

# Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

## Refugees and Migration

### Speaker Bios

#### WELCOME



#### **Anthony Koliha**

Director, Office of Global Educational Programs  
U. S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Anthony Koliha is the Director of the Office of Global Educational Programs at the U.S. Department of State, where he oversees a portfolio of international teacher, professional, and global mobility programs and services across four branches. Prior to joining ECA, he was the Director of International Programs in the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he

helped successfully launch a new School of Global and International Studies, in addition to expanding international programs and providing senior leadership for over a dozen federally- funded international, area studies, and foreign language centers. Mr. Koliha previously held joint posts as Director of the Fulbright Program in Russia and International Director of the Russia/Eurasia office for the Institute of International Education. Mr. Koliha has also worked at the Social Science Research Council and American Councils for International Education. He holds degrees from Kenyon College and Indiana University, Bloomington.

#### KEYNOTE: REFUGEES AND MIGRATION



#### **Scott C. Turner**

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State

Scott Turner is currently a Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for the Bureau of Population, Migration, and Refugees and has responsibility for humanitarian assistance programs in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa and press and congressional affairs. From 2019-2022 he served as Deputy Political Counselor at the United States Mission to the United Nations in New York (USUN). He oversaw issues pertaining to Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and the Western Hemisphere in the UN Security Council. Prior to that assignment, he was Deputy Counselor for Humanitarian Affairs at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva where he represented the United States at the International Syria Support Group's Humanitarian Task Force from 2016-2019.

DAS Turner has also served overseas in several posts including Baghdad, where he was a refugee coordinator, and as the Political Counselor/Acting Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to UNESCO.

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Domestically he served in the Secretary of State's Operations Center and had a previous tour at USUN covering African peacekeeping and political issues. He joined the Department of State's Foreign Service in 2001.

Prior to joining the State Department, he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guinea, West Africa promoting public health education, including for Liberian refugees, and women's small enterprises.

### PANEL: REFUGEES, MIGRATION, AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY



#### **Dan Pattarini**

Foreign Service Officer

U. S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

As a Public Diplomacy-coned Foreign Service Officer, Dan's career has centered mainly on public affairs with significant connections to educational and cultural affairs programming and a fair bit of experience with consular work. Dan has recently taken up his assignment with the USA Study Abroad office within the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, having spent the previous year as the Public Affairs Officer in the Office of Foreign Missions. Immediately prior, Dan was an Outreach Officer with the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of Public and Congressional Affairs (CA/P). Dan's overseas tours include assignments in Oman (Assistant Public Affairs Officer), Egypt (Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer + Vice Consul), Iraq (Environment Science Technology and Health Officer), and Luxembourg as Public Affairs Officer. Prior to joining State, Dan worked at IIE for almost five years. Dan received a BA from William and Mary and an MA from American University.



#### **Austin Ericson**

Europe Program Analyst, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

U.S. Department of State

Austin Ericson joined the State Department in 2020 as a Pathways Intern before being converted to the Civil Service in 2021. She currently serves as a Civil Service Program Analyst based in Washington, DC at the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). Since 2021, Austin has covered humanitarian assistance and related policy issues in Europe, with a particular focus on the South Caucasus. Prior to covering the Europe portfolio, Austin served on PRM's Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran team and in the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. Originally from Indiana, Austin received her BA in International Security and Conflict Resolution from San Diego State University and an MA in U.S. Foreign Policy and National Security from American University.

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#### **Renee Lariviere**

Regional Refugee Coordinator  
U.S. Embassy Kyiv

Renee Lariviere is a Foreign Service Officer currently serving as the Regional Refugee Coordinator at Embassy Kyiv, covering humanitarian assistance and policy in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Following the ordered departure of Embassy Kyiv, Renee relocated to Warsaw to cover the regional refugee response. Prior to Renee's assignment to Kyiv in November 2020, she worked as a Program Officer for Europe and Central Asia in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons as a Reports and Political Affairs Officer for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Renee has also served at U.S. Embassy Moscow, Russia and U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Renee is a native of Vermont, with a BA in Political Science and Russian Area Studies from the University of Vermont and an MA in International Affairs from the George Washington University.



#### **George Mesthos**

International Relations Officer, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations  
U.S. Department of State

George Mesthos is a Foreign Service Officer working on the Europe Team in the Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations Office of Western Hemisphere and Europe and Eurasia Affairs (CSO/WHA-EUR). After joining the Foreign Service in 2014, he served overseas as Cultural Affairs Officer for Education and Exchange Programs at U.S. Embassy Dhaka, Bangladesh and Vice Consul at U.S. Consulate General Florence, Italy. In Washington, George has served multiple roles at CSO as well as in the Front Office of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. George earned his Bachelor's degree in Classics with Honors from Brown University, and his Master's Degree in Southeast European Studies from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece on a Fulbright Fellowship. He worked as a reporter predominately for CBS Radio before joining the Department.

