

# BOARD OF VISITORS

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## NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

# BIOGRAPHIES



**April 18, 2024**

**Fort Lesley J. McNair • Washington, D.C.**



# **NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY**

## **BOARD OF VISITORS AND NDU SENIOR LEADERSHIP**

### **I. BOARD OF VISITORS**

<b>Vice Admiral Jody A. Breckenridge, USCG (Ret)</b> .....	5
<b>Lieutenant General Charles W. Hooper, USA (Ret)</b> .....	6
<b>Dr. Christopher B. Howard</b> .....	7
<b>Dr. Suzanne Logan</b> .....	9
<b>Colonel Nora Ramirez Marcos, USA (Ret)</b> .....	11
<b>Ambassador Bismarck Myrick (Ret)—Board Vice Chair</b> .....	12
<b>Dr. DJ Patil</b> .....	14
<b>The Honorable Timothy J. Roemer</b> .....	15
<b>General Norton A. Schwartz, USAF (Ret)—Board Chair</b> .....	17
<b>The Honorable Debra S. Wada</b> .....	18

### **II. NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY SENIOR LEADERSHIP**

<b>Lieutenant General Michael T. Plehn, USAF (NDU President)</b> .....	20
<b>Ambassador Roxanne Cabral (Senior Vice President)</b> .....	21
<b>Dr. James Lapse (Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs)</b> .....	22
<b>Ms. Kathryn Kolbe (Chief Operating Officer and Vice President for Administration)</b> .....	23
<b>Major General Paul J. Rock, USMC (Commandant, National War College)</b> .....	24
<b>Major General William H. Seely, III, USMC (Commandant, Dwight D. Eisenhower School of National Security and Resource Strategy)</b> .....	25
<b>Major General Thomas D. Crimmins, USAF ANG (Commandant, Joint Forces Staff College)</b> ...	27
<b>Dr. Cassandra C. Lewis (Chancellor, College of Information and Cyberspace)</b> .....	28
<b>Ms. Denise M. Marsh (Acting Chancellor, College of International Security Affairs)</b> .....	29
<b>The Honorable Denise Natali (Director, Institute for National Strategic Studies)</b> .....	30
<b>Rear Admiral Gerard M. Mauer, Jr., USN (Ret) (Director, CAPSTONE/KEYSTONE/ PINNACLE)</b> .....	31
<b>Ambassador Andrew Young (Director, International Student Management Office)</b> .....	32



# BOARD OF VISITORS





**Vice Admiral Jody A. Breckenridge**  
***United States Coast Guard (Retired)***



Jody A. Breckenridge serves as the Chair of the California Military Council serving the state, military facilities, military personnel and their families serving in California and Defense Support Communities. As a board member, she serves the following agencies and nonprofits: Association for Rescue at Sea, Council for a Strong America, Marines Memorial Foundation, Armed Services YMCA, San Francisco Fleet Week Association and U.S. Vets.

Ms. Breckenridge serves on the Board of First Command Financial Services and on the board of the Armed Services YMCA.

A retired three-star, Vice Admiral Breckenridge completed a 34-year career in the United States Coast Guard. In her last assignment as Pacific Area Commander, she served as one of the two senior field commanders, directing all operations across 73 million square miles of the Pacific. Additional flag assignments included Director of Strategic Transformation guiding the largest reorganization and business practice realignment in the modern Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Human Resources with responsibility for all the workforces, pay and benefits, healthcare, awards and recognitions, housing, training and education, and Acquisition Official for training and human capital. As the Eleventh District Commander, the regional command achieved record drug interdictions including the arrest of the head of the Arellano Felix cartel. Her initial flag assignment was as Maintenance and Logistics Command Pacific leading all support and logistic systems supporting the Pacific Area Commander. As a flag officer, the Admiral participated in State Department programs in the countries of Georgia and Azerbaijan. She was a US representative for the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum and led meetings with the Russian Border Service.

Vice Admiral Breckenridge earned a Masters in National Security Strategy and Resource Management from ICAF (now the Dwight D Eisenhower School) of the National Defense University and a Masters of Public Policy from the University of Maryland (Honors). She was awarded a BS in Biology from Virginia Tech.



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## Lieutenant General Charles W. Hooper

### *United States Army (Retired)*



Lieutenant General (Retired) Charles Hooper is one of America's most distinguished soldier-diplomats and known as a conceptual and analytical thinker, a consummate negotiator, a trusted advisor who effectively navigates complex, sensitive issues and challenges, and a catalyst for collaboration and cooperation. He is well-known and widely respected within the Departments of State and Defense, the Intelligence Community and among national security scholars.

Lieutenant General Hooper has over 40 years of experience in security policy formulation and execution; strategic intelligence; security cooperation; sensitive negotiations; foreign military sales; education and transformational leadership. A fluent Chinese linguist with almost seven years living and working in China, many consider him one of the Nation's foremost experts on the Chinese military and defense industries.

In addition to operational assignments with the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Divisions and teaching Chinese Foreign Policy at the Naval Postgraduate School, Lieutenant General Hooper had three high profile diplomatic assignments including serving as the U.S. Defense Attaché—the senior U.S. military officer, in both China and Egypt. Lieutenant General Hooper also served the senior DOD strategist and planner (J5) for U.S. Africa Command and deputy strategy and plans director for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (Deputy J5), and as the senior China and Taiwan policy official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

In his final military assignment (2017-2020), he was Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, responsible for the overseas sale of all weapons, military equipment, support services and training packages for the United States Government. In that capacity he served as the Department of Defense expert on U.S. security assistance funding and U.S. foreign military sales.

Lieutenant General Hooper is a graduate of the United States Military Academy, West Point (BS), and Harvard University Kennedy School of Government (MPA) where he received the Don K. Price Award for Academic Excellence and Public Service. He also holds a certificate in Chinese Language and Literature from the British Ministry of Defense Chinese Language School and returned to Harvard University as a post-graduate research fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs studying U.S.-China military relations.

