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ADM. MICHAEL G. “MIKE” MULLEN, USN
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Adm. Mike Mullen is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest-ranking officer in the U.S. armed forces and the principal military advisor to the President of the United States.

As such, he presides over all meetings and coordinates the efforts of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), advising the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council.

Prior to this duty, Adm. Mullen served as the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), the Navy’s top uniformed leader and representative to the JCS. He has also served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations and, in 2005, was the commander of NATO’s Joint Force Command Naples and commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, leading the Alliance’s peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and its training mission in Iraq.

His rise in the Navy started at sea. Three months after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968, then-Ensign Mullen reported aboard the destroyer U.S.S. Collett for duty as anti-submarine officer, where he deployed to the Western Pacific and participated in combat operations off the coast of Vietnam.

Over the course of his career at sea, he served aboard six other warships, three as the commanding officer; and as an admiral, he commanded the U.S.S. George Washington Carrier Strike Group and the U.S. Second Fleet.

Since taking office as JCS Chairman in October 2007, Adm. Mullen has focused his efforts on three main priorities: 1) defending vital national interests in the Middle East; 2) resetting, revitalizing and reconstituting the armed forces; and 3) properly balancing global risk. He has placed significant emphasis on the expansion of counter-insurgency warfare training and resources and was an early advocate for a greater focus on operations in Afghanistan. He now considers that war the U.S. military’s “main effort.”

Adm. Mullen and his wife, Deborah, also devote much of their time to advancing a host of warrior and family support initiatives, to include survivor benefits, suicide prevention, mental health, wounded care and veteran employment and education.