
The Department Of State Today

[The following article was originally published in the Department of State *Dispatch*, 23 November 1992, pp. 846-856.]

THE ROLE OF DIPLOMACY

The role of the Department of State today is changing dramatically as it leads the United States toward the global challenges of the 21st century. The sweep of democratic reform throughout the world—especially evident in Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union—has brought the Cold War to an end and led to the beginning of a new world order. Former adversaries in what had been an East-West competition for power and influence are quickly becoming partners in efforts to resolve outstanding regional disputes—such as those in the Middle East and Africa—and to address such transnational issues as environmental pollution, international narcotics trafficking, and terrorism.

These changes have carved new professional roles for the State Department. Departmental elements such as the Bureau for International Narcotics Matters, which did not even exist 10 years ago, now command a significant share of State Department resources. Others, such as the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, have become increasingly important as the issues they cover take center stage in the world community. The opening of the former communist countries of Europe to international trade resulted in a groundswell of demand for services from the Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. Unfortunately, the increase in violence against diplomats and other Americans who travel the world Foreign Policy Machinery Executive Branch has required the Department to dramatically upgrade its diplomatic security and counter-terrorism elements.

As a result of these new diplomatic challenges, Department of State employees are becoming increasingly specialized. The political challenges of Cold War diplomacy were handled by generalists, who took the same skills from job to job. However, the new focus on technical issues such as the environment and scientific affairs has found a growing number of people with technical and scientific backgrounds working with generalists with training in the "traditional" fields of history, political science, and law.

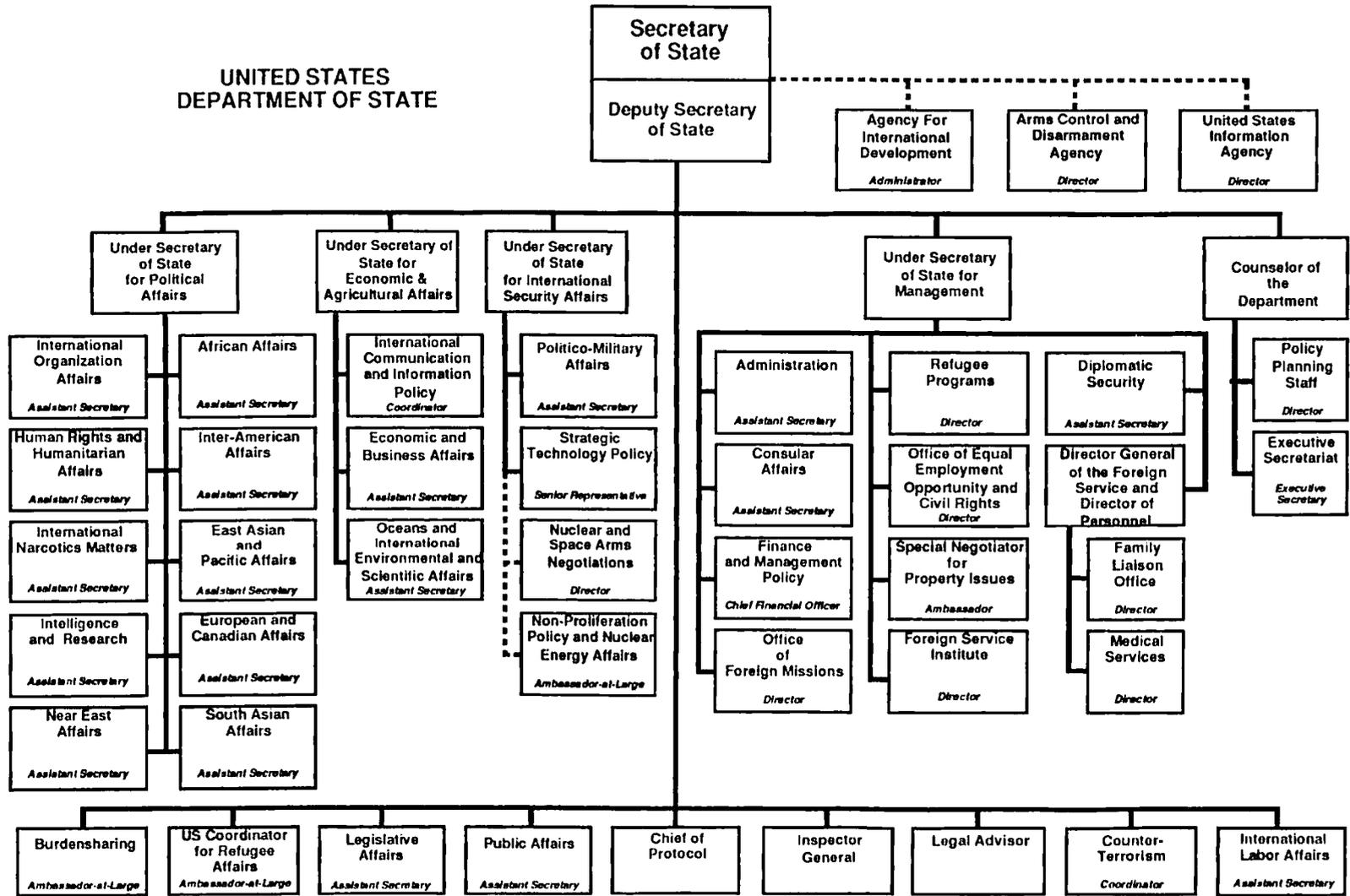
As the United States approaches the year 2000, diplomacy can be characterized more as a "hands-on" profession and less of an analytical or advisory discipline—a fact reflected in the changing role of the Department of State today.