Among his numerous honors, Lieutenant General Hooper was awarded the National Defense Medal by the French Government and was the first Army student-officer and first Harvard Kennedy School of Government student ever selected to give a Harvard University Commencement Address.

Lieutenant General Hooper is now a Senior Counselor with The Cohen Group, the Washington, D.C. consulting firm founded by former Secretary of Defense William Cohen. He is also a member of the National Bureau of Asian Research Board of Directors, a senior non-resident scholar at the Atlantic Council, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.



## **Dr. Christopher B. Howard**

***Lieutenant Colonel, United States Air Force Reserve (Retired)***



Dr. Chris Howard is the executive vice president and chief operating officer of ASU. Howard works closely with President Crow and the other executive vice presidents to coordinate enterprise-wide initiatives and advancement, oversee ASU Enterprise affiliates, advance new enterprise relationships and opportunities, and integrate ASU Enterprise planning and strategy.

He is a distinguished graduate of the US Air Force Academy and earned a doctorate in politics as a Rhodes Scholar from the University of Oxford. He also has an MBA with distinction from Harvard Business School, and in 2018 received the school's Alumni Achievement Award. Howard's service to his country began as a helicopter pilot, then as an intelligence officer, where he was assigned to the elite Joint Special Operations Command. He served in Afghanistan in the Air Force Reserve and was awarded the Bronze Star. Howard concluded his career as a Reserve Military Attaché to Liberia, Africa.

As a member of the Aspen Strategy Group, Howard co-edited a report entitled 'Re-Engineering American Security: Cultivating Talent for Competitiveness'. Howard unveiled the report's key findings during the 2023 Aspen Security Forum sharing a panel with former Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

Previously, Howard served as the eighth president of Robert Morris University, a nationally ranked doctoral-granting university in suburban Pittsburgh.

Before serving at RMU, Howard was President of Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia.

Howard also served as vice president for Leadership & Strategic Initiatives at the University of Oklahoma. Previously he worked in General Electric's Corporate Initiatives Group and Bristol-Myers Squibb's Corporate Associates Program. Howard served on the National Security Education Board, appointed by President Barack Obama.

He is a trustee on the Harvard University Board of Overseers and also serves on the Board of Directors of AvalonBay Communities. Howard is a Henry Crown Fellow at the Aspen Institute, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Young Presidents Organization, the Aspen Strategy Group and Trilateral Commission, and Sigma Pi Phi, the oldest African-American fraternity in the United States.

Howard won the Campbell Trophy, the nation's highest academic award for a senior college football player. He also is a member of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and a former member of the College Football Playoff Selection Committee.



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Howard is the founder and a trustee emeritus of the Impact Young Lives Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports South African youth.

His wife, Barbara Noble Howard, serves as an Arizona State University Fellow for nonprofit leadership. She also serves on several philanthropic boards and hails from South Africa. They have two adult sons, Cohen and Joshua.





## Dr. Suzanne Logan



Dr. Suzanne Logan is providing independent consulting/coaching services after retiring in 2022 from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) where she was a member of the Senior Executive Service—most recently as the Senior Advisor for the Associate Director, Employee Services but for the prior nine years as Director of the Federal Executive Institute, the Director of the Center for Leadership Development (CLD) and the Deputy Associate Director of Human Resources Solutions. Operating within a yearly revolving-fund budget of over \$180M, she successfully led all aspects of the U.S. government's career-long professional leadership and management development programs. CLD's Continuum of Leadership and Professional Development, created by Dr. Logan, was delivered through FEI, the two management development centers in Washington, D.C. and Denver, Colorado, the SES Leading EDGE program, USALearning, OPM's Innovation Design Lab, the Presidential Management Fellows program, the Presidential Executive Fellows program, the International Leadership

Development program, Performance and Process Improvement program, and the Federal HR Institute. Each year under her leadership over 18 million development courses or programs were completed by the Federal workforce through these courses or programs.

Before joining FEI, Dr. Logan served as the U.S. Air Force's Chief Academic Officer for Officer Education, Spaatz Center and the Chief Academic Officer, Air War College at Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. She served on the J7 JPME educational advisory group, participated in updates to the CJCSI 1800 and led or participated in the joint accreditation processes of war colleges and staff colleges each year.

While working in private industry, Dr. Logan was Vice President of Academic Affairs for class.com, a private company formed by the University of Nebraska, where she held responsibilities for the development and delivery of a completely Internet-based worldwide academic program. Earlier, she served as a Regional Manager for Texas Instruments, Inc. where she developed training programs and oversaw the training for one-third of the country.

A seventeen-year academic administrator at Texas Tech University (TTU) and a member of the graduate faculty, Dr. Logan was the guiding force behind several groundbreaking academic initiatives, including the first virtual public school district in Texas, the university's first online Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and the largest kindergarten through Master's degree e-learning program in the country. She was one of the first members of Texas Tech's graduate faculty to teach courses using interactive video instruction and was the first to teach online courses over the worldwide web. She led the TTU to international prominence as a pacesetter in e-learning. Dr. Logan served regularly for over a decade as a peer consultant for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Middle States Association during her university tenure and again while serving at Air University.



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Dr. Logan holds a bachelor's degree from Midwestern State University and both a master's degree and a doctoral degree in higher education administration from TTU. She is a recipient of the TTU Distinguished Service Award. She has completed certificate programs from Harvard University, University of Georgia, University of North Carolina, and Center for Creative Leadership. Dr. Logan is an Academy Fellow of the congressionally chartered National Academy of Public Administration.

She serves as a member of the National Defense University Board of Visitors and a member of the US Coast Guard Academy's Board of Trustees. Dr. Logan has provided consultation services to organizations such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), George Washington University, the US Air Force, the government of Colombia, and the European Union. She has written and presented extensively to national and international audiences on the topics of e-learning and career-long development.



