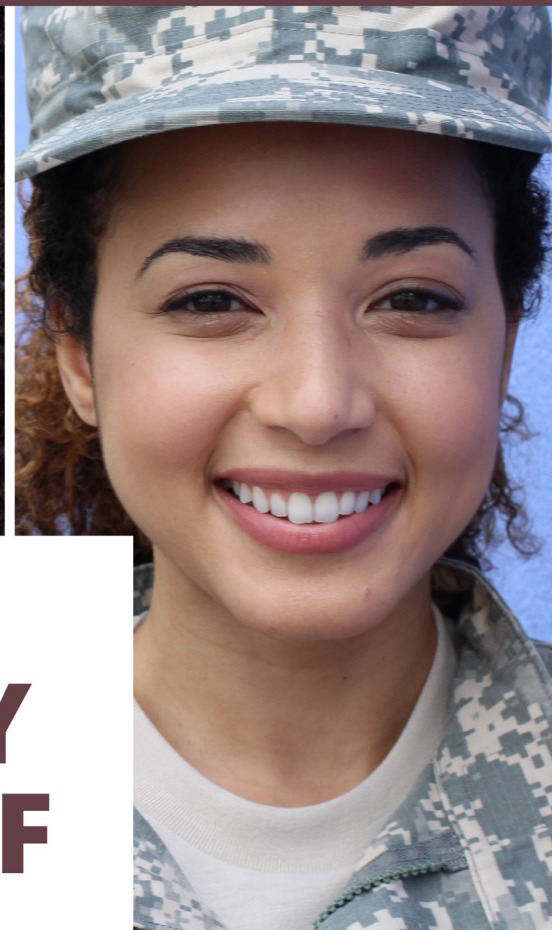
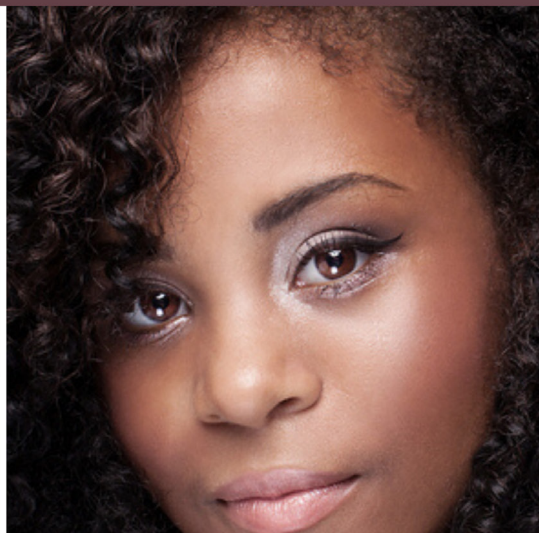


THE FIRST EDITION



POLICY PAPERS BY WOMEN OF COLOR

*TOP ISSUES IN PEACE, SECURITY,
CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION, AND
FOREIGN POLICY*



A PUBLICATION BY



LETTER FROM THE AMBASSADOR



Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security, and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS) is happy to publish its First Edition of “Policy Papers By Women of Color” on issues of peace, security, conflict transformation, and foreign policy.

The topics in this first publication of policy papers examine several issues that are within the areas of expertise of our members, some having a clear focus on issues of equity that we, as an organization, believe should be a part of all matters of peace and security. Topics in this edition range from religion to food and water security, from cybersecurity and emerging technologies to weapons of mass destruction, and from redefining national security to female military leadership.

We seek to publish future editions that focus on many additional peace, security, and conflict issues not covered in this publication. We appreciate you taking the time to read through these papers and welcome ideas and input on issues to discuss in the next edition, which we will begin working on this year (contact wcaps@wcapsnet.org).

Thank you,

AMBASSADOR BONNIE JENKINS FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WCAPS

In addition to her leadership role with WCAPS, Jenkins is a Non-resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. She also serves as an adjunct professor at both Georgetown University and George Washington University. From 2009 to 2017, Jenkins was an Ambassador at the U.S. Department of State, where her role was Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs. Furthermore, Jenkins was the U.S. representative to the G7 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Department of State Lead to the Nuclear Security Summit. She was a leading U.S. official in the launch and implementation of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and led engagement efforts with governments and the non-governmental sector, as well. Jenkins was honored as the 2016 Department of State International Security and Nonproliferation Bureau’s nominee for the Secretary’s Award for Excellence in International Security Affairs. Formerly, Jenkins was a Program Officer at the Ford Foundation, a Counsel on the National Commission on Terrorists Attacks Upon the United States (a.k.a. The 9-11 Commission), and is a retired Naval Reserve Officer.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01** Redefining National Security: Perspectives from Women of Color
by Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins

- 03** The Role of Religion in U.S. Foreign Policy
by April Arnold

- 05** Food Security, Climate Change, and Migration: Central America's Dry Corridor
by Yuri Lee

- 07** Womenomics and Water Management
by Camille J. Moore

- 09** Information Operations Targeting U.S. Elections: Recommendations for Countering Interference
by Sean Shank, Princess D. Harris, Sayako Quinlan, and Kendra Brown

- 11** Mitigating the Negative Impact of Automation and General Artificial Intelligence for Communities Underrepresented in the Industry
by Sayako Quinlan

- 13** Transportation Equity: The Shared, Electric, and Autonomous Transport Revolution
by Stephanie Eyocko
- 15** A Needed United States Strategy on Nuclear Weapons Arms Control and Disarmament
by Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins)
- 17** Circumvention or Efficiency: The Brouhaha of the Attorney General's Certification Authority to Set Immigration Policy
by Joyce Williams
- 19** The Potential Pipeline from the U.S. Military to SES in Creating Greater Diversity in the Strategic Leadership of the U.S. Government
by Carolyn Washington
- 21** How Congress Can Help Increase Female Military Leadership at Military Service Academies
by Carolyn Washington

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REDEFINING NATIONAL SECURITY: PERSPECTIVES OF WOMEN OF COLOR

Redefining national security is central to our work at Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS). In fact, we think a lot about whether traditional definitions of national security are enough when it comes to threats to Americans, particularly women of color, at home and abroad. Some, however, see danger in reshaping and expanding national security's framework too far.

