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State Department Special Envoy, Representative, and Coordinator Positions: Background and Congressional Actions

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Summary

The 115th Congress has expressed interest in monitoring the use of special envoys, representatives, and coordinator positions by the Department of State, as well as any changes to their status. Special, temporary diplomatic appointments originated during the presidency of George Washington, and the number of special representatives has expanded and contracted since then. Tabulating the precise number of these positions is difficult, however, because some special positions have fallen into disuse over time and were never officially eliminated.

Administration Action on Special Positions

It is not unusual for Congress to express concern or assert legislative prerogatives regarding the department's use of temporary positions in the foreign policy arena. These positions may come under particular scrutiny in the 115th Congress in light of the Trump Administration's ongoing effort to reorganize the executive branch, including the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. On August 28, 2017, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson transmitted a letter detailing the Trump Administration's proposed plans to expand, consolidate, or eliminate several temporary special envoy positions, while keeping others in place without any changes. For those positions that are authorized in statute, congressional action may be required for the Administration to move forward with its proposed changes.

Congressional Action on Special Positions

The 115th Congress has also taken action to address the issue of special envoys. For example, on July 17, 2017, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing with Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan in which the use of such positions was discussed extensively. Later in July, the committee passed an authorization bill (S. 1631) that, if enacted, would include new limitations pertaining to the use of special envoys, such as provisions subjecting the appointment of individuals to such positions to the advice and consent of the Senate. Furthermore, the Senate Committee on Appropriations passed a State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill (S. 1780) that would prohibit the use of funds to downsize, downgrade, consolidate, close, move, or relocate (to another federal agency) select special envoys or their offices. Some Members of Congress perceive congressional input regarding the use of special envoys as both important in its own right and a crucial component of the broader need for Congress to assert its prerogatives as the Trump Administration continues to reorganize the executive branch and the Department of State.

Scope of This Report

This report provides background on the use of special envoys, representatives, and coordinators (primarily within the foreign affairs arena; for the most part, interagency positions are not included). It identifies various temporary positions, their purpose, and existing authorities. The report presents commonly articulated arguments for and against the use of these positions and issues for Congress going forward. The scope of this report is limited to the special envoy and related positions identified by the Department of State in a 2017 report to Congress and additional selected positions identified by CRS. This report may be updated to reflect congressional action.

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Introduction

President George Washington set the precedent for making special, temporary diplomatic appointments in 1789 when he named Gouverneur Morris as a private agent to establish normal diplomatic relations with British officials. From that point on, the number of these temporary special representatives expanded and contracted, depending on each Administration's governing style and the issues at the time. As the United States became more deeply involved in world affairs, and as Presidents became more directly involved in international relations, the number of special appointments grew, particularly in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In the 115th Congress, the authority of the President and the Secretary of State to make or change temporary, special appointments of special envoys, representatives, coordinators, advisors, and related positions has emerged as an ongoing issue of interest.[1] Congressional concern and scrutiny regarding these special appointments has occurred during previous Administrations, including those of Presidents William J. Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

Critics of these special positions sometimes view them as a way to circumvent the Senate's constitutional prerogative to provide its advice and consent required for long-term positions at the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), perhaps because the nominee or the position is controversial. Furthermore, such critics contend that these positions may (1) create tension or cause disputes over funding and resources with the regional and functional bureaus that would otherwise be tasked with addressing the issue at hand, (2) confuse foreign government officials regarding the importance of the issues on which the positions focus compared with other Administration policy priorities, and (3) make it harder for foreign officials to identify the correct point person representing the U.S. government on select topics. In contrast, proponents often view special appointments as a temporary, flexible tool that administrations can leverage quickly to draw attention and direct resources to a particular issue. Some proponents assert that if special envoy positions are folded into larger parts of the department, they may be overlooked and, as a result, the issues under the relevant envoy's purview may not receive the necessary attention.

On August 28, 2017, Secretary Tillerson transmitted a letter to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that unveiled the department's plans to address special envoys.[2] According to Department of State comments to the press, of the 66 positions outlined, 30 will be retained, 21 will be integrated into regional and functional bureaus, 9 will be eliminated, and 5 will be folded into existing positions. In addition, one position will be transferred to USAID.[3]

In his letter, Secretary Tillerson made note of concerns that special envoys can "circumvent the regional and functional bureaus that make up the core of the State Department." He asserted that his planned changes would empower regional and functional bureaus, create a more efficient State Department, and improve the department's ability to achieve critical foreign policy goals that are currently the responsibility of special envoys. The Administration proposed one of the following policy options for each special envoy position (see tables below to review specific proposals for each position):

[1] Special appointments in this report include special envoys, special representatives, special coordinators, special negotiators, and special advisors, among other temporary foreign affairs appointments.

[2] Letter from Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State, to Senator Bob Corker, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, http://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000015e-2b43-db52-a75e-ff7b3bfa0001.

[3] Krishnadev Calamur, "Why Keep State Department Special Envoys?," *The Atlantic*, August 30, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/08/tillerson-special-envoys/538377/.

- retain and expand the position;
- retain the position, with no changes;
- retain the position and staff, but realign them under a more appropriate bureau or office;
- retain the position and staff, dual-hat the position with an existing position, and keep its staff and functions aligned under its existing bureau or office;
- retain the position and staff, dual-hat the position with an existing position, and realign the position, staff, and functions under a more appropriate bureau or office;
- transfer the functions and staff of the position to USAID;
- remove the title of the position, but keep its staff and functions aligned under its existing bureau or office;
- remove the title of the position and realign staff and functions under a more appropriate bureau or office; or
- remove or retire the position.