## **Colonel Nora Ramirez Marcos**

***United States Army (Retired)***



Nora R. Marcos is a Director of Service Delivery at Cisco where she is responsible for delivery of Advanced Services in support of the Army, Defense Agencies, SOF Units and DoD organizations in Germany. She also serves on the Board of Visitors of the National Defense University and the Board of Advisors for the West Point Association of Graduates.

A native of Brownsville, Texas, Nora retired after a 30 - year career serving as a Signal Officer. She commanded Soldiers at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels deploying twice to Iraq in leadership positions, first as a Second Lieutenant and later as a Battalion Commander leading a thousand-Soldier task force with the 3rd Infantry Division near Tikrit, Iraq.

In her final role as a Soldier, she served as the Chief of Staff of the Network Cross Functional Team where she coordinated and synchronized the operations of a matrixed, cross-functional team that developed and executed of the Army's Network modernization priorities. Prior to this, Nora served as Division Chief for Force Development - Mission Command Division, Army G-8 for two years. In this role, she developed the Army's investment strategy for a \$19B portfolio supporting information technology, communications, defensive cyber and business systems to enable Army modernization. Nora also commanded the Defense Information Systems Agency, Continental United States (DISA-CONUS), which is responsible for provisioning, managing, and defending the Department of Defense network.

Nora holds a master's degree in National Security and Strategic studies from the National War College, an M.B.A. from the Texas A&M University - Central Texas, and a certificate in National Security Policy Studies from MIT (Seminar XXI).

Nora lives in Springfield, VA with her husband Elmer (SDSU '85). They have two children, Adrian (SDSU '19) and Rolando (currently attending college in Japan – Asian Pacific University), and two dogs – Rabbit and Bunny.



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## Ambassador Bismarck Myrick

(Retired)  
Board Vice Chair



Ambassador (Ret.) Bismarck Myrick, is Ambassador-in-Residence and Lecturer of Political Science and History at Old Dominion University. He completed a career in the Foreign Service of the U.S. The President twice nominated him to serve as Ambassador (Lesotho 1995; Liberia 1999). He also headed the U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Durban, South Africa -- arriving there in 1990, the year Nelson Mandela was released from 27 years of imprisonment. He later headed the Diplomatic Mission in Cape Town, South Africa. His diplomatic assignments included periods when he served as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. In addition, he served as Desk Officer for Somalia; chaired an interagency working group on strategic nuclear policy; and, as Deputy Director, managed U.S. security assistance policies for South America and the Caribbean. He earned the Department of State's Superior Honor Award.

He has traveled to over 40 African countries and represented the U.S. at the swearing in of South Africa's first democratic parliament. The Kingdom of Lesotho conferred on him the Kingdom's highest honor to a non-citizen. Liberia's major newspapers and civil society organizations named him "Diplomat of the Year" or "Man of the Year" for three consecutive years. The City Council appointed him Goodwill Ambassador for Goree Island, Senegal. He was Political Officer in Liberia during the government of Samuel Doe. He completed regular study projects in southern and western Africa: 2006-2014; South Africa, 2015; and, Senegal and South Africa in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2022.

Ambassador Myrick also completed a career in the U.S. Army. Starting as a private, he rose through the ranks to become a field grade officer. He served in Vietnam, Korea, Japan, Germany and Ethiopia. He earned the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars for heroism in combat, two Bronze Stars for meritorious service in a combat zone, the Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Parachutist Badge and Combat Infantryman Badge. An Army Foreign Area Officer (Africa Specialist), he was Director of African Studies at the School of International Studies, Fort Bragg, NC. He is in the National Infantry Hall of Fame at Fort Benning, GA. He was the ODU 2011 Veterans Day Honoree and Featured Speaker.

He graduated from the University of Tampa with honors and earned an M.A. degree from Syracuse University. Spelman College awarded him a Doctor of Humane Letters degree. He is co-author of *Three Aspects of Crisis in Colonial Kenya*; author of "The United States and Liberia" in *The African Experience: Past, Present, and Future* and author of scores of official documents. Portsmouth, VA, his home town, named two streets in his honor and selected him as a "Portsmouth Notable" – the city's highest honor.

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Active in community service, he is on a number of boards, such as the World Affairs Council. The highly respected New Chesapeake Men for Progress Foundation selected him for the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award. Ambassador Myrick was featured in a lengthy article in the winter 2023 edition of the University of Tampa Journal, entitled: “Worldly Perspective.” He is married to Marie Pierre Myrick and they live in Chesapeake. His children are Attorney Bismarck Myrick, Jr., Wesley Todd Myrick and Allison Elizabeth Myrick Sanders.





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## Dr. DJ Patil



DJ Patil is an entrepreneur, investor, scientist, and leader in public policy. He has held senior roles in industry, academia, and government and his work has been featured in two Michael Lewis books (*The Fifth Risk* and *Premonition*). As a General Partner at GreatPoint Ventures he focuses on building companies in healthcare, enterprise technologies, and national security.

Notable early stage investments include Figma, Confluent, Ola in India, Monte Carlo, Chronosphere, Sumologic, RelateIQ, Peoplehood, and Rebellion Defense.

He is a board member for Devoted Health where he was an executive on the founding team and CTO with the mission to build a health care system that takes care of every member like they were family. Previously he led the product teams at RelateIQ, which was acquired by Salesforce, and was founding board member for Crisis Text Line which works to use new technologies to provide on demand mental and crisis support. At LinkedIn he was Chief Scientist, Chief Security Officer and led the data efforts which included recommendation systems like People You May Know, Who Viewed My Profile, and Jobs You May Like; new technologies like Kafka; co-coining the term Data Scientist. He has also held a number of roles at Skype, PayPal, and eBay.

