

State Department – What We Do (Modified 3 July 2015)

The Executive Branch and the Congress have constitutional responsibilities for U.S. foreign policy. Within the Executive Branch, the Department of State is the lead U.S. foreign affairs agency, and the Secretary of State is the President's principal foreign policy adviser. The Department advances U.S. objectives and interests through its primary role in developing and implementing the President's foreign policy. The Department also supports the foreign affairs activities of other U.S. Government entities, in particular the Department of Commerce and the Agency for International Development. It also provides an array of important services to U.S. citizens and to foreigners seeking to visit or immigrate to the U.S.

The United States maintains diplomatic relations with about 180 states and also maintains relations with many international organizations. We have more than 250 diplomatic and consular posts around the world, including embassies, consulates, and delegations and missions to international organizations.

As the lead foreign affairs agency, the Department of State has the primary role in:

- ◆ Leading interagency coordination in developing and implementing foreign policy;
- ◆ Managing the foreign affairs budget and other foreign affairs resources;
- ◆ Leading and coordinating U.S. representation abroad, conveying U.S. foreign policy to foreign governments and international organizations through U.S. embassies (see below) and consulates in foreign countries and diplomatic missions to international organizations (see below);
- ◆ Developing and maintaining relationships with foreign governments and international organizations.
- ◆ Conducting negotiations and concluding agreements and treaties on issues ranging from trade to nuclear weapons; and
- ◆ Coordinating and supporting international activities of other U.S. agencies.

The Department of State conducts all of these activities with a small workforce comprised of Civil Service and Foreign Service employees. In fact, the Department employs fewer people than do many local governments -- for example, in Memphis, Tennessee or Baltimore, Maryland. Overseas, Foreign Service officers represent America; analyze and report on political, economic, and social trends in the host country; develop and help maintain relationships, and respond to the needs of American citizens abroad.

Bureaus and Offices of the Department of State in the U.S.

The Office of the Secretary of State - The immediate Office of the Secretary is comprised of the Secretary's Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, the Secretary's secretary, the Executive Assistant, two special assistants, the Secretary's scheduler, staff assistant, and two personal assistants. This staff handles all of the day-to-day matters of the Secretary, including meetings at the Department, functions in Washington and throughout the country, and travel around the world.

The Policy Planning Staff serves as a source of independent policy analysis and

advice for the Secretary of State. The Director of Policy Planning has a rank equivalent to Assistant Secretary. Its primary responsibilities include formulation of long-term policies to achieve U.S. objectives; coordination of policy to promote the priorities of the Secretary of State; speech writing for the Secretary; and liaison with non-governmental organizations, "think tanks," and others for outside views on matters relevant to U.S. policy.

The Office of Protocol directly supports the President of the United States, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State on official matters of national and international protocol, and in the planning, hosting, and officiating of related ceremonial events and activities for visiting heads of state.

The Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism heads U.S. Government efforts to improve counterterrorism cooperation with foreign governments. The Coordinator chairs the Interagency Working Group on Counterterrorism and the State Department's task force to coordinate responses to international terrorist incidents. The Coordinator has primary responsibility for developing, coordinating, and implementing American counterterrorism policy. There are also several offices headed by ambassadors at large, special advisers, and senior coordinators for such foreign policy areas as the Middle East Peace Process, Russia and the other New Independent States of the former Soviet Union, War Crimes, and Democracy in the Balkans.

In addition, the following bureaus and offices, although not attached to the Office of the Secretary, report directly to the Secretary.

The Office of the Permanent Representative to the United Nations is headed by the Permanent Representative, a Cabinet member who represents the United States at the UN. This office shapes U.S. policy at the UN, working for multilateral policy formulation and implementation where possible and seeking to make the UN and its agencies more effective instruments for advancing U.S. interests and addressing global needs.

