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**CHRISTINE AHN  
DR. KENNETTE BENEDICT  
TERRY GAMBLE BOYER  
DR. CAROL COHN  
MARISSA CONWAY  
BEATRICE FIHN  
AMBASSADOR PAMELA HAMAMOTO  
AMBASSADOR LAURA HOLGATE  
AMBASSADOR BONNIE JENKINS  
REPRESENTATIVE BARBARA LEE  
AMBASSADOR WENDY R. SHERMAN  
CECILI THOMPSON WILLIAMS**

# **A NEW VISION**

**GENDER. JUSTICE.  
NATIONAL SECURITY.**

**Edited by Tom Z. Collina and  
Cara Marie Wagner**

April 2019

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## Tom Z. Collina

Tom Z. Collina is the director of policy at Ploughshares Fund. He brings 30 years of Washington, D.C. experience in nuclear weapons, missile defense and nonproliferation issues to Ploughshares Fund. He has worked extensively as a researcher, analyst and advocate to strengthen efforts to end U.S. nuclear testing, rationalize anti-missile programs, extend the Nonproliferation Treaty and secure Senate ratification of the New START Treaty among others.

Prior to joining Ploughshares Fund in 2014, he served as research director of the Arms Control Association. He was the executive director and co-founder of the Institute for Science and International Security and the director of the global security program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, among other leadership positions. He has published widely in major magazines and journals and has appeared frequently in the national media, including The New York Times, CNN and NPR. He has testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and regularly briefs congressional staff. He has a degree in International Relations from Cornell University.

## Cara Marie Wagner

Cara Marie Wagner is a senior program officer at Ploughshares Fund. She manages grantmaking portfolios focused on nuclear policy, the elevation of women and diverse voices in national security and conflict prevention and regional security.

Prior to joining Ploughshares Fund in 2015, she worked with a variety of international education, gender, human rights and security organizations, holding positions in both development and research. She has a Master's of Science in Global Studies and International Affairs, specialized in conflict resolution and international security with an emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa, and a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management from Northeastern University in Boston, MA. She also received her degree in International Affairs with a Certificate in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder focusing on foreign policy and Western Europe.

## From the Editors

The editors would like to thank all of the authors for sharing their visions and ideas around some of today's most challenging foreign policy and national security issues. We would also like to thank them for their hard work on each essay and flexibility and openness during the editing process. We would like to thank Ploughshares Fund's board of directors, donors, President Joe Cirincione and Executive Director Philip Yun for making this report possible.

Special thanks to Michelle Dover for her exceptional editing assistance, insights and overall support; Catherine Killough for her expert knowledge and editing support; Terry Greenblatt for her stellar shepherding of this project; Mary Kaszynski for facilitating the roll-out and launch of this report; Delfin Vigil for his communications guidance and know-how; Munnu Kallany and Zack Brown for administrative support; and Elizabeth Warner and Megan Clemens for always lending an ear and brainstorming ideas. And finally, thanks to Ruby Stacey and Karis Cady of Pyramid Communications for the outstanding design and production of the report and to Arnaud Ghelfi, l'atelier starno for the cover design.

Cover image: Robert Cicchetti / Shutterstock.com  
Ploughshares Fund Study Report No. 5  
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# WOMEN STEPPING UP

By Terry Gamble Boyer

I am of what some would call quaintly “an age.” As a small girl, I ducked and covered beneath my desk in drills triggered by the Cuban Missile Crisis.

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In elementary school, we read John Hershey’s “Hiroshima” and watched Henry Fonda play the president in the movie “Fail Safe.”

In those days of looming threat, the notion of nuclear war was more visceral than academic. It was also an era in which girls were taught to check themselves, raise their hands, and stop talking when men interrupted. In the patriarchal household of my childhood, I learned to maneuver through humor and the occasional restrained silence. But during the Second-Wave Feminism of the seventies, I tentatively found a voice in my all-girls’ high school where the students were encouraged to be smart, be strong, be proactive.

Early feminism grew out of a 19<sup>th</sup> century reaction to the prevailing “Cult of True Womanhood” that confined and restricted the role of women in civic life, in business, in leadership and in professions

and labor markets. In 1920, when the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave women suffrage, my great-grandmother was just a little older than I am now; my grandmother was 35. They had never before cast a vote. For a century, there had been fierce debate about the implications of women having a say in politics. Would this lead to the complete moral collapse of society? Or would political participation by women have an ameliorative effect in discouraging child labor and the exploitation of workers, thereby encouraging public health, temperance and providing a counterweight to political and economic abuse? The latter argument won out.

In the last presidential election, common wisdom held that Hillary Clinton would win, becoming the first woman president. Eighty-three years after Franklin Delano Roosevelt appointed Frances Perkins as the first woman to hold a cabinet post,

Clinton indicated that *her* cabinet would be composed of 50 percent women. Much was made about the downstream effect of having a woman in the highest office in the land incentivizing other women to run for election.

When Hillary Clinton did *not* win, momentum for women seemed stalled. Yet in the wake of this loss, something unexpected happened. The day after the inauguration of President Trump, millions of women and men took to the street, an estimate 4.2 million in the United States and nearly 5 million globally – the largest single day protest in U.S. history. Inspired by the peaceful sea of pink hats, many of us marched in solidarity to stand up to what we felt was the regressive rhetoric of the new administration. My friends in Washington, D.C. said the protest was so packed they were literally unable to move more than a few feet at a time.

What we now know was that the Women's March presaged more than a moment; it hearkened a *movement*. In 2018, more women than ever ran for office – candidates like Lt. Col. Amy McGrath, a former Marine pilot with a background in nuclear security who, in the wake of the election, felt she needed to fight for the values of the country to which she had literary dedicated her life; values such as equality, justice and human rights. "I didn't want my son to ask me in 10 years, 'What did you do?' and have to tell him 'I was too scared to act!'"

Studies have shown that a critical mass of women (at least 30 percent) raises the intelligence level and efficacy of a group, whether it is in a boardroom, a working group or a government. In general, women tend to be more collaborative and consensus-building, with a focus on relationships and partnerships, balancing work and family. If history is an indicator, women are more likely to strike a deal than their male counterparts. For example, in the past decade women (representing 20 percent or less of Congress) have passed a majority of the legislation. Considering that women make up 51 percent of our population, they will still be underrepresented in government in the years ahead despite their historic wins. But the trend is heartening. While the incoming Congress will be comprised of less than 30 percent of women, the House of Representatives will be led by a woman. And although McGrath's candidacy did not prevail, over 100 women from both parties were elected to Congress.

I am proud of Ploughshares Fund for launching the Women's Initiative, an initiative that seeks to elevate more women's voices into the

conversations around national security and nuclear security in particular. At a time when stark polarization and extreme ideology cry for more nuanced conversation, Ploughshares Fund is stepping up. The initiative is long overdue.

The opaque nature of our nuclear protocol and the policies of procurement have resulted almost exclusively from a male-dominated decision chain. More and more citizens are waking up to the fact that the president of the United States has unchecked authority to launch nuclear weapons. Think of it: a decision that could impact life as we know it lies solely in the realm of the male perspective. What might the implications be for a conversation informed by representatives from the other half of the population? We at Ploughshares Fund intend to make room for that possibility.

Founded by Sally Lilienthal in 1981, Ploughshares Fund now has a board of directors comprised of nearly 50 percent women. We are partnering with other "Gender Champions" to ensure that expert panels on national and nuclear security are no longer solely represented by men, and we are emphasizing the importance of women leadership in our assessment

of our grants and partnerships. In the first year of our Women's Initiative, 48 percent of our total grants (and 42 percent of our total grantmaking budget) were awarded to women-led projects or organizations; we aim to make that 50 percent in the near future. We strive to be a beacon for good governance, leadership, policy and advocacy in this moment when women are stepping up ever more assertively as we work together for a safer more secure world. This is our mission. This is our goal. ■

*Terry Gamble Boyer is a writer and philanthropist. Along with her husband Peter, she co-founded the Caldera Foundation that concentrates on energy and the environment. She has served on the boards of the Ayrshire Foundation, the Urban School of San Francisco, The San Francisco School, Project Open Hand and The Magic Theater. Along with serving as chair of the Ploughshares Fund board of directors, she currently serves on the board of Island Press and the advisory boards of Mesa Refuge and The Truman National Security Project. Passionate about leaving a more just, secure, cleaner world for future generations, Terry is also the author of three novels: "The Water Dancers," "Good Family" and "The Eulogist."*

*Marchers carrying the 'women's wave' sign at the 2019 Women's March, Washington, D.C. Image: Mobilus In Mobili, Flickr.*





*Statue of British suffragist Millicent Garrett Fawcett in Parliament Square, London, England.*

## Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful for the collaboration of foundations that made this report possible. Together, Our Secure Future, Compton Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Ploughshares Fund assembled this collection because we believe that women's voices belong in national security and nuclear policy, and that now is a crucial moment to learn from experts and advocates like these who have worked tirelessly to effect change in this field. Read more about these foundations and this project on page 64.

## INTRODUCTION

# A NEW AGENDA

By **Cara Marie Wagner**

In these collected essays, women share lessons learned, personal stories of success and failure as they rose to become leaders in their respective fields, and practical policy recommendations for Congress.

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They explore cornerstone topics ripe for attention on the national security agenda. The authors begin to dismantle underlying assumptions, shed light on injustices and unearth the cross-cutting intersections between fields. Collectively they offer a unique vantage point into what a diverse, inclusive and intersectional policy agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century could look like.

Dr. Carol Cohn, for example, exposes the gendered thinking that underlies our national security discourse; Christine Ahn highlights the need for diplomacy with North Korea and the role of women in this process; 2017 Nobel Peace Prize winner Beatrice Fihn writes on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons; while Ambassadors Pamela Hamamoto and Laura Holgate call out the timely

need for increased diversity in policymaking.

Though the topics are diverse, these essays have one underlying, unifying theme – justice. From the injustice that a single individual retains sole authority to launch nuclear weapons to the exclusion of women and people of color from policymaking (despite the fact they make up the majority of the population) to a generation fighting endless wars, the injustices in our national security policies are made clear. Each essay shines a light on a broken system that places nuclear weapons and militarized responses above the needs of the people they are supposed to protect.

As the nation tackles issues of justice on multiple fronts – in the #MeToo movement, in Black Lives

Matter, in income inequity – the national security and nuclear policy fields cannot be exempt from this process of transformation. We, too, must question the exclusion, secrecy and violence in our field and the assumption that strength equals security and vulnerability equals weakness and insecurity.

From the Green New Deal to gender equality, this report launches a conversation for the future and dives deep into the heart of U.S. security policies today.

It is our hope that this collection of essays presents a snapshot of what could be the start of a truly diverse, equitable, inclusive and *just* new vision for nuclear policy and national security direct from the minds of leading women in the field.

# GENDER AND NATIONAL SECURITY

By Dr. Carol Cohn



“As a mom, as a daughter, there is nothing I want more for my family than a world with no nuclear weapons. But we have to be realistic.”

– Ambassador Nikki Haley, March 27, 2017<sup>1</sup>

Our thinking about national security – and our national security policies themselves – are shaped and limited by *ideas* about gender. These ideas are deeply embedded in national security discourse, where they underlie core assumptions about what makes us more secure, and what counts as “rational,” “self-evident” and “realistic” in security policy. In so doing, they act as a preemptive deterrent to thinking complexly, creatively and truly realistically about security.

Before going further, please note: my focus is on *ideas* about gender, *not* the gender of security analysts or policymakers. I am not saying that the people (historically, mostly men) who theorize and decide on national security policy take the actions they do *because* they are men, or “to prove they are real men”; nor am I suggesting that women in those same positions would necessarily advocate for a different concept of strength and security policy simply because they are women.

Instead, I argue something more disturbing and recalcitrant: that *many of our assumptions and beliefs about which security policies will be effective arise from a series of gendered ideas about how to most*

*effectively exercise power, what it means to be “strong” and what “works” to keep us secure.* These gendered ideas are built into the professional paradigms and ways of thinking that any of us, male or female, adopt when becoming national security specialists. There, they deter us from cognitive and political engagement with ideas and actions that could result in greater security.

The fact that ideas about gender permeate national security thinking is, in one sense, so obvious as to usually go unnoticed. Most people would probably recognize the striking resonance between dominant cultural ideals of masculinity and precepts of American national security policy. Consider:

- Strength is being able to protect oneself using physical force.
- Avoid penetration of your boundaries, your property; be able to penetrate the defenses of others.
- The other guy only understands the language of force.
- Vulnerability invites attack, so strive to make yourself invulnerable.
- Being afraid of violence, and of risk-taking, is cowardly.

The conflation of manliness and national security occasionally takes a crude form (e.g., Donald Trump’s tweeted comparisons of the size and functionality of his and Kim Jong Un’s nuclear buttons, or Hindu nationalist leader Balasaheb Thackeray’s justification for India’s 1998 nuclear tests – “We had to prove that we are not eunuchs”).<sup>2</sup> But ideas about gender are more often buried deep in the assumptions and models of mainstream nuclear and national security policy. There, they make some options appear sensible and others so irrational or “unrealistic” as to not merit serious consideration. For example, why in 2003 did it feel obvious to so many people that the most effective way to prevent Iraq from building and deploying weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was to launch a massive military campaign to “smoke `em out of their holes and their WMD with them,” rather than a regime of United Nations (U.N.), and International Atomic Energy Agency monitoring and inspection? Why did aggressive, “muscular,” militarized (masculinized) action *feel* so much more potent than “passive,” (feminized) waiting and watching, that political debate about which course of action would *actually* be most effective was impossible?

