

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Online Event

**“A Conversation with Dr. Stacey Dixon, Principal Deputy  
Director of National Intelligence”**

DATE

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FEATURING

**Stacey Dixon**

*Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence*

**Ellen E. McCarthy**

*Former Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research*

**Candida Wolff**

*Executive Vice President and Head of Global Government Affairs, Citi*

CSIS EXPERTS

**Suzanne Spaulding**

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Suzanne  
Spaulding:

Welcome to CSIS and Smart Women, Smart Power. We're so excited today. We've got a terrific program with the principal deputy director of national intelligence, Dr. Stacey Dixon. She will have a chat with our friend, colleague and co-founder of Smart Women, Smart Power, Nina Easton. It's great to have Nina back here, but Nina did lure away our beloved Beverly Kirk who had, for a long time, led Smart Women, Smart Power, to start an exciting new project that we hope to hear more about when we have Beverly back on the program.

But in the interim, I have had the great honor and privilege of being the interim director of Smart Women, Smart Power. I'm Suzanne Spaulding and I lead the Defending Democratic Institutions Project here at CSIS in the international security program. But I am so pleased to announce today that we now have a new permanent director for Smart Women, Smart Power that has been selected, Dr. Kathleen McInnis. And it's kind of a homecoming here for Kathleen because she used to be at CSIS as a coordinator for the project on nuclear issues. She then went on to do amazing things at the Pentagon, and in the U.K. Parliament, and at think tanks, and most recently at the Congressional Research Service. And we are pleased that Kathleen could join us today just to take a couple minutes before we start our formal program to introduce herself.

So, Kathleen, I know you're going to take this program to amazing places. Over to you.

Kathleen  
McInnis:

Thank you so much, Suzanne. I can't tell you how honored I am that CSIS has chosen me to lead the Smart Women, Smart Power initiative at this critical moment in U.S. national security. I've long been convinced that the most pressing issue facing the U.S. national security and foreign policy community is retention and retaining of the national security workforce. It's an absolutely pressing issue because people are policy, after all. If we are to think through the myriad strategic challenges before us, we need to have the best people developing the best policy options regardless of their economic background, gender, ethnicity, or disability.

Through its pathbreaking work in highlighting the accomplishments of leading women, the Smart Women, Smart Power Initiative has played a critical role in helping build that strategic culture we need to see. Thank you so much to Citi for having the vision to partner with CSIS to create this critically important platform.

National security is a team sport. I am delighted to be joining this amazing team and am looking forward to continuing this important work.

And now I'm going to pass it over to Candi Wolff, who is the head of Global Government Affairs at Citi.

Candida Wolff: Great. Thanks, Kathleen. And let me echo Citi's welcome, our welcome, to you here in this new role. We're really excited to work with you and talk through the next adventure. This is our seventh year in supporting Smart Women, Smart Power, and looking forward to the evolution of this program with your leadership. So thank you.

And thank you all for joining us today from around the world. Here in Washington, we're thankful that spring has finally sprung. And I'm hopeful that we have put away our coats, although allergies are beginning to affect many of us.

The last event we had here in March, I took a moment to acknowledge the horrifying situation in Ukraine. And unfortunately, a month later, I want to continue to do the same, as the violence continues. At Citi, we have employees in Ukraine. And we want to, you know, think of them, their families, and obviously all of the Ukrainians who are impacted and in harm's way.

Citi, as I said, has been supporting this program for the past seven years. And it brings together women leaders in foreign policy and national security and in the business community to convene a dialogue on the most pressing issues. We proudly call ourselves the most global bank. We're present in 96 countries and do business in many more. Our global footprint gives us a front-row view on the – (audio break) – opportunities that exist in various political – (audio break) – the world.

So it is with pleasure today that we are lucky to have such a pioneer in the intelligence community in Dr. Stacey Dixon in joining us for this program. She has a fascinating career. And we look forward to a conversation with her on the trends that she's seeing, as well as her career as the Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence.

I can't wait to hear the conversation, so I am going to turn it over to Nina to get us started. Thank you all.

Nina Easton: Great. And thank you again to Citi for being with us and by our side since the inception of Smart Women, Smart Power. And Kathleen, a big welcome to you. We're so excited to have you.

And Dr. Dixon, what an honor to have you here. Thank you for joining us.

Stacey Dixon: Thank you, Nina. I'm happy to be here.

Ms. Easton: Great. Let's just start with the fact that you have had this really two-decade-plus tour of the upper reaches of the intelligence community – the CIA, the U.S. House, the National Geospatial Agency, if I got that right – the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency – and, of course, now as Deputy Director of National Intelligence.

What would you say is the biggest evolution of intelligence gathering during that period? And what is the greatest challenge to emerge?

Dr. Dixon: That's a great question. If you think about what caused the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to be created, think back to 9/11 and the fact that there was information out there in the community that wasn't being integrated properly. That was the impetus for the creation. So we recognized 20 years since 9/11 back in September. Now we're talking about 17 years of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence in just a few days.

What's changed is the amount of integration that we've seen, that we've been able to continue to push on agencies to work together and really to leverage the – not only the strength of each agency, but also the authorities of each agency, to be able to do more for our customers, to be able to provide that intelligence insight. I've seen that grow over the years.

The other thing that's changed really is the threats that are out there. And we have responded to those threats. We've spent a lot of time focusing on terrorism and countering terrorism; now global competition, strategic competition. It's caused us to look at how we're structured, how we are interacting with each other in trying to figure out how do we best position ourselves for these other threats that are coming.

And I know we'll talk more about that one going forward, but really coming from a place where the ODNI wasn't – didn't exist, to a place now, 17 years in, where our place in the community in terms of being able to help with that integration and help standardize some of the things that are happening with the community, whether on the personnel side, whether on standards for analysis, whether on joint-duty rotations, all of these things are things that have been brought in since then that have really made a difference in contributing to us being able to do more and provide better insight to our customers.

Ms. Easton: And of course there's been the rise of disinformation –

Dr. Dixon: Yes.

Ms. Easton: – which is on everyone's minds, especially now. It was interesting that you spoke to the South by Southwest festival.

