

ROBERT B. BLAIR

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SUMMARY

Practitioner with experience across the executive branch, Congress, and the private sector in national security, technology policy, and economic statecraft. Career includes White House service, congressional appropriations leadership, Department of Commerce policy development, and senior roles at major technology companies. Background in interagency decision-making, presidential policy processes, federal budgeting, and the intersection of technology and national security.

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Presidential Decision-Making
- National Security & Intelligence Policy
- Semiconductor Policy & Supply Chains
- Federal Budget & Appropriations
- Executive Branch Operations
- Interagency Policy Processes
- Technology & Economic Statecraft
- Export Controls & Trade Policy
- Congressional Relations
- International Government Relations

CURRENT POSITION

Applied Materials, Santa Clara, CA

2026–Present

Chief Global Policy Officer

Lead global government affairs and policy strategy for the world's largest semiconductor equipment company, spanning trade policy, export controls, and international government engagement across key markets.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH EXPERIENCE

U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC

2020–2021

Director of Policy and Strategic Planning

Shaped U.S. economic statecraft during intensified technology competition with China. Led development of semiconductor-specific export control measures, entity list designations, CFIUS implementation procedures, and supply chain regulations targeting critical technologies. Balanced industry competitiveness concerns with national security imperatives across multiple stakeholder groups.

The White House, Washington, DC

2019–2020

Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor to the Chief of Staff

Chief of Staff designate to support Presidential decision-making on foreign policy and national security. Managed complex interagency processes involving the National Security Council, State, Defense, and intelligence agencies. Provided direct counsel to senior White House leadership on decisions with significant strategic, political, and operational consequences. Concurrently served as U.S. Special Representative for International Telecommunications Policy (Dec 2019 – Apr 2020), leading U.S. global strategy on 5G security to address supply chain vulnerabilities.

Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC

2017–2018

Associate Director for National Security Programs

Oversaw \$1.3 trillion in budgets across the Departments of Defense, State, and Veterans Affairs; the intelligence community; and other national security agencies. Managed a team of 100 career professionals responsible for evaluating program performance and providing strategic resource allocation guidance to Cabinet officials and agency leadership. Represented OMB in senior-level interagency discussions on defense modernization, intelligence priorities, and diplomatic resourcing.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations

2003–2017

Staff Director (Clerk), Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations

2014–2017

Directed funding and oversight of nearly \$600 billion in annual defense and intelligence appropriations. Led development of annual Defense appropriations bills, continuing resolutions, and supplementals. Managed floor strategy and led conference negotiations with the Senate. Built relationships across DOD, the intelligence community, Members of Congress, and defense industry to balance readiness, modernization, and fiscal constraints.

Staff Director (Clerk), Energy and Water Development Appropriations 2010–2014

Directed funding and oversight of more than \$30 billion in annual appropriations for energy, nuclear weapons, environmental cleanup, and water infrastructure programs. Led policy development and legislative strategy for programs at the Department of Energy, Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Reclamation.

Minority Clerk, Energy and Water Development Appropriations 2008–2010

Professional Staff, State and Foreign Operations Appropriations 2003–2008

PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE

WestExec Advisors, Washington, DC 2025–2026

Principal

Advised senior executives on technology strategy, geopolitical risk, and government market positioning across defense, intelligence, semiconductor, and emerging technology sectors. Counseled clients on export control regimes, government relationships, and federal market opportunities in defense, advanced manufacturing, and semiconductor supply chains.

Microsoft Corporation, Washington, DC 2021–2025

General Manager and Partner, National Missions and Emerging Technology 2023–2025

Led government affairs for U.S. public sector business across AI, quantum computing, classified cloud, and national security programs. Secured FedRAMP authorizations unlocking approximately \$4 billion in market opportunity.

Senior Director, National Security and Emerging Technology 2022–2023

Senior Director, 5G and External Affairs 2021–2022

EARLIER CAREER

U.S. Department of State, Office of International Health Affairs 2001–2003

Regional Advisor for Africa and Presidential Management Fellow

Developed U.S. health policy for Africa with focus on HIV/AIDS. Served on steering committee for President Bush's PEPFAR AIDS Initiative.

Peace Corps, Central African Republic 1994–1996

Volunteer, Sustainable Agriculture

Designed programs addressing soil erosion and deforestation. Established community gardening initiatives for nutrition and income generation.

AFFILIATIONS

Practitioner Senior Fellow — Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia

EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy — The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 2001

Master of Arts — Tufts University, 2000

Bachelor of Science — Cornell University, 1994