



Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)

The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs is headed by Assistant Secretary of State Thomas A. Shannon. The Bureau is responsible for managing and promoting U.S. interests in the region by supporting democracy, trade, and sustainable economic development, and fostering cooperation on issues such as drug trafficking and crime, poverty reduction, and environmental protection.

Interns in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) may serve in any of the Bureau's eleven offices. Offices consist of a Director, Deputy Director, multi-functional officers, and support staff.

FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES MAY CONSIST OF:

- Drafting and editing reports, including the Assistant Secretary's Daily Activity Report
- Assisting in sorting incoming cables for the Office Director and Deputy Director
- Drafting letters for the President and replies to Congressional correspondence
- Responding to WHA Front Office requests for input on mega talkers (large documents containing the Department policy on a given issue)
- Reviewing daily newspapers and electronic databases for pertinent articles on a specific country
- Becoming familiar with officer portfolios in order to sort telegram traffic and fill in behind when they are out
- Providing assistance to officers as needed to include researching, analyzing, and translating existing material on a specific country and maintaining databases on monitoring and visa issuance
- Responding to public inquiries regarding a specific country's policy
- Compiling comprehensive briefing books on a specific country

The following are examples of duties that have been performed by interns in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs:

- Compiling comprehensive briefing books on Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador to be used by transferring FSOs and desk officers.
- Preparing comparison charts for SOA compliance activity of all 15 Andean countries in two or more areas (e.g., anti-corruption, money-laundering, energy, etc).
- Preparing written summary of two Spanish-language reports from Colombian human rights groups.
- Preparing written summary of WOLA narcotics report on Colombia.
- Writing analysis of Ecuadorian former defense minister and current presidential candidate Gallardo, coordinating with INR/B office.
- Writing a short (3-5 pp.) analysis on comparative decentralization in at least two Andean countries.

SUPERVISION:

Interns are supervised by an officer, but their work is reviewed by the Deputy Director. Interns are given instructions and usually left to compile or complete a project on his/her own.

The supervisor assures that completed work and methods used are technically accurate, and with instructions or established procedures.

OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

WHA/FO:

The Front Office staff is responsible for keeping the Assistant Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretaries informed on developments related to implementation of U.S. foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere. The staff advises the Assistant Secretary and Deputies on regional policy and management considerations and is responsible for managing the flow of information within the Bureau ensuring timely follow-up. The staff edits Bureau memoranda and correspondence, and coordinates the movement of policy and briefing papers within the Department and other agencies.

FO interns will be call to perform certain duties such as:

- Post cable highlights Online
- Upload Thursday Presentations on intranet website
- Maintain and distribute the internal Bureau phone list
- Oversee conference room scheduling
- Email forwards
- Archive and retire old files
- Distribute Bureau mail
- Prepare and deliver paper to S/ES-S (the Line), S, P, D, H, and other bureaus
- Compile, edit, and distribute the Assistant Secretary Daily Activity Report
- Order Supplies
- Edit comeback copies from the Line

WHA/AND:

The 18-member Office of Andean Affairs (WHA/AND) is responsible for shaping, coordinating and implementing U.S. foreign policy for **Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela**, and for helping to oversee over \$825 million in annual assistance programs. The office is comprised of a director, two deputies, 11 desk officers, a regional advisor, and three support staff. WHA/AND is one of two offices reporting to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary. The office deals with a broad agenda, encompassing all the major issue areas for WHA, including democracy strengthening and good governance, economic development and trade, counter-narcotics and counterterrorism,

WHA/BSC:

The ten-member Office of Brazilian and Southern Cone Affairs (WHA/BSC) is responsible for managing U.S. relations with **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay** and backstopping the U.S. Embassies in these countries. The office supports the WHA Front Office and Department principals on issues relating to the BSC countries. WHA/BSC is the primary point of contact within the Department for Washington embassies of the BSC countries and coordinates interagency policies and programs of the U.S. government that relate to the region.

The office is comprised of a director, a deputy director, five desk officers (two covering Brazil), a regional affairs officer, an office management specialist and a program assistant.

WHA/CAN:

The Office of Canadian Affairs (WHA/CAN) is responsible for day-to-day management of relations between the U.S. and **Canada**. The office is composed of the office director, the

deputy, an Environmental Affairs Officer, a Political Affairs and Economic Officer, a Political Military Officer, a Border and Law Officer, and two secretaries.

WHA/CAR

WHA/CAR's office is led by a Director and one Deputy. CAR is responsible for managing USG relations with the island nations and dependencies of the **Caribbean (Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles)**. It is the Department's principal liaison with the thirteen Caribbean embassies, which maintain a presence in Washington. The office also coordinates USG relations with the regional organization CARICOM and manages the USG's "Third Border Initiative," an assistance portfolio designed to promote regional cooperation in security and development. CAR's responsibility for coordinating the USG's policy of stabilization, security, democracy and economic development in Haiti requires significant staffing resources.