Dr. Patil's public policy work includes being appointed by President Obama to be the first U.S. Chief Data Scientist where his efforts led to the establishment of nearly 40 Chief Data Officer roles across the Federal government. Establishing new health care programs including the Precision Medicine Initiative (now the NIH All of Us program) and the Cancer Moonshot, new criminal justice reforms including the Data-Driven Justice and Police Data Initiatives that cover more than 94 million Americans, as well as leading the national data efforts. He also has been active in national security and for his efforts was awarded by Secretary Carter the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service which is the highest honor the department bestows on a civilian.

He is a member of the Defense Science Board, a member of the Board of Visitors for National Defense University, and the Dean's Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley.

As a member of the faculty at the University of Maryland, his research focused on nonlinear dynamics and chaos theory, and he helped start a major research initiative on numerical weather prediction. As an AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow for the Department of Defense, Dr. Patil directed new efforts to leverage social network analysis and the melding of computational and social sciences to anticipate emerging threats to the US. He has also co-chaired a major review of US efforts to prevent bioweapons proliferation in Central Asia and co-founded the Iraqi Virtual Science Library (IVSL). And if you've read this far, he barely graduated from high school because of his math grades.

More details can be found on his LinkedIn profile: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/dpatil> and he can be followed on twitter @dpatil



## The Honorable Timothy J. Roemer



Tim Roemer, former U.S. Member of Congress, 9/11 Commissioner, and U.S. Ambassador to India, is Executive Director and Strategic Counselor at APCO Worldwide. He advises clients on government relations and provides strategy guidance. With his background in international trade, education policy, and national security, Ambassador Roemer is a trusted consensus-builder, problem solver and international expert.

In 2009, he was appointed by President Obama to serve as U.S. Ambassador to India, one of America's largest diplomatic missions. He oversaw the signing of the Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative, which broadened U.S. – India coordination in intelligence, homeland security, border security, money laundering, and terrorist financing. Ambassador Roemer strengthened U.S. cooperation with India in technology transfers and sales in the defense and space industries.

Ambassador Roemer was appointed by U.S. Secretary of Defense Austin to serve on the Board of Visitors of National Defense University (<https://www.ndu.edu>). NDU is the nation's premier institution of advanced training and education of senior military and civilian officers as they transition to strategic responsibilities at the highest levels within the US government, business and Industry.

Recently, Ambassador Roemer was appointed to the Board of Directors of the US Anti-Doping Agency (<https://www.usada.org>) which seeks to keep sports clean. It is recognized by the United States Congress as the official anti-doping organization for all Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American and Parapan American sport in the United States.

Ambassador Roemer was an early endorser of President Obama and President Biden and actively supported both successful campaigns. He has participated regularly in TV interviews with CNN, MSNBC, Bloomberg News, NDTV, IndiaToday, CNBC, Voice of America, and other outlets in which he has spoken on U.S. political issues and foreign affairs. He has contributed numerous articles and op-eds to the Washington Post, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and South Bend Tribune on domestic and international issues.

Earlier, Ambassador Roemer proudly served for 12 years in the United States Congress as Representative for Indiana's 3rd Congressional District. Coming from a family of educators, he fought to improve access, standards, and achievement for American education. He was known for his bipartisan work on getting laws passed and for his insights on the Intelligence Committee. Ambassador Roemer was appointed to serve on the 9/11 Commission and helped pass the Commission's recommendations into law. Later, he was a member of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's Presidential Task Force on Combating the Ideology of Radical Extremism, the 21st Century



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National Parks Commission, the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism, and the 9/11 FBI Review Commission.

Ambassador Roemer is a board member of the US India Strategic Partnership Forum (<https://usispf.org/>). He is also a strategic adviser to Issue One (<https://issueone.org/>), a non-profit organization working on a non-partisan basis to address the insidious impact of big money on American democracy. Ambassador Roemer is a member of the board of advisors of **More Perfect**, an initiative of the **Partnership for American Democracy**, a national campaign to align American citizens and institutions around a shared vision for our democracy. Since 2018, he has participated in annual U.S.-China Track II Strategic Dialogues, at which leading U.S. and Chinese experts discuss current political and economic issues of critical importance to the bilateral relationship.

He completed his bachelor's degree at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD). He earned a master's and a doctoral degree in American government from the University of Notre Dame, with his dissertation on: "The Senior Executive Service: Retirement and Public Personnel Policy". Both institutions have recognized his achievements with distinguished alumnus awards, including the "WaveMaker" 2022 award from UCSD.

Ambassador Roemer is married to Sally Johnston Roemer. They have four children, Patrick, Matthew, Sarah, and Grace and live in Great Falls, Virginia, attend St. Thomas à Becket Catholic Church, and have a rescue dog named Willie. Ambassador Roemer collects inexpensive first edition books and overpriced old baseball cards.



**General Norton A. Schwartz**  
**United States Air Force (Retired)**  
**Board Chair**



Norton A. Schwartz serves as President of the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), a nonprofit corporation operating in the public interest. IDA manages three Federally Funded Research and Development Centers that answer the most challenging U.S. security and science policy questions with objective analysis leveraging extraordinary scientific, technical, and analytic expertise. At IDA, General Schwartz (U.S. Air Force, retired) directs the activities of more than 1,000 scientists and technologists employed by IDA.

General Schwartz has a long and prestigious career of service and leadership that spans over 5 decades. He was most recently President and CEO of Business Executives for National Security (BENS). During his 6-year tenure at BENS, he was also a member of IDA's Board of Trustees.

Prior to retiring from the U.S. Air Force, General Schwartz served as the 19th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force from 2008 to 2012. He previously held senior joint positions as Director of the Joint Staff and as the Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command. He began his service as a pilot with the airlift evacuation out of Vietnam in 1975.

