



Wess Mitchell

Co-Founder and Principal

Dr. A. Wess Mitchell is co-founder and principal at The Marathon Initiative, a policy initiative focused on developing strategies to prepare the United States for an era of sustained great power competition.

Previously, he served as Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs from 2017 to 2019. In this role, he was responsible for diplomatic relations with the 50 countries of Europe and Eurasia, as well as the institutions of NATO, the EU, and OSCE. At State Department, Mitchell played a principal role in formulating Europe strategy in support of the 2017 National Security Strategy and 2018 National Defense Strategy, led the Interagency in building instruments to counter Russian and Chinese influence in Europe, and spearheaded new diplomatic initiatives for Central Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Western Balkans. Prior to joining the State Department, Mitchell cofounded and served as President and CEO of the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA). Mitchell is the author of numerous articles and reports that have been translated into more than a dozen languages. His work has appeared in publications such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Washington Post*, *American Interest*, *National Interest*, *Orbis*, and *Internationale Politik*. He is the author of three books, including *Unquiet Frontier: Rising Rivals*, *Vulnerable Allies and the Crisis of American Power* (with Jakub J. Grygiel) and most recently, *The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2018).

Mitchell holds a doctorate in political science from the Otto Suhr Institut für Politikwissenschaft at Freie Universität in Berlin, a master's degree from the Center for German and European Studies at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, where he received the 2004 Hopper Award, and a bachelor's degree in history from Texas Tech University. During the 2012 Presidential campaign, Mitchell served on the national security team of Gov. Mitt Romney. From 2013 to 2016, he chaired the Europe Working Group of the John Hay Initiative. He has been awarded the Gold Medal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary, the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, and the Stanton Foundation Prize for writing in *Applied History*. Mitchell formerly served as a senior advisor to the Secretary of State. He currently serves as the vice chairman of the board of directors at CEPA, senior advisor at the U.S. Institute of Peace, and Non-Resident Fellow in the *Applied History Project* at Harvard University Kennedy School of Government's Belfer Center. He is also a member of the International Advisory Council at Cambridge University's Centre for Geopolitics.

In 2020, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg appointed Mitchell to co-chair, with former German Minister of Defense Thomas de Maiziere, the NATO Forward Looking Reflection Group, a ten-member consultative body charged with providing recommendations on the future of NATO. A sixth generation Texan, Mitchell lives with his family in Virginia.