WHA/CCA:

Students seeking eligibility for an internship in CCA will be called on to perform the following duties. Every morning, hundreds of nonimmigrant requests for US visas (Security Advisory Opinions/SAOs) sent by posts overseas are analyzed by CCA. The student will be required to print all of the SAOs from the Consular Consolidated Database (CCD) for review by the consular officer. In addition to printing, the student will need to check for any relevant association codes in their non-immigrant visa (NIV) application, search the web for information on this person, and log in the appropriate information into Microsoft access. At the end of this process the student will communicate CCA's clearance decision to the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

In addition to preparing SAOs for the consular officer, the student will be asked to complete a number of other duties. For example, Cuban officials that serve in Washington, D.C. and New York are required to request permission to travel outside of a certain pre-established perimeter. The request for travel will come in from an office at the Department of State, usually the Office of Foreign Missions. The student will be responsible for seeking approval from CCA's Office Director and will respond appropriately to the office that is requesting the travel. In addition, students will be asked to handle U.S. Government officials traveling to Havana as either permanent personnel or on Temporary Duty (TDY). In which case, students will need to be able to interact not only with USG officials, but also Cuban officials when dropping off/picking up visas at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, DC. Finally, students need to stay apprised of the most recent changes in personnel at the Cuban Interests Section and notify the Consular officer of any unusual changes. It is important to keep the personnel list accurate as Cuban officials have limits to the amount of people working for them and also the length of their stays.

Students might also be called on to perform certain in duties with the economic section of CCA.

Those responsibilities include the following:

- Review and recommend course of action on numerous Cuba export license applications, ensuring consistency with U.S. foreign policy objectives and legal standards;
- Review and recommend course of action on proposed charter flight schedules between the United States and Cuba, ensuring consistency with U.S. foreign policy objectives and legal standards;
- Research and develop Title IV sanctions cases against specific individuals and companies found to be in violation of the U.S. economic embargo;
- Prepare summaries, press guidance, and talking points for Bureau principals on sensitive sanctions licensing decisions;

- Monitor, evaluate and report on Cuba's economic trends; present analysis in Powerpoint to office principals;
- Provide support to Consular officers as required in processing visa applications;
- Ensure proper handling of classified materials and information.

Any special requirements that the intern is expected to meet with the economic section are listed below:

The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs (CCA) is the focal point within the U.S. Government for developing, coordinating, recommending, and executing U.S. policy on Cuba. The intern will serve in CCA's Economic Affairs Unit, which is functionally responsible for providing the full range of support to the Coordinator, who, among the many other duties for which the intern may be called upon to assist as required, coordinates and administers Cuba sanctions. Sanctions issues are technical, complex, highly sensitive and politically charged. Interns must learn to balance competing U.S. foreign policy interests within the framework of complicated legal and regulatory guidelines.

Interns will also become exceedingly familiar with the provisions of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act, Cuban Assets Control Regulations, the Export Administration Act, Cuban Democracy Act, and the Trade Sanctions Reform and Exports Enhancement Act.

Even as legislative and policy requirements limit the flow of resources to the Government of Cuba, CCA is increasingly focused on anticipating the needs of the Cuban people, and on addressing those needs immediately upon the President's determination that a democratic transition is underway on the island. As such, interns must have the ability to adapt to changing work requirements as the situation in Cuba changes.

WHA/CEN:

The nine members of Office of Central American Affairs are responsible for day-to-day management of U.S. relations for **Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Belize**. The office is comprised of the office director, a deputy director, five officers, and two secretaries. The Costa Rican desk office usually handles regional affairs, but individual components of regional affairs are often allocated to other officers as well. The office reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central America and the Caribbean.

This very active office is involved in the transition from war to peace, and dictatorships to democratic governments throughout the region. It covers the Panama Canal Reversion, economic reform, and a host of trade issues including the just-passed Free Trade Agreement for the Americas (CAFTA).

The responsibilities of an intern in WHA/CEN vary greatly as the workload in the office fluctuates. Duties may include compiling information on current issues and writing interoffice reports, frequently communicating with foreign embassies to update or track the status of various documents, or escorting esteemed visitors around the building. Interns may often attend conferences and panels and report to the office on topics relevant to Central American affairs. Interns may compose cabinet-level letters and inter-office forms or work with desk officers to follow significant issues.

WHA/EPSC:

The Office of Regional Economic Policy and Summit Coordination (WHA/EPSC) is responsible for Latin American economic and trade issues. EPSC acts as a liaison and focal point for both the nations of the hemisphere and our embassies. There are two divisions to the office. The division of Economic Policy has responsibility for trade and investment policy macroeconomic and financial policy, and environment, science, technology and health policy. The division of

Summit Coordination is in charge of managing the U.S. participation in the Summit of the Americas process.

WHA/EX:

WHA/EX provides administrative support to the bureau's domestic operations as well as its posts overseas.

WHA/MEX:

There are ten officers and three secretaries in WHA/MEX. A 2,000 mile shared U.S. – Mexico border means WHA/MEX handles an extraordinarily complex and varied bilateral agenda. In addition to political and economic matters, other issues that the office deals with include the environment, migration, and drug enforcement. There is a Border Affairs Unit in WHA/MEX, as well as a representative of the International Boundary and Water Commission,

WHA/PDA:

The Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs is comprised of eighteen employees, fourteen dedicated to public diplomacy with foreign audiences and four to public affairs activities with U.S. publics. The office oversees the public diplomacy activities carried out by WHA posts abroad to promote understanding of the United States and advocate and advance U.S. policy.

It is responsible for ensuring that public diplomacy activities overseas support the Bureau's Performance Plan goals and that adequate resources are applied to meet objectives. The office advises the Bureau on the reaction of foreign public opinion to U.S. policies and develops public diplomacy strategies in support of priority issues. The public affairs unit of the office provides and coordinates information on U.S. policies toward the WHA region to U.S.-based media and to U.S. audiences, as appropriate.

WHA/PPC:

The Office of Policy Planning and Coordination (PPC) coordinates all socio-political issues that extend beyond a single geographic office (e.g. security assistance, counter-narcotics, human rights, labor, international organizations issues). PPC has the lead on strategic planning and evaluation for the bureau, including coordination of policy, program, and foreign assistance funding. This includes guidance and coordination on Mission Strategic Plans (MSP) and the Bureau Strategic Plan (BSP). PPC serves as the general inter-agency liaison for other USG agencies, especially with USAID and DOD. It provides policy support to the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States (USOAS) during General Assemblies and international conferences and to Bureau and Department officials during the UN General Assembly in New York. PPC is involved in Bureau outreach, particularly with think tanks and academics. Other responsibilities include drafting speeches and Congressional testimony, coordinating high-level visits to the region (including Presidential trips), and arranging bilateral and multilateral consultations with the EU, Japan, Korea, China, and other countries that have an interest or equities in Hemispheric policies and programs.

PPC office directors and officers determine projects to assign to PPC Interns and Stay-In-School Students (SIS) based on office needs. The Intern/SIS thus plays a supporting role to staff members on various challenging long and short term projects; subject matter depends on the portfolio of the PPC employee who assigns it, but could include security assistance, counter-narcotics, human rights, labor, international organizations, the foreign assistance budget, think tank liaison, public outreach, women's and indigenous/marginalized peoples' issues, and congressional affairs. Work is assigned on these themes with the goal of giving the Intern/SIS insight into how these topics are managed within the Bureau, and might include preparing for conferences and events, writing memos, drafting documents in Microsoft Word and Excel, preparing different types of weekly and monthly calendars, researching and gathering information, attending informational conferences on behalf of PPC, and taking notes.

PPC Interns/SIS also needs to be in contact and coordinate with other offices in State. An intern is also given the opportunity to write Briefing Check Lists and other documents that will be cleared by the front office and used by the Assistant Secretary. They may attend think tank events, OAS sessions, and congressional hearings, with responsibility for preparing a written briefing to send to PPC and other relevant offices. The Intern/SIS is also on call to assist with occasional requests by the Front Office or other offices in WHA, such as greeting and escorting high-level officials around the Department.

At all times, the intern's comments and input are welcome. PPC views the internship experience as a two-way educational experience - for the intern and for PPC.

USOAS:

The U.S. Permanent Mission to the Organization of the American States (USOAS) is a multilateral diplomatic mission, headed by an ambassador who is the U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of the American States (OAS), and it functions administratively as an office of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. The OAS, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is the world's oldest international organization and is made up of the 34 democracies of the Western Hemisphere. The Mission represents U.S. interests at the OAS and with all other entities in the inter-American system, such as the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), and the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH). The only exception is the Pan American Health Organization, which is considered a regional organization of the UN system.

In addition to the Permanent Representative, USOAS also has a Deputy U.S. Permanent Representative, with the rank of ambassador. The ambassadors are supported by two sections: the Political Section and the Development and Cooperation Section. The Political Section handles all political, human rights, security, counter-narcotics, anti-terrorism, and international legal issues at the OAS. The Development & Cooperation Section deals with education, labor, sustainable development, tourism, trade, social development, culture, economic, science and technology, and the budget and institutional issues of the OAS. The Mission also has an Administrative Officer who supervises all direct support for the Mission (administration, internal budgeting, personnel, and logistics), manages external funding to the Organization, and coordinates the Mission Program Plan (MPP). USOAS officers are represented by both Foreign Service and Civil Service and serve as Alternate Representatives to the OAS.

Intern Duties

USOAS interns, perform a wide range of duties to assist officers with issues facing the hemisphere. These duties could include, but are not limited to, researching, preparing position papers, coordinating projects and issues with other department and inter-agency officers. Interns also attend meetings at the Organization of American States (OAS) and prepare reporting notes on the meeting. Interns also have the opportunity to write cables and points for the Assistant Secretary's Daily Activity Report pertaining to issues at the OAS.

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