U.S. National Security Priorities after the Election

Michèle Flournoy

Former U.S. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

Thursday, 1 November
7:30 p.m.
HBLL Auditorium

Michèle Flournoy is the former under secretary of defense for policy in the U.S. and the most senior female civilian to serve at the Pentagon. Flournoy served as the Pentagon's top policy advisor to former Defense Chief Robert Gates and to Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. She was influential from the start of the Obama administration in shaping defense policy toward emerging threats and formulating counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. Flournoy was at the center of some of the administration's most challenging foreign policy issues, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the intervention in Libya, and the U.S. response to Arab Spring. She also dealt extensively with the realignment of U.S. global military posture and the rebalancing toward Asia–Pacific. Before becoming under secretary of defense, Flournoy worked in the Defense Department under President Bill Clinton, as both the principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy and threat reduction and the deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy. She oversaw strategy; requirements, plans, and counterproliferation; and Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasian affairs in the U.S. Secretary of Defense office. In 2007, Flournoy founded and was named president of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), an independent, nonpartisan national security think tank that has major influence on Democratic policy. Prior to co-founding CNAS, she was a senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where she worked on a broad range of defense policy and international security issues, including post-9/11 strategy, interagency reform, and reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism. Before that, Flournoy was a distinguished research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, where she founded and led the university's Quadrennial Defense Review working group. She received a BA in social studies from Harvard University and an MLitt in international relations from Oxford University, where she was a Newton-Tatum scholar at Balliol College.

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