Our national security bias toward overestimating the efficacy of armed violence and undercounting its costs (while underestimating the efficacy of nonviolence) stems from the depth and power of our associations of strength with masculinity – and weakness with whatever we code feminine. That is, the assumption that massive military might will make us more secure is often not borne out by experience (e.g., Did massive military superiority enable the U.S. to win the war in Vietnam? Has the U.S. \$5.9 trillion investment in the “War on Terror” reduced the numbers of terrorists?<sup>3</sup> Are we made more or less secure by giving a single human the capacity to end life on the planet as we know it, with a reputed “necessity” of making the decision in under 10 minutes?).

**“..the assumption that massive military might will make us more secure is often not borne out by experience.”**

This assumption has a remarkable staying power that derives more from the ways our beliefs about gender make it feel true than from a careful, rational assessment of its effectiveness in making the country – or the people in it – more secure. Yet the strength of that feeling biases U.S. politicians across the political spectrum toward supporting massive military budgets; underwrites claims that the U.S. requires a massive nuclear arsenal to protect itself; and biases presidents toward responding to perceived threats with military action.

However, the effect of gendered assumptions in national security policy goes beyond underwriting certain narrow concepts of strength and of how to achieve security. They also short-circuit and distort both deliberative and political processes, preventing us from thinking genuinely and realistically about security.

Political leaders, for example, are frequently accused of “being a wimp,” i.e., of being insufficiently manly, when they are perceived as not having sufficient appetite for going to war. The impact goes beyond personal insult. When political commentators questioned whether President George H.W. Bush would “beat the wimp factor” by invading Iraq, they reduced the complex and momentous decision to start a war

down to the simplistic question of whether a leader was “man enough” to make the decision; in the face of that question, consideration of the strategic, political, economic, environmental and human consequences of war disappears. The acid test of manliness eradicates other questions and ends meaningful political debate. It makes advocating for nonviolent alternatives – even if they are likely to lead to better outcomes – seem weak, passive, defensive and inadequate.

The overt impugning of masculinity, however, is not the only mechanism

through which ideas about gender act as a preemptive deterrent to thought in national security deliberations. That is because gender is more than a set of ideas about what men and women are or should be like. Gender functions as a culturally-pervasive symbolic system, encoding a wealth of characteristics, activities, stances and ways of thinking as either “masculine” or “feminine.” For instance, our dominant culture encodes rationality, dispassion, objectivity, invulnerability, independence, courage, aggression and risk-taking (to name but a few!) as “masculine,” while encoding emotion, empathy, subjectivity, vulnerability, dependence, passivity, caution, intuition and nature as “feminine.”

These “masculine” and “feminine” coded characteristics are seen as mutually exclusive opposites, with the former more highly valued than the latter. The impact is visible in the premises of national and nuclear security strategic thinking, where, for example, empathic imagining of the suffering of war’s victims is seen as antithetical to the ability to think well about security policy, rather than as being essential to it.

One of the most pernicious and powerful effects of ideas about gender in national security is that the mantle of “realism” is reserved for whatever is coded “masculine,” while policy alternatives associated with anything coded “feminine” can be summarily dismissed as “soft” or “unrealistic” before they are ever thought-through. For instance, it is projected that over \$1 trillion will be spent on nuclear weapons worldwide over the next 10 years.<sup>4</sup> If you argued that national security would be better served by spending



Artwork reimagining the bomb. Image: ICAN.

that money on health care, schools, clean water, renewable household energy, decent livelihoods and/or sustainable smallholder agriculture in conflict-affected countries, you would immediately be dismissed as “unrealistic.”

But the truth is that even from a national (rather than human) security perspective, we don’t know which path is more “realistic,” i.e., which would lead to greater national security for the countries investing in nuclear arsenals, because the gender-coding of this alternative, “soft” path enables its instant dismissal. Thus, the investment of funds, time and brain power in projecting, modeling and comparing the different outcomes of these alternative paths is never made. This problem needs correcting in our policy development process.

In national security discourse, “realism” functions a lot like the word “wimp” – as a gendered silencer, an interrupter of cognitive and political processes. “Realism,” with its connotations of manly tough-mindedness, is deployed whenever the human dimensions

of security threaten to become a topic of conversation. One can simultaneously tip one’s hat to feminized concerns with familial love, bodily harm, human suffering, human feelings of grief, loss and despair – perhaps even the death of animals and plants – and summarily dismiss the possibility that they should ever be the basis upon which security policy is made: “After all, we must be realistic!”

The deployment of masculinized “realism” forecloses the possibility of even deliberating about the proper role of those “feminized” concerns in national security policy. This is exactly the rhetorical strategy used by (then) U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley, to justify not attending or participating in the U.N. General Assembly debate on a prospective global ban on nuclear weapons. The debate and the treaty itself dared make the *human consequences* of nuclear weapons, rather than the weapons’ supposed *national security* benefit, the appropriate grounds for decisionmaking. This approach, which falls on the “feminine” side of our gender system, is deftly undercut by Haley’s comments: the tip of the

hat to the “feminine” (her womanly familial roles, the sentimental pull they create toward idealistic fantasy) immediately delegitimized as the grounds for decisionmaking through the invocation of “realism.”

## Recommendations

If ideas about gender act as a preemptive deterrent to thinking rationally, fully, complexly, creatively and, indeed, realistically about security, what are the implications for policymakers and the citizens they represent? What can we each do?

- Be curious! Gender as a symbolic system is so deeply embedded in how we perceive, categorize and evaluate ideas and policy options that it is often hard to notice. Practice being curious about where gender is shaping – or preventing – mainstream thinking about national security issues.
- Pay attention to that which *feels* true and ask *why* it feels this way. Do you have an empirical basis for believing it, or is it just “self-evident”? If the latter, how are gendered assumptions working to make it feel true – and what questions might you ask or what actions might you recommend if gender did not underpin your gut-level sense of its truth?
- Be alert to – and wary of – the use of terms like “rogue actors,” “bad guys” and “bad actors.” They short-circuit and dumb down our political analysis by reducing a complex country with

many competing interests and motivations into a unitary male actor. And they trigger all the conventional tropes of manly contest (e.g., “I’m not gonna let him push me around,” etc.), instead of more complex and accurate assessments of the varied options for dealing with the problem at hand.

- Monitor your own silences. When you hesitate to propose an idea or to oppose someone else’s, ask yourself: why? Are you unconsciously self-censoring out of fear of appearing “soft,” “wimpy,” “naïve,” “idealistic” – i.e., not being taken seriously because you veered into “the feminine”? If that’s the case, or if you do speak and someone tries to discredit you in this way, try naming it and shaming it as the absurd barrier to truly rational thought that it is.
- At every step, question the claim of “realism” as the basis for nuclear and national security policy. Is it *actually* realistic or does its claim to realism rely on

the ideas about gender encoded within it? Ask what other models have been seriously considered, thought-through, modeled, tested. And ask to be shown the evidence for any particular policy.

- Finally, try an experiment. Since the human, material and financial resources invested in militarized state security so vastly outweigh those invested in any other manner of trying to ensure security for the world’s people or states, try committing to just one year of equal allocation. One year matching every dollar the government spends on the nuclear arsenal, military, or private security contractors with a dollar spent on improving health care, education, access to water and sustainable household energy, improving access to resources for subsistence agriculture, and reversing climate change around the world. Then, at the end of that year, we can start measuring the impacts of these different expenditures on our national security.

Are you about to dismiss this last idea as “unrealistic”? Try giving a second thought to your gendered assumptions... ■

*Dr. Carol Cohn is the founding director of the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She is a leader in the scholarly community addressing issues of gender in global politics, armed conflict and security. She has been published in a number of arenas in both the academic and policy world.*

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## Notes

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# NEVER GIVE UP

By Ambassador Wendy R. Sherman



# In diplomacy, and in life, we always have to be prepared to accept our lack of control over circumstances. The world can and often will wreak havoc on our plans.

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Even these days, when I am often despairing and want to lean out, I keep working to make the world safer, less violent and more understanding, because I still carry my parents' faith that the world can change for the better if you have the courage to keep trying.

If the pain of letting a deal get away is proportional to how close you get to completing it, one of the hardest failures I've ever had to accept is the long-range missile test moratorium with North Korea that almost became my last deal as a Clinton administration official.

I had been negotiating with the North Koreans since 1997, after it became clear that they were not only testing missiles for their own program but had been shipping missiles and related technology to Iran. The White House responded by slapping sanctions on the North Koreans to get their attention.

The next year, as the relationship continued to degrade, and missile tests went on unabated, the president asked his former defense secretary, Bill Perry, to make a full review of our relationship with the Kim regime and its nuclear ambitions. Bill brought along his

academic partner Ashton Carter, who later became President Obama's secretary of defense, and borrowed me as the inside-government person to join his review team.

Diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK, as the government is formally known, are a little like the movie *Groundhog Day* – time seems to be caught in a loop as the same events repeat over and over.

Then, as now, the United States had imposed sanctions to kick-start negotiations after the DPRK launched a missile that flew over Japan. In May 1999, Bill and I traveled to Pyongyang with our small team to meet with senior North Korean officials and deliver a letter from President Clinton offering to back off on sanctions and normalize our relations in return if North Korea would agree to abandon its nuclear weapons program and stop developing long-range missiles.

Dealing with North Korea always involves one part normal, if tortuous, diplomacy and one-part absurdity. On my first trip to the country with the Perry team, we joined an entourage of North Korean officials on a visit to a rice paddy. Farmers and oxen were working together in a swampy field

festooned along one side with signs bearing revolutionary slogans. On the other side of the field was a military band whose members were dressed in pristine white band uniforms, playing revolutionary anthems. It was a surreal scene, one that might have taken place 100 years ago, in the country's colonial past.

It's important to realize that the Kim regime's actions are not the result of irrationality. The bizarre moments, like our visit to the rice paddy, are less the product of a loose screw than of overexuberant socialist propaganda. Similarly, their taunting and illicit missile tests act out a strategy that has proved effective. If the DPRK's behavior under Kim Jong Il tested the world's patience, it was because he, like his father, and as his son does now, acted according to a paradigm rooted in the idea that the United States is determined to destroy the regime. In his mind, the only way he could guarantee its survival was to have nuclear weapons to deter us from attacking. If you understood his perspective, his behavior was rational.

Indeed, the "Dear Leader" was smart and transactional. He and his top advisers knew precisely what they wanted. At the time I negotiated

with them, 14 extremely technical issues were up for discussion. When Secretary Albright, along with me and our team, made the historic October 2000 trip to Pyongyang, Kim Jong Il sat with an interpreter and Kang Suk Ju, my counterpart, and went through each of the points of concern with surprising mastery, answering authoritatively and ignoring only those points on which he didn't hold a strong position.

In a highly technical negotiation, the details are critical. If the leader knows what is being negotiated, it's a good indication that a deal can be made. (Which makes me greatly concerned about how such negotiations will fare under our current president.)

**“In a highly technical negotiation, the details are critical. If the leader knows what is being negotiated, it's a good indication that a deal can be made.”**

I believe that Kim Jong Il was ready in 2000 to complete a deal over his missile program. Unfortunately, my country was not ready.

The negotiations continued, and we looked to be very close to a deal. The American media, sensing the breakthrough, kept a constant watch on whether I would return to North Korea, pestering me so often that at a good-bye reception at the State Department for diplomatic press as the Clinton administration wound down, I sported a sign, tied with ribbon from my neck, reading No Decision Yet to fend off the repeated inquiries.

I never went to Pyongyang again. Between the president's Middle East negotiations and the uncertainty over the outcome of the presidential election, we simply ran out of time.

In addition to the disappointment of the election, I had to process the disheartening realization that my team and I might have wrestled a viable deal out of a tyrannical regime, only to have it negated by a Supreme Court ruling on a ballot recount in Florida.

The key to surviving tough times like these is to step back and look at the larger picture. Take stock of what you may have gained, despite seeming failure. Consider how you might use that knowledge, process and

techniques to offer someone else support, or nurse yourself through.

Whether it's a policy setback or a professional disappointment, letting go can represent a leap forward.

One of my greatest moments of professional pride was when I became the first woman undersecretary for political affairs. But perhaps my biggest moment of disappointment in my professional career came from wanting to be the first woman deputy secretary of state. In the spring of 2014, Bill Burns, the deputy secretary and my predecessor as undersecretary

for political affairs announced that he planned to retire from the Foreign Service in the fall, after an extraordinary career of more than 30 years. The buzz began immediately about possible candidates to follow in his footsteps. I wanted to be respectful of the president's and Secretary Kerry's selection process while at the same time ensuring I was given real consideration. I carefully let Kerry's chief of staff know of my interest. I heard that others, particularly other senior women in the department, were urging the secretary to recommend me to the president. Finally, after many weeks of uncertainty, Secretary Kerry and I had a conversation, and he told me he was recommending me.

As we neared the end of Bill's time without a decision announced, National Security Adviser Susan Rice suggested that some influential men in the White House were supporting Tony Blinken, a colleague with whom I'd worked well since the Clinton years, a longtime aide to Vice President Biden, and now Susan's very competent deputy and someone who had been with President Obama since the beginning.

On a Friday, the eve of Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, Secretary Kerry called me to his office. The president, he informed me, had decided on Tony.

When I got back to work Monday, I asked Secretary Kerry if he would recommend to the president naming me acting deputy until Tony was confirmed by the Senate. The president and secretary agreed (meaning that, officially, I was the first female to sit in the chair, even if I wasn't to be permanently appointed).

Part of letting go of the disappointment of not becoming deputy secretary of state was accepting what I got instead: had I replaced Bill as deputy then, I probably would not have continued to lead the work on the Iran deal, one of the singular accomplishments of my time at State, and a signature achievement of the Obama era.

Of course, that achievement proved short-lived. In May 2018, President Trump withdrew the United States from the nuclear agreement, although Iran was – and still is – in compliance, and reimposed unilateral sanctions on nations that continue to do business with Iran.

