



Toward Equity and Antiracism in Nuclear Policymaking 2021 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference

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Toby Dalton: Hello and welcome back to the last session of this first day of Nukefest. So attention to racial and social justice issues and how these impacts the national security policy community has grown considerably in the last year. This is quite obviously visible in the United States, but it is apparent that these debates and these issues are occurring in other countries too. A lot of this conversation and action has been directed into diversity, equity and inclusion programs with the goal of addressing prevalent under-representation of certain groups in the workforce. This is certainly I think, necessary and welcome. But as we think about how these efforts relate to nuclear policy, our sense is that focusing solely or even mostly on diversity and inclusion is not sufficient. And that there should also be consideration about how equity figures into the policy process and more critically policy outcomes.

This is new territory for the Carnegie Nuclear Policy Conference. And to help us explore this territory, we've assembled a stellar panel this afternoon. Your moderator is Bunmi Akinnusotu, she is the host of What in the World? Podcast. She is joined by Bishop Garrison, who is senior advisor to the U.S Secretary of Defense for Human Capital and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Jessica Lee, who is senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, and Aditi Verma, who is a Stanton Nuclear Security fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center. A polite reminder that to pose questions to this panel during this discussion, please use the stage chat tab to the right of your screen on Hopin which makes sure that the questions go to the moderator. With that, let me get out of the way. Bunmi, over to you.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Thank you so much, Toby. I greatly appreciate you and the staff who've put together an amazing conference. I also want to make sure, I thank Mareena Robinson Snowden, who has been a champion and my

cheerleader in the corner making sure that this panel comes to light and she's just been amazing. I hope I can make you proud Mareena. So in preparation for this conversation, I came across the oral histories of those who were living during the early phases of the Manhattan Project. And Aditi, I have to thank your work that's where I got lost in some of this research, but I came across the oral history of Mr. James Ford, who was a 17 year old African-American lab assistant at the Nash Garage Building.

And his parents, like mine, were immigrants, and he just wanted to make a living and do right by his family. In his comment during the oral history, he said, "A lab assistant meant you did clean up work and you cleaned the beakers and other materials that the scientists used. The main job was that I had to clean the tubes in the sulfuric acid bath. I did not know what these tubes were, what they were for or anything. I saw the headline where we had dropped the bomb. I said, oh my God, that is what I was working on. That was the extent of my knowledge and what it was that we were doing."

I think we've all had the, oh my God moments in the last year or so, and this is why Mr. Ford's story resonates with me. I grapple with my own privilege as an American who benefits from the global world order. I grapple with the fact that many of the policies that have come from the nuclear programs here in the United States have subjugated indigenous populations and black and brown communities all over the world.

So here we are this afternoon to talk about moving forward, to talk about how we unpack and unravel the mistakes of the past. And I have our three esteemed guests with me to do so. So let's level set here before we begin. And I'm going to start with you, Jessica, but all three of you will respond to this question, which is from your vantage point, let's set the baseline, let's talk about this, what do we mean by equity? This is a word that's tossed around a lot, but what do we mean by equity from your space Jessica?

Jessica Lee:

Sure. Thank you so much Bunmi, and thank you Toby for bringing us all together in this very exciting panel on the first day of the conference, which I think really speaks volumes to Carnegie Endowment's commitment to these issues related to diversity and inclusion. To me, equity in nuclear policy means three different things. One, an equitable nuclear policy is one that looks like America. It not only has more people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds working on it, but it also involves mentoring and sponsoring of people across all levels to progressively senior roles so that they can grow into various roles in this field. I think it also includes many more practitioners on nuclear policy so that the field is more balanced between academics who conduct deep research and those with underground experience from politics, grassroots organizing and community development that relate to foreign policy.

Secondly, I think equity in nuclear policy means having the best minds work on the issue without kind of feeling pressured to conform to a set of norms or ideas that affirm U.S.'s sort of unquestioned global dominance. I'll speak from the North Korean Nuclear Policy space, which I've been part of for the last six years or so. And on one hand, I'm very proud of the high number of Asian-Americans, including Korean-Americans like me, who are in various roles in East Asia and International Security and Non-Proliferation bureaus at State and in other places in U.S government. These are senior positions and roles and yet, it's unclear whether the views that are held by some of these very high ranking Asian-American policymakers are informed in part by their understanding of the Asian-American communities sort of history and positions on these issues, or are mainly there to affirm and uphold existing policies.

Particularly on issues as complex as North Korea, I think we need a balance of experts, including those that are a bit more critical of the U.S government's past or current efforts and that their criticisms are taken seriously. Third, I think equity in nuclear policy is really about constantly adapting to reality. In the past 15 months Asian-Americans have been dealing with not just the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus, but also racism. And the troubling part is that this violence has been sustained despite the change in the White House. In fact, according to Stop AAPI Hate, anti-Asian violence actually grew 164% in the first quarter of this year, compared to the same period last year. Pew Research Center found the 45% of Asian-American adults have directly experienced racism since the start of the pandemic.

