



**2017 Halifax International Security Forum
Plenary 4 Transcript
Making Peace with Women**

SPEAKERS:

Ms. Fauziya Ali, Founder and President, Women In International Security Kenya; and Chair, Sisters Without Borders

Pastor Esther Ibanga, Jos Christian Missions International and President and Founder, Women without Walls Initiative

Ms. Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Laureate and Founder, Women Journalists Without Chains

Ms. Nancy Lindborg, President, United States Institute of Peace

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senator from New Hampshire, United States Senate

General Jonathan Vance, Chief of the Defence Staff, Canadian Armed Forces

MODERATOR:

Ms. Nahlah Ayed, Foreign Correspondent, CBC News

Peter Van Praagh: Ladies and gentlemen, I want to introduce my good friend and Chairman of the Board of Halifax International Security Forum, Mr. Jonathan Weisstub. (applause)

Jonathan Weisstub: Thank you, Peter.

So Margaret Thatcher once said if you want something said, ask a man. If you want something done, ask a woman. Now there's no longer any doubt or debate about the central role of women in achieving and sustaining security. It was a focus of the very first speeches and panels this weekend. It is the explicit subject of the discussion that will begin here in a few moments.

In fact, if much of the discussion here in Halifax over the last several Novembers has been sobering and concerning, if many of the important trend lines and tendencies have been deeply troubling, the one undeniably positive trend has been the growing understanding of the essential and unique role of women as

initiators and guarantors of peace and security. Just as this awareness is maturing, so is the Halifax Forum.

With this year's forum, we conclude our first decade of life, so it is only fitting that we start our second decade, our second chapter by announcing a new beginning, the Halifax Peace with Women Fellowship. Beginning next year, up to six women from allied militaries will participate in annual three-week program in Ottawa, Waterloo, Silicon Valley and Washington, DC, focusing on the intersection of new technologies and global security, learning and sharing with each other and with colleagues from Canada and the United States, and these initial fellows will report back to us at next year's forum, our actual 10th anniversary here in Halifax.

So to borrow Margaret Thatcher's construct, while we continue to talk here in Halifax, we could at least do so secure in the knowledge that we are empowering more people, more women to actually get things done. And so with that, I'd like to turn it over to our moderator. Thank you. (applause)

Nahlah Ayed: Thank you very much. Good afternoon everybody. My name is Nahlah Ayed, I'll be your moderator tonight, this afternoon, I should say. It is nighttime in London where I'm living at the moment.

The powerful video that we just saw is an excellent way to start the discussion, what's been repeatedly called the necessity or the imperative of including women in all aspects of conflict resolution. In fact, the Defence Minister, Canada's Defence Minister yesterday called it the necessity of our time. Obviously, some of you know, it was a big topic in Vancouver as well, but as you also know, the action has lagged behind the rhetoric on this.

For one, it's been 17 years since the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and just to recap, I'm sure you know, the resolution had reaffirmed the importance of women's equal participation in the prevention, resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict construction.

And yet in 2015, we're told, at least according to one review, that only 4% of military peacekeepers and 10% of police deployed were women, that currently two out of 15 heads of peacekeeping operations are women, an even smaller percentage of peace negotiators are women. Now there are many strands to this issue, obviously. You know better than me whether it's peacekeeping, peacemaking or fighting extremist violence and we're not going to get to all of it in our hour. So it's important to get right to the panel and to get to your questions as well.

So first I'd like to introduce the panel very quickly. To my right, Senator Jeanne Shaheen who, as you well know, sponsored the US version of the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017. Next to the senator is Ms. Nancy Lindborg, President of the United States Institute of Peace. General Jonathan Vance, Chief of Defence Staff of the Canadian Armed Forces, and Ms. Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Laureate and founder of Women Journalists Without Chains. We have Ms. Ester Ibanga, Pastor of the Jos Christian Missions International and President and Founder of Women Without Walls Initiative. And last but not least, we have Ms. Fauziya Ali, who is the Founder and President of Women In International Security Kenya and Chair of Sisters Without Borders.

I think it's fair to say that we know that all the members of the panel want to see increased participation of women in conflict resolution. Though they may not agree in exactly how, and we'll get to that eventually. But first, I'd like to start with the what. Beyond the fact that it is 2017, it would be useful to hear from all of you just what your best argument or best empirical case, rooted in research or anecdote or however you prefer, your best argument for the inclusion of women in all aspects of conflict resolution.

And I'd love to start with Ms. Lindborg, if possible, because you wrote the brief on this issue. If you don't mind starting. Thank you.

Nancy Lindborg: Sure. Well, thank you. And you know, congratulations to Halifax Forum for putting this panel together and especially, I am really awed at what the, the people you've assembled here and what they've all done. And a special shout out to Senator Shaheen for what you did for Women, Peace and Security passage. (applause) That was truly landmark.