Despite this, our European allies remain committed to the Iran deal. Unfortunately, I think it will be very hard to keep this agreement alive. It is very painful for me to say that, given my role. Our secondary economic sanctions will basically mean that anyone who does business with the Central Bank of Iran cannot do business with American banks, which is the simple version of the situation. All the big companies have left Iran because they care more about the U.S. market than the Iranian market, and U.S. banks more than the Iranian Central Bank. Over the long haul, we are playing into the hands of Russia

and China and putting our allies – the Europeans – in league with Russia and China against the United States. It is a truly bizarre and more than unfortunate circumstance in which we find ourselves. We are back potentially to the brink of an Arab-Persian war.

But, I recall that at a dark moment in the Iran negotiation, when failure seemed certain, John Kerry said, “Sometimes you have to meet and not get anywhere in order to one day get somewhere.” I don’t mean to say that letting go always means taking it on the chin. But the tendency to try to control one’s life too closely can inhibit us from saying yes to opportunities that might change our lives. So, during these moments when it feels hopeless, I go back to what I know: we must learn from our experiences and use that knowledge as inspiration as we get up and try again.

Indeed, the day after President Trump’s inauguration, millions of women marched in streets all over the country and all over the world. That march produced scores of women who have since been moved to run for office. It’s inevitable that many will fail in their first try. But it’s exhilarating to know that even after what we’ve been through, so many want to give it a try. People

have taken failure and turned it into personal and political power.

We may not succeed at first. But abetting the failure of our democracy is not an option. We will mourn our loss together and then, together, we will try and try again. ■

*Ambassador Wendy R. Sherman was the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs who led the U.S. negotiating team that reached agreement in 2015 on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the P5+1, the European Union and Iran for which she was awarded the National Security Medal by President Barack Obama. Before this she served as Counselor of the Department of State under Secretary Madeleine Albright, Special Advisor to President Clinton and Policy Coordinator on North Korea as well as on the U.S. Department of Defense’s Defense Policy Board and Congressional Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation and Terrorism. She is currently senior advisor at Albright Stonebridge Group and as of January 2019, Ambassador Sherman joined Harvard Kennedy School as a professor of the practice in public leadership and Director of the School’s Center for Public Leadership.*

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*Former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry and Ambassador Wendy R. Sherman at the 2018 Ploughshares Fund gala.*



# PERPETUAL WAR

By Representative Barbara Lee

AUTHORIZATION  
FOR THE USE OF  
MILITARY FORCE

**17 years**

AFGHANISTAN

# Last year marked a new, tragic milestone in the war on Afghanistan. Now, children born after Sept. 11, 2001 – young people with no memory of how America’s longest war began – are old enough to enlist in it.

Seventeen years is a long time. I know that, because 17 years ago I was the only member of Congress to vote no on the war. On Sept. 14, 2001, Congress gathered to vote on the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). I stood alone – 420 to 1 – in opposing this blank check for war.

At the time, I feared that Congress was rushing into a military operation with an overly broad, poorly defined mission and no exit strategy. I didn’t want to stand alone, but I knew that someone had to speak out and urge the use of restraint.

This legislation set the stage for perpetual war. And 17 years later, we’re no closer to realizing peace than we were on Sept. 14, 2001. At the heart of the AUMF are 60 words that authorize any president “to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks...or harbored such organizations or persons in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism.”

These words have been used to justify military actions utterly unrelated to the attacks on Sept.

11 – including operations against the Islamic State, which did not even exist in 2001. The AUMF has no end date, no geographical constraints and no target. It can be used by any president, to wage war anywhere, at any time, against anyone, in perpetuity.

And that’s exactly what has happened. The Congressional Research Service has found that the 2001 AUMF has been used 41 times in 19 different countries by three presidential administrations. And those are just the unclassified instances.

**“The AUMF has no end date, no geographical constraints and no target. It can be used by any president, to wage war anywhere, at any time, against anyone, in perpetuity.”**

It doesn’t have to be this way. Congress wrote this law – we have the power to change it. The only thing that’s missing is the political will. I’m proud to say that I no longer stand alone in opposing this blank check. I have colleagues on both sides of the aisle – from the House Liberty Caucus to the Congressional

Progressive Caucus – who want to see this AUMF come off the books.

There are 300 Members in the U.S. House of Representatives today who weren’t serving in Congress on Sept. 11. That means two-thirds of Congress has never voted on the war in Afghanistan. This isn’t fair to Congress or the American people. And it’s certainly not fair to our troops, who risk their lives to fight in a war that we refuse to debate.

Last year, we finally made some progress toward repealing the 2001 AUMF. In the House Appropriations

Committee, I introduced an amendment to a defense funding bill that would have sunset the 2001 AUMF 240 days after enactment – giving Congress eight months to debate and vote on a new authorization. In a bipartisan vote, my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee supported this



Landscape in the Pamir Mountains, Afghanistan. Image: Huib Scholten/Unsplash.

amendment and agreed it was long past time for Congress to do its job.

The vote in favor was nearly unanimous. And for a moment, it looked like we were on track to finally get this blank check for war off the books. But then, in the dead of night, former Speaker Ryan used an underhanded legislative maneuver to strip my amendment from the bill without a vote.

From a 326-page bill, my amendment was the only piece that was touched. Despite the wishes of my Democratic and Republican colleagues – not to mention the American people – my amendment was removed from the bill.

But this setback made one thing clear to me: this AUMF repeal will happen, sooner or later. It's not 420 to 1 anymore. The majority in Congress – Democrats and Republicans alike – want to have a debate and vote on our wars. They're tired of kicking the can down the road.

Since Sept. 11, 2001 the United States has spent more than \$5.6 trillion on our wars. That's trillions of dollars that could have been spent repairing our roads, rebuilding our schools, caring for the sick and feeding the hungry. And every day we fail to address these wars, we lose ground not just on the international stage, but on our priorities here at home. In his "Beyond Vietnam" speech, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us: "a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

That was a different war. A different generation. But today, we find ourselves wrestling with the same questions. How can we fund unlimited dollars to fight a war 7,000 miles away, but not afford adequate care for our service members when they come home? How can we give hundreds of billions of dollars every year to the Pentagon, while

the children of Flint drink out of pipes poisoned by lead? How can we continue to funnel billions of dollars into military slush funds to fund a war without end, and then ask Americans to sacrifice funding for food stamps, Social Security and Medicaid?

It's time for Congress to have some tough conversations about the cost and consequences of our forever wars – in terms of dollars squandered, credibility diminished and lives lost. Congress has been missing in action for far too long. It's time to start changing that. ■

*Representative Barbara Lee is a member of the United States House of Representatives from the State of California. She serves as the co-chair of the Steering and Policy Committee. She was the only member of Congress to oppose the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force.*

# WOMEN IN THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS

By Christine Ahn



“The past of no contact with North Korea has not worked. We feel that it is important to try reaching out, friendship, contact, walking, doing with our physical selves what we hope can be done politically.” – Gloria Steinem

In one year, the world witnessed the prospect of a nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula turn into awe-inspiring peacemaking by Korean leaders. Now, a historic opportunity to end the seven-decade Korean War is within reach. The majority of South Koreans want a peace agreement to end the Korean War.<sup>1</sup> But peacemaking between the Koreas alone is not enough. The United States must also establish peace with North Korea.

A peace agreement would reduce the prospect of another Korean War and set the stage for normalized peaceful relations between North Korea and South Korea, and with the United States. For this process to succeed, women must be included. Groundbreaking research indicates that the participation of civil society groups, including women’s organizations, make a peace agreement 35 percent more likely to succeed, and that when women participate in peace processes, resulting agreements are more durable.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this, there are very few women involved in official inter-Korean peace processes. This is a missed opportunity for a lasting

peace agreement. It’s crucial that those activists who have engaged with North Koreans through citizen diplomacy, humanitarian aid and educational exchanges – especially women activists – be at the table to reach a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement.

We at Women Cross DMZ believe that the success of any Korean peace process hinges on two key

leader. They committed to improve relations, establish a peace regime, work toward denuclearization and to repatriate the remains of fallen U.S. servicemen from the Korean War. Two, President Trump signed into law the bipartisan Women, Peace, and Security Act (2017), making clear that meaningfully including women in preventing, ending and rebuilding after conflict is consistent with and supportive of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

**“Diplomacy is the only way to resolve the nuclear crisis and end the Korean War.”**

ingredients: a permanent peace settlement to replace the Armistice Agreement signed by the United States, North Korea and China in 1953 and the inclusion of women at all levels of the peace process.

Two significant developments during the Trump administration have impacted our work. One, in June 2018 President Trump met with North Korean Chairman Kim Jong Un – the first between a sitting U.S. president and a North Korean

The way forward has been difficult, however. The Trump administration weighed a “bloody nose strike” on North Korea, which could trigger a war that would kill hundreds of thousands of people, and impact millions, including 28,500 U.S. troops and their families in South Korea.<sup>4</sup> While Korean leaders have pursued normalization, the Trump administration reverted to its rhetoric of “maximum pressure” by imposing new sanctions, prolonging the U.S. travel ban to North Korea

and impeding U.S. civil society humanitarian operations. U.S. policymakers across the political spectrum, from Senator Lindsey Graham to Ambassador Joseph Yun (former U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy) continue to resist calls for peace, arguing that signing a peace agreement with North Korea would grant the Kim regime the right to become a nuclear weapons state.<sup>5</sup>

But a peace agreement could help defuse tensions by serving as a crucial security guarantee to a country that has long justified its nuclear weapons development on the unended state of war with the United States. Both North Korean and U.S. officials have gone on record noting the importance of a peace treaty to provide a baseline for relationships.<sup>6</sup> To break the impasse in this historic window, women's inclusion in the peace process offers the best chance for negotiating a positive outcome.

### **Korean War's Disproportionate Impact on Women**

From 1950-1953, the Korean War claimed 4 million lives from those who fought and those who lived there, with at least 2 million estimated to be Korean civilians.<sup>7</sup>

U.S. bombing campaigns flattened 80 percent of North Korean cities, dropping more bombs than in the Asia-Pacific in WWII and splattering more napalm than in Vietnam.<sup>8</sup> On July 27, 1953, the Korean War ended in a stalemate when military commanders signed the Armistice Agreement.<sup>9</sup> The agreement promised a conference within three months "to settle...questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question."<sup>10</sup> This never happened and, as such, a state of war has defined U.S.-North Korea relations for 70 years.

No women were consulted on the decisions resulting in the Korean War. Yet it has been well documented that war – both during armed conflict and after – differently and unequally impacts women, especially in sexual violence.<sup>11</sup> According to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), "civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict."<sup>12</sup> No one was immune to the devastation of the Korean War, but women disproportionately carried the brunt of helping their families survive the devastation at home and in their communities.

Today, women in North and South Korea are continually impacted by the war's legacy, whether through international sanctions or various forms of violence against vulnerable populations.<sup>13</sup> Despite this, there is a paucity of women involved in inter-Korean peace delegations: in 2000, only one out of 24 delegates were women, and in 2018, none of the 51 were women.<sup>14</sup> However, Korean women have been on the forefront of the movement calling for peace to the conflict, being the first to cross the demilitarized zone (DMZ) to inspire reunification.

Like all Korean families, mine was uprooted by multigenerational chaos sown by colonialism, division and war. My parents were born during the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea, lived through the indignation of not being able to speak Korean at school or read Korean in publications, and were forced to adopt Japanese names. Although my mother's grandfather was a provincial governor of Pyongyang and her father a Kaesong merchant, she always proudly claimed that her hometown was Seoul, given the tremendous redbaiting of anyone with familial ties to the North. With 10 children – nine girls and one boy – my parents struggled to make ends meet in a postwar Korean economy and

*Women crossing the DMZ in 2015, South Korea. Image: Women Cross DMZ.*



society. The path out of poverty, like with many South Koreans, was to emigrate, with all the challenges of assimilating culturally in a foreign land.

At Georgetown University, I learned from Ambassador Robert Gallucci that the Clinton administration almost waged a first strike on North Korea, which began my long journey to understand the forgotten Korean War. Through leading peace and humanitarian delegations to North and South Korea, where I met with ordinary civilians, I could see with my own eyes and feel the pain in my heart the enormous suffering caused by the unresolved war and division. As an American citizen of Korean descent, I felt I had a responsibility to help bring closure to this war and heal the division.

As the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Korea's division approached, I founded Women Cross DMZ to organize a DMZ crossing to call for the reunion of separated families, women's leadership in peacebuilding and an end to the Korean War. On May 24, 2015, with 30 women peacemakers from 16 countries, I led a peace walk with 10,000 Korean women on both sides of the DMZ. In Pyongyang under the Reunification Tower depicting two women holding up the Korean Peninsula, Gloria Steinem invited "all concerned to imagine a new chapter in Korean history, one marked by dialogue, understanding and – ultimately – forgiveness."

At our peace symposiums in Pyongyang and Seoul, the international delegates listened to Korean women share how the unresolved conflict impacted their lives. In Pyongyang, Ri Ok Hui shared her experience as a seven-year-old

girl during the war, when she lost both hands after being shot at by U.S. soldiers as she tried to escape. With tears, Ri said, "If there is another war here, women and children will suffer the most."

The resulting 2015 International Women's Declaration listed reasons for our walking: to unite Korean families tragically separated by an artificial, unwanted division; to lessen military tensions on the Korean Peninsula; and to urge leaders to redirect funds devoted to armaments toward improving people's welfare and protecting the environment.<sup>15</sup> But most of all, we walked to end the Korean War by replacing the 1953 Armistice Agreement with a permanent peace treaty.<sup>16</sup> These calls to action remain true today.