Congressional Actions

While it is not unusual for Congress to express concern regarding the department's use of these temporary positions in the foreign policy arena, the 115th Congress is particularly interested because of the Trump Administration's announced goals to reorganize the executive branch, including the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development.[4] On June 13 and 14, 2017, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs held budget hearings with Secretary of State Tillerson that indicated congressional interest in special envoy use. On July 17, 2017, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing with Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan on the State Department FY2018 Reauthorization and Reorganization Plan. Extensive discussion focused on special envoys, representatives, coordinators, negotiators, and advisors (hereinafter referred to as special envoys or special appointments).[5] Congressional interest in this issue has surfaced at additional hearings in the 115th Congress.[6]

In July 2017, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed S. 1631, the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2018. If enacted into law, this bill would limit the use of temporary foreign affairs appointments and require most appointees to be confirmed with the advice and consent of the Senate. Title III, Section 301, of S. 1631 would require that

- the Secretary of State provide a report, not later than 30 days after enactment of the bill, comprising recommendations regarding whether to maintain each existing "Special Envoy, Special Representative, Special Coordinator, Special Negotiator, Envoy, Representative, Coordinator, or Special Advisor" that is not expressly authorized by a provision of law enacted by Congress;

[4] For background information regarding executive branch reorganization efforts, see CRS Report R44909, *Executive Branch Reorganization*, by Henry B. Hogue.

[5] For more detail on these hearings, see http://www.cq.com/doc/congressionaltranscripts-5145195?2, http://www.cq.com/doc/congressionaltranscripts-5121537?6, and http://www.cq.com/doc/congressionaltranscripts-5122657?9.

[6] For example, see http://www.cq.com/doc/congressionaltranscripts-5123921?6.

- no later than 90 days after the issuance of the aforementioned report, the Secretary of State present any "Special Envoy, Special Representative, Special Coordinator, Special Negotiator, Envoy, Representative, Coordinator, or Special Advisor" that the department intends to retain but is not expressly authorized by a provision of law enacted by Congress to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations for the advice and consent of the Senate;
- the Secretary can establish or maintain "Special Envoy, Special Representative, Special Coordinator, Special Negotiator, Envoy, Representative, Coordinator, or Special Advisor" positions provided that the appointment is established for a specified term and presented to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations for the advice and consent of the Senate within 90 days of the appointment;
- the Secretary of State may maintain or establish temporary "Special Envoy, Special Representative, Special Coordinator, Special Negotiator, or Special Advisor" positions for a limited period of no longer than 180 days without the advice and consent of the Senate as long as the Secretary notifies the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations at least 15 days prior to the appointment and certifies that the position is not expected to demand the exercise of significant authority pursuant to U.S. law (the Secretary may renew any position established under these authorities provided that the Secretary complies with these notification requirements);
- beginning not later than 120 days following enactment, no funds may be obligated or expended for any "Special Envoy, Special Representative, Special Coordinator, Special Negotiator, Envoy, Representative, Coordinator, or Special Advisor" positions exercising significant authority pursuant to U.S. law that is not being served by an individual who has been presented to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations for advice and consent of the Senate; in addition, funds may not be obligated or expended for any staff or resources related to such positions until the appointed individual has been presented;
- beginning not later than 120 days following enactment, no funds may be obligated or expended for temporary positions (those lasting for a duration of no longer than 180 days) or any related staff and resources unless the Secretary of State has complied with the notification process;
- no "Special Envoy, Special Representative, Special Coordinator, Special Negotiator, Envoy, Representative, Coordinator, or Special Advisor" authorized by a provision of law enacted by Congress shall be appointed absent the advice and consent of the Senate (with the exception of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues);
- the congressional authorization for the Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma shall be repealed.

Separate provisions of S. 1631 provide congressional authorization for the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues position and, separately, give the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom the authority to supervise any special envoy, representative, or office, including the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, with responsibility for protecting international religious freedom, protecting religious minorities, or advising the Secretary of State on matters relating to religion.[7]

[7] See Sections 105 and 106 of S. 1631.

In September 2017, the Senate Committee on Appropriations passed S. 1780, the "Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2018." If enacted, none of the funds appropriated in the bill or in any prior law could be used to downsize, downgrade, consolidate, close, move, or relocate to another United States Government agency several offices and positions, including

- the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs;
- the Office of the Special Coordinator for Global Criminal Justice Issues;
- the Coordinator for Cyber Issues;
- the Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia;
- the Coordinator for Sanctions Policy;
- the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues;
- the Office of Global Women's Issues;
- the Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons; and
- the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights.[8]

The committee report accompanying the bill noted that, "the August 28, 2017, notification on special envoys and representatives raises further questions on the integrity of the [reorganization of the Department of State] process, as the Committee notes that any proposal for significant personnel changes should be a component of the [broader] reorganization or redesign."[9]

In addition, the 114th Congress passed the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017 (P.L. 114-323), which required the Secretary of State to submit a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs comprising a "tabulation of the current names, ranks, positions, and responsibilities of all special envoy, representative, advisor, and coordinator positions at the Department, with a separate accounting of all such positions at the level of Assistant Secretary (or equivalent) or above." In addition, for each position so identified, the department was required to provide information including the date on which each position was created, the mechanism by which each position was created, the current department official to which each position reports, and the total number of staff assigned to support each position.[10] The Department of State provided this report to the committees in April 2017.