So what does this all mean for nuclear policy? I think that part of what this means is that the continued anti-Asian violence is a natural outcome of sort of the over the top framing of China, almost as an existential threat of the United States, that has become prevalent across administrations. And there's exacerbating this notion of Yellow Peril and fears that really stoke anti-Asian violence. In fact, during the cold war, if we look at history, the FBI actually spent years profiling and targeting Chinese and Chinese-American scientists and students. And many of the same stereotypes and assumptions about Chinese-Americans then, are being used today to deny security clearance of military contractors, government employees, as well as assignment restrictions against Asian-American diplomats.

So while laws like the COVID and Hate Crimes Act that we'll get into I think later today, are helpful in collecting data and strengthening law enforcement aspect of this surging violence. We need to sort of grapple with the broader context in which these things are taking place and what that means for Asian-Americans in the next several years and decades. Are they going to be opting out of roles in government, including in nuclear policy for fear of discrimination or worse? So I think these are the types of questions and areas that really deserve more attention, more scrutiny in

order to make sure that we don't end up in a situation where only non-Asians or Caucasians have a career in nuclear policy or feel accepted as experts in that community. Thanks.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Thank you, Jessica. We're going to be pulling on a few of the threads that you mentioned in your remarks here. So thank you for that. Aditi, let's go with you next. What does equity mean for you?

Aditi Verma: Thank you Bunmi. And I just want to thank Toby and Mareena and everyone at the Carnegie Endowment for putting this together. It's really a pleasure to be with all of you here today. So in order to define what equity means and what we are working towards in the nuclear field, I actually want to say a bit about what we are working against. So if we want nuclear policymaking that is anti-racist and equitable, I think we have to develop a critical frame for understanding the mechanisms of exclusion that already operate in our field and which have operated for a long time. And so I think we need to break down these systemic mechanisms of exclusion and I think we can break them down into two parts, and they're epistemic exclusion and institutional exclusion.

So by epistemic exclusion I mean the practices of knowledge making in the field and how the field remembers its own history of evolution. And so epistemic exclusion really is the erasure and the devaluation or the negation of histories of colonial dehumanization and exploitation of people and communities of color by the nuclear community. For example, we've chosen to selectively forget the impacts of weapons testing and uranium mining on indigenous communities, not just in the U.S, but in other countries as well. And so what epistemic exclusion does is that it leads to these exclusionary norms and values becoming embedded in our very technologies and the policies that we make to govern them. So, for example, our very notion of national security, which is predicated on maintaining vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons and credible threats of their use, that very notion of security is exclusionary, and we can get into that later.

Institutional exclusion operates in the form of mechanisms, policies and attitudes that create and sustain barriers that minoritize indigenous, black, non-black professionals of color, women, queer, and disabled people from full participation and professional advancement in the field. We know that our field is not very diverse and that's something that we need to work towards. But what we have to remember is that epistemic and institutional exclusion are entangled and they're mutually reinforcing. So who designs nuclear technologies for example, and makes decisions about their governance, shapes who is seen not just now, but also in the future as a legitimate expert, as a credible expert in the field, and whose contributions are ultimately valued or devalued.

And I think this is an especially important point because as Toby just said in the beginning, when we think about diversity, equity and inclusion work in the nuclear field, and I can say, especially in academic spaces, because those are primarily the spaces that I inhabit, we often focus on recruiting and retaining individuals from demographics that have historically been excluded or minoritized. And that's very important, I cannot overemphasize or overstate the importance of that.

But that alone I think is not enough because we also have to transform the intellectual and moral foundations on which our field is built, in order to keep these new people that we bring to the field and in order to create an environment in which their voices will really be heard. And so we have to create a field that's also epistemically inclusive. So to me, equity in the nuclear field means going from epistemic and institutional exclusion to this epistemic and institutional equity.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Amazing. Thank you so much Aditi for that. Again, more things that we're going to pull on as we continue our conversation. And Bishop, what about you from where you're sitting, what does equity mean?

Bishop Garrison: Well first and foremost, thank you so much to Carnegie for having this panel and for allowing me to be part of such an esteemed group. I'm really honored to be here and to be a part of this vital discussion. So when I speak of equity and when we speak of equity, I think in the government and in policy, we're really talking about fairness and opportunity. And that's something across the board that I think Americans both within our profession and outside of it, the average citizen, want to see. And something that Jake Sullivan, our National Security Advisor, and in that regard, the entirety of the foreign policy apparatus has continued to spouse from the Biden administration is the idea of a foreign policy in national security for the middle class.

Well, what does that mean? I know there are a lot of economic pieces that revolve around that, but in this particular context, what we're really talking about goes back to that idea of equity and fairness. If we're going to have the proper policies in place that ensure that individuals have a voice at the table, as we build these out. Whether it's a treaty or I think a part to your point earlier, a part to your story, we can look at this even from an environmental justice perspective. If you're going to work on nuclear policy, what neighborhoods, what cities, what communities are going to have the greatest impact from those outcomes, who is at the table making those decisions? And that is really where this equity comes into play.

