



## Colin Kahl

Director, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, and Professor, by courtesy, of Political Science

### Bio

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#### BIO

Colin Kahl is the Steven C. Háyzy Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), an interdisciplinary research hub in the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. He is also the faculty director of CISAC's Program on Geopolitics, Technology, and Governance, and a professor of political science (by courtesy).

From April 2021-July 2023, Dr. Kahl served as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy at the U.S. Department of Defense. In that role, he was the principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense for all matters related to national security and defense policy and represented the Department as a standing member of the National Security Council Deputies' Committee. He oversaw the writing of the 2022 National Defense Strategy, which focused the Pentagon's efforts on the "pacing challenge" posed by the PRC, and he led the Department's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and numerous other international crises. He also led several other 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. In June 2023, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III awarded Dr. Kahl the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Medal, the highest civilian award presented by the Secretary of Defense.

During the Obama Administration, Dr. Kahl served as Deputy Assistant to President Obama and National Security Advisor to the Vice President Biden from October 2014 to January 2017. He also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East from February 2009 to December 2011, for which he received the Outstanding Public Service Medal in July 2011.

Dr. Kahl is the co-author (along with Thomas Wright) of *Aftershocks: Pandemic Politics and the End of the Old International Order* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2021) and the author *States, Scarcity, and Civil Strife in the Developing World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). He has also published numerous articles on U.S. national security and defense policy in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *International Security*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Middle East Policy*, the *National Interest*, the *New Republic*, the *New York Times*, *Politico*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Washington Quarterly*, as well as several reports for the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), a non-partisan think tank in Washington, DC.

Dr. Kahl previously taught at Georgetown University and the University of Minnesota, and he has held fellowship positions at Harvard University, the Council on Foreign Relations, CNAS, and the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and International Engagement.

He received his B.A. in political science from the University of Michigan (1993) and his Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University (2000).

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Senior Fellow, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
- Professor (By courtesy), Political Science

## PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Program in International Relations

## Teaching

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### COURSES

#### 2025-26

- International Security in a Changing World: INTNLREL 114S, POLISCI 114S (Win)

#### 2024-25

- Foreign Policy Decision-Making in International Relations: INTLPOL 306 (Spr)
- Technology, National Security, and Sustainability: EPS 194, EPS 204 (Aut)
- Technology, National Security, and Sustainability: INTLPOL 256 (Aut)

#### 2023-24

- Foreign Policy Decision-Making in International Relations: INTLPOL 306 (Win)
- National Security Decision Making: SIW 161 (Aut)