

MCCAIN
INSTITUTE



Arizona State University

MEDIA GUIDE

CONTACT:

press@mccaininstitute.org

AMBASSADOR MARK GREEN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Ambassador Mark Green (ret.) serves as the executive director of the McCain Institute for International Leadership. Prior to joining the Institute, from August 2017 to April 2020, Amb. Green served as administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Known for an approach he named the “Journey to Self-Reliance,” Amb. Green helped transform the agency with a new metrics-based, country-by-country framework, USAID’s first-ever private sector engagement policy, sweeping reform of partnership and procurement policies, innovative education assistance for children abroad living in crisis and conflict, a comprehensive effort to protect religious liberty, and a new fund for the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity initiative.

In addition to program reforms, Amb. Green led the agency through a reorganization of its structure and global presence to meet the challenge of widescale human displacement conflated with rising authoritarianism, and to seize new opportunities presented by technology and private enterprise. Along with reshaping bureaus and centers within the agency, Amb. Green oversaw the opening or reopening of offices in Somali, Niger, Cameroon, Ecuador and Tunisia. [[FULL BIO HERE](#)]

CAREER HISTORY

- Executive Director, McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University
- Administrator, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- President, International Republican Institute
- President & Chief Executive Officer, Initiative for Global Development
- Senior Director, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition
- United States Ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania
- Member of the House of Representatives, Wisconsin 8th District

EXPERTISE

- Global promotion of democracy
- U.S. foreign aid benefits and policies
- U.S. policy and interests in Africa
- Intersection of U.S. interests and values
- U.S. and NGO policy towards vulnerable populations around the world
- Wisconsin politics

NOTABLE MEDIA

- **Print:** The Hill, CNN, Devex, Politico, Foreign Policy, Washington Post, Miami Herald, ABC News
- **Radio:** NPR, Voice of America, WPR News

KRISTEN LEANDERSON ABRAMS

SENIOR DIRECTOR, COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Kristen Leanderson Abrams is the senior director of combatting human trafficking at the McCain Institute, providing strategic leadership and operational management for the Institute's program to combat all forms of human trafficking.



Abrams has extensive experience managing programs and advocating for solutions to prevent and end human trafficking and modern slavery around the world. Prior to joining the McCain Institute, she ran a consulting practice providing advice to non-profits working to end exploitation and promote human rights. She also served as the acting director of the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST). [[FULL BIO HERE](#)]

CAREER HISTORY

- Senior Director, Combatting Human Trafficking, McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University
- Acting Director, Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking
- International Pro Bono Counsel, DLA Piper

EXPERTISE

- Human trafficking
- Protection and assistance to runaway and vulnerable populations
- Human rights
- Non-profit management
- Rule of law
- Access to justice

NOTABLE MEDIA

- **PRINT:** The New York Times, Agence France-Presse, Associated Press, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal, Voice of America, The Guardian

PAUL FAGAN

DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



Paul Fagan is the director of the Human Rights & Democracy program for the McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University. Previously, he served as the executive director of the Eastern Congo Initiative (ECI), an organization founded by Ben Affleck.

Prior to joining ECI, Fagan worked at the International Republican Institute (IRI), an organization that promotes democracy worldwide by developing political parties, civic institutions, democratic governance and the rule of law. He was IRI's Africa director for nearly four years, overseeing IRI's programs during South Sudan's historic transition to independence; led election observation missions to Nigeria and Somaliland; implemented IRI's first programs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), ushered in IRI's return to Mali and expanded programming in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe. [[FULL BIO HERE](#)]

CAREER HISTORY

- Director, Human Rights & Democracy, McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University
- Executive Director, Eastern Congo Initiative
- Director for Africa, International Republican Institute
- Deputy Director for Latin America, International Republican Institute
- Chief of Party/Country Director for Zimbabwe, International Republican Institute
- Chief of Party/Country Director for Kenya, International Republican Institute
- Program Officer for Azerbaijan and Georgia, International Republican Institute

EXPERTISE

- Human rights
- Human rights, democracy and elections as it pertains to sub-Saharan Africa
- Democracy Promotion
- Election observations

NOTABLE MEDIA

- **Print:** Agence France-Presse, Miami Herald, National Journal

AARON KOREWA

PROGRAM MANAGER, DECISION THEATER AND KISSINGER FELLOWSHIP



As the program manager for the Decision Theater, Aaron Korewa works to identify and develop projects that illustrate the Decision Theater's ability to visualize complex problems and produce better solutions for the leaders of today. Korewa also manages the Kissinger Fellowship, an initiative that focuses on developing the strategic skills of future foreign policy and national security leaders with the kind of principles that are the hallmark of Dr. Henry A. Kissinger's career.