### **The Path Forward**

Moving forward, as a Korea peace process unfolds, Women Cross DMZ is committed to ensuring that the Trump administration upholds their commitment codified in the 2017 Women, Peace, and Security Act. Recognizing the historic opportunity we now have to end the seven-decade Korean War, women globally are leading the calls for a Korea peace treaty. In coalition with the Nobel Women's Initiative, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and South Korean women's peace organizations, we are launching a 2020 Women-Led Korea Peace Treaty Campaign.

We urge President Trump to do what no U.S. president has done: end the longest standing U.S. conflict. In the process of doing so, the administration must abide by U.S. commitments to UNSC 1325 and the 2017 Women, Peace, and

Security Act and include women at all stages. The administration should model meaningful inclusion within its own negotiating team, engage U.S. women's groups with a track record working with North Koreans, invite representatives of Korean women's organizations working on the Korea peace process to brief senior officials at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, and support the efforts of women peacebuilders from the region to convene, especially by eliminating the travel ban.

On the Hill, in addition to restricting the president's ability to initiate war with North Korea, members of Congress can introduce a resolution urging the formal declaration to end the Korean War. Members of Congress can invite women activists already bridging the divide between countries to testify in hearings or briefings, and they can dialogue with South Korean members of Parliament to explore together how women can be more actively involved in both official and unofficial peace processes.

Diplomacy is the only way to resolve the nuclear crisis and end the Korean War. While our primary goal is a permanent Korea peace settlement, our larger aim is to shift the "national security" discourse away from a militaristic paradigm and toward a vision of a feminist foreign policy that focuses on genuine human security, justice, ecological sustainability and peace. We will also continue to press for women's inclusion in the Korea peace process by modeling what a more inclusive process would look like, setting our own table by continuing to bring women together from the two Koreas with women from the United States, China, Japan, Russia and other key countries.

Despite high-profile exceptions, women largely have been kept outside the center of power and rarely been included in positions of authority, particularly in the Korean context. As a result, they have used strategic and creative approaches to bring attention to issues of war and peace, such as crossing the DMZ to raise global awareness about the insanity of a 70-year war that has torn homes and families apart for three generations. Looking forward, peace will be the most powerful deterrent of all, and women the most powerful agents for its delivery.<sup>17</sup> ■

*Christine Ahn is the founder and international coordinator of Women Cross DMZ, a global movement of women mobilizing to end the Korean War, reunite families and ensure women's leadership in peacebuilding. She is the co-founder of the Korea Policy Institute, Global Campaign to Save Jeju Island and the Korea Peace Network. She has organized peace and humanitarian aid delegations to North and South Korea, and has spoken in Congress, the United Nations, Canadian Parliament and the Republic of Korea National Commission on Human Rights. She was formerly the senior policy analyst at the Global Fund*

*for Women from 2008 to 2013 and has previously worked with the Oakland Institute, Grassroots Global Justice, Institute for Food and Development Policy and Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development.*

## Notes

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# A NUCLEAR POLICY FOR ALL

By Dr. Kennette Benedict



# The legitimacy of American democracy is rooted in political participation. Since the end of World War II, however, participation in national security policymaking by citizens, and even by most elected representatives, is no longer considered legitimate.

This is especially true for decisions about nuclear weapons. Despite the Constitution's provision that only Congress has the right to declare war, it is the president who has the sole authority to launch nuclear weapons and begin nuclear war, with the capability to ignite destruction beyond imagination. Since 1945, when the atomic bomb was first used, the rights of citizens and their representatives to shape national security policy, to participate in debate and even to access information about government military plans have been greatly diminished.

How can citizens restore their right to represent their own interests on issues of war and peace? How can authoritarian nuclear policy be challenged? What would democratic processes of national security policymaking look like?

These limits to citizen rights began in the aftermath of World War II and the onset of the Cold War. Political and military leaders argued that secrecy was required as the U.S. government fought an ideological war and engaged in a nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union. Fear

of Stalin's Russia, and especially fear of the Soviet bomb drove ever stricter constraints on who could have access to information and who could participate in national security policy. Nuclear secrecy hampers the ability of citizens to hold government accountable for weapons programs, and, in turn, reduces robust congressional oversight.<sup>1</sup>

The result is that presidents and military leaders, along with their expert advisers, have enlarged their political power and rendered citizen participation illegitimate. The most obvious result was the alarming growth of U.S. nuclear weapons in the 1950s and 1960s and continued stockpiles through the 1980s.<sup>2</sup>

junctures over the past 70 years, pressuring Congress and the White House, to freeze and reduce the number of nuclear weapons. Their success is worth recounting to demonstrate how citizen action and expression of their preferences can change nuclear weapons policy today.

In the 1950s, doctors found strontium-90 from radioactive fallout in babies' teeth and in mothers' breast milk.<sup>3</sup> Citizens, including many women who were outraged that weapons testing programs could harm them directly, organized protests. Women Strike for Peace, a network of some 50,000 women organized in 1961 to protest nuclear

**“Nuclear secrecy hampers the ability of citizens to hold government accountable for weapons programs, and, in turn, reduces robust congressional oversight.”**

Citizens have not acquiesced completely in the face of a growing national security state. They have taken direct action at critical

testing, was one of the most dynamic new forces in a larger disarmament movement.<sup>4</sup> These newcomers, along with college

students who joined the venerable National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), provided new energy and a public presence that resulted in the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty.

In the 1980s, the U.S. nuclear freeze movement and the European Committee on Nuclear Disarmament protested the Reagan administration's buildup of nuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup> With public outreach and education, SANE membership grew by 800 percent, and a revived Physicians for Social Responsibility and the new Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND) pressed for a stop to the arms buildup.<sup>6</sup> These and other groups pushed for both the United States and the Soviet Union to ban testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons. A June 1982 demonstration in New York City drew almost 1 million people, and surveys found that 71 percent of Americans favored the Nuclear Freeze.<sup>7</sup> In May 1983 the House of Representatives responded by passing a Freeze resolution by a vote of 278 to 149.<sup>8</sup> Citizen protests and mobilization, popular books like Jonathan Schell's "Fate of the Earth" and films like "The Day After" (which President Reagan viewed on television) contributed to an urgent need to control nuclear weapons, and ultimately end the Cold War.

Beginning in 2007, another civic group of nongovernmental organizations, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), organized non-nuclear weapons states under the auspices of the United Nations (U.N.) to call for the abolition of nuclear weapons. At conferences of the leaders of these countries,

international relief agencies, scientists and physicians' groups illustrated the consequences of a future nuclear war for all countries, not just for the nuclear weapons states. The negative effects on the climate, the disruption of aid to developing countries as international organizations dealt with the aftermath of nuclear war, and the devastation to a fragile global economy would have profound effects on all countries of the world, not just on nuclear weapons states. Informing leaders of emerging economies and developing countries of the destruction from nuclear weapons led 122 countries to adopt a new U.N. treaty in 2017 that would ban nuclear weapons, becoming the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.<sup>9</sup>

Today, nuclear weapons states are calling again for the buildup and modernization of their nuclear arsenals. While efforts to reason with policymakers about the dangers and costs of this new nuclear arms race are worthwhile, lessons from past nuclear disarmament movements suggest that a much wider campaign is needed to exert pressure. This campaign would call on citizens to learn about nuclear weapons, to question their governments and to reveal nuclear secrecy for what it is – an instrument for the few to reduce citizens to wards of the state while allowing presidents and guardians of these arsenals to maintain ultimate power over life on Earth.

To build a more democratic process for nuclear policymaking, one that places citizens at the center of nuclear weapons governance, requires new habits of thought and a new process of nuclear policymaking based on democratic participation.

Such a process will include several elements.

**1** First, the people's representatives in Congress will need to reclaim their right to decide issues of war and peace, foremost among these: how and whether nuclear weapons should be used. Presidential sole authority to launch nuclear weapons has long been questioned as unconstitutional by legal scholars.<sup>10</sup> Senator Ed Markey and Representative Ted Lieu introduced legislation in 2017 that would prohibit the president from launching nuclear weapons, unless in retaliation for a nuclear attack, without permission of Congress.<sup>11</sup> Representatives Markey, Lieu and their 93 co-sponsors argue that the use of nuclear weapons, when not in retaliation against an enemy strike, constitutes a declaration of war.

A similar measure introduced by Representative Adam Smith (D-WA) and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) in 2019 proposes that the United States refrain from the first use of nuclear weapons, effectively preventing the president from launching nuclear weapons unless in retaliation.<sup>12</sup> Article II of the U.S. Constitution empowers the Congress – not the president – to declare war, but under current practice, the president can initiate war by launching nuclear weapons without even consulting Congress. Clearly, this arrangement defies the founders' intent to prevent a concentration of power in the hands of one person, a situation they feared would turn the president into a king.

**2** Second, to make informed decisions, citizens require authoritative public information about nuclear weapons and military



*Women's Action for New Directions with 'Disarm the Patriarchy' signs at the 2018 Women's March, Washington D.C. Image: Corey Greer, WAND.*

plans. National secrecy about nuclear weapons makes it very difficult for people and the people's representatives to understand what is being contemplated, how much it will cost and what the implications and consequences are of using nuclear weapons. Such secrecy flies in the face of the most rudimentary needs for accountability in a democracy. The government must publish more information about nuclear arsenals, their numbers, launch readiness and details of the nuclear posture including plans for war.

Despite state secrecy, independent analysts and journalists have provided information that helps hold decisionmakers to account. Among these is the Nuclear Notebook, published since 1987 by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, providing estimates of states' nuclear weapons arsenals along with analysis of force structures and capabilities.<sup>13</sup> The Bulletin's Doomsday Clock, backed initially by those who worked on the first atomic bomb, has informed the public about the risks of nuclear weapons since 1947.<sup>14</sup> These efforts raise awareness and provide assessments of the enormity of the problem.

**3** Third, the public needs to hear from independent experts who challenge bureaucratic

complacency. Those former government officials who step out of the circle of secrecy to alert citizens about the dangers of nuclear weapons perform a necessary public service and deserve continuing support from academic institutions, media organizations and civic groups. For example, in their recent memoirs former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry and former U.S. Defense Department analyst Daniel Ellsberg provide valuable information from an insider's point of view that pierces the veil of government secrecy used to keep citizens at a distance from the policymaking process.

**4** Fourth, nuclear weapons issues need to be discussed in every election cycle and at every government level – city, state and federal. Just as health care, education, tax and economic policies are part of every election debate, nuclear weapons and military plans should be raised at election time. Even more important, the prospective uses and likely effects of these weapons, with their potential for genocide, need addressing at every turn. Whether the focus is on how the nation's international policy goals will be furthered or damaged by threatening the use of nuclear weapons, or how nuclear exchanges will affect us in cities and

regions across the country, the use of nuclear weapons will wreak such havoc that citizens need to know what the likely consequences are and whether they wish to unleash this destructive technology. Political leaders will need to have answers and will need to acquire much more knowledge than they currently have to answer constituents' questions. Only then will citizen judgments about nuclear policy be reflected at the ballot box.

**5** Fifth, knowledge about nuclear weapons and government policy needs to be taught in educational institutions and through cultural programs. Social protest is useful in raising awareness and constraining political leaders in the short-term, but to achieve lasting results and develop new habits of thought requires ongoing programs of education in schools, colleges and universities. New lesson plans and courses on nuclear weapons policy could be developed and required, just as math and language courses are. Nuclear literacy should be reinforced in museum exhibitions, art festivals and social media in ways that stimulate further curiosity about the consequences of possessing and using nuclear weapons.

**6** Sixth, U.S. citizens can reach across political borders to ally with counterparts in other countries, and especially with those in nuclear weapons states. The focus of this communication would be to learn about practices in those countries and identify shared interests in prohibiting nuclear weapons and ensuring our common survival and prosperity.

These recommendations are based on expert analysis and data, and

also upon my own experiences. I came up in the women's movement, which practiced participatory democracy. After graduate school, where I studied American politics and democratic theory, and my first encounters with the bomb and international security, I found myself coming up against a problem: I would ask a question about nuclear weapons and experts with security clearances would say "if only you knew, you would understand, but I can't tell you." I realized then that there was a huge democratic deficit when it came to nuclear weapons policy. Yet I understood that the legitimacy of American democracy rests on knowledge and participation.

To restore our representative democracy, public discussion of

all aspects of nuclear weapons is urgently needed. For too long, a very small group of experts and political and military leaders have decided the fate of the country, and, indeed, the fate of the world. My experience in the women's movement was life altering because it empowered us to challenge conventional wisdom and to demand a seat at the policymaking table. That's what feminist and other diverse perspectives can bring to this issue.