And if we don't have the right individuals represented in the room in those discussions, we're not going to see equity within the outcomes. We're not going to have fairness in outcome if we don't have fairness in opportunity at the outset, that's ultimately what we're talking about here. So that's part

one. Part two is we look at it again from the lens or framework as we talk about it for a middle-class, you're also talking about innovative solutions, and I think we all hit on this a bit. The complexity of the geopolitical sphere is only becoming more dynamic by the second. If we're going to be able to continue to have the leading voice at the table, and we being the United States, in a lot of these international discussions with our partners, as well as continuing to ensure that those that might be our competitors are kept in good faith, that their actions continue to be that of rational actors, we're going to need innovative solutions and dialogues in order to achieve that. The most innovative solutions come from dynamic teams, teams that have not diversity for diversity's sake, but diversity of thought. And just as important in that, diversity of lived experience. The way I see the world is shaped and viewed from the way the world sees me. The way I interact in the world, the way that I speak in the world is shaped in part from the way I am viewed. So in order to meet the need for that innovative solution, you want a team that has varying opinions, varying backgrounds, varying lived experience.

You want a team that looks at least in part like the four of us in these panels where you're pulling from so many different diaspora and just dynamic backgrounds in order to come up with those innovative solutions. Because we know whenever you have homogenous thought, you're going to have group think, and when you have group think you're going to turn into the blob. You're going to become that group that is a self-licking ice cream cone to mix metaphors there. That continues to create the same types of answers because they like the way that answer feels or the way it hears, and everyone agrees. And you're not going to have necessarily the dynamic discussions necessary in order to really achieve the truly innovative and thoughtful solutions to your problems.

And then third, and I don't think I need to tell anyone here on this panel this, but third it's about being a part of a collective American society. We are a reflection of those we serve. And so many of us have such incredible stories in our own personal backgrounds, and then the history of our families that that is woven absolutely into the American tapestry. And it's important for us to continue to leverage that strength and to leverage that story, because that is what the international community sees and that is what makes us stronger. That's what continues to make us a leader within a lot of these different aspects. And we build on the legitimacy we have in various parts of other policies that help us lead into being leaders in this policy as well. It's all interconnected.

Little by little we're seeing the gap, or excuse me, more and more we're seeing the gap between domestic policy and international policy become smaller and smaller. We have to be able to lead by our values. The world is watching us and a critical value is ensuring that everyone has an equitable voice at the table, and we are a part of American society, and it's important

for us to properly reflect that. So that's kind of the three pillars for me on this. And note, that's without even going deeply into nuclear policy in and of itself, we at least have the proper foundation with the right people in the room before we even to properly engage deeply in the science and policy behind the issue as well. So with that, I'll pass it back to you.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Thank you so much, Bishop. And I want to acknowledge the fact that you are the first of your kind in your role at the Department of Defense. And I know that your job is extremely difficult, what are we four, five, six months in, at this point and-

Bishop Garrison: I'm into my fifth.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Into your fifth month. And I'm going to start with you actually before I jump to my colleagues, but in your role, I have a specific question. What your biggest challenge that you're facing as you try to implement the policies that you just described to us? What's one thing that you're just like, dang it, I can't figure this out or this is going to be a tough hill to climb?

Bishop Garrison: Absolutely. Understanding that there is no one policy, there is no one size fits all for an organization of 2.8 million people with a budget roughly a little over \$700 billion. We need to be smart and thoughtful in our approach, in everything we do around human capital issues and around diversity, equity and inclusion and understanding that the two are intertwined. And that it's important as we speak about DEI that we do so mindfully in terms of policy and process and not to stovepipe it or silo it. I think that's probably the second one. The first one is the size of the organization. The second is, and this is not isolated to DOD, but the second issue is that you see organizations say, well, this is our DEI department, and this is what DEI does. While really DEI is cross cutting, it's cross-functional.

You should be thinking about how do your policies and processes affect your overall DEI strategy into the decision-making process. And I go back to, I think our administration has been very thoughtful on this when we think about climate change, for instance, and not to get too far off topic. But when you think about climate change, you think about equitable solutions to it. And you think about, well, if we're talking about climate in the east coast, well, how are we discussing it in Detroit? And it's not simply on the messaging aspect of it, but how are the changes in climate affecting these communities of color? How might they affect them differently when you're already talking about in many areas under-representation and underprivileged communities that are going to be affected in a much more drastic manner than some of the more affluent communities that you see of their fellow citizens and colleagues.

So that's really for me, the two critical aspects of this. And then a third is always to some degree, how is this properly messaged in a way that it is adopted by the culture of the organization? I think right now equity continues to be an unnecessarily politicized topic. I think at the end of the day when people truly understand it and they know we're simply talking about fairness in opportunity and not about fairness in outcome. If you give me the fairness in opportunities, it's incumbent on me to take advantage of that opportunity to see the outcomes that I want to see. So we're not talking about just handing someone a ticket at the end of it, we're talking about giving them a fair shake at the beginning of the race.

