

Michael J. Morell

Michael Morell, the former Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is one of our nation's leading national security professionals, with extensive experience in intelligence and foreign policy. He has been at the center of our nation's fight against terrorism, its work to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and its efforts to respond to trends that are altering the international landscape—including the rise of China, a revanchist Russia, and the cyber threat. Politico has called Michael the “Bob Gates of his generation.”

During his 33-year career at CIA, Michael served as Deputy Director for three-and-a-half years, a job in which he managed the Agency's day-to-day operations and analysis, represented the Agency at the White House and Congress, and maintained the Agency's relationships with intelligence services and foreign leaders around the world. Michael also served twice as Acting Director, leading CIA when Leon Panetta was confirmed as Secretary of Defense and again after David Petraeus left government.

Michael's senior assignments at CIA also included serving for two years as the Director of Intelligence, the Agency's top analyst, and for two years as Executive Director, the CIA's top administrator—managing human resources, the budget, security, and information technology for an agency the size of a Fortune 200 firm.

Michael has been a witness to history on multiple occasions. He is the only person who was both with President Bush on September 11th, when al-Qaida burst into the American consciousness, and with President Obama on May 1st, when Bin Laden was brought to justice. Michael played a major role in the Bin Laden operation.

Michael was known inside CIA for his leadership. He inspired individuals and work units to perform beyond expectations. He mentored many Agency officers into the senior leadership ranks, including a significant number of women and minorities. When he departed CIA, thousands of officers wrote Michael notes of thanks.

Michael is the recipient of many awards. He received the Presidential Rank Award for exceptional performance - the nation's highest honor for civilian service. He also received the Distinguished Intelligence Medal, CIA's highest award, for his role in the Bin Ladin operation. Michael is also the recipient of the Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal, the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, and the Department of Defense Service Medal.

Today, Michael is involved in a wide range of activities. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Fortress Investment Group; the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Orbis Operations; Senior Counselor and Global Chairman of the Geopolitical Risk Practice at Washington's fastest growing consulting firm, Beacon Global Strategies; and an advisor to a large number of private sector entities.

Much of what Michael does today is tied to educating the country on national security. He is a Senior National Security Contributor for CBS News, the host of a CBS News

popular podcast and national radio program on national security called Intelligence Matters, an Expert Voice on Axios, and a Contributing Columnist for the Washington Post. He has lectured on national security at the University of Chicago, Stanford, Dartmouth, Harvard, Brown, Princeton, West Point, the Army War College, and George Mason University. He is currently a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Michael Hayden Center at George Mason.

Michael is a member of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic Council, a member of the Advisory Board to the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics, a member of the Advisory Board to the Alliance for Securing Democracy program at the German-Marshall Fund, an Advisory Board member for American Media Abroad, and an Advisory Board member of U.S. Cyber Dome, an organization providing pro-bono cyber security services to political campaigns.

Michael served as a member of President Obama's 2013 Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technology and as a member on the 2018 Commission on the National Defense Strategy, a commission appointed by Congress to help it understand the nation's defense needs.

Michael is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Economic Association.

Michael is the author of the New York Times bestseller on CIA's nearly 20-year fight against al Qaeda. The title of the book is "The Great War of Our Time: An Insider's Account of the CIA's Fight Against Terrorism - From al Qaeda to ISIS." It was published in May 2015.

Michael is a native of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, and he maintains close ties to northeast Ohio. His father and mother—who taught him hard work, the pursuit of excellence, and humility—were an autoworker and a homemaker. Michael is a first-generation college student, earning a B.A. summa cum laude in economics from the University of Akron. He also earned an M.A. in economics from Georgetown University.

Michael is involved with a number of charities. He serves on the Honorary Board of Directors at the International Spy Museum. Michael served on the Board of the CIA Officers Memorial Fund and on the Board of the National Intelligence University Foundation. He and his wife Mary Beth are fully committed to the first-grade class they sponsor at a DC Charter School.

Michael and Mary Beth have three children.