FOREIGN POLICY MACHINERY

Executive Branch

The conduct of U.S. foreign relations is centered in the executive branch and has evolved from the constitutional responsibilities of the President. Under the Constitution, the President has the authority to make treaties and appoint diplomatic and consular officials (with the advice and consent of the Senate), to receive foreign emissaries, and to exercise other authority provided by legislation. To assist the President in these duties, Congress created the Department of State in 1789, replacing the Department of Foreign Affairs established in 1781. As head of the Department, the Secretary of State was made the President's principal adviser on foreign affairs and chiefly responsible for U.S. representation abroad. Consular and diplomatic systems also were established; originally separate, they were united in the Foreign Service of the United States in 1924.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



The current machinery was developed after World War II when U.S. global responsibilities expanded greatly. The Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Treasury acquired new duties in world economic affairs; the Department of Defense (created in 1947) in military aid and cooperation. New agencies were placed under the general direction of the Secretary of State—the United States Information Agency (1955), the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1961), and the Agency for International Development (1961, to manage the principal foreign aid programs).

To assist the President on foreign policy and to coordinate the work of the many agencies involved, Congress passed the National Security Act of 1947 creating the National Security Council (NSC). Chaired by the President, the NSC includes the Vice President and the Secretaries of State and Defense as regular members. Presidents have shaped NSC functions and made use of the position of Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, established in 1951, to suit their own administrative preferences.

Congress

The Constitution also gives Congress a role in U.S. foreign policy. As noted, the Senate must provide its advice and consent to treaties and to diplomatic and consular appointments. Other major congressional powers include providing for the common defense and general welfare of the United States, regulating international commerce, and declaring war.

Congressional influence on U.S. foreign policy rests in part on legislative control over the federal budget. Congress appropriates the money to support the agencies executing foreign policy and frequently mandates specific foreign affairs actions and sets personnel ceilings for those agencies. In addition, it provides funds to finance U.S. foreign assistance programs carried out by executive agencies, and it legislates in such areas as immigration, foreign trade, and international monetary arrangements.

Foreign affairs legislation is guided through Congress by members of the appropriate committees. The most important are the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations Committees and the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees of both Houses. The Secretary of State and other Administration officials consult with and testify frequently before these committees and brief them on foreign policy developments. Members of Congress make periodic trips abroad to inspect U.S. programs and also may serve as delegates to the United Nations and international conferences.

General Organization

IN THE UNITED STATES

The Department of State is the primary source of foreign affairs information for the U.S. Government. It provides much of the national security and economic facts available to the government and most of the data on the internal politics of foreign countries.

U.S. embassies provide in-depth analyses of the politics, economic trends, and social forces at work in foreign countries. This information goes to some 60 federal agencies concerned with national security, intelligence, economic and commercial matters, and science and technology. As the President's principal adviser in formulating foreign policy, the Secretary of State uses it in making policy recommendations to the President. The State Department, in turn, is responsible for implementing the President's policies.

The Secretary and Principal Aides

The Secretary of State, the President's principal foreign policy adviser, is the ranking member of the cabinet and fourth in line of presidential succession (after the Vice President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President pro tempore of the Senate). Principal aides are:

- Deputy Secretary of State;
- Under Secretary for Political Affairs;
- Under Secretary for Economic and Agricultural Affairs;
- Under Secretary for International Security Affairs;
- Under Secretary for Management;
- Counselor; and
- Assistant Secretaries of regional and functional bureaus.

Other advisers include several ambassadors at large with special assignments (e.g., refugees, nuclear energy, burdensharing, terrorism), the Executive Secretary, the Director of the Policy Planning Staff, and the Chief of Protocol.

Geographic Bureaus

Six geographic bureaus are responsible for U.S. foreign relations in Africa, Europe and Canada, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, and South Asia. Assistant Secretaries, who head each bureau, advise the Secretary and guide the operation of the U.S. diplomatic establishments within their regional jurisdiction. They are assisted by Office Directors and country desk [officers] who are responsible for interdepartmental coordination and who work closely with U.S. embassies overseas and with foreign embassies in Washington, DC.

Functional Bureaus

Other bureaus have functional responsibilities that cross geographic lines in dealing with matters such as economies, intelligence, or human rights.

Bureau of Administration is responsible for administrative support policies, programs, and activities for the Department and overseas posts. These responsibilities include both domestic and foreign building operations; acquisition management; supply and transportation; presidential and vice presidential travel support; overseas schools assistance; establishing allowance rates; and providing translation services and safety, occupational health, and other support services.

Additionally, the bureau provides domestic and worldwide information services for the Department, which include providing a secure and reliable global communications network; maintaining the Department's central automated data processing system; managing Department documents; and annually responding to more than 5,000 requests under the Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts. Other services include maintaining the Department's library and overseeing the printing of more than 1 million copies of Department publications per year.

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 (also see "Consular Services" below). Through 13 passport agencies in the United States and more than 255 diplomatic and consular posts, about 3.5 million passports are issued each year. Annually, the

Citizens Emergency Center in the State Department monitors the cases of an estimated 6,500 Americans arrested in other countries, responds to 200,000 welfare and whereabouts inquiries, repatriates about 1,000 U.S. citizens, assists about 3,000 returnees with family/friend prepaid trust funds, and deals with crises (e.g., hostagetaking) as they occur.

Bureau of Diplomatic Security protects U.S. embassies against mob violence, terrorist attacks, electronic surveillance, and unauthorized intrusion; helps Americans living and working overseas to protect themselves against terrorist, espionage, and criminal threats; shares information on terrorist threats and protective techniques with U.S. businesses operating abroad; works with other agencies to foil electronic threats to communications systems; investigates passport and visa fraud; conducts background security investigations on prospective employees and contractors; and protects the Secretary of State and visiting foreign dignitaries.

Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs deals with issues on energy, international finance, trade, commodities, agriculture, aviation, shipping, foreign investment, intellectual property, and technology transfers. It also assists U.S. businesses with overseas interests.

Bureau of Finance and Management Policy provides resource planning direction and assistance, develops annual budget requests to the Office of Management and Budget and Congress, and monitors budget execution. It also provides management analysis, oversees Chief of Mission authority and staffing issues, and implements initiatives affecting the organization and management of the Department. The bureau administers the Department's worldwide financial accounting and disbursement program; provides payroll services, including foreign currency management as well as monitoring accounting, payroll, and fiscal records; and provides pension services for U.S. citizen Foreign Service employees.

Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs ensures that human rights conditions in foreign countries are taken into account in the U.S. policy-making process. The bureau submits an annual report to the Congress reviewing human rights practices abroad.

Bureau of Intelligence and Research analyzes information from U.S. embassies, other government agencies, and worldwide media to provide the Secretary and other Department decision-makers with finished intelligence in support of the development and execution of U.S. foreign policy.

Bureau of International Communications and Information Policy promotes agreement among nations to allow the free flow of information across national frontiers. It represents U.S. interests in several international organizations (International Telecommunication Union and the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization) and actively encourages the U.S. private sector's involvement in promoting a multilateral cooperative approach to global telecommunications.

Bureau of International Narcotics Matters works with foreign governments to increase awareness of the importance of narcotics control in multilateral relations. It coordinates efforts with other governments and international organizations to halt the flow of illegal drugs into the United States by providing assistance to foreign governments to eradicate narcotics crops, destroy illicit laboratories, train interdiction personnel, and develop education programs to counter drug abuse among their own populations.

Bureau of International Organization Affairs builds the coalitions necessary to advance U.S. policies in the United Nations and its specialized and technical agencies. The scope of interests includes the UN Security Council and the maintenance of international peace and

security, and issues such as refugees, human rights, food production, air safety, health, terrorism, and the environment.

Bureau of Legislative Affairs serves as the liaison between the State Department and the Congress.

Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs melds the new emphasis on environmental issues and science and technology with traditional diplomacy. Experts are concerned with such specialized fields as global climate, environmental pollution, marine conservation, space and advanced technology, nuclear energy, and population.

Bureau of Personnel determines employment requirements and administers recruitment, evaluation, assignment, career development, and retirement policies and programs for Civil Service and Foreign Service employees.

Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs advises the Secretary and other Department principals on security and defense issues worldwide, including arms control negotiations, regional security arrangements, security assistance and arms sales programs, technology transfers, and non-proliferation. The bureau also is responsible for licensing and regulating commercial exports of military equipment and services.

Bureau of Public Affairs provides information on U.S. foreign policy through publications and electronic dissemination, as well as conferences and briefings.

Bureau for Refugee Programs is at the center of a cooperative effort among the State Department, other U.S. Government agencies, private voluntary organizations, and international agencies to assist refugees in first asylum countries and in their admission to the United States.

Other offices in the State Department headed by assistant secretary level appointees include the Office of the Inspector General, who audits the activities of all elements of the Department; the Foreign Service Institute, which is responsible for all professional and language training for Department personnel; Medical Services, whose doctors and nurses monitor the health and provide medical services to Foreign Service personnel in the United States and abroad; and the Office of the Legal Adviser, which counsels the Secretary and Department on legal considerations involved in foreign policy and administering the Department and Foreign Service.

OVERSEAS

U.S. Diplomatic Missions

The United States has diplomatic relations with more than 170 countries and maintains about 270 embassies, consulates, and missions around the world, including the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York City and the Permanent U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States in Washington, DC.

The U.S. embassy is the basic unit for conducting U.S. diplomacy overseas. It is headed by an Ambassador, who is the personal representative of the President and, as "chief of mission," directs all U.S. programs and personnel (except for non-diplomatic military staff under a U.S. military commander) in the country to which he/she is accredited.

The Ambassador's staff normally includes a Deputy Chief of Mission and other Foreign Service Officers responsible for political, economic, consular, press, and administrative matters as well as cultural and educational exchanges. Many embassies also have personnel from the

Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, and Defense and representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The number of persons assigned to an embassy depends on the size of the foreign country and the depth and breadth of bilateral relations.

From the earliest days of its diplomatic presence abroad, the United States has employed local citizens to perform many administrative and maintenance tasks. These Foreign Service nationals (FSNs) provide continuity for the transient American staff. FSNs have language and cultural expertise, and the costs of employing them are far less than those incurred by moving an American citizen temporarily into a country. The 9,000 FSNs around the world are cultural assistants, consular and press aides, economic analysts, secretaries, receptionists, telephone operators, drivers, and cleaning crews. Because of the national security aspects of diplomacy, FSNs do not occupy decision-making or managerial positions.