General Schwartz is a U.S. Air Force Academy graduate and holds a master's degree in business administration from Central Michigan University. He is also an alumnus of the Armed Forces Staff College and the National War College.

He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a 1994 Fellow of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Seminar XXI. General Schwartz has been married to Suzie since 1981.



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## The Honorable Debra S. Wada



Ms. Wada is the CEO of Senshi Ame Advisors LLC, a government consulting firm that provides strategic advice to corporations and organizations seeking to engage with Congress and the Department of Defense. She also serves as the Executive Director to the Uniformed Services Family Health Plan Alliance, a consortium of former public health hospitals that provide health care to military beneficiaries and retirees. Debra also serves on several boards, including chairing the Board on Army Research and Development under the auspices of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, a member of the National Defense University Board of Visitors, and subcommittee chair on military personnel for the Department of Defense Reserve Forces Policy Board. She is also a Board member for the Military Child Education Coalition, as well as an Advisory Member to the Service Year Alliance.

In 2017, Debra was appointed to the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service Commission, which was formed to review the Selective Service System and develop recommendations to improve the awareness, aspiration, and access to military, national and public service. From 2014 to 2017, Debra served as the Assistant Secretary of Manpower and Reserves Affairs for the United States Army. As the Assistant Secretary, she effectively managed Army military, civilian and contractor personnel, training, and readiness policies, including health care services, for over 1.2 million soldiers and Army civilians. In addition, she oversaw morale, welfare and recreation programs that supported over 2 million Army dependents.

Prior to her appointment by President Obama, Debra spent over 25 years in Congress, including over a decade of experience on the House Armed Services Committee where she served as Deputy Staff Director, Lead Military Personnel Staff, and Professional Staff Member.

Debra graduated from Drake University with a B.A. in Economics and Political Science.



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# NDU SENIOR LEADERSHIP



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## Lieutenant General Michael T. Plehn

**United States Air Force**  
**17<sup>th</sup> President**



Lieutenant General Mike Plehn is the 17<sup>th</sup> President of the National Defense University. As President of NDU, he oversees its five component colleges that offer graduate-level degrees and certifications in joint professional military education to over 2,000 U.S. military officers, civilian government officials, international military officers and industry partners annually.

Raised in an Army family, he graduated from Miami Southridge Senior High School in 1983 and attended the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy with Military Distinction and a degree in Astronautical Engineering in 1988. He is a Distinguished Graduate of Squadron Officer School as well as the College of Naval Command and Staff, where he received a Master's Degree with Highest Distinction in National Security and Strategic Studies. He also holds a Master of Airpower Art and Science degree from the School of Advanced Airpower Studies, as well as a Master of Aerospace Science degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Lt Gen Plehn has extensive experience in joint, interagency, and special operations, including: Middle East Policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, and four tours at the Combatant Command level to include U.S. European Command, U.S. Central Command, and twice at U.S. Southern Command, where he was most recently the Military Deputy Commander. He also served on the Air Staff in Strategy and Policy and as the speechwriter to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Lt Gen Plehn is a master navigator with 2,200 flight hours in the AC-130H, AC-130U, U-28, MQ-1B, MQ-9, and F-16D. He has more than 350 combat hours supporting operations over Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq. He has commanded special operations units at the squadron, group, and wing levels, and was formerly the Deputy Commander of Air Force Special Operations Command.

His awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters, the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with 3 oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters, Aerial Achievement Medal with 4 oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Gallant Unit Citation, the Medal for Distinguished Service to the Colombian Military Forces and the White Nun Medal for Distinguished Actions to the Army and Republic of Guatemala.

An Eagle Scout and avid reader, he speaks passable Spanish. In their quiet time, Mike and his wife enjoy watching ice hockey and providing staff assistance to their two cats.



## **Ambassador Roxanne Cabral** *Senior Vice President*



Ambassador Roxanne Cabral began her role as the Senior Vice President at the National Defense University on April 19, 2023. She most recently served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands from February 2020 to March 2023. Prior to this, she served as Chargé d’Affaires ad interim at U.S. Embassy Panama since March 2018. She arrived in Panama as Deputy Chief of Mission in August 2017.

She has more than 25 years of experience as a U.S. diplomat with several high impact assignments in Washington and abroad. Her most recent Washington, D.C., assignment was as the Director of the Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs from 2015-2017, where she led the development of public diplomacy policy and management of global public diplomacy resources to advance key national security objectives. She held the 2013-14 Department of State Senior Fellowship at the Washington, D.C.-based think tank The Atlantic Council, during which time she co-authored a white paper titled “Diplomacy for a Diffuse World.”

She was the Public Affairs Section Chief at the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou, China, from 2010-2013. Previous overseas assignments include Taiwan, Albania, Mexico City, and Ukraine. She also served as the public diplomacy advisor in the Department of State’s Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs focusing on Balkans issues from 2006-2008.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Vanderbilt University and a Master of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University. She is married to fellow Foreign Service Officer David Schroeder and they have three sons.



# SENIOR LEADERSHIP

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### Dr. James Lepse

*Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs*



Dr. James L. Lepse became National Defense University's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in early December 2022 after serving as the Eisenhower School's Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs since June 2018. He previously served as the Eisenhower School's Associate Dean of Faculty and Academic Planning.

As the Eisenhower School's Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs, Dr. Lepse guides the planning, implementation, execution, and evaluation of all academic programs, as well as all matters related to faculty, teaching, engagement, service, professional development, and research. In the Associate Dean position, he was the Dean of Faculty's primary deputy on a variety of issues related to curriculum and faculty matters, including ensuring the integration, balance, and currency of the curriculum as it is executed by the academic departments and faculty.

