

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.
20508**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
MARCH 11, 2003**

**2003-14
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USTR Announces Personnel Appointments

New General Counsel, Five New Assistant USTRs & New FTAA Negotiator Among Those Named

WASHINGTON - U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick today announced a number of new senior appointments at USTR. These changes in key executives will provide an opportunity for the Administration to build on the successful work of the last two years, such as launching new global trade negotiations in the WTO; completing the accession of China and Taiwan into the WTO; securing the Trade Act of 2002, including Trade Promotion Authority; completing new Free Trade Agreements; and, aggressively pursuing trade liberalization globally, regionally, and bilaterally.

“I am proud of the top quality people we have at USTR, and I am honored to work with such a fine group of professionals, all of whom, day-in and day-out, go the extra mile in promoting America’s trade interests,” said Zoellick. “We have seen some good and skilled friends depart, but I’m delighted with the new appointments, who will strengthen our ability to advance the President’s successful trade agenda.”

The appointments are outlined below:

- **General Counsel: John Veroneau** will be the new General Counsel at USTR, succeeding **Peter Davidson**, who is leaving to pursue opportunities in the private sector. Mr. Veroneau most recently served as the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative (AUSTR) for Congressional Affairs. His appointment will be effective April 1.
- **AUSTR for Congressional Affairs: Matt Niemeyer** will become the new AUSTR for Congressional Affairs. Mr. Niemeyer previously served as the Deputy in that office. His appointment will be effective April 1.
- **AUSTR for Services, Investment and Intellectual Property: James Mendenhall** has been named AUSTR for this office. For the past 18 months, Mr. Mendenhall served as the Deputy General Counsel. Joe Papovich, the previous AUSTR, has retired from USTR after 21 years of service. Mr. Mendenhall’s appointment is effective immediately.
- **AUSTR for African Affairs: Florizelle “Florie” Liser**, currently the AUSTR for Industry, Market Access and Telecommunications, has been named AUSTR for this

office. Her appointment will be effective April 1.

- **AUSTR for Industry, Market Access and Telecommunications: Meredith Broadbent**, currently a Professional Staff Member on the House Ways and Means Committee, has been named AUSTR for this office, succeeding Florie Liser. Ms. Broadbent's appointment will be effective April 1.
- **AUSTR for South Asian Affairs: E. Ashley Wills**, currently U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, will become the AUSTR in this newly created office. His appointment will be effective in June.
- **Senior Negotiator for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA): Ross Wilson**, currently the U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan, will become Senior Negotiator for the FTAA, a new position, effective June 23.
- **Deputy AUSTR for Congressional Affairs: Lisa Coen** has recently started as a Deputy in this office, after service in the State Department.

Expanded information is detailed below:

Peter Davidson, General Counsel at USTR from February 2001 to the present, is leaving to pursue opportunities in the private sector. Prior to coming USTR, Mr. Davidson was the Vice President for Congressional Affairs at Qwest Communications, coordinating all federal legislative activities. From January 1995 until June 1999, Mr. Davidson served as the General Counsel and Policy Director to the Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, Representative Dick Armey.

“As General Counsel, Peter Davidson played a key role in helping us restore American leadership in expanding trade worldwide. We will miss him, and I wish him the best in his future endeavors,” said Zoellick.

John Veroneau served as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs at the U.S. Department of Defense, a position requiring Senate confirmation, prior to joining USTR in March of 2001. Before serving at the Department of Defense, Mr. Veroneau served as Legislative Director to Senator William Cohen and Senator William Frist, and as Chief of Staff to Senator Susan Collins, respectively. Mr. Veroneau received his Juris Doctor degree and his undergraduate degree from the University of Maine. He is a member of the Maryland Bar Association.

“In addition to his strong Congressional experience, John Veroneau's legal background has been a tremendous asset in his responsibilities representing USTR before the Congress. Likewise, his experiences as Legislative Counsel and Legislative Director in the Senate will serve him well in his new responsibilities as General Counsel, and he is well acquainted with USTR's legal agenda,” Zoellick said.

Matt Niemeyer will assume the position of Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Congressional Affairs. Mr. Niemeyer currently serves as Deputy Assistant USTR for Congressional Affairs. Prior to joining USTR, he served as the Deputy Political Director for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). He also served as the manager of grassroots programs for the Independent Insurance Agents of America and as a Legislative Assistant and political consultant for House Rules Committee Chairman Gerald B. Solomon. Before joining Congressman Solomon's staff, Mr. Niemeyer was a political analyst at AIPAC. In addition, he spent two election cycles at the National Republican Congressional Committee and worked as a Staff Assistant in the state office of U.S. Senator John McCain in Phoenix, AZ. Mr. Niemeyer graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

“Matt Niemeyer has played a critical role in our outreach to the Congress, and I and others have relied heavily on his energy and judgment. He’s very familiar with the issues and will be able to hit the ground running with his new responsibilities,” said Zoellick.

Since September 2001, **James Mendenhall** has served as Deputy General Counsel of USTR. Prior to joining USTR, Mr. Mendenhall was a partner with the law firm of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer and Murphy, L.L.P., where he specialized in WTO litigation, international arbitration, and trade policy. Mr. Mendenhall graduated cum laude from the Harvard Law School in 1992 and from the University of Notre Dame with Highest Honors in 1989.

“Jim Mendenhall will have big shoes to fill, but he brings a breadth of experience, knowledge, and problem-solving skills that will be invaluable as we advance our agenda in the cutting edge areas of services, intellectual property, and investment,” said Zoellick.

Joe Papovich has retired from USTR after 21 years of service. Mr. Papovich most recently served as the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Services, Investment, and Intellectual Property. In this capacity, he was responsible for U.S. trade and investment policy concerning these activities.

