



Michael A. Sheehan

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict



Michael A. Sheehan was confirmed by the U.S. Senate and sworn-in as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC) in December 2011. He is the Secretary of Defense's principal civilian advisor on programs, policies, and resources for special operations. In addition, the office oversees Defense Department policies and programs regarding counternarcotics, humanitarian assistance, security force assistance programs for building partner capacity, and stability operations. Mr. Sheehan has over thirty-years in public service; much of it involved in counter terrorism, counter insurgency, peacekeeping, and law enforcement operations.

Mr. Sheehan is a 1977 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. He served in a variety of infantry and special forces assignments. In the infantry, he commanded a mechanized company in an armored brigade in Korea with multiple tours on the Demilitarized Zone (1983-85). As a special forces officer, Mr. Sheehan served in a variety of counter terrorism and counter insurgency capacities. He commanded an

Operational Detachment -Alpha in a hostage rescue unit in Panama (Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)) and participated in numerous training and advisory deployments in Latin America including Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Ecuador. In addition, Mr. Sheehan graduated from the Colombian Commando course, Lancero. He is Airborne, Ranger, Special Forces, Jungle Warfare, and Jumpmaster qualified, and is a recipient of the Combat Infantry Badge. In 1985 and 1986, Mr. Sheehan was the brigade counter insurgency advisor for the Fourth Brigade in Chalatenango, El Salvador, one of the most combative regions in the country.

While on active duty, Mr. Sheehan served in the field on peacekeeping missions in Somalia (1993-94) and Haiti (1995). In both cases, he was Special Advisor to the head of the United Nations (U.N.) mission and engaged in the integration of U.N. military and civilian police programs. Mr. Sheehan served on the National Security Council staff for both President George H.W. Bush (1989-92) and President William Jefferson Clinton (1995-97).

After retiring from the Army in 1997, Mr. Sheehan served at the State Department in the Bureau of International Organizations. After the bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa, Mr. Sheehan was appointed by President Clinton as Ambassador-at-Large for Counter Terrorism (1998-2000) and was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1999. During his tenure Mr. Sheehan establish bi-lateral counter terrorism working groups with India and Russia (both of which are still operating). From 2001 to 2003, Sheehan went back to peacekeeping duty as the Assistant Secretary General of Mission Support in the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations, where he was responsible for supporting 16 missions around the world and over 40,000 military and police peacekeepers.

From 2003 to 2006, Mr. Sheehan served as the New York Police Department (NYPD) Deputy Commissioner for Counter Terrorism. In this position he was instrumental in reshaping the NYPD into what is widely regarded as one of the most effective counter terrorism organizations in the world.

Mr. Sheehan has master degrees from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service (1988)



and the US Army Command and Staff College (1991). In both programs his dissertations concerned irregular warfare theory and practice. Mr. Sheehan spoke and lectured on counter terrorism and counter-insurgency policy and was a distinguished fellow at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point and the Center for Law and Security at NYU. In addition, he was the on-air counter terrorism analyst for NBC News from 2006-11.