While serving at the Eisenhower School, Dean Lepse has taught several different courses related to national security and resource strategy, and has been engaged in the full spectrum of curriculum design, development, execution, and evaluation. Prior to assuming his position as the Associate Dean of Faculty and Academic Planning in October 2016, Dr. Lepse served as the Chair of the Defense Strategy, Acquisition, and Resourcing (DSAR) Department. Additionally, he has served for more than ten years in several key Eisenhower School leadership positions, including three different academic departments. Besides leading academic departments, Dr. Lepse has also previously served as the Director of the Supply Chain Management Concentration and as the Faculty Leader for three different Industry Studies (Electronics, Agribusiness, and Organic Industrial Base).

After graduating from Saint Olaf College, Northfield, MN with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics, he was commissioned in the U.S. Navy. After 27 years of naval service, he retired from active duty at the rank of Captain. Dr. Lepse's graduate education includes a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Public Administration/Public Affairs from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), a Master of Science degree in Applied Economics from the Johns Hopkins University, a Master of Business Administration degree from The Ohio State University, a Master of Science degree in Systems Management from the University of Southern California, and a Master of Science degree in National Resource Strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF). Additionally, he has completed executive education programs at several business schools.

Dr. Lepse is a member of the Defense Acquisition Corps and has achieved Level III acquisition certifications in both Program Management and Information Technology.



## **Ms. Kathryn Kolbe**

***Chief Operating Officer and Vice President for Administration***



Ms. Kathryn Kolbe is the Chief Operating Officer and Vice President, Administration of the National Defense University. Ms. Kolbe is a retired Air Force Colonel and former installation commander at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, home to the Ogden Air Logistics Complex, two fighter wings and the Utah Test and Training Range. Throughout her career, she also served as a Vice Wing Commander, a Civil Engineer Squadron Commander, as a legislative fellow in the US Senate and completed two joint deployments during the Iraq War.

She has experience in the federal government at the Headquarters, Department of Homeland Security, where she led the Congressionally mandated consolidation of 22 component agencies in the National Capital Region and as the Executive Assistant Commissioner, Enterprise Services at Customs and Border Protection, providing full-spectrum mission support for 60,000 personnel, responsible for our nation's trade,

travel and border security.

She is a graduate of the Eisenhower School, and also earned a master's degree from George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in engineering from Lehigh University, where she earned her commission, as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program.





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## Major General Paul J. Rock *United States Marine Corps* **33<sup>rd</sup> Commandant, National War College**



Major General Paul J. Rock, USMC, is the 33<sup>rd</sup> Commandant of the National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington D.C. As the commandant, MajGen Rock leads the formation of academic policies, supervises curriculum planning and preparation, and ensures enduring excellence in classroom teaching.

Born in Baltimore, MD and the son of a soldier, MajGen Rock was commissioned in 1988 upon graduation from the US Naval Academy. Designated a Naval Aviator in 1990, he flew the CH-46E Sea Knight while serving in HMM-263 (1991-95). Following duty as the Air Officer for 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn, 8<sup>th</sup> Mar (1995-96), he returned to the cockpit as a flight instructor at HMT-204 (1997).

Selected to conduct MV-22 Osprey operational testing at HMX-1 (1997-2000), he was then an instructor at VMMT-204 (2000-03) and a “plankowner” for the Corps’ first operational test squadron, VMX-22 (2003-05). Upon his return from 2d MAW (Forward) staff in G-3 (Plans) in Iraq (2005), he took command of VMM-263, the Marine Corps’ first operational MV-22B squadron, and again deployed to Iraq in support of OIF (2006-08).

After squadron command, MajGen Rock attended the National War College (2008-09) and commanded VMMT-204, the Joint USMC/USAF MV-22B training squadron (2009-11). Subsequent O-6 duties included the Joint Staff J-5 Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate (Deputy Directorate-Asia) (2011-13) and the Aviation Expeditionary Enabler Branch Chief and V-22 Cell Lead at Headquarters Marine Corps (2013-14).

General Officer assignments began with Assistant Wing Commander and interim Commanding General of 2d Marine Aircraft Wing (2014-15). He then served in Joint duty as the J5 - Director of Strategy, Policy, & Plans for US Southern Command (2015-17). Shifting to Okinawa, Japan, General Rock served as the 27th Commanding General of Marine Corps Installations Pacific - Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler (2017-19). MajGen Rock was the Commanding General, 3d Marine Expeditionary Brigade and Deputy Commanding General, III Marine Expeditionary Force (2019-20).

MajGen Rock returned from Japan to serve as Director of Strategy and Plans, HQMC Plans, Policies and Operations (2020-2021).

Prior to his current assignment, Major General Rock served as the Commanding General, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command (2021-23).



**Major General William H. Seely III**  
*United States Marine Corps*  
*Commandant, Eisenhower School*



Major General William H. Seely III was born in Saigon, Vietnam. Major General Seely graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from American University and was commissioned through NROTC George Washington University (1989). He holds Masters Degrees from Oklahoma State University, the National Intelligence University, and the Naval War College (With Distinction). He also holds Certificates from the Army War College, Air University, Singularity University, Johns Hopkins, UNC-Chapel Hill, MIT and Harvard.

Major General Seely's leadership assignments include: Communications Platoon Commander, H&S Company, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, (1990-92), Company Commander, India Company, Marine Cryptologic Support Battalion, Kunia Hawaii (2000-02), Battalion Commander, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, 3d Marine Division (2006-08), Commander, Marine Corps Intelligence Schools, Training Command (2011-13), Commander, Task Force-Iraq (TF-Iraq), CJTF-Operation Inherent Resolve (2019-20), and Commandant, Joint Forces Staff College (2020-21).

