

COLIN H. KAHL

CURRENT POSITIONS

Steven C. Háy Senior Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation and Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, and Professor of Political Science (by Courtesy), Stanford University.

Sydney Stein, Jr. Scholar in Residence within the Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, the Brookings Institution.

Diller von Furstenberg Senior Fellow at the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

FORMER POSITIONS

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, April 2021-July 2023.

- Served as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense for defense policy and led the formulation and coordination of national security policy within the Department of Defense for every region and functional domain, including cyber, space, nuclear, emerging technologies, and counterterrorism.
- Oversaw the development of the 2022 National Defense Strategy, which focused the Department's efforts on the "pacing challenge" posed by the People's Republic of China.
- Led the Department's response to security crises, including the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Led major defense diplomacy initiatives, including: an unprecedented strengthening of the NATO alliance; the negotiation of the AUKUS agreement with Australia and the United Kingdom; historic defense force posture enhancements in Australia, Japan, and the Philippines; and deepening defense and strategic ties with India.
- Represented the Department of Defense on the interagency Deputies Committee.
- Led an organization of nearly 3,000 with an annual budget of more than \$700 million.
- Awarded the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Medal, June 2023.

Social Science Co-Director, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, August 2018- April 2021.

Associate Professor, Security Studies Program, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, July 2007-December 2017.

Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor to the Vice President, October 2014-January 2017.

- Senior advisor to President Obama and principal aide to Vice President Biden for all matters related to foreign policy and national security.

- Managed 13-person National Security Affairs team in the Office of the Vice President (OVP).
- OVP representative to the interagency Deputies Committee.

Senior Fellow and Director, Middle East Security Program, Center for a New American Security, August 2007-February 2009 and January 2012-September 2014.

- Analyst and program director for leading non-partisan national security think tank.
- Raised \$250,000+ each year (2012-2014) to fund program research.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, February 2009-December 2011.

- Senior policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense responsible for Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel and the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
- Played a lead role in designing and overseeing the transition strategy in Iraq; shaping the Pentagon's efforts to counter Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions and destabilizing activities; promoting unprecedented defense cooperation with Israel; building a regional security architecture in the Gulf; and crafting the Department's response to the Arab Spring.
- Managed 35-person office responsible for policy oversight of tens of billions of dollars in security assistance and 150,000 deployed U.S. military forces across the Middle East.
- Awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service, June 2011.

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota, September 2000-May 2007.

Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow and Stability Operations Analyst, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations, Department of Defense, January 2005-August 2006 (on public service leave from the University of Minnesota).

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Political Science, Columbia University, 2000

- Major Field: International Relations; Minor Field: Comparative Politics; Third Field: Environmental Studies.
- Advisors: Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder.

B.A., Political Science, University of Michigan, 1993

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Aftershocks: Pandemic Politics and the End of the Old International Order (with Thomas Wright) (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2021).

States, Scarcity, and Civil Strife in the Developing World (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). Examines the relationship between demographic pressures, natural resource scarcity, and violent internal conflict, with empirical discussions of dynamics in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Peer Reviewed Articles and Reports

If All Else Fails: The Challenges of Containing a Nuclear-Armed Iran (with Raj Pattani and Jacob Stokes), Center for a New American Security, May 2013, http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_IfAllElseFails.pdf.

Atomic Kingdom: If Iran Builds the Bomb, Will Saudi Arabia Be Next? (with Matthew Irvine and Melissa G. Dalton), Center for a New American Security, February 2013, http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_AtomicKingdom_Kahl.pdf.

Risk and Rivalry: Iran, Israel, and the Bomb (with Matthew Irvine and Melissa G. Dalton), Center for a New American Security, June 2012, www.cnas.org/riskandrivalry.

"In the Crossfire or the Crosshairs? Norms, Civilian Casualties, and U.S. Conduct in Iraq," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Summer 2007), pp. 7-46.

"Constructing a Separate Peace: Constructivism, Collective Liberal Identity, and Democratic Peace," *Security Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Winter 1998/99-Spring 1999), pp. 94-144.

"Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence: The Case of Kenya, 1991-93," *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Fall 1998), pp. 80-119.