Dr. Dixon: I did.

Ms. Easton: That in itself is interesting. Quite a public role to be speaking at. And you talked about how U.S. spies can help frame the truth. Talk about that.

Dr. Dixon: Yes. Yes. We did a couple things. One, we tried to frame what disinformation is, because I think there's still a lack of awareness of the fact that there's a lot of information out there that is not true and that is basically also trying to shape the way people think about various things based on what the information is; trying to highlight the fact that we spread information all the time and a lot of that information is not truthful information, so providing people tools and ways to think about and really to be able to assess whether the information that's coming to them is fact or fiction, being able to look at the sourcing of it, to make sure that it's actually coming from a reputable source. We talked a little bit about that and how you can look at how we pursue analysis within the community with very structured techniques, always questioning our hypotheses, always questioning and making sure that we're looking and taking into consideration our biases as we look at information, trying to remove that from the process. If more people thought about the things coming through their social media feeds, the things that they're hearing about and passed from, you know, friend to friend or from coworker to coworker – thought about it from that perspective, I think the impact of the disinformation would decrease, and that was really the awareness we were trying to reach.

Ms. Easton: And that's a great bridge to what's top of mind right now, of course, is the invasion of Ukraine. Early on the administration, obviously with the support of the intel community, decided to declassify information almost, it seemed like, to get ahead of the curve on real information versus disinformation. But walk us through that decision.

Dr. Dixon: Absolutely. It started, really, with what we were seeing in the buildup around Ukraine, not only leveraging the sources that we have internally within the community but really leveraging even just commercial imagery that's out there. You can actually see, if you were watching, that there were numbers of troops that were building up, and while Russia was stating that it was for an exercise, it was an exercise on the scale of something we had never seen before. So we thought that we wanted to make sure that others were also watching what was happening. Our intelligence was also suggesting that there was an invasion that was being considered and, with that, that there would be statements coming out of Russia that would seek to justify why an invasion needed to happen, whether it was some of the things that they were saying about the individuals, the Russian-speaking individuals that they were going to say were being not treated the same way, whether it was them claiming that Ukraine did something that would then justify a Russian invasion.

We wanted to make sure that policymakers were aware of that, making sure that our allies and friends in the international community were aware of it. Policymakers came back and said, well, we think this is more global than that; we think we want to make sure that the American public and the people out there are also aware, so we found ways to actually declassify the information using the processes that we already had within the community, on a scale, perhaps, expanded because of the amount of things that they wanted declassified. But we decided that we could go through and there were things that we could declassify while still protecting our sources and methods, so not jeopardizing how we've collected or where the information was coming from, and policymakers decided that that was information to be shared with the American public, and so that's sort of been a partnership within the entire community to figure out what could actually go and be declassified to be shared.

Ms. Easton: But Russia still invaded.

Dr. Dixon: They did. They did. There was a window of hope where it was, maybe this will keep them from invading, and it did not. What it did do, though, was alert the world of what was happening, pointed people so that they were now focused on it, and now, if disinformation came out that was going to be used as a justification for the invasion, people would be able to think twice about whether or not that was actually true, in a way that, had we not publicized it beforehand, had we not shared it beforehand, it's not clear whether people would have been as aware that that could have been disinformation.

Ms. Easton: That was pretty unprecedented, right? I mean, and there were risks involved. Avril Haines, the director of national intelligence, was asked about this and she said, you know, in terms of burning sources, she said, we're cautious but we continue to look to see whether or not we made the right calculation in doing that because it's a long-term thing to see whether or not you actually burn your sources and methods through disclosures. So can you take us into the – inside the debate about that?

Dr. Dixon: Absolutely. And of course, there are experts out here who it is their – literally their job to go through and figure out how to declassify things. The experts at the ODNI work with experts within the other intelligence agencies who actually were the ones who collected the information to figure out: How sensitive is it? Are there other sources that could also have provided the same information as opposed to some of their more sensitive sources? Those are the types of things that they ask. Are these things where, if we put the information out in public, we would reveal how we had collected it? In which case that would be burning your source and that would be something that you would really – you would – you would not want to do that very often, if

ever. So usually you're looking at whether or not there's other information out there, whether it's something that's in public – in the public sphere or whether it's something that you can point to another type of source to – as to have collected the information.

That, then, goes through the process – a very rigorous process – to make sure that we're not revealing anything. And then that would go and provide a series of talking points and details that were okayed by not only the collectors of the information, but the larger intelligence enterprise as well, to be able to declassify. So rigorous process.

Ms. Easton: And this – and this proceeded over the course of a pretty condensed timeframe. I mean, what – tell –

Dr. Dixon: It happens very, very quickly, yes. It can happen very, very quickly.

Ms. Easton: And it did, it sounds like. And you know, and speaking of collecting information, I mean, one of the most stunning aspects of the Russian invasion is how much publicly available information was out there –

Dr. Dixon: That's true.

Ms. Easton: – whether you're talking about satellite imagery or commercial signals intelligence or information on social media. How do you describe now this use of open-source information?

Dr. Dixon: It's interesting. Within the community, I think, we have been thinking about open-source information and how it actually fits into the intelligence enterprise for quite a while. There's a lot of really useful information out there, and so figuring out how do we legally – with keeping in mind privacy and civil liberties, how do we bring in the information that's useful and see how it can complement the classified information we have in terms of being able to provide insights to our customers. So it's something that we've been thinking about for a while.

I think the awareness right now is how much is available for the public to see, whether it is some of the companies putting imagery out on their websites for all to take a look at or highlighting it. And they're very vocal, as well, talking with the media about what you can see from their – the information they've collected. It puts us into a different place where we are not the sole ones to have access to that information. And there's a lot of other people now looking at what's happening around the world, which I think is good.

Ms. Easton: And interpreting it, as you – as you said. That's –

Dr. Dixon: And interpreting it.

Ms. Easton: Doesn't that raise also kind of an interesting new twist for you?

