

# Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

## U.S. Foreign Policy in South and Central Asia Speaker Bios

### Room 1: Experience of an Entry-Level Political Officer



Cody Etlin

*Political Officer, U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai*

Cody Etlin is serving his first Foreign Service assignment as a Political Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai, India (2020-2022). Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he obtained a master's degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and a bachelor's degree from the George Washington University, where he studied abroad in Argentina with a Gilman scholarship. His professional experience ranges from international election observation to emerging markets consulting. He is originally from Los Angeles, California.

### Room 2: Joining the State Department's Civil Service



Waleed Hashmi

*Foreign Affairs Officer for Indo-Pacific Issues, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*

Born and raised in Rawalpindi and northern Virginia, Waleed is a Foreign Affairs Officer at the Department of State. He currently works in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs and covers the Indo-Pacific portfolio. Waleed supports energy development and economic growth efforts in South Asia. He obtained his Bachelor and Master degrees from George Mason University, and will be starting a doctoral program at Johns Hopkins University in 2022. He resides in northern Virginia, and speaks Urdu and Hindi.



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#### Room 3: Fulbright, Work with India & Pakistan, Grad School to State



Jake Miner

*Foreign Service Officer with Previous Tours in New Delhi and Islamabad*

Jake Miner is the incoming Staff Assistant for Embassy Berlin. He previously served as a Vice Consul in Embassy Islamabad and a Political Officer in Embassy New Delhi. Jake is a Thomas R. Pickering Fellow and has degrees from The George Washington University and Columbia University. Jake previously studied abroad in Aleppo, Syria with the support of the Gilman Program, interned for the State Department in Buenos Aires, and did a Fulbright in Morocco. He is originally from Bethel, Connecticut and is a lifelong fan of the New York Mets.

#### Room 4: Work in the Foreign Service



Susan Ross

*Public Diplomacy Officer, India, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*

Susan Ross has served in Suriname, Chile, Malta, Pakistan, and Micronesia, working in Public Affairs and Consular Affairs. Most recently she was Regional Public Affairs Officer in Kolonia, Federated States of Micronesia. Before joining the Foreign Service, Dr. Ross was a professor of communication theory at Hamilton College, in New York. She has had two Fulbright grants, one as a student in Germany and one as a Lecturer in Pune, India.



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#### Room 5: Life in the Foreign Service



Molly L. Stephenson

*Deputy Director, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*

Molly L. Stephenson is the Deputy Director of the Press and Public Diplomacy Office in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. She joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 2001 and previously served in the Philippines, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and with the Bureaus of Human Resources and European and Eurasian Affairs in Washington, DC. She holds a M.S. from the National War College and Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and a B.A. from Michigan State University. She and her spouse have two daughters. They enjoy singing, swimming, skiing, and walking their cockapoo together.

#### Room 6: Rangel Fellowship Program



Heather Thornton

*Assistant Social Media Coordinator, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*

As a Rangel fellow, Heather joins the office with experience as a former Foreign Service Officer trained in public diplomacy. Additionally, she has a master's degree in International Politics from American University. Heather looks forward to using her communications skills to support SCA's digital engagement efforts as the Assistant Social Media Coordinator.



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#### Room 7: ECA Exchange Programs



**Amelia VanderLaan**

*Outreach Officer, USA Study Abroad, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs*

Amelia VanderLaan is a Foreign Service Officer currently serving as the USA Study Abroad Outreach Officer in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. She previously served as the Assistant Public Affairs Officer at U.S. Embassy Cyprus managing exchange and cultural programs along with outreach initiatives. From 2015-17 she served in Canada heading the Investment Visa section of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto. Prior to the Foreign Service, she was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to teach in Sinop, Turkey for one year. She also advised students on pursuing international opportunities when she worked as a fellowships advisor at Smith College, and served as a Teaching Fellow at Athens College. Amelia graduated from Smith College in 2009 with a B.A. in Government. She received her M.A. from the University of Athens in Southeast European Studies in 2013. She speaks Greek, Turkish and Spanish.

#### Room 8: Networking and Informational Interviews, Working as a Contrator at State



**Jackie Viselli**

*Public Diplomacy Officer, Central Asia, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*

Jackie Viselli is a Civil Servant at the State Department who serves as the Central Asia Public Diplomacy Grants Officer, as well as the acting Public Diplomacy Desk Officer, in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs' Office of Press and Public Diplomacy (SCA/PPD). Her portfolio covers projects ranging from large-scale education reform initiatives to cultural heritage preservation exchanges. Jackie previously served as a contractor in SCA/PPD as a Grants Analyst, supporting embassies across South and Central Asia in their public diplomacy grants management. Prior to joining the SCA/PPD, she held an internship with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), as well as positions outside the Department focused on world religions and media monitoring. Jackie holds an M.A. from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and a B.A. from Michigan State University in Political Science.



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#### Room 9: Pickering Fellowship Program



#### Jeffrey Wood

##### *Recent Consular Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka*

Jeffrey Wood is a 2013 Gilman Alum and a Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. Department of State. He completed his first tour in Dhaka, Bangladesh as a Consular Officer. Jeffrey will arrive to Guangzhou, China later this summer where he will be serving as a Public Diplomacy Officer.

Jeffrey received a M.A. in International Economics and China Studies from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and a B.A. in Foreign Languages with a concentration in Chinese from George Mason University.

He has worked at both the US Embassy Oslo, Norway and the China and Mongolian Affairs office at the U.S. Department of State as a Pickering Fellow. During his Gilman year abroad, he interviewed Former First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, as part of a White House cross-cultural exchange initiative in Beijing, China. In his spare time, Jeffrey loves painting and collecting artwork.