

Interview with Mr. Casey Mace, Deputy Chief of Mission to Singapore
He is currently assigned as DCM of the US Consulate of Singapore from 2021-2024. Prior to Singapore he was assigned to the US Embassy, Luxembourg.

1. What inspired you to pursue a career in International Relations?

I was actually an international student growing up. Due to the nature of my father's work, I spent part of my childhood in London, and I loved it. I loved seeing and meeting new people. In the community I was a part of, there were also lots of children of the embassy personnel.

2. When working with the State Department and moving frequently between countries, foreign language knowledge becomes an integral part of the job.

a. Can you take us through your journey of learning and engaging with foreign languages?

So I speak English, Chinese, and Bahasa, and in school I studied Spanish, although I haven't utilized it professionally. I studied Chinese at the State Department Language School, and I also learned Bahasa at the State Department as it was required for my assignment in Jakarta, Indonesia.

b. Prior to University, had you pursued any foreign language?

I studied Spanish in high school and college. I also studied abroad in Spain.

3. You obtained a bachelor's degree in International Relations from Georgetown. Did you pursue any internships during your time in college?

I had a summer internship during university with a lobbying firm, but it wasn't focused on International Relations.

4. How relevant was your Georgetown education in your current job success?

Georgetown was a wonderful experience, the location was great and the professors were great teachers.

a. What aspects specifically?

Georgetown gave me an opportunity to engage with embassies and professionals especially. For example, the Georgetown Diplomatic Ball is an event which brings together alumni, students, faculty and members of the diplomatic community.

5. In order to become a foreign service officer, you must take the Foreign Service Officer Test. Could you describe your experiences with your exam? What were the most difficult aspects for you?

There are two parts to the Foreign Service Officer Test, a written, standardized test and essays. It's very similar to a US History/current events test. There is also an oral exam, which is simulated. Georgetown prepares you for the exam. I ended up taking it twice. I would say just studying and preparing for it was difficult, and the oral aspect of it is the hardest for sure.

6. Prior to joining the State Department, you were at a consultancy in the Space and Telecom industries. What motivated you to move into consulting instead of applying immediately for the State Department?

I was always interested in joining the State Department. I was really just working in Washington D.C as a market analyst, waiting for a spot in the State Department to become available,

Throughout your career, you have focused specifically on the Indo-Pacific region. Was this your area of interest in University?

Not an area of interest but I was always interested in the region just generally.

a. If yes, what interested you specifically about the Indo-Pacific as opposed to other regions?

It is a super dynamic region, and especially important as we move into a more technologically driven world.

b. If not, was it your choice, or were you assigned that specific focus?

It was my first or second choice.

7. Prior to Singapore, you have worked in Australia, Luxembourg, Indonesia, and China. Could you provide some context regarding your experiences in each job, your location assignment process, and objectives in each country?

In Australia, I worked in the consulate, basically just understanding the country and explaining about America and our objectives. Almost like a journalist.

In Indonesia, I worked with the government to promote and protect democracy.

In Luxembourg, I was managing the embassy, seeing how Brexit was affecting the European Union.

Uganda was a really fun assignment, I was a second tax officer. I was helping with HIV AIDS assistance.

8. What are some of the struggles and advantages of moving frequently?

9. During your time in both Indonesia and China, you were required to learn Bahasa and Mandarin Chinese. What was the process like? How long did it take you to gain proficiency in each? How is it determined for which jobs you have to gain language proficiency?

The Embassies require you to learn the local language: you have to be at least proficient if not fluent.

Really, it depends on your position as to whether or not you have to learn the language. Usually, it's first and second tier employees that must be proficient, as there is a lot of communication with other officials and possibly broadcasting.

10. Do you believe students with proficiency in foreign languages gain an advantage going into the State Department?

Yes, they have changed the foreign service officer exam to give weight to people with foreign language proficiency. And as it is such a big aspect of our career, I would say it's definitely beneficial if you have prior foreign language knowledge.

11. Can you describe some of your tasks and responsibilities as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Singapore?

One of the main tasks as DCM is to bring together and coordinate government agencies. Here in Singapore, it has been a great success, as in the last 8 months there has been lots of growth with regards to cyber security. The US government will likely implement AI into law enforcement.

12. Although you currently serve as the DCM in Singapore, you previously held other positions, such as the Deputy Political Counselor in Jakarta. How do your assignments and responsibilities differ, and how do you transition between different roles?

DPC is mostly focused on reporting, explaining to Washington, trying to find areas of cooperation. There is some training provided. There is increased emphasis on Asia, it is expanding and is the

biggest competitor. As DCM, it's a lot more interactive with the host government and working together as opposed to simply communicating back to DC.

13. In addition to serving overseas, you have also worked as the principal Southeast Asia advisor in DC for the White House. What are some key differences between jobs in the US and overseas?

In Washington, you are basically developing policy, and overseas you are advising the President and putting that policy into play.

a. Do you have a preference?

In Washington you create, and overseas you build partnerships. Both are rewarding in their own way. I wouldn't say I have a preference.

14. What are some of your future goals and aspirations for your career?

Probably just continuing with the State Department, continuing to excel and rise the ranks.

15. What are some of your favorite aspects about working for the State Department? What have been some of your biggest struggles?

My favorite aspects are shaping foreign policy, practicing American leadership, and engaging with other governments.

The difficulties are being far away from home and moving frequently, especially as we grow a family. Also, sometimes it can be really discouraging when missions go wrong or political uprisings storm the country, like what happened in Uganda. It can feel like we're not actually making a change at all.

16. Is there anything else you would like to inform students aspiring to work for the State Department?

I would say go for it! Don't be discouraged or deterred, the Foreign Service Officer Test is free. And honestly, even on our worst day, American diplomacy is still one of the greatest agents for change, and it is so rewarding to feel like you're making a significant contribution to the betterment of the world.