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Celeste Wallander is Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy at the U.S. Department of Defense. She previously served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russia/Central Asia on the National Security Council (2013-2017), as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia (2009 to July 2012).

Outside government, she served as President and CEO of the U.S.-Russia Foundation (2017-2022), professor at American University (2009-2013), visiting professor at Georgetown University (2006-2008), Director for Russia/Eurasia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (2001-2006), Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (2000- 2001), and professor of Government at Harvard (1989-2000).

She is the author of over 80 publications on European and Eurasian security issues, focused on Russian foreign and defense strategy. She received her Ph.D. (1990), M.Phil. (1986) and M.A. (1985) degrees from Yale University, and her B.A. (1983 – summa cum laude) from Northwestern University. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Atlantic Council of the United States, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies.