

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

KEYNOTE



Ethan Rosenzweig

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Ethan joins the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) from Atlanta, GA, where he worked at Emory University's School of Law as Associate Dean overseeing enrollment management and student services including international recruiting and engagement activities. A graduate of Emory Law, Ethan clerked for the Honorable G. Ernest Tidwell of the U.S. District Court of Northern Georgia and then practiced law in Charleston, South Carolina. Before Emory, he completed a Presidential Management Fellowship at the U.S. Department of Education, and received his undergraduate and master's degrees in public policy from American University. Originally from Louisiana where his family still resides, he says he doesn't return often enough and misses the crawfish and jambalaya.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

KEYNOTE



Gabriel Escobar

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

Gabriel Escobar is the Deputy Assistant Secretary overseeing policy towards the countries of the Western Balkans and the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy. Previously, he served as the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy Belgrade, Serbia. His leadership positions in the Department of State include Economic Minister Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, Coordinator for Cuban Affairs in the Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs from 2017-2018, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia 2014-2017, Consul General at the U.S. Consulate General in Peshawar, Pakistan 2013-2014, and Team Leader of the U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kirkuk, Iraq 2009-2010.

From 1998-2001, Gabriel completed four consecutive tours in the former Yugoslavia, including serving as the Chief of Staff for the Office of the High Representative in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Head of the Embassy Branch Office in Banja Luka, the Deputy Head of the U.S. Diplomatic Liaison Team in Podgorica, and Political Unit Chief in Belgrade shortly after the U.S. Embassy reopened in 2001. In the Bureau of European Affairs, Gabriel has served as the Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon, Spain, Deputy Political Counselor in Rome, Italy, and Political-Military Officer in Prague, Czech Republic, and Vice-Consul in Moscow, Russia.

A career diplomat, he has been awarded the State Department's Superior Honor Award six times and the Meritorious Honor Award once. He has also been awarded the Department of State's Expeditionary Service Award and the Department of the Army Superior Civilian Service Award. Gabriel is a graduate of Columbia University in New York and Cathedral High School in El Paso, Texas. He speaks Spanish, Russian, Italian, Serbian, Croatian, Czech, and Portuguese.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 1 - U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN EUROPE AND EURASIA



Ingrid Specht

Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Germany, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

Ingrid Specht is the Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for the U.K., Ireland, and Germany at the Department of State's Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs. Previously she was the Assistant Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Hyderabad, India. In Washington D.C., she worked in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) as Special Assistant for Academic Programs and in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. She has also worked at the U.S. Consulates in Vancouver, Canada and Monterrey, Mexico. Ingrid received her undergraduate degree in Linguistics from Georgetown University and her M.A. in Global Environmental Policy from American University, and she is an ECA alumna of the Critical Language Scholarship (Indonesian, 2010).



LaSean Knox-Brown

Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for South Central and South East Europe, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

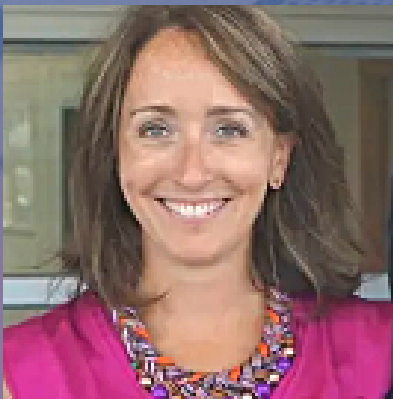
LaSean Knox-Brown is the Public Diplomacy Desk Officer covering the West Balkans, Cyprus, Greece, and Malta in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. He received a B.A. in International Relations from Morehouse College and an M.P.A. in Public Policy and International Development at Princeton University. Before joining the Department, he worked as a policy analyst at the Cape York Institute in Cairns, Australia and was a Fulbright Fellow in Germany. LaSean is also a Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow, and interned in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (alumni affairs) and the U.S. Embassy in Conakry, Guinea. After joining the Department in 2011, LaSean worked as the Assistant Public Affairs Officer in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Vice Consul in Berlin, Germany, Information Officer in Algiers, Algeria, and the Public Affairs Officer in Praia, Cape Verde. LaSean is married to Patrick Knox-Brown, a physical biochemist currently working on his postdoc.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 1 - U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN EUROPE AND EURASIA



