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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.

Ms. Magsamen received her Bachelors degree in International Relations from American University, and her Masters degree in Strategic Studies from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.