

[00:00:00 to 00:00:06 – opening music and announcement]

Female Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. I want to make sure we have as much time as possible with our speaker today. Let me invite you all to get settled, you're your food, your drink, your chocolate, and sit down before we talk about everything scary in the world.

I have to start with an apology. My name is Amy Zegart. I am the co-director here at CSAC, Senior Fellow here, and Senior Fellow at Hoover. So, when I first invited Michael Morell to come to Stanford, my recruitment effort consisted of two photos. I sent him a picture of Washington, D.C. at this time of year covered in snow and I sent him a picture of Stanford – not this weather – beautiful, sunny, and I said it's your choice.

Unidentified Male: We were walking around in T-shirts and shorts.

Amy Zegart: So, he brought the rain and the first thing he said to me today was; and now it's raining harder than yesterday. I apologize for the rain, but I'm sure that the conversation between all of us here today will make up for the weather. It's such a pleasure for me to introduce Michael Morell as our Wesson Lecturer for 2017 here at FSI. As you all know, he has served twice as Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and twice as Acting Director of the agency.

As Deputy Director from 2010 to 2013 he oversaw of course all the analytic and collection operations, represented the agency at White House meetings, and served on the deputy's committee. He capped a 33-year extraordinary career serving in the U.S. intelligence community. He has been at the forefront of nearly every national security challenge that this nation has confronted in that period: from our efforts in counter-terrorism to countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the evolving cyber threat landscape, and the rise of China just to name a few.

He has served six American presidents; three Republicans and three Democrats. He began his career in 1980 as an economic analyst and worked on east Asia for 14 years and has served a variety of roles before assuming the Deputy Directorship and the Acting Director. Let me just mention two: he served as Executive Director of the CIA, which is essentially running the agency, an equivalent job to running a Fortune 200 company. He also served as the briefer to President George W. Bush. He writes in this book – and I would urge you all to buy it; it's a terrific book and a bestseller and he didn't pay me to say that.

He writes in the book that “if you're a little league baseball player as a kid you dream of playing in the World Series. If you're a pianist, you dream of playing in Carnegie Hall, and if you're a junior analyst at the CIA you dream of one day being the president's daily briefer and serving the first customer.”

He was with President Bush on 9-11 and hopefully we'll talk about that in a little bit, and he was also with President Obama and instrumental in the operation to bring Osama Bin Laden to justice. He has a number of awards. I'll just mention three of them; the Presidential Rank Award – those of you who have served in government know how prestigious this award is – he also won the Distinguished Intelligence Medal for this role in the 2011 Bin Laden operation, and the Defense Department Service Medal.

Now, he retired in 2013, but you don't seem retired in any way. Since then he has served as Senior Counselor at Beacon Global Strategies, he's a Senior Fellow at the Belford [PH] Center, where I guarantee you the weather is worse today than it is here., and is an analyst for CBS News. Most of what he has written remains classified and you can't read it, but he's written this terrific book as I've mentioned and he's also written some pretty remarkable Op-eds, which we'll talk about here today.

Before I jump into the conversation please just join me in giving a warm weather welcome to Michael Morell.

Michael Morell: Thank you.

Amy Zegart: Michael guest-lectured in our undergraduate class and I see a few of our students here today. I want to start by asking you about something that you mentioned in class yesterday. You said that intelligence fundamentally has two jobs; understanding what's happening now and understanding what's driving what will happen later. So I want to ask you to put your analytic lens and help us understand what's happening now in U.S. foreign policy and what factors are driving that?

Michael Morell: What's happening now is great confusion I think, with different voices saying different things about the same issue. I think the best example of that was over the weekend. On Thursday, Nikki Haley the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. took – can you guys hear me?

Audience: No.

Amy Zegart: No. Why don't I give you my microphone?

Michael Morell: So I think the current situation is confusion. I think that's displayed best by the people saying different things about the same issue. The best example of that is what's happening in the Ukraine. On Thursday Nikki Haley, the new U.N. Ambassador condemned Russia for its recent actions in the Ukraine. She said that the sanctions would stay on until Russia stopped its support for the separatists in the eastern Ukraine and until Crimea was returned – pretty tough language.

On the Sunday shows the vice president said he was deeply disturbed by Russian actions in the eastern Ukraine, and on Saturday the president said something completely different. He didn't even raise Ukraine when he had the opportunity to do so. So, I think there's confusion right now and part of that is a reflection of personalities of course in this administration. Part of it is a reflection of the fact that he got such a late start. They did not think they were going to win.

More than anybody in either campaign who thought that Donald Trump was going to win so literally the day after the election is when they started thinking about the transition. And then the third, I think this is somewhat reflective of any new administration, trying to work out the kinks and figure out how you're going to do business. So I think it's confusion. The factors that will determine where we go from here is a great question.

I think there are two polls and a wild card. One poll is Steve Bannon and his main guys, Steve Miller and to some extent Mike Flynn, who have a particular world view. That particular world view is the threat to the Judeo-Christian way of life, our values, capitalism, and that threat originates from two places. It originates not from Islamic extremists or Jihadists; it emanates from Islam itself and from God-less communists in China. That's their world view. Mike Flynn doesn't buy into that completely I don't think, but that I think is Steve Bannon's world view.

I think they're going to come at national security from that perspective. I think embracing Russia is, interestingly fully consistent with that world view. Russia is a Christian country at the end of the day. That's the way they look at it; how do we use it to leverage against Iran and Islam and how do we use it to leverage against China? So I think that's one poll.

I think the other poll is the rest of the national security team, and I have to say rest because Mike Flynn of course is a member of the national security team, but so is Steve Bannon now that he's a member of the National Security Council. So, the rest of the National Security Team is Rex Tillerson, Jim Mattis, John Kelly, Mike Pompeo, and Dan Coates and I think they are going to come at as most national security experts would come at issues. For example I think they don't see Islam as the threat; they see Jihadists as the threat. They understand the threat that Russia poses to our strategic interests.

There's going to be a clash between those two groups and I think it's really tough to say who's going to win the battles. I can imagine that the Bannon group wins some and the Tillerson/Mattis group wins some and I imagine there's a coming together and a consensus on other issues. Those are the two polls I think, and then you have the wild card of the president, whom I don't think has any particular ideology nor do I think he has any particular policies that he adheres to. I think it's all about him and what makes him look good and I think that's how he'll weigh in on these issues.

I think those are the factors that will determine where we go and where we end up I wouldn't place a bet.

Amy Zegart: So, let me push a little bit more on that. You did mention adversaries or allies or events. How constrained is the directionality of our foreign policy by those three things, if at all?

Michael Morell: What were the three things again real quick – allies?

Amy Zegart: Allies, adversaries, and events.

Michael Morell: So, obviously we know that all three of them will play a huge role, but I think the administration, they might think about the first. Certainly the two camps think about it. The national security camp and the Mattes/Tillerson camp I think understand allies and adversaries the way everybody in this room does. I think the Bannon camp is willing to mix those up and have different views about who the allies and adversaries are.

And then of course unless you've been in government, unless you've dealt with these events, and how they force you to make decisions, how they sometimes – based on the decisions you make in a very short period of time – become your strategy, define your strategy. They don't understand that yet, but they will I think soon enough.

Amy Zegart: One of the big adversaries that it seemed that Trump had as he was taking office was the Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence community more broadly.

Unidentified Male: You.

Amy Zegart: You've written about this in *The Washington Post*. I would urge you all to read his piece in the Post over the weekend. Help us understand where we are with the distrust between the president and in particular CIA and why that matters.

Michael Morell: I actually think this is interesting. One of the key jobs of an intelligence officer is to think about the issue from the other guy's perspective. For example, on Russian interference in the U.S. election, it's really helpful to know – it doesn't excuse – but it's really helpful to know that Vladimir Putin believes that we mess around in his politics. We don't, but he thinks we do. He really does, so that just gives a different perspective, right, to him messing around in our politics.

Let's look at the intelligence community, Trump issue from Trump's perspective. What does he see? He sees a former director of the CIA, Mike Hayden, criticize him during the campaign pretty harshly. He sees a former acting director of the CIA not only criticize him but endorse his opponent. So

you could say right off the bat you could hear him saying; what's with these CIA guys?

Then what's the next thing he sees? Within 24 to 48 hours after his first intelligence briefing when he becomes the Republican nominee for president, he sees leaks out of everything and the information that leaks is critical of him and his national security advisor, Mike Flynn in the media. Chris Christie had to restrain Mike Flynn, right? That raises the question again in his mind; where do these leaks come from? Are these guys out to get me? What's going on here?

He sees that during the general election campaign itself that the current director of the CIA, John Brennan, say one, two, or three things publicly that seem critical of candidate Donald Trump. Trump says I'm going to tear the Iranian nuclear deal on the first day. John Brennan says publicly that that would be utter folly. Again, it raises a question in his mind about the CIA place, right?

Then he becomes president and within a week there are leaks about him not taking the PEB briefing, so again he says; what is going on with these CIA people? So, I think from his perspective – and I'm just guessing; I don't talk to the guy obviously – from his perspective he saw the CIA as a political institution and I think that's where his critique of the intelligence community and CIA came from. He was pushing back on that.

Just as Putin was saying, it's not an excuse for him to do that. I don't think it was the right thing to do even if we were being political and we weren't. I think he connected the dots in the wrong way, but I think that's what he was thinking. You and I were having a conversation yesterday about; does he think about it as an institution that is there to support the president politically. Does he think that? Given what happened over the summer and into the fall does he even think that more? Have we given him a reason to think that way, which is obviously very dangerous?

Having said that, I think that it was a very positive gesture for him to make the Central Intelligence Agency his first stop, like that was a really good idea, whoever's idea that was. I think that the initial comments he made there were really positive about the hard work and the dedication and what people do and then he went off-script.

Amy Zegart: For most of it.

Michael Morell: And it was a disaster. I think things have gotten better. I think people at the agency have calmed down. I think at the end of the day the most important thing for the people at the agency is not whether he agrees with what it is that they say and they tell him but whether he listens. Is he open-minded? Is he actually reading? Is he actually taking a briefing? Is he taking the information

on board? Whether he agrees or not is not the important point, but is he listening? That's the very essence of the agency is to serve the president of the United States.

I need to say two more things on this. One is that I did not find it perfect. I did not find it surprising that his first confrontation, his first struggle with his government was with the Central Intelligence Agency. Why? It's because the fundamental job of the agency is to put facts and fact-based analysis on the table and the president is not a person likes to hear facts that are inconsistent with his world view. So it's not surprising at all.

I do think that it's not only an issue for the Central Intelligence Agency the intelligence community going forward, but it's an issue for the entire executive branch. Every executive branch agency believes it is speaking truth to power. Every executive branch agency wants to walk in there and tell the president what they think about climate change and what they think about this or what they think about that. And so while he's struggled with the intelligence community early on I wouldn't be surprised to see struggles with other executive branch agencies as well.

The last point I'd make is kind of just for fun. In criticizing the intelligence community's judgment that Putin interfered in our election with the intent of harming Secretary Clinton and assisting Donald Trump, the president brought up repeatedly our failure with regard to Iraq W.M.D. That was largely a failure of over-connecting the dots. If you go back to my original story about him connecting all of these dots with me and Hayden and the leaks and what John Brennan said, he was over-connecting the dots. He was making exactly the same mistake that we made on Iraq.

Amy Zegart:

I want to come back to Iraq in a minute, but let's talk about your Op-ed where you endorse Hillary Clinton. You'd never done it before. There have been a lot of discussions. We talked yesterday about whether it's appropriate for former military officials and intelligence officials to make political statements when you're endorsing one presidential candidate or the other. I want to get for the benefit of all of us your response to that.

Michael Morell:

I did not get any pushback from former intelligence officers for what I did, but I got plenty of pushback from friends who were former military officers. They said this is not appropriate. Just like military officers should, even when they retire, should not be political my co-intelligence officers should not be political either. They said; I think you made a mistake here.

What I find interesting and what I said to them in response was; look, former military officers run for president and they use their credentials as part of their pitch for being commander in chief. Former senators and congressmen, people running for the senate and for congress do exactly the same thing. I

think some of them actually join the military with the intent of using it someday as a platform to run for office.

So if it's okay to be a former military officer and run for president or run for high office and use your credentials then I think it's probably okay for you to be a former military or intelligence officer and actually endorse somebody running for one of those organizations. It just makes kind of logical sense to me. I will say this, though. The thing that I thought hard about in writing the Op-ed was what would this do to the agency? Would people be able to distinguish between the view of a former agency official and the institution itself?

I concluded when I did that analysis in my head that of course people would be able to see the difference. How could they not see the difference? Maybe the most important person did and just maybe part of his concern about the CIA and part of his public critique of the CIA was based on people like Mike and me being out there to come full-circle.

Amy Zegart: I want to ask you to comment on something specifically you wrote in the Op-ed that may not have sat too well with the president. You wrote in that *New York Times* Op-ed that in the intelligence business we would say that Mr. Putin had recruited Mr. Trump as an unwitting agent of the Russian Federation. What did you mean by that and do you still believe it?

Michael Morell: I got real pushback from my operational friends.

Amy Zegart: He said by the way; ask me anything.

Michael Morell: I'm just being honest. I got a little pushback from my operational friends who said absolutely there are unwitting agents. It's actually a category of agents who actually know they're an agent for you and unwitting agents; people who do things that you want them to do and they don't even know they're doing them. You recruit agents. Technically you don't recruit unwitting agents. In the mind of these operational officers a recruitment is sitting down at a table and saying; would you like to work for the CIA? This is what we would like from you and this is what we will provide to you. Recruitment is a very specific term.

I used it very broadly as my defense. If I had to do it over again I'd probably just say he was an unwitting agent. Yeah, I do think he's an unwitting agent. At the time I wrote it I thought that with the recruitment the unwitting agent was simply that Putin was saying nice things about Donald Trump and Donald Trump, being narcissistic and having this huge ego and the need for aggrandizement was simply responding. Part of the response was saying not only nice things about Putin, but saying; eh, it's okay if he took Crimea. It's not that big of a deal.

Me, who doesn't have a significant role to play anymore so I think he was being responsive to Putin's positive comments about him. Putin is a trained intelligence officer. He was a very good intelligence officer. He knows how to spot – and this is kind of easy in this case – he knows how to spot vulnerabilities and the way you exploit the vulnerability of somebody with narcissistic tendencies is to play to their ego. It's really simple.

So I thought that's what happened and maybe that's the only thing that happened, but there were all these questions about possible Russian compromising information. There were all these questions about financial ties of which I know nothing and of which there is no evidence. There is no evidence at the moment. Those may be factors if they're true, but I could see this unwitting agent, this recruitment by Putin in a broad sense simply being a reflection of Trump's response to Putin's various comments.

Amy Zegart: If we take a step back – we're talking a lot about Russia and a few people here know a lot about Russia –

Michael Morell: A lot more than I do.

Amy Zegart: If you look at the threat landscape help us understand your perspective of it. During the presidential campaign and the Democratic Primary with five candidates on the stage they were each asked; what's the number one threat facing the United States? They gave five different answers. What's the threat landscape look like to you?

Michael Morell: I think about threats and challenges; national security threats, national security challenges. A challenge is not yet a threat, but if you don't manage it right it can become a threat, so that's what I think about it. So, what are the top couple in each category? On the threat side international terrorism remains a significant threat. I had a great conversation this morning about the number of terrorist attacks and how low they actually are, but a significant terrorist on a homeland can lead the American people to be willing to give up their privacy and some liberties.

You know President Obama – God bless him; I miss him very much – used to say more people in auto accidents. I don't like that and the reason I don't like that and the kind of nasty response to that is; well, your car is not trying to kill you. More people die in slips in the bathtub than from terrorism, but your bathtub is not trying to kill you. Terrorists are, but the much bigger point is that car accidents and bathtub accidents don't get people to want to give up their constitutional rights.

After 911 the American people were willing to give up some constitutional rights. You can imagine what another 911 or even worse, right a W.M.D. attack on the homeland would do to what the American people were willing to give up to be secure. I think that's the issue with regard to terrorism. There

is a threat from both Al-Qaeda to the homeland today and there is a threat from ISIS to the homeland today. The bigger threat from ISIS is not a directed attack here, but is an inspired attack here.

The difference between an inspired and a directed attack is that an inspired attack is probably going to be much smaller than a directed attack, with fewer people, one or two as opposed to five or six in Paris/Brussels. The other big difference between a directed attack and an inspired attack is that the inspired attack is really hard to stop whereas a directed attack is much easier to stop because a directed attack requires communications between the center and the terrorists whereas an inspired attack can be one person all by themselves with no communications and really hard to find.

So I think terrorism is still at the top. I think cyber is the fastest-growing threat. I think it's going to surpass terrorism sooner or later even though terrorism is going to remain a threat for as long as I can see. The cyber threat falls into a whole bunch of different categories. I think it's best to think about it in terms of the adversary. The Chinese and the Russians use cyber to steal national security information. Guess what; so Wikileaks [PH] doesn't bother me. They also use it to prepare for cyber war, so in case there's ever a hot war with the United States there will be a cyber component to that. Guess what. We prepared for that too.

The target set is a little different. This has a similarity to the targeting of nuclear weapons. The Chinese and the Russians are looking at cyber war broadly, including a tax that would affect the public at large while the United States tends to look at cyber infrastructure closely tied to the military's of our adversaries so there's a difference in targeting. There might be room there for an international norm going forward, at least discussions about it I think.

And then the Chinese do something that the Russians don't do. They use cyber for economic espionage, so stealing corporate information and giving it to their companies to try to advantage them to the tune of billions and billions of dollars of lost intellectual property every year. I think a potential solution to that, and I think people have talked about a potential solution to that is to make cyber espionage for economic purposes an unfair trade practice under the WTO. So, if you can prove that – as what's happened to several steel companies – that the Chinese stole intellectual property and gave it to their companies, the WTO should impose some sort of penalty.

If that penalty is tough enough then I think you would get somebody's attention. That's kind of the nation-state and then got to jump down to the Iran's and North Korea's of the world who are actually willing to do damage, whether it's Sony or whether it's Aramco or U.S. financial institutions to do denial-of-service attacks and to actually do damage with cyber and they see it simply as part of the asymmetric fight with the United States of America.

That's kind of the nation-state threat, right? The really serious threat from cyber is cyber crime. Cyber crime now generates – and those of you in the room who follow this know – that cyber crime now generates more money than the illicit drug trade. It's huge. I consult for a number of cyber companies. I was with one a year ago when one of the CEO's of one of their clients got an email from a cyber organized-crime organization and the email said; dear sir, blah, blah, blah, we're So-and-So. We just stole the credit card information of 50,000 of your customers and we're willing to return that information to you in exchange for \$300,000.00.

If you don't comply with our request we'll be forced to monetize the value of what we have. That's exactly, word-for-word what it said and then the best part of it was; you should not look at this as extortion but as a business opportunity.

I will tell you that some CEO's just pay. Some CEO's just pay because they don't want the reputational damage of going to the authorities, so what this particular CEO wanted to know from the cyber company was do they have what they say? Did they really steal it? Do they have any more than that? Do they have any record of complying with such offers? If I pay them are they really going to give me the stuff back? If I comply can we keep them out of my system going forward so they can't steal anything else and do this again?