And I would say the best argument is that there's pretty persuasive evidence that has been collected over the past decade that when women are included in a peace process, that you have a much better chance of it being an enduring progress. And I would add that Jane Harman noted yesterday of the importance of a different ki-, in the world we live in today, building peace and sustaining peace is no longer a state to state, top-down, you know, diplomat or even just a military exercise, and you've got to be engaging with multi stakeholders from the ground up at the community level.

And if you're not engaging women in that process of either being involved with the peace process or negotiating peace at a ground level, you have a much lesser chance of succeeding. And so, as Minister Sajjan said yesterday, it's kind of a no brainer. And the question really is why aren't we moving more vigorously to make it so?

Nahlah Ayed: Thank you very much. If we could just go out at the end, to Ms. Fauziya Ali. Please.

Fauziya Ali: Thank you. So what is actually very interesting to me is listening to the last two days, some of the discussions that have been going on, especially coming from Honourable Harjit, who said it's about time to also include women in engaging in peace and security and of course, the Secretary General from NATO who too said that he's looking at ensuring there's more women in the military. Coming from different countries.

I think to me what's even more important is to look at the element of even higher up. You can have a lot of women in military, but when, within the cadre of military, they don't still respect that you show gender rights and including gender dynamics within pre-deployment as well as when they're engaging within communities. Then you can have as many women as possible, but it won't have the same effect. So it's very critical to even look at how the command structure looks at the issue of women and engaging women at all levels of the same.

And then what is also critical to me is also looking at the issue of terror and how we engage women in prevention. One of the key things that keeps coming up is we are looking at women only as mothers and as wives of jihadists. And to me, I sit back and I say that really takes away from our agencies. Not all women in prevention are the mothers or wives of jihadists. Women have different agencies and this is why we set up their organization called Sisters Without Borders, because we have different women who do different things towards prevention of violent extremism within communities.

Nahlah Ayed: Thank you very much. Senator, would you like to give your two minutes worth of the answer to that question?

Jeanne Shaheen: Well, I was really pleased that the United States is the first nation to actually put into law the Women, Peace and Security Act to require a plan for including women in conflict resolution. And I had a chance to meet with the Ambassador for UN Women recently, and she talked about the fact that there are 89 nations that are working on plans but how nice it is to actually have a model that has it in legislation.

And I think the argument is very clear from the data that Nancy has put together. But the Ambassador also told me a great story. She said, I asked her what, what country has done a good job or where have you seen this really make a difference? And she said well, in Colombia, as they were working on the agreement with the FARC, there were women at the table and she said every time we would reach, they would reach an impasse, the women would, on both sides, would signal each other and go to the ladies room. They would come up with strategies for how to get by the impasse. They would go back and they would be able to move the debate.

So I think that's a great example of what a difference it can make when women are at the table, and the data proves it.

Nahlah Ayed: Thank you Senator. Can we go to Ms. Karman.

Tawakkol Karman: Okay. Thank you so much. And first of all, I want to congratulate you, Senator, and General and specially the Canadian people on the Canadian act for supporting women in security and peace.

For me, how can we give woman her right in the security and peace, it's the matter of how can we support her on the, her struggle from the beginning. Her struggle on preventing the war, her struggle against the tyranny, her struggle against the corruption. So this is a very important beginning to prevent the war before talking about can we give her the chance to be at the table for the discussion.

So to prevent the war, it needs to stop dictatorship. It needs to stop corruption and it needs to be with the women on the field, that they are sacrificing for freedom just as dignity and democracy. And that is a very (inaudible) in much of the, you know, the treatment agreement that talk about women, peace and security. For me, it's to prevent the impunity. So it's prevent the injustice, is to follow those perpetrators of crimes against humanity, to put them in the jail. So not letting them, giving them the space to escape from, from justice.

For me, it's to guarantee to the, giving her or, I don't like to say giving her because it's her right, to be in the position in the, (inaudible) position making – sorry for my English – so to put her in the decision-making. She must be in the old field of the, of the political positions in the parties, in the Parliament, in the presidency, in the Cabinet. That is a very important way for, you know, supporting and for giving, for empowering woman, you know, and putting her in her real position.

Nahlah Ayed: Pastor Ibanga?

Esther Ibanga: Thank you. I'll probably speak from an experiential level, and that is talking about the city of Jos in Nigeria that's been involved in religious crisis for over two decades. It got to a point where the whole society were segregated along religious lines and there were no go zones and areas. Even the military and the police could not access certain communities. And the young people, the foot soldiers, the violent extremists were armed to the teeth and they were ready to face the soldiers and the police. It was women who had access to that community.

The young people were ready to fight and they were armed to fight and they were expecting to fight, and instead they saw women come in and sit down with

them and talk with them and ask what is your problem? I mean, yesterday the baroness talked about visiting the roots. I think the roots is the community level, the grassroots level and women are able to access it even when military force cannot, and it has happened in our case. And that was the beginning of collaboration with these young people and transforming them from violent extremists to terrorists to now become peace builders and co-liberals with us.

Nahlah Ayed: General Vance.

General Jonathan Vance: Thanks Nahlah. I think I'd like to start off by thanking the Halifax Security Forum, International Security Forum for the fellowship. Jonathan and Peter, I think that's a fantastic thing and I hope it grows and thrives over the years. And thank you for putting the Women, Peace and Security on the main stage as opposed to a breakfast session this year. It's good to have it on the main stage, very happy about that. And you know, you were very responsive to our request for that, so it's fantastic.

The fact that it's here, I think, and the fact that I'm even here, you know, I am passionate about this issue. I look around the room, there are women who I work with here who I respect deeply. You know, Jody Thomas, our Deputy Minister, Margaret Bloodworth is just basically everything, you know, my Judge Advocate General, Kerry Buck, Ambassador to NATO. So if doing this kind of work makes more of you happen in the future, then that's a great thing.

I think that the way I'll answer the question, Nahlah, is kind of structured, typical kind of military approach. I think the nature and purpose of a military has to be suitable to its age and its era. When military started, they brought the right tools to the conflicts and were able to get the jobs that their government gave them done, whether that was a, a king or a tribal leader or whatnot.

As conflict progressed, militaries progressed with it, and I think we're at an inflection point right now where the range of military skill sets largely contained and confined to intelligence and kinetics is not likely to be eclipsed, but it needs to be added to so that the toolbox and the relevance of the use of military force, which is always preoccupation for any Chief of Defence, the relevance and value added of a government using a military force has to change to address the conflicts of our age, which have a mix and a range of threat vectors.

And most of them right now are not kinetic. They don't require fire power because I think that we are tasked as militaries, to not fight. We're not meant to fight and be in perpetual battle. We're meant to drive a situation, help governments get to conflict resolution. And sometimes we forget that. Sometimes, I think we perfect the ability to keep fighting and fail to develop ourselves such that we arrive at conflict resolution. We try with the

comprehensive approach, 3D, whole of government, what have you, we try. But nonetheless, I think there's a long way to go.

The nature and scope of operations has changed and thus, who we are and what we do with who we are has to change with it. And that means that the value proposition from a straight, cold, calculating I want to win perspective, the value proposition of diversity, gender, broader skill sets has increased now and will increase exponentially into the future or we will fail in achieving conflict resolution conditions and we will therefore fail in the future to be seen as the profession of arms by our populations and by our government as useful. And relevance and usefulness is kind of what we're all about.

So I believe that right now, the predominant military focus in conflict resolution is dealing with symptoms and we need to change that dynamic to add to stabilizing conditions, reinforce and influence and increase stabilizing conditions and reduce destabilizing conditions. And as has been very well said already and has been talked about by our Minister and others, that the attention to the domain of women, peace and security or gender, both in terms of who you are by having sufficient women in your force, ideally a gender balance to be able to do the operations and the operations that you do must try to add to those stabilizing conditions, which means you're preventing the rape, gender harm and setting conditions for the empowerment and participation of women in conflict resolution.

And so I think, I'd take it from a fairly structured perspective.

Nahlah Ayed: Thank you very much all those comments. So fairly strong arguments obviously for increased participation, and Ms. Lindborg, you raised this so I'm going to ask you first. Is, with such strong arguments and in fact, I'll base it into a question, but there was an excellent question that was asked yesterday, is that if everyone's so convinced that it's a good idea to increase the number of women participating in conflict resolution, why isn't it, why isn't it happening at greater levels?

It is, and the question was is everybody really on side? Is everybody really on board?

Nancy Lindborg: So at US Institute of Peace, this has been a priority issue for us for over a decade because conflict obviously presents significant threats to women, but also opportunities to lead and to help reset the stage. And if you look at where we've come over this decade plus, I do think the evidence base has been increasingly laid down. There have been heartening gains with the Women, Peace and Security Act in a number of countries.

So where I see the critical barriers are that we still have deep structural barriers and to address them will require consistent determined leadership at the top, whether it's the Secretary General of the UN saying you will restructure that peace process so that there are women at the table and I think we've probably all experienced cases where the special envoy for the UN has not taken up that challenge and it's always, there's often an easy excuse well, the parties at the table wouldn't accept it.

And we see that they often don't end up with any kind of resolution anyway. So why not try a different way and it will have to be demanded and required and incentive structures put into place. And I think what General Vance just described is an interesting example and what, what just happened with the legislation of there being that kind of requirement.

The second big barrier that we're really looking deeply at now also is the long-term need for normative change. And there's been a lot of, I think, important work done on empowering women, on enabling women to be leaders in a different way. But what we're also seeing is the barrier of masculinity. And in a lot of cultures, what it means to be a man still very much includes dominance of women, violence against women, not allowing women to have a voice and a say, and we see that particularly in cultures that are stuck in cycles of violence, that that deeply reinforces valorisation of violence in a way that is detrimental both to prevention or resolution of violent conflict, but certainly also to women having a greater voice and greater leadership role.

Nahlah Ayed: Ms. Ibanga, you were just nodding at that. I just wonder what your thoughts are as to the question of why and how to fight that sort of, the idea of this, of what Ms. Lindborg mentioned of masculinization?

Esther Ibanga: Well, I can readily think of two reasons. In Africa especially, the culture and tradition says a woman should be seen and not heard. So you will have a huge obstacle to overcome and that mindset represents itself not just in the religious circle but even in governments as well. So it is difficult to overcome that. We're working on it, but you know, the progress is slow, but at least we're saying no, she needs to be heard as well because she has a voice that can be impactful.

Secondly, I think also that they, the wheel of governance is pretty slow, you know, so not working in government, I mean, I can stay from the outside and look at it and say it takes forever to first of all, adopt policies, not to talk about implementing them. So these are, for me, some of the reasons why we're not seeing it in spite of the fact that Nigeria's a member state of the UN endorsed, the UN Resolution 1325. We don't see them implementing it. So these are some of the issues.

Nahlah Ayed: Tawakkol.

Tawakkol Karman: I want to say that the most important reason that we have a lot of agreements, a lot of, you know, yes, a lot of agreements, special in the UN. And the problem is with the implementation. We have 1325 resolution and if we go really to the implementation, I can say that there's nothing. It's just very small improvement. And why does it happen? Because there is no real follow-up from the UN. The UN doesn't have the mechanisms to follow what they put with all their agreements.

They don't have, they just throw, wrote that great agreement and tell the governments to implement it. And, and who's the government that they made it? Who's this government and most of them, that they are, have, they have really problem with women. And I want also to say about youth. They are (inaudible) so they trust them, go and implement it and they didn't do it. And this is number one.

And also, even with the International decision-making, we have really lack of the implementation. Look, look, go to the UN, see just the pictures of all the Secretary General. Is there, since it, it has started and to know there not one woman led this very important international institution. Why this is, is there in all the world, there's not one woman deserved (laughter) to lead the UN? (applause) And on, and in all our history. So this is very important. So it's, and also, I really, I came from the people, from the community, I came from a very conservative country, from a country that before I trust myself and go to the street, lead the street, convince them that I am here, they've been very welcomed. So I believe that people around the world, if they see a good woman lead them, they will follow her.

Nahlah Ayed: Can you dispel that myth out there that, that in traditional or societies, as you mentioned like that, that do not want to get involved? Can you just, can you make a statement to the effect of that's not true?

Tawakkol Karman: And I don't want that, to say that that is not true totally. But also there is a very important solution. First, the constitution and laws should include, should include very clear articles for this right. At least, 30% for women as, as a constitutional right as law, a law right for, with all the institutions, with the (inaudible) man, with the government, with the military, with everything. That must be in the constitution.

Second also, it's very important would be laws like the election laws, that the, with the candidate of the, the candidate of election, they shouldn't, it must be include 30% (sic) so that, that will be, that will be a very guarantee (sic) for woman to be there, to give her this chance. Talking about tradition, customs, why she (inaudible), she isn't protected by laws and constitution, it's something,

you know, doesn't give any sense. (sic) That is very important laws and constitutions.

Nahlah Ayed: Senator, you wanted to get in there.

Jeanne Shaheen: Well, I did. First of all, I think your point about we need people in decision-making, with decision-making authority, and we need to be able to see women in those positions. It's very important.

You know, when I was coming of age, the only two women world leaders were Indira Gandhi and Golda Meir. And you know, now we have a few more, but not that many. And that continues to be a challenge. I think the point that was made yesterday by the Secretary General and by Defence Minister Sajjan was very important in talking about getting women in positions in the military for peacekeeping, for example. If UN has more women in their peacekeeping troops, then it will cut down on sexual assault, on rape, on the other problems that they have when UN peacekeepers go into areas.