WCAPS maintains that varied, innovative and creative perspectives can't impact issues of national security if women and people of color are not at the table. They also need to be in the game to help find solutions and combat challenges to global and domestic peace and security. WCAPS surveyed its members and some of them noted the following regarding current perceptions of how we define national security:

- What's needed: "To move national security from its current historically imperialistic, militaristic and data-driven focus to one that welcomes inquiry and is defined through the lens of racial justice and human security."
- What's needed: "To bring a new and broader definition of national security to the campaign trail. Right now, the discussion is about guns, bombs and military power as the primary tools of national security."
- A New Definition: "The peaceful exchange of ideas that ensures that we are all safe and able to achieve progress."
- A New Definition: "National security should mean empowering local communities, and the people in them, to be more proactive when it comes to understanding the challenges, extremism and national threats to their community before these things turn into larger national security threats."
- A New Definition. "National security is responsive to innovation and supportive of innovative coalitions."

As a form, the traditional definitions of national security are driven from a military perspective. These definitions normally exclude threats against human and environmental security, which have become more prevalent. As such, the definition is overly narrow for today's challenges. Guns, bombs and military power cannot continue to be the only tools for securing the nation. The benefactors of the current national security framework are the limited to the few rich and powerful. Women of Color expressed the desire for a new definition because the old definitions do not include those issues that most directly affect women of color here

and abroad. And by bringing in new voices, we can help ensure definitions that better serve vulnerable communities. National security should be viewed through the lens of racial justice and human security, because the way the U.S. takes care of its people at home determines how the rest of the world sees the country.

WCAPS Survey

According to the WCAPS survey results from 2017-2019, traditional national security is defined as a function of the United States government, to protect the core interests of America: its citizens, its territory, and its economy. Specifically, national security is ensuring that borders are secure against invasion, sustained acts of terror, and insurrection. National security is preparing a strong military defense to stand against foreign threats. National security is controlled immigration, continued economic development, safeguarding the environment, and reducing and stabilizing international threats.

Our survey results also reveal a broader view of national security that expands upon traditional perspectives to include issues that have become more prevalent today. National security has evolved to include three interconnected components:

- Physical Security: Preparing for and responding to current and future threats to U.S. citizens through the development and maintenance of adequate armed forces.
- Human Security: Providing for the welfare of the citizens, such as human rights, defending against the spread of infectious diseases, and human trafficking.
- Environmental Security: Addressing issues related such threats as climate change, food security, and water security.

Respondents believe that physical security through armed forces continues to take precedence over issues related to human and environmental security. According to one respondent, "The concept of human security has not gained traction in the United States. Over the last five to ten years, national security has been defined as something that is much more military focused because of the security anxieties of the public."

While issues of security differ greatly from the issues of 30 years ago, the current definition of national security outlined by government policy and interest groups has not evolved. We now live in a world that is facing increased gun violence and mass shootings. A world where infectious diseases

cannot be contained at their points of origin. Respondents believe the approach of leadership might limit the definition of national security and its ability to evolve from its traditional definition to a definition that equally emphasizes each component (physical, human and environmental) under the umbrella of national security.

According to a respondent, the rise of domestic hate crimes in the United States is also an issue that is discussed internationally and has impacted the rise of such hate crimes abroad as White supremacy groups often share similar ideologies. Responses to information gathered point toward shifting the definition of national security to focus on both domestic (realism) and foreign (liberalism) approaches to ensure that physical, human and environmental issues are equally taken into consideration as national security efforts.

- Realism sees the world as a competitive place where one strives to maintain sovereignty. The realism strategy focuses primarily on domestic relations.
- Liberalism views the world as a place of rules and institutions in which people work in collaboration to adhere to international standards as they affect each other. The liberalism strategy focuses primarily on foreign relations.

Some surveyed noted that our current administration takes the realism approach to national security, while the previous administration took the liberal approach. Responses from panelists, interviewees and survey participants seem to conclude that domestic security and foreign security are interconnected, and, thus, taking one approach over the other limits the definition of national security.

Some respondents believe that diversifying the conversation about national security is important on multiple levels, stating that it is in the best interest of “America to utilize the assets and diversity of this country to advance peace and security around the world... [People of color in this

nation] know what it’s like to be resilient through adversity. This understanding helps us relate to individuals in other cultures outside of America...in addition, who better to interact with individuals [in foreign countries] than the people who are from those countries or share their culture.” One respondent stated that her race and ethnicity allow her to have different conversations with people globally.

However, respondents also stated that although a diversity of perspectives is necessary, the issue of redefining national security is not solely about who is sitting at the table but also the money that is driving the security agenda. If the definition of national security is to be addressed, you must also be aware of the actors that are influencing or hindering such redefinition.

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THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Executive Summary: After nearly two decades of war padded with religious rhetoric, alongside the eventual rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), we are witnessing the resurgence of religion into the national conversation. Domestically, there has also been a growing concern over Christian nationalism and its implications for those who do not adhere to its tenets. With these issues undergirding much of the strife today, the question of separation of church and state is already beginning to undergo another round of scrutiny. In the past, most discussions around the separation of church and state remained a domestic issue, but with international actors insisting on implementing their religious ideologies at the brutal expense of others, the United States needs to revisit how it approaches matters of religion both domestically and internationally. More specifically, the U.S. government should consider implementing a sturdier framework that more directly addresses religious conflict and speaks for those most marginalized by religious prejudice.

Background: When religious ideologies dominate the rule of law in a country, women tend to receive some of the worst persecution, especially if they are in the religious minority. Typically, the international norm has been to allow religious matters to remain at the domestic level until the crimes become too egregious. Whether to avoid becoming “world police” or to maintain the status quo between church and state, the result of U.S. inaction remains the same – those affected by religious persecution only receive passing attention until issues go viral on social media. Striking the balance between freedom of religion and intervening in large scale persecution has been extremely difficult for all international actors.

Policy Recommendations: By engaging countries on religious grounds through diplomatic channels and without endorsing one specific religion, the United States may be able to confront abuses that have often been ignored. As mentioned, the United States has already begun to loosely establish a framework to address religious matters at a national and international level. But, many of the initiatives are in their infancy and have not been fully utilized. Outlined are three initial recommendations that would help develop a sturdier foundation of U.S. religious diplomatic doctrine: 1) Fill the National Security Council position established by the bi-partisan International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998; 2) Integrate the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and the Ambassador-at-Large for Religious Freedom into key negotiations and international relationships; and 3) Expand the role of military chaplains in the military. Fill the National Security Council position established by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

1. *Fill the National Security Council position established by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.*

In Title III of the IRFA of 1998, Congress establishes a special adviser to the President on International Religious Freedom on the National Security Council. According to the USCIRF 2019 Annual Report, the position has not been filled since its inception. Establishing this position provides a high-level voice in government that can advise on religious freedoms around the world and how those freedoms can impact U.S. foreign policy. As this position develops and grows, it may help further establish a cadre of religious experts deeper within various parts of the government who can advise on conflicts that have a religious element.

