

Ambassador Alexander Vershbow NATO Deputy Secretary General



Ambassador Vershbow took up his position in February, 2012 after serving for three years as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. In that position, he was responsible for coordinating U.S. security and defense policies relating to the nations and international organizations of Europe (including NATO), the Middle East and Africa.

From 1977 to 2008, Alexander was a career member of the United States Foreign Service. He served as U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1998-2001); to the Russian Federation (2001-2005); and to the Republic of Korea (2005-2008). He held numerous senior positions in Washington, including Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council (1994-97) and State Department Director for Soviet Union Affairs (1988-91). During his career, he was centrally involved in strengthening U.S. defense relations with allies in Europe and Asia and in transforming NATO and other European security organizations to meet post-Cold War challenges. He also was centrally involved in efforts to promote democracy and human rights in the former Soviet Union.

Alexander Vershbow is a long-time student of Russian Affairs and international relations. He received a B.A. in Russian and East European Studies from Yale University (1974) and a Master's Degree in International Relations and Certificate of the Russian Institute from Columbia University (1976).

During his U.S. government career, Ambassador Vershbow received numerous awards including the Department of Defense's Distinguished Civilian Service Medal (2012) the State Department's Cordell Hull Award for Economic Achievement for his contributions to negotiations on the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (2007); the American Bar Association's Ambassador's Award for his advocacy of the democracy, human rights and rule of law in Russia (2004); the State Department's Distinguished Service Award for his work as Ambassador to NATO (2001); the Department of Defense's Joseph J. Kruzel Award for his contributions to peace in the former Yugoslavia (1997); and the Anatoly Sharansky Freedom Award of the Union of Councils of Soviet Jews for his work in advancing the cause of Jewish emigration from the USSR (1990).

Alexander Vershbow was born in Boston, Massachusetts. His wife, Lisa, is a prominent contemporary jewelry designer and metalsmith.