



Frances Fragos Townsend

Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism



Ms. Frances Fragos Townsend was appointed Homeland Security Advisor by the President on May 28th, 2004. Ms. Townsend chairs the Homeland Security Council and reports to the President on United States Homeland Security policy and Combating Terrorism matters. She previously served as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Combating Terrorism. Ms. Townsend came to the White House from the U. S. Coast Guard, where she had served as Assistant Commandant for Intelligence. Prior to that, Ms. Townsend spent 13 years at the U. S. Department of Justice in a variety of senior positions, her last assignment as Counsel to the Attorney General for Intelligence Policy. Ms. Townsend began her prosecutorial career in 1985, serving as an Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn, New York. In 1988, she joined the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York where she focused on international organized crime and white-collar crime cases. In 1991, she worked in the Office of the Attorney General to assist in establishing the newly created Office of International Programs, the predecessor to the Executive Office for National Security. In December 1993, she joined the Criminal Division where she served as Chief of Staff to the Assistant Attorney General and played a critical part in establishing the Division's international training and rule of law programs. From November of 1995 to November of 1997, Ms. Townsend was Director of the Office of International Affairs in the Criminal Division, which serves as the U. S. Central Authority for extradition and mutual legal assistance, and works with the Department of State in the negotiation of international law enforcement treaties. In November of 1997, Ms. Townsend was appointed as Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, where she oversaw international law enforcement and training matters in the Criminal Division, and acted as an advisor to the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General on international law enforcement policy. In March of 1998, Ms. Townsend was appointed Counsel for Intelligence Policy, managing matters related to national security policy and operations for the Department of Justice. In this capacity she headed the office of Intelligence Policy and Review, an office that provides legal advice and recommendations to the Attorney General and the Department of Justice regarding national security matters, reviews executive orders, directives and procedures relating to the intelligence community, and approves certain intelligence-gathering activities, especially those matters related to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

After three years of study, Ms. Townsend graduated cum laude from the American University in 1982 where she received a B.A. in Political Science and a B.S. in Psychology. Ms. Townsend received her J.D. from the University of San Diego School of Law in 1984. In 1986, she attended the Institute on International and Comparative Law in London, England.