



Mark E. Mitchell

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict



Mark E. Mitchell is a highly decorated U.S. Army combat veteran in the Special Operations community with extensive experience in the Middle East and South Asia. He brings 28 years of national level defense and counterterrorism policy experience to the Policy team.

Mitchell was among the first U.S. soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan after 9/11 and advised the Northern Alliance prior to the fall of the Taliban regime. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions in the November 2001 Battle of Qala-I Jangi in Mazar-e Sharif.

In 2014, Mitchell served as a Director for Counterterrorism on the National Security Council where he was intimately involved in significant hostage cases and recovery efforts in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia. He was instrumental in establishing the framework for the landmark Presidential Policy Review of Hostage Policy, which resulted in significant changes in organization and policy. He previously served in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as the Senior Military Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity

Conflict. As a colonel, he commanded 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and simultaneously commanded a nationwide, Joint Special Operations Task Force in Iraq in 2010-2011. Mitchell has planned and conducted counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, and other sensitive special operations. In addition to commanding multiple Special Forces organizations, he has served in principal staff positions up to and including the Theater Special Operations Command. He most recently worked as a business executive in the private sector and served on the board of a non-profit organization.

Mitchell earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Engineering from Marquette University and a Master of Science degree in Defense Analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School. He also served as a National Security Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.