



Ambassador Nathan A. Sales

Ambassador Nathan A. Sales is a distinguished fellow with the Atlantic Council's Middle East Programs, focusing on counterterrorism, security, democracy and the rule of law, and human rights.

From 2017 to 2021, Sales served at the US Department of State as under secretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights (acting). He oversaw nine bureaus and offices led by Senate-confirmed principals, with 1,300 employees and a combined foreign assistance budget of more than \$5 billion annually, and the mission of preventing and countering threats to civilian security, including terrorism, mass atrocities, and violations of human rights and the rule of law.

Concurrently, Sales served as ambassador-at-large and coordinator for counterterrorism. After being nominated by the president and unanimously confirmed by the US Senate, he was sworn in on August 10, 2017. He served as the principal adviser to the secretary of state on international counterterrorism matters, and led the State Department's Counterterrorism Bureau, a 200-person team with an annual foreign assistance budget of \$400 million. He was also the special presidential envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, leading US relations with the 83-member coalition and efforts to ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS in the Middle East and around the world.

While at the State Department, Sales led the elements of the US government's China strategy promoting democratic values and human rights, including with respect to Hong Kong and Xinjiang. He oversaw the development and implementation of a wide range of US government sanctions, including Global Magnitsky Actions and Executive Order 13,936, targeting those responsible for undermining Hong Kong's freedoms and autonomy. Sales was the architect of the landmark 2017 UN Security Council Resolution 2396 on terrorist travel and sanctions, and successfully pressed NATO to make counterterrorism a core Alliance mission. He led diplomatic engagements to persuade a dozen key partners in Europe and the Americas to designate Hizballah as a terrorist organization in its entirety. He launched the Western Hemisphere Counterterrorism Ministerial, in which heads of state and minister-level officials meet biannually to coordinate efforts against terrorist threats in the region. He led the US government's international efforts to combat white supremacist terrorism, including through sanctions.

Before joining the State Department, Sales was of counsel at the law firm Kirkland & Ellis LLP (formerly Bancroft PLLC). He was also a tenured law professor, teaching and writing in the fields of administrative law, constitutional law, and national security law. His scholarship has been cited by the US Supreme Court multiple times.

Sales previously was deputy assistant secretary for policy at the US Department of Homeland Security. He led DHS's efforts to draft and implement legislation that strengthened the security of and expanded the Visa Waiver Program (which allows citizens of certain countries to travel to

the United States without a visa). He headed the US delegation in talks with seven countries to implement the new security measures and was the Secretary of Homeland Security's Special Envoy to South Korea.

Sales also served at the Office of Legal Policy at the US Department of Justice, where he worked on regulatory initiatives, counterterrorism, and judicial confirmations. In 2005, he managed DOJ's "war room" for the confirmation of Chief Justice John Roberts. He received the Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Service – the Justice Department's highest honor – for his role in drafting the USA PATRIOT Act, as well as the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award.

An Ohio native, Sales received his BA, *summa cum laude*, from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He earned his JD, *magna cum laude*, from Duke Law School, where he was research editor of the Duke Law Journal and joined the Order of the Coif. After law school, he clerked for the Honorable David B. Sentelle of the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit.