

Nelson W. Cunningham

President and Co-founder of McLarty Associates



Nelson W. Cunningham is President and Co-founder of McLarty Associates. Under Mr. Cunningham's leadership, McLarty Associates has developed into a firm with global reach and over seventy employees and advisors, stationed in Washington and around the world.

Mr. Cunningham is responsible for guiding our service to clients and is a skilled strategist on national and international policy issues. He travels extensively on firm business, helping ensure that we bring to our clients the broadest range of regional expertise and transnational perspectives.

Prior to co-founding McLarty Associates in 1998, Mr. Cunningham served in the White House as Special Advisor to President Clinton on Western Hemisphere affairs and as General Counsel at the White House Office of Administration. He previously served as General Counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee, under then-Chairman Joseph R. Biden. Before moving to Washington, Mr. Cunningham served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York from 1988 until 1994, having been hired by Rudolph Giuliani, and in 1984 he was a staffer on the successful Senate campaign of John Kerry.

Mr. Cunningham is active on foreign policy and political matters and frequently speaks to audiences in the United States and abroad. He is a member of the Secretary of State's Foreign Affairs Policy Board, the Department of State's Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy, and past Chairman of the Export-Import Bank Advisory Committee. He also served as a member of the Obama-Biden Transition Team and an advisor during the campaign, and was a foreign policy and trade advisor to John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign, as well as to other Democratic candidates.

Additionally, Mr. Cunningham serves as President of the American Security Project, a think tank founded by then-Senator John Kerry in 2005; Vice Chair of the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU) and of the Institute of the Americas; and is past Chair of NDN's Latin America Policy Initiative. He is an active member of the boards of the Atlantic Council and the U.S.-India Business Council, and is a member of the Yale President's Council on International Activities, the Council of the Americas, and the Council on Foreign Relations. A lawyer by training, Mr. Cunningham is a member of the DC, New York, and Massachusetts bars.

Mr. Cunningham is a magna cum laude graduate of Yale College and Stanford Law School, where he served as an editor of the Stanford Law Review. He was raised in Latin America and has lived in seven different countries throughout the region. Mr. Cunningham speaks Spanish fluently and French passably.