2. *Integrate the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and the Ambassador-at-Large into key negotiations and international relationships.*

Currently, USCIRF primarily produces a variety of reports on the current state of religious freedom, providing recommendations to Congress on how to address concerns related to religious liberty. It is unclear how frequently the USCIRF engages internationally, as the most recent press releases with the United Nations and other international organizations are several years old. Efforts by USCIRF to raise religious freedom concerns remain on the periphery of even State Department priorities. Under a more robust commission, USCIRF could provide more feedback to government leaders on how to confront religious rights violations in key relationships.

Furthermore, in 2018, the USCIRF hosted its first Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. The Ministerial was established to bring religious and civic leaders together to discuss some of the most pressing issues in religious freedom. While this conference shows progress in elevating concerns of religious freedom, the U.S. government could better use this forum by inviting more prominent world leaders and religious leaders. Involving more high-level government participants from other countries, international organizations or religious organizations would thrust the conversation further into the national spotlight.

3. *Expand the role of military chaplains in the military.*

In the 2005 research report, *Military Chaplains as Peace Builders*, the authors provided multiple findings supporting the use of military chaplains as liaisons to local religious leaders to stabilize relationships between the U.S. military and local citizens. In one instance during Operation Iraqi Freedom, after determining the link between religious opposition and roadside bombings, General Martin E. Dempsey ordered his military chaplain to host an Inter-

Religious Council with local clerics to ease hostilities. Following the first meeting, General Dempsey noticed a considerable decrease in roadside bombings. The 2005 report provides additional examples where military chaplains played a diplomatic role in easing religious tensions. With the skillset to address religious issues in stressful war-torn situations, military chaplains may be able to serve as one of the first sets of religious diplomats to help with tense, religiously charged situations. While no study was conducted, increasing female military chaplains' roles in stability operations may have an additional impact on women in war-torn environments.

In conclusion, these recommendations are intended to better establish a consistent and peaceful approach by the U.S. government regarding religious matters around the world, while also providing a voice for those persecuted in religiously charged circumstances. By following these recommendations, the U.S. would be better equipped to address situations and relationships that are driven by religious sentiments.

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FOOD SECURITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND MIGRATION: CENTRAL AMERICA'S DRY CORRIDOR

Food security is a critical factor influencing international migration as well as intra-regional migration.

According to the U.N. International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), food security is “a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” In the Global South, where agriculture represents a large share of countries’ economies and where many households’ livelihoods rely on agriculture both for income and sustenance, food security is particularly volatile. Affected not only by factors like poverty or local conflict, food security is also increasingly affected by the consequences of climatic variations attributed to global climate change and its effects on weather systems. Climate change is affecting the livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable groups—particularly rural women—in countries bearing the brunt of climate change impacts now, rather than in the distant future. Combined with food security pressures are other problems like land degradation, violence, and poverty, making food insecurity a tipping point for migration. This paper discusses the intersection of food security, climate change, and migration issues with the Dry Corridor of northern Central America as a case study. The possibility, however, of food crises occurring on multiple continents simultaneously is increasingly likely. The background section will first go over the global challenges to food production and food security in the context of climate change, followed by information on the linkages between food security, climate change, and migration, as shown in the case of Central America. Recommendations follow as to what the United States should emphasize in its approach to food security in its foreign policy.

Background: According to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

With a projected global population of nine billion people by 2050, there have been many calls in the international community for increased food production and agricultural productivity. It is not, however, so much a matter of the quantity of food produced (currently 25–30% of all food is lost or wasted along the supply chain from farm to consumer) but, rather, how it is produced and distributed. Devoting more land to crops meant for human consumption and reducing the amount of arable land devoted to crops

that become feed for livestock is one example.

Climate change related production pressures include desertification, soil loss, rising temperatures (e.g., crops respond to specific temperature ranges; growing seasons shift earlier or later; pest populations can increase from warmer temperatures), in addition to sea-level rise for low lying areas and irregular and severe weather patterns that can disrupt and shrink food supply. These pressures are greatest in poor regions of the world where dependence on agriculture for livelihoods is greatest. Thus, climate change in relation to food security can be a threat multiplier, making poor populations more vulnerable and reducing resilience to other threats such as natural disasters, and localized conflicts.

Central America is a region of the world that is highly vulnerable to climate change. Agricultural employment represents over 30% of all employment in Honduras and Guatemala, and maize and bean cultivation is a significant staple food source for households relying on subsistence and commercial farming. Long-term productivity of those staple food sources is projected to decrease significantly in Honduras and El Salvador, two of the countries with large emigrating populations already facing economic hardship and violence. From 2010 to 2015, there was a fivefold increase of undocumented migrants from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador recorded at the US-Mexico border.

A multi-agency initiative led by the World Food Programme (WFP) conducted a mixed-method study in 2016 on linkages between food security and migration, focusing geographically on the Dry Corridor—a region spanning Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Nearly half the families in the study were found to be food insecure at unprecedented levels. The Dry Corridor is known for prolonged dry spells and its high dependence on the agricultural sector and seasonal labor. The study determined that there was a clear link between food insecurity and emigration from those countries, with the first push factor being general unemployment and poverty, compounded by reduced agricultural productivity due to climatic stressors such as drought, unseasonable or intense rainfall, and higher occurrence of pests. Widespread violence contributed to the reasons to migrate but was not necessarily the central factor for the larger population when considering food insecurity. Nearly half of the households in the study reported spending two-thirds or more of their income on food alone, showing high vulnerability to food insecurity. Furthermore, as most migrants were men, the women

household members who remained behind were loaded with additional farming responsibilities after the departure of male family members. This resulted in increased burdens on time for women, who are already heavily tasked with domestic and caregiving chores culturally. As a result, these households were more food insecure, especially when remittances were insufficient for off-farm food purchases.

Half of the migrants in the study were employed in the agricultural sector prior to their departures. The study also found household food production had fallen significantly in recent years due to back-to-back droughts in 2014 and 2015. Outside the dry region in the coffee-producing highlands, commercial farm employment opportunities for day laborers and livelihoods for coffee farmers had been severely reduced due to an epidemic of coffee leaf rust, a plant disease that is also influenced by climate variability.

Recommendations:

International aid should not be limited to deter migration.

If the evidence shows anything, it is that economic and agricultural development programs are highly needed to support and retain the current population, so people do not feel pushed to emigrate away from food insecurity and other stressors. Food aid should be strategically targeted during the agricultural lean seasons (outside of harvest time).

Further integrate food security and food policy in discussions around migration together with development strategies and political approaches to countries with high migrant-sending populations. Consider increases in technical farming assistance geared towards climate change adaptation and mitigation (e.g., agroforestry, better soil management techniques) and coping strategies for these countries. Economic transition towards non-climate sensitive job sectors may be needed for the longer term, where climate change impacts are irreversible.