Key Positions

Temporary positions are often created in response to congressional or public demands for increased Department of State attention to a specific global issue, event, or crisis. These positions may be created to circumvent the advice and consent role of the Senate, among other reasons, although Congress has established some of these positions in statute. The following tables identify key positions, including

[8] For a full listing of offices and positions, see Sec. 7083 of S. 1780.

[9] U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 2018*, report to accompany S. 1780, 115th Cong., 1st sess., S.Rept. 115-152.

[10] For more detailed information regarding this reporting requirement, see Section 418 of the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, P.L. 114-323.

- special envoy, representative, coordinator, advisor, ambassador-at-large, and similar positions that the State Department identified in an April 2017 report transmitted to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs;
- additional positions that CRS identified;
- descriptions for each position; and
- the Trump Administration's proposed plan for each position as described in Secretary Tillerson's August 28, 2017, letter.

Special Envoys

The Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) defines a *special envoy* as "one designated for a particular purpose, such as the conduct of special negotiations and attendance at coronations, inaugurations, and other state ceremonies of special importance."[11] The designation is temporary. While U.S. law does not include a blanket requirement that the Senate provide advice and consent for the appointment of special envoys, it does require advice and consent for select special envoys.[12] The department's two "special envoy and coordinator" positions, the Special Envoy and Coordinator of the Global Engagement Center and the Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs, are at least in part authorized by statute.[13]

In addition, the Department of State has established two existing special presidential envoys, the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs. The responsibilities of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs are provided through Executive Order 13698 and Presidential Policy Directive 30.[14] According to the Department of State, the role of the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS is to help coordinate all aspects of U.S. policy related to destroying ISIS. This position was established pursuant to Department of State general authorities. Both special presidential envoys are housed within the Office of the Secretary and report to the Secretary of State.[15] See **Table 1** for the status of special envoys, special envoy and coordinators, special presidential envoys, and U.S. special envoys.

[11] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)*, "Diplomatic Terms," 5 FAH-1 Exhibit H-611, https://fam.state.gov/.

[12] For example, 22 U.S.C. §7817(a) specifies that the "President shall appoint a special envoy for North Korean human rights issues ... by and with the advice and consent of the Senate."

[13] For the Special Envoy and Coordinator of the Global Engagement Center, see 22 U.S.C. §2656 and Executive Order 13721. For the Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs, see 42 U.S.C. §17371.

[14] Executive Order 13698, "Hostage Recovery Activities," 80 *Federal Register* 37131, June 29, 2015; The White House (archived), "Presidential Policy Directive – Hostage Recovery Activities," June 24, 2015, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/06/24/presidential-policy-directive-hostage-recovery-activities.

[15] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)*, "Domestic Codes," 4 FAH-1 H-420, https://fam.state.gov/.

Table 1. Special Envoys, Special Envoys and Coordinators, Special Presidential Envoys, U.S. Special Envoys

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Special Envoy for Climate Change *Created 2001 (originally Amb. and Special Envoy to U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change)*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs*
Special Envoy for Closure of the Guantanamo Detention Facility *Created 2009*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position*
Special Envoy for the Colombian Peace Process *Created 2015*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position*
Special Envoy for Global Food Security *Created 2014*	Ted Lyng, Acting *Appointed 2017* —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Transfer the functions and staff of the position to USAID*
Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues *Created 1999*	Thomas Yazdgerdi *Appointed 2016* —	Department of State general authorities	Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs	*Retain and expand the position*
Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons[a] *Created 2015*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor	*No changes proposed*
Special Envoy for Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations *Created 1993 (according to DOS, this is when the "earliest comparable position" was created)*	Frank Lowenstein* *Appointed 2016* —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*No changes proposed*
Special Envoy for Libya *Created 2013*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs	*Remove the position title, retain staff and functions in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs*

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism *Created 2004*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §2731; Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-332).	Secretary of State	*Retain the position and staff, realign them under the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*
Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues** *Created 2004*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §7817; North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-333), as amended.	Secretary of State	*Retain the position, realign staff to and dual-hat the position with the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights*
Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation *Created 2008*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Office of International Religious Freedom*
Special Envoy for Six-Party Talks[b] *Created 2005*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs	*Remove the position*
Special Envoy and Coordinator of the Global Engagement Center *Created 2016*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §2656; National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (P.L. 114-328); Executive Order 13721.	Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs	*No changes proposed*
Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs*** *Created 2007*	Mary Bruce Warlick, Acting *Appointed 2017* —	42 U.S.C. §17371; Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-140).	Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment	*Remove the position title, keep its staff and functions in the Bureau of Energy Resources*
Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter Islamic State of Iraq and Syria *Created 2014*	Brett McGurk* *Appointed 2015* —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*No changes proposed*
Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs *Created 2015*	Julia Nesheiwat, Acting* *Appointed 2015* —	Executive Order 13698 and Presidential Policy Directive 30	Secretary of State	*Retain the position and staff, realign them under the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights*

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan *Created 1994 (according to the DOS, this position was expanded to include South Sudan in 2007-2008)*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of African Affairs	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of African Affairs*
U.S. Special Envoy for Syria[c] *Created 2014*	Michael Ratney *Appointed 2015* —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs	*Remove the position title, retain staff and functions in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs*

Source: Created by CRS based on American Foreign Service Association, "Special Envoys, Representatives, and Coordinators," August 3, 2017, http://www.afsa.org/special-envoys-representatives-and-coordinators; U.S. Department of State, "Assistant Secretaries and Other Senior Officials," https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/title/as/; supplementary information provided by the Department of State in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 14, 2017.