A U.S. consulate is located in many cities outside the capital. The staff is under the direction of the Ambassador and performs consular duties and provides the embassy with economic and political reporting.

Consular officers at a U.S. diplomatic post abroad are the State Department employees that American citizens overseas are most likely to meet. They are the key players involved in the protection of millions of Americans living and traveling abroad. Every year, about two million U.S. citizens need emergency help—consular officers help transfer personal funds to those in financial difficulty, search for missing Americans, issue travel advisories, visit those in prison, assist hospitalized Americans, re-issue lost or stolen passports, and assist next of kin in the United States when relatives die abroad.

They also perform non-emergency services—dispense information on absentee voting, international parental kidnapping and child custody, selective service registration, and acquisition and loss of U.S. citizenship; provide U.S. tax forms, notarize documents, and process estate and property claims.

U.S. consular officers issue about 6 million visas to foreign nationals who wish to visit the United States and almost 500,000 immigrant visas to those who wish to reside here permanently.

In addition, several other U.S. Government agencies make vital contributions to the success of U.S. foreign relations and in promoting U.S. interests abroad.

Authority of U.S. Ambassadors

In a July 1990 letter to all U.S. Ambassadors, the President strengthened their authority overseas. Referring to each as his personal representative, as well as a "partner" in advancing U.S. objectives and interests in helping to shape a freer, more secure, and more prosperous world, he stated that their responsibilities at their respective posts are to:

- Direct all executive branch U.S. offices and personnel (except those under the command of a U.S. area military commander, personnel under the authority of another U.S. diplomatic post, or U.S. personnel detailed to an international organization);
- Maintain security from terrorism;
- Reduce staffing and costs whenever possible;

-
- Approve every change each agency seeks to make in the size, composition, or mandate of its staffing;
 - See all communication to or from the mission, except those specifically excepted by law or executive decision;
 - Ensure that ethical conduct is a hallmark of the U.S. presence overseas, on and off the job; and
 - Ensure fair treatment of all staff members regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin.

RELATED AGENCIES

Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA)

ACDA's creation in 1961 came on the heels of growing interest in disarmament issues in the United States in the late 1950s. Today, ACDA remains the only independent government agency in the world whose mandate deals solely with arms control and disarmament policies. ACDA manages U.S. participation in negotiations on disarmament and arms control, conducts research, participates in verifying compliance with existing agreements, and disseminates information to the public.

ACDA's concerns span the full range of modern weaponry—conventional, nuclear, chemical, and biological. It monitors arms transfers worldwide and engages in international negotiations on nuclear safety. ACDA has led all of the U.S. delegations to what is now known as the Conference on Disarmament, the principal forum for negotiating multilateral arms control agreements. The Limited Test Ban Treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Seabed Arms Control Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Environmental Modification Convention have been negotiated since the establishment of ACDA. In addition, ACDA has actively participated in all major U.S.-Soviet arms negotiations since 1961, such as the Limited Test Ban Treaty, the antiballistic Missile Treaty, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), talks on nuclear and space issues, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), and Open Skies.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

USAID administers U.S. economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Near East, and the new independent states of the former Soviet Union.

USAID programs concentrate on providing assistance designed to:

- Support economic and political reforms that will generate employment, promote broad-based and environmentally sound economic growth, and encourage political freedom and good governance;
- Invest in human resources development (such as child survival, health, and education), support voluntary family planning programs, and respond to natural and man-made disasters; and
- Strengthen the institutions and infrastructure necessary to expand the production of goods and services.

USAID programs advance U.S. foreign policy objectives by promoting democratic values and international cooperation and by helping establish economic conditions for expanding markets for U.S. goods and services in developing countries. USAID funds technical assistance and commodity assistance, trains thousands of foreign students each year at American colleges, and supports development research. USAID also enlists the collaboration of the American for-profit private sector, non-governmental and private organizations, and universities in its programs. USAID assistance programs are administered through overseas missions, which have broad decision-making authority, and through specialized offices in Washington, DC.