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WOMENOMICS AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Executive Summary: We are in the midst of a global water crisis, one in which women will be disproportionately affected. Experts say that our global water crisis is linked to several issues, including changing climate, higher water demand, disproportionate water pricing, and mismanagement. Annually, approximately 2.7 billion people experience water scarcity—the lack of water resources to meet their physical or infrastructural water demands. For women, a lack of clean and accessible water means a more insecure, unsanitary, and less productive society. Womenomics is the idea that the economic advancement of women will benefit society as a whole. This policy paper aims to discuss the adverse effects women experience in relation to water, examine the role of the energy-water nexus in climate change, and examine why womenomics is our secret weapon for more efficient, innovative, and prosperous water management.

Accessible Water is an International Human Right

Universal and equitable access to affordable water regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic background is an international human right. It was first recognized in 1977 at the United Nations Water Conference in Mar Del Plata, Argentina, where it was stated that “all peoples, whatever their stage of development and social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs.” Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, focused on water and sanitation, takes this human right a step further,

imploping all of its member nations to achieve universal, equitable access and sanitation, improved water quality, sustainable withdrawal, and more integrated management by 2030. International bodies have formally recognized the importance of women’s participation in water issues. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, formally stated that “the participation of women was particularly important in ensuring that water issues were addressed in peace agreements.”

Water Scarcity and Security

Clean water access and regional security are inextricably linked. Water was found to play a major role in conflicts in at least 45 countries, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (OCHA, 2018 Data and Trends). Water was identified to be a causality of conflicts, either used as a weapon to precipitate conflict or serving as a trigger to stoke unrest.

The 2000 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 recognizes that “women and children account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements.” The resolution also makes a point to “[stress] the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.” Although men are more likely to die during armed conflict, more women die in the aftermath of the conflict and are twice as disadvantaged in situations of



displacement.

Today, roughly 2 billion people both lack access to safe drinking water and live in severely water-scarce areas, a figure estimated to increase to 3 billion people by 2050. Again, experts point to the better management of water as a key factor in greater water efficiency.

Water Security and Sanitation

UN-Water found that women and girls carry a heavier burden in relation to water and sanitation duties than men do. Unpaid and domestic work—like caring for ill relatives and fetching water for the household—often belongs to women and girls. Over 70% of women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa are tasked with traveling long distances to secure water for the household, often making them too preoccupied to pursue formal education. In fact, a reduced time burden in water collection could not only benefit the women and girls involved but also increase the overall productive potential of the entire community and, thus, their overall health and quality of life.

Water scarcity also impacts the access of women and girls to proper sanitation. Amnesty International's report "Insecurity and Indignity: Women's Experiences in the Slums of Nairobi, Kenya" found a clear link between insufficient sanitation and violence. Women and girls reportedly suffered physical, mental, and even forms of sexual violence like rape while using toilets, no matter if it was day or night. These compounding issues work against women and girls and block key opportunities for them to join the labor force successfully.

Water is Becoming More Expensive

Water is becoming both more energy intensive and carbon emitting in the U.S. For this reason, management at the local level will require greater innovation and diversity of thought. U.S. water-related energy use is at least 521 million MWh a year—equivalent to 13% of the nation's electricity consumption or 290 million metric tons of carbon emissions each year. For perspective, 290 million metric tons is equivalent to the combined carbon emissions of 11 U.S. states. Aside from water-related energy use, U.S. electricity demand is projected to increase by 53% between 2003 and 2030. Experts have found that water bills in the U.S. have increased by 30% in less than a decade. Much of the country is currently experiencing water shortages, with many of the fastest-growing regions in the nation already withdrawing up to five times more water than is naturally replenished through precipitation.

Womenomics is Our Secret Weapon

Applying womenomics to water management will create more global security, better sanitation, and more affordability. The government, civil society, or a non-governmental organization (NGO) usually finance the infrastructure, and the local community manages the services through a water user committee (WUC). Several case studies from rural communities of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific suggest that water supply services greatly benefited from the participation and leadership of women. In fact, WUCs with at least 40% female membership "significantly improved budgeting and accounting functions and had water systems with less leakage." Woman leadership in WUC positions like chair or treasurer improved overall system functionality, increased revenue collection, and increased the frequency of meetings.

The WUC wields great influence in its community, as it is responsible for maintenance, operational administration, and fee collection. Along with the clear structural, financial, and managerial benefits, female leadership in the WUCs also reduced family conflict, reduced violence against women, and changed attitudes towards traditional gender roles. Scores for sustainability, efficiency, and functionality increased with the participation of women in Timor-Leste, Uganda, and the Dominican Republic.

Recommendations:

- The first recommendation is to create a WUC pilot program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 70-year-old Rural Development Loan and Grant Program, which has disbursed \$14.5 billion in total. Through the establishment of these programs in rural U.S. communities, this theory of increased womenomics in water management can truly be tested and measured.
- The second recommendation is to support legislative vehicles that will prioritize the role of women in water and climate issues across U.S. agencies. Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) is Vice Chair of the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs on the House Appropriations Committee. In March 2019, Congresswoman Lee introduced H.R.1880 – Women and Climate Change Act of 2019, which establishes an interagency working group to study the effects of climate change on women in the national and international spheres and improve the response and strategy of the Federal Government to fight climate change for the security of the United States and the international community.

INFORMATION OPERATIONS TARGETING U.S. ELECTIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNTERING INTERFERENCE

Executive Summary: Analysis of social media activity during the 2016 election revealed that information operations, or “active measures,” were carried out by Russian intelligence services and Russia-backed proxy actors to influence public opinion. In some instances, this did, in fact, change the nature of discourse around the elections while showcasing robust capabilities for targeting select audiences with false narratives. This activity continued in 2018 as part of an effort to similarly impact crucial state-wide elections during the U.S. midterm elections, despite the absence of presidential candidates on the ballot. As we approach the 2020 U.S. Presidential election, it is clear that foreign intelligence services’ efforts to shape public opinion not only continue, but include a growing set of participating countries—China, Iran, and India, to name a few—that have also entered the fray. This brief policy paper sets out multiple recommendations to address the threat of election-focused information operations, while drawing from the examples set by Russian active measures in 2016 and 2018, given their demonstrated capability for exploiting issues pertaining to race.

Background: There is a growing number of instances in which intelligence services disseminate messages (often via Twitter) and amplify content that exploits racial inequity while also bolstering “us versus them” framing in political discourse. Available data suggests this has dissuaded persons in communities of color from participating in elections; even when this has not occurred, information operations have arguably achieved great success in diluting everyday citizens’ understanding of basic facts pertaining to public affairs and the power of civic engagement.

