

Michael Morell

Former Deputy and Acting Director of the CIA & Author of the Bestseller *The Great War Of Our Time*

One of the country's most-respected national security experts, Michael Morell is the former deputy director and acting director of the Central Intelligence Agency and the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Great War of Our Time: The CIA's Fight Against Terrorism from Al-Qaeda to ISIS*. The agency's second-in-command, he spent his entire career at the CIA and has been in the room with the nation's major political players for more than a decade. He is the only official who was with both President Bush on September 11th and President Obama on May 1st, when Osama Bin Laden was brought to justice during a raid that Morell had been integral in planning. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, he had "been at the center of nearly every fight against Al-Qaeda and has seen the limits of U.S. intelligence," and *POLITICO* called him the "Bob Gates of his generation."

Morell continues to offer his national security expertise as host of the award-winning *CBS News* podcast *Intelligence Matters*, as senior national security contributor for *CBS News*, and as Global Chairman of the Geopolitical Risk Practice at Beacon Global Strategies. Exclusively represented by Leading Authorities speakers bureau, he is an extraordinary speaker and an emotionally-moving storyteller. Audiences appreciate his insights on current events and the geopolitical challenges that keep one of the nation's most legendary CIA leaders awake at night. He has been at the center of our nation's fight against terrorism and the trends altering the international landscape — including global hotspots, like the war in Ukraine and the turmoil in the Middle East, the rise of China, and the growing cyber threat — and he tailors his talks to regional-specific issues and audience interests. In high-impact presentations, Morell shares insider stories and navigates the complex and clandestine web of politics and security, helping organizations understand the business impact of and leadership behind these pivotal issues.

CIA Leadership. During his 33-year career at the CIA, Morell was known for his leadership. He managed an agency equivalent in complexity to a Fortune 500 firm, inspired peak performance, and mentored most of the agency's senior leadership team. When David Petraeus took over in 2011, it was Morell who shepherded the general into the role, and he twice served as acting director — longer than anyone in the history of the agency, leading the CIA when Leon Panetta was named Secretary of Defense and again following Petraeus' resignation.

Morell started at the bottom and worked his way up through the ranks. First assigned as an international energy analyst followed by 14 years working on East Asia, his senior assignments included two years as executive director (the CIA's top administrator), and two years as director of intelligence (the agency's chief analyst). He was also in charge of personally briefing President George W. Bush each morning on the latest from the intelligence community and served on President Obama's Review Group on Intelligence and Telecommunications, which analyzed the Edward Snowden leaks. He also served on the 2018 Commission on the National Defense Strategy, a commission appointed by Congress to help it understand the nation's defense needs.

Awards. Morell is the recipient of a myriad of awards, including a Presidential Rank Award for exceptional performance and the Distinguished Intelligence Medal — the CIA's highest honor — for his role in the Bin Laden operation. Senator Joe Lieberman called him, "one of the best intelligence officers our nation has ever had," and Admiral Mike Mullen said he is the "best of the best."