

Dr. John M. Poindexter
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (ret)

John Poindexter graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1958, where he was first in his class. From 1961 to 1964, Poindexter studied as a graduate student at the California Institute of Technology, where he conducted laboratory research to further develop a model for understanding the Mossbauer effect with Nobel Laureate Rudolph Mossbauer. He earned both his M.S. and Ph.D. in Physics from Caltech.

While commander of a destroyer squadron, he was Surface Warfare and Anti-submarine warfare Commander of battle groups in the Western Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean, and he developed new tactics and battle management procedures under the Composite Warfare Commander concept. As the commanding officer of USS England (CG-22), he served in the Gulf of Tonkin protecting aircraft carriers and pioneered the shipboard use of computers to manage the ship's force portion of yard overhauls. He was also an executive officer and a chief engineer of destroyers.

As Deputy Commander of the Naval Education and Training Command, his duties included commanding the US Navy's extensive education and training programs, for which he initiated a project to develop a distributed data management system for more efficient management of training pipelines. His significant staff assignments included: Executive Assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy and Special Assistant for Systems Analysis to the Secretary of Defense. He served to the rank of Vice Admiral.

Poindexter went on to serve in the administration of President Ronald Reagan as Military Assistant to the National Security Advisor from 1981 to 1983, as Deputy National Security Advisor from 1983 to 1985, and as National Security Advisor from 1985 to 1986. From 1983 to 1985, Poindexter was responsible for leading and managing the National Security Council staff as chairman of the Crisis Pre-planning Group. As National Security Advisor, he provided recommendations to the President on all matters pertaining to national security, foreign policy and defense policy. Major events in which he played a significant role while at the White House included the Strategic Defense Initiative, Grenada Operation, the Achille Lauro incident, Operation El Dorado Canyon (launched in response to Libyan terrorist attacks), the Reykjavik Summit with the Soviet Union that marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War, and the Iran-Contra Affair.

After leaving government service the first time, Poindexter from 1988 to 1989 was senior scientist at Presearch, Inc. From 1990 to 1996, Poindexter served as co-founder of TP Systems, Inc., a software development firm. From 1993 to 1996, he was a consultant to Elkins Group. Then from 1996 through 2001 Poindexter served as senior vice president for SYNTEK Technologies, a high technology firm with contracts in domestic and international defense and commercial business. His duties at SYNTEK included his personal oversight of a contract with the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) known as Project Genoa, which focused on providing advanced decision-support and collaboration tools to rapidly deal with and adjust to dynamic crisis management and allow for inter-agency collaboration in real-time.

After 911 Poindexter came back into government. Starting in January 2002, he established a new office in DARPA and served as the Director of the Information Awareness Office (IAO). The mission of the IAO was to imagine, develop, apply, integrate, demonstrate, and transition information technologies, components, and prototype closed-loop information systems that will counter asymmetric threats by achieving total information awareness. The goal of this effort was to enable preemption, advance national security warnings, and the facilitation of national security decision making. Poindexter retired from DARPA on 29 August 2003.

Poindexter is now a private consultant working on national security issues.