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#### STATE DEPARTMENT CAREERS AND STUDENT PROGRAMS INFORMATION SESSION



#### **Darion Akins**

Diplomat-in-Residence, DC-Metro Area  
U.S. Department of State

Darion K. Akins is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, who is currently serving as the Diplomat-in-Residence (DIR) for the District of Columbia (DC) Metro area and hosted by the Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center at Howard University. Prior to this assignment, he served as the Consul General for Northern Germany at U.S. Consulate General Hamburg. He also previously served in Malaysia, India, Afghanistan, Australia, and Indonesia. After earning a Master's degree in National Security Strategy at the National War College in Washington, D.C., he served as the Human Resources Division Chief in the Executive Office for European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) and International Organizations (IO). Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he was an educator and a Peace Corps Volunteer. Although born in the Great State of Oklahoma, he calls Texas home. He solidified his Lone Star State status after graduating Texas A&M University in College Station with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science and Management. His languages are German, Japanese, and ChiNyanja.

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#### FOREIGN POLICY AND CAREER CONVERSATIONS

##### Room 1: Q&A about State Department Careers and Student Programs



##### **Darion Akins**

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U.S. Department of State

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Hamburg. He also previously served in Malaysia, India, Afghanistan, Australia, and Indonesia. After earning a Master's degree in National Security Strategy at the National War College in Washington, D.C., he served as the Human Resources Division Chief in the Executive Office for European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) and International Organizations (IO). Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he was an educator and a Peace Corps Volunteer. Although born in the Great State of Oklahoma, he calls Texas home. He solidified his Lone Star State status after graduating Texas A&M University in College Station with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science and Management. His languages are German, Japanese, and ChiNyanja.

##### Room 2: Pickering & Rangel Fellowships



##### **Alexis "Lex" Carter**

Syria-Turkiye Program Officer, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State

Hailing from the DC-MD-VA area, Alexis "Lex" Carter joined the Foreign Service in the summer of 2016 as a Political Officer. Her first assignment was in Kingston, Jamaica, as a Vice-Consul. Then she served as a Political Officer in Haiti. Before her current assignment as a Syria-Turkiye Program

Officer in the Bureau for Population, Refugee, and Migration (PRM), she was the Consular Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Burkina Faso. She received a B.A. in International Studies from Spelman College and a Master of Science in Foreign Service in Global Politics and Security from Georgetown University. She's been married for over two years, and you may find her watching Netflix, trying a new recipe, or learning the ropes as a newly minted cat mom during her free time.

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#### Room 3: State Department Exchange & Scholarship Programs: Developing Tomorrow's Global Perspectives, Today



#### **Rebecca Johnson**

Program Officer, USA Study Abroad  
U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Rebecca Johnson is a Program Officer for USA Study Abroad within the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), where she oversees a portfolio of capacity building and professional development initiatives. She manages the IDEAS Program (Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students), which provides grants and resources to help U.S. colleges and universities expand their study abroad programming. She also oversees professional development workshops for study abroad advisors and alumni of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program and Critical Language Scholarship Program.

Rebecca previously worked as the Special Assistant for ECA's Office of Global Educational Programs and in program development at American Councils for International Education. She was a Boren Scholar to Tanzania and later returned to her host community to partner with local teachers to create an education nonprofit that trains high school and college students to run arts-and-science-based school break programs for elementary school students. Rebecca holds degrees in international relations and journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Master of Public Administration degree with a focus on education policy from the George Washington University.

#### Room 4: We want YOU in the U.S. Foreign Service! Conversation with a Foreign Service Officer



#### **Amelia VanderLaan**

Regional Climate Officer  
U.S. Department of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

Amelia VanderLaan is the Regional Climate Officer in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA). She coordinates with SCA front office principals, country desks, and officers at SCA missions overseas to catalyze global efforts to tackle the climate crisis. She previously served in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as the U.S. Study Abroad Outreach Officer from 2019-2022, was the Assistant Public Affairs Officer at U.S. Embassy Cyprus from 2017-2019 managing press engagements and a number of exchange programs. From 2015-2017 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 to Turkey and worked as a Fellowships Advisor and in communications. Amelia graduated from Smith College with a B.A. in Government and received her M.A. from the University of Athens focused on political and economic issues in southeast Europe.

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#### Room 5: Supporting Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Ukraine



#### **George Mesthos**

International Relations Officer, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations  
U.S. Department of State

George Mesthos is a Foreign Service Officer working on the Europe Team in the Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations Office of Western Hemisphere and Europe and Eurasia Affairs (CSO/WHA-EUR). After joining the Foreign Service in 2014, he served overseas as Cultural Affairs Officer for Education and Exchange Programs at U.S. Embassy Dhaka, Bangladesh and Vice

Consul at U.S. Consulate General Florence, Italy. In Washington, George has served multiple roles at CSO as well as in the Front Office of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. George earned his Bachelor's degree in Classics with Honors from Brown University, and his Master's Degree in Southeast European Studies from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece on a Fulbright Fellowship. He worked as a reporter predominately for CBS Radio before joining the Department.

#### Room 6: Life at the State Department as a Civil Service Officer



#### **Dineo Brinson**

Fulbright Program Officer, Office of Academic Exchange Programs  
U.S. Department of State

Dineo Brinson (she/her) is a Fulbright Program Officer in the Office of Academic Exchange Programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the U.S. Department of State. Dineo's portfolio includes Fulbright alumni engagement, diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and outreach. Dineo received her Bachelor's degree in Spanish from Spelman College and studied abroad in the

Dominican Republic. She later earned a Master of Science degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. As a graduate student, she had the opportunity to intern at the U.S. Embassy in Panama in their Public Affairs Section. She enjoys mentoring students and young professionals. Dineo hails from New York with a heart for the Knicks and the transformational power of education, learning languages and cultures, and international exchange.

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#### CLOSING



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