Policy, Solutions, and Alternatives: Policymakers, candidates, and voting rights advocates should account for the developing landscape of information operations aimed at U.S. elections, particularly those efforts which seek to exploit racial inequity and dissuade persons of color from exercising their right to vote.

Alternatively, those involved in the electoral process may seek to advocate for specific policies and carry out their campaigns without directly addressing electoral interference. This is perhaps motivated by the assumption that giving the problem attention inadvertently bolsters its impact, while avoiding excessive discussion would allow the public to focus their attention on objective policy matters. Ostensibly, this seems as reasonable as putting out a fire by starving it of oxygen. However, social media is pervasive, and viral activity may get substantial amounts of attention no matter the circumstances. Knowing the potential impacts of information operations thus demands more than passive

observation or a desire to look past the problem altogether.

As Russia and other players enter this environment, comprehensive efforts to address election-focused information operations are increasingly necessary. Such efforts include real-time analysis of malicious social media activity and their incorporation into messaging and social media campaign efforts. Further, advocates, policymakers, and candidates should also consider potential identification of specific entities (in the U.S. or abroad) responsible for bad faith exploitation of racial inequity.

Recommendations: Policymakers should develop and implement plans that reflect the following specific recommendations:

1. Acknowledge U.S. Shortcomings: Although disinformation and carefully crafted bad faith arguments are a key component of Russian active measures, they also use truthful, mainstream reporting and historical fact in a manner that discourages turnout. Information operations may seek to dilute support for U.S. policies and candidates who seek to address these challenges.

Policymakers, elected officials, candidates for office, and voting rights advocates are thus best served by acknowledging America’s own history of systemic racism and White supremacy while also confronting ongoing racial inequity in the present day. Outreach to communities of color cannot simultaneously decry messages spread via bots and disregard historical injustices or the disproportionate impacts that White supremacy has on communities of color in terms of upward economic mobility, health, and hiring opportunities, among other faults.

2. Be One-Part Advocate, One-Part Threat Analyst: While advocating for citizens’ right to vote, let alone urging them to vote in favor of a specific candidate or proposal, policymakers and candidates alike should be as aware as possible of trending content that may reflect information operations. The disproportionate signal boosting/re-tweeting of specific hashtags, and participation of suspect social media accounts should be accounted for in political messaging, so that information operations’ content is not inadvertently disregarded or repackaged for voter audiences.

3. Use Outreach to Empower, Emphasize Ballot Access: In addition to asking voters for support on specific positions, educate voters on common traits related to active measures in campaigns, and the ways in which they may try to discourage the right to vote or exploit matters pertaining

to race, and stress that voters must, no matter what, still find their way to polls and exercise an independent judgment. Repeatedly providing voters with clear information on registration deadlines, polling place locations, and the full extent of their rights is essential.

This approach, reflected in both rhetoric and practice, does not discard the importance of a particular policy objective or candidacy, but it does emphasize that voter participation is valued above all else.

4. Assert a Presence in the Information Space: Various features of Russian active measures in the 2016 campaign caught multiple social media platforms off guard, allowing malicious activity and disinformation to cloud the information spaces that provided citizens with ostensibly reliable information. Terms such as “fake news” have entered the public lexicon, but are often understood informally and subjectively—voting rights advocates may be able to partner with savvy members of the security research arena and build activist, community-focused counter-narratives.

Voting rights advocates, candidates, and policymakers should all seek to build bridges with the security research community. Sympathetic security researchers, cybersecurity consultants, and cyber-threat intelligence professionals are valuable resources and are conditioned to provide up-to-date analysis of information operations on a frequent basis. Recurring communications between these groups should be used to develop criteria for identifying pending malicious activities via social media, while also brainstorming social media campaigns that inform the voters of their rights and the basis for specific policy positions.

In a similar vein, like-minded security researchers should build upon efforts that identify potential bot-boostered hashtags and other malicious social media activity—Hamilton 68 is one example, but it does not have a specific focus on addressing racial injustice. A dashboard- or portal-style resource that identifies deceptive social media accounts in this context is valuable and becoming increasingly urgent. Today, despite the broad exposure of Russian active measures and similar information operations, malicious actors are cynically developing accounts that impersonate persons of color, exploit the work of reparations advocates, and potentially continue the aggressive efforts of Russia’s

Internet Research Agency in specifically targeting women of color.

5. Draw Upon Cybersecurity Approaches to Protect the Vote Itself: In recognizing that the purpose of information operations is to discourage individuals’ efforts to vote (i.e., voter suppression), efforts to counter this malicious activity must also actually empower persons of color to go to their polling places on election day. Developing, popularizing, and implementing a “Ballot Access Resiliency” model based on cybersecurity resiliency and incident response efforts is essential. This model can be broken into two basic parts: 1) a Resiliency component that uses per-election legal action, advocacy for hand-marked paper ballots, and coordination of Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts, and 2), an Incident Response component that uses a scenario-based playbook to deploy legal counsel and other voting rights advocates in response to Election Day voter intimidation and polling place irregularities.

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MITIGATING THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF AUTOMATION AND GENERAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR COMMUNITIES UNDERREPRESENTED IN THE INDUSTRY

Executive Summary: From the disproportionate impact of job loss at the hands of automation to the power of cognitive diversity within data science teams, the inclusion of communities typically underrepresented in the artificial intelligence (AI) industry is a national security concern. The nation's strategy toward innovations in AI should ensure the involvement of these groups, which comprise of women, people of color (POC), and LGBTQIA+ members, with particular attention to the intersection of these identities.

Background: In this paper, AI is a broad term for technology that enables machines to have human-like qualities and includes machine learning, robotics, voice recognition, and automation. The Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) program's The National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan: 2019 Update mentions the risk of job displacement from the implementation of AI and the importance of training an AI workforce. However, the document does not expand on how the technology will disproportionately



harm certain demographics and does not specify the need in underrepresented communities for education in fields related to AI.

Recommendations: NITRD should convene a committee of stakeholders from the top three industries where NITRD predicts AI to cause the most job displacement. The committee must include representatives from groups, particularly communities of color and women, which would be economically harmed by the implementation of AI. The goal of the committee should be to provide recommendations to incorporate into the National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan that maximize the inclusion of communities that are underrepresented in the AI industry and provide an AI strategy that benefits those communities.

Discussion: Underrepresented groups are most likely to be harmed by companies' implementation of AI and—incongruously—are also the groups most needed in the industry.