So, the CEO was wanting a bunch of answers to questions to figure out what he was going to do about this. Cyber crime just runs the gamut, right in terms of what the target sets are. Then you can go through a bunch of other adversaries, whether they be terrorists in there interested in cyber, pretty limited. Hacktivist [PH] groups, I do feel strongly about one issue or another, and then the most important cyber threat of all, and this is where I get businessmen's attention when I talk about this: it's not the Russians, it's not the Chinese, it's not cyber organized crime – it's your very own employees. The insider threat is the biggest cyber threat to you.

The best example of that is Edward Snowden. Edward Snowden did not do what he did because he felt strongly about the civil liberties and privacy of American citizens. He did what he did because he thought he was brilliant and NSA did not recognize that brilliance and promote him at the rate that he thought he should have been promoted at. So by God, he was going to make them pay. And guess what? He did. So, the biggest threat are people who live inside your very organizations and get mad at you for some reason. I would put cyber second.

On the challenge side I put China first. I don't call China a threat. I call China a challenge. The way I see this, and then we go to the next question, is that the range of possible outcomes in the U.S./China relationship over the next 25 to 30 years is huge. From cooperation at one end of the spectrum like we saw on climate change between Xi and Obama all the way to military

confrontation at the other end of the spectrum, it's huge. There are in my mind two factors that are pulling us apart and pulling us toward the confrontation end and two factors that are pulling us together toward the cooperation end.

What are the two factors pulling us towards cooperation? One is we both, contrary what President Trump says, both China and the United States have a huge stake in the success of the Chinese economy, the critically-reforming Chinese economy, and two; the number of national security issues in the world where our interests actually overlap with the Chinese is growing and I think it's actually larger than the number of issues where our national security interests clash.

I know this from firsthand experience sitting down and talking to my Chinese counterparts over a number of years. Those are two things pulling us together. We should take advantage of those, right? We should build on those in terms of our policy toward China. The two things pulling us apart are; one, we both have large militaries on the same part of the planet. When that happens and we are somewhat adversarial toward each other you have to plan for war against each other and we both do. You have to equip yourself for war against each other and both sides do. You have to exercise those plans and that equipment and both sides do.

Each side sees what the other side is doing and that creates a natural tension in the relationship. It creates an inertia towards the bad end of the spectrum, so that's one thing taking us in the wrong direction. The other thing taking us in the wrong direction is that China is a rising power and we're a status quo power. They want a bigger say in the world around them and guess who has that say today? How does that get resolved? That's the tough one.

I think there is an answer to that, an enlightened answer to that and I think President Obama was heading in this direction and I think he had made some progress with President Xi. We'll give you more room in the region and we'll give you more room in the world to exercise your influence if you live by the international order. So this South China Sea thing, the solution to it is negotiation and there is a not a military solution to it.

My view is we pushed back on some things we should not have pushed back on. The development bank the Chinese came up with to restage it made no sense for me for us to push back on that. That's them living within the international rules. We didn't push back hard enough on South China Sea. I actually think it's going to take some pretty delicate diplomacy over the next couple of decades and some real enlightened leadership in both Beijing and Washington for this to come out in the right place.

Amy Zegart:

Let me turn to an event that was seminal in your lifetime and your outlook: 911. Now, you have a freshman in college and you have lots of freshman in

our class that you were in yesterday. They were four years old on 911. It's history for them; it's not experience, but us older people remember it well and you probably remember it better than anyone. Share with us your thoughts as that day progressed and how that moment affected how you viewed the world and how you viewed your job.

Michael Morell:

Great question. So, I was with the president all day. I was on Air Force One when we went wheels-up on the 10th. We flew to Jacksonville and he did an education event there. We flew on to Sarasota, where we spent the night. He was scheduled to do an event that morning at Booker T. Elementary School. I briefed him from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. contrary to a bunch of myths out there that there was nothing in the briefing about Al-Qaeda and 911. There was nothing in the briefing at all about terrorism that day.

There were two things and I stayed with him the rest of the day. The two things I remember were the intensity of doing my job in a way that I never felt before and then the surreal nature of the day. So, a couple of examples on the intensity of doing the job: from the flight from Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, where we landed and took on fuel and food and kicked anybody not related with national security off the plane and the flight off of the air force base to Omaha, where the president asked to see me alone.