RaeJean Stokes

Belarus Desk Officer, Office of Eastern European Affairs

RaeJeanStokes is a State Department Foreign Service Officer specializing in public diplomacy. She is currently the Belarus Desk Officer in Washington, DC. Since joining the State Department, she has also worked in Ankara, Turkey, Kyiv, Ukraine, Mexico City, Mexico, and Yerevan, Armenia. RaeJean has a Master's degree from the Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver and also served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine. She started her professional career in non-profit grants management and journalism. RaeJean is married to fellow Foreign Service Officer Nick Stokes; between them they have two dogs and speak six languages. They have no idea where they're going next.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 1 - U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN EUROPE AND EURASIA



Tina Wong

International Relations Officer, Office of Policy and Regional Affairs, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

Tina advances U.S. national security through nonproliferation policy, export controls, sanctions, and international cooperation. Tina brings over 10 years of foreign policy, national security, and trade negotiations experience focused on advising U.S. government partners and leveling the playing field for American companies on infrastructure, telecommunications, agricultural, and defense sectors in emerging markets. She has led teams to engage like-minded countries and develop champions who join the United States to open new markets, create jobs, and promote global economic growth. Tina is also a mentor on diversity and inclusion efforts across the State Department and interagency to increase underrepresented groups in international affairs.

Her overseas tours included Beijing, China and Mexico City, Mexico. Her previous domestic assignments also included economic advisor, public diplomacy, and policy roles in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Bureau of International Information Programs, and Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. She was the 2019-2020 President of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association and is a core member of the Europe Diversity and Inclusion Committee. From 2020-2021, she led a 20-member volunteer team to design, implement, and analyze 2020 foreign service assignment outcomes leading to high-level commitments to improving transparency and strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion. In July 2021, she was elected as State Representative at the American Foreign Service Association where she continues to advocate for data transparency and institutional reform. Tina is fluent in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Spanish. She received her M.A. from the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University and B.A. from Wesleyan University.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 2 - U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



Ingrid Specht

Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Germany, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

Ingrid Specht is the Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for the U.K., Ireland, and Germany at the Department of State's Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs. Previously she was the Assistant Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Hyderabad, India. In Washington D.C., she worked in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) as Special Assistant for Academic Programs and in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. She has also worked at the U.S. Consulates in Vancouver, Canada, and Monterrey, Mexico. Ingrid received her undergraduate degree in Linguistics from Georgetown University and her M.A. in Global Environmental Policy from American University, and she is an ECA alumna of the Critical Language Scholarship (Indonesian, 2010).



Sydney Smith

Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy London

Sydney Smith is the Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy London where she covers exchange programs, misinformation, and open societies, among other things. She previously served as the Spokesperson at the U.S. Consulate General Karachi in Pakistan, where her work focused heavily on press freedom and misinformation. Previous tours include the State Department's Western Europe and EducationUSA offices, Deputy Director of the Community Engagement Office in Islamabad, Pakistan, and Deputy Public Affairs Officer in Peshawar, Pakistan. Sydney has a degree in Anthropology and Sociology from Amherst College and an M.Sc. in Media, Communication and Development from the London School of Economics. Prior to joining the State Department, she worked at the conflict resolution NGO, Search for Common Ground.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 2 - U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



Rita Rico

Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellow, U.S. Embassy London

Rita Rico is on a yearlong detail to the U.K. Cabinet Office from the U.S. Department of State through the Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellowship program. She is a mid-level Foreign Service Officer specializing in public diplomacy and press and arrived in London from an assignment in Washington as Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy. She has also served in Belo Horizonte attached to the U.S. Embassy in Brazil and completed other diplomatic postings at the U.S. Embassies in Venezuela, Kenya, and Chile. Before joining the Foreign Service, Rita worked as a Senior Advisor in the U.S. Senate. She holds a Ph.D. from UCLA, M.A. from the University of Guadalajara, and a B.A. from Stanford University. Rita has hometown roots in both Chicago and San Diego.