Broadening participation in nuclear weapons policymaking will require government to reduce secrecy, public officials to take responsibility for decisions about war and peace, educators and cultural workers to make knowledge about nuclear weapons accessible to citizens,

and citizens to demand that their representatives serve their legitimate interests in securing a future free of catastrophic destruction from nuclear weapons. ■

*Dr. Kennette Benedict is senior adviser to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and lecturer at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. Previously, she was the executive director and publisher at the Bulletin from 2005 to 2015, and before that was the director of international peace and security at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation from 1991 to 2005. She currently serves on the Advisory Council of the Stanley Foundation and is a member of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, as well as the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute of Strategic Studies. She is a member of Ploughshares Fund's board of directors.*

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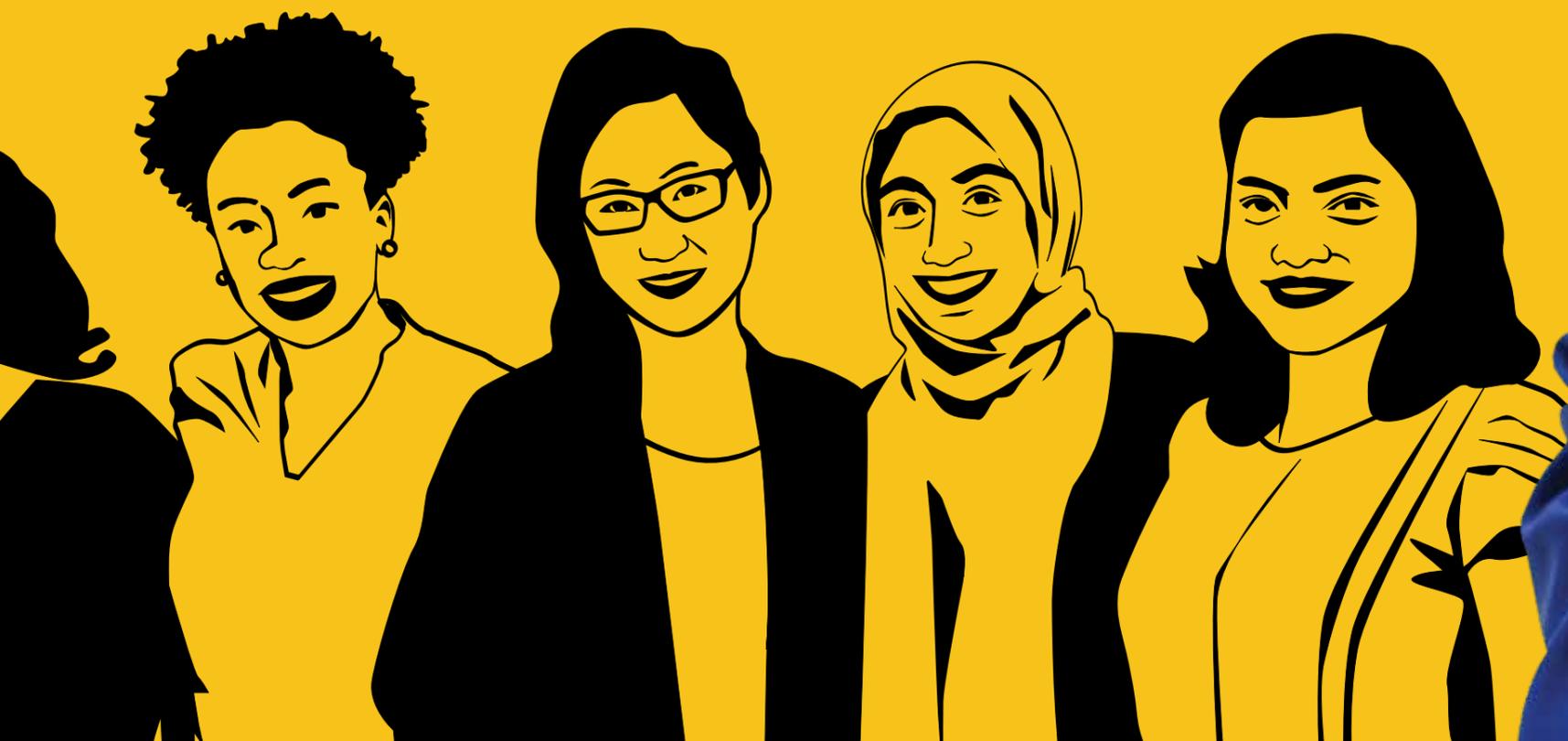
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# DIVERSITY MAKES BETTER POLICY

By Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins



# At a time when our global challenges are more complex than ever, it is particularly unfortunate that the decisionmaking levers of foreign and security policy do not reflect the rich diversity of cultures and perspectives that make up the United States.

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U.S. foreign and security policy is predominantly decided upon in governmental meeting rooms. While not inside government, other institutions that impact policymaking, such as think tanks and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), traditionally provide input into these deliberations through direct engagement with government officials, conferences, op-eds and Track II meetings. As we deal with increased global security issues like climate change, infectious disease and the threat of weapons of mass destruction proliferation, decisionmakers must have the best and brightest at the table. Policymaking institutions, and those that impact policy, benefit from increased diversity of viewpoints, which have proved to lead to better decisions. Think tanks, one of those institutions, must have a process that both brings in and is inclusive of diverse voices throughout the organization. The question is, how do we create that diversity?

## **Why Does It Matter and What Is the Scope of the Problem?**

A more diverse workforce is important to improving U.S. foreign

and security policy decisionmaking and outcomes.<sup>1</sup> While the United States has an extraordinary array of cultures and perspectives, it is not leveraging its wealth of diverse talents.<sup>2</sup> It has also become clear that the number of women and people of color in decisionmaking positions in foreign and security policies remains significantly underdeveloped.<sup>3</sup> Brookings Institution, in a bold step, released demographic data related to staffing.<sup>4</sup> It indicated how few fellows and senior fellows are women and people of color, and how they aim to do better.<sup>5</sup> Hopefully this will set a trend of self-reporting by think tanks since accurate data helps increase our understanding of the challenges to diversifying organizations.

For me, the problem and solutions are personal. I have spent my career in policymaking positions, both inside and outside the U.S. government. As Ford Foundation's program officer for U.S. foreign and security policy, it was clear based on grantee responses that many organizations, including think tanks, were not doing enough to diversify their boards, leadership and professional staff.<sup>6</sup> I was interested in the leadership levels of organizations,

like think tanks, which appeared to be particularly challenged in the area of diversity.<sup>7</sup> After meeting those interested in diversity, I decided to focus on think tanks to learn what some of the challenges were and ways for those institutions to increase diversity. These experiences taught me two important realities. One, such institutions were not thinking strategically about how diversity would benefit them; two, they were not considering how to create an effective diverse pipeline of individuals entering the fields of foreign and security policy.

With this in mind, I followed my desire to empower young women of color, the demographic most impacted by peace and security policies. I wanted to promote their education and exposure to these issues, bring light to often hidden figures working in these fields and engage organizations to bring these women into leadership positions. Thus, in 2017, I founded Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS).

I center my efforts on the two pathways for increasing diversity in foreign policy establishments:

institutions and individuals. Recent levels of interest in the value of inclusion in the foreign and security policy space is more widespread and accepted than it was when I started in this field, which is a positive step. But to ensure the foreign policy field has access – and is listening – to the best policy ideas and decisions, we must do more to increase the numbers of women and people of color in professional and leadership roles and make those efforts more sustainable.

### **Institutions: Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**

Long-term diversity programs that recruit and maintain talent will create more diverse foreign policy establishments. Yet successful programs are more than just recruiting new talent. Before program creation, change must start at the top. Institutional leadership must be clearly committed to the goals of DEI. Those in leadership roles should delineate the importance of diversity, set objectives of a diversity plan and be clear on steps for implementation. Practically speaking, an organization should create a strategic plan for the sustainability of DEI efforts. It should address long-term goals, what the organization seeks to achieve in a specific time frame and how the leadership will measure success. To ensure accountability, a dedicated individual or a diverse group should meet regularly to review the organization's processes, as well as successes and failures.

An important goal, though it is not always articulated, is to change an organization's culture, which may be resistant. Change is uncomfortable. Staff can easily let new DEI initiatives become a low priority if there is no direction, because they

want to protect their comfortable environment. In these situations, a leader must make decisions requiring immediate action that, if maintained through successive leaderships, will be sustainable and result in positive change.

Organizational process steps are not the only requisite for making such change, however. Part of an inclusive organizational culture is making people feel welcome. The diverse talent brought into an organization should not bear the burden of changing the organization. Those not from the predominant culture can tell whether an organization accepts and wants them to be part of the makeup. If these individuals do not feel welcome, the new talent will leave for a more welcoming environment.

One way to encourage a culture that welcomes diversity is to promote regular discussions on the topic of inclusion, between both the leadership and the staff. Culture is created through shared understandings of the world around us. Engaging staff in discussions on inclusion will help individuals

become more comfortable with difficult conversations that many of us would otherwise actively avoid. Organizations should offer annual trainings on topics like unconscious bias and preventing sexual harassment, to assist and supplement these conversations as they evolve. They should be tailored to the specific needs of the organization and its personnel.

Finally, active pipeline maintenance is crucial to keeping these talented people in the field. Think tanks should consider how they can turn internships and fellowships into stable, paid positions. This makes it more likely that women and people of color entering the field as interns can remain. Where long-term employment is not possible, institutions can help them seek follow-on employment in places where the skills acquired at the think tank can be utilized.

Institutions should also require interns or fellows, regardless of demographic, to draft a development plan for advancement in the organization, to ensure career progression and satisfaction. It can

*Members of the WCAPS network. Image: WCAPS.*



match new diverse entrants with an experienced and senior-level person for support. That senior individual can serve as a mentor and sponsor, helping the new entrant navigate the organization and evaluate their career path. Fostering affinity groups as an additional support system for those who share a diverse background can also be helpful. Setting aside time for leadership and staff to gather outside the office so that individuals will get to know one another on a personal level is also important to building relationships and is key to better inclusion and acceptance.

foster more inclusive and diverse organizations and subsequently form better policy.

### **Outreach: Engaging a Diverse Population**

If think tanks are to increase diversity within professional and leadership positions, they must prepare the next generation to move into such roles. As a field and as individual institutions, they should consider how to reach young people of diverse backgrounds to interest them in issues like foreign and security

field's pipeline. Recruitment for these positions must be a deliberate aspect of any outreach strategy. Fostering diversity begins much earlier in the process than decisions about which applicant to interview – institutions need to consider what networks are being tapped for applications, and whether the communities and places being reached are those from which they want to recruit talent.

Creating a solid applicant pool is more than sending out a position posting to an organization's networks. Institutions should be very familiar with those they will engage. They should have an interesting message for different audiences, particularly those who do not necessarily connect foreign policy to their world or lived experience, given increasing discrimination challenges at home. In addition, paid internships and fellowships are critical. The applicant pool for positions in Washington, D.C. favors those who can afford to be in the District and work for little or no pay. If institutions seek a larger pool of diverse applicants, paying their interns and fellows will make such positions far more appealing and equitable.

Moreover, finding positions at think tanks is not a transparent process, particularly the farther away one is from Washington, D.C. Seeking prospective applicants at academic institutions is important but think tanks should also engage NGOs to share information with their memberships, youth programs and during outreach events. Building outreach relationships will help to bolster the pipeline. Organizations should create a regularly updated, easily accessed set of materials for prospective applicants about the application process, making it more likely they will remember

**“It is essential that diversity be present at different levels within the organization, from the highest echelons of leadership to the most entry-level internships.”**

It is essential that diversity be present at different levels within the organization, from the highest echelons of leadership to the most entry-level internships. Perception matters. Women and people of color want to see others like themselves in myriad roles, particularly in professional and leadership positions. Not only does this support a positive diverse culture, but organizations are more likely to attract a diverse pool of candidates from the outset if they can visibly show dedication to diversity.

Institutions must take ownership of the lack of diversity and inclusion in their leadership positions. Taking ownership starts at the top and includes a process and actions that ensure results. Ultimately, making such changes will help break down barriers for talented individuals,

policy and showcase this career path. Opening eyes to these areas even before college is essential. My own interest in public service goes as far back as junior high school, influencing early decisions about my education. While I was not sure what substantive area I would work, I knew where I wanted to be: in Washington, D.C., working in the federal government. Institutions should recognize there are many students like this, who may not know how to pursue this career path.

Simultaneously, there must be a strategy for outreach to diverse populations at colleges and universities. Most think tanks have internships and fellowships for students and recent graduates. Such employments are the primary vehicle for bringing more diverse voices into organizations and populating the

such institutions when seeking placements.

Finally, organizations do not need to reinvent the wheel, especially given limited resources and time. There are already many resources for organizations to reach diverse and inclusive audiences. These include contact lists of women and people of color experts who can be engaged on foreign policy issues. Women In International Security (WIIS) is putting together a list of women professionals who may make good candidates for boards; WCAPS has a growing database of women of color in the fields of peace, security and conflict transformation to highlight the immense talent of young and midcareer women who can also serve on panels, are ready for media engagement and prepared for leadership positions; and Foreign Policy Interrupted and Women Also Know Stuff also both provide lists of female experts for engagement and outreach efforts.<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusion

The global community is faced with increasing global threats; now more than ever foreign policy and security decisions need different perspectives. Current interest in more diverse, equitable and inclusive organizations within the Washington, D.C. landscape is important, but that interest must lead to actual changes that are sustainable over time. Incorporating more diverse staff and leadership at think tanks and other institutions is an effort that requires thoughtful leadership and dedication. Ensuring these become best practices, incorporated across the whole of the field – particularly within crucial policymaking institutions like think tanks – will lead to better decisions. This will summarily improve the overall policy of the United States by incorporating more individuals' different perspectives, strengths and lived experiences in the process and subsequently the policies themselves. ■

*Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins is the founder and president of Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS) and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. Jenkins served as the Special Envoy and Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, U.S. Department of State (DOS) under President Barack Obama from April 2009 to January 2017. She was the DOS lead for the 2010 – 2016 Nuclear Security Summits and the U.S. Representative to the G-7 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Before returning to government in 2009, Jenkins served as a program officer for U.S. foreign and security policy at the Ford Foundation. Jenkins is a retired Naval Reserves officer and received several awards for her service.*

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## Notes

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6 I served as Ford Foundation's Program Officer for U.S. Foreign and Security Policy from 2005-2009.

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# GENDER CHAMPIONS

By Ambassador Pamela Hamamoto  
and Ambassador Laura Holgate



“The meaningful inclusion of women in decisionmaking increases effectiveness and productivity, brings new perspectives and solutions to the table, unlocks greater resources and strengthens efforts across all the three pillars of our work.”<sup>1</sup>

– United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres  
(inaugural member of the International Gender Champions leadership network)

Across the United States, the rallying cry for gender equality and women’s empowerment is getting louder. The Women’s March, Jan. 21, 2017, the largest single-day protest in U.S. history, drew millions of people to the streets to advocate for women’s rights, reproductive rights and other important social issues and has inspired a heightened level of activism for gender equality that continues to generate momentum to this day. The #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault quickly went viral in 2017 as further evidence of the growing outrage felt around the world about the continued widespread mistreatment of women.<sup>2</sup> Inspired by this movement, more than 200 women diplomats (including us both) civil servants and others who worked on national security for the U.S., signed an open letter stating they had survived sexual harassment or assault or knew someone who had experienced it, and called for stronger reporting, training and data collection.<sup>3</sup> All

**“We live in a deeply interconnected world, so it should come as no surprise that companies with greater diversity consistently outperform those with less diverse workforces.”**

of this begs the question: What can leaders do to address such a deep-rooted problem? Below are our stories of how we have helped create a model that engages leaders around the world to take concrete steps to advance gender equity, and how Congress and leaders of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can make a difference in their own spheres of influence.

#### **Why Does It Matter?**

There is ample research that shows the best way to bring about peace and prosperity, to lift up entire societies and to advance

sustainable development is to invest in women and girls. Women’s empowerment leads to global gross domestic product (GDP) growth, higher living standards and more resilient communities.<sup>4</sup> Meaningful representation of women at the negotiating table during peace processes results in far better and longer lasting outcomes.<sup>5</sup> Educating women and girls creates a powerful ripple effect from better decisionmaking, improved health care and more advanced skills.<sup>6</sup> We live in a deeply interconnected world, so it should come as no surprise that companies with greater diversity consistently outperform those with

less diverse workforces. In fact, a 2016 McKinsey report estimated that global GDP would increase by \$28 trillion by 2025 if the global gender gap in workforce participation were to close.<sup>7</sup>

For decades, women have been speaking up for equal rights and equal representation in all aspects of their lives. The Charter of the United Nations (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) served as early clarion calls and presented frameworks for achieving gender equality across all countries. But it was only in 2018 that, for the first time ever, there was gender parity across the United Nations (U.N.) senior management team. Underlying this accomplishment is U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres' personal commitment as an International Gender Champion to promote equality and to achieve gender parity across the U.N. system well before 2030.<sup>8</sup>

In the lead up to this current period of increased gender activism, two important developments occurred in the international arena and national security field: 1) the creation of International Gender Champions (IGC), first in Geneva and subsequently in New York, Vienna and Nairobi and 2) the establishment of Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy (GCNP) in Washington, D.C.<sup>9</sup> We are the founders of each of these initiatives.

### **What We Did: International Gender Champions**

While serving as ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva from 2014-2017, I (Pamela) saw the harmful effects of gender inequality permeate each of the issues I addressed. Many of the organizations I worked



*Inaugural class of Gender Champions at the launch of Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy in November 2018, Washington, D.C.*

with in Geneva promoted gender equality in some capacity, but there was very little coordination. Often responsibility was buried deep within the organization, resulting in slow and uneven progress. International Geneva, with its unique concentration of Member States, international organizations, civil society, research/academic institutions and private sector entities, presented an ideal platform for harnessing leadership in very practical and impactful ways.<sup>10</sup> In 2015, I teamed up with Michael Möller, director-general of the U.N. Office at Geneva (UNOG), to launch IGC with the objective of uniting the international community around the all-important goal of gender equality. Leveraging off my signature Future She Deserves initiative and the U.N. System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality (UN-SWAP), we urged colleagues to lead by example through concrete actions that would result in genuine change both in organizational culture and in their programmatic work.<sup>11</sup>

IGC was built on the premise that engaging leaders at the highest levels was essential, but it was also imperative that we all work together – across organizations, sectors and cultures – if we are to bring about meaningful and lasting change. More than 600 action-oriented commitments have been made by IGC Champions over the

past three years and have focused on good governance, leadership and accountability, organizational culture, representation, recruitment and work/life balance. Only through active engagement in each of these areas from top government representatives and policymakers, business and civic leaders, activists and influencers will we achieve the policy, behavioral, environmental and cultural advancements necessary to bring about gender balance and increased representation of women in positions of importance.

As she prepared in 2016 to take up her post as U.S. ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency and to the international organizations in Vienna, my colleague, Ambassador Laura Holgate, was encouraged by the State Department to develop a version of IGC for the community of organizations, diplomats and NGOs she would be joining. She held extensive consultations with potential advocates and with me and my team in Geneva. Although she resigned from her post in January 2017, her efforts laid the groundwork for the launch of the IGC Vienna chapter in June 2018.

### **What We Did: Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy**

I (Laura) have been committed to promoting women in the international security field since the early years

of my career, including working with Women In International Security (WIIS), a professional society dedicated to supporting women at all stages of their careers. I eventually rose to the position of president of WIIS. This is why I was so pleased to have the opportunity to promote the IGC in Vienna, and why I was so grateful to the ambassadors who picked up the baton to carry the IGC launch across the finish line after I left my post. With this career backdrop, and inspired by the practical nature of the IGC's focus on leadership and pledges, I came to believe that a network of gender champions could be beneficial in supporting women throughout the often male-dominated world of think tanks, NGOs, activist groups and philanthropies that work on nuclear nonproliferation, nuclear security, disarmament, deterrence or nuclear energy.

The nuclear policy and national security communities in particular have challenges in achieving a balanced representation of men and women. NGOs in this field are often small, with few management positions between research assistants and top leadership. Key feeder communities for organizations working on nuclear policy tend to be male-dominated (military, intelligence, technical), although the associated academic disciplines are producing higher proportions of female graduates. The benefits, however, of greater diversity of experience, viewpoint, scholarship and work style should be as high as those reported in business or other fields.

Upon my return to Washington, D.C. in 2017, I shared my experience with IGC among colleagues in the nuclear policy field. With their support, I designed the GCNP initiative and began recruiting the heads of these

organizations to make specific pledges to enhance the presence, visibility and influence of women in the nuclear policy community. More than 30 men and women leaders pledged to be champions at the formal launch in fall 2018, and further outreach is ongoing as we continue to build this valuable network of leaders in the nuclear policy field.

Both IGC and GCNP helped catalyze global leaders, experts and activists in the ongoing fight for gender equality. But the issues are broad, deep-seated and stubborn, and our efforts have only scratched the surface.

### What Comes Next?

Progress has been made, but much of that progress is under threat from policymakers. Women who speak out against abuses continue to be victimized and silenced. Gender inequality remains deeply rooted in developed and developing countries alike, and widespread underrepresentation of women in positions of power is a pernicious and persistent problem. We believe the time is now for our political and civic leaders to demand equality for women and girls. Congress could ignite a sea change for women if collectively they would summon the will to act. There are many practical and meaningful actions all stakeholders could undertake immediately to put us on the path toward gender equality:

- The U.S. government should aim for gender balance among senior officials, consider the gender balance of the delegations they send to international negotiations and meetings and publish up-to-date statistics on the gender breakdown of government staff and official delegates.

- Members of Congress should require at least one of every three candidates being interviewed for an open staff position be a woman and ensure that the hiring process does not contain gender bias and discrimination.
- Members of Congress and their staff should speak publicly about the benefits of inclusivity and suggest concrete actions for addressing gender inequality.
- Congressional committees working on national security should pursue gender balance in selecting experts for hearings and briefings so that more women's voices are heard, and their expertise is showcased.
- Staff directors on congressional committees dealing with national and international security matters should actively seek gender balance among their teams.
- NGOs, foundations and think tanks benefiting from 501(c)(3) status should be required to publish statistics on gender distribution among leadership, governance boards, staff and grant recipients.
- Leaders of civil society organizations should draw upon and adopt best practices identified by organizations such as Catalyst and authors such as Iris Bohnet to eliminate unconscious bias in the way their teams are recruited, selected, promoted, tasked, mentored and paid.
- Funders and program leads in the nuclear policy field should call for and support additional

analysis which applies a gender perspective to a range of nuclear issues.

- All stakeholders should actively support existing programs that seek to support and empower women on Capitol Hill, such as the Women's Congressional Staff Foundation and the Black Women's Congressional Alliance.

As we saw with IGC and GCNP, leadership is critically important in effecting change. Those at the top have the ability to shape organizations, build teams, marshal resources, set policy, establish standards, influence public opinion and start movements, and with such power comes great responsibility. In this regard, brave and bold steps from our leaders could springboard us all to a more just and prosperous world. Ultimately, this responsible leadership would empower people

at all levels to join the chorus of voices calling for an end to gender discrimination and the beginning of lasting equality for women and girls everywhere. The time is now. ■

*Ambassador Pamela Hamamoto served under President Barack Obama as Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva from 2014 to 2017, where she led the United States' largest overseas multilateral diplomatic post. In 2015, she co-founded International Gender Champions, a global network of leaders committed to promoting gender equality through specific actions and policy changes. Early in her career she worked as a civil engineer and computer programmer focused on hydroelectric power generation and as a strategic planner in the telecommunications sector. Following graduate school, she spent 10 years as an investment banker for Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch. She is a member of Ploughshares Fund's board of directors and is currently serving on*

*the Advisory Council for the Clayman Institute for Gender Research and as a 2018-2019 Stanford DCI Fellow.*

*Ambassador Laura S. H. Holgate is the vice president for materials risk management at the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). She served as U.S. Representative to the Vienna Office of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency under President Barack Obama from July 11, 2016 to Jan. 20, 2017. Previously, she served as the Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism and Threat Reduction on the National Security Council and held senior positions in the Departments of Energy and Defense. She is the co-founder of Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy, a leadership network in nuclear policy committed to breaking down gender barriers and making gender equality a working reality.*

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# TIME TO BAN THE BOMB

By Beatrice Fihn



NUCLEAR FREE  
NOW!

# Of late, the world has been reminded that the threat posed by nuclear weapons is severe and is worsening.

The United States has signaled that it will withdraw from one of the most important Cold War arms control agreements – the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) – which successfully removed an entire class of nuclear and conventional missiles from Europe. President Trump has assailed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. Rhetoric and tensions among nuclear-armed states are rising, and nearly all are engaged in rebuilding their nuclear weapons programs. The United States alone plans to spend close to \$2 trillion over the next 30 years on such efforts.<sup>1</sup> The stage is set for a new global nuclear arms race.

The risk of use of nuclear weapons is higher today than it has been for years. With developments in cyber warfare, autonomous weapons and an increasingly uncertain global security situation, that risk will only increase over time. A security policy based on plans to fight – and “win” – a nuclear war is morally bankrupt and unsustainable. The United States must begin developing a policy for a non-nuclear future, or risk becoming an outlier without moral authority.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a global coalition of over 530 organizations, is leading a movement to achieve this non-nuclear future. Over 10 years, together with countless partners in governments,

international organizations and civil society groups around the world, we helped incubate and amplify a previously-ignored conversation about nuclear weapons. We placed civilians and the harm caused to

them by nuclear weapons at the center of debate. This movement ultimately led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and to ICAN being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its work in promoting nuclear disarmament.

The Treaty emerged through something new and different in the disarmament debate within the nuclear community – the Humanitarian Initiative. This initiative reframed the discourse around nuclear weapons to make the horrific humanitarian consequences caused by their use the center of discussion, rather than a secondary issue. In seeking the negotiation and adoption of the treaty, we followed the path set by other global weapons prohibitions, including conventions related to biological weapons, chemical weapons, antipersonnel

landmines and cluster munitions. The premise, based in international law, is founded on the total abnegation of possession and use of weapons with unspeakable consequences.

**“No sustainable, smart or effective national security strategy can be based on weapons that cause the level of harm to civilians that nuclear weapons do.”**

No sustainable, smart or effective national security strategy can be based on weapons that cause the level of harm to civilians that nuclear weapons do. This reflects a shift in security and development policies toward a more pre-eminent role for humanitarian concerns, humanitarian law and the protection of civilians. Therefore, such weapons cannot remain legal or be considered legitimate options for states in warfare.

On July 7, 2017, the TPNW was adopted by 122 states at the United Nations (U.N.).<sup>2</sup> It will enter into force once 50 states have deposited their instruments of ratification, which we expect will happen by 2020. This moment represents an opportunity for the international community to make real progress toward a world free of nuclear weapons. With this in mind, the United States – and all

states possessing nuclear weapons – must engage the majority of the world’s countries working toward true global peace and security.

The United States’ path forward is clear: 1) end nuclear saber-rattling and place humanitarian consequences at the center of nuclear policy; 2) commit in good faith to multilateralism with a view to ending the new nuclear arms race, putting legal and diplomatic options above military expansionism; and 3) cease denigrating the TPNW and instead support the treaty and its signatories.

### **Humanitarian Consequences at the Center of Nuclear Policy**

By their nature, nuclear weapons are indiscriminate and inhumane. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would quickly ripple across the world, even if a nuclear conflict was localized. The use of a nuclear weapon over a

populated area would immediately kill tens of thousands – if not hundreds of thousands – of men, women and children, and injure countless more.<sup>3</sup> We continue to pay the price of atmospheric nuclear testing in many countries around the world with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people dying early from cancers.<sup>4</sup>

We also must not forget that the effects of nuclear detonations have disproportionately affected women. Though the immediate effects of nuclear weapons use are indiscriminate – no matter your sex or gender identity – the impact on survivors is not. Women in Hiroshima and Nagasaki have nearly double the risk that men do of developing and dying from solid cancer due to ionizing radiation exposure.<sup>5</sup> Robust findings from the Chernobyl disaster indicate that girls are considerably more likely than boys to develop thyroid cancer from nuclear fallout.<sup>6</sup> Pregnant women exposed to nuclear radiation face a greater likelihood

of delivering children with physical malformations and stillbirths, leading to increased maternal mortality.<sup>7</sup> And these effects last *generations*.<sup>8</sup> Women’s rights, human rights, cannot be fully realized when we are threatened by, or threaten others, with such consequences.

A national security framework that respects human rights must work to eliminate and legally ban any weapon that causes these consequences. The TPNW codifies the stigma against the infliction of such barbarity and can be used as an example of how to incorporate humanitarian consequences at the center of policy. A congressional inquiry is needed on the short- and long-term environmental and human cost of past nuclear programs. Members must ask: Who has died early as a result of these programs and who will die in the future as a result of past misdeeds? And to be credible, such an inquiry must include women and other survivors as an integral part of the process.

*Beatrice Fihn on stage with ICAN campaigners at the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize Concert. Image: ICAN.*



## Commit to Multilateralism

The key to sustainability in national security is multilateralism. Outside the United States, a cohort of nations is trying to restrain the global military-industrial complex. The adoption of the TPNW is a reaffirmation of this multilateralism. All regions of the world – not just the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council – must have a say in the solutions. Just as no nation will be immune to the consequences of nuclear weapons, no nation should be excluded from a seat at the table when it comes to deciding the fate of nuclear security – and through that the fate of the world. In addition to refusing to engage the majority of states who negotiated and adopted the TPNW, the Trump administration is rejecting international solutions to the global nuclear problem. This is the exact opposite of how to ensure security for the United States.

The United States must re-engage with international bodies and the global community on nuclear issues, particularly if it prides itself as being a global leader. Only solutions

built upon international law and existing frameworks can provide comprehensive, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. Once unthinkable, U.S. allies who claim protection through the U.S. nuclear umbrella are facing mounting domestic pressure to reject a security arrangement rooted in nuclear weapons. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states are awakening to the false argument that there can be no NATO except a nuclear NATO.

Spain has signaled an intent to join the TPNW while remaining a full member of the Alliance. Even states like Italy that host nuclear weapons on their territory are considering joining the treaty and renegotiating their security relationship with the United States. These examples make clear that it is time for the United States to refocus attention on how to reduce tensions by engaging in practical arms control and disarmament negotiations. These negotiations were successful during the Cold War and can be successful again in an increasingly multipolar world.

The U.S. Congress should support and enforce international treaties on nuclear nonproliferation and arms control. It must stop the administration from applying a wrecking ball to agreements that have maintained international peace and security for years. It's easy to rip up agreements, but far harder to make them, and even harder still to make them work. But this is what leaders do. Members of Congress must support the existing international legal order and also urge the administration to engage in good faith in multilateral negotiation to further reduce nuclear arsenals around the world. And when engaging in such negotiations, the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons should be at the forefront of all leaders' minds. For they are, in effect, discussing the potential elimination of humankind as a species. Now more than ever, we need more arms control, not less.

## Engage with the Prohibition Treaty

The TPNW offers a pathway forward at a time when the world and the United States are in desperate need. Already concerned citizens from cities across the country are stepping forward to have their voices heard, calling on their representatives to come forward in support of nuclear disarmament. Several towns and cities, including Baltimore and Los Angeles, have already endorsed the TPNW and the U.S. Conference of Mayors supports ICAN's work. California, the largest state by economy and population, became the first to endorse the TPNW when it passed CA resolution AJR 33 in August 2018.<sup>9</sup>

*Copy of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Image: ICAN.*



We call on cities, states and municipal authorities throughout the United States to do likewise. Do not stay silent: every resolution that is passed endorsing the TPNW takes us a step closer to a nuclear-free world. Similarly, members of Congress need to put aside shortsighted commercial and military interests and introduce and debate a resolution calling on the United States to join the TPNW.

They must "acknowledge the ethical imperatives for nuclear disarmament and the urgency of achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free world, which is a global public good of the highest order, serving both national and collective security interests."<sup>10</sup>

A tide of support for the TPNW is rising around the world. It can be seen across NATO member states and within cities, counties and states in the United States. Once ratification is achieved in 50 nations,

the ban on nuclear weapons will become international law. This will impact all countries, including those that have not yet joined. The United States will be no exception. Any leader that wants to be taken seriously on security and represent a realistic plan to keep Americans and the world safe must engage with this treaty. Engaging with the TPNW means engaging with the world. This is the only way to finally fulfill the long unfulfilled promise of a world free from these weapons of mass destruction.

No nation, not even one as powerful as the United States, can outrun the nuclear threat. It is time to respect the rights of all people to live free of nuclear terror. Every leader in the United States – from local officials to those that walk the halls of Congress to those in the White House – has the opportunity today to ensure a safe and secure world. Bring the humanitarian consequences of

nuclear weapons to the forefront of your nuclear conversations. Engage in multilateralism and international arms control agreements. Support the TPNW. Change is sweeping across the world, one that the United States cannot afford to ignore. ■

*Beatrice Fihn is the executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize-winning campaign coalition that works to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. She has over a decade of experience in disarmament diplomacy and civil society mobilization, through her work with ICAN, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. She has written extensively on weapons law, humanitarian law, civil society engagement in diplomacy and multilateral institutions and gender perspective on disarmament work.*

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# A FEMINIST NUCLEAR POLICY

By Marissa Conway



I founded the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy because I kept seeing the same patterns in foreign policy: the exclusion of marginalized communities in policymaking, the pressure on women to bear the burden of peacekeeping and the insistence that gendered ideas (in particular those relying on the threat of violence) were “best” for national security.

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Wearing feminist-tinted glasses, I could no longer ignore the disconnect between state action and human consequence.

Perhaps nowhere is this disconnect better exemplified than in nuclear policy. The abstraction of nuclear weapons’ brutally destructive capacity and implicit insistence on certain gendered leadership qualities makes it ripe for a feminist revisioning. The timing could not be better. Every day feminist foreign policy is becoming increasingly mainstream as exemplified by the official adoption of feminist foreign policies by both Canada and Sweden, and now more than ever nuclear weapons are front and center in the American psyche.<sup>1</sup> It is time for the United States to adopt a feminist foreign policy. But to do so, it must first re-examine its nuclear policy with a feminist lens.

The policies of the last two U.S. administrations have maintained

our position on the nuclear playing field. While the Trump administration inherited plans to spend \$1.7 trillion over 30 years to rebuild the nuclear arsenal, its own Nuclear Posture Review added a new nuclear weapon: the low-yield warhead for Trident D5 submarine missiles, designated the W76-2.<sup>2</sup> The introduction of and misguided justification for these new weapons have made it clear that now is the time for the United States to look at national security in a fresh and dynamic way.

We must rethink security and consider alternative policies to ensure they break away from outdated and patriarchal structures. This article’s purpose, then, is threefold. First, to define feminist foreign policy. Second, to apply a feminist critique to the justifications in support of the new low-yield warhead. Finally, to outline how the addition of this new warhead undermines the United States’ ability

to develop its own feminist foreign policy.

### **What Is a Feminist Foreign Policy?**

A feminist foreign policy is both a theoretical approach and a practical framework to ensure policies are truly vested in establishing a more peaceful and equal society. It acknowledges the foreign policy status quo as a flawed structure that reproduces a very narrow and often harmful understanding of security and diplomacy.

At a practical level, a feminist foreign policy means not just including typically marginalized voices in foreign policymaking but also taking them seriously. It involves including those affected by specific policies in consultations, as typically policymakers are not the populations bearing the brunt of their decisions. It asks that budgets are used wisely to reinforce gender equality and

anti-racist principles, and money be moved away from militarization and weaponization toward diplomacy and peacebuilding. It means understanding historical contexts and critiquing policy decisions to push for a more just global order.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of nuclear policy, this process means taking seriously the marginalized voices both at a state-level (for example, non-possessor nations and the Global South) and at a more localized level (for example, women, indigenous people and people of color). It actively seeks to collaborate with a wide range of actors in making policy decisions and grounds its perspective in the risk to human life rather than the abstract strategic benefits of reinforcing deterrence theory. At minimum it freezes current nuclear arsenals and at best eliminates nuclear weapons entirely.

### **A Feminist Analysis of Low-Yield Nuclear Weapons**

Feminist foreign policy puts feminist analysis front and center of its approach. As much as a feminist analysis is about gender equality, it is more broadly a tool to understand power. It insists that nothing occurs in isolation, and understanding the big picture is crucial before analyzing the specific. Most often, it sheds light on who holds the power and why they are unwilling to give it up.

Thus, to understand the low-yield warhead, we must understand the ideas and assumptions that underpin U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons. There are several themes woven throughout U.S. nuclear policy, stemming largely from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. They include a sense of

entitlement to nuclear weapons, a belief in the “sanctioned” right to power as granted by treaties and policy and an expectation of being the primary agenda setter for international security. Current U.S. nuclear doctrine is informed by ideas of dominance, competition and strength – gendered characteristics typically coded as masculine. With a feminist analysis these masculinity-driven patterns found in nuclear policy can be unpacked, especially within the proposal for low-yield weapons.

**“...allowing nuclear policy to act as an extension of one’s ego is an irresponsible use of power.”**

In a June 2018 letter to Senator Mitch McConnell, former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis detailed the reasons that low-yield warheads on submarines are needed.<sup>4</sup> He stated, “The President’s request for the W76-2, a supplemental capability, is in response to developments in Russian nuclear doctrine, exercises and its new nuclear capabilities.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, as Russian nuclear policy shifts toward potential escalation, then so must ours. This acknowledgement that the low-yield warhead is meant to match Russia boils the issue down to, at least in part, a symbolic battle of superiority between Russia and the United States, both in pursuit of the upper hand in a show of dominance. This reliance on a “dominate or be dominated” mindset (coded as masculine) in nuclear policy fuels the Trump administration’s pursuit of low-yield nuclear weapons and ultimately puts each state’s residents’ lives at

risk. Put simply, building the low-yield weapon and allowing nuclear policy to act as an extension of one’s ego is an irresponsible use of power.

The race to the top of the nuclear hierarchy is also reinforced by a reliance on deterrence theory. In his letter, Mattis suggests that “it is not possible to determine precisely what is needed to deter with high confidence. It is, however, possible to get indications that one’s deterrence strategy, posture and capabilities are potentially inadequate.”<sup>6</sup> He uses

this lack of confidence and fear of inadequacy not to knock the zealous worship of deterrence, but rather to encourage modernization so the theory continues to be upheld as law. A feminist analysis is quick to point out that the theoretical “objectivity” of deterrence theory has in fact been manipulated and co-opted as a means to uphold a man-made status quo.

This is reflected in the identification of the low-yield warhead as a more useable, “battlefield-friendly” weapon. The terminology of the new warhead is misleading. Though only a fraction of the size of other atomic weapons in the U.S. arsenal, even a “low-yield” warhead would unleash destruction on the scale of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and kill tens of thousands. And its “usability” is seen as a bargaining chip to deter state-state violence. But, how long can we flex before a bomb is dropped? As

Mattis posits, if it's not possible to say with confidence what ensures nuclear deterrence, then the risk of nuclear warfare is indeed amplified to frightening heights, especially when the key feature of the low-yield warhead is its "usability." If we perceive this weapon as useable, what is to stop its actual use? In fact, in the event of a nuclear exchange, low-yield weapons would be used *first* precisely due to their lower-yield. Its development does not increase our security. It puts us closer to midnight on the Doomsday Clock.<sup>7</sup>

### Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy

The push for low-yield weapons recycles a realist, power-hungry status quo mindset and is not truly about safety or security. The destructive force and usability of these weapons do not center the human experience over the pursuit of power. Moreover, their development undermines U.S. national security and sets us further down the path to nuclear war. The United States should not build nuclear weapons simply to feel or look powerful or gain an edge over our adversaries, including Russia. Instead, policymakers must develop helpful – not harmful – security mechanisms. As championed by feminist foreign policy, this means building up diplomacy, health care, education, reproductive rights and a sustainable economy.

So, who is setting the current agenda encapsulating us in a new arms race? The defense industry plays a significant role that must be addressed. As Senator Elizabeth Warren highlighted, "We can start by ending the stranglehold of defense contractors on our military policy. It's clear that the Pentagon is captured by the so-called "Big Five" defense

contractors – and taxpayers are picking up the bill. ... The defense industry will inevitably have a seat at the table – but they shouldn't get to own the table."<sup>8</sup> We should be centering the needs of the American public in our policies and with our dollars over the desires of the defense industry.

Furthermore, historically the dominant voice in nuclear policy has been that of white men. Support for the low-yield warhead is championed by a president who espouses traditional gender roles, normative and toxic masculinity, and patriarchal values. The Trump administration is led by a majority of white men, with only three women in senior national security positions. Though simply adding women or people of color into decisionmaking roles and expecting better, more peace-oriented ideas is foolish, their near complete absence in the Trump administration is noteworthy. It reinforces the sheer lack of diverse voices involved in developing policy, particularly national security and nuclear policies.

These weapons inherently sit at odds with a feminist foreign policy. Ultimately, to ensure true national security, the values a feminist foreign policy espouses – a diversity of voices, grounding policy in the human experience and moving money away from militarization and toward more holistic understandings of security – must be prioritized. So, what can be done?

- **Conduct oversight.** Congress has a duty of oversight, and the American public deserves to know the truth about low-yield weapons and to hold accountable those justifying their development. Congress should exercise its duty and

hold hearings on the low-yield warhead.

- **Cancel the low-yield warhead.** In fall 2018, Representatives Ted Lieu (D-CA) and Adam Smith (D-WA) introduced the Hold the LYNE Bill which would "prohibit the research, development, production and deployment of low-yield nuclear warheads for submarine-launched ballistic missiles."<sup>9</sup> Members of Congress can support this bill and others that move money away from the low-yield warhead.
- **Include more marginalized voices in nuclear policymaking.** Expanding the base of nuclear and national security leadership to include those with different life experiences is of the utmost importance. The broader the knowledge that feeds policy, the better chance there is of implementing effective security and foreign policies that do not uphold traditionally idealized masculine traits of dominance and power.
- **Rethink security.** It is critical to rebuild ideas of security as ones that are not reliant on violence. Peaceful coexistence understands that education, access to reproductive health care and societal equality are far greater indicators of the stability of a nation than any amount of weaponry ever has been. When national security incorporates these issues into its strategy rather than solely focusing on power optimization, disarmament can become politically palatable and a peaceful, nuclear-free world a more likely reality.

