



Joseph Votel
Background Box

GWOT Memorial Foundation Appoints Votel to Board of Directors:

<https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/general-joseph-votel-joins-gwotmf/>

Votel Skeptical of counterterrorism strategy:

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/former-centcom-commander-skeptical-of-counterterrorism-strategy-for-afghanistan>

The U.S. military is working to lessen terrorism in Afghanistan however Votel is skeptical if the effort is worth it.

How the events of 9/11 shaped Votel's passion for such a filled career:

<https://ctc.westpoint.edu/twenty-years-after-9-11-reflections-from-general-ret-joseph-votel-former-commander-of-u-s-central-command/>

"...trying to understand the confusion, shock of what was happening—but almost simultaneously, an instant recognition that everything was changing for us. And as we collectively gained this appreciation, not fully knowing where this was going to go, I think all of us in uniform knew that something had changed for all of us and that this would change the direction of our organizations and the direction of our country for the foreseeable future. So a morning of initial confusion, but a moment of clarity afterward that this attack on our nation had changed everything." Votel goes into further detail on how 9/11 affected the ones in uniform. Actions and efforts following the attack shaped his career and his character.

Lessons on Afghanistan:

<https://www.thecipherbrief.com/the-painful-lessons-of-afghanistan>

In an interview with The Cipher Brief, Votel discusses the personal and public lessons that he learned when dealing with strategy in Afghanistan.

Interview with Joseph Votel on relationships with different countries:

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1137522.pdf>

Joseph Votel discusses relationships and strategies with different countries and what the US has accomplished with those countries.

Votel on the defeat of the Islamic State:

<https://ctc.usma.edu/view-ct-foxhole-general-ret-joseph-votel-former-commander-u-s-central-command/>

The Combating Terrorism Center interviewed Votel about the strategy and lessons he learned while taking down the Islamic State. “A certain amount of flak comes along when you are told, “our partners are talking to ISIS right now.” I was like, “What? What are you doing?” Well, this is what had to be done. So, you must accept it. This is part of the ‘by, with, and through operational approach. When you rely on partners to do things, they’re going to do it in a partner way. We’re not going to like everything they do. It won’t be exactly the way we’d do it, but that was the trade-off. And frankly, even as horrendous as that fight was, I think we probably saved lives allowing them to operate that way.” The interview continues with the key steps that Votel followed to move forward with his military strategy.

Votel against Trump's Syria decision:

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/08/politics/votel-syria-trump/index.html>

Votel completely disagreed with Donald Trump’s choice to pull US troops out of the Syrian-Turkish border. Votel mentioned that it “could not come at a worse time.” He felt the decision made the US abandon the Kurdish partners they were working with.

Votel opinion on Iran’s Qud Force:

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/08/politics/votel-iran-irgc-criticism>

Votel is critical of Qasem Soleimani because he believes that he is too aggressive in strategy and is the reason Iran has become unstable.

Votel on Regional Threats:

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/1133859/centcom-commander-briefs-congress-on-regional-threats/>

Votel discusses major issues with the House of Armed Services Committee including Iran, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, Egypt, the Sinai, and Pakistan. In the

interview, Votel explains, “we are making progress in many areas, but much, much work remains.”

After firsthand fighting the war on terrorism, the GWOT explains their excitement for Votel to be involved. “The entire Board of Directors is thrilled about the addition of General Votel to our leadership team,” said Foundation Board Chairman Ted Skokos. “Our gratitude abounds for his life of servant leadership, and we look forward to making enormous progress on the Memorial’s construction together in the months and years to come.”

Summary of the military experience in government and on the front lines:

<https://www.defense.gov/About/Biographies/Biography/Article/602777/general-joseph-l-votel/>

Joseph Votel was born on Valentine's Day in 1958. He attended the US Military Academy and was commissioned as an Army Infantry Officer in 1980. He continued his career as a rifle platoon leader, an executive officer, a battalion adjutant, and a rifle company commander. After these positions in Germany, he worked for the Allied Forces Southern Europe in Naples, Italy along with the NATO Peace Implementation Force in Sarajevo. He commanded at Fort Drum, New York, and in the 1st Ranger Battalion. He then commanded the 75th Ranger Regiment during Operation Enduring Freedom. Shortly after, he led 3rd Battalion rangers in Operation Rhino which attacked the Taliban. He served as the Director of the Army and Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Task Force along with the Deputy Director of the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization. He continued to serve as the Deputy Commanding General of Operations, and in the 82nd Airborne Division in Afghanistan. Soon after, he was assigned to Deputy Commanding General of the Joint Special Operations Command in Fort Bragg. After his time on the front lines, he was nominated by former President Barack Obama to be the 10th commander of the United States Special Operations Command. He then became the commander of the United States Central command. In this position, Votel supervised the United States in the war on terrorism in the Middle East. Votel retired in 2019 after witnessing the collapse of the Islamic State in Syria. Though retired, Votel continues to work in the government to serve the United States against terroristic threats.

Strategy in the Middle East:

<https://www.americanprogress.org/events/u-s-strategy-in-the-middle-east-a-conversation-with-general-joseph-l-votel-commander-of-u-s-central-command-and-expert-panel-discussion/>

Votel participates in a presentation with the Center for American Progress regarding strategies in the Middle East. The discussion includes US administration, challenges, strategies, and security in the Middle East.