# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# assistant secretary for Political-Military 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. |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary is the Department of State’s principal liaison to the Department of Defense and provides policy direction on international security, security assistance programs, military operations, defense strategy and plans, and commercial defense trade. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | Political-Military Affairs had a fiscal 2015 actual budget of $10.054 million. The office has about 300 civil servants, 50 foreign service officers and 50 military officers from the Pentagon assigned to Political-Military Affairs. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as the Department of State’s principal liaison to the Department of Defense * Provides policy direction on international security, security assistance programs, military operations, defense strategy and plans, and commercial defense trade * Coordinates policy related to U.S. military activities affecting U.S. foreign relations, and other political-military matters related to national security and foreign policy * Manages the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs * Within the department, coordinates closely with the six regional assistant secretaries; the assistant secretary for international security and nonproliferation; the assistant secretary for verification, compliance and implementation; the coordinator for counterterrorism; the legal adviser; the assistant secretary for consular affairs; outside the department, coordinates with the assistant secretary of commerce for export enforcement; the assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs; the director of the joint staff; the director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency; and other senior officials at other departments and agencies[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Expert in the field of national security and foreign policy * Extensive government experience and understanding of the national security and foreign policy agencies and bodies |
| Competencies | * Ability to work in a matrixed interagency environment * Strong management, leadership and negotiation skills, and ability to interact with high-level officials * Excellent communicator * Ability to handle sensitive matters and work in a high-pressure environment |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Tina S. Kaidanow (2016 to 2017): Ambassador-at-Large and Coordinator for Counterterrorism; Deputy Ambassador at the Embassy in Kabul; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs[[4]](#endnote-4) | |
| Puneet Talwar (2014 to 2015): Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Iraq, Iran and the Gulf States, White House National Security Council; Chief Middle East Advisor to Vice President Biden; Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Policy Planning Staff Member, Department of State[[5]](#endnote-5) | |
| Andrew J. Shapiro (2009 to 2013): Senior Advisor to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; Senator Clinton’s Senior Defense and Foreign Policy Advisor; Obama-Biden Department of Defense Agency Review Transition Team Member[[6]](#endnote-6) | |

1. 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-1)
2. https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99484.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/80149.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/224691.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://bgsdc.com/team/andrew-j-shapiro/ [↑](#endnote-ref-6)