So it was me, the president, and Andy Carr, the president's White House Chief of Staff. The president said "Michael, who did this?" I said "Mr. President, I have not seen any intelligence that would take us in one direction or another here so you're going to get my opinion. He said "Michael, I understand your caveat; now get on with it."

So I said "Mr. President, there are two nation-states with the capability to do this: Iran and Iraq, but neither has anything to gain and both have everything to lose by doing something like this, so I don't think it's a nation-state." I think when we figure this out I think the trail is going to take us to Al-Qaeda and De Monde. I said "Mr. President, I would bet my children's future on that."

I never told my kids that. Then he didn't say anything for a few second and then he said "When will we know?" It's the kind of question you get from a president, right when you're an intelligence officer. When will we know? The honest answer is we don't know, but you have to view this in context. Context is everything; intelligence officers are at their best when they provide context, right?

So, what's the context? The context was; let me tell you, Mr. President, about previous attacks and how long it took us to figure out who did it. So, the East Africa bombings; two days to get human reporting that this was an Al-Qaeda/Bin Laden operation; the Cole bombing in Yemen, months to figure out that it was Al-Qaeda Central; the Khobar Towers a couple of years to

figure out who was behind it and I don't know if I can even say, still who was behind it.

So I said "Mr. President, it may be soon or it may be a while," but what I didn't know when I was having that conversation was that the CIA had already run the flight manifests against the terrorist databases and had hits of at least three Al-Qaeda guys, so we knew pretty well it was Al-Qaeda at that time. We didn't know it went all the way back to Bin Laden.

Another example of the intensity was on our flight back from Offutt to Andrews. The agency sent me some intelligence to share with the president and it was reporting from a foreign government who said that they had information that this was the first attack and there would be a follow-on attack of a similar size. So you can imagine being the President of the United States and you believe that your first responsibility is to protect your country and something this horrible has just happened and now you've got this intelligence guy telling you that the same thing may happen again in a few days.

I'll give you one example of the surreal; the whole day was filled with surreal, but I'll give you one example. When you land at Andrews Air Force base and you're flying from west to east, when you look out on final approach, when you look out the left side of the aircraft you can see the Pentagon. And so when we were on final approach the president's military aide, the guy who carries the nuclear football, was looking out the left side of the aircraft and waved me over.

And so I went over to window and I looked out and there was a fighter jet on our wing tip. It was close enough that you could see the facial features of the pilot and you could actually see the pilot looking at us. The military aide told me that there was another one on the other wing tip. He told me they were from the D.C. International Guard. He told me what their purpose was: every plane in the country had now been grounded so there was no risk of anybody flying a plane into Air Force One. He said their job was, on final approach that if somebody shot a surface-to-air missile at Air Force One it was their job to put themselves between that missile and Air Force One.

Then when you looked beyond the fighter jet that was on our wing tip you could see the still-burning Pentagon with smoke pouring out of it. That was the first time that day that tears came into my eyes. I remember the whole day like it was yesterday.

Amy Zegart: I know everybody has lots of questions now that you've made us all very sad.

Michael Morell: Well, you asked the question about what this meant, right?

Amy Zegart: Yeah. How did it change how you view – you said it changed the intensity of your job – how did it change how you view the world?

Michael Morell: So, Mike Hayden, the former director of the CIA has a way with words that very few people do. He talks about the difference of intelligence during the Cold War and intelligence in this new world, particularly with regard to terrorism, but it applies to proliferation and it applies to a whole bunch of other stuff.

That is; during the Cold War the enemy was very easy to find, but very hard to kill. Soviet battle group tanks in Eastern Europe; you could see them with satellites. You knew exactly where they were, but you couldn't do anything about it.

A terrorist in an internet café in Yemen is just the opposite. He's very easy to kill or capture, but very hard to find. Intelligence is all about finding, so in this new world intelligence is much, much more important than it was in the old world and I think I had an understanding of that before that moment on 911. I think on 911 that was driven home in a way that has stayed with me ever since.