## Conclusion

Whether or not one personally ascribes to feminist principles, a feminist foreign policy is a powerful framework to flip any issue on its head and peel back the layers of power to reveal the hidden truths beneath. When it comes to nuclear policy, understanding the context, the power dynamics and the truths behind public justifications is critical.

The Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy was founded not solely for those already sympathetic to a feminist agenda, but to bring everyone on a journey to push the boundaries of foreign policy and encourage a more people-oriented policymaking process. When discussing nuclear weapons, the human experience must be at the center. Every policy option must be explored, as many diverse



*TM-61 Matador Nuclear Cruise Missile at the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History, Albuquerque, NM. Image: Smriti Keshari*

perspectives as available included and every justification rooted in true security – not a drive for power or money. Ultimately, to build a more equal and peace-oriented society, a feminist foreign policy must be adopted and low-yield nuclear weapons abandoned. ■

*Marissa Conway is the co-founder and UK director of the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, a research and advocacy organization promoting people-centered policy. Follow her at @marissakonway.*

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# NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE GREEN NEW DEAL

By Cecili Thompson Williams

At its core, ours is an existential fight. Our work to prevent nuclear war is driven by an understanding that humanity has the capacity to destroy itself and we can't leave prevention to chance.

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The Doomsday Clock is currently set at two minutes to midnight – the closest to a nuclear apocalypse it has been since the height of the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> Several factors have put us so close to midnight. These include: misinformation campaigns on social media, increasing risk of cyber-based conflicts and the threat of climate change. But most threatening of all are unpredictable nuclear-armed world leaders like Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un.

At Beyond the Bomb, our primary focus through 2021 is passing domestic “No First Use” (NFU)

legislation – a sensible policy in which a nuclear armed state pledges not to use nuclear weapons unless first attacked with nuclear weapons. It would legally prohibit the president from single-handedly launching a nuclear weapon on a baseless whim. NFU is a critical and achievable step to reducing the risk of nuclear war – by limiting the possibility of an accidental or ill-intentioned U.S. first strike. It is not the final step in preventing nuclear war, but it is a solid first step required to lower our current risk and put us on a path to launch a renewed disarmament effort.

But we can't solve this existential crisis within the same social frameworks in which it was created. Our work must incorporate significantly broader audiences than it has in the past and engage them in meaningful and respectful ways. Thus, we view our work as deeply relevant to many other fights for positive social and environmental change because we view them through the lens of our shared values. If a nuclear weapon was detonated anywhere in the world, it would likely decimate our ability to carry out effective work on any other issue. The rights and freedoms

*Organizing event with the Sunrise Movement in support of the Green New Deal. Image: Beyond the Bomb.*



that we leverage to fight for positive change would be limited, if not eliminated entirely.

With this knowledge, we are expanding our work to acknowledge the fundamental role that intersectionality plays in nuclear policy. At the end of the day, if our work isn't appealing to a wide variety of audiences, we are undermining our potential for success. So many of the major fights of our time – from social justice to the environment – present opportunities to implement common sense nuclear policies through new platforms and to new audiences. This includes building a sustainable, environmentally-friendly economy.

**“By adopting an NFU policy, Congress can create an important barrier against the indiscriminate and undemocratic use of nuclear weapons.”**

Researchers have found that even a relatively small-scale and localized nuclear war, for example between India and Pakistan, would have global climate impacts. Atmospheric soot would block sunlight and further deplete the ozone layer, lower global temperatures, ruin global agricultural yields and cause catastrophic economic downturns.<sup>2</sup> In sum, building a sustainable and environmentally-friendly economy would be critically undermined by the use of any nuclear weapon. The Green New Deal (GND), which links the economic movement with the environmental movement, offers

a unique vehicle for advocating for commonsense nuclear policy including NFU with a diverse audience of lawmakers and voters. Most recently, our partnership with the Sunrise Movement, the primary group organizing on this issue, presented us with an excellent opportunity to do just that.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Green New Deal and No First Use**

The GND calls for the establishment of a House Select Committee on a Green New Deal, which would be charged with developing a national industrial and economic climate plan to address the negative effects of climate change. Specifically, the GND

looks to build policy solutions within four pillars: an economic bill of rights, a green transition, real financial reform and a functioning democracy. Within the context of the GND policy platform, the strategic rationale for incorporating nuclear policy may seem unclear. However, the fourth pillar of the GND – “a functioning democracy” – includes a clause about reining in the military-industrial complex. A core principle of democratic governance – checks and balances on power – is currently not present in the decisionmaking process to carry out a nuclear strike. NFU supports a functioning

democracy by limiting the president's sole authority to carry out a planet-altering nuclear strike and prevents the president from launching nuclear weapons except in the case of an incoming strike. By adopting an NFU policy, Congress can create an important barrier against the indiscriminate and undemocratic use of nuclear weapons.

When discussing the military-industrial complex, the GND specifically calls for creating a new round of nuclear disarmament initiatives. NFU not only drastically reduces the threat of an accidental or unfounded nuclear first strike, it holds broader policy implications for disarmament and preventing nuclear war fighting. For example, an NFU policy would mean there is no need to retain first strike weapons, and thus we could take nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert and phase out land-based ballistic missiles.

Further still, to reign in the military-industrial complex we must re-evaluate our spending and review our understanding of what constitutes national security. The exorbitant amount of money we spend on our outdated and dangerous nuclear system, if instead put toward our crumbling infrastructure, painfully underresourced schools or green jobs would make us more secure. All such examples are core policies for the sustainable economic goals of the GND. Therefore, the incorporation of NFU in the GND is essential and should be the central policy pathway to fulfilling its fourth prong. It is on these principles that we are building our partnership with the leaders of the GND and exposing the connection between nuclear policy and climate change.

This partnership arose through our work to engage 2018 candidates for Congress in support of an NFU policy. We asked candidates to commit to support NFU once they were elected. Specifically, in January 2019 Representative Adam Smith (D-WA) and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) introduced legislation that would make NFU the official policy of the United States.<sup>4</sup> Support is growing in Congress and increasingly notable members are endorsing the policy. In a November 2018 speech Senator Warren said, “To reduce the chances of a miscalculation or an accident, and to maintain our moral and diplomatic leadership in the world, we must be clear that deterrence is the sole purpose of our arsenal.”<sup>5</sup>

The beauty of the intersection between NFU and the GND is that it truly captures what the future of policy looks like – efforts that recognize the interconnected nature of policy implications and aim to address system challenges with bold new solutions. Being able to so clearly address the threat of nuclear war while also working to reverse climate change and moving toward a thriving, green economy is a win-win-win for Americans and the global community. In immediate terms, we need lawmakers who understand both the unique moment we are in and the unprecedented potential of this kind of bold legislation to vocally support the GND and commit to incorporating NFU as a central component. To demonstrate this support, all members of Congress should co-sponsor Senator Warren and Representative Smith’s NFU bill and lay a clear policy foundation for this commonsense policy.

### **Building a Movement for No First Use Through Authentic Partnerships**

The more candidates with whom we spoke in 2018, the more evidence we saw of our deep philosophical alignment with many of the GND’s policy recommendations and champions. Candidates and voters alike were concerned about the threat to national security posed by both our nuclear system and climate change. Further, the American people were alarmed that our government seems incapable of taking bold action on either issue. There is a clear need to understand nuclear issues among voters, candidates, elected officials and activists alike. NFU gives people a simple, tangible and meaningful avenue to effect change in nuclear policy.

To achieve the level of support we have received for NFU today, we needed a large presence on-the-ground in districts. And we could not have done so without identifying and engaging other movements that share a values-base and for which our issue is relevant, and subsequently engaging their activist networks. But to gain their support for NFU, we had to first plug into current events outside of the nuclear policy space and understand the fundamental values at the core of their work.

We recognize the positive contributions that everyone can make in breaking through the status quo in nuclear policy to build a truly multi-issue movement for change. We look for partners who share our values – justice, community, equity and leadership – and for whom we can provide genuine support in return. This approach – values-

based campaigning and building authentic partnerships – means making a commitment to long-term relationship-building, providing strategic support, showing up and mobilizing on behalf of others’ work. Through it we are able to identify partners outside of the nuclear space with which we can collaborate. As we have seen from the swell in support for an NFU policy, these relationships lead to significantly broader grassroots and grassroots engagement opportunities as we grow and nurture them. Our partnership with the Sunrise Movement and the GND is just one example of success in authenticity and allyship.

Authentic partnerships are not merely a strategic decision, they are how we put our values into action. Every player engaged in change work – nongovernmental organizations, policymakers, activists and beyond – should aim to build authentic partnerships into their work. This is done by cross-checking participation in meetings, regularly brainstorming ways to include new partners and looking for the broader relevance of their work.

A final point: the nuclear topic has historically been reserved to closed door conversations by those in power (read: white men). But, it is increasingly finding innovative leadership and participation from women and people of color. The voices driving the campaign strategies are seemingly more diverse by the week – with women and people of color taking on more leadership roles throughout the nuclear space. This is an aspect of the work that has gained great recognition as of late, bringing a

new era of opportunity for these traditionally marginalized voices.

The drive toward diversity, equity and inclusion that underpins the current civic moment around women's inclusion and #MeToo should expand to acknowledge and orient around the fundamental role that intersectionality plays in this fight – along gender lines, yes, but also race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, health and more. It is in this vein that support for intersectional policy solutions, like linking NFU and the GND, has deeper value and long-term implications.

## Conclusion

We are working to prevent nuclear war to safeguard a future where other fights for social and environmental justice can be met with success. But we cannot do it alone. As we open up to deeper, more collaborative relationships with those who were once thought to be unlikely partners, we must do so

authentically. Looking to the future, we see the Sunrise Movement (and others who share our same values) figuring prominently in our strategies to prevent nuclear war. This will have a positive impact on the overall disposition of the nuclear policy space – moving us toward greater partnership, collaboration and recognition of the value of diverse voices – and especially on passing NFU.

We are proud to work with Senator Warren, Representative Smith and other congressional champions to move NFU into law. But we also know that broader recognition of this policy will result in faster passage and sounder implementation. Thus, we are asking all policymakers to join us in recognizing opportunities to enhance other legislative packages, such as the GND, by incorporating NFU into its fourth pillar and offering support. Because ultimately our work to prevent nuclear war is not solely about preventing the direct devastation that it would bring,

but about protecting our ability to continue to bend the arc of the universe toward justice. ■

*Cecili Thompson Williams is the director of Beyond the Bomb where she leads a team of campaigners and activists mobilizing against the threat of nuclear war and weapons. She has nearly two decades of experience leading mission-driven campaigns with organizations including Amnesty International USA, RESULTS Educational Fund and the National Partnership for Women & Families. Previously, she founded and served as the chief strategist for We Divine Water, a consulting group helping smart and passionate changemakers build strategic and effective campaigns. She also serves as a faculty member at the Center for Social Design at the Maryland Institute College of Art.*

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## Notes

1 "Doomsday Clock," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, accessed January 14, 2019, <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/>.

2 James MacDonald. "The Environmental Impact of Nuclear War," JSTOR Daily, (JSTOR, August 26, 2017), <https://daily.jstor.org/the-environmental-impact-of-nuclear-war/>.

3 "Our Road to Victory on a Green New Deal," Sunrise Movement, accessed January 14, 2019, <https://www.sunrisemovement.org/gnd-strategy>.

4 U.S. Congress, House, To establish the policy of the United States regarding the no-first-use of nuclear weapons, H.R.921, 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, introduced in House January 30, 2019, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/921>.

5 Nahal Toosi. "A moment of crisis': Warren lays out foreign policy vision," *Politico*, Nov. 29, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/11/29/elizabeth-warren-foreign-policy-1029102>.

# SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ploughshares Fund's Women's Initiative network is helping to grow a movement of nuclear experts, activists, policymakers, scholars and funders that is transforming thinking and advancing policy in the peace and security sectors. It's generating and popularizing more honest narratives about security writ large and tackling the unproductive divide between grassroots efforts and capital "P" politics. It's helping to promote new strategies, analyses and policies needed to address current and future security challenges. It's broadening the prevailing notion of who determines the security and sustainability of humankind and the planet.

We are grateful to the funding partners who made this report possible and for their thoughtful, instructive and oftentimes delightful partnership and support during the production of this report:

**Our Secure Future (OSF)** – A program of One Earth Future, OSF believes that women make the crucial difference in achieving more effective governance and lasting peace. OSF aims to strengthen the Women, Peace and Security movement by amplifying women's voices, strengthening the global network of women peacebuilders, and promoting committed action by multiple stakeholders to turn policy into practice.

**Compton Foundation** – A private family foundation inspiring action toward a more peaceful, just and sustainable future. Recognizing that to create a positive future will require innovative ways of naming problems as well as new methods for collaborating to solve them, the Foundation supports transformative leadership and courageous storytelling.

**Rockefeller Brothers Fund** – A private family foundation helping to advance social change that contributes to a more just, sustainable and peaceful world. Through its grantmaking, the Fund supports efforts to expand knowledge, clarify values and critical choices, nurture creative expression and shape public policy.

And a final acknowledgement to Ploughshares Fund founder Sally Lilienthal, a woman with the determination not just to do the right things for peace and justice, but to persuade, cajole and enable others to find the best in themselves to do right and work toward "peace for perpetuity." Her legacy drives us forward.



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# PLOUGHSHARES FUND

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Ploughshares Fund is a global peace and security foundation that believes everyone has the right to a safe and secure future. Every day we work to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons, to stop their spread and to build peace in regions of conflict where nuclear weapons exist.

315 Bay Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94133  
415.668.2244

1100 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.783.4401

**PLOUGHSHARES.ORG**