Notes: * indicates that the official in charge is not a career officer in the U.S. Foreign Service; ** indicates that the position holds the rank of Ambassador; *** indicates that the position holds the rank of Assistant Secretary.

a. The Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons is dual-hatted as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

b. The first two Special Envoys for Six-Party Talks were assigned the rank of Ambassador and confirmed by the Senate.

c. The U.S. Special Envoy for Syria is dual-hatted as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Levant and Israeli-Palestinian Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

Special Representatives

The roles, responsibilities, and protocol rankings of several *special representative* positions in the Department of State are addressed in U.S. law. For example, 22 U.S.C. §2567 authorizes the President to appoint, with the advice and consent of the Senate, "special representatives of the President for arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament matters." This law further stipulates that "each Presidential Special Representative shall hold the rank of ambassador." The Foreign Affairs Manual provides information regarding the roles and responsibilities of select special representatives not mandated by statute.[16] See **Table 2** for the status of special representatives and U.S. special representatives.

[16] For example, see U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM), "Special Representative for International Labor Affairs," 1 FAM 515, http://fam.state.gov.

Table 2. Representatives, Senior Representatives, Special Representatives, U.S. Special Representatives

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan[a] ** *Created 2001*	Alice G. Wells, Acting *Appointed 2017* —	Department of State general authorities; 22 U.S.C. §7514 Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-327), as amended.	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*
Special Representative for the Arctic Region *Created 2014*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs*
Special Representative for Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Issues[b] ** *It is unclear when this position was first created, but DOS reports that it has been filled for decades*	Robert Wood *Appointed 2014* *Confirmed July 15, 2014*	22 U.S.C. §2567; Arms Control and Disarmament Act (P.L. 87-297), as amended.	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation	*No changes proposed*
Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs *Created 2000*	Lisa Dyer, Acting *Appointed 2017* —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs	*No changes proposed*
Special Representative for Environment and Water Resources *Created 2010*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §2152h(e)(2); Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-289); 22 U.S.C. §2686a; Foreign Relations Authorization Act, FY1992 and FY1993 (P.L. 102-138).	Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment	*Retain the position, dual-hat the position with that of the Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs*
Special Representative for Global Partnerships *Created 2008*	Thomas Debass, Acting *Appointed 2016* —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation*

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region of Africa *Created 1993*	Laurence Wohlers *Appointed 2017* —	Department of State general authorities; 22 U.S.C. §2151 note; Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-456).	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of African Affairs*
Special Representative for International Labor Affairs *According to DOS, this position was established in the mid-1990s but there was a gap in filling the position for several years, until 2010*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*
Special Representative to Muslim Communities *Created 2014*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Office of International Religious Freedom*
Special Representative of North Korea Policy[c] *Created 2011*	Joseph Yun *Appointed 2016* —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs	*No changes proposed*
Special Representative for the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review *Created 2014*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Deputy Secretary of State	*Remove the position*
U.S. Special Representative to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States[d] ** *Created 2012*	Linda Taglialatela *Appointed 2015* *Confirmed December 9, 2015*	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs	*Position not addressed in Secretary Tillerson's letter*
U.S. Special Representative for Religion and Global Affairs *Created 2013*	Amy Lillis, Acting *Appointed 2017* —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Office of International Religious Freedom*

Source: Created by CRS based on American Foreign Service Association, "Special Envoys, Representatives, and Coordinators," August 3, 2017, http://www.afsa.org/special-envoys-representatives-and-coordinators; U.S. Department of State, "Assistant Secretaries and Other Senior Officials," https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/title/as/; supplementary information provided by the Department of State in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 14, 2017.

Notes: * indicates that the official in charge is not a career officer in the U.S. Foreign Service; ** indicates that the position holds the rank of Ambassador; *** indicates that the position holds the rank of Assistant Secretary.

a. The Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan was not established by statute. However, the Special Representative is dual-hatted as the Coordinator for Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is a congressionally authorized position (with regard to Afghanistan) pursuant to 22 U.S.C. §7514.
b. The Special Representative for Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Issues is dual-hatted as U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament.
c. The Special Representative of North Korea Policy is dual-hatted as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Korea and Japan in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.
d. The U.S. Special Representative to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean State is dual-hatted as Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

Coordinators

Neither U.S. law nor the Foreign Affairs Manual offers a basic definition or generic overview of the roles, responsibilities, and protocol for the ranking of coordinators, lead coordinators, senior coordinators, special coordinators, or U.S. coordinators (hereinafter, coordinators) in the Department of State. However, the duties of the congressionally authorized coordinator positions are provided in statute.[17] When not detailed in the FAM, descriptions of the coordinator positions that are not congressionally authorized are sometimes available on the Department of State's website.[18] See **Table 3** for the status of coordinators.

Table 3. Coordinators

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Coordinator for Cyber Issues *Created 2011*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of Economic & Business Affairs*
Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization[a] *** *Created 2004*	Thomas Hushek, Acting *Appointed 2015* —	22 U.S.C. §2734(a); State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (P.L. 84-885), as amended. 22 U.S.C. 2368 note; The Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act, (P.L. 110-417), as amended.	Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights	*Position not addressed in Secretary Tillerson's letter*
Coordinator for Sanctions Policy *Created 2013*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff*

[17] For example, the authorities of Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues and the Special Coordinator for Water Resources are provided for in 22 U.S.C. §6901 and 22 U.S.C. §2152h, respectively.