U.S. Information Agency (USIA)

The U.S. Information Agency is an independent foreign affairs agency within the executive branch that explains and supports U.S. foreign policy and national security interests abroad through a wide range of information programs. These public diplomacy efforts by USIA promote mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through a series of educational and cultural exchange activities.

USIA's programs include the Voice of America, Radio and TV Marti, the WORLDNET satellite television system, the Fulbright scholarship program, the U.S. Speakers Abroad program, the International Visitor program, publications translated in more than 15 languages, three foreign press centers in the United States, and a network of overseas libraries and cultural centers. The agency has more than 200 posts in over 130 countries.

Public Services

ELECTRONIC SERVICES

Federal Bulletin Board Service

In September 1992, the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) began a new service to give the public immediate, self-service access to federal electronic information. The State Department is one of the first participants in the Federal Bulletin Board Service (BBS), along with the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency. The Bureau of Public Affairs provides *Dispatch*, various *Background Notes*, and the daily press briefing on BBS.

A user with a personal computer, modem, and telecommunications software can access the bulletin board by calling 202-512-1587. Prices are reasonable: the minimum charge per file is \$2 (up to 50 kilobytes); a full megabyte file costs \$21 (exclusive of telecommunication charges). There is no charge for browsing the list of files or for downloading copies of instructional and product description files. Currently, downloading only is available to users with GPO deposit account numbers, but any user can review free services. To open a deposit account, contact GPO's Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services at 202-512-1530 (FAX 202-512-1262). For additional information about GPO's service, contact Shelley Ford or Michael Bright (202-512-1524).

Computer Information Delivery Service

In 1991, the Bureau of Public Affairs inaugurated the Computer Information Delivery Service (CIDS), which complements traditional methods of printing and distribution. Through CIDS, the State Department electronically transmits U.S. foreign affairs information, such as:

- Transcripts of the daily press briefings

-
- Full texts of speeches by the President, the Secretary, and senior Department officials;
 - Congressional testimony by the Secretary and senior Department officials;
 - Complete texts of the weekly magazine *Dispatch*;
 - *Background Notes* and *Country Profiles* on countries and selected international organizations;
 - Travel advisories;
 - Fact sheets, chronologies;
 - Foreign policy summaries (*GIST*);
 - Brief historical studies; and
 - Current treaty actions.

To obtain an information packet (noting rates, services, contents, etc.), contact the CIDS Message Center at 703-802-5070.

CD-ROM

In early 1993, the Bureau of Public Affairs plans to release a compilation of U.S. foreign policy from 1990 to mid-1992 on CD-ROM. More information will appear in weekly issues of *Dispatch* upon its release.

PUBLICATIONS

The *United States Department of State Dispatch* is a weekly magazine produced by the Office of Public Communication, Bureau of Public Affairs. It chronicles U.S. foreign policy, using major speeches by the President and Secretary of State, congressional testimony by the Secretary and other senior State Department officials, fact sheets and chronologies on international events, analyses of foreign policy issues, maps and profiles of countries in the news, updates on U.S. initiatives on crisis areas, and regular listings of U.S. treaty actions and ambassadorial appointments. It is indexed every 6 months.

Dispatch is available only by subscription from either of the following

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402-9371
Tel: 202-783-3238
Fax: 202-512-2233

GPO offers first-class or third-class delivery of *Dispatch*. Call the number above for prices.

National Technical Information Service (NTIS)
U.S. Department of Commerce
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
Tel: 703-487-4630
Fax: 703-321-8547

NTIS offers first-class and overnight delivery service for *Dispatch*. Call the number above for prices.

Subscriptions to other State Department publications also may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents. All questions concerning availability and price should be directed to the Superintendent of Documents.