Management consulting firm McKinsey & Company “found that African-American workers are disproportionately concentrated in the kinds of support roles most likely to be affected” by automation. Research by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies reported that 31% of Latino workers are in occupations at a high risk of automation compared to only 24% of White workers. Without a strategic approach to AI innovation and workforce retraining, the United States economy is at risk of increased unemployment and economic inequality.

NITRD, and the federal government in general, should proactively promote the inclusion of underrepresented groups because of the demonstrated inadequacy from the private sector and academia and the risk of the ineffective application of AI. It is difficult to find statistics specifically

about the workforce in the AI industry, but existing tangential data paints a landscape that is predominantly White and male. Only 20% of AI conference speakers are women. Google, one of the world's largest AI companies, disclosed in 2018 that only 2.5% of their workforce identified as black, and only 0.3% as Native American. Meanwhile, there have been several reports of AI projects failing in ways that negatively impact such underrepresented groups. Human Rights Data Analysis Group found that crime prediction technology PredPol directed police frequently to low-income and POC neighborhoods in Oakland at a rate “disproportionate to their level of crime.” Joy Buolamwini, the founder of the Algorithmic Justice League, found that IBM's gender recognition technology was 99% accurate for men who are White and only 35% accurate for women with darker skin. The inconsistent implementation of facial recognition is an increased concern when one considers that the United States Army leverages such technology to target threats for drone strikes. Research supports that cognitive diversity improves a team's chances for success. In data science and AI, the diverse background of those involved—which is tied to different experiences and ways of thinking—can help develop robust algorithms and holistic datasets.

Affected parties must be invited to a discussion on the issues before NITRD, or any other government organization that attempts to develop strategies or policies to solve the problems related to AI. Too often, organizations that want to help do not consult those who are expected to be beneficiaries of a solution. This results in the most critical perspectives being excluded from the problem-solving process, dramatically decreasing the likelihood of success. The first step by the NITRD in any AI policy should be to convene all relevant stakeholders.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY: THE SHARED, ELECTRIC, AND AUTONOMOUS TRANSPORT REVOLUTION

Executive Summary: While many researchers, stakeholders, and innovators remain inspired by the potentially groundbreaking and accessible benefits of shared, electric, autonomous, and connected transport, less is known about how potentially costly and inequitable these technologies may be. Equity can be difficult to analyze because there are several types of equity issues impacting the transportation network. With the proliferation of private mobility services often requiring a smart phone, mobile Internet access, and/or credit and debit cards, these services can raise a wide array of potential environmental justice and social equity issues, including digital poverty, unbanked and underbanked users, service access to low-density and rural areas, affordability, and access for older adults and people with disabilities.

Background: Globally, the transportation sector is responsible for almost a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, road fatalities that are a leading cause of death among young adults, and groups who live near interstate highways who are more likely to be plagued with respiratory-related illnesses. Though global efforts to curb emissions and transition to alternative and low-carbon fuels have been taken up in the mass market, private internal combustion engine vehicles are still the dominant form of transport. The global uptake of electric, autonomous, shared, and connected transport can support the transition to sustainable forms of mobility. This brief focuses on solutions that can benefit those historically left behind in the transportation equity debate: (1) mobility-challenged individuals, (2) historically disadvantaged communities, including but not limited to people of color, immigrant communities, and rural communities, and (3) low-income households. And, it urges policymakers to mitigate the risks and maximize the opportunities for shared, electric, connected, and autonomous vehicles.

In a 2018 Ph.D. dissertation, Anne Elizabeth Brown's "Ridehail Revolution: Ridehail Travel and Equity in Los Angeles" examines the mobility divide separating American households with and without cars. A key finding suggests that African Americans waiting for taxis in L.A. were likely to face longer wait times and have a greater chance of being canceled on than Whites, with the former being 73% more likely. The United States is home to 56.7 million people with disabilities (approximately 19% of the population). People with disabilities have lower household incomes and lower employment rates than people without disabilities, thus affecting their travel behavior. According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the two most common strategies for dealing with a transportation

disability for this population are to reduce day-to-day travel (70.6%) and to ask others for rides (44.3%). A government transportation survey conducted indicated that fifteen million Americans, with six million disabled individuals, have difficulty getting the transportation they need. Though applications like Uber and Lyft, as well as government assistance programs for those with disabilities, have had favorable outcomes over the years, improvement and special attention to the shared, electric, autonomous, and connected transport revolution require discussion.

In a study conducted by the Union of Concerned Scientists, autonomous vehicles (AVs) will cause the total amount of driving to increase by as much as 66% relative to the 2040 baseline year. Congestion will increase in disadvantaged and low-income communities, and communities of color would be subjected to a ballooning increase in exposure to congested driving. Congestion would make it more difficult to get around, and it would increase harmful air pollutants if AVs are not EVs.

Recommendations:

1. **Issue #1:** Disadvantaged communities are not engaged in local conversations about shared mobility, electric vehicle affordability, and the future of autonomous vehicles.

Possible actions for federal and local governments: Cities and municipalities should introduce a Mobility Equity Framework that serves as a foundational tool for expanding transportation services, with residents in mind. This Mobility Equity Framework would form a working group that is tasked with researching, supporting, and advocating projects that ensure that the benefits of AVs are distributed fairly, including but not limited to inviting pilot driverless vehicle companies to drive in poorer neighborhoods.

The Mobility Equity Framework can be used as a guide to support demonstration projects, pen model policies, and introduce programs with equity in mind.

- **Issue #2:** Disadvantaged communities face financial, technological, and language barriers in using shared mobility. According to Pew Research, roughly three in ten adults with household incomes below \$30,000 a year (29%) don't own a smart phone. More than four in ten don't have home broadband services (44%). With shared mobility applications requiring smart phone access, banking access, and Internet access, there's a considerable population of people who are not included.

Possible actions: Guidelines for expanding access to communities without the need of smart phone or banking access. Cities should request that companies eager to expand to these neighborhoods meet specific guidelines. Cities can work directly with companies to develop platforms for households that don't have access to bank accounts/online payment systems.

- **Issue #3:** Congestion and air pollution may increase because of autonomous vehicles

Possible actions: Cities should prioritize and incentivize the full utilization of electric vehicles for automated transport. In addition to incentivizing EV uptake, cities should support the installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in all parts of the city, including disadvantaged communities.

Conclusion:

When exploring alternative policy frameworks that could be effective in promoting electrification of shared and, eventually, autonomous fleets, researchers, and policymakers should be mindful of the consequences it may have on disadvantaged communities. There may be useful lessons learned on EV policy and infrastructure planning from cities with high rates of electrified taxis and buses around the world, but there are no cases for autonomous, electric, connected, and shared vehicles. This makes policy considerations and careful research even more important. This revolution will reach the United States whether we are prepared or not, and fairness in access needs to be a priority.