And it's important for us to be able to not simply message that, but to really ingrain it culturally into what we do. But again, I think you get to that point when you open the aperture about how you discuss DEI across functional, across everything that an organization does. And just as important ensuring that your organization on every level, particularly on your lowest levels are willing and able to have the tough, awkward conversations around these topics to be able to get outside of our comfort zones a bit, and really interact with each other on a personal level.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Yes. Thank you for that Bishop. You've given us a lot of information and I would not want your job. Let's just put it that way.

Bishop Garrison: I love my job. It is my absolute honor to serve the Department of Defense, and the military departments every day.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: I'm glad you're there. Jessica, Bishop talked about in summary making sure that our federal agencies and the public servants that represent the United States look like America. But we know that just because you bring the Asian person or the black person or the Muslim person to the table, that it doesn't mean that the status quo of a policy will be upheld. I think we'd like to believe that, but the reality is that at times, because of the bureaucracy, because of history, because of lots of things, the status quo is upheld, even though we have diverse voices at the table. Can you talk us through that dichotomy and how we should navigate that as policymakers?

Jessica Lee: Sure. First of all, I want to associate myself with everything Bishop said. I think thinking about these issues, particularly in the context of a department as massive as DOD is extremely challenging. And I think it speaks volume to the Biden administration that they have someone like Bishop literally doing this work day in and day out. I think that obviously I think signals that this is an important element of a strong national security strategy.

But to your question, I do think that part of answering your question has to do with how we understand the connection between our foreign policy

and civil liberties for minorities in our country. I think about what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr said when he said that the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism was something that he warned against. And he was a fierce critic of the Vietnam War if you'll recall, and really implore that a country that invests far more in the military compared to social programs is approaching spiritual death.

And I think Dr. King was right. And so, how we understand the linkages Bishop talked about between foreign policy and domestic policy. I think it is really important aspect of really truly reaching equity, not just in a superficial kind of check the box quota way of having one person of color at the table or one woman in this role and feeling really good about ourselves. We need to understand what do these people actually bring to the table? What are they saying and how are they informed in terms of their information? Is it just based on things that they read as a PhD student, or have they actually gone and talked to Americans across the country, try to persuade elected officials, run for office, these are all I think the kinds of skills and talent that we need in a system as complex as U.S government, including on nuclear policy.

I guess one other thing to add here would be, I think it's also really important to understand that there have been times in the past where we just didn't have enough kind of basic skills of culturally and linguistically skilled experts at the table. And I'm talking of course about the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, where the absence of a diverse national security workforce, as documented by the GAO and others, probably contributed to miscalculations and gross blind spots that led to the Iraq invasion in particular. And so we really need to be thinking again, very critically about who is at the table and who is not at the table. And what does that mean? What is the gap?

I think I'll end by saying to many organizations, credit folks who are asking these questions. And I have to be optimistic that we are on a better footing at the governmental and non-governmental level. For example, I've just been selected to a newly created program last year called Arms Control Negotiation Academy, which is seeking to build next generation arms control negotiators. And this and other programs in our field are really meant, thank you, are really meant to be disruptive and to bring the Bishops and the Aditis of the world into the policy-making roles, not only so that they kind of get their foot in the door, but actually succeed because they have the technical know-how to really become an expert.

And so I think these are the kinds of sensibilities that folks at the top and at the bottom need to, I think, have in mind learning from history, learning from civil rights activists who have long warned that having a totally lopsided national security budget, where our diplomats don't have enough, and our military folks have too much, I'm grossly exaggerating

here, but just in terms of dollar amounts alone, we know that there's huge discrepancy. And most of the folks in U.S government that I speak to are very much like Bishop. They understand that there are some things that we have inherited and that there are ways that we can fix this, but it's going to take so much time and effort and most importantly, like-minded people who are just completely linked in terms of common purpose. I think once we have that and we have the ability to critically examine ourselves, we will see improved situations in terms of Asian-American violence and learn from history, like I said, and so as to not repeat it.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Yeah, absolutely. And I want to first do a quick time check, we have about five more minutes before we open it up for questions. And Aditi, I want you to do a favor for all of us who maybe a little skeptical about this conversation and what exactly it means for nuclear policy or nuclear non-proliferation. I think it's very easy for us to assume that we're having a moral high ground conversation, we're just making this stuff up and it's all feel good, and this has nothing to do with policy. But you wrote an article and I've read several subsequent articles about the importance of having people at the table to influence decisions. One of the important pieces that I've read about is the importance of data and having data-driven policy and data-driven decision-making. Very surface level sometimes it can be, but data is very important.