“Joe Papovich has had a distinguished career spanning 21 years and six USTRs. Joe was particularly instrumental in shaping the challenging intellectual property issues. Joe was one of our most accomplished negotiators, the best of the best and we’ll miss him and his wise counsel tremendously,” said Zoellick.

Prior to assuming her position, **Florizelle (Florie) Liser** served as the AUSTR for Industry, Market Access and Telecommunication, where she played an important role on issues such as the steel safeguard and efforts to reduce global steel subsidies and overcapacity; developing the U.S. proposal in the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Non-Agricultural Market Access; and, global telecom issues, including the recent telecom chapters of the Singapore and Chile FTA’s. Before Ms. Liser came to USTR, she worked at the Department of Transportation, serving as senior trade policy advisor to the Secretary in the Office of International Transportation and Trade. In this capacity, Ms. Liser coordinated trade and transportation issues, including during the Uruguay Round trade negotiations, and with Africa, Latin America, and APEC. From 1980 to 1987, Ms. Liser worked in the USTR GATT Affairs office on WTO developing country trade

issues, customs valuation, import licensing, and non-tariff barrier issues. Ms. Liser holds a M.A. in International Economics from Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and a B.A. in International Relations and Political Science from Dickinson College.

“Florie Liser has a significant background in a broad array of trade and development issues, and has had experience working with Africa. She’s one of our top negotiators and has the experience and motivation to build on the excellent pioneering work of the first AUSTR for African Affairs, Rosa Whitaker,” said Zoellick.

Meredith Broadbent currently serves a Senior Professional Staff Member on the Majority Staff of the House Subcommittee on Trade. She has worked on trade issues with the Ways and Means Committee in various capacities since 1982, dealing with such issues as the Trade Act of 2002; Section 301; the Caribbean Basin Initiative; the Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act; the Generalized System of Preferences; the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988; and NAFTA and Uruguay Round implementation legislation. She has a B.A. in European History from Middlebury College, and an M.B.A. from George Washington University.

“Meredith Broadbent has been an excellent partner as we have worked with the Congress, helping USTR with trade issues, and performing great policy work for Chairman Thomas,” Zoellick said. “It will be a real plus to have her at USTR.”

E. Ashley Wills was nominated on February 23, 2000 to be the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, and began serving in Colombo on October 5, 2000. He previously served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Charge d’Affaires at the U.S. Mission in New Delhi, India from August 1997 until July 2000. From 1995 until 1997, he was Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, also at the Embassy in New Delhi. Ambassador Wills has been a Foreign Service Officer since 1972. Prior to India, he served in Brussels, Belgium; Belgrade, Yugoslavia; as head of South African Affairs at the State Department in Washington; as Deputy Director of the Office of Political Advisor to the Commander of U.S. Forces in Grenada; in Bridgetown, Barbados; Durban, South Africa; and Bucharest, Romania. Ambassador Wills attended the State Department’s Senior Seminar in 1991 and 1992. He was born in Tennessee and raised in Mississippi and Georgia. He graduated with honors from the University of Virginia in 1971 and has an M.A. in Economics from Johns Hopkins University.

“I’m very pleased we will have someone with Ambassador Wills’ stature and expertise to help us on South Asia trade issues, an increasingly important part of the world,” Zoellick said.

In **Ambassador Ross Wilson’s** new capacity as Senior Negotiator for the FTAA, effective June 23, he will lead the US delegation to the FTAA Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) as well as conduct the inter-agency development of the US negotiating positions in the FTAA. He will report directly to Deputy USTR Peter Allgeier, who serves as co-chair of the FTAA process with Brazilian Deputy Secretary General Hugueneu. Mr. Wilson has been Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan since October 2000. He is a career officer in the U.S. Foreign Service with the personal rank of Minister-Counselor. Prior to being nominated to serve in Azerbaijan, he was

Principal Deputy to the Ambassador-at-Large and Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the New and Independent States of the former Soviet Union (1997-2000), where he had direct responsibility for U.S. relations with Ukraine, Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as region-wide economic and other issues. Ambassador Wilson also served as Deputy Executive Secretary of the Department of State (1992-94), directly supporting the work of Secretaries of State Baker, Eagleburger, and Christopher. He was Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and Counselor of the Department (1990-92). He also served in the Department of State's Offices of Soviet Union Affairs (1979-80) and Egyptian Affairs (1982-84). Overseas assignments include Moscow, Prague, and Melbourne, Australia. Ambassador Wilson speaks Russian and Czech. Ambassador Wilson received a Bachelors degree from the University of Minnesota in 1977 and a Masters degrees from Columbia University (1979) and the U.S. National War College (1995). He joined the Foreign Service in 1979.

"I've known and respected Ross Wilson for many years, and he is recognized as a top rank economics officer in the Foreign Service, a skilled leader who can master many diverse issues. Ross will work with Peter Allgeier and me to direct our FTAA negotiations, which are entering a key phase," added Zoellick.

Prior to joining USTR, **Lisa Coen** was a Special Assistant and the Senior Congressional Advisor to the Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs from October 2001 to February 2003. From October 1999 through October 2001, she held the position of Manager and Counsel for Federal Governmental Affairs at United Technologies Corporation in Washington, D.C. Prior to that, Ms. Coen was an attorney in the Public Law and Policy section at Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer, and Feld from April 1994 through September 1999. Ms. Coen received her Juris Doctor degree from George Washington University, and her Bachelor of Arts degree from Providence College. While in law school, she worked for the late Senator John Chafee (R-RI).

"I'm very pleased that Lisa has joined our congressional affairs office. Her experience at the State Department and in the private sector will complement our excellent legislative affairs team," said Zoellick.

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