Other Articles, Book Chapters, and Reports

"Aftershocks: The Coronavirus Pandemic and the New World Disorder" (with Ariana Berengaut), *War on the Rocks*, April 10, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/aftershocks-the-coronavirus-pandemic-and-the-new-world-disorder/>.

"Trump is Playing with Fire in the Middle East," *Foreign Policy*, January 4, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/01/04/trump-is-playing-with-fire-in-the-middle-east/>.

“This is How Easily the U.S. and Iran Could Blunder Into War,” *Washington Post*, May 23, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/this-is-how-easily-the-us-and-iran-could-blunder-into-war/2019/05/23/40dbbcae-7c07-11e9-8ede-f4abf521ef17_story.html.

“It’s John Bolton’s World. Trump is Just Living in It” (with Jon Wolfsthal), *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-kahl-wolfsthal-john-bolton-trump-north-korea-iran-venezuela-20190514-story.html>.

“Trump’s Iran Policy is Becoming Dangerous,” *Foreign Policy*, May 7, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/07/trumps-iran-policy-is-becoming-dangerous/>.

“Pompeo’s Dangerous Delusions: What the Trump Administration’s Iran Policy Gets Wrong,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 24, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-kahl-wolfsthal-john-bolton-trump-north-korea-iran-venezuela-20190514-story.html>.

“Trump Has Nobody to Blame for North Korea but Himself,” *Foreign Policy*, July 11, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/11/trump-has-nobody-to-blame-but-himself-for-north-korea-nuclear-pyongyang-pompeo/>.

“Trump Thinks His North Korea Strategy Will Work on Iran. He’s Wrong on Both” (with Vipin Narang) *Washington Post*, May 4, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/trump-thinks-his-north-korea-strategy-will-work-on-iran-hes-wrong-on-both/2018/05/04/9a430328-4e28-11e8-84a0-458a1aa9ac0a_story.html.

“Europe’s Last-Ditch Effort to Save the Iran Deal” (with Robert Malley), *The Atlantic*, April 24, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/04/europe-iran-deal/558800/>.

“John Bolton Is a National Security Threat” (with Jon Wolfsthal), *Foreign Policy*, March 23, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/23/john-bolton-is-a-national-security-threat/>.

“The United States Should Resolve to Avoid War With North Korea in 2018,” *Foreign Policy*, December 27, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/12/27/the-united-states-should-resolve-to-avoid-war-with-north-korea-in-2018/>.

“The Evidence is Damning: What Team Trump Knew and When,” *Foreign Policy*, December 4, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/12/04/the-evidence-is-damning-what-team-trump-knew-and-when-flynn-guilty/>.

“The Myth of a ‘Better’ Iran Deal,” *Foreign Policy*, September 26, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/09/26/the-myth-of-a-better-iran-deal/>.

“Nuclear Summer: Will Trump’s Bluster Spark a War With Iran?,” *The New Republic*, July 14, 2017, <https://newrepublic.com/article/143592/nuclear-summer-trump-bluster-spark-war-iran>.

“A Strategy for Ending the Syrian War” (with Ilan Goldenberg and Nicholas Heras), Center for a New American Security, June 2017, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/a-strategy-for-ending-the-syrian-civil-war>.

“A Momentous Week for the Iran Deal” (with multiple others), *Politico*, May 18, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/05/18/a-momentous-week-for-the-iran-nuclear-deal-215156>.

“The United States and Turkey are on a Collision Course Over Syria,” *Foreign Policy*, May 12, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/12/the-united-states-and-turkey-are-on-a-collision-course-in-syria-trump/>.

“What Could Go Wrong in Syria? War with Russia,” *Washington Post*, April 9, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/04/09/what-could-go-wrong-for-the-u-s-in-syria-war-with-russia/?utm_term=.36facc078c6b.

“Like Middle East Wars? You’re Gonna Love President Trump,” *Politico*, April 5, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/04/like-middle-east-wars-youre-gonna-love-president-trump-214985>.

“Dear Senators: Push Back Against Iran, But Not at the Expense of the Nuclear Deal” (with multiple others), *Foreign Policy*, March 31, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/31/dear-senators-push-back-against-iran-but-not-at-the-expense-of-the-nuclear-deal/>.

