# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Assistant Secretary for Strategy, Plans and Capabilities, Department of defense

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Armed Services |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the Department of Defense (DOD) is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country. |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary for strategy, plans and capabilities is responsible for advising the secretary of defense and the undersecretary of defense for policy on national security and defense strategy; the forces and contingency plans necessary to implement defense strategy; nuclear deterrence and missile defense policy; and security cooperation plans and policies.[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary of Defense for Policy |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Strategy, Plans and Capabilities includes a principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy, plans and capabilities; a deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy and force development; a deputy assistant secretary of defense for plans; a deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear and missile defense policy; and a deputy assistant secretary of defense for security cooperation.[[3]](#endnote-3) The assistant secretary oversees approximately 100 total employees. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as the principal advisor to the secretary of defense, deputy secretary of defense, undersecretary of defense for policy and principal deputy undersecretary of defense on national security issues and defense strategy, and the capabilities, forces and contingency plans necessary to implement the defense strategy
* Supports the secretary and deputy secretary of defense, and the undersecretary of defense for policy, in providing DOD with guidance to align resources, activities and capabilities with national security and defense strategy goals
* Provides DOD input on the national security strategy and associated national, regional and functional strategies
* Provides the Office of the Secretary of Defense input on the national military strategy
* Develops National Defense Strategy, Defense Planning Guide and Guidance for Employment of the Force
* Reviews campaign and contingency plans, major force deployments and military operational plans
* Evaluates the capability of forces to accomplish U.S. defense and national security strategy
* Develops policy and strategy guidance to enhance partner capabilities and compatibility with DOD
* Develops Global Force Posture policy and strategy, and oversees implementation
* Prioritizes day-to-day operations and reviews plans for commands
* Leads the Quadrennial Defense Review[[4]](#endnote-4)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Appointed from civilian life (10 U.S.C. § 138)
* Understanding of the Department of Defense
* Familiarity with the military and the Pentagon
* Experience with or knowledge of risk analysis and program evaluation
* Knowledge of international affairs and politics (preferred)
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| Competencies | * Ability to learn quickly and think strategically
* Ability to interact respectfully yet firmly with military personnel
* Ability to understand budgeting and planning processes
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Robert Scher (2014 to 2017): Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Plans, Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Forces; Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Southeast Asia, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs; Associate at Booz Allen Hamilton where he led efforts to assist Asian nations in improving their defense and national security decision making processes[[5]](#endnote-5) |

1. <http://policy.defense.gov/OUSDP-Offices/ASD-for-Strategy-Plans-and-Capabilities/> [↑](#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. <http://policy.defense.gov/OUSDP-Offices/ASD-for-Strategy-Plans-and-Capabilities/> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <http://policy.defense.gov/OUSDP-Offices/ASD-for-Strategy-Plans-and-Capabilities/> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://policy.defense.gov/OUSDP-Offices/ASD-for-Strategy-Plans-and-Capabilities/> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)