



Colonel Patrick “Steve” Penn, USMC (Retired)
General Partner, Senior National Security Consultant



Colonel Steve Penn is a national defense and security expert and co-founder of Leonidas Strategic Solutions, LLP a US-based company providing its clients and partners at home and abroad actionable national security and defense solutions. His primary areas of expertise include strategic assessment and planning, policy analysis and formulation, senior leadership support, Executive and Legislative branches of government, strategic communications, combined and Alliance planning, political-military affairs, interagency coordination, civil-military operations, and military transformation. He has over thirty-three years of experience in progressively challenging staff and leadership positions including service on the personal staff for a service chief, special assistant to a combatant commander/Supreme Allied Commander Europe, military assistant to a special envoy, and special assistant to the national security advisor and

President of the United States. Colonel Penn is a graduate of the Naval War College and holds a Master of Science in National Security Strategy and Strategic Studies. He has recent, extensive experience in the Middle East as the Riyadh-based team leader of approximately ten subject matter experts in direct support to senior leadership (former general officers and secretary/under secretaries of defense) associated with Jones Group International’s (JGI) efforts to assist the transformation of Saudi Arabia’s ministry of defense.

Colonel Penn graduated from Illinois State University with an undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice and was commissioned a second lieutenant in April 1983. Following completion of The Basic School and Infantry Officers Course, he joined 1st Battalion, 8th Marines and served as a rifle, weapons, and 81mm mortar platoon commander, and company executive officer for a weapons company. Follow on tours of duty included Officer Candidates School (OCS) in Quantico Virginia as the Operations Officer, Platoon Commander and Executive Officer; honor graduate from the Amphibious Warfare School in 1990, military liaison officer to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) serving in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Israel from 1990-1991. In the fall of 1991, he reported to 1st Marine Division in Camp Pendleton, CA serving in both 1st Battalion 9th Marines and 3rd Battalion 1st Marines as a Company Commander. The later assignment deploying as a company commander for the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit/Special Operations Capable (MEU/SOC) in 1993 during which time he was designated as the Leftwich Trophy finalist for 3rd Marine Division. A subsequent assignment in 1994 as the Inspector & Instructor, operations officer, 23rd Marine Regiment followed by attendance at the Naval War College. Upon graduating in 1996 he worked as a special staff officer for the J-5, Joint Staff in the Pentagon for approximately eight months, before being hand selected by HQMC to attend a Brookings Legislative fellowship program in Washington DC and placed by Marine Corps Legislative Affairs for assignment to Senator Pat Roberts personal staff. During this one-year fellowship he worked directly with Senator Roberts and various key committee staff on the Senate Armed Services and Select-Committee on Intelligence. Upon completion of the fellowship program, he was assigned as the Deputy Director for the Senate liaison office, US Senate. During his tenure on Capitol Hill (1997-2000) he traveled with several members of Congress, planning, and coordinating travel to over 30 different countries and participating in numerous high-level meetings with heads-of-state.



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In 1999 he was assigned as the Inspector & Instructor for 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines. Following the activation and deployment of 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines to Iraq he was requested by the newly appointed combatant commander, General Jones, Supreme Allied Commander Europe as a Special Assistant for Legislative Affairs at NATO Headquarters in Mons, Belgium. In order to facilitate the comprehensive transformation of both European Command and the NATO Alliance, Colonel Penn was transferred to the Pentagon by General Jones to form a team of subject matter experts to develop, coordinate, and execute a comprehensive strategic communications plan integrating the various stakeholders in the National Capitol Region (OSD, Joint Staff, Services, Congress, and the media) to garner support and funding for EUCOM and NATO transformation.

In June of 2006, Colonel Penn was assigned as the Director, Global War on Terror Operations Division, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory in Quantico, VA. In this assignment Colonel Penn was responsible for direction and oversight of Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) solutions to support combat operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. During this assignment Colonel Penn deployed in 2007 as the Science & Technology (S&T) Liaison Officer to Multi-National Forces-West, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Camp Fallujah, Iraq.

From July 2008 to December 2008, Colonel Penn was assigned as the Military Assistant to the Special Envoy Middle East Regional Security (SEMERS) working directly with the Israeli Defense Force and Palestinian Authority in 2008, Colonel Penn was one of small group of professionals from the Department of Defense and Department of State, hand-selected, and assigned to the US Embassy in Tel Aviv to advance the Two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. As negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians faltered, the US sought to revitalize the peace process by undertaking measures that would provide the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank greater autonomy, improve economic conditions, and allow Palestinian forces to assume a much greater role in their own security.

From January 2009 to June 2011 as the Special Assistant to the President of the United States on the National Security Council primarily responsible for coordinating the Administration's national security policies with the Legislative branch of government, Colonel Penn planned, coordinated, and developed a myriad of engagement strategies on a range of issues with Members of Congress, congressional staff, and the respective national security oversight committees. Requested by the Obama Administration and the newly appointed National Security Advisor to the President, Colonel Penn participated in countless Initial Planning Committees, Deputies Committee, and Principals Committee meetings with senior national security advisors and Cabinet officials. Of note during Penn's tenure were two major national security decisions that had tremendous implications in US foreign policy – the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq and the comprehensive Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy. As the President's lead on Legislative Affairs, NSC, Mr. Penn was responsible for preparing senior White House officials, to include the President, in rolling out these plans and garnering the needed support from Congress to facilitate execution.

In 2021, he co-founded Leonidas Strategic Solutions, LLP, a company dedicated to providing its clients and partners at home and abroad actionable national security and defense solutions.



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His personal decorations and awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal with gold star, Legion of Merit with gold star, Meritorious Service Medal (3d Award), Joint Service Commendation Medal (3d Award), and Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (3d Award).