

Staff Report of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy



*Update on the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy
and Public Affairs*

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The position of the [Office of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs](#), or “R,” was established in 1999 under the Clinton Administration to support the activities moved into the State Department with the abolishment of the United States Information Agency in 1999. This senior leadership position is equivalent to a four-star general and supports the Secretary of State, the President, and the whole of government on all issues related to the Government’s engagement of global audiences through a variety of means and methods. There was one Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in the Clinton Administration, four in the Bush Administration, and, as of this writing, Tara Sonenshine awaits Senate confirmation as the Obama Administration’s second Under Secretary for R. Assistant Secretary Ann Stock is ably and effectively filling the role of the Under Secretary until a new Under Secretary is confirmed.

Since the first Under Secretary was sworn in, the position has been unencumbered more than 30% of the time for a total of 1,375 days, or 3.75 years.

The Commission’s staff compared the stability of two other prominent Under Secretary of State positions involved with engaging global publics: the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, or “G,” and the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, or “P.” Neither positions were unfilled as often or for as long as R. The below chart displays the number of Under Secretaries that served in the respective positions and how long it took to replace the Under Secretary. The last column shows the percentage of time each position was unfilled across the same period, beginning in October 1999 when Evelyn Lieberman was sworn in as the first Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

<i>Under Secretary Office</i>	<i># Under Secretaries since 1999</i>	<i>Days not filled since 1999</i>	<i>Average Tenure (days)</i>	<i>% not filled since 1999</i>
<i>Public Diplomacy</i>	6	1,375	512	30%
<i>Global Affairs</i>	3	300	1,498	7%
<i>Political Affairs</i>	5	238	1,246	5%

Based in part on this information, Commission staff suggests the following questions to guide future research. The Commission welcomes input on these findings and questions.

1. What do the long vacancies between appointments for the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs indicate about the perceived role, importance, and required skills of the position, of public diplomacy, and of the State Department in leading and coordinating Government activities that intend to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics?
2. What is the impact on the perceived value and role of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs within the State Department, across the interagency, and in the Congress when this senior position remains unfilled so often and for long?
3. What role can the Under Secretary play in protecting and furthering the careers of public diplomacy officers considering leadership turnover and frequent and long periods when the position is unencumbered?

Background

Incumbency Chart for the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

<i>Under Secretary - R</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Number of Days</i>
Evelyn Lieberman	Oct 1, 1999 - Jan 20, 2001	477
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Jan 21, 2001 - Oct 2, 2001</i>	<i>254</i>
Charlotte Beers	Oct 2, 2001 - Mar 28, 2003	542
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Mar 29, 2003 - Dec 15, 2003</i>	<i>261</i>
Margaret Tutwiler	Dec 16, 2003 - Jun 30, 2004	197
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Jul 1, 2004 - Jul 29, 2005</i>	<i>393</i>
Karen Hughes	Jul 29, 2005 - Dec 14, 2007	868
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Dec 15, 2007 - Jun 4, 2008</i>	<i>172</i>
James K. Glassman	Jun 5, 2008 - Jan 16, 2009	225
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Jan 17, 2009 - May 25, 2009</i>	<i>127</i>
Judith McHale	May 26, 2009 - Jun 30, 2011	765
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Jul 1, 2011 - present (Dec 16, 2011)</i>	<i>168+</i>

Incumbency Chart for the Office of the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs

<i>Under Secretary - G</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Number of Days</i>
Frank E. Loy	Oct 26, 1998 - Jan 20, 2001	817
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Jan 21, 2001 - Apr 30, 2001</i>	<i>99</i>
Paula Dobriansky	May 1, 2011 - Jan 20, 2009	2,821
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Jan 21, 2009 - Aug 10, 2009</i>	<i>201</i>
Maria Otero	Aug 11, 2009 - present (Dec 16, 2011)	857+

**Incumbency Chart for the
Office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs**

<i>Under Secretary</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Number of Days</i>
Thomas Reeve Pickering	May 27, 1997 - Dec 21, 2000	1,304
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Dec 22, 2001 - Mar 25, 2001</i>	<i>93</i>
Marc Grossman	Mar 26, 2001 - Feb 25, 2005	1,432
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Feb 26, 2005 - Mar 17, 2005</i>	<i>19</i>
Nicholas Burns	Mar 18, 2005 - Feb 29, 2008	1,078
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Mar 1, 2008 - May 12, 2008</i>	<i>72</i>
William J. Burns	May 13, 2008 - Jul 27, 2011	1,170
<i>Unfilled</i>	<i>Jul 27, 2011 - Sep 20, 2011</i>	<i>54</i>
Wendy Ruth Sherman	Sep 21, 2011 - present (Dec 16, 2011)	86+



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