“Can Trump End the Syrian War?” (with Ilan Goldenberg and Nicholas Heras), *Foreign Policy*, March 29, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/29/can-trump-end-the-war-in-syria/>.

“The Curious Case of Sebastian Gorka, Trump’s New Terrorism Guru,” *Foreign Policy*, March 3, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/03/the-curious-case-of-sebastian-gorka-trumps-new-terrorism-guru-security-clearance/>.

“President Trump’s Terrible One-Month Report Card” (with Derek Chollet and Julie Smith), *Foreign Policy*, February 19, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/02/19/president-trumps-terrible-one-month-report-card/>.

“The Strategic Suicide of Aligning with Russia in Syria” (with Hal Brands), *Foreign Policy*, February 7, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/02/07/the-strategic-suicide-of-aligning-with-russia-in-syria/>.

“Trump’s Grand Strategic Train Wreck” (with Hal Brands), *Foreign Policy*, January 31, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/31/trumps-grand-strategic-train-wreck/>.

“Iran’s Highly Enriched Bargaining Chip,” *Foreign Policy*, July 17, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/07/17/irans_highly_enriched_bargaining_chip_john_kerry_javad_zarif_nuclear.

“How Worried Should Policymakers Be About Nuclear Blackmail?” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, July 9, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/07/09/how-worried-should-u-s-policymakers-be-about-nuclear-blackmail/>.

“Risky Business: Why Iran's Nuclear Demands Could Backfire,” *Foreign Affairs*, June 9, 2014, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141552/colin-h-kahl/risky-business>.

“No, Obama Didn't Lose Iraq,” *Politico Magazine*, June 15, 2014, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/no-obama-didnt-lose-iraq-107874.html#.U8W39IYhOy8>.

“Still Not Time to Attack Iran,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 7, 2014, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/140633/colin-h-kahl/still-not-time-to-attack-iran>.

“The Danger of New Iran Sanctions,” *The National Interest*, December 31, 2013, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/the-danger-new-iran-sanctions-9651>.

“Why New Iran Sanctions Won't Work,” *Politico*, December 10, 2013, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2013/12/why-new-iran-sanctions-wont-work-100978.html#.UvP62v3u4mw>.

“A Good Deal in Geneva,” *Foreign Policy* (online), November 25, 2013, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/11/25/a_good_deal_in_geneva.

“Inflection Point: Requirements for an Enduring Diplomatic Solution to the Iranian Nuclear Challenge,” Policy Brief, Center for a New American Security, November 2013, http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNAS_InflectionPoint_Kahl.pdf.

“Overcoming the Gulf in the Gulf” (with Jacob Stokes), *Defense One*, October 31, 2013, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2013/10/overcoming-gulf-gulf/72983/>.

“Zero-Sum Enrichment” (with Alireza Nader), *Foreign Policy* (online), October 14, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/14/zero_sum_enrichment_iran_us_nuclear_deal?page=0.0.

“The Great Unwinding: Iranian Nuclear Negotiations and Principles for Sanctions Relief” (with Elizabeth Rosenberg), Policy Brief, Center for a New American Security, October 2013, http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_GreatUnwind_policybrief_Rosenberg_Kahl.pdf.

“Hard Choices for the New Middle East,” *Defense One*, July 15, 2013, <http://www.defenseone.com/politics/2013/07/hard-choices-new-middle-east/66626/?oref=d-river>.

“Before Piling on More Sanctions, Give Rouhani a Chance” (with Alizeza Nader), *Al-Monitor*, June 26, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/06/us-ease-iran-sanctions-hassan-rouhani.html>.

“U.S. Strategy After the Arab Uprisings: Toward Progressive Engagement in the Middle East” (with Marc Lynch), *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Spring 2013).

“Revising U.S. Strategy in Light of the Arab Uprisings,” in Nicholas Burns and Jonathon Price, eds., *The Arab Revolutions and American Policy* (The Aspen Institute, 2013).

“One Step Too Far,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2012.

“Romney’s Empty Foreign Policy Agenda” (with Michèle A. Flournoy and Marc Lynch), *CNN.com*, October 2, 2012, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/10/02/opinion/flournoy-kaul-lynch-romney/index.html>.