A UNITED STATES STRATEGY ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

The United States should develop an overall nuclear weapons arms control and disarmament strategy. Recent actions by the U.S. on nuclear weapons issues have left behind destroyed agreements, a questionable future in others, and a lack of progress on what happens next.

The Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START) entered into force on February 5, 2011. The treaty limits both parties to no more than 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICMBS), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLMBS), and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments; 1,550 nuclear warheads on deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments; and a total of 800 deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments. Both parties have met their treaty obligations.

The treaty will remain in force until February 2021, unless a new agreement on strategic arms replaces the current treaty before it expires. The parties can also agree to extend the treaty for another five years. However, neither of these actions has occurred, and there is no clear strategy on what happens next.

Recent comments from Russian leadership reflect a strong interest in extending the treaty, as well as concern about the delay in any discussions for a concrete way forward. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov noted last year that Washington is avoiding having any serious conversations about the future of New START. Vladimir Leontyev, Deputy Head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's arms control department, stated that time is running out for the two parties to negotiate an agreement.¹ Also, Leontyev has noted that extension of the New START could require several months for approval from the Russian Duma.

These comments by Russia have not received a supportive reception in the U.S. The administration stated on November 4 that the U.S. seeks a new treaty. However, it would not be just with Russia but also with China and maybe other countries as well.² On October 22, President Trump stated that the U.S. would work with Russia and with China, and all three countries would negotiate a nuclear pact.³ However, China has not shown any interest in such negotiations. China does not feel a need to engage in nuclear discussions until the number of nuclear weapons owned by the U.S. and Russia's is significantly reduced.

As regards North Korea, the U.S. made efforts to convince the country to agree to a "verifiable and irreversible denuclearization." The interactions between the U.S. and North Korea had been positive following months of harsh rhetoric between the two leaders after Trump took office. However, the February 2019 Summit fell apart and ended early. In June, Donald Trump took 20 unprecedented steps into North Korea across the demilitarized zone.

Since that time, there have been no significant negotiations between the two countries on the North Korean nuclear program. Instead, Kim Jong Un is taking steps to show his displeasure with the fact that there was no action taken by the U.S. by the end of 2019. In late November, North Korea fired artillery near a disputed sea boundary with South Korea. North Korea imposed a year-end deadline to offer a new initiative to end the standoff. What North Korea remains most interested in is the easing of sanctions.

Earlier in August 2019, the U.S. withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). Under INF obligations, the United States and the Soviet Union destroyed a total of 2,692 missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers by the treaty's implementation deadline of June 1, 1991. President Trump noted at the time of withdrawal that there would be an attempt made to get China to join new non-proliferation agreements. In response to the idea that China would be interested in negotiations, China stated that "what is imperative at the moment is to uphold and implement the existing treaty instead of creating a new one."⁴ China expressed no interest in being a part of such negotiations.

Finally, in 2018, the U.S. withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Agreement, which limited Iran's nuclear weapons program. Though Iran followed the treaty obligations, the U.S. noted that one of the reasons for withdrawal is that Iran's missile program was not included in the deal. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated in July 2019 that Iran appeared willing to negotiate over its missile program "for the first time," which he and President Trump presented as evidence that sanctions and military pressure were working. However, Iran Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif quickly stated that this was not true. His spokesman said that the two men had misinterpreted Minister Zarif's public statements.⁵ "I think the administration is desperately looking for any sign that this is working, and that Iran is willing to talk," said Philip Gordon, a Middle East official in the Obama administration who helped to negotiate the 2015 accord.⁶

Recommendations:

1. The United States should extend the New START immediately and plan negotiations for future reductions beyond those in the New Start agreement.
2. The US should consider how it can pursue discussions with the existing JCPOA parties on ways to reengage on that agreement.
3. The U.S. must develop an overall strategy for what it seeks in nuclear arms control and disarmament and how each action we have taken fits within that strategy. The U.S. should also not withdraw from treaties if there is no long-term strategy for next steps.
4. If the U.S. wants China to join nuclear arms discussions, the U.S. must develop a strategy for how it will convince China that it is in its interest to enter such negotiations. We must know what it is we want to achieve from engaging China. In that respect, before making statements regarding the intent of countries to engage in discussion, the U.S. should ensure it has done some preliminary outreach to those countries to ensure their interest.
5. The administration must take advantage of the whole of government on issues of nuclear weapons arms control and disarmament. There is significant expertise in the Department of State, whose personnel should take a leading role on these arms control issues and the leading role in actual negotiations. We must be sure to understand the critical role of the interagency process and learn from what we have done in the past.

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CIRCUMVENTION OR EFFICIENCY: THE BROUHAHA OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CERTIFICATION AUTHORITY TO SET

The urgent need for comprehensive immigration policy is reflected in the debate on how the executive branch is wielding its authority through the attorney general's certification process for setting immigration policies. With an estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, a comprehensive policy is essential both in terms of resolving the fate of the undocumented immigrants within the country, and developing strategies and opportunities for new immigrants to come to the United States.

The increasing use of the certification authority of the attorneys general (AGs) under the Trump administration ushers in a new conversation on whether the administration is attempting to circumvent the legislative powers of Congress to legislate on immigration laws and policies. Another question is whether the administration is looking for a way to streamline and provide guidelines in a broken system.

No matter where one falls on the debate about the attorney general's increasing use of the certification authority, one thing is clear: that the country is overdue for a structural and institutional reform on immigration laws and policies.

The AGs certification authority is "firmly rooted" and embedded in practice and regulation and in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Section 103(a)(1) of the INA states that "determination and ruling by the Attorney General concerning all questions of law shall be controlling." Oftentimes, this authority is translated literally to mean that the Attorney General is the "top judge" when it comes to immigration laws and the removal of cases before the immigration courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). There are three categories of cases that the AG may review regarding certification: (1) cases that the AG refers to that office, (2) cases that the BIA refers to the AG for consideration, and (3) cases that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) refers to the AG for review.



While past AGs have used the certification power, since coming into office, Trump's attorneys general have used the certification process frequently to limit the discretion of immigration judges while narrowing asylum law. The decisions and pronouncements of the AG are binding and precedential on the immigration courts and the BIA.

It is worth noting that past AGs have used this power as well. President George W. Bush issued 16 decisions under the certification process; President Bill Clinton issued three decisions; and President Obama issued four decisions. Under President Donald Trump, his three AGs have issued decisions in seven cases in under three years, and more decisions are likely forthcoming.