But that also provides a powerful example, not just for the women, but for the men. Women's ability to take on those jobs and to be equal, and we've got to continue to reinforce that everywhere. We need to do it in the US, we need to do it in Nigeria, we need to do it in Yemen, we need to do it everywhere.

Nahlah Ayed: And you raise an important issue, which is that the problem, the failure is often upstream in incorporating women, obviously as Ms. Karman said, in the areas of politics and I just wonder practically, how you do that? I mean, it's a big, it's a really big job, but it sort of comes before everything else.

Jeanne Shaheen: Well, one of the ways is through laws, you know, where we can legislate. We can legislate requirements that women equal participation in terms of elections. It's easier in a parliamentary system than it is in the US system where it's hard to legislate parties, that you have to actually, as part of the primary, select a woman. But making sure that there are requirements to do that.

And you know, it's a cultural change too. And the only way we're going to change culture is by making sure that we have women in positions. You know, I'm convinced that one of the reasons we did not elect a woman president in the United States in the last election had to do with gender. And we've got to take that on. You know, people don't want to talk about it. Oh, well don't raise that issue. That, that might upset somebody. Well, we need to raise it. We need to talk about it because that's the only way we're going to change it.

Nahlah Ayed: You wanted to get in there.

Nancy Lindborg: Well, just two points on how can we address that? First is we need to create fuller pipelines because often, what you'll see is a leader will come in with a commitment, appoint women at the highest levels. We saw this with the last Secretary General. But there's no pipeline so that there's not an ability of women to rise up through the system and then you've got leaders ready to take it on.

And a second point is and this really builds on something that Tawakkol said early on, you know, look at the really interesting example of Tunisia and if you talk to everyone from the president to the four Nobel Prize winners, of the quartet, they will say that the reason that Tunisia has not collapsed into the kind of chaos post-Arab Spring, that the rest of the region has is because there was a strategy that started 40 years ago of investing in women's education. And so it's, it's both the long-term prevention of conflict, but it's also part of creating a pipeline of women who can move into these, into these positions.

Nahlah Ayed: Ms. Ali, in your experience, what would be the answer?

Fauziya Ali: I think part of the answer will be to also include budgets. It's always good to talk about we are going to create a legislation, we are going to put in place policies, we will have the quota system in place. But when there's no budget that backs that up, then it's doomed for failure. We see this a lot with the 1325. In Africa, we have, like, almost 20 countries that have (inaudible) to 1325. But there is no budget that goes towards implementation of 1325. So it's almost like we're still talking about engaging women, but we're not really having the action that pushes it farther and actually has women being engaged.

And then secondly, it's to look at it from even the institutions that are at the community level. I think for a long time, we look at institutions at a much higher level and say we need to ensure women are represented in much higher institutions. The community institutions have a lacking of number of women in them. For instance, if we look at faith based institutions, you do not find numbers when it comes to women. And this actually you find affects how decision-making is done at the community level. And in particular when you look at where we have marginalized settings, these are usually at the periphery where you don't necessarily have central authorities.

These informal community institutions play a critical role. So how do we ensure women are also included within those community institutions so that they can be able to not only be custodians of culture, but also to push forward policies that can move from bottom up and move much higher in, in terms of being legislated much higher.

Nahlah Ayed: General Vance, in the military context, perhaps even tougher because of it seen as a perhaps unfriendly, maybe even unsafe place for women at times.

General Jonathan Vance: Certainly has in the past. I would say even the opening video proved that that's not entirely the case at all. I think we're, we are now as a function of where we've been, I think there's, we have to change and where we've been is the militaries have been employed to deal with the symptoms of conflict. At least recently. We are for conflict, not for conflict resolution. And in that dynamic, we will never get ahead of the prevention curve. And I would say one of the main reasons why we, we tend to get stuck into a, you know, typecast as we're the last resort, we've let a whole lot of political runway run past us and we get used when it gets so urgent, you've got no other choice but to reduce danger and harm.

So you do not get in front of what my colleague said here, of the, the tragedies. We're post-tragedy people. And therefore, you lose all of the opportunity to prevent. Because of that dynamic, we're built a certain way. We're built to be only used when the bullets are flying and everything else is secondary. And I would say that as opposed to making it secondary, I think we need to increase the political decision-making space that says maybe we start to employ the instruments of power, including military, in conflict, genuine conflict prevention.

And I dare say anyone of us could look around the world today and say where we ought to be, but because it's not on TV, because it's not a major issue, because we're not being, sort of, forced at it or there's not a resolution or a coalition hasn't come together, we're not dealing with it. Cause it's expensive and you don't know if you're going to win.

