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On February 24, 2022, CNA held its first Inclusive National Security event of the year (@InclusiveNatSec on Twitter). The purpose of this initiative is to develop a forum for discussions on the effect of bias on national security. Whereas last year's theme was racism, this year's series focuses on the relationship between gender and national security. This month's event ([recording here](#)), "Gender, International Development, and National Security," explored the extent to which international development programs have meaningfully influenced gender equity, including how gender norms have affected these efforts and what role the promotion of gender equity plays in advancing US national security objectives. The keynote speaker was Carla Koppell, a Distinguished Fellow at the Georgetown University Institute for Women, Peace and Security as well as a Senior Advisor and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. Gender policy and security expert Maryum Saifee moderated the event in her personal capacity.

Covering a range of regions and development issues, Koppell shared her perspectives on both diversity and inclusion efforts and the risks of not thinking about gender in a nuanced way. Koppell mentioned a range of goals, including integrating male stakeholders into international development gender projects to "avoid preaching to the choir," expanding monitoring and evaluation efforts to better consider qualitative variables, and bridging communication gaps between agencies to take a whole-of-government approach. Below are some takeaways from the event.

### Reflections from Carla Koppell

- Meaningfully including women in international development leads to better results. Including the voices of women in planning, implementation, and evaluation of both programs and strategy is crucial for a holistic approach to solving development and security problems.
- The absence of quantitative data—specifically data on intersectionality—is a problem for those active in international development. Although it is known that those most at risk of disenfranchisement are those with multiple marginalized identities, we lack data on how intersectionality really affects gender issues.
- Lack of data must not be used as an excuse to ignore facts that are known to be true. Crucial issues and problems cannot go unaddressed indefinitely while waiting for the perfect metric or the perfect study. For example, although comprehensive data on the increase in domestic violence during the pandemic are lacking, this increase is a problem that should still be addressed.
- Domestic social movements often offer insights that are relevant globally, such as the #MeToo movement, which helped spark women's rights campaigns in India and Colombia, among other countries. The US needs to lead from a position of humility; we still have work to do at home.
- Recognizing that the expectations around men can bring baggage and difficulty is important. For example, among male gang or militia members, respect and ambition in the community can be tied to a willingness to engage in violence. In other words, violence may sometimes connect to rigid expectations about what it means to be a man.

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