[18] For example, see U.S. Department of State, "Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues," https://www.state.gov/s/cyberissues/ and U.S. Department of State, "Office of the Haiti Special Coordinator," https://www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/ha/hsc/.

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs** *Created 2009*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §2567; Arms Control and Disarmament Act (P.L. 87-297), as amended.	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation	*No changes proposed*
Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia *Created 1989, 1990 (this position comprises two congressionally mandated positions that were later combined by the Department of State (DOS))*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §5461; Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act (P.L. 101-179), as amended; 22 U.S.C. §5812; Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Support Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-511), as amended.	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs	*No changes proposed*
Lead Coordinator for Iran Nuclear Implementation *Created 2015*	Stephen Mull *Appointed 2015* —	Department of State general authorities	Deputy Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation*
Senior Coordinator for International Information Technology Diplomacy[b] **** *Created 2014*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs*
Senior Coordinator for Knowledge Management *Created 2015*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Deputy Secretary of State	*Position not addressed in Secretary Tillerson's letter*
Special Coordinator for Haiti[c] ** *Created 1993*	Kenneth Merten *Appointed 2015* —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs	*Remove the position title, keep its staff and functions in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs*
Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues[d] **** *Created 1993*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §6901 note; Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-228), as amended.	Secretary of State	*No changes proposed*
Transparency Coordinator *Created 2015*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Deputy Secretary of State	*Remove the position*

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy[e] ** *Created 1983*	Julie Zoller, Acting * *Appointed 2017* —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs	*Remove the position title, keep its staff and functions in the Bureau of Economic & Business Affairs*

Source: Created by CRS based on American Foreign Service Association, "Special Envoys, Representatives, and Coordinators," August 3, 2017, http://www.afsa.org/special-envoys-representatives-and-coordinators; U.S. Department of State, "Assistant Secretaries and Other Senior Officials," https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/title/as/; supplementary information provided by the Department of State in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 14, 2017.

Notes: * indicates that the official in charge is not a career officer in the U.S. Foreign Service; ** indicates that the position holds the rank of Ambassador; *** indicates that the position holds the rank of Assistant Secretary, **** indicates that the position holds the rank of Under Secretary.

a. The Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization is dual-hatted as the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization.

b. The Senior Coordinator for International Information Technology Diplomacy is dual-hatted as the Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment.

c. The Special Coordinator for Haiti is dual-hatted as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary with responsibility for Haiti, Canada, Caribbean Affairs in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

d. The Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues is dual-hatted as the Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights.

e. The U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy is dual-hatted as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Economic & Business Affairs.

Advisors

U.S. law does not define the general roles, responsibilities, and protocol ranking of senior advisors and special advisors in the Department of State. The Foreign Affairs Manual makes note of the general responsibilities of special advisors assigned to the department's regional bureaus, dividing them into the categories of labor advisors, economic advisors, political-military advisors, regional planning advisors, and United Nations advisors. The FAM adds that "some bureaus combine a number of these advisors into one office unit under a director" and includes information about the responsibilities of public affairs advisors assigned to both regional and functional bureaus.[19] However, these broader guidelines do not appear to apply generally to those advisors placed outside of regional bureaus.[20] Senior advisors and special advisors in functional bureaus tend to have significant influence over a narrow functional area, while senior advisors and special advisors in regional bureaus support a broader scope of bureau activities with less leadership responsibility. This distinction may explain why the senior advisors and special advisors identified by the department and listed below are located outside regional bureaus.

[19] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)*, "Special Advisors," 1 FAM 118, https://fam.state.gov/.

[20] For example, the Special Advisors for Innovation and Technology and Secretary Initiatives are housed within the Office of the Secretary. See U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)*, "Domestic Codes," 4 FAH-1 Exhibit H-420, https://fam.state.gov/.

Position descriptions for some department advisors are available on the department's website.[21] See **Table 4** for the status of senior advisors and special advisors.

Table 4. Senior Advisors, Special Advisors

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Senior Advisor for Partner Engagement on Syria Foreign Fighters *Created 2015*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Counterterrorism	*Remove the position title, keep its staff and functions in the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism*
Senior Advisor for Security Negotiations and Agreements *Created 1995*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs	*Position not addressed in Secretary Tillerson's letter*
Special Advisor for Children's Issues *Created 2010*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Consular Affairs	*No changes proposed*
Special Advisor for Conflict Diamonds *Created 2001*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs	*Remove the position title, keep its staff and functions in the Bureau of Economic & Business Affairs*
Special Advisor for Global Youth Issues *Created 2011*	Andy Rabens *Appointed 2014* —	Department of State general authorities	Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights	*Remove the position*
Special Advisor for Holocaust Issues *Created 2013*	Stuart Eizenstat *Appointed 2013* —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs	*Absorb office and staff into that of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues*
Special Advisor for International Disability Rights *Created 2010*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*

[21] For example, see U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "International Disability Rights," https://www.state.gov/j/drl/sadr.

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia** *Created 2015*	Knox Thames* *Appointed 2015* —	22 U.S.C. §6411 note; Near East and South Central Asia Religious Freedom Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-161).	Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom	*Keep the position title, realign staff and functions to the Office of International Religious Freedom*
Special Advisor for Secretary Initiatives *Created 2014*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Remove the position*
Special Advisor for Ukraine Negotiations *Created 2017*	Kurt Volker* *Appointed 2017* —	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Position not addressed in Secretary Tillerson's letter*
Science and Technology Advisor *Created 2001*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §2651a note; Foreign Relations Authorization Act, FY2000 and FY2001 (P.L. 106-113), as amended.	Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment	*No changes proposed*

Sources: Created by CRS based on American Foreign Service Association, "Special Envoys, Representatives, and Coordinators," August 3, 2017, http://www.afsa.org/special-envoys-representatives-and-coordinators; U.S. Department of State, "Assistant Secretaries and Other Senior Officials," https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/title/as/; supplementary information provided by the Department of State in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 14, 2017.