Dr. Dixon: I think – well, it does. I know the rigor with which our analysts interpret information. I don't know the rigor with which all other analysts interpret information. So the challenge will be seeing – there are things that I know that our analysts – if you can't – if you can't say that it's come from what we can see or what we can hear, they will stop short of actually making a statement about the information. I have seen sometimes others with perhaps less rigor in their analysis make statements and claims that you really can't tell from that information itself. It may be a logical next step, but our intelligence is based on what we actually see or hear or – what we see or hear, what we actually – or measure. If you can't see it, you can't hear it, and you can't measure it, we can suggest what we're seeing that may be the next case, but we would not take the next steps to say that this is absolutely going to be what's going to happen next.

So how we do things and how others do things is something that we will watch over time. I think – you know, I think other companies who are doing analysis are thinking about that, though, as they go forward, especially as they go back and they check and see whether they were right or wrong about sort of the forecast that they presented.

Ms. Easton: And it's interesting, too, I mean, you, I don't know, revealed/talked about in a speech very recently that you approached commercial enterprises about getting, for example, satellite imagery faster. Talk about that.

Dr. Dixon: Again, people will believe what they can see for themselves. And you know, there is information that we have in the community, some of which is derived from these commercial sources. We did ask them whether they would – you know, whether we could use – because we have contracts that sort of allow us to use the information for certain purposes – asked them whether we could actually use that not only to share with partners, but increasingly you also see them now on their own going out and sharing more information with the public. Because seeing actually allows individuals to make their own judgments about it, which is – you know, we've talked about that a little bit.

It's a great – I would say it's a partnership on the one hand, but it's also just the companies independently wanting to be able to share more of what's happening in the world. And frankly, I think it's a great service that they're providing, putting the information out there. I'm glad we were able to sort of spur it. But now, you know, they're actually leading in many ways in putting information out for others to see.

Ms. Easton: So you're saying a lot – commercial enterprises are leading a lot of the information – intel getting out? Yeah.

Dr. Dixon: I think – in terms of being able to share more with the public, there's things that we would have to declassify if we were to use our classified sources. It's easier for them because their sources aren't classified, so they're able to actually just go forward. And they're putting things out there that we aren't asking them to put out, but that's sort of what I was meaning.

Ms. Easton: And one of the things that's been kind of talked about inside the intel community is why you didn't predict the difficulties the Russian military would have. Some people might also say and didn't predict the triumph of the Taliban in Afghanistan. How do you answer that? Did we get it wrong?

Dr. Dixon: You know, I was – the statement “getting things wrong” is always a tricky one, right? There are certain things that are very difficult to know 100 percent. And to include how people think about it, how people on the ground are going to experience it, what their reaction is going to be, what their will is going to be in the face of someone coming and invading their country, for example. It's very difficult to figure out what's going to happen next. You know, we can look historically at how the militaries have acted, how the militaries have prepared. And that gives you a picture of what you think might happen. Being able to be able to guarantee that you know what the outcome is going to be is a very difficult thing and one that, you know, I guess if you say right or wrong, we don't always get it right.

But there's so many factors that go into how a country's going to react to being invaded, for example, that it's very difficult to have all of the intelligence forces that are going to predict an exact outcome. I think what we were able to do is talk about – you know, can talk about, you know, the buildup. We can talk about what we're seeing. We can talk about how we've seen Russia over the years plan an invasion. The exact challenges that they've had would have been really, really difficult to predict. Seeing how they've reacted to it and kind of given some context to that I think is something that we've done for our customers, though. We try to help them understand that even though the things that we've seen weren't what we expected in some cases, you know, giving them options – OK, these are different things that might be happening in the future – is something that we can do to help them be able to prepare for it, whatever is to come, frankly.

Mr. Easton: What's interesting too is a lot of it comes down to the culture of organizations, the culture of the Afghan military, the Afghan government, the culture of the Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian military, the culture of the military in Russia, the on-the-ground – you know, troops on the ground, which is a harder – much harder – it's a much harder thing to measure.

Dr. Dixon: It all comes down to culture and people. And people can be very difficult to predict. Organizations can be difficult to predict. You certainly use the best insights that you have over what they've done in the past, but that's no guarantee of what they're going to do in the future. So you sort of give your best judgements, and you paint a range of these are all the possible – these are all the possibilities that may come out of there. Some of them are more likely than others, but you sort of paint the full picture of it and, you know, hope that the information that you're giving your policymakers is giving them the best information to make the next-step decisions on the policy side.

Ms. Easton: So there have been accusations about a chemical attack. How are you pursuing finding out whether that's credible or not?

Dr. Dixon: I mean, it's like we approach other intelligence – other intelligence issues. You see what information you can gather to be able to answer the question, is it or is it not. If yes, where? If so, how?

Ms. Easton: Can you talk about where you are in that scale right now?

Dr. Dixon: No, not really. (Laughs.)

Ms. Easton: (Laughs.) OK. Or the use of –

Dr. Dixon: But it is definitely something that we are, in the community, looking at, trying to make sure that we're providing the most up-to-date and the most accurate information we can to the policymakers. It's very difficult when it's – when you're doing things remotely. That's the other challenge that people have on things like that. During the course of a war, of course, it is very difficult to be able to get in and get the same information that you might have had prior to a war being in effect. But we are trying to answer those very questions for our policymakers. And we'll give them our best insights.

Ms. Easton: And what did you learn that you didn't know about the Russian military?

Dr. Dixon: Oh, I think that's still ongoing. I think many people are looking and watching the situations and rethinking what we've seen historically and what we might have thought would have happened.

Ms. Easton: How do?

Dr. Dixon: You know, you look at exercises, you look at the – you look at exercises, you look at the things that the countries are saying, their leaders are saying about their capabilities. And then you sort of match them up with the reality that you're seeing on the ground. And if they don't match up, you ask a lot of questions afterwards as to, OK, so why is it that they weren't able to do what they thought they would be able to do? Why is it that they've done

something differently than they've done in the past? What are they going to learn – Russia in particular – going to learn from everything they've done? What are other countries going to learn by having watched the situation?