The Bureau of Intelligence and Research, drawing on all-source intelligence, provides value-added independent analysis of events to Department policymakers, ensures that intelligence activities support foreign policy and national security purposes; and serves as the focal point in the Department for ensuring policy review of sensitive counterintelligence and law enforcement activities. Its primary mission is to harness intelligence to serve U.S. diplomacy.

Also, although the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) remains an independent agency following the reorganization of the foreign affairs agencies in 1999 in which the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the United States Information Agency (USIA) were merged into the Department of State, USAID receives general direction and overall foreign policy guidance from the Secretary.

Under Secretaries - The Under Secretaries report directly to the Secretary and serve as the Department's "corporate board" on foreign policy.

Under Secretary for Political Affairs is the Department's crisis manager and is responsible for integrating political, economic, global, and security issues into the United States' bilateral relationships.

The geographic bureaus coordinate the conduct of U.S. foreign relations. The Department has grouped countries of the world in the following areas of responsibility:

- Bureau of African Affairs
- Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
- Bureau of European Affairs
- Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
- Bureau of South Asian Affairs
- Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
- Office of the Special Advisor for the New Independent States

Bureau of International Organization Affairs develops and implements the policies of the U.S. Government within the United Nations and its affiliated agencies, as well as within certain other international organizations. The Bureau does this via nine offices in Washington and seven field missions: in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Rome, Paris, Montreal, and Nairobi. Together, the various elements of the Bureau engage in what is known as "multilateral diplomacy" to promote and defend the many overlapping interests of the American people. Subject areas addressed by the Bureau include: peacekeeping, democracy and human rights, humanitarian and refugee assistance, international trade, economic development, safe food production, transportation safety, public health, terrorism, and the environment. To meet these objectives, the Bureau also promotes effective and efficient management within the international organizations themselves.

Under Secretary for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs serves as the senior economic official at the Department of State. The Under Secretary advises the Secretary of State on international economic policy and leads the work of the Department on issues ranging from trade, agriculture, and aviation to bilateral relations with America's economic partners. Its Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs promotes the full range of U.S. economic and business interests around the world and in so doing, fosters regional and global stability, creates and secures good jobs, enhances consumer choice, lowers the prices Americans pay for goods and services, protects interests of U.S. business and investors abroad, advances commercial ties around the world, improves international communications systems, and promotes energy security and safe and efficient global transportation.

Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs manages global U.S. security policy, principally in the areas of nonproliferation, arms control, regional security and defense relations, and arms transfers and security assistance. The Under Secretary leads in policy formulation for nonproliferation and by delegation from the Secretary, performs a range of functions under the Foreign Assistance Act, Arms Export Control Act, and related legislation. The Under Secretary also serves as Senior Adviser to the President and the Secretary of State for Arms Control, Nonproliferation and Disarmament.

The Bureau of Arms Control leads U.S. negotiations for arms control agreements for nuclear, conventional, and chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems. The Bureau will head up negotiations for a cutoff of fissile material production and an end to

antipersonnel landmine transfer. In addition, the Bureau has the U.S. lead for negotiations and policy development related to efforts such as the Open Skies treaty and Confidence and Security Building Measures that help reduce the causes of mistrust, fear, and hostility amongst modern states. The bureau leads implementation of all arms control agreements, including the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions.

The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs manages political-military relations throughout the world, including training and assistance for foreign militaries, and works to maintain global access for U.S. military forces. The bureau promotes responsible U.S. defense trade, while controlling foreign access to militarily significant technology, through export controls. It also coordinates U.S. programs that help rid countries of landmines and other conventional weapons. It helps protect national security by leading interagency efforts to plan for future crises -- including planning U.S. responses to cyber-attacks against vital computer networks or to nuclear, biological, or chemical attacks overseas.

The Nonproliferation Bureau leads U.S. efforts to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons) and their missile delivery systems; to secure nuclear materials in the states of the former Soviet Union; and to promote nuclear safety and the protection of nuclear materials worldwide. It also promotes responsibility, transparency, and restraint in international transfers of conventional arms and sensitive dual-use (commercial and military) technology.