But right now, because, you know, it's not as well defined, right now I'd suggest that although we spend a lot of money dealing with danger, we put a lot of troops in danger or dealing with danger, we also know that if you treat symptoms, conflicts become enduring or frozen, intractable. The, all of the harm to a population, the cycles of violence will not break out of where it's been kind of cast into doubt the value proposition of engagement with any instrument of power. And so I think part of the why is how we have and continue to contemplate the use of those instruments, including the military as a, you know, just for the symptoms.

Nahlah Ayed: I want to bring in the audience because we're quickly running out of time. So maybe if we can take a couple of questions and we'll continue. There's so many strands here. Maybe we'll start over here on the right, please.

Question: Hi. Thank you. Tzipi Livni, former Foreign Minister, Vice-Prime Minister of the state of Israel, but in this room, Chief Negotiator for Peace

between Israel and the Palestinians. And I would like to thank you for what you said, and especially for the beginning of, of this conference, talking about women in security and not only women negotiating peace, and this is something that is really important.

And I would like to touch something that is not on the table and this is the world of images and perception that we are living in. And Senator Shaheen, you referred to wonderful stories about Colombia and women negotiating peace. But I would like to have a combination between this and what Senator Harman (ph) said yesterday about, about a map, because in the end, this piece was rejected in the referendum by the people.

And therefore, we need to work to have a better understanding by the people that peace is important for security because the images that peace is, you know, for the weak ones, you give, you're not getting, you appease the other and unfortunately, we are not, but this is also the image of women. And therefore, in order to change these, the entire session is not just about empowering women, it's about empowering women as a mean to achieve peace. And therefore I believe that the more we have women in security and the more we have men, especially Generals, speaking about peace as part of global security, this is something that, this could, only this combination can really bring peace in other parts on, of the world, including hopefully the Middle East and ours.

And just finishing with what you said about voting for women to the highest position, basically the question is the answer for the phone call at 3:00 a.m. and it's not a phone call about peace. Usually it's a phone call about security, about military operation and therefore it is very important, and understanding that women can and should do both. And peace is also a matter of strength and security and not just appeasing the other.

Thank you.

Nahlah Ayed: Senator, would you like to say something?

Jeanne Shaheen: I agree. (laughter) You know, you're talking about grassroots. One of the responses in the US that's gotten a lot of attention to our elections was the women's march that occurred, that has produced literally thousands of women who have gotten involved in the political process. And I do think the grassroots are very important, and that's what's going to get us to all of those women that we need in positions of decision-making authority.

Nahlah Ayed: Just on that note, Pastor, you wanted to —

Esther Ibanga: Yes.

Nahlah Ayed: — to talk about women and marches.

Esther Ibanga: I just want to add, yes, immediately the Senator mentioned that, marches are very important and very impactful, especially when taken by women. 2010, we had a crisis, a religious crisis, 530 women were killed in a community predominantly Christians. The Christian women went out and had a march of protest. And then a week after, the Muslim women also their own march. They said their own people were killed as well, and which was true. So we had a marching competition between the Christians and the Muslims. (laughter) And then we realized it wasn't taking us anywhere. So we came together and instead of having Christian and Muslim marches, we had one interfaith march. And believe me, it was more impactful than anything we'd ever done because through that march, we're able to, you know, bring the attention of the whole nation to the issues at stake. And not only that, because we're now working together. It gave us access and entry points into communities that before then, we didn't have access to. So marches are good.

Nahlah Ayed: Just, there's a lot of interest in this one, so I'll go to Ms. Ali and then Ms. Karman before we go to the next question. Just quick comments on, on that. Go ahead.

Fauziya Ali: I think what she raised is really important, and it brings the question of which women? We keep saying we need to have women in peace and security, but which women do we really need to have at the table? One example comes into mind, and this is the issue of South Sudan, where we had one woman who was part of the negotiation, but she was put into that table because she knew a member of, some of the high elites that were also brokering peace.

And after a while, the peace did not hold because that one woman was not necessarily the right woman to have on the table. And a good example is when you look at the case of Kenya, this is immediately after the Garissa attacks. We had a number of women coming from the community in Garissa who had children who were coming from that university. We brought them together, together with women leaders, the wives of Senators, the Senators themselves who are female, and asked them to discuss why we should reopen the university. Because if it kept being closed for a long time, it becomes a driver of why young people join extremist groups, the lack of education.

So having the right women at the table and having the right women discussing the right issue at that time is critical. It's not just having women at the table.

Nahlah Ayed: Ms. Karman.

Tawakkol Karman: I like this.

Nahlah Ayed: That's the point you wanted to cover?

Tawakkol Karman: No. No.

Nahlah Ayed: Okay, go ahead.

Tawakkol Karman: (inaudible) I like this point because unfortunately, when they want the parties, and also as well as they (inaudible). When they want, in most of the cases, when they want to involve women in the peace talk, they bring women as a décor. So this is a very, you know, dangerous (inaudible). We want women to be there to be very influent and to have really decision on making peace. This is number one.