So there's a lot of what-if scenarios, I think, that will take place, and a lot of lessons learned based on how we – you know, how we as a community have been able to answer the questions that policymakers need. But a lot of countries will be looking at this and making their own assessments as to what this means about Russia's military, about Ukraine, about what's going to happen later on with other countries in Europe, other countries around the world who are also watching this and learning from it.

Ms. Easton: And is there – before we go on to other hot spots in the world, anything else that you want to add about Russia and Ukraine?

Dr. Dixon: You know, I think that this is a – it's a very challenging and disturbing time that we're in right now. We appreciate the fact that we've been able to work with allies and partners around the world, that that partnership is really, really important to be able to have sort of a unified front in some cases.

You've seen the sanctions that have come out and you've seen the number of countries that have also agreed to put sanctions on, just to sort of send that very clear message to Russia that this is not acceptable. Partnerships is going to be a huge part of really everything that we do in the future with respect to our national security and our strategic – the things that are very important to our country, our interests, our allies' interests.

So I just want to thank everyone for the partnership out there. And I thank the public, frankly, for looking at the information that was shared with them and then making their own decisions about what was happening and not allowing disinformation to affect what they saw on the ground, to really be able to look at the facts as they were presented and weigh those themselves.

Ms. Easton: So partnerships within the willing –

Dr. Dixon: Yes.

Ms. Easton: – the community of the willing.

Dr. Dixon: Absolutely.

Ms. Easton: And partnerships between public and private –

Dr. Dixon: Exactly.

Ms. Easton: – is what –

Dr. Dixon: And the transparency that's there. That's something that also I see. And generally the intelligence community has been trying to be more transparent, has been trying to find ways of not only declassifying but sharing more information when we can.

And this, I think, is sort of a next step in that iteration of really being able to – this is an example of a very significant crisis that's happening on the ground, and we're trying to be as transparent as possible. When we did our annual threat assessment earlier this year, we talked about the threats as we saw them. So there's information that we're declassifying, that we have been, but certainly not on a scale of what you're seeing in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Ms. Easton: That's interesting.

China. You have cited China as – I just want to pull out your own words here. You've said that they are very much moving into our sphere on a lot of levels. But the one area that you seem to be very concerned about is space.

Dr. Dixon: Yes.

Ms. Easton: Can you talk about that?

Dr. Dixon: Absolutely. I mean, you see it actually in a lot of different areas, and frankly through their own plans and their own statements that they're making, whether it is the investments that they're making around the world in many things, whether it is their Belt and Road initiative, their decision to do a lot more on technology advancements, emerging tech, to include space.

So space is sort of just one of many of the different places. But we know that there's an appetite for many, many countries because of the importance of space, to be able to have more assets in space, to be able to do more with space. We see in this country how reliant we are on space; you know, a lot of things, whether it's GPS and just getting from place to place or a lot of other systems that we use.

And so we know that they're moving in that area, and they would want to counter our very – you know, our very, I would say, robust system, our very – not only our government-own systems, but even the commercial systems that are in there. They aspire to be able to do as much in that environment as we are – as we're doing.

Ms. Easton: Which means what? Which means that –

Dr. Dixon: Which means there's –

Ms. Easton: – cyberattacks or –

Dr. Dixon: Well, that's, I mean –

Ms. Easton: That's a given.

Dr. Dixon: In space or not in space. We see it – you know, that is definitely a possibility. And there's a lot of ways to threaten sort of the status quo. And cyberattacks is certainly one of them, whether it's cyberattacks in space or cyberattacks on the ground. And so we see the desire to be able to sort of control what is happening, not only in their own country but in other parts of the world. And some of that does include looking at where they can invest in the technology space to exceed our capabilities or exceed what they think our capabilities are or to surpass those capabilities. And so we're sort of watching it.

Ms. Easton: What are some examples of that?

Dr. Dixon: Artificial intelligence, machine learning. Both the Chinese government and the Russian government have stated that to be leading in that area is to sort of lead the future. We see investments in quantum information science and what we can do with that very, very interesting technology. You see a lot of investments and stated investments on both countries in that area.

Some of the – gosh, I'm thinking of the other ones. Those are probably the two main ones; but, you know, in other aspects of the world, automation in general. Like, where do you see those things like that, whether it is investments in – biotechnology is another one that we've also heard both countries decide they want to invest in.

Ms. Easton: You were also sounding alarms about cyberthreats to supply chains and noticed –

Dr. Dixon: Yes.

Ms. Easton: – and you've noted that you're seeking to establish an American information and community technology and sciences ecosystem to identify weaknesses. Can you explain what you mean by that?

Dr. Dixon: Absolutely. You know, a lot of our critical infrastructure here in this country is owned by the commercial sector. And part of organizations like that, the goal is to be able to have government and the private sector cooperating and collaborating more so that we can not only make them aware of the threats as we see them from within the community, but also potentially help them understand how they can harden their defenses against – whether it's cyberattacks or physical attacks. And so having places where we can have more of these conversations for all of the things that not only is the

government dependent on, but really the country is dependent on, keeping these things safe.

Ms. Easton: What's interesting about your background, especially when you were talking about machine learning or quantum computing, your degrees are in engineering –

Dr. Dixon: They are.

Ms. Easton: – which is fascinating, a doctorate and a master's in mechanical engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology and a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from Stanford. How did you go from that to the intelligence community? And how does it help you in your job?

Dr. Dixon: So what I know now about the community is that there are a lot of places where STEM backgrounds, including engineering, can really make a great effect. We are always trying to figure out better opportunities to collect information. So some of that is, you know, building things that can collect information. Sometimes it is figuring out how to get things in certain places where you can collect information. And so there's a lot of things with respect to engineering where you can contribute to that mission.

What I knew when I came in was that I had – I had family, friends, and colleagues who were in the community, and while they couldn't tell me what they did they had very fulfilling jobs. They were very excited about the things that they were working on. So I probably entered the community with less understanding about it than I certainly have now, but now I know that there is – there's a lot of opportunity for really every single work role, but certainly for the STEM sciences.

Ms. Easton: And you grew up in Washington.

Dr. Dixon: I did.

Ms. Easton: And what did your parents – tell us about your youth and what your parents did.