Carson Wu

Visa Chief, U.S. Embassy London

Carson Wu is the Visa Chief at the U.S. Embassy in London overseeing immigrant and non-immigrant visa processing. He has also served in Beijing, China, Bangkok, Thailand, New Delhi, India, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Kabul, Afghanistan. He was born in Detroit and graduated from the University of Michigan and University of Minnesota School of Law.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 3 - FROM STUDY ABROAD TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT



Amelia VanderLaan

Program 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 Education and Cultural Affairs. She previously served as the Assistant Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in 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 with a B.A. in Government. She received her M.A. from the University of Athens in Southeast European Studies. She speaks Greek, Turkish and Spanish.



Leyth Swidan

Political Officer, U.S. Embassy Copenhagen

Leyth Swidan joined the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer in 2018. He currently serves as a Political Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark and previously served as a Vice Consul at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City, Kuwait. Leyth is also the Employee Relations Liaison for Mosaic, the State Department's employee affinity group for Muslims and those interested in Muslim cultures and traditions. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Leyth served at the U.S. Embassy in Singapore and on the Syria Desk as a Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow. He holds an M.P.A. from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University and a B.A. from Pomona College. Leyth studied abroad in Amman, Jordan in Fall 2014 and in London, United Kingdom as a Gilman Scholar in Spring 2015.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 3 - FROM STUDY ABROAD TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT



Kevin Moss

Political Officer, U.S. Consulate General Istanbul

Kevin Moss is a Foreign Service Officer currently covering human rights at the U.S. Consulate General in Istanbul, Turkey. In high school, he was a National Security Language Initiative for Youth scholarship recipient from 2009-2010 and studied Arabic in Egypt. He then continued to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona, where he majored in Global Security and minored in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies after studying at the American University in Beirut, Lebanon, Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan, and Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco as a Gilman Scholar. Kevin graduated with a Master's in Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University, where he specialized in Contemporary Iran and received the Critical Language Scholarship to study Persian in Tajikistan. For his next assignment, Kevin will return to Egypt doing a military detail in the Multinational Force and Observes operation in the Sinai, then continue to Tel Aviv, Israel where he will cover human rights. Kevin joined the Foreign Service in 2016 and served in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and Singapore.

SESSION 4 - CAREER CONVERSATIONS.

CLICK HERE TO SEE NETWORKING SESSION SPEAKERS.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 5 - STATE DEPARTMENT CAREERS INFORMATION SESSION



J. Nathan Bland

Diplomat-in-Residence, Tulane University

J. Nathan Bland is a career Foreign Service Officer with over sixteen years of experience in a wide variety of areas with the U.S. Department of State. He is currently the Diplomat-in-Residence based at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana where he is responsible for recruiting the best and brightest candidates from diverse backgrounds within Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas for the U.S. Department of State career and student program opportunities. His most recent assignment was as an Assistant General Services Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, Mexico serving as the Embassy's primary Contracting Officer and overseeing logistics for VIP visits. Prior to that, he was the Political, Economic, and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Section Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, Belize. He also served as the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission in at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, Belize for nearly a year.

Previous assignments include a tour at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs where he led U.S. Government multilateral engagement on marine environmental protection issues in the Caribbean and ocean dumping. He also served as the Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See in Rome, Italy, and a Consular Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Shenyang, China. He began his career with the U.S. Department of State as a Presidential Management Fellow working in the Public Affairs Office for the East Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau in 2004.

Nathan completed Executive Leadership Training from Harvard Business School as part of the Secretary's Leadership Seminar. He graduated from Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations with an M.A. in Diplomacy and International Relations and an M.A. in Asian Studies. Nathan wrote his M.A. thesis on China's efforts to stabilize the Xinjiang region drawing from his own experience living and working in the Xinjiang for 1½ years. He holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Louisiana College, and also successfully completed the State Department's Foreign Service Economic Studies course.

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Europe

Speaker Bios

SESSION 5 - STATE DEPARTMENT CAREERS INFORMATION SESSION



Abigail Barnes
Consular Fellow Recruiter

Abigail Barnes is the Consular Fellows Program (CFP) recruiter. She is a Virginia native and studied International Relations and French at the College of William & Mary. Her first experience with the Department of State was interning for the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, where she analyzed human resources management policy reform to provide policy recommendations. She developed an interest in learning about languages and people from completing a five-year Spanish immersion program and a visit to Russia. She enjoys trying new things, and speaks intermediate French, and elementary Russian and Spanish.