

Debra Cagan, Senior State Department Fellow

Debra L. Cagan is a career State Department officer with over 30 years of domestic and international experience advancing U.S. national security interests. She is currently the Senior State Department Fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University. She has a long track record as a successful negotiator of arms control and proliferation matters, has been a senior nuclear and security adviser at State, and was the lead negotiator on the recently concluded Megatons to Megawatts agreement with Russia which converted over 20 thousand nuclear warheads into commercial fuel for US consumption and successfully negotiated the removal of weapons usable material from Belgrade after the breakup of Yugoslavia. Ms. Cagan has worked extensively with NATO to develop out of area training missions and established the first informal NATO-Russia group dealing with nuclear security. She has also worked with the UN and other international organizations, and on a multi-national level, to create coalitions for peace-keeping, stability operations, counter-insurgencies and humanitarian and disaster relief including in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq and in Latin America. She has spear-headed strategic policy initiatives in difficult political and military environments, including the building of national security institutions and military forces and implementing multi-million dollar assistance programs in Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, the Caucasus and the Middle East. Most recently as the International Affairs Adviser to the President of NDU Ms. Cagan worked with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Vietnam and the UAE, among other countries, to establish new military education programs. She was assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense as a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Coalition Operations, and has been an advisor to senior U.S. military officials, including Combatant Commanders, Commanders in the field and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Ms. Cagan has received several awards and commendations from the Department of State and a commendation from the President of the United States. She has also received medals from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the NASA Exceptional Service Medal in support of US-Russian cooperation in human space flight, honors from NGOs, has been decorated by the Hungarian Government and has been recognized by several other governments. She did doctoral work in Political Science and Military Sociology at the University of Chicago where she was named the first woman Fellow for Armed Forces and Society and holds Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Journalism and Political Science from the University of Iowa.

Center for Transatlantic Relations