Dr. Dixon: My dad was an engineer turned lawyer. My mom was in telecommunications. Education was always very, very important, so you know, going to college and then going beyond that were sort of givens. Well, my dad worked for – he became a judge, so he became – he worked for D.C. government.

Working for the federal government was not something that I really had thought about growing up. I sort of thought I had a path to first engineering and then potentially academia, and ended up making a change later on and coming into the intelligence community. So I really wasn't thinking about a

job in the intelligence community growing up, even though I lived here in D.C. where we're certainly surrounded by not only government but intelligence.

Ms. Easton: Was the CIA your first big professional job, or?

Dr. Dixon: It was, yes.

Ms. Easton: It was.

Dr. Dixon: Correct.

Ms. Easton: That's -

Dr. Dixon: Yeah, after my academic path it was.

Ms. Easton: And what made you decide that this was it, this was the path I want to proceed? What was it about that experience?

Dr. Dixon: You know, it's interesting. It was - it was, again, people who were in the community who said such great things about the opportunities in the community, said such great things about what they were contributing to in general. There was no specificity. There was no specifics. You know, I knew - I was CIA and I was actually working at the National Reconnaissance Office building satellites. The people doing that were just super excited. They used their engineering skills to really be able to - to great effect to deliver these satellites on behalf of the country. They were making decisions to help protect national security. That was sort of enough to get me interested in putting an application in, and then when it came through entered the community. And great decision, the best decision I've ever made, frankly, professionally. And I'm really, really happy that I stayed in because I've had so many wonderful opportunities to not only use the STEM background, but really to exercise other things like the leadership, like the - you know, the ability to ask questions, the ability to know how science can contribute to some of the very challenging things that we're trying to face. So it's been a - it's been a wonderful opportunity to be able to use those skillsets, even though my time as an engineer per se was not that long.

Ms. Easton: How would you describe yourself as a leader?

Dr. Dixon: Ooh. I love enabling other people to solve hard problems. I love trying to be the one who can sort of reduce the bureaucratic barriers so that they can get their work done. I'm a very collaborative leader. I enjoy bringing people to the table, which is why working as the principal deputy is - it's a wonderful job because we've got these 17 other elements of the intelligence community. And our deputies, we get together and we try to solve hard

problems on behalf of the community to better serve our policymaker customers, to better deliver that national security and foreign policy advantage to our policymaker customers.

So it's a – it's a wonderful opportunity to work together. You know, it's a bit of a coalition of the willing. People come because they know they have something to offer and they know that we all share this common mission, this common set of goals. And it sort of works with the way that I approach things, which is in a very collaborative nature.

Ms. Easton: You are the highest-ranking Black woman in the intel community. How would you rate, broadly speaking, the intel community on diversification efforts?

Dr. Dixon: Ah. We have some ways to go across the entire organization. I'd say if you look at our leadership, certainly you've seen – we've seen people – I mean, we've broken the glass ceiling in some cases. We have broken some of these barriers and we're celebrating that. We're not resting on it, but we are celebrating the fact that, you know, we've had female principal deputies before. I am the first African American. We haven't had a female director of national intelligence before, so we're certainly celebrating that.

We've got leaders in other places within the intelligence community who are also breaking barriers themselves. We look at ourselves regularly. We look at our statistics. We look at our numbers. We look at our hiring from the recruitment all the way to the retention of individuals of different backgrounds to see how we're doing. And if you compare us to either the civilian labor force or to the American public, we don't quite look like that yet.

That is aspirational. We need to be able to look more like the country we serve. And so those are – we're trying to figure out, you know, are there barriers within that are keeping people from coming in, number one, or being successful when they're there? How do we make sure that every American who wants to serve, who has some abilities that they can bring to the community, finds a place in here and can be successful?

Ms. Easton: And so what would you say – you have this moment – what would you say to younger women and women of color about why they should think about this career path?

Dr. Dixon: I think it's – there are so many opportunities within the intelligence community. And if you are a person who is inspired by serving your country, this is one way to do that. This is one way to bring all of your skills and expertise, combine them with the skills and expertise of a host of other people who also share that same passion for love of country, to really be able

to position this country in a good light. To be able to position us so that we can protect ourselves, protect our families, protect our allies. But also really be able to support policymakers in making the decisions on behalf of the rest of the country.

It's also a place where you can be successful. I mean, having me in place, having DNI Haines in place certainly says that if you want to aspire to these highest levels you have examples of people who've been able to do that. There's other jobs in there that maybe there aren't the same examples, but don't let that stop you. We need good people who want to come in. And I would encourage people to learn more about it, whether through an internship or talking to someone in the community to see whether it's something you'd want to be a part of. But don't hesitate to come in, because I think you won't regret that decision.

Ms. Easton: So, you know, one of the results of the disinformation campaigns we've seen in the past few years is that there's a big target on the intel community's back. There's a lot of the deep state stuff. Does that affect morale? Does it affect recruitment? Does it affect retention? How do you deal with that internally?

Dr. Dixon: I mean, it's disappointing that there isn't more trust, but it also just challenges us to want to be better so that we can be better and be more transparent so people can have a better sense of what the community does and be able to sort of have that trust. So we spent a lot of time and effort trying to figure out how we can shed more light into the inner operations of the intelligence community, while still protecting those sources and methods. So it's not really necessarily a morale killer, but certainly something that we want to work towards. It would be lovely if everything we did was trusted and embraced. It's not. We can deal with that.

Recruitment, not really. Actually, we still have a lot of people who are very interested in coming into the community, thankfully. And I think that will continue to be the case, because people see it as a place where they can make a difference to those sort of ultimate goals that the country has. Retention? People who are leaving will leave for a variety of reasons, and I haven't heard that one as a predominant reason that people are leaving, because of the lack of trust or the perceived lack of trust with the American public.

But we're certainly trying to continue to build that, because it would be – we do need the public to trust us. And we're trying to find more ways to shed light on what we're doing so that people can see it, putting more products out when we can, more of our assessments out when we can, having declassified versions or declassified summaries. That is a goal of ours.