And talking about march, I came from (inaudible) and I came from the march movement that, the movement, peaceful revolution that leaded by women in Arab countries. And women, in all our (inaudible) and allow me to talk about Yemen, because I don't want to be very, you know, (inaudible) and speaking about Yemen. We as women led the peaceful revolution 100% peaceful revolution that forced the dictator, Ali Saleh, to leave. While we are an (inaudible) society, has more than 70 million piece of weapons. We as women convinced Yemeni people to leave that and to face all the violence with flowers.

And with that peaceful method, we kicked the dictator out of authority. And we as women in the transitional period, we participated in the national dialogue and drew the best outcomes inside it. We wrote the draft of constitution and inside the draft of constitution also, we wrote that the guarantee all the women's right, kids' rights and also democracy rule of law, good governance, etc.

After that, the coup happened. Look, we made a lot of achievements as a woman inside the revolution and also in the transitional period. After that, the coup happened. The coup that is, that was led by the ousted president Ali Saleh, militia (inaudible) and Iran from one side, they backed them and after that, the Arab coalition, led by Saudi and Emirate. Both of them now, they are fighting Yemen. They are collapsing Yemen and they are collapsing our struggle as women.

Nahlah Ayed: So what is the role of women now, given this conflict and given the fact that they bear the brunt with children, of any conflict, including this one?

Tawakkol Karman: After women was leader in the peaceful revolution in the transitional period, now woman is a victim. Now woman is suffering from famine, is suffering from war, is suffering from coup, is suffering from losing most of the, from, from all the, from lack of education, lack of electricity, etc.,

etc. And I am here with the very important people here and with mine on stage. And I'm calling you, General, I'm calling you Senator and calling all of you. If you really want to support women in security and peace, please be in the right way, which is support those women who are fighting tyranny. Support the women who are fighting military coup. Support those women who are fighting war.

I'm calling you, General and Senator, we as women really suffer in Yemen. What is your strong position against Saudi and Emirate (inaudible) to my country, Yemen. That is my struggle as Tawakkol Karman. I win Nobel Peace Prize because I was with those people who are dreaming for freedom and justice. Telling me just to go to the, to negotiate for peace talk, to don't tell the Saudi and Emirate to stop their bombing Yemen. Don't do, why don't you do a lot of things against Iran interfering in my country?

Nahlah Ayed: So just to bring in the others to this —

Tawakkol Karman: I want – please, I, because —

Nahlah Ayed: — one last, one final point.

Tawakkol Karman: for peace. I will not talk about my vision as a woman, my vision as a woman.

Nahlah Ayed: And then we'll take some questions.

Tawakkol Karman: For peace, peace talk.

Nahlah Ayed: Please.

Tawakkol Karman: You want to know —

Nahlah Ayed: Please.

Tawakkol Karman: Okay. My, as an Nobel Prize laureate, as a woman willing to (inaudible) revolution, I'm calling for sustainable peace in Yemen. How the sustainable peace in Yemen will happen.

First, the ceasefire should be started now. Then, in (inaudible), the militia of (inaudible) and other militias has to hand over their weapons to the state. And Saudi and Emirates should leave all the territory that they (inaudible). I want president —

Nahlah Ayed: (inaudible) we've got —

Tawakkol Karman:— should return to Yemen to lead Yemen.

Nahlah Ayed: But on the subject at hand, just very quickly, how do you support women in this process? How do you make sure that women have a voice in this process? Just, just one line.

Tawakkol Karman: (inaudible) I want peace. This is the voice of women. So how to support women (laughter) to talk about women, I'm talking about the country.

Nahlah Ayed: Please.

Tawakkol Karman: I'm talking about the state.

Nahlah Ayed: (inaudible)

Tawakkol Karman: I'm talking regaining our state. I'm talking about our president now, he is under house arrest in Riyadh.

Nahlah Ayed: Okay.

Tawakkol Karman: Our president should return to Yemen to the free land to lead our country. The militias have to hand over their weapons to the state, has to transfer themselves to be political party.

Nahlah Ayed: Okay. I just want to bring in —

Tawakkol Karman: (inaudible) home, you know. (inaudible)

Nahlah Ayed: — other (inaudible).
Ms. Lindborg, please. Thank you very much.

Nancy Lindborg: I think there's, I think there's two specific ideas to pull from this. And I think we all share your pain at what's going on in Yemen right now. But this is a prime example of where there could be, from all of the donor nations, a demand that women are at the peace table because they're not right now on any of these peace discussions. And what you just heard is an example of what happened in Colombia and that is because women were at the table and because there were a lot of women in the community level who were engaged in the process, they brought these concerns to the table. They brought the concerns of the victims, they brought the concerns of the displaced and of the women. And it changed the nature of what was at stake in the peace negotiations.