And so how can organizations, so here we are talking about these issues, equity and diversity and inclusion, but there's got to be some meat, there's got to be something that draws a connection at the end of the day to the policy, to the solution. So how can organizations re-imagine the use of data to bring about changes as it relates to nuclear policy? Just in case someone is wondering why we're having this conversation and what exactly you're supposed to do to actually operationalize it, data is one of those entities including the human capital, but Aditi, explain for the folks how can we reimagine the use of data to really bring about solutions to the issues we're talking about?

Aditi Verma: Bunmi, that's such a great question. And I feel like I could go on about this for a long time, but I'll try not to. I wonder if the article that you have in mind is actually the one that Mareena Robinson Snowden wrote for the bulletin.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: It absolutely is.

Aditi Verma: Fantastic piece! If somebody is able to drop it in the chat somewhere a link to that, I would really recommend that everybody read it. I think Bunmi's question sort of operates at two levels. There are two kinds of data that I think we need to be gathering to solve two different, but related problems having to do with nuclear policymaking. The first is about, and I guess this sort of goes back to what I was talking about earlier, the first is about

making the field demographically, institutionally more inclusive. So how do we bring the right voices to the table?

Historically, I think we've just relied on numbers. We've set a very low bar for ourselves in terms of what that number needs to be in terms of X percent people of color and having sort of reached that low bar, we sometimes pat ourselves on the back. But there are other kinds of data that are stories of people who tried to enter the field, who stayed in it for life, perhaps had bad experiences, did not advance professionally and left. These are the kinds of stories that we need to be gathering. And this is something that Mareena writes about in her piece. These stories are data as well, in fact, they're a very important kind of data, especially when you have the sort of small N problem every story matters. You can't disregard individual experiences just because they're small in number.

And another wonderful point that I will echo again, that Mareena makes in that piece is that, and I think Bishop has already said that, one size is not going to fit all. To fix this lack of diversity and equity problem that we have in our field, we need to tailor our DEI policies and efforts and mechanisms to different demographics and understand that different groups at different stages of their careers even will need to be supported in different ways. So that's one aspect of gathering data that's both quantitative and qualitative. Gathering these stories and understanding people's experiences, making the field more human as we also seek to make it more inclusive. That's one form of data gathering that I think in general, besides the wonderful benefit of making the field more diverse, but also make the field more human and welcoming. And I think that's good for everyone in the field. So that's one aspect of data gathering.

But another aspect is to just understand the impact of nuclear policies and the impact that they've had for a long time on communities around the world. How do the decisions that we make, whether that has to do with developing and testing weapons, developing and testing nuclear weapons and new kinds of weapons systems, the threat of their use, how is that experienced by people? Because when we often talk about national security, we tend to think of it as being sort of a monolithic concept, national security in the way that the U.S cares about it. And yes, it makes sense to think about it that way, but the U.S is not a monolithic whole, it's made up of many different communities that have many different experiences.

And so we need to think about how our policies, how they impact American communities, but also communities outside the U.S. And so I think another part of the data that needs to be gathered is just how our policies that are made by the nuclear field are experienced by communities that have historically been minoritized. And there, again, I cannot overemphasize the importance of people's stories and experiences. Bunmi,

as you started us off with this wonderful quote from Mr. Ford, I think it was, yes, that is the kind of data that we need to gather.

It takes a long time to gather it, to understand it, sort of immerse ourselves in it. Numbers are easier to read I will concede that, but I think this literature, sort of texture data is just as important. And we need to understand that this is a kind of data as well and value it as such. So I have perhaps gone on for too long, so I will stop there so that we can go on to audience questions, but I hope that that got to your question in some way. It was a very big question. In fact, I would encourage everybody in the audience to think about that.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Yeah, absolutely. Aditi, no, you did exactly what I desired, which was to orient the audience to the importance of data. We're going to end with this question, and I'm going to ask my colleagues to keep their remark as brief as possible. So for people in the audience who want to take this on genuinely, who actually want to make a difference from where they're sitting at, where should they start? I know that's a big question because we don't know who's in the audience, but where should they start? Jessica, let's start with you, we'll go to Bishop and then Aditi, we'll end with you.

Jessica Lee: Sure. This is a sort of an unfair answer, but I think a really important place to start is actually to travel, post pandemic of course. And I say this as somebody, when I was in grad school, I was only what, 22, 23, I visited Hiroshima for the first time. And I was floored by what I saw and learned from locals who live there. And so I think it's really important especially in the context of nuclear policy for Americans, not only to read about what has transpired and especially in places like Hiroshima and Nagasaki but also strive to see the world through the lens of other countries whenever possible. Now this is very difficult I know, I've worked in DC for 13 years. It's a very unpopular thing to say.

But I think diplomats and folks who routinely travel as part of their work get it, they know what it means for a person like me to have an American passport and to be really proud of the multiculturalism of our country, but also to see U.S kind of dominance and its kind of presence felt by people in places like Okinawa or in South Korea, et cetera. Again, not necessarily the most popular thing to say if you want to make friends in Washington, but it's absolutely the case that there are really important lessons for American policymakers that can only really be truly felt and grappled with once you're outside of the Beltway, outside of the echo chamber and really begin to confront with our legacy. And so I strongly encourage folks to continue to travel and to learn and really ask the hard questions.

Bishop Garrison: I'm going to have to completely disagree with Jessica on the idea that there's life outside of the Beltway as far as I've been told. I'm joking, it's a

beautiful country out there. We all need to get out and see the country and the world more. For me, I think I want to keep it something that I know every individual can do right now. You can literally walk out of your room, your house and go do this, building up our interpersonal relationships. That includes everything from mentorship and guidance, to going back to that idea of the awkward conversation.

Something we speak about a lot at work, but we have to figure out ways kind of to break our own internal filibusters here. I know people generally don't want to have that confrontation, to have that awkwardness around a lot of these topics, these cultural sticky topics that are just generally seen as uncomfortable and problematic, but they're so intertwined now with how we even govern ourselves and how we build these policies and what the room looks like when we build them that we've reached a fever pitch in our society and our culture.

And I think we really need to take it upon ourselves as individuals to begin to help this ice melt around these discussion points and really reach out and get ourselves a bit uncomfortable. It doesn't mean put yourself in danger, whether that's physical or mental, I'm not suggesting that, but what I am suggesting is trying to meet someone to some degree in the middle. I know a lot of people would argue that is not something I necessarily always do, but it is something I truly always strive to do. We're going to be imperfect as we do it. So you also have to make room for people to be imperfect, to stumble and to fall as they try to meet you halfway and have these types of discussions in order for us to move this societal dialogue forward. Hope that was brief enough, I know I speak long.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Thank you, Bishop.

Bishop Garrison: I felt personally attacked when you said that.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: No, it's in honor of our audience who is eager to ask us lots of questions. But Aditi, you have the final word here.

Aditi Verma: Thank you. And I completely agree with Jessica and Bishop and as an academic, perhaps what I would add is that I would encourage people to question the received wisdom and to really re-examine how we think about some of our most fundamental ideas about security, about deterrence to really think about where this received wisdom comes from, whose values and voices have shaped this wisdom, whose values and voices have been left out and think about how you can bring some of those values and voices that have been left out to the table.

Because I think we're in a moment where this field, and I think every other professional field is sort of reexamining its ethical and moral foundations.

And so we're in a moment in which we can remake our field both intellectually, but also who gets to have a say. And so now is the moment to really be re-evaluating some of this received wisdom and to think about what we retain as part of our intellectual canon and what we just throw out to make room for new and fresh thinking and new people who should have been there all along.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Absolutely what a great way to end. Thank you. Aditi. Let's go to the questions that we've got. I wanted to direct this one to Bishop and this looks like it's coming from Hiroaki Nakanishi, and forgive me in advance if I mispronounce your name, but Hiroaki asks, what kind of impact of the U.S Department of Defense's equity and anti-racism approach can be brought to the international sphere, for example, influencing other countries? Are there any plans in the United States to facilitate or encourage other countries on this point? I think that's a phenomenal question. So Bishop what do you think? You're on mute Garrick, I mean Bishop. Garrick is my colleague, I don't-

Bishop Garrison: It's okay, you can call me a wrong name when I'm doing wrong. It's not a problem. I don't want to go into too much of a deliberative processes around policy at all. So I am not trying to evade the question, but I want to make sure that I don't step in the way of things that haven't been completed in the decision-making process in the building. One thing I will say is, well, it's kind of two-fold. One, I hit on this earlier, but it's about not simply having the proper image, but actually living by our values domestically so we can demonstrate to the world that this is who we are internationally. So having both our partners and allies, as well as our competitors see us in the proper light as living by our values and knowing that we are an imperfect nation built on an imperfect history, but we're always striving forward to that perfection, striving towards that light at the end of the tunnel. So that's a part of it.

The second part is we know that a lot of nations are struggling with their own types of internal domestic issues in a lot of these spaces, particularly around issues of race and diversity as well. And when you look at countries in the Western hemisphere and in Latin America, when you talk about the Afro-Latino community and some of the different issues that they sometimes perceive with colorism. For instance when you talk about darkly complected people versus lightly complected in that area in that region? I think it's important for us to demonstrate through policy and through societal action that we can be a leader that can help them learn to navigate these types of thornier issues and in dealing with their own differences in demographics domestically there internally. So it's really almost a domestic to international to domestic issue, but in the 21st century in the world, these are the types of complicated issues that we have the ability to have some effect on.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Thank you, Bishop. Jessica, I'm going to direct this question to you and also Aditi, since you're academia, perhaps you can provide insight. But let's see, I have a question from Masako Toki who asks, how can we best reach out to young generations in underserved communities to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education. And you've been doing some work around this, as you mentioned in your remarks earlier. So what advice do you have for reaching younger generations from underserved populations?