Ms. Easton: So I want to remind our audience, our online audience, that we do have a couple minutes to ask questions. You're going to have to do it very quickly.

Bryan from the Information Security Oversight Office asks: How can the government use advanced technologies to improve processes concerning the classification and declassification of information? And what is being planned for in this space?

Dr. Dixon: Thank you, Bryan. Great question. We are actually looking at how we can better automate some of the processes to declassify. I mean, declassification involves looking at, whether printed or electronic files and documents, to try to see whether or not – you know, it's covering a classified subject. You look for keywords, you look for – you look for phrases that might be problematic and might be things that we'd need to take out before we declassified it. Using natural language technology, using automation, using artificial intelligence to help us with that is something we're looking to do to reduce the timelines to potentially help us so they can do a first pass through a document, flag some of those words that might be concerning to a person, words that might be the ones that we have to actually redact. Do that first pass, and then the human can go back and actually do the second pass. And we think it will speed up the processes, but it will take some investment around the community and some maturation of the actual technology to be able to do it effectively.

Ms. Easton: So one massive global risk we haven't touched on is climate change.

Dr. Dixon: Yes.

Ms. Easton: How is the intel community – it's a rather sweeping question, I realize – but how are you addressing that? How do you think about it?

Dr. Dixon: I would say – no, I'm really glad you asked because there's a number of transnational threats, sort of, that go beyond the border of any particular country or region that we're looking at. And the national security impacts of climate change is how the intelligence community is thinking about it, so looking at not only, you know, are there sources that we have that actually can help answer questions about what's happening in the world? In the past, the intelligence community has declassified some of the collection we've had that's shown – you know, the melting in the Arctic, for example, was something we did, you know, a number of years ago. But that will change the way – you know, transportation through there, it will change the ability to use Arctic locations for various means.

We also know that climate change often is a source behind conflict, whether it's the drying up of water, the changing of resources, the possible inability to be able to feed the individuals in a country. Climate change can have a lot of

negative impacts, so being able to forecast for climate change may cause future tension and future conflicts, to see whether we can do something policywise or see whether the country can do something policywise to get in front of that.

Ms. Easton: So where else do you go with this? Is this –

Dr. Dixon: It – the transnational threats – also migration, human trafficking, and other trafficking, whether it is drug-related or not drug-related. These are all things that I think have national security implications even beyond our borders that we're also looking at and trying to figure out, how do we also increase our collection in these areas because these are things that our policymakers are asking?

Ms. Easton: Dr. Dixon, in a recent speech you asked, how can democratic societies prevail in this ongoing struggle with authoritarian regimes? I'd like you to answer your own question. (Laughs.)

Dr. Dixon: (Laughs.) Well, part of it is also – part of it is increasing trust with the public, part of it is that transparency. We have to realize that there is a threat out there to democracy. There's a lot of countries who are more authoritarian in nature who are seeking to have their norms be the norms that cover the world. That's not a world that I want to live in. I think the democratic ideals, the values underpinning democratic countries are really important, the ones where there is competitiveness and opportunity, the ones where people have a choice of being able to choose whether they do one thing or the other. Those are things that this country has professed and that we really do need to continue to defend.

So we need to talk about it, we need to look at all of the tools we have at our disposal, whether it's diplomatic, whether it's economic, whether it's military, intelligence, as being able to provide those policymakers who are making decisions in those spaces with the tools they need to, so working together – government, public, industry – to make sure that the ideals and values that we profess as members of a democratic society, making sure that that is – that we are holding true to that, that we're finding ways to make sure that as we go out into the international – in the world and do business that we're continuing to profess those ideals, that we're continuing to act on those ideals. We need to be able to counter those individuals who think that having more control over their populations, less opportunity, and less competitiveness is a good thing, but that's not how we want to be, and making sure that as we go forward with international norms that they look more like the values that we profess than the values that an authoritarian country would profess.

- Ms. Easton: Your position forces you to be a historian, essentially. Where are we on that trajectory? Are you feeling more hopeful, less hopeful? Where are we?
- Dr. Dixon: I'll say it this way: As I travel around the country and meet with, for example, students at different universities, talk to them about how they see the world, I'm very hopeful. When I look at the fact that, you know, with raising the awareness about disinformation, I see more people being – leveraging those critical thinking skills, thinking about information. I am more hopeful. But I also know that the threat is real and that democracy is not something that you can let alone; it's something that we have to continue to fight for and hold people accountable to the values that we profess. We have to continue to do that. So I am hopeful but I'm also very, very realistic that there's a lot more threats out there and a lot more leaders of countries around the world who don't think that that's the path that they want to follow, who think that there's a more expedient path by being more of a controlling person over their countries and that we're going to constantly be in battle over that, frankly, so hopeful but realistic at the same time that the challenge is real and the challenge continues to grow.
- Ms. Easton: And do you think what we're seeing on our TV sets right now in the Ukraine is helping people understand the importance of defending democracy –
- Dr. Dixon: I hope so.
- Ms. Easton: – and young people, in particular, who didn't grow up during the Soviet Union?
- Dr. Dixon: And certainly haven't grown up with seeing a lot of conflict, especially depending on how old they are. I think it is important. I think it's important because it was – one country invading another is not something that you see very often. It's something that should be condemned, it's something that should be, you know, mitigated and reduced. You don't want to see that happening. I think the awareness that it's raising, that this is still – we're still in a world where things like this happen is something that is necessary for people to see so that they can see that we do need to continue to protect those values. We do need to continue to protect those partners, and that the world isn't necessarily going to just sort of stand idly by when people go and do something like that to another sovereign nation.
- Ms. Easton: Well, Dr. Dixon, you're an incredibly eloquent spokesperson, not only for the intelligence community but also for democracy and the future. So thank you so much for being here.
- Dr. Dixon: Thank you, Nina. I appreciate the questions.

Ms. Easton: And for our online folks, our online audience watching at home, don't turn us off yet because we're going to show a short prerecorded conversation between Suzanne Spaulding and the honorable Ellen McCarthy discussing another trailblazer in intelligence, Virginia Hall. So sit tight.