- *Background Notes* are concise pamphlets describing 170 countries (excluding the U.S.) and selected international organizations.
- *Diplomatic List* is a quarterly accounting of foreign diplomatic representatives in Washington, DC.
- *Employees of Diplomatic Missions*, issued every 3 months, lists employees of foreign diplomatic missions in Washington, DC, who are not in the Diplomatic List
- *Foreign Entry Requirements*, updated every year, lists entry (including AIDS testing) and visa requirements for all countries of the world. Available from the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009 for \$0.50
- *Geographic Notes*, issued quarterly, offers official updates of changes in foreign geographic names and international boundary designations; analyses of boundary, sovereignty, and territorial disputes; coverage of resource conflicts and environmental issues; reports on political and economic issues; and perspectives on maritime, migration, and refugee issues.
- *A Guide to Doing Business With the Department of State* identifies procurement opportunities for small, minority, and female-owned firms seeking to do business with the Department. It is issued quarterly, but timing varies.
- *Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts: Guide for Business Representatives*, issued biannually, lists key officers at Foreign Service posts with whom American business representatives would most likely have contact.
- *A Safe Trip Abroad* offers precautions one can take to minimize the chances of becoming a victim of terrorism or crime and other safety tips.
- *Tips for Americans Residing Abroad* offers information for U.S. citizens living abroad on [such subjects as] dual citizenship, tax regulations, voting, and other overseas consular services.
- *Tips for Travelers* to specific countries contains information on currency regulations, customs, and dual nationality.
- *Travel Tips for Older Americans* contains information on special health, safety, and travel information for older Americans.
- *Treaties and Other International Acts*, issued irregularly, contains the official and full texts of agreements entered into by the United States with other nations.
- *U.S. Department of State Telephone Directory* is published three times a year—spring, summer, and fall.
- *Your Trip Abroad* offers tips on obtaining a passport, things to consider in preparing for your trip, and other resources for travel and customs information.

All questions concerning availability and price should be directed to the Superintendent of Documents at the address/telephone given above.

Historical

The Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, is responsible for researching, compiling, editing, and publishing the foreign affairs documentary record of the United States. It prepares and issues two major documentary series, occasional special documentary volumes, and periodically updated historical reference works.

- *Foreign Relations of the United States* is the official documentary record of American foreign policy. The most important classified records of the White House, the State Department, and other foreign affairs agencies have been declassified, edited, and published in more than 200 volumes since the series began in 1861. Volumes covering the late 1950s and early 1960s are now being released.

- *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents* are annual volumes published 1 year after the events. This series covers the years since 1941 and presents a selection of the most important public documents on major foreign policy subjects and geographical areas. The volumes contain principal public foreign policy messages, addresses, statements, interviews, press briefings and conferences, and congressional testimony by executive branch officials.

The series also documents public aspects of U.S. bilateral relationships with key foreign nations and U.S. participation in multilateral forums and initiatives. Each volume is arranged chronologically by geographic and topical chapters and includes a table of contents, editorial annotations, lists of documents, names and abbreviations, and an index. Beginning with the year 1981, microfiche supplements have been published.

Historical reference works include lists of principal officers of the Department and U.S. Chiefs of Mission from 1776 to 1990, lists of visits of U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of State to foreign countries; and a comprehensive history of the Great Seal of the United States.

Tel: 202-663-1122
Fax: 202-663-1289

PUBLIC AFFAIRS BUREAU CONTACTS

State/Local Contacts

State, county, and city officials interested in international markets, sister-city relationships, and information to prepare for official trips abroad and to welcome visiting foreign dignitaries or potential investors can obtain assistance from the State Department. The Coordinator for Intergovernmental Affairs arranges meetings with Department experts and contacts U.S. embassies to facilitate travel. Special foreign affairs briefings also are held in the Department for intergovernmental representatives.

Coordinator for Intergovernmental Affairs
Bureau of Public Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520-6810
Tel: 202-647-7416
Fax: 202-647-5937

Media Contacts

More than 1,500 news correspondents from around the world cover the Department of State; nearly 60 news gathering agencies have facilities in the State Department building and attend the daily press briefing. The Press Office provides correspondents with information on U.S. foreign policy.

Tel: 202-647-2492

Direct Contacts

The Office of Public Liaison assists groups and organizations in arranging the following types of programs with State Department officials.

Regional Programs. State Department officials will address meetings and conferences throughout the United States. While the speaker is in the city or area, Regional Program Officers also will schedule additional speaking engagements with universities, civic and foreign policy groups, and set up interviews by local newspapers, radio, and TV stations to maximize use of the speaker's time.

