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Michèle Flournoy

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy



Michèle Flournoy was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on February 9, 2009. She serves as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy and the integration and oversight of DoD policy and plans to achieve national security objectives.

Prior to her confirmation, Ms. Flournoy was appointed President of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in January 2007. Before co-founding CNAS, she was a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where she worked on a broad range of defense policy and international security issues.

Ms. Flournoy previously served as a distinguished research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU), where she founded and led the university's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) working group, which was chartered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop intellectual capital in preparation for the Department of Defense's 2001 QDR.

Prior to joining NDU, Ms. Flournoy was dual-hatted as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy. In that capacity, she oversaw three Policy offices in the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Strategy; Requirements, Plans and Counterproliferation; and Russia, Ukraine and Eurasian Affairs.

Ms. Flournoy was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service in 1996, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 1998 and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Joint Distinguished Civilian Service Award in 2000. She is a former member of the Defense Policy Board and the Defense Science Board Task Force on Transformation.



Ms. Flournoy earned a bachelor's degree in social studies from Harvard University and a master's degree in international relations from Balliol College, Oxford University, where she was a Newton-Tatum scholar.

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