

Dr. Robert Gates Keynote Speaker – May 2, 2013



One of the most respected leaders in recent U.S. history, Robert Gates served as a trusted advisor to eight U.S. presidents, driving U.S. intelligence and defense policies over the past four and a half decades from the Cold War to today's ongoing war on terrorism.

As Secretary of Defense under two presidents—Barack Obama and George W. Bush—and through two wars—Iraq and Afghanistan—Gates shares with audiences his candid insights on global politics and world affairs, U.S. intelligence and defense strategies, leadership and leading change in a large institution and the global challenges of the 21st century. Considered “The Soldier’s Secretary,” for his commitment to placing the men and women in uniform as his top priority, Gates made significant advances in soldier safety including replacing vehicles in the field with heavily armored vehicles, which according to *USA Today*, reduced roadside bomb attacks and fatalities by almost ninety percent.

A three-time recipient of the Distinguished Intelligence Medal, the CIA’s highest award, he is the only career officer in the CIA’s history to rise from entry-level employee to Director. A nonpartisan senior level official – considered an anomaly by the *Washington Post*—Gates’ leadership and guidance earned him the National Security Medal, the Presidential Citizens Medal and the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal. Successes include the reshaping of U.S. nuclear weapons policies, the removal of troops from Iraq and the resurgence of troops in Afghanistan—culminating in the death of Osama bin Laden.