Jessica Lee: Yeah, that's a great question. Masako, thank you for asking that. I think it's really important to bring people in this field and folks in foreign policy more broadly to folks in underserved communities and communities of color. I went to high school in Brooklyn and I never would have imagined this is the work I'll do today in part because I really didn't see many role models and I didn't have many mentors who said, "Hey, look, you can do this. You're good at math and science." And I think that's kind of part of how we build a better ecosystem of folks at all levels who are sort of walking in this path of a more sane nuclear policy. So I think there's that kind of aspect of diversity and really starting out early and being intentional about who we kind of bring into this space.

In terms of more systemic broad based programs and outreach efforts, I know there are international NGOs as well as domestic NGOs that work on building kind of programs around the country to better kind of promote not just international affairs budget and international work that we do abroad, but also connect it to U.S kind of conditions here at home. There are not that many but I know that there are folks who are trying to really connect the dots in this space. I think finally there are student kind of conferences and organizations like the one that brought me to Hiroshima in 2007 that I now serve as a board member of that nonprofit. So I think there are organizations that are doing some level of work, they may not be very big, but they are kind of tackling this issue of really getting more people of color in this space of nuclear disarmament.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Thank you for that. And I want to put a plug out there for several organizations, this is not a promotion but it is a support, the Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security has a phenomenal base of young people who are interested this work. And so if you are looking for talent, you should reach out to WCAPS as they go by. Another is Global Kids headquartered in New York. Global Kids also works with the next generation of global leaders and they talk about everything from climate change, to nuke issues, to defense issues. So if you're looking to partner genuinely, I encourage you to reach out to those two programs.

Let's see, we have about I believe seven minutes to address some questions. So I'm going to go to this one from, it looks like Renata Dalaqua, Renata asks in your view do measures to foster equity and anti-

racism and nuclear policymaking lead to different outcomes? And we hinted at this a little bit, but if yes, how? And Aditi, maybe we can start with you here. So do measures to foster equity and anti-racism in nuclear policymaking actually lead to something different?

Aditi Verma:

I would say yes. I think this is a great question. And actually I would use the example of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to illustrate this point. That treaty is an example of an institutional mechanism that brings in voices from the global south that have sort of historically been left out of these debates and discussions about who gets to have nuclear weapons, who doesn't, what even constitutes security in the context of nuclear weapons. So I do think that when we approach questions about nuclear security and policy from these broader perspectives that include the views of a broader spectrum of communities and countries, we do get different outcomes and better outcomes. It remains to be seen how many people have tried to position the TPNW and the NPT as being an opposition to each other as a way to sort of denigrate or shutdown the TPNW. I personally think and many people will agree with me that they are actually very compatible.

So when we do try to bring in these anti-racist equitable ideas to shape our policymaking, inevitably there will be a clash with the older institutional structures that are sort of shaped by a different set of ideas. And so while these clashes are sort of, it's very uncomfortable to witness them, they also tell us something about how these systems of values are so different. And even if the institutional mechanisms themselves are not compatible, they show us why those values are incompatible in some way.

So I see the TPNW as just being sort of a landmark piece of diplomacy, a new institutional mechanism that we should sort of try to emulate more broadly in the nuclear community other international treaties and conventions, which if we try to reimagine from this starting point of bringing in voices from communities and countries that have historically not informed nuclear policymaking, how would that alter the existing institutions and treaties that we have now? So I think the TPNW is almost sort of an experiment or a case study in how to do that. And I think we should regard it as a starting point for doing more of the same in the field. I'll stop there.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Jessica, did you have anything to add to that? I know that this is also similar to your area of expertise as well.

Jessica Lee: I'm okay. I know we have a lot of other questions, so.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Yeah, we do. Let's take this last one. And I'll allow any of you all or encourage any of you to answer this one. It's from Lila Green. I'll try to condense it here, but arguably the entire nuclear policy apparatus was

written via white male lens. And although the landscape of participants or practitioners has become more diverse, the original foundation remains. As we move forward and write policy for present and future that is vastly different than the past, how do you propose we sort of renovate the current policies that we have and practices that were fundamentally created by the white male. And so I guess the bottom line is how do we operationalize the renovation of our current policies? What specific items can we address today that would fundamentally upend what's been done in the past. That's how I'm going to frame it. I'm not sure if that's what Lila wanted, but that's how I'm going to frame the question.

Jessica Lee: Bunmi, I can quickly jump in-

Bishop Garrison: Do you want to go first, Jessica, please by all means-

Jessica Lee: Okay, great. Yeah. I'll quickly jump in here. This is such a great question. I wish we had another hour, but we don't so I will be very brief. I do think that part of what we need is to, so I'll stick to the North Korea kind of nuclear issue, which is something I spend a lot of time thinking about, which is part of the problem that has led to this deadlock in talks between the two countries I believe, is that the United States nuclear expert community routinely refuses to see North Korea as a country with interests just like the United States does. And so it's really funny when you read U.S media coverage of North Korea over the decades. There's tendency to view North Korea as a very irrational kind of de-humanized actor and North Korea has no voice in our policy of that country and is silenced in many ways.

