



Craig Newmark
Philanthropies



Women in Intelligence and National Security participates in the
**2021 Newmark Symposium on National Security, Technology, and Society:
Preparing Girls for a Rapidly Changing Future**

October 2021

The WINS executive council was invited to attend the virtual *2021 Newmark Symposium on National Security, Technology, and Society: Preparing Girls for a Rapidly Changing Future* on Wednesday, October 20th, and Thursday, October 21st. This conference was an invite-only event hosted by Girlsecurity, which prepares girls, women, and gender minorities for national security through equity-informed learning, transitional high school-to-college training, and relationship-based mentoring. During the introduction, the Founder and CEO of Girlsecurity, Lauren Bean Buitta, spoke about how their model starts with adolescent girls and gender minorities to help them gain confidence as they grow older. Thus, creating a generation of people who are confident enough to enter male-dominated national security positions. Over these two days, we were given the opportunity to hear from the National Counterterrorism Center, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the National Security Administration, the International Military Council on Climate and Security, etc.

Education Inequity and the Implications for Girls' Participation in a Future Security Workforce

A panel discussion focused “on Education Inequality and the Implications for Girls' Participation in a Future Security Workforce”. We heard from many different speakers, including Ivette Dubiel, the Founder, CEO, and Chief Executive Officer of Systemic Educational Equity, LLC., Sara Allen, the Director of Early Learning pathways at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Dr. Rajini Goel, Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor at Howard University. This panel was moderated by Beverly Kirk, Fellow and Director for Outreach International Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Director of the Smart Women Smart Power Initiative.

This session explored the impact of education inequity on diversity and inclusion in security pathways. When given the support at a young age, they will realize their full potential in their academics and careers. Allen shared a story about how her parents, both working in STEM fields, have helped her gain the confidence to enter a male-dominated profession. The idea is that allowing high school and colleges students to express their identities will create a better educational experience. While this seems like an easy fix, Dubiel states that this long-term problem requires a long-term solution. Goel offers that a starting point is to affirm students. Student identities being affirmed can serve as a first step towards creating a space where they are comfortable to learn. Kirk mentioned that schools hold the responsibility to help students gain confidence. A solution would be to bring in outside sources such as girlsecurity and Girls Who Code.

Another solution offered was by policy change. Electing officials who can lay the foundation for addressing education inequality can systematically address this issue. Elected officials can try to understand the needs of the people and put solutions into practice, especially for girls of underrepresented communities. Without systemic support, there is almost no way of creating change in terms of helping girls go into the field of national security.

Girls & Gender Minorities Aspiring to Service: Removing Barriers to Engagement & Advancement

The panel discussion began with an opening remark video from Deputy Secretary of the Department of Defense (DoD), Dr. Kathleen Hicks. Dr. Hicks mentioned how it is not easy to overcome barriers and biases towards women and minorities in the DoD. She explained how she was a woman with no military experience at the beginning of her career and, through her experiences, promoted togetherness. Dr. Hicks emphasized that it is essential for the DoD to continue to provide diversity, equity, and inclusion which is the mission of Women in Intelligence and National Security (WINS). Dr. Hicks described the implementation plan in the DoD to promote their goal, which included a change to uniforms for pregnancies, maternity leave for women, implementing transgender services to prevent discrimination, and ending sexual assault and harassment.

The conference continued with a Q&A session. Panelists discussed how to overcome barriers in the service of national security careers, specifically in the military. Policy change is vital to creating change in culture and climate in national security. The DoD must select the right leaders, educate service members, and overcome obstacles to achieve exemplary leadership. Leaders are the linchpin in culture and climate. Specifically, in the Army, they are adjusting their interview process when selecting commanders and recognizing that women's "issues" are also operations issues. Educating servicemembers shows that diversity is our strategic competitive advancement against adversaries like Russia and China. The main takeaway from the panel discussion is diversity is our strength in the United States, unlike Russia and China. Efforts to build an inclusive national security workforce have been impeded by several challenges, including the impact of education inequity on priority populations, specifically black and brown communities.

The panel also discussed sexual assault and mental health within the national security profession. The DoD and other military agencies need to create and promote an environment of having those conversations. It is significant to normalize life experiences and recognize that everyone faces different problems. There is a rumor that seeking support and mental health help will prevent or make it more complicated to get a security clearance. The panel expressed with confidence that the rumor is entirely false. Recognizing the values of relentlessness, fairness, and love will go a long way in the career of intelligence. In a society of tearing each other down, women and other minorities must build each other up.

