# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Department of defense

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Armed Services[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the Department of Defense is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country. |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary for international security affairs serves as the principal advisor to the undersecretary of defense and secretary of defense on security strategy and policy issues related to the nations and international organizations of Europe (including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), Russia, the Middle East, Africa and the Western Hemisphere. This individual also has oversight for security cooperation programs, including foreign military sales in these regions.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary of Defense for Policy and the Secretary of Defense[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs supervises the:* Deputy assistant secretary of defense for African affairs
* Deputy assistant secretary of defense for Middle East
* Deputy assistant secretary of defense for Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
* Secretary of defense representative in the U.S. mission to NATO
* Secretary of defense representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)[[5]](#endnote-5)
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| Primary Responsibilities | * Advises the undersecretary of defense and secretary of defense on security strategy and policy issues related to the nations and international organizations of Europe (including NATO), Russia, the Middle East, Africa and the Western Hemisphere
* Oversees security cooperation programs, including foreign military sales in these regions[[6]](#endnote-6)
* Conducts and manages day-to-day, multilateral, regional and bilateral defense relations with all foreign governments in assigned areas of responsibility
* Develops regional security defense strategy and policy, provides advice and issues guidance to translate global and functional policies into regional-specific country strategies, and oversees their implementation in coordination with DOD officials
* Develops, coordinates and oversees the implementation of defense security policy, and manages defense and military relations
* Oversees DOD policy and recommendations concerning security cooperation programs and organizations, foreign military sales, military education and training, and other missions pertaining to security cooperation program relationships
* Coordinates the implementation of policy related to NATO, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Partnership for Peace and other institutions with a security dimension, including the European Union, OSCE and the African Union
* Provides policy guidance and oversight to the defense advisor, U.S. mission to NATO and the secretary of defense representative to the OSCE, on behalf of the undersecretary of defense for policy
* Promotes coordination, cooperation and joint planning on nuclear policy and strategy with NATO allies, in coordination with the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low intensity conflict and interdependent capabilities
* Supports the NATO Nuclear Planning Group and chairs the High Level Group, its subordinate body
* Represents the undersecretary of defense for policy and the secretary of defense, in interagency policy deliberations and international negotiations dealing with assigned areas of responsibility
* Monitors and provides policy recommendations related to the conduct of U.S. military operations in the countries or regions of focus, or on the participation of such countries in operations outside of the region
* Performs such other functions as the undersecretary of defense for policy or the secretary of defense may prescribe[[7]](#endnote-7)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Extensive government experience in international affairs/national security
* Extensive management experience and ability to form relationships inside and outside of the Department of Defense
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| Competencies | * Energy for frequent amount of travel
* Excellent negotiation and diplomatic skills
* Ability to develop relationships with high-level stakeholders
* Ability to handle sensitive matters
* Ability to integrate diverse missions and organizations
* Ability to work under high pressure

Strong communication, interpersonal and leadership skills |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Elissa Slotkin (2015 to 2017) (acting) – Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Department of Defense; Acting Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Policy, Department of Defense; Senior Advisor for Middle East Transition for the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Department of Defense[[8]](#endnote-8) |
| Derek Chollet (2012 to 2015) – Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Strategic Planning on the National Security Council Staff, White House; Principal Deputy Director of the Secretary of State’s Policy Planning Staff, Department of State; Senior Fellow, The Center for a New American Security[[9]](#endnote-9) |
| Alexander Vershbow (2009 to 2012) – U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Department of State; U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, Department of State; U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Department of State[[10]](#endnote-10) |

1. <https://www.congress.gov/nomination/111th-congress/179?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Alexander+Vershbow%22%5D%7D&r=1> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.defense.gov/About-DoD/Biographies/Biography-View/Article/602768/elissa-slotkin> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. 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-3)
4. <http://www.defense.gov/About-DoD/Biographies/Biography-View/Article/602768/elissa-slotkin> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://policy.defense.gov/OUSDP-Offices/ASD-for-International-Security-Affairs/> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <http://www.defense.gov/About-DoD/Biographies/Biography-View/Article/602768/elissa-slotkin> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://policy.defense.gov/OUSDP-Offices/ASD-for-International-Security-Affairs/> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <http://www.defense.gov/About-DoD/Biographies/Biography-View/Article/602768/elissa-slotkin> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. <http://policy.defense.gov/OUSDP-Offices/ASD-for-International-Security-Affairs/Leadership/> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/who_is_who_84342.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)