Notes: * indicates that the official in charge is not a career officer in the U.S. Foreign Service; ** indicates that the position holds the rank of Ambassador; *** indicates that the position holds the rank of Assistant Secretary.

Ambassadors-at-Large

Ambassadors-at-large are "appointed by the President and serve anywhere in the world to help with emergent problems, to conduct special or intensive negotiations, or serve in other capacities, as requested by the Secretary or the President."[22] As required by 22 U.S.C. §3942(a)(1), the appointment of Ambassadors-at-large is subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. Ambassadors-at-large generally rank immediately below assistant secretaries of state in terms of protocol. They are perceived within the department as managers of crucial yet narrow subject matters, while assistant secretaries have much broader responsibilities.[23] While the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Global HIV/AIDS, the Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy, and the Special Coordinator for Global Criminal Justice Issues do not have the position title of "ambassador-at-large," the department currently provides these positions that rank.[24] See **Table 5** for the status of ambassadors-at-large.

[22] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)*, "Generic Responsibilities," 1 FAM 014.4, https://fam.state.gov/.

[23] Conversation between CRS staff and Department of State officials.

[24] Information provided by the Department of State on April 14, 2017.

Table 5. Ambassadors-at-Large

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues** *Created 2009*	Vacant __ __	Presidential Memo of Jan. 30, 2013 (78 F.R. 7989).	Secretary of State	*Retain the position and staff, realign them under the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights*
Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom** *Created 1999*	Vacant __ __	22 U.S.C. §6411; International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-292), as amended.	Secretary of State	*Retain and expand the position*
Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons** *Created 2000*	Susan Coppedge* *Appointed 2015* *Confirmed October 8, 2015*	22 U.S.C. §7103(e); Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-386), as amended.	Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights	*No changes proposed*
Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues[a] ** *Created 1997*	Vacant __ __	Department of State general authorities; statutory responsibilities later prescribed in 22 U.S.C. §8213(a); Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-53), as amended.	Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights	*No changes proposed (some press reports suggested this position could be eliminated, but the department has not moved to eliminate the position)*
Coordinator for Counterterrorism** *Created 1994*	Nathan Sales Appointed 2017 Confirmed August 3, 2017	22 U.S.C. §2651a(e); State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (P.L. 84-885), as amended.	Secretary of State	*No changes proposed*
Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Global HIV/AIDS and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy** *Created 2003*	Deborah Birx* *Appointed 2014* *Confirmed April 2, 2014*	22 U.S.C. §2651a(f); State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (P.L. 84-885), as amended.	Secretary of State	*Retain and expand the position*

Sources: Created by CRS based on American Foreign Service Association, "Special Envoys, Representatives, and Coordinators," August 3, 2017, http://www.afsa.org/special-envoys-representatives-and-coordinators; U.S. Department of State, "Assistant Secretaries and Other Senior Officials," https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/title/as/; supplementary information provided by the Department of State in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 14, 2017.

Notes: * indicates that the official in charge is not a career officer in the U.S. Foreign Service; ** indicates that the position holds the rank of ambassador-at-large.

a. The Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, a position that requires Senate confirmation, has in the past been dual-hatted as the Special Coordinator for Global Criminal Justice Issues. However, the current special coordinator, Todd Buchwald, was never afforded the ambassador-at-large title.

Miscellaneous Positions

In addition to the position groups noted above, several uniquely titled positions exist within the Department of State identified by both the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) and the department as related to special envoys, representatives, coordinators, and related positions. Many of these positions are authorized by statute, and their authorities can be found therein. Nevertheless, no statutory authorization exists for the lone "lead coordinator" position, the "Lead Coordinator for Iran Nuclear Implementation" post. The position is noted in the Foreign Affairs Manual only as being housed within the Office of the Secretary.[25] A description of the position is available in remarks made by then-Secretary Kerry in September 2015.[26] Similarly, no statutory authorization exists for the lone "senior official" position, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Senior Official. The position title reflects the institutional infrastructure of APEC, wherein each member state designates a "senior official" who, according to APEC, participates in guiding the organization's working level activities and projects under the direction of APEC Ministers.[27] The duties of the Senior Official for APEC are defined in the FAM.[28] Descriptions for other positions listed below can be found on the department's website.[29] See **Table 6** for the status of miscellaneous positions.

Table 6. Miscellaneous Positions

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Representative for Northern Ireland Issues *Created 1995*	Vacant __ __	Department of State general authorities	Secretary of State	*Retire the position*
Senior Representative to the Minsk Group *Created 1997*	Vacant __ __	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs	*Remove the position title, keep its staff and functions in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs*

[25] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)*, "Senior Official for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation," 1 FAM 134, https://fam.state.gov/.

[26] U.S. Department of State, "Appointment of Ambassador Stephen D. Mull as Lead Coordinator for Iran Nuclear Implementations," remarks from Secretary of State John Kerry, September 27, 2015, https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/09/247006.htm.

[27] Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, "How APEC Operates: Working Level," http://www.apec.org/About-Us/How-APEC-Operates/Working-Level.