“Obama Has Been Great for Israel,” *Foreign Policy* (online), August 16, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/08/16/obama_has_been_good_for_israel.

“Red, Red Lines” (with Matthew Irvine and Melissa G. Dalton), *Foreign Policy* (online), June 7, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/07/red_red_lines.

“Not Time to Attack Iran,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2012.

“Before Attacking Iran, Israel Should Learn from Its 1981 Strike on Iraq,” *Washington Post*, March 2, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/an-israeli-attack-against-iran-would-backfire--just-like-israels-1981-strike-on-iraq/2012/02/28/gIQATOMFnR_story.html.

“The Iran Containment Fallacy,” *The Hill*, February 22, 2012, <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/212003-the-iran-containment-fallacy>.

“Supremely Irrelevant: Iran Tried to Take Advantage of the Arab Spring. It Failed, Miserably,” *Foreign Policy* (online), January 25, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/24/supremely_irrelevant.

“Breaking Dawn: Building a Long-Term Strategic Partnership with Iraq,” *Foreign Policy* (online), August 31, 2010, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/08/31/breaking_dawn.

“Bridge on the River Euphrates,” *The National Interest*, September/October 2008.

“How to Exit Iraq” (with John Nagl and Shawn Brimley), *New York Times*, September 5, 2008.

“Baghdad’s Misguided Crackdown on the Sons of Iraq” (with Shawn Brimley), *Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 2008.

“Cancel Iraq’s Blank Check” (with John Nagl and Shawn Brimley), *Foreign Policy* (online), August 2008, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4454.

“Walk Before Running,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008.

Shaping the Iraq Inheritance (with Michèle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley), Center for a New American Security, June 2008.

“Turning Point or Tactical Pause? Prospects for Stability and Political Accommodation in Iraq,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 15, No 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 83-91.

“The Case for Conditional Engagement” (with Shawn Brimley), Center for a New American Security Policy Brief, March 2008.

“COIN of the Realm,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 6 (November/December 2007).

“The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” (with Shawn Brimley), *Foreign Policy* (online), September 2007, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3968.

“Measuring Progress in Iraq,” Center for a New American Security Policy Brief, August 30, 2007.

“Time for a National Debate on Plan B: If the Surge Fails, What Next?” *Foreign Policy* (online), February 2007, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3746.

“How We Fight,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 6 (November/December 2006), pp. 83-101.

“Demography, Environment, and Civil Strife,” in Lael Brainard and Derek Chollet, eds., *Too Poor for Peace? Global Poverty, Conflict and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), pp. 60-72.

“Population, Development, and Revolution,” in *Encyclopedia of Modern Revolutions* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006).

“The Nature of Warfare: Natural Resources and Civil War,” in Peter Dombrowski, ed., *Guns and Butter: The Political Economy of International Security* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

“Review Essay on *The Conflict Trap*,” Woodrow Wilson Center, *Population, Environmental Change, and Security Newsletter*, Environmental Change and Security Project (Spring 2004), p. 6-9.

Contributor, *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings* (McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation, 2003 [2000]).

“The Political Ecology of Violence: Lessons for the Mediterranean,” in Hans Günter Brauch, et al., eds., *Security and Environment in the Mediterranean: Conceptualizing Security and Environmental Conflicts* (Berlin: Springer 2003), pp. 465-76.

“Demographic Change, Natural Resources, and Violence: The Current Debate,” *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Fall 2002), pp. 257-82.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Secretary of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, awarded by Secretary Lloyd Austin III in June 2023

Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service, awarded by Secretary Robert M. Gates in July 2011

Council on Foreign Relations, International Affairs Fellowship, Department of Defense, January 2005-January 2006

Research Fellowship, Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University, 1999-2000

President’s Fellow, Department of Political Science, Columbia University, 1993-2000

Hamburg Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, Center for International Security and Arms Control, Stanford University, 1998-1999 (declined)

National Security Fellow, John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1997-1998

International Studies Association Environmental Studies Section Young Scholar Award, recognizing the best paper presented by a graduate student at the 39th Annual International Studies Association Annual Convention, Minneapolis, MN, March 17-21, 1998

National Debate Tournament, Finalist, 1991