



*Rapporteur: Kaia Haney*

On September 10, 2021, CNA held its sixth Inclusive National Security event (@InclusiveNatSec on Twitter). This initiative provides a forum for discussions on inclusive national security. This month's event "Racism and National Security" explored the question, How can the United States overcome the legacy of racism in national security to actively further inclusivity and anti-racism? The keynote speaker was Dr. Keisha N. Blain, Associate Professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh, co-author of the *New York Times* best seller *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019*, and co-author of *The Charleston Syllabus*. Dr. Blain is an award-winning historian of the 20th-century United States with broad interests and specializations in African American history, the modern African Diaspora, and women's and gender studies. The event was moderated by Dr. Pauline Shanks Kaurin, Stockdale Chair in Professional Military Ethics at the US Naval War College.

### Reflections from Dr. Keisha N. Blain:

- Addressing injustices in US national security is impossible if we don't understand our nation's history. History can be used as a lens to understand how past harm and structures of inequality influence contemporary challenges. Applying lessons from history can enable us to identify solutions to current challenges and ultimately move the US towards a truly inclusive democracy.
- National security should be for all Americans, not just elites or certain types of citizens. Historically, however, this has not been the case. Groups have been criminalized or viewed as threats for their race, religion, or political objectives. Practitioners have the responsibility to move beyond stereotypes, stigmas, and labels to identify genuine domestic threats and work to create a nation that is safe for all citizens.
- We have to believe we can overcome the legacy of racism in international relations, even while understanding it will be difficult and take a long time. This hope has a function—it spurs action and inspires people to make necessary changes.
- Complacency is dangerous. There are always ways we can contribute to dismantling systems of oppression and furthering inclusivity and diversity. An action does not need to occur on a grand scale to be meaningful. Actions can range from investing in organizations, developing personal relationships, and hosting local reading groups. Avoid falling into the trap of feeling overwhelmed and doing nothing.
- We should ask ourselves two key questions as we think about the education of the next generation of national security leaders. First, how does the educational approach redress past harms and injustices? Second, does the approach address the needs of all students?
- Merely having more diversity or diverse leadership within an existing organization might not be enough. Many organizations and their structures have been perpetuating legacies of racism for a long time. Instead, dismantling the structures themselves might be necessary to see the desired changes.

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