Women in Media and National Security

The panelists consisted of a former counterterrorism analyst, the founder of the Coalition for Women in Journalism, and the co-founder of the Fuller Project, a group dedicated to reporting on women and exposing injustice. The discussion highlighted many of the realities faced by women in journalism and security careers. This idea of representation alone presents staggering numbers, with only 22 percent of women making up top leadership positions in media, despite most journalist graduates being women. The lack of representation and the absence of equal respect highlights a quantity issue and a quality one. In media and news, women appear primarily as victims or family members. Women make up 1/5 of the experts and 1/4 of the protagonists.

This significant gap is allowed to exist because of the public's apathy, where only 15 percent view this as an issue. Those in these careers still experience a lack of respect, with minority journalists sharing their experience of being slotted to cover small-scale stories of their ethnic communities, disregarding years of experience. A reoccurring point was made that the US is not exempt from these realities and has been a source of these problems. One speaker mentioned her experience with foreign news organizations being so much more positive than US news organizations. The online harassment of women journalists is much more common than that of men and rose significantly with the election of President Donald Trump. His language gave social permission for misogynists to express their views. Overall, women in national security are regularly misrepresented in the media. They are often hypersexualized, particularly those in the intelligence community.

Gendered Challenges in the Digital Domain and Prospective Interventions

Camille Stewart, Global Head of Product Security Strategy at Google, was the moderator of this session. Regarding disinformation amount women, the threat of the digitized world can negatively impact women's accomplishments and forthcoming. Over 50% of women have experienced negative impacts due to the digitized world, and 87% of girls believe the problem will get worse. Disinformation is a security challenge with gendered implications that uniquely affect girls, gender minorities, and women in the U.S globally. Girls are more likely to be targeted for mis- and disinformation and are more likely to be socially and emotionally impacted by cyber-suppression.

Jen Easterly, Director at the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CSIS), provided her background in cybersecurity. She was a West Point graduate and spent 22 years in the army's tactical division. Easterly transitioned to the public service sector following 9/11 and became a senior counterterrorism director at the White House during the Obama Administration. She worries that the upcoming generations have unreasonable expectations and states that it is okay to fail. Even being a senior director of an intel unit and failure occurs. When the results are unfavorable and discouraging, you must reevaluate the situation and craft another option to go forward.

Climate Security and Space: Understanding the Gendered Implications of New Domains

This session of the Girl Security Symposium hosted an in-depth discussion describing the importance of gender inclusion in the climate and space security domains. The four speakers included a woman who works closely with the Women, Peace, and Security Act implemented by the UN Security Council. She noted that climate security is crucial to maintaining stability in regimes worldwide, thus ensuring that women, especially in third-world countries, are protected and secure. When speaking about security in space, the importance of opportunity for women in STEM education programs was highlighted. A stable influx of women involved in STEM programs allows women to enter this field and offer a diverse array of thinking. The women on the discussion panel highlighted the clear over-arching theme of the importance of diverse thinking that occurs once gender inclusivity is implemented. It was noted that diverse thinking is necessary, especially in these new security domains, as these are areas that provide new and unique challenges for security.

Building a Global Community of Girls in Security

This panel consisted of Jamille Biglio, the Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the US Agency for International Development, Dr. Urvashi Sahni, the Founder and CEO of Study Hall Education Foundation, and Ivette Young, former FBI Special Agent. Experts often question what constitutes a "national" security threat in a globalized world, and therefore implying that security challenges will require the coordination and collaboration of the global community. At the same time, women globally remain excluded from security's pathways.

The panel started with Biglio's remarks on building a global community for girls in security and the government. Creating a government where there is participation from women and girls does better work due to the variety of perspectives. Additionally, national security policy frequently impacts women and girls, so they must have a seat at the table. One question that was asked was about the role of security in the advancement of women. The panelists stated that the role that women play is important in breaking cycles of conflict. If there are women in leadership, they can enact policy or protocol that protects all. Young also talked about how women can bring different experiences and approaches to solving national security issues, which means that in her experience, women have taken a more methodical approach to crisis management.

One approach discussed was how there is still a patriarchal approach to women and girls' security. An example of this was how girls are taught about their physical security from a young age, rather than teaching others not to threaten their safety. It was highlighted that certain types of security have come to the forefront after events such as the #MeToo Movement. Young saw a shift in the focus of diversity in the FBI once that movement started to gain traction. The FBI began to focus on diversifying their employees at all levels to prevent and stop more issues from happening and increase the quality of their work.