The Bureau for Verification and Compliance is responsible within the Department for the overall supervision of all matters relating to verification of and compliance with international arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament agreements and commitments. To this end the Bureau has oversight of policy development, implementation and resources related to verification and compliance. The Bureau also serves as the Department's verification and compliance policy liaison with the intelligence community, which includes providing guidance on funding and priorities for collection and analytic assets. The bureau also leads and coordinates multilateral negotiations in the EU, APEC, OECD, and other fora that address existing and emerging Information Technology threats and vulnerabilities to our economic security. The Bureau further leads and coordinates all bilateral negotiations and meetings aimed at identifying, developing, and facilitating science and technology solutions for critical infrastructure protection.

Under Secretary for Global Affairs is responsible for the coordination of U.S. foreign relations on a variety of global issues, including democracy, human rights and labor; environment, oceans and science; narcotics control and law enforcement; and population, refugees and migration. In addition, the Senior Coordinator for Woman's Issues, whose office deals with issues such as stopping violence toward and trafficking in women and children, reports directly to the Under Secretary.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor oversees initiatives and policies to promote and strengthen democratic institutions, civil society, and respect for human and worker rights. The bureau ensures that human rights and labor conditions in foreign countries are taken into account in the U.S. policymaking process. In support of these efforts, the bureau prepares and submits to the Congress annual reports on human rights practices and religious freedom in countries around the world.

The Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs is charged with reducing illicit drug flows to the U.S. It works with foreign governments to reduce illicit drug crop cultivation and trafficking through crop control, enforcement, and alternative development programs. Through its training programs, it strengthens the ability of foreign law enforcement and judicial institutions to investigate, prosecute, incarcerate, and seize the assets of major drug traffickers and other international criminals.

The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs melds an emphasis on environmental issues and science and technology with traditional diplomacy. The bureau, along with environment, science, and technology officers overseas, deals with such global issues as trade and environment; biodiversity; global climate change; environmental pollution; oceans policy, fisheries, and marine conservation; international civil and commercial space cooperation; technology; and health.

The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration coordinates the Department's policy on global population, refugees, and migration issues and manages migration and refugee assistance appropriations. The bureau is at the center of a cooperative effort among the State Department, other U.S. Government agencies, private voluntary organizations, and international agencies to implement a more comprehensive international population policy, including broadening of population assistance programs to cover a wider range of reproductive health services; provide assistance to refugees in first-asylum countries and admit refugees to the United States for permanent resettlement; and develop bilateral and multilateral approaches to international migration issues.

Under Secretary for Management handles management improvement initiatives; the Department's information technology infrastructure; support services for domestic and overseas operations; and personnel.

Among its subordinate organizations is the Bureau of Consular Affairs assists American citizens traveling or living abroad and issues visas to foreign nationals who wish to visit or reside in the United States. The Bureau's domestic passport agencies and U.S. consular sections overseas issue about 7.5 million passports each year. Annually, the Office of Overseas Citizens Services monitors the cases of an estimated 2,600 Americans arrested in other countries, responds to 21,000 welfare and whereabouts inquiries, repatriates about 1,000 U.S. citizens, assists about 3,000 returnees with family/friend prepaid trust funds, assists in the cases of some 6,000 Americans who die abroad, and deals with crises -- such as hostage-taking, mass casualty situations, and natural disasters. The Bureau also issues Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements that provide information to American citizens considering foreign travel.

Organization of the Department of State Abroad

U.S. Missions - To support its relations with other countries and international organizations, the United States maintains diplomatic and consular posts around the world. Under the President's direction, the Secretary of State is responsible for the overall coordination

and supervision of U.S. Government activities abroad. Missions to countries and international organizations are headed by Chiefs of Mission. They are considered the President's personal representatives and, with the Secretary of State, assist in implementing the President's constitutional responsibilities for the conduct of U.S. foreign relations. Most missions have personnel assigned from other executive branch agencies in addition to those from the Department of State; in some cases, State Department employees may account for less than one-half of the mission staff.

Country Missions - In most countries, the U.S. maintains an embassy, which usually is located in the host country capital. The U.S. also may have consulates in large commercial centers or in dependencies of the country. Several countries have U.S. ambassadors accredited to them who are not resident in the country. In a few special cases--such as when it does not have full diplomatic relations with a country--the U.S. may be represented by only a U.S. Liaison Office or U.S. Interests Section.

The Chief of Mission--with the title of Ambassador, Minister, or Charge d'Affaires--and the Deputy Chief of Mission head the mission's "country team" of U.S. Government personnel. Among the responsibilities of Chiefs of Mission at post are: speaking with one voice to others on U.S. policy, while providing to the President and Secretary of State guidance and counsel; directing and coordinating all executive branch offices and personnel (except for those under the command of a U.S. area military commander, under another chief of mission, or on the staff of an international organization); cooperating with the U.S. legislative and judicial branches; maintaining security -- including security from terrorism--and protecting all U.S. Government personnel on official duty (other than those personnel under the command of a U.S. area military commander) and their dependents.

The country team consists of all U.S. agencies in the country except for those under the command of a U.S. area military commander, under another chief of mission, or on the staff of an international organization. It usually includes:

- the consular officers, who are the State Department employees whom American citizens overseas and foreign nationals are most likely to meet. Overall, they touch the lives of millions of Americans living and traveling abroad, providing many types of emergency assistance. They also perform non-emergency services, such as dispensing information on absentee voting and the acquisition and loss of U.S. citizenship; providing U.S. tax forms; issuing passports; and processing estate and property claims. They also issue about six million nonimmigrant visas annually to foreign nationals who wish to visit, work or study in the United States and almost 500,000 immigrant visas to those who wish to reside here permanently.

- the commercial, economic, and financial affairs officers, who advise U.S. businesses, promote adoption of economic policies by foreign countries to further U.S. interests, analyze and report on local natural resource trends and trade policies and their potential impact on U.S. interests, and analyze and report on major financial developments as well as the host country's macroeconomic condition.

- the agricultural officers, who promote the export of U.S. agricultural products and report on agricultural production and market developments.
- the environment, science, technology, and health officers who analyze and report on developments in these areas and their potential impact on U.S. interests.
- the political officers who analyze political developments and their potential impact on U.S. interests and promote adoption by the host country of foreign policy decisions which support U.S. interests.
- the defense attaches from the Department of Defense.
- the regional security officers who are responsible for providing physical, procedural, and personnel security services to U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel
- public affairs officers and cultural affairs officers, who serve as press spokespersons and as administrators of such official U.S. exchange programs as those for Fulbright scholars, Humphrey and Muskie fellows, and foreign participants in International Visitor consultations in the United States.
- Legal attaches who serve as Department of Justice representatives on criminal matters.
- Immigration and Naturalization Service officers, who administer the laws regulating the admission of foreign-born persons (aliens) to the United States.
- USAID mission directors who are responsible for USAID Programs and humanitarian assistance abroad during times of natural or man-made disasters.

U.S. Representation at International Organizations - U.S. representation at international organizations reflects the growing importance of multilateral diplomacy to the conduct of U.S. foreign relations. In addition to its bilateral embassies and consulates, accredited to just a single host country, the U.S. also sends official representatives to international organizations and conferences in various locations around the world. These representatives are typically organized into delegations. Some of the larger, more permanent delegations are designated "U.S. Missions," such as in Geneva or Vienna. Others are designated simply "U.S. Delegations," such as to the Conference on Disarmament or to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Other "U.S. Delegations" are assembled for only a finite period to represent the U.S. at a single international event.

Current permanent U.S. Missions to international organizations include:

- U.S. Mission to the United Nations (New York);
- U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States (Washington, DC);
- U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna (Vienna);
- U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (USNATO) (Brussels);
- U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Paris);
- U.S. Mission to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva (Geneva);
- U.S. Mission to the European Union (Brussels)