and health (ESTH) challenges with innovative solutions.

- **Justification** | As an exceptionally biodiverse country, with significant rainforest and other forest acreage, Malaysia is a critical partner in protecting the environment, countering wildlife trafficking, preserving forest cover, and ensuring these natural resources can be used sustainably for generations. In addition to the federal government, state and local partners offer many avenues for partnership and collaboration. To achieve this objective, we will harness U.S. technical expertise to build institutional capacity in planning, decision-making, policy formation, rule of law and enforcement, which pays dividends by increasing capacity that benefits other security priorities.
- **Linkages** | Building resilience under the Indo-pacific strategy explicitly involves combating climate change. This objective is in line with the EAP Joint Regional Strategy's approach to active threats in the region.

Objective 4.2 | Support Malaysia's pandemic preparedness to predict, prevent and be ready for the next domestic, regional, or global infectious disease outbreak.

- **Justification** | Malaysia is a hotspot for emerging diseases of zoonotic origin, particularly in Borneo, and serves as a global crossroads for tourism, manufacturing supply chains and wildlife trafficking, making it a key point of risk for global and regional infectious disease outbreaks. Malaysia also battled world-leading rates of COVID-19 hospitalization per capita in 2021, imposing among the strictest controls on movement globally in 2020 and 2021. Malaysia's health leadership and academia have demonstrated a desire to lead regionally on public health interventions and an interest in working with U.S. technical experts on pandemic detection, preparedness and prevention. We will work with Post's network of health NGOs, medical and public health personnel at the Ministry of Health, and influential health decision makers in government to build consensus for U.S. health security goals in the ASEAN region and then work closely with the interagency in the region, particularly with the CDC, NIH, USAID and DoD to support Malaysia's pandemic preparedness efforts.

- **Linkages** | This objective flows from the public health and health security strategy outlined in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and corresponds directly to OES Bureau Objective 2.1 to strengthen U.S. and international partners' capacity to prevent, detect and prepare for climate, environmental and health security threats. It also supports the Indo-Pacific Strategy's resilience pillar and links to the EAP Joint Regional Strategy's focus on health security.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Continue to work with OBO to move forward with the construction of a NEC on existing Embassy land that meets overseas policy board standards to provide a secure and collaborative environment.

- **Justification** | Post's staffing has grown significantly since moving into the existing Chancery in 1983. A modern replacement for the 1983 Chancery building is necessary to accommodate a larger Mission community and to provide a state-of-the-art platform from which to meet key policy requirements.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports the Department of State and USAID's Joint Strategic Plan Goal 4: Revitalize the Diplomatic and Development Workforce and Institutions, focused on ensuring the resilience of the Department of State's global real property platform and sustainable asset management programs.

Management Objective 2 | Promote diversity and inclusion and encourage resilience within the Embassy community by deepening professional development, such as the mentoring program, enhancing Embassy-wide recruitment efforts, and facilitating community-integration events.

- **Justification** | Recruiting, developing, and ensuring a diverse workforce is crucial for our success in Malaysia, given its ethnic complexity, as well as presenting an accurate picture of the depth and diversity of the American people in our diplomacy. We will aim to recruit a broad range of candidates for local and USDH staff positions in order to gain the widest template of experience, skills, and perspectives. Moreover, in order to create a Mission team that is well informed about our goals, post leadership will create opportunities for staff to share their initiatives to create a better-informed workforce.
- **Linkages:** | This objective implements several Presidential and Department of State declarations on promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the workforce and supports the

EAP Joint Regional Strategy's commitment to the President's Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility. Post management has revamped the full array of orientation and check-in requirements for new arrivals and new hires, to include the Overseas Seasonal Hire Program and a tailored, separate check-in for EFMs. Additionally, Post supports regular virtual townhalls and "Ask Me Anything" events with the management team. The Diversity and Inclusion Council is active and engaged with the community through events in close coordination with the CLO and LE Staff Committee Leadership.