[28] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)*, "Senior Official for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation," 1 FAM 134, https://fam.state.gov/.

[29] For example, see U.S. Department of State, "Michael Guhin," https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/bureau/213350.htm.

Position Title *Year position was created*	**Current Occupant** *Year appointed* *Date of Senate confirmation*	**Authorization Source(s)**	**Position Reports to**	**Administration Proposal**
Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma** *Created 1996*	Vacant — —	Department of State general authorities; 50 U.S.C. §1701; Tom Lantos Block Burmese Jade Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-286), as amended.	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs	*Remove the position title, realign staff and functions to the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs*
Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation** *According to DOS, this position was filled in the 1960s.*	Vacant — —	22 U.S.C. §2567; Arms Control and Disarmament Act (P.L. 87-297), as amended.	Assistant Secretary of Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation	*No changes proposed*
U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority *Created 2005*	Lt. Gen. Frederick "Rudy" Rudesheim* *Appointed 2015* —	Department of State general authorities	Jerusalem Consul General and Ambassador to Israel	*No changes proposed*
Special Negotiator for Plutonium Disposition[a] *Created 2008*	Michael Guhin *Appointed 2009* —	Department of State general authorities	Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation	*No changes proposed*
U.S. Senior Official to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)[b] ** *Created 1996*	Matthew Matthews *Appointed 2015* —	Department of State general authorities	Assistant Secretary of the Bureau for East Asia and Pacific Affairs	*Position not addressed in Secretary Tillerson's letter*

Sources: Created by CRS based on American Foreign Service Association, "Special Envoys, Representatives, and Coordinators," August 3, 2017, http://www.afsa.org/special-envoys-representatives-and-coordinators; U.S. Department of State, "Assistant Secretaries and Other Senior Officials," https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/title/as/; supplementary information provided by the Department of State in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 14, 2017.

Notes: * indicates that the official in charge is not a career officer in the U.S. Foreign Service; ** indicates that the position holds the rank of Ambassador; *** indicates that the position holds the rank of Assistant Secretary.

a. The Special Negotiator for Plutonium Disposition Director is dual-hatted as the Special Negotiator for Fissile Material

b. The U.S. Senior Official to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation is dual-hatted as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

Compensation

Special envoys and related position officeholders are appointed to government service through various avenues, as reflected by the diverse means of pay through which officeholders are compensated. According to the Department of State, these include the Senior Executive Service (SES) pay rates, the Executive Schedule (EX) and the General Schedule (GS) pay rates, and, separately, rates of pay for those appointed as Experts (ED), Consultants (EF), and in senior-level positions (SL). These means of pay, which are authorized by statute, are applied not only to

personnel within the Department of State, but also to those elsewhere in the federal government.[30] Special envoys who serve as ambassadors-at-large, assistant secretaries and under secretaries are required by statute to be compensated through the Executive Schedule.[31] According to information transmitted by the Department of State, officeholders compensated through these means are both career FSOs and noncareer officials.[32]

Other officeholders are compensated through the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) and Foreign Service (FS) pay rates, whereas others are compensated through statutory guidelines proscribing salaries to chiefs of mission.[33] These means of compensation are authorized pursuant to the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-465, as amended; hereinafter, the Foreign Service Act).[34] The Foreign Service Act authorizes the Secretary of State to make "limited appointments" to the Senior Foreign Service of individuals who are not career FSOs under certain conditions.[35] Therefore, special envoys and related officeholders compensated under SFS and FS pay rates are both career FSOs and noncareer members of the Senior Foreign Service.

Issues for Congress

Many in the foreign affairs community and in Congress have differing views of the advantages and disadvantages of special appointments. In the 1990s, for example, many believed that the Clinton Administration had overused special appointments (for those not established by statute). Early in George W. Bush's terms of office, his Administration announced, in contrast to the previous Administration, that it would avoid the use of special appointments. However, by the end of the Bush Administration, the number of special appointments had matched those under the Clinton Administration.[36]

Another factor in appointing special envoys is the sense of urgency regarding a given issue, as determined by Members of Congress and interest groups that may be pressing their representatives and the Administration to elevate their concerns—either through Congress or via the Administration. According to one study, "in nearly every case we examined over several Administrations, the impetus to appoint a [special envoy/special representative] was a combination of congressional pressure and the Administration's readiness to give the matter higher-level attention."[37]

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[30] The Senior Executive Service (SES) pay rates, the Executive Schedule (EX) pay rates, and the General Schedule (GS) pay rates are authorized pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §5381-5385, 5 U.S.C. §5311-5318, and 5 U.S.C. §5331-5338, respectively. Pay for expert and consultant employees is provided for under 5 U.S.C. §3109 and the *Code of Federal Regulations*, 5 C.F.R. §304; pay for senior-level employees is provided under 5 U.S.C. §5376.

[31] 5 U.S.C. §5314 requires Under Secretaries of State to be compensated at Level III of the Executive Schedule. 5 U.S.C. §5315 requires Assistant Secretaries of State and Ambassadors-at-Large to be compensated at Level IV of the Executive Schedule.

[32] Information transmitted by the Department of State on April 14, 2017.

[33] 22 U.S.C. §3902 notes that a chief of mission is "the principal officer in charge of a diplomatic mission of the United States or of a United States office abroad which is designated by the Secretary of State as diplomatic in nature.... "

[34] SFS pay is authorized pursuant to 22 U.S.C. §3962. The FS pay schedule is authorized pursuant to 22 U.S.C. §3963. Any chief of mission serving concurrently as a special envoy or in a similar role is compensated in a manner consistent with 22 U.S.C. §3961.

