

25 Years After 9/11: NCTC Directors Assess Progress and Remaining Challenges

by [Christine Abizaid \(/experts/christine-abizaid\)](#), [Matt Olsen \(/experts/matt-olsen\)](#), [Nicholas Rasmussen \(/experts/nicholas-rasmussen\)](#)

September 8, 2026, starting at 9:00 a.m. EDT (1300 GMT)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Christine Abizaid \(/experts/christine-abizaid\)](#)

Christine Abizaid served as NCTC Director from 2021 to 2024. Previously, she served as deputy assistant secretary of defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia, as director for counterterrorism on the National Security Council, and as senior policy advisor to President Obama's assistant for



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Matt Olsen served as NCTC Director from 2011 to 2014. His previous posts included general counsel for the National Security Agency and assistant attorney general for national security at the Justice Department. He is currently deputy general counsel for Uber Technologies.



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Nicholas Rasmussen served as NCTC Director from 2014 to 2017, as a senior member of the National Security Council staff under Presidents Bush and Obama, and as counterterrorism coordinator for the Department of Homeland Security from 2022 to 2024. Outside of government, he was the founding executive



Brief Analysis

Join us for a conversation with three former directors of the National Counterterrorism Center as they look back on a quarter century of combating the global terrorist threat. Watch live starting at 9:00 a.m. EDT (1300 GMT) on Tuesday, September 8, 2026.

As the anniversary of the September 11 attacks approaches, the threat of terrorism at home and abroad is far from extinguished. Global jihadist groups like the Islamic State and al-Qaeda are still active, Iran and its proxies continue to mount attacks, and a range of groups driven by other ideologies pose new threats to U.S. interests around the world. How much progress have Washington and its partners made on these issues since 2001,

and where have they fallen short? More important, what can be done differently to make us safer today?

To discuss the terrorist threat landscape twenty-five years after 9/11, The Washington Institute will hold a virtual Policy Forum with three former directors of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), established in the wake of the 9/11 attacks to reduce stovepipes within the U.S. intelligence community. The event will be moderated by Fromer-Wexler Senior Fellow Matthew Levitt.

Christine Abizaid served as NCTC Director from 2021 to 2024. Previously, she served as deputy assistant secretary of defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia, as director for counterterrorism on the National Security Council, and as senior policy advisor to President Obama’s assistant for homeland security and counterterrorism. She currently works at Google as the vice president of trust and safety, global policy and standards.

Matt Olsen served as NCTC Director from 2011 to 2014. His previous posts included general counsel for the National Security Agency and assistant attorney general for national security at the Justice Department. He is currently deputy general counsel for Uber Technologies.

Nicholas Rasmussen served as NCTC Director from 2014 to 2017, as a senior member of the National Security Council staff under Presidents Bush and Obama, and as counterterrorism coordinator for the Department of Homeland Security from 2022 to 2024. Outside of government, he was the founding executive director of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism and currently works as the senior advisor for national security and leadership programs at the McCain Institute.

The Policy Forum series is made possible through the generosity of the Winkler Lowy Foundation. ❖

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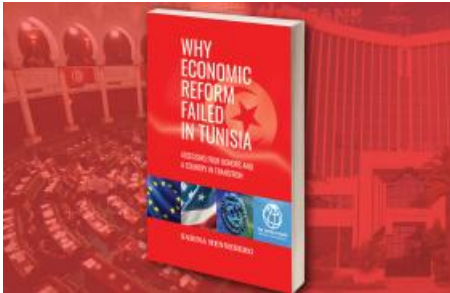
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