Ms. Spaulding: We could not think of a better person to honor, following that terrific interview with our PDDNI, than the heroic Virginia Hall. We're going to talk with Ellen McCarthy today about her remarkable story – a humble servant, a real patriot, and an invaluable contributor to the allied effort in World War II.

Ellen, we're so happy that you're here today. Ellen has had a terrific career in the intelligence community, including as the chief operating officer for the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, leadership positions with INSA, the Intelligence and National Security Alliance. She's on a number of boards and is the president of Just the Facts. And Ellen is here to talk with us today about the amazing career of Virginia Hall and the effort that is under way to get her some appropriate recognition.

So Ellen, tell us about how you came to be involved in this effort around telling Virginia Hall's story and getting her appropriately recognized.

Ellen E. McCarthy: Well, thank you, Suzanne.

You know, really it was my last job in government. I was the assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at State Department. And I would love to come back and talk more about INR. It was my most favorite job. And when I started there, I was just curious as to why was it that it's so small. I think small is good, but, you know, it's not resourced to do a lot of the things that it needs to do.

And so I just started doing some research. You know, I really believe that if you want a new idea, read an old book. And it just turned out that this, the year I was there, was INR's 75th anniversary. And I learned that it is the last remaining operational component of the Office of Strategic Services.

So in 1945 President Truman did not dissolve all of INR. "Wild Bill" Donovan, then the head of the OSS, convinced him to keep the Research and Analysis Branch together. And it would get transferred to State in 1945. Really interesting, because I thought that CIA was the first civilian all-source intelligence organization, but it's not. It was INR. And so I really wanted to take advantage of that history to really promote INR and learn more about it, and really was amazed at how the culture of OSS was so much like the culture of INR.

In the process of doing this research and taking advantage of the 75th anniversary, I became involved with the OSS Society, which was run by a fellow named Charles Pinck. He asked me to do an interview – interview a woman named Erika Robuck, who had just written a book called “The Invisible Woman,” which was the story of Virginia Hall. And it literally was from that moment that I just absolutely became entranced with her; pretty much read everything I could.

In fact, there’s a couple of books I would recommend. Sonia Purcell (sic; Purnell) wrote “A Woman of No Importance,” which is just an amazing book. She looked at Virginia Hall from the British side. And then a former CIA officer, Craig Gralley, wrote a book, “Hall of Mirrors: Virginia Hall, America’s Greatest Spy of World War II.” I just couldn’t get enough of Virginia Hall. And even now, every decision I make, I sit there and think what would Virginia do?

That’s really what started this. I got together with some friends. It was Women’s History Month that was coming up and we were thinking of what are some things we could do. And all of us agreed, when we learned that Virginia Hall did not have a Congressional Medal of Honor, that we had to start this campaign. When I say women, it’s other amazing women in the IC like Sue Gordon and Kristin Wood and Megan Jaffer. And so we’ve really – we’ve really worked together to make this happen.

I know that you wanted – and there’s really two reasons why we wanted to make this happen. One is that we learned that she had a Distinguished Service Cross, which is pretty amazing, but it’s our nation’s second-highest honor. And we were wondering, why hasn’t she gotten the highest honor? She certainly, from our optic, deserved it.

What’s so amazing is that Virginia Hall would have hated this. She would have hated what we’re doing right now. She was so humble. She didn’t like all the fuss that came with awards and recognition. It just wasn’t her thing. She probably would hate this. But the second reason, I think the one that’s far more important, is that it’s really about recognizing her as an inspiration to those women who may want to join this community, or those women who are already operating like Virginia Hall. It’s important to recognize people’s achievements, especially hers.

Soo, I mean, that’s really what has motivated us to take on this campaign. I thought maybe I could spend a few minutes and walk through her life, if that works for you?

Ms. Spaulding:

Yeah, that’d be terrific. And I’m so excited that you’ve got these wonderful photos to help tell the story.

Ms. McCarthy:

So, I've got to tell you, in the process of being a Virginia Hall addict, I got a chance to meet her family. She has two nieces and a nephew who are still around. And they lent me these slides. And they're just – it's so much more interesting to tell somebody's story through pictures. So I'm very grateful to Brad and Lorna Catling for lending me these slides and letting me show you them here today. So let's start with – there we go. So Virginia Hall was born on April 6th, 1906, actually her birthday is coming up, in Baltimore, Maryland. She's a local girl. To a fairly affluent family.

Her father was Edwin Lee Hall. Here she's pictured with him. He was a bit of an adventurer himself. When he was nine years old he stowed away on his uncle's clipper ship. She loved her father dearly. He actually died when she was in her early '20s and she was very hurt by that. She never quite got over the loss of her father. Her mother was Barbara Virginia Hammel. Here she is in this photo. Her nickname was Dindy. Everybody in the family called her Dindy. You know, she had an interesting relationship with her mom. It was a little more strained. I think it's because her mother really just wanted Virginia to follow this traditional path, to get married, you know, live the life of a socialite, live the life of – in her class, which was very wealthy.

You know, but that just wasn't Virginia. You know, and I think in some ways her mom and dad had a lot to do with this. When she was very young, at four, they took her on a trip to Europe. And she never stopped traveling after that. She loved the outdoors – hunting, and hiking. She loved boating, horseback riding. And she was a lifelong fan of animals. I think she would tell you that she would prefer the company of animals over most human beings.

You know, I thought in talking to her family that she was an incredible student. It was pretty funny, her cousin – her niece just said, well, she only earned As and Bs, but she went to some pretty incredible colleges. As an undergrad, she went to Barnard and Radcliffe. She studied abroad, where she would master French and German. She would come back to Washington, D.C. and get her graduate degree at American University. That's pretty impressive, given those days. She was incredibly self-confident. She was very active in the drama club when she was in high school. She was editor of her college newspaper, president of her class.