His staff assignments include: S-2, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, (1992-93); S-2A and S-2, Marine AirGroup-36, (1993-95); S-2, Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Belleau Wood, Mogadishu, Somalia (1994-95); S-2A/S-2, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), 1996-00; Deputy G-2 and G-2 Operations Officer, Marine Forces Central (FWD) Command (2002-03); Regional Terrorism OIC, J2 Counter-Terrorism Branch, (2004-05) and Deputy Director for Intelligence, Joint Intelligence Center, US Central Command (2005-06); Director, Intelligence Integration Division, Combat Development and Integration, MCCDC (2010-11); A/COS for Intelligence (G-2), Marine Corps Forces Command (2013-14); Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace (2015); Intelligence Director (J-2), Combined Joint Forces Land Component Commander-Iraq (CJFLCC-I / Task Force 82nd ABN Div) (2015-16). As a General Officer, he served as Director, Intelligence Department, HQMC (2016-17), Director, Communication Strategy, HQMC (2017-19), Commander, Task Force-Iraq/Director Joint Operations Center-Iraq, CJTF-Operation Inherent Resolve (2019-20), Commandant, Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk (2020-21), and Director, Information Intelligence Division, HQMC (2021-23).

Major General Seely's operational deployments include UNITED SHIELD Mogadishu, Somalia, USS Belleau Wood (1994-95), SOUTHERN WATCH / INTRINSIC ACTION / DESERT THUNDER Kuwait (1996-98) USS Essex/USS Tarawa, SAFE DEPARTURE Eritrea NEO (1998) USS Tarawa, STABILISE East Timor HAO (1999) USS Peleliu, ENDURING FREEDOM Bahrain/Kuwait (2002-03), IRAQI FREEDOM Iraq (2005, 06-07, 08) and INHERENT RESOLVE Iraq (2015-16, 19-20).



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Major General Seely's personal military decorations include: the Defense Superior Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Legion of Merit with Gold Star, the Bronze Star with two Gold Stars and "Combat V", the Defense Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with two Gold Stars, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon. He is authorized to wear the Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification badge, the Scuba Diver Insignia and the Navy and Marine Corps Parachutist Insignia.



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**Major General Thomas D. Crimmins**  
***United States Air Force Air National Guard***  
***Commandant, Joint Forces Staff College***



Major General Thomas Crimmins is the 37th Commandant of the Joint Forces Staff College. As Commandant of JFSC, he oversees its three schools: Joint Advanced Warfighting School (JAWS), Joint & Combined Warfighting School (JCWS), and Joint Information School (JIS). JFSC offers a graduate-level degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy and certifications in joint professional military education to over 1,000 U.S. military officers, civilian government officials, international military officers and industry partners annually.

Maj Gen Crimmins's graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1990 with a Bachelor of Science, Political Science, U.S Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado. In 1997 he graduated Squadron Officer School at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. In 2004, he earned Distinguished Graduate, Master of Arts, Operational Art and Science, Air Command and Staff College. He was also a National Defense Fellow (SDE), at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, DC.

Major General Crimmins has extensive experience in joint, coalition, and interagency operations to include the White House, Combatant Command, and US Embassy positions. Most recently, he was the Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché (SDO/DATT) at US Embassy, Riyadh and the Director CENTCOM Forward Headquarters—Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He has commanded operational flying squadrons both in combat and in garrison, and as a Vice Wing Commander and Wing Commander. He also served as the U. S. Central Command Deputy Director of Mobility Forces, supporting Operations Resolute Support, Freedom's Sentinel and Inherent Resolve. His staff assignments include tours at the Pentagon, White House, United States Military Training Mission-Saudi Arabia, and Headquarters Pacific Air Forces. Additionally, as the former Assistant Adjutant General, Air National Guard, Joint Force Headquarters, Arkansas he is certified as both Joint Task Force and Dual-Status Commander.

Maj Gen Crimmins is a Command Pilot with more than 2,800 flight hours in the C-130E/H/J and has more than 130 combat hours supporting operations over Iraq.

His military awards and honors include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, Aerial Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, and Air Force Achievement Medal.

Maj Gen Crimmins is married and has 2 grown daughters. He enjoys golf and traveling with his family.



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## **Dr. Cassandra C. Lewis**

***Chancellor, College of Information and Cyberspace***



Dr. Cassandra C. Lewis is the Chancellor, and former Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs, at the National Defense University (NDU) College of Information and Cyberspace (CIC). She serves as the principal advisor to the National Defense University President and Provost on curriculum and academic programs related to cyberspace and information. As a member of NDU's senior leadership executive council, Dr. Lewis is instrumental in strategic planning and coordination of University initiatives. Dr. Lewis is the chief administrator of CIC's academic programs, with responsibility for financial, facilities, and personnel management. She maintains relationships with partner NDU components, U.S. government agencies, the private sector, international allies and Department of Defense and civilian educational institutions and universities and has engaged in international capacity building on the behalf of the University.

Under her leadership CIC's academic programs and curricula continue to be rigorous, relevant, and of high quality, to effectively fulfill its mission; and the College continues to be recognized as an institution of choice for education, scholarship, and thought leadership in cyber and information. Her track record and involvement in government, academia, industry, and the non-profit sector reflect her commitment to leader development, educational innovation, and building an inclusive and resilient workforce. Her research and teaching portfolios span a range of fields including: the politics of education; online teaching practices; access and equity in higher education; national security and cyber workforce policy and strategy; cyber leader development; and storytelling for organizational and personal change.

Dr. Lewis is a community-minded educator dedicated to advancing opportunities for underserved women and K-16 students both locally and abroad. She has a particular passion for fostering transformational leadership and advancing careers in STEM.

Dr. Lewis holds a Bachelor's degree in the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences/International Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo; Master's degree in Higher Education from Boston College; a Ph.D. in Education Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park; and a Certificate in Executive Leadership Coaching from Georgetown University.





