



*Rapporteur: Emily Mushen*

On May 19, 2021, CNA held its third Inclusive National Security event (@InclusiveNatSec on Twitter). This series explores the intersection of structural bias and national security, and this event (recording [here](#)) focused on the relationship between racism and the work of diplomacy. The keynote speaker was Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, the US State Department's inaugural Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO). The event moderator was Ms. Tina Wong, Foreign Affairs Officer, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Office of Policy and Regional Affairs. Below are key takeaways from the discussion.

### Reflections from Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley:

- Diversity and inclusion (D&I) efforts help ensure that we are exposed to a variety of perspectives and sources of knowledge, giving us as many options as possible when confronting a difficult challenge. This results in more effective negotiations and better, longer lasting policies.
- We have sufficient research to demonstrate that we have a D&I problem, and the US government has decided that change is necessary. It is now time to move out on this knowledge. Our goal is to incorporate D&I ideals into how we evaluate, manage, and promote people.
- We plan to hold accountable those who are not reflecting the values of inclusion. And we are looking for leaders who will speak out and use their voices to say, "We can do better—and we intend to."
- We can do many things that would have an immediate impact, and we are working to tackle these as quickly as possible. We begin this work with two efforts: (1) establish and reestablish trust in the system and (2) use data to identify potential barriers to success.
  - Best practices are important, but we are most interested in what *really* works.
  - Greater transparency is necessary across the board.
  - It will take innovation, creativity, and grit to get this done.
- We already see real change in the senior appointments by the current administration. These appointments show a true commitment to leveling the playing field, and we anticipate that we will see mid- and entry-level personnel encouraged by these changes.
- In looking at how D&I issues affect our ability to compete with other great powers, it is important to understand that we have been here before. During the Civil Rights Movement, the US had difficulty in its relationships with African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American partners because the treatment of racial and ethnic minority groups at home undermined the message abroad. The current administration is tackling this issue head-on, calling for systemic change.
- We have work to do, regardless of how our competitors try to use these challenges against us.
- The US is not perfect, but we are not afraid to look at our imperfections.
- We need to use plain language and keep human costs and opportunities central to our foreign policy.

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