Nahlah Ayed: There's a question here in the green. Please.

Question: Thank you. Bonnie Butlin from the Security Partners Forum, based in Ottawa, but operating internationally. I also am the international coordinator of one of our subnetworks, the international network works with about 700 professional security organizations globally. One of the subnetworks is the Women in Security and Resilience Alliance.

We have been able to, and very fortunate to work with such talented women in security around the world, France, Australia now has a women in security group. Norway has been fantastic. And so many others, 35 women's groups in security. And it's, it's been a fascinating journey because it deals with capacity building, it deals with different kinds of leadership, women's leadership. That doesn't necessarily look like male leadership in the traditional sense. And even at the centre, we've had some wonderful participation in, in New Hampshire and Vermont as well, and fantastic work down there with women.

But very pleased to see these organizations internationally supporting each other and helping to build capacity among themselves. We've seen women's groups around the world sharing blueprints for how to get women in defence, law enforcement, forensics, privacy. So many different areas, cyber. We also have the Canadian Cyber Security Alliance which works with over 100 professional cyber security organizations or with organizations that have a stake in cyber security.

And all of these things that you've mentioned on the panel bring in different kinds of leadership, bringing in that pipeline of women to work on cyber security issues moving forward has been a real honour and I just got back from Australia where the Australian Women in Security Network has launched and taken off like wildfire. But it's gone well beyond the bathroom diplomacy that was mentioned here. But a very different style of networking that's been very effective. Thank you.

Oh, and General Vance, your efforts on working for women's capacity and place in the military is much appreciated and has not gone unnoticed.

Nahlah Ayed: Thank you very much. We only literally have three and a half minutes. We'd like to get to some more questions. Sir, if you don't mind, right in the front here.

Question: Thank you. I'm Lincoln Bloomfield from Washington, the Chairman Emeritus of the Simpson Centre. First of all, I applaud the Halifax Forum for having this panel as a main panel. I'd like to argue from a strategic perspective that this may be the most important panel for the work of the Halifax Security Forum. And I say that as someone who's looked ahead several decades of this

century from a strategic perspective. What do we see? We see the erosion of democracy. It's sort of what brings all of us here now.

If you look at the, the main autocratic states in the world that are successfully organizing around one party interminable rule where they don't put themselves up for re-election, Russia, China, Syria, North Korea, Iran. These are highly repressive states. How many women have power in any of those states? The answer is none. They don't control any resources, they don't control security, they don't control transport, media, all of these are in the hands of men.

So I'm here to argue that if the United States and likeminded countries care about the trajectory of national security in this century, perhaps the metric of democracy is the role of women and I would sort of take a strategic view that access to power at all levels, financial power, political power, not necessarily playing identical roles because as Margaret Thatcher pointed out, men and women are different, they bring different sensibilities to the table.

But if we can aim for a gender neutral disposition of power in the west, I believe we need to do that in order to counter autocracy in the 21st century. Thank you.

(applause)

Nahlah Ayed: Is there another question, or a question back there? Please.

Question: Hi. Julie (inaudible), with The Atlantic. Just to piggyback on that question, I feel like we're not really talking about the elephant in the room, which is, you know, why, you know, why are we even having this panel and we're not having a panel on men making peace. We're not talking about the role of men creating messes, that then we're talking about women cleaning up. Like, you alluded to this briefly about women not having the power, the guns, the money, the media resources in their hands and it's, and you know, how we're going to maybe deign to give some of it to the women.

I think we're not discussing that kind of elephant in the room. So I'd love to hear a little bit about that.

Nahlah Ayed: Well, we have exactly a minute to address that. So why don't we, who would like to, would you –

Nancy Lindborg: Well, I'll just, to that issue, I briefly touched on it and I do think that the whole, the whole question of what is masculinity is an important inquiry in the ways in which cultural norms push men to – and we see this again and again in countries that are stuck in these spin cycles of violence in particular, but elsewhere as well, that, that it enshrines notions of valorisation of violence, that

it enshrines this, some of the ideas that include making messes and dominating women.

And that, that's, so this conversation needs to include that and it needs to include men. So thank you for being on this panel, you know —

Unidentified Female: Yes. Yes. (applause)

Nancy Lindborg: — who embrace a more inclusive approach.

Nahlah Ayed: And thank all of you for being on this panel and I'm sorry, it's just not nearly enough time to cover everything we needed to get to. But thank you very much and thank you to those of you who made comments and who did ask questions. Thank you very much.

(applause)