Tel: 202-647-2176

Washington Programs. Briefings and conferences emphasizing foreign policy and global economic issues are arranged in the Department for national business organizations and civic leadership groups. In addition, Department officials are available to speak at foreign policy platforms in the metropolitan Washington, DC area.

Office of Public Liaison
Bureau of Public Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520-6810
Tel: 202-647-1710
Fax: 202-647-1579

Public Information

To request information on foreign affairs or to express an opinion about U.S. foreign policy, call or write the Office of Public Liaison:

Public Information Division
Office of Public Liaison
Bureau of Public Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520-6810
Tel: 202-647-6575

LOCATOR SERVICES

To obtain the office telephone numbers of Department personnel, contact:
Tel: 202-647-4000

CONSULAR SERVICES

Travel Information

U.S. citizens traveling abroad can obtain information about the health, security, and general travel situation in countries around the world from Consular Information Sheets. Consular Information Sheets contain data on the location of the U.S. embassy or consulate, unusual immigration practices, health concerns, political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. Contact:

Citizens Emergency Center
Tel: 202-647-5225
(recorded information)
Fax: 202-647-6201

The Consular Affairs Bulletin Board (CABB) enables users to access the Consular Information Sheets described above, as well as information on U.S. citizen passports, visas for foreigners wishing to come to the U.S., acquisition and loss of U.S. citizenship, international adoptions, and entry requirements for Americans wishing to travel to other countries. Information comes from the Overseas Security Advisory Council's (OSAC) electronic bulletin board, maintained by the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security. To access CABB from your modem:

Tel: 202-647-9225

Emergency Services

For inquiries about the welfare or whereabouts of a U.S. citizen traveling or living abroad, contact the Citizens Emergency Center at the numbers listed above.

U.S. Passports

U.S. passports are issued through passport agencies in Boston, Chicago, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Stamford, and Washington, DC. Passport applications are accepted at more than 3,500 authorized post offices and clerks of courts across the country. Check your local telephone book listing: "United States Government, Department of State, Passport Agency."

Tel: 202-647-0518.
(recorded information)

Visa Services

For information on issuing immigrant and non-immigrant U.S. visas to foreign nationals, contact:

Visa Services
Public Inquiries, VO/P
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20522-0013
Tel: 202-663-1225
(recorded information)

Citizens Consular Services

For non-emergency consular information involving U.S. citizens abroad other than that described above, contact.

Bureau of Consular Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520-4818
Tel: 202-647-3444
Fax: 202-647-6201

BUSINESS AFFAIRS

For information on the foreign economic environment and its impact on business and investment opportunities, contact:

Office of Commercial, Legislative, and Public Affairs
Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520-5820
Tel. 202-647-1942
Fax: 202-647-5713

EMPLOYMENT

Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment
U.S. Department of State
Box 9317
Arlington, VA 22209-0317
Tel: 703-875-7490
(recorded information about the Foreign Service Exam)
Tel: 202-647-7284

(recorded information on Civil Service positions in Washington, DC. Programmed to pick up only one call at a time; please dial again.)

TOUR OFFICE

Reservations for tours of the 8th floor diplomatic reception rooms.
Tel: 202-647-3241

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Requests for Department of State records must be made in writing. There is a fee for copying documents.

Director, Office of Freedom of Information, Privacy, and Classification Review
Bureau of Administration
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520-1239
Tel: 202-647-8484
Fax: 202-647-7120

DOCUMENT AUTHENTICATION

The Department certifies, with the seal of the Department of State, certain documents for use in foreign countries (e.g., certificates of incorporation and powers of attorney for Americans doing business abroad; educational papers such as degrees and transcripts of foreign students returning to their own countries; and papers carrying seals of other federal agencies or the seals of the 50 states).

Walk-in Service Monday through Friday, 9-11 am and 2-4 pm (limit of three documents per person per day):

2400 M Street NW, Room 1001
U.S. Department of State

Recorded Information
Tel: 202-647-5002

Mailing Address:
Document Authentication
A/OPR/FMSS/AUTH
U.S. Department of State
Washington DC 20520-2815