



Ambassador Barbara Stephenson ***President, American Foreign Service Association***



An active-duty member of the American Foreign Service for over 30 years, Barbara Stephenson was elected President of the American Foreign Service Association in 2015. Her second term as AFSA president runs to July 2019.

Previously, she served as Dean of the Leadership and Management School at the Foreign Service Institute where she launched and co-chaired the Department-wide Culture of Leadership Initiative. In 2008, she was appointed Ambassador to Panama and later became the first female Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in London.

As Deputy Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Coordinator for Iraq (2006-2008), she won the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award for developing and implementing the "civilian surge" that helped improve governance and reduce violence in Iraq's provinces—without breaking the back of the career Foreign Service. Before taking up Iraq duties, Ambassador Stephenson served as Director for Planning in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

From 2001-2004, as the American Consul General in Belfast, Northern Ireland, she worked on the Northern Ireland Peace Process. From 1998-2001, she served as Consul General and Chief of Mission in Curaçao, where she was responsible for the five islands of the Netherlands Antilles as well as Aruba, both of which became hosts of U.S. Air Force Forward Operating Locations during her tenure.

Earlier in her career, Ambassador Stephenson served as special assistant to Under Secretaries for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff and Tom Pickering, covering European affairs, including the war-torn Balkans. Other assignments have included desk officer for the UK, political-military officer in South Africa, and political officer in The Hague, San Salvador, and Panama.

A member of the Advisory Boards for Global Ties, World Affairs Council DC, and the British-American Project, Ambassador Stephenson speaks Spanish and Dutch and holds a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Florida. She and her husband Matthew Furbush have two children, a daughter (27) and a son (18).