## **Ms. Denise M. Marsh**

***Acting Chancellor, College of International Security Affairs***



Denise Marsh joined the College of International Security Affairs in 2021 as the Department of State Chair, Associate Dean for Outreach, and faculty. Prior to the National Defense University, Ms. Marsh served as the Chief of Staff and Deputy to the Secretary's Representative for Syria Engagement and Special Envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. A Senior Foreign Service Officer, Ms. Marsh has served as Political Counselor at U.S. Embassy Ankara from 2017-2019. Her experience includes multiple tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, including Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Ms. Marsh held policy coordination roles at the Departments of State and Defense: Director of the Office of the Middle East and Asia in State's Energy and Resources Bureau; Policy Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict; and Senior Congressional Advisor in State's Legislative Affairs Bureau.

Ms. Marsh is a recipient of the Department of State's Award for Heroism and the U.S. Forces-Iraq Commander's Award for Civilian Service. She has a B.A. in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland, an M.A. in International Development from The George Washington University, and an M.M.S. from the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College. A native Spanish speaker, she is also proficient in French and Turkish. Ms. Marsh is married to COL Adrian Marsh and they have a son, Lochlan.



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## The Honorable Denise Natali

*Director, Institute for National Strategic Studies*



Dr. Denise Natali is the Director of the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) at National Defense University (NDU). She previously served as the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations at the Department of State. Dr. Natali has also held positions with a non-governmental organization in Peshawar, Pakistan, the American Red Cross in Washington D.C., and USAID/DART and the American University of Iraq-Sulaimani in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Dr. Natali specializes in the Middle East, Iraq, Kurdish issue, and post-conflict stabilization and is the author of numerous publications op-eds, and analyses. Her books include *The Kurdish Quasi-State: Development and Dependency in Post-Gulf War Iraq* and *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran*, which received the Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Title.

Dr. Natali received a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, and a B.A. in government at Franklin & Marshall College. She studied at L'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris, the University of Tehran Deh Khoda Language Program, and Tel Aviv University. Dr. Natali is a member of the Council of Foreign Relations and speaks French and conversational Kurdish and Farsi.



**Rear Admiral Gerard M. Mauer, Jr.**  
*United States Navy (Retired)*  
**Director, CAPSTONE/KEYSTONE/PINNACLE**



Rear Admiral Mauer is a Philadelphia native and was commissioned via the Villanova University NROTC program. He retired from the Navy in March 2008 after over 31 years of service, which included extensive experience in fleet operations, resource management, technical innovation, Joint Professional Military Education (JPME), inter-agency coordination, and leading organizational change in NATO and joint commands.

From 2008 to 2011, RADM Mauer was a Group Vice President for Sabre Systems Inc. He was responsible for developing then implementing the corporate strategic plan and managing the Southeast Region's profit and loss operations, its contracts, corporate business development, human resources programs, and Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) level III attainment. After leaving Sabre Systems, RADM Mauer had positions as an Associate with Burdeshaw Associates, as a Senior Analyst for Wikistrat, as a Board member and Board Treasurer for the Navy Safe Harbor Foundation, and as a representative and the national Co-Chair for the US Global Leadership Coalition's

**Veterans for Smart Power.**

Admiral Mauer's last position in the Navy was from 2006 to 2008, when he served as the Commandant, Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF). He was responsible for executing the congressionally mandated and accredited master's degree senior Professional Military Education curriculum. As a university leader, he directly supported the direction of the National Defense University and was a key member in the development of the University's strategic plan.

From 2003 to 2006, he served as the NATO Allied Command Transformation's Director, Joint Experimentation, Exercises, and Assessment, where he developed and implemented NATO's largest Concept Development and Experimentation program. The scope included creating NATO's transformation strategic vision and aligning the vision with its concepts and requirements. As a result of his initiatives, NATO rapidly implemented new processes, policies, and systems in support of its forces in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as new capabilities to support its political and military infrastructure in NATO headquarters.

From 2001 to 2003, he was the Deputy, Directorate for Information Operations (J39/DDIO), Joint Staff Director of Operations (J-3) where he was responsible for direct coordination with the Office of the Secretary of Defense staff, Combatant Commands, and inter-agency organizations in their global information operations. In this capacity, his responsibilities also included supervision and operational coordination of the Joint Staff's Special Technical Operations information system and its programs.

Admiral Mauer was a Naval Aviator who commanded Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadrons SEVEN (HS-7) and TEN (HS-10) in addition to assignment as the Commanding Officer of USS NASSAU (LHA 4). He has vast experience at sea with deployments to the Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, and Arabian Gulf. Ashore assignments included: Naval Postgraduate School student, Assistant Program Manager for the Naval Air Systems Command SH-60F/H helicopter program (PMA 266), and Training Officer and Instructor Pilot in Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron ONE (HS-1). He started with CAPSTONE/KEYSTONE/PINNACLE in August of 2016. He was inducted into the Archbishop John Carroll High School (Radnor, Pa.) Hall of Fame class of 2023 -2024.



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### **Ambassador Andrew Young** *Director, International Student Management Office*



Ambassador Andrew Young joined the International Student Management Office at the National Defense University as Director in June 2023. He previously served as Deputy Commander for Civil-Military Engagement, United States Africa Command (2020-2023) and U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso (2016-2020). In over 30 years in public service on four continents, he served in Burkina Faso, Mali, Korea, France, New Zealand, Burma, India, and Hong Kong. In Washington, he served as Foreign Policy Advisor in the U.S. Senate, Senior Watch Officer in the State Department's Operations Center, Desk Officer for Italy, San Marino, India and Bhutan and at the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

Ambassador Young received the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, State Department's Award for Outstanding Deputy Chief of Mission, the Foreign Service Award for Advancing Democracy, the Joint Distinguished Civilian Service Medal from the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards and Burkina Faso's Knight of the Order of the Stallion. He earned a Masters' Degree in African Studies and Economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and an undergraduate degree in Political Science and French at the University of California Berkeley (ΦBK). Married to a fellow Foreign Service Officer (retired) with two children currently in graduate school, Ambassador Young hails from Bakersfield, California.







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