With the lack of comprehensive immigration laws and policies, coupled with a divisive Congress, a solution to the current broken immigration system does not appear to be on the horizon. Thus, it is essential to stress the importance of carefully monitoring other pathways to affect immigration laws and policies. There should be a clear and good standard established by the Department of Justice for when the AG intervenes in the immigration appeals process and a position well advocated by the American Bar Association.

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THE POTENTIAL PIPELINE FROM THE U.S. MILITARY TO THE SES IN CREATING GREATER DIVERSITY IN THE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT



Executive Summary: The Federal Government offers unique paths to hire individuals that represent our diverse society. Hiring preferences for particular groups include Native Americans, veterans, military spouses, students and recent graduates, and the Senior Executive Service (SES).

The SES is a position classification in the civil service of the federal government, equivalent to general officer or flag officer ranks in the armed forces. It was created in 1979 via the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 under President Jimmy Carter. According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the SES was designed to be a corps of executives selected for their leadership qualifications to serve in key positions just below presidential appointees as a link between them and the rest of the civil service workforce. U.S. citizens or nationals must meet the five Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs), which are used by many departments and agencies in the selection, performance management,

and leadership development for executive positions. The five ECQs are: leading change, leading people, results-driven, business acumen, and building coalitions.

SES applicants must also serve at least one year at the GS-15 level. GS-15 is the equivalent grade for military officers at the O6 grade, meaning Colonels in the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps as well as Captains in the Coast Guard or Navy. The average age of Colonels/Captains who retire after thirty years, as mandated, is fifty-two years old, which is still young enough to serve long-term in the SES. These officers typically spend several years in that rank, well exceeding the one-year requirement.

The SES consists of executive positions, including managerial, supervisory, and policy positions in most Executive Branch agencies of the federal government. The Department of Defense (DOD) boasts the largest number of SES positions, followed by the Department of Justice

(DOJ). Moreover, several other agencies are exempt from the SES but have their own senior executive positions, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Transportation Security Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Government Accountability Office, and Foreign Service. Military specialties in all services can enhance the leadership in these agencies—intelligence, judge advocate, attorneys, transportation, aviation, and finance, to name a few—but especially in the area of National Security. For example, Foreign Area Officers (FAO), often defined as “Soldier-Statesmen,” are commissioned officers who are trained, educated, and developed to become regionally-focused experts in political-military operations with advanced language skills and cultural awareness, to advise senior military and civilian strategic decision-makers.

In addition to their leadership skills and areas of expertise, most military O6s receive postgraduate-level senior joint professional military education (JPME) either at the Army War College, the Air War College at Maxwell AFB, the Marine War College, the National Defense University (NDU), or one of the other U.S. military services. Civilian SESs often attend these same schools.

The proposed policy action is to expand existing hiring paths to specifically target female veterans in the O6 grade, especially women of color. These existing hiring paths can be used to identify and recruit women in the SES. Military personnel have several transferable skills to provide strategic leadership and qualify to fill these jobs.

Background: Women, especially women of color, are severely underrepresented at the SES level in the federal government. According to OPM data, some 66.05% of SES employees are male, 33.95% female. By race, 79.38% of employees in the SES are White, 1.15% American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.24% Asian, 11.01% Black/African American, 0.15% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 4.34% Hispanic/Latino, and 0.01% Unspecified. By agencies, the Department of Defense (DOD) has the largest number of SES positions at 1,208, followed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) with 767, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with 598. This underutilization denies the opportunity for, and talents of, half the U.S. population to contribute at this level, especially in national security affairs, thus contributing to a lack of diversity. The recruitment of female veterans (especially women of color) at the senior rank of Colonel or Captain can help fill this gap.

Policy Alternatives: This paper does not propose necessarily new policies but rather an expansion of current policies to target women, specifically women of color, for hiring in the SES. OPM can take several steps to accomplish this, including coordinating with military human resource command to track pending retirements and sending OPM representatives to military installations to brief on the SES selection process.

Recommendations: OPM could expand its current hiring categories to actively target, identify, recruit, and hire women, specifically women of color, for SES positions. OPM should tweak existing hiring programs such as the veterans’ programs to identify and recruit females. A special category could be created to focus on the hiring of women of color, lest just White women will be hired and will account for a disproportionate number of women. The Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program (DoD-TAP) provides information and training to ensure service members separating from active duty are prepared for their next step in life. OPM might collaborate with DoD-TAP to establish a database of potential SES candidates as well as send representatives to their retirement sessions.

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HOW CONGRESS CAN HELP INCREASE FEMALE MILITARY LEADERSHIP AT MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMIES

Executive Summary: In May 2019, the largest number of African American women at the U.S. Army Military Academy, a total of 34, graduated, “a sign of concerted efforts to diversify West Point’s Long Gray Line.”¹ However, West Point, like the three other service academies, Air Force, Navy and the Coast Guard, remains mostly White and male. Male nominees to service academies outnumber women 3 to 1.² Applicants to all service academies except the U.S. Coast Guard Academy require a nomination as part of the application process. Nominations may be made by congressional representatives, senators, the vice president and the president.³

According to a new report from the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center and the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School, members of the current Congress have collectively nominated nearly four times as many men as women to the service academies. Women are 20 percent of nominees from Republican members and 22 percent of nominees from Democratic members.⁴ This nomination gap contributes to an already wide gender imbalance within the armed services.⁵ The proposed policy action is that members of Congress work to specifically target, identify and nominate women, especially women of color, within their districts. This can be done by working with schools as early as middle school to expose as many students as possible to the prospect of attendance at military service schools, for example, through mentoring programs.

Background: Males, usually White men, account for nearly 80 percent of current service academy nominees by members of Congress, according to a new report which looked at data from the past 25 years.⁶ Because

most students who seek attendance at a military academy must secure a congressional nomination, individual members of Congress serve as “gatekeepers,” exercising a certain degree of control over the nomination process for attendance at military service academies. These nominations can determine key leadership in the armed forces. This is problematic because it denies the opportunity to so many women, especially women of color, who may also benefit from a military career and create more diverse leadership in the military.

Policy Alternatives: Members of Congress need to become more cognizant of the fact that they are nominating mostly White men and the impact it has on the diversity of military leadership.

Recommendations: To help address the lack of diversity within military leadership in the armed forces, recommend that members of Congress use their nomination power to actively identify women, especially women of color, for service academies.

Members of Congress should devise special programs in their districts in conjunction with the public and private school systems that bring in women of color for information sessions, for recruitment to service academies, even work closely with service academies to identify role models for recruitment. This is not to imply that women of color may not be as aware of the advantages of a military career or the application processes. Given the recent historic numbers of Black women at West Point’s graduation last year, attendance at the service academies does not appear to be a difficult sale.

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