[35] This authority is provided under 22 U.S.C. §3943. See 22 U.S.C. §3945 and 22 U.S.C. §3949 for detail regarding the conditions under which such appointments can be made.

[36] United States Institute of Peace, *Using Special Envoys In High-States Conflict Diplomacy*, Special Report 353, by Princeton N. Lyman and Robert M. Beecroft, October 2014, p. 3.

[37] Ibid.

In the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on July 17, 2017, Chairman Corker stated, "Special Envoys do more harm than good.... I think that they hurt the culture of our professional Foreign Service officers candidly because I think they see them in many cases as a work around.... I hope that we'll do away with all of them that are unnecessary. And I think most of them are unnecessary."[38] Following issuance of the Trump Administration's plans regarding special envoys on August 28, 2017, Senator Corker reiterated his concern regarding the accumulation of special envoys at the department. He added that the authorization bill the committee passed in July "recognizes that urgent developments may require the creation of a special envoy" and that he looked forward to examining the proposed changes in detail.[39]

At the same hearing, Ranking Member Benjamin Cardin said that "we have too many special envoys. On the other hand, there are areas that I want to have special attention, where I don't think you get it unless there's a point person within the State Department to deal with it.... " Following the publication of Secretary Tillerson's letter outlining the department's plans with regard to special envoys, Senator Cardin commented, "I agree with Secretary Tillerson that there is room for examining the use of our Special Envoys ... while I support creating a more efficient and effective Department, we must be sure that the Administration is not eliminating Envoys who are critical to our ability to advance our interests and our values."[40] There are numerous arguments for and against the use of special envoys—both in general and with regard to specific policy issues. Which positions are necessary or unnecessary may differ from one Member of Congress to another or from one Administration to another.

Potential Advantages

Proponents of special envoys espouse several perceived benefits of such positions, including the notions that such positions

- are short-term and flexible and can activate U.S. response more easily than having to go through regular channels;
- are a quick tool that the Department of State can use when a crisis erupts;
- indicate high-level Administration interest in a particular issue;
- help an ambassador or an assistant secretary who does not have the time or resources to deal with a specific issue within a country;
- can coordinate a wider range of aspects that go beyond the country or region under the purview of an ambassador or assistant secretary;
- can represent directly the views of the President or Secretary of State and, thus, give the U.S. representative greater status (than an assistant secretary, for example) and access to higher level foreign government officials;
- are generally less expensive than a full-time permanent government employee, whose position may be difficult to eliminate at the end of an Administration;
- could engage, in certain cases, with enemies or others that regular diplomats would or could not; and

[38] Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearing on July 17, 2017.

[39] Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Corker Statement on State Department Special Envoy Changes," August 28, 2017, https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/corker-statement-on-state-department-special-envoy-changes.

[40] Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Cardin Responds to Tillerson Letter on Special Envoys," August 31, 2017, https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/cardin-responds-to-tillerson-letter-on-special-envoys.

- address issues that Congress or interest groups are calling attention toward.

Potential Disadvantages

Critics argue that special envoys, especially if overused, can create concerns. Some concerns are that special appointments

- could undermine the ambassador in the country, the assistant secretary of state, or cause confusion among foreign government officials and even within the department itself as to who is the point person on certain issues;
- may create tension between themselves and the ambassador or the assistant secretary by assuming a large share of scarce resources dedicated to a particular issue or taking on a special role and leaving the routine work to the career employees;
- have a lack of accountability to Congress and the American public, as they frequently work directly for the President or Secretary of State;
- have, in the past, hired large numbers of staff, while not being able to take advantage of qualified Foreign Service Officers because of timing and a perception among Foreign Service Officers that serving under special envoys does little to advance their careers;
- could undermine the consistency of the Administration's policy and/or could distort the importance of the issue, as compared with other ongoing foreign policy issues;
- in some cases are appointed from outside the foreign policy arena and are unable to operate effectively due to a lack knowledge of key policy players in Washington and the means through which the department's bureaucracy operates;
- tend to remain in place at the department long after the issues for which they were created to address are resolved; and
- if eliminated after they are created, could signal unintentionally to the rest of the world that the United States is downplaying or ignoring the issue area for which the special representative was responsible.

Congressional Outlook

Congress has addressed issues arising from the use of special appointments by requiring the Department of State to report to Congress on the existing use of these positions, holding hearings, and including language in legislation (currently in the Senate) that would require many appointments to be made with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Other options might include limiting the scope of individuals eligible to serve as special envoys through several related means, including

- proscribing limitations on the volume of appropriated funds that can be expended for the compensation of special envoys and related officials; exemptions could be carved out for the remuneration of special pay differentials and death gratuities as needed; and
- requiring individuals who serve in these positions to be career members of the Senior Foreign Service or the Foreign Service appointed pursuant to 22 U.S.C. §3492(a)(1), which requires career members of the Senior Foreign Service and

Foreign Service Officers to be appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate; exemptions could be carved out for members of the Senior Executive Service, detailees from other federal agencies, or others as needed.

Congressional perspectives on these issues over the 115th Congress may evolve as the Secretary of State and the Trump Administration as a whole continue to pursue and implement specific aspects of State Department and executive branch reorganization.

Author Information

Cory R. Gill
Analyst in Foreign Affairs

Susan B. Epstein
Specialist in Foreign Policy

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