POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Assistant secretary for near eastern affairs, Department of state**

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Foreign Relations |
| Agency Mission | The Department of State is the lead institution for the conduct of American diplomacy, and the secretary of state is the president’s principal foreign policy advisor.[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs handles U.S. foreign policy and U.S. diplomatic relations with countries in the region and focuses on policy issues including Iraq, Middle East peace, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and political and economic reform. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs deals with U.S. foreign policy and U.S. diplomatic relations with Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The bureau’s budget was $126.751 million in fiscal 2015. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as the principal advisor to the secretary and the deputy secretaries and is responsible for the general conduct of U.S. foreign policy and diplomatic relations with countries in this geographic region from Morocco to Iran * Implements U.S. policy toward the region * Testifies before congressional subcommittees, appears in the media and manages the bureau * Provides instructions to ambassadors in the region, follows up on diplomatic reporting and communicates with the Washington diplomatic corps * Works closely with the assistant secretary for crisis and stabilization operations; the policy planning staff; the secretary’s advisor on Iraq; the assistant secretary for intelligence and research; the coordinator for counterterrorism; the assistant secretary for economic, energy and business affairs; the assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs; senior officials at the White House; and other departments and agencies[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Experience in the region and broad familiarity with regional leaders * Government experience * Strong relationships and stature with stakeholders on Capitol Hill and other parts of government |
| Competencies | * Ability to work well with counterparts in foreign policy positions * Excellent leadership skills * Ability to think strategically yet also accomplish the department’s operational priorities * Energy for frequent amount of travel * Strong communication and interpersonal skills * Ability to work under high pressure * Ability to handle sensitive matters * Excellent negotiation skills * Ability to work across partisan lines |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Anne W. Patterson (2013 to 2016): Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; Ambassador to Egypt; Ambassador to Pakistan[[5]](#endnote-5) | |
| Jeffrey D. Feltman (2009 to 2013): Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs[[6]](#endnote-6); Ambassador to Lebanon; Volunteer, Coalition Provisional Authority office in Irbil, Iraq[[7]](#endnote-7) | |
| David Welch (2005 to 2008): Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Egypt; Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs; Chargé d’Affaires ad interim to Saudi Arabia[[8]](#endnote-8) | |

1. Partnership for Public Service agency profile [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99484.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.c-span.org/person/?annepatterson [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.c-span.org/person/?jeffreyfeltman [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. https://2001-2009.state.gov/outofdate/bios/f/35948.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/welch-c-david [↑](#endnote-ref-8)