

BRIAN HELMER

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Senior enterprise management strategist and national security expert with extensive experience leading large-scale transformation and initiatives within the Department of Defense and U.S. Interagency. A trusted advisor to senior leaders, integrating deep strategic analysis with practical execution across both enterprise management and geopolitical/national security domains. Lead expert for how the Secretary (SecDef) and Deputy Secretary of Defense (DepSecDef) engage with the broader Department on organizational and management matters (C-suite processes).

Led the transformation of the SecDef's Board of Directors Framework, streamlining governance and decision-making across 31 senior-level forums—creating a scalable model now successfully adopted by multiple organizations without additional cost. Proven ability to align organizational structures with strategy, enhance decision-making efficiency, and implement high-impact reforms in complex, multi-stakeholder environments. Extensive background in U.S. Interagency coordination, defense policy, and international security.

Founder and Principal at Iron Frame Advisory, a strategy and management consultancy translating decades of DoD and interagency experience into actionable solutions. Iron Frame supports clients through strategy execution, performance transformation, and enterprise reform, bridging the divide between insight and implementation.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Enterprise transformation and reform leadership
- Strategic advisory for senior executives and decision-making bodies
- Large-scale organizational governance and operational management
- National security policy, strategy, and geopolitical analysis
- U.S. interagency coordination and international defense diplomacy
- Cross-functional team leadership and stakeholder coordination
- Applied teaching and mentoring in public affairs
- Resource alignment, risk mitigation, and performance optimization
- Adapting and applying private-sector management models in government environments
- Translating strategic plans into actionable outcomes

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT REFORM & SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANALYST

Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) | Pentagon, Washington, DC | 2012 to 2025

- Led the transformation of the Secretary of Defense's governance framework, streamlining governance and decision-making across 31 senior-level forums.

- Pioneered a senior civilian management model—recognized as a DoD best practice and replicated across nine organizations to improve leadership continuity and strategic oversight.
- Directed major enterprise-wide reforms, including bottom-up reviews of DoD's Space Enterprise and assessment of the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act integration into DoD's strategic planning framework.
- Primary author of the strategy enabling SecDef-empowered cross-functional teams, guiding enterprise-wide implementation.
- Led the integration of performance measurement systems into SecDef and DepSecDef decision-making venues.

PROGRAM MANAGER – NATO & INTERAGENCY DEFENSE INITIATIVES

Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict (OSD) | Pentagon, Washington, DC | 2011-2012

- Oversaw program strategy, guidance, and \$35M budget for multinational training programs ranging from small unit tactics to regional exercises.
- Developed engagement strategies with the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, State Department, U.S. Country teams, NATO International Staff, and U.S Mission NATO.
- Led in-country working groups, working directly with foreign defense ministries and military staff, U.S. and foreign ambassadors to develop practical implementation plans.

SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR REFORM INTEGRATION & NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

Project on National Security Reform | Washington, DC | 2008 to 2010

- Led core staff of 28; orchestrated research, budgets, and holistic implementation of 6 cross-functional teams and over 160 experts on national security system reform.
- Major initiatives included: redesign of the National Security Staff; concept development for the Next Generation State Department; enhanced Homeland Security National Preparedness System, and problem analysis of National Counterterrorism Center's strategic operational planning.
- Substantive interaction with internationally recognized national security thought leaders and multi-national organizations and governments.
- Advised senior policymakers on interagency governance and crisis response.

DEPUTY DOD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY & MILITARY ASSISTANT (O-6)

Immediate Office of the Secretary of Defense | Pentagon, Washington, DC | 2004 to 2008

- Managed executive-level decision support, overseeing high-priority actions for the SecDef and DepSecDef.
- Served as the primary after-hours action officer for U.S. Government agencies requiring SecDef authorization for emergent DoD support for foreign countries and civil authorities.
- Led congressional engagement and sensitive initiatives on behalf of senior DoD leadership.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, AVIATION OFFICER DISTRIBUTION DIVISION & CAPTAIN ASSIGNMENTS

Navy Personnel Command | Millington, TN | 2003 to 2004

- Career manager for over 700 Naval Aviation captains; developed career paths for all aviation officer grades.
- Led number of large statutory promotion boards involving thousands of candidate records, to include Lead Recorder (director) of 2003/2004 combined Aviation Command Screen Board involving 10,000 officer records.

EDUCATION

Master of Science, National Security Strategy | National War College, Washington, DC

Bachelor of Business Administration, Accounting | University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN

ADDENDUM

POLITICO-MILITARY HIGHLIGHTS

Global Exposure

- Visited over 55 countries during an extensive military and civilian career, gaining firsthand strategic insights and cultivating trusted relationships across allied nations and foreign ministries.

Office of the Secretary of Defense (2012–2025)

- Attended all Deputy Secretary of Defense decision and budget meetings (2014-2021) spanning all strategy, operations, and management issues, providing enterprise reform insights and contributing to international defense strategy development.
- Led performance integration into SecDef decision-making to enhance DoD-wide responsiveness to national security interests and threats.

Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict (2011–2012)

- Served as Program Manager for NATO and interagency initiatives, directly implementing U.S. and NATO policy through bilateral and multilateral engagements across Eastern Europe, Southwest Asia, and NATO headquarters.
- Built and led in-country defense working groups with foreign defense ministries, U.S. embassies, and senior allied military officials.

Project on National Security Reform (2008–2010)

- Led design and operationalization of cross-functional teams (CFTs) aligned to the U.S. Government's most urgent national security priorities.
- Worked closely with senior interagency leaders to implement structural reforms outlined in the final bipartisan report.

Immediate Office of the Secretary of Defense (2004–2008)

- Served as Military Assistant and Executive Secretary in SecDef's immediate office. Oversaw critical international affairs actions and after-hours decision-making processes involving emergent global support missions.
- Managed highly sensitive coordination between senior DoD leadership and interagency partners.

Navy Staff (1991–1993)

- Served as Middle East/Southwest Asia desk officer and Foreign Area Officer for Navy Staff, leading diplomatic security engagements and access negotiations with Gulf Cooperation Council nations.
- Primary liaison and direct engagement with foreign attaches and embassies for 12 countries.

Joint Staff (1990-1991)

- Represented the U.S. during Conventional Armed Forces Treaty negotiations in Vienna, Austria with former Warsaw Pact countries; designated treaty inspector.
- Served in the Pentagon's National Military Command Center as part of U.S. Interagency crisis action team during DESERT STORM.

U.S. Senate (1979-1980)

- Chief Page responsible for an in-depth knowledge of Senate rules and status of legislation, amendments, motions, etc. ensuring all Senators were apprised of Majority/Minority Leader positions on roll call votes and other floor actions. Supervised a 30-member Page corps.
- Over a 14-month period, on the Senate Floor anytime the Senate was in session.