

Empowering the Next Generation of Foreign Policy Leaders

The CENSA Mission: To improve long term national security policymaking by building a cohesive network of talented midcareer professionals across sectors, providing them with ongoing opportunities to learn real world practice from peers and experts across disciplines, and building the preeminent platform for production and distribution of quality midcareer analysis, research and op-eds into the national security community.

The Power of the “Midcareers”

The need for preparing the next generation of enlightened foreign policy leaders is greater than ever. In the second half of the 20th century, unitary rational actors controlled national security issues. Now, as we start the 3rd Millennium, emerging and non-traditional issues have come to the forefront of the security agenda, and the world is increasingly shaped by globalization, terrorism, counter-insurgency, transnational crime, financial interdependence, health issues, and scientific and technological progress. Midcareer professionals work on the frontlines everyday and are the first to confront the impact of new issues as they emerge. CENSA provides an exceptional opportunity to tap into and exploit these unique observations. These new issues cut globally across private industry and government lines, and they challenge conventional institutions.

The U.S. must retain its influence over these global issues, and the key to doing this is the development of our future national security leaders. CENSA challenges and empowers them to learn, hone their talents and grow.

CENSA does just that. Founded over 10 years ago as a non-partisan, non-profit organization, we give proven midcareer professionals— “midcareers”— in the government, military, academic, and business fields a real voice in the national security dialogue. We provide the channels through which they can cross-pollinate their ideas and broadcast them to the foreign policy community.

Through CENSA, midcareers help shape emerging national security issues by systematically contributing to the discussion, preparing themselves to take on national security issues in the future. Currently there are very few opportunities for midcareers to join forces. So there is a huge opportunity to bring together their valuable ideas and policy options through CENSA.

CENSA’s Objectives and Strategies

- 1.** Provide a unified platform for interdisciplinary midcareers by making it a membership requirement to generate chapters, essays, newsletters, or op-eds that are reviewed by CENSA leaders and then distributed to key national security institutions, think tanks, and policy makers.
- 2.** Develop a cadre of highly networked leaders with strong ties across sectors and disciplines by admitting a high quality group of cross-industry midcareers and encouraging collaboration through in-person events and training, as well as through online interaction.
- 3.** Provide ongoing situation-based training and development by creating opportunities to educate and inform midcareers with up-to-the-minute research and policy process training events.

Our Members

CENSA develops leaders from a diverse international group of public sector foreign policy specialists, military officers, private sector professionals, and accomplished academics, all with a midcareer’s focus on actionable policy tools. Members come from a wide variety of disciplines, such as business, law, NGOs, the military, and information technology—and from a broad range of backgrounds, fostering an on-the-ground perspective to the policy debate.

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I had the privilege to work with the founders of the Council for Emerging National Security Affairs at the outset and provided some strategic direction to them in 1999 when the organization was formed. I thought they had a deep commitment to national security, a sound structure, a strong model for reaching out across the private and public sector boundaries, and high professional standards. So my advice to them was to focus the efforts of CENSA on substance... getting things done in order to have a real impact. Ten years later it is clear they have done that and quite a bit more. As a former Deputy Secretary of Defense, I recognize the tremendous value of CENSA’s network and intellectual capital. They engage military officers, public sector officials, businessmen, and professors alike in formal discussions and policy debates, they have cataloged the advances in publication after publication. And they have found a way to reach the heart of complex, emerging national security issues. They have a strong track record and a growing reputation. I am certain that their intellectual influence will continue to grow. If I were back in the Pentagon I wouldn’t hesitate to leverage this wellspring of talent. CENSA is an extraordinary organization.

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John P. White

Former Deputy Secretary of Defense

Currently National Security Lecturer/Chair of the Middle East Initiative, Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government

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CENSA is a unique treasure. No other group succeeds as well at bringing together national security stakeholders—the military, the private and public sectors, and academe—to debate the challenges confronting our nation. At teleconferences and dinner meetings, professionals from these four sectors explore vital security policy issues. Rejecting the bitter partisanship and ideological blinders that constrain so much of today’s political and national security debate, CENSA members strive for creative approaches and a genuine consensus on national security policies that will enhance American interests at home and abroad. Its books—on such subjects as military innovation, hybrid warfare, redefining and reforming intelligence in an age of transnational threats, counterinsurgency and combating terrorism—reflect not only the talent of its members and contributors, but the group’s commitment to sustained analysis and innovative solutions to the complex security problems we face.”

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Judith Miller

Pulitzer Prize Winning Journalist (2002), Contributing Editor of City Journal in New York, Adjunct Fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and formerly Special Correspondent with the New York Times

CENSA Programs

Over the past ten plus years, CENSA has empowered top-notch midcareers by producing a variety of programs and publications that encourage its members to share information among themselves and with the greater national security community. During that time, CENSA has achieved the following:

Membership

- Attracted a committed, active membership base of over 200 professionals
- Developed a leadership structure with effective operating and project committees
- Established a compelling website with content, media, and membership information

Activity and Events

- Established a series of nearly 100 dinner events in three major cities: Washington, DC, New York, and London, as well as in 5 other cities across the globe
- Established a recurring thematic teleconference series
- Conducted six major member conferences with panels and leading keynote speakers such as Brent Scowcroft, Robert Gallucci, and Richard Clarke

Research and Institutional Outreach

- Published six major hardcopy books covering diverse topic areas with over 30 authors
- Developed an online media center with over 50 articles and editorials
- Established and ran educational and internship programs at three leading U.S. universities—Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, and Columbia

Publications



Crossroads Africa: Perspectives on US-China-Africa Security Affairs, 2009



Countering Insurgency and Promoting Democracy, 2007



Faces of Intelligence Reform: Perspectives on Direction and Forms, 2005



Beyond the Campaign: The Future of Countering Terrorism, 2004



Program on Innovation and National Security, 2002



Presidential Transition Report: Passing the Torch—Recommendations to the Next President on Emerging National Security Issues, 2001

Key Goals for the Next Five Years

- Create a larger (approximately 500 member), more international, and more specifically targeted membership base for a greater pool of intellectual and experiential capital
- Hold more frequent and more varied sets of events and teleconferences to achieve the goal of a tightly connected community
- Publish more frequent and more broadly distributed publications and op-eds to make CENSA the premier platform for national security midcareer policy input
- Build stronger relationships with key national security related nonprofit institutions and higher education institutions like Johns Hopkins SAIS and Columbia SIPA
- Solidify the funding base with multi-year grants, an active fundraising plan, and an endowed fund
- Establish full time staff to develop and coordinate major programs and infrastructure

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