



Ms. Kelly Magsamen is the vice president for National Security and International Policy at American Progress. Previously, she was the principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs and also performed the duties of assistant secretary of defense, where she was responsible for defense and security policy for all of Asia and served as principal adviser to the secretary of defense. In these roles, Magsamen shaped Department of Defense policy and strategy in the South China Sea and was responsible for strengthening and modernizing U.S. alliances and partnerships in the region. She was also integral to the development of U.S. strategy and policy in Afghanistan and South Asia.

Prior to her tenure at the Pentagon, Magsamen served on the National Security Council staff for two presidents and four national security advisers. As special assistant to the president and senior director for strategic planning from 2012 to 2014, she was responsible for long-term strategic planning and helped craft the 2015 U.S. National Security Strategy. From 2011 to 2012, she served as senior adviser for Middle East reform. As director for Iran from 2008 to 2011, she was responsible for coordination of U.S. policy on Iran, including diplomatic, economic, defense, and intelligence efforts.

Magsamen started her government career at the Department of State, where she worked on Iraq policy in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs from 2005 to 2007 and served as special assistant and chief of staff to the counselor from 2007 to 2008.

Magsamen received her bachelor's degree in international relations from American University and her master's degree in strategic studies from Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.