Korewa is also a security policy writer and blogger. He has written for the Stockholm Free World Forum, The Atlantic Council and Svenska Dagbladet, a major Swedish newspaper. His primary focuses are Eastern European and Nordic Security, the Ukrainian conflict and Russia. He is the editor of a Swedish blog, "Natobloggen," that discusses the importance of NATO-membership. Korewa previously worked as a political adviser at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [[FULL BIO HERE](#)]

CAREER HISTORY

- Program Manager, Decision Theater and the Kissinger Fellowship, McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University
- Editor of "Natobloggen," Stockholm Free World Forum
- Political Adviser, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

EXPERTISE

- Eastern European and Nordic security
- Ukraine
- Russia, including Russian propaganda
- Native speaker of English, Swedish and Polish

NOTABLE MEDIA

- **Broadcast:** Studio Wschod and Studio Zachod, TVP (Polish TV)
- **Print:** The Atlantic Council, Newsweek, Svenska Dagbladet

CLAIRE SECHLER MERKEL

SENIOR DIRECTOR, ARIZONA PROGRAMS, COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Claire Sechler Merkel is the senior director of Arizona programs for the McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University. She served as director of friends and family and chief of staff to Mrs. Cindy McCain during the 2008 presidential election campaign and worked for McCain for President 2000. Previously, she served as legislative assistant and special assistant to U.S. Senator John McCain and campaign coordinator for John McCain's first U.S. senate campaign. Sechler Merkel was associate director in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs for President George H.W. Bush, senior intergovernmental officer at the U.S. Department of Labor and regional director for Eastern and Central Europe at the International Republican Institute. [[FULL BIO HERE](#)]

CAREER HISTORY

- Senior Director, Arizona Programs, Combatting Human Trafficking, McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University
- Chief of Staff, Mrs. Cindy McCain (2008 Presidential Campaign)
- Founder, Sechler Merkel International, LLC
- Political Action Committee Director, Jim Kolbe for Congress
- Regional Director for Eastern and Central Europe, International Republican Institute
- Associate Director of Surrogates, Bush/Quayle 1992
- Associate Director, White House Office of Cabinet Affairs
- Director of Volunteers for Public Liaison, Presidential Inaugural
- Coordinator of Volunteers, 1988 Republican National Convention
- Legislative Assistant & Special Assistant, Senator John McCain
- Campaign Coordinator, John McCain for Senate, 1986

EXPERTISE

- Government affairs
- Human trafficking

AMBASSADOR EDWARD B. O'DONNELL

PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE



Ambassador Edward O'Donnell leads educational leadership programs at the McCain Institute including a prospective Masters of Arts in international affairs and leadership for fall 2021. He teaches the Arizona State University undergraduate course, "Diplomacy in Action, the Embassy Country Team."

Amb. O'Donnell retired from the career U.S. foreign service in 2007, after 33 years in Latin America, German-speaking Europe and other positions in Washington, D.C. He served in Germany, Austria, Panama, Colombia, Afghanistan and Paraguay, as charge, deputy chief of mission, consul general (principal officer), economic counselor and commercial attaché. In Washington, D.C., he was a negotiating ambassador concentrating on Holocaust issues, a democratic charter for the Americas and civil aviation rights. [\[FULL BIO HERE\]](#)

CAREER HISTORY

- Professor of Practice, McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University
- Senior Strategy Advisor, Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security
- Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
- Negotiating Ambassador, Holocaust Issues
- Senior Mentor/Advisor, Afghanistan Government Minister of Counter Narcotics
- Department of State Inspector, Middle East Regional Office of the Inspector General
- Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Congressional Relations Bureau
- Manager: State Department Liaison Office, House of Representatives
- Charge of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Germany
- Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Austria
- Consul General, U.S. Embassy in Panama
- Economic Counselor, U.S. Embassy in Colombia
- Commercial Attaché, U.S. Embassy in Paraguay
- Manager of international firm, business development, global markets, international finance and banking
- Active U.S. Army Reserve, Tours in Germany, Panama and the United States

EXPERTISE

- Counter narcotics and counter terrorism
- Economics, business development, sustainable growth, economic sanctions
- Character-driven leaders in U.S. foreign policy
- Risk management for diplomacy and soft power programs
- International negotiations in business and multilateral diplomacy
- U.S. interests and policy in Europe and Latin America
- The ins and outs of managing U.S. embassy policy and programs around the world
- Holocaust issues and lessons for the future to prevent genocide
- Fluent in German and Spanish

NOTABLE MEDIA

- **Broadcast:** Hesse TV, PBS
- **Print:** Dallas Times Herald, Frankfurter Rundschau, Die Zeit, La Estrella, The Jerusalem Post
- **Radio:** NPR, local radio in Germany, Panama and Israel

NICHOLAS RASMUSSEN

NON-RESIDENT SENIOR FELLOW AND PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE



Nicholas Rasmussen is a non-resident senior fellow at the McCain Institute. He is currently the executive director of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT). Before joining GIFCT in 2020, Rasmussen was the senior director for the National Security & Counterterrorism program at the McCain Institute. He is a national security professional with over 27 years in U.S. government service, including in senior counterterrorism posts at the White House and in the U.S. Intelligence Community from 2001 to 2017. He concluded his government career as director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), leading more than 1,000 professionals from across the Intelligence Community, federal government and federal contractor workforce.

Rasmussen served in senior posts across three administrations, including as special assistant to the president and senior director for counterterrorism at the National Security Council staff under Presidents Bush and Obama before being appointed director of NCTC by President Obama and continuing his tenure at the request of President Trump's administration. [[FULL BIO HERE](#)]

CAREER HISTORY

- Executive Director, Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT)
- Senior Director, National Security & Counterterrorism Program, McCain Institute for International Leadership
- Professor of Practice, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University
- Visiting Professor of Practice, School of Law, University of Texas at Austin
- Distinguished Visiting Fellow, National Security College of Australia National University
- Non-Resident Fellow, Reiss Center on Law and Security, NYU School of Law
- Director, National Counterterrorism Center
- Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Counterterrorism at the National Security Council under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama
- Various policy positions focusing on the Middle East, Department of State

EXPERTISE

- National security policy and decision making
- Terrorism and Counterterrorism
- Homeland Security
- Middle East security
- Leadership

NOTABLE MEDIA

- **Broadcast:** MSNBC, CNN, C-SPAN
- **Print:** Politico, The Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Lawfare, Atlantic Council
- **Radio:** BBC Radio, Pod Saves the World

BRETTE STEELE

DIRECTOR OF PREVENTION AND NATIONAL SECURITY



Brette Steele serves as the director of prevention and national security at the McCain Institute for International Leadership. Steele directs the Peer-to-Peer: Protective Project, a national competition among universities that empowers students to counter hate and targeted violence through the development and deployment of dynamic campaigns. Steele also partners with the Center for American Progress to develop an actionable policy blueprint for countering violent white supremacy in the United States. In addition, Steele advises targeted violence prevention and intervention providers throughout the country as she works to build a national network of practitioners.

Prior to joining the Institute, Steele served as the regional director of strategic engagement for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Terrorism Prevention Partnerships. In that role she advised the State of California in the development of a statewide preventing violent extremism strategy and partnered with counties, cities and nonprofit organizations to develop and implement Preventing Violent Extremism programs. [[FULL BIO HERE](#)]

CAREER HISTORY

- Director of Prevention and National Security, McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University
- Regional Director of Strategic Engagement, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Terrorism Prevention Partnerships
- Deputy Director, U.S. Countering Violent Extremism Task Force
- Senior Counsel, U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Deputy Attorney General
- Senior Counsel, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Legal Policy

EXPERTISE

- Terrorism and hate crime prevention
- Countering violent white supremacy

NOTABLE MEDIA

- **Print:** New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, The Nation, Reuters, OC Register, San Diego Union Tribune
- **Radio:** NPR, Jesse's Office: A Wondros Podcast

AMBASSADOR CLINT WILLIAMSON

SENIOR DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL RULE OF LAW & SECURITY



Ambassador Clint Williamson is the senior director for International Rule of Law, Governance & Security at the McCain Institute for International Leadership and a professor of practice at the Sandra Day O'Connor Law School at Arizona State University. He served as U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues from June 2006 to September 2009. Prior to this appointment, he served as senior director for relief, stabilization, and development and as director for stability operations at the National Security Council between January 2003 and June 2006. Amb. Williamson has also served in a variety of senior roles with the United Nations and the European Union. Most recently, from October 2011 to August 2014, he served as the chief prosecutor of the EU Special Investigative Task Force in Brussels. [\[FULL BIO HERE\]](#)

CAREER HISTORY

- Senior Director, International Rule of Law, Governance & Security, McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University
- Professor of Practice, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University
- U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues
- Chief Prosecutor of the Special Investigative Task Force, European Union
- Special Expert to the Secretary General of the United Nations
- Director of the Department of Justice for the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)
- Trial Attorney, International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia
Senior Director for Relief, Stabilization, and Development, National

EXPERTISE

- Global criminal justice and international tribunals
- Mass atrocity prevention and response
- Investigations and prosecutions of war criminals
- Rule of law development in post-conflict states
- Process of working with international organizations (e.g., UN, EU) and national governments at once
- 1990s Balkans Conflict

NOTABLE MEDIA

- **Print:** The Hill, The New York Times, The Guardian, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal, Politico Europe, Balkan Insight, Die Weltwoche