And so it's sort of like Yellow Peril, but North Korea style. We care about this issue, we're just not going to listen to the people who actually live there though because they don't have any agency and they're sort of led by a crazy guy anyway. So they're not really legitimate. So that's unfortunately I think what we're sort of operating. Obviously there are many who have looked at this issue and come to a very different conclusion. So for example, Bob Carlin and John Lewis historian, former State Department respectively, they have talked about it how in the early '90s when Kim Il-sung, then leader of North Korea, was talking with American kind of policymakers that, Kim Il-sung had calculated that actually it would be in North Korea's interest to even accept some level of U.S troop presence on the Korean Peninsula, as a hedge against a potentially expanded hostile Chinese or Russian influence.

So that seems to me like a pretty rational thing for a country, as small as North Korea to be worried about, but you wouldn't really hear that. And in fact, whenever we talk about sort of political reconciliation between U.S and North Korea through things like ending the Korean war, you often get hit with this rejoinder of, "Oh, you're just advocating for immediate

withdrawal of U.S troops. Your isolation that's so far fetched and de-stabilizing." Well, that's not exactly what we're saying.

We're saying, let's look at the conditions that are leading to North Korea's continued provocative behavior of acquiring more and more nuclear weapons in the order of 50 to 60 nuclear weapons at this point. And what is the underlying reason for their insecurity that is leading to this behavior, and sort of work backwards. That's one way I think of really shifting the lens from a U.S centric view, whether it's white male or woman, white, it doesn't matter, but it's a U.S centric baked in lens rather than sort of a global lens. And I think that's a bigger problem.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Thank you, Jessica. Bishop, go for it.

Bishop Garrison: Yeah, I'll just add that, because I think she already hit on some incredibly astute points. What we're really talking about is it's not just in one particular realm of policy or one particular area of business. Foundationally that is the way a lot of policy, law, business, regulatory concerns were built. They were built without women, without people of color in the discussion. So it's something that we're continuously navigating and attempting to evolve as we move forward, we look forward towards building a more inclusive sense of governance, a more inclusive sense of legal frameworks and look for opportunities to provide equity in all we do from here on out.

So I don't think the premise of this should be like it was white male in Yale when it was built. So now we need to go back and look and see how we can deconstruct it and figure, no, I think foundationally, there are a lot of good parts, again, imperfect. There are a lot of good parts that exists, how can we build on the foundation that exists now being thoughtful in terms of the proper diversity, equity, inclusion in solving a lot of these problems.

And to be quite frank, a lot of the problems and issues of the 21st century are not going to allow us to not take a comprehensive gap analysis and look at our policies and who's building them. I think we all have hit on this to some degree, but when you look at everything from the issues internationally at any time that are affecting the country, you're going to need people that are regional experts, you're going to need people that understand the region and understand functional expertise. So you're going to need a mix of people that know North Korea and know nuclear policy or know economic policy or now we're crazy when it's popping up this space in space commerce, and that's a real thing.

So how are we thinking through the existence of these new 21st century or just generally these issues that some have long existed, but some are coming into the framework of the modern world now. How are we thinking through the policy development there and looking back on

history for both the positive and negative aspects of how policy was built previously? I don't think that this should be a fire sale in terms of throwing everything out and trying to rebuild. I think it really is reflecting, and I think Jessica was hitting on this to some degree, reflecting back on the history of how we've done things in the past and looking forward to a more inclusive, diverse way of doing it.

Bunmi Akinnusotu: Wonderful way to end Bishop. Thank you so much, Jessica, Aditi, this has been such a helpful conversation for me as someone who is not a complete expert in nuke policy. As I said at the beginning, I've learned so much from the work of each of you and I want to thank you just for your perseverance and your strength, I know these conversations are not easy. And for our audience if you are skeptical, I encourage you to go inward and to think about your own situation, your own experiences and also to consider the resources that are out there that will help you safely challenge what you experience, and safely challenge your thoughts and perspectives on any and all issues. And so with that, I will pass it over to Toby to finish us out for the afternoon. Toby.

Toby Dalton: Thank you so much Bunmi and Bishop and Jessica and Aditi. It was a fantastic conversation. I learned a great deal and expect that others did as well. We really just scratched the surface of these issues inside of an hour or so, hopefully this session was for more conversations in our community about the foundations that were just discussed and how we adjust, rebuild and have a more inclusive policy process going forward. I just also wanted to apologize for the technical glitch, we had a question pop up on the screen briefly during the session.

Well with that, that brings us to a conclusion of the formal program for day one of Nukefest. Just a reminder that any of the sessions that you've missed, you'll be able to find on our YouTube channel later. Except for the young professionals who have other events this afternoon and tomorrow morning, we will see the rest of you on Wednesday afternoon at 1:55 Eastern time for the presentation of the Thérèse Delpech Memorial Award, immediately followed by a keynote conversation with U.S Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl. Until then, we'll see you next time.