

Rear Admiral JOHN C. ACTON (Ret.)

Admiral Acton is an experienced operational and strategic senior leader with a unique blend of private sector and government experience, including challenging national/ homeland security positions as a Coast Guard admiral and member of the Senior Executive Service. His expertise includes strategic vision and planning, operations, collaboration and building strategic partnerships, operations, leader development, marketing and sales, and strategic communications.



On active duty, he served in the icebreaker CGC GLACIER during trips to the Arctic and Antarctica and as the commanding officer of a search and rescue patrol boat in Alaska. In the Reserves, Admiral Acton developed broad operational, interagency, and joint military expertise as the commanding officer of six units, including tours with PSU 308 and SOUTHCOM.

Subsequent to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Admiral Acton was recalled to active duty: first, at U.S. Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia, where he helped stand-up U.S. Northern Command. Then, as Chief of Staff, Fifth Coast Guard District, he oversaw homeland security operations along the mid-Atlantic coast. Next, he served on Secretary Ridge's operations integration staff at the DHS, dealing with events such as the Madrid train bombings and Aristide's departure from Haiti.

During the Fall 2005 he served as the senior CG Liaison Officer in support of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita operations. In 2006, he was recalled to serve as the Deputy Director of Operations (DJ3) at U.S. Northern Command in Colorado Springs, where his duties included oversight of the command center in Cheyenne Mountain. For his final assignment, Admiral Acton served as the Director for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) 2008 Presidential Transition Team for the Bush-Obama transition.

He then joined DHS in the Senior Executive Service (SES), first as the Director, DHS Operations Coordination and Planning he dealt with national-level incidents, such as the Zazi NYC subway plot, the Abdulmutallab attempt to down NW Flight 253, and responses to the American Samoa tsunami, the Haiti earthquake and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Then, as the Chief Learning Officer (Acting), he developed an integrated program to enhance the leadership bench strength for the department's 250,000 employees. He routinely represented DHS in critical interactions with White House National Security Council staff and stakeholders, such as Congress and Department of Defense. Admiral Acton retired from DHS in 2015 and now consults on the 2016 presidential transition.

His private sector experience includes over 25 years of general and marketing management, change management, and client account and field sales management, with a broad spectrum of consulting, telecommunications, consumer product, and internet companies, including Booz Allen Hamilton, Pepsi-Cola, Frito-Lay, BellSouth Mobility and the America's Cup sailboat races.

A 1976 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, where he rowed on the small college national championship crew team, he holds an MBA degree in marketing from Columbia University. He has completed executive education at Harvard, UNC Chapel Hill, and the Naval War College.

Admiral Acton's decorations include two CG Distinguished Service Medals and three Legions of Merit. Admiral Acton and his wife, Jane, have two adult children and live in Reston, Virginia.