But her dreams after college were not to become a spy. Her dream, her lifelong dream, was to become a diplomat, a part of the Foreign Service. And when she first applied after college there was roughly 1,600 diplomats. Only two of them were women. So, you know, odds were against her that she was ever going to be able to become a diplomat. But she thought, you know, where I sit is where I stand. And if I can't be a diplomat, I'm going to continue to fight for this. And she applied for the only job she could at State Department, which was as a secretary in the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

And so there she started. Her first job was at an embassy in Poland. And later she would move onto Turkey. And Turkey would be incredibly important. It would really set – the incident that occurred in Turkey really would set sort of the course for the rest of her life. It's important context. Because while she was there, on December 8th in 1933, she suffered an unfortunate accident while hunting. She was climbing a fence, the gun misfired, it shattered her foot. Gangrene set in. Her leg would have to be amputated. She was medevac'd back to the United States, to Baltimore with her mom, where she would recover, she would get fit for a prosthetic leg, which really was nothing more than a ginormous piece of wood.

Her mom and everyone would have thought that she would have just stayed in Baltimore, you know, given all that had happened. But Virginia really looked at this as an opportunity, almost a second chance. It was like this was divine calling, she was being told that because she wasn't dead she was supposed to press ahead. So against her mother's wishes she applied for jobs back at State Department. And she would move to the U.S. consulate in Venice. There we go. Here she really put the press on to try and get back into the Foreign Service. But it was interesting, at that point State Department had a policy that said that people with prosthetics, people with amputations, could not be Foreign Service officers.

This dejected her. She actually would try and get a change of scenery, and she would transfer to our U.S. delegation in Tallinn, thinking that maybe she would meet some other folks who would help her with her campaign to become a diplomat. She even wrote a letter to President Roosevelt, who himself was disabled, asking if potentially, you know, he would help her on this quest. He actually wrote her a very nice note saying she seemed like a very nice girl, and that, you know, she should continue her path as a secretary at State Department. She was so disgusted with this that, you know, not only was the president not supporting her here, and the work she was doing in Tallinn was just not interesting to her anymore. It was just not challenging.

So she did what I think I would have done, which is she decided to go to Paris and find herself. And in 1939, it didn't take very long for her to find herself there. Hitler invaded Poland. France would declare war on Germany. And Virginia volunteered to become an ambulance driver. And very soon she found herself on the front lines working 24 hours a day, moving people in and around the war zone. When France surrendered to Germany, she really had grown to hate Germany and the regime and its policies in Europe. And because she had a U.S. passport, she decided to leave France and move to London. She just thought maybe she could find something to do there that would help her be more productive on the war effort.

And sure enough, in very short order she was recruited by the British Special Operations Executive, or the SOE. And she spent the summer of 1941 in agent training. And in very short order by the end of the summer, August of 1941, she would return to Vichy France under an operation that was called Germaine. Her identity was that of Bridget Lecontret. She was a French reporter – a French American reporter for The New York Post. She was an excellent writer, being as educated as she was. But what's so interesting was – is that she only found that interesting. There was just – she knew there were so many other things she could do.

So in very short order she was not only collecting intelligence – another interesting point is while most agents stayed in a place for six months, and during World War II most of them died, Virginia would spend 15 months in France, which was pretty unheard of given all that she faced. So not only was she collecting intelligence, but she was organizing, funding, and supplying the French resistance. She would rescue airmen who had crashed and made sure they got safely back to England. She would organize sabotage and attack operations against German supply lines. She would engineer escapes from prison of war camps that both the Vichy French and the Nazis were running. She would oversee parachute drops. I mean, she just was – she really operated far beyond, you know, what they thought she was able to do. It was pretty amazing.

She did so well that she came to the attention of the Vichy French and the Nazis, the Gestapo. But they just didn't know who she was. I mean, she was such – incredible at disguise and evasion that they knew that there was somebody out there, because she was limping, but they never really knew who it was. Klaus Barbie would come in and take over the Gestapo. And he launched a country-wide campaign to catch her. There was posters posted all over the place of what they thought this limping lady might look like. He was actually quoted as saying to his staff, "I would give anything to get my hands on that limping bitch." And of course, he never –

Ms. Spaulding: So she was having a real impact.

Ms. McCarthy: Oh, she was having an incredible impact. I don't think the Germans ever really thought that the allies, the British, would put women in a war zone. But, you know, the Brits were pretty smart. And putting her there was very smart.

There came a time, though, where the French had pretty much – or, the Nazis had taken over France, and she had to leave. In fact, she left almost to the point – she barely made it out of France. In December of 1943 she caught the last train out of Lyon. The only exit was for her to hike through the Pyrenees Mountains through Spain, dragging Cuthbert with her. She had this huge wooden leg through, you know, two feet of snow. It was pretty amazing. But

she made it back to England in time for Christmas. And she came back a real hero. You know, the Brits just loved her. She got all sorts of awards.

On the screen right now is the British – the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, which is the U.K.'s highest military honor. What's so interesting is that King George VI really wanted to give her this award – this is going to be funny later on – but she just didn't want any part of it. She wasn't into awards. She really was undercover. She didn't really want any to-do about any of this. And it really wasn't – it wasn't about awards, anyway, in her mind; she just was very humble.

In her free time while in England, she decided that she would learn how to operate a radio, which would prove to be very helpful on her next mission and really would add to her tradecraft. The SOE kept refusing to send her back. You just don't send agents back to places. And she was still being hunted. And so she went back to the United States and joined the Office of Strategic Services, which was being run by "Wild Bill" Donovan.

The OSS was really in a bind at this point. They were doing everything they could to try and prepare the battlefield for what would be D-Day and the Normandy invasion. At this time, it was towards – it was just before D-Day and we only had three agents on the ground. And so "Wild Bill" Donovan did what you never do, and it was – and he asked her to go back to a place that you just – again, it's a sacred rule you don't send agents back. But Virginia did.

And in March of 1944, with total disregard for her safety, she, under the cover of night by boat, went back into France. She would lead over 1,500 resistance fighters in blowing up bridges and communication networks and anything she could do to make sure that the Germans could not resupply our efforts on Normandy.

I find this picture sort of interesting, the picture on the right. The fellow who is holding the dog would actually later become her husband. That was Paul Goillot, very handsome French man – 12 years her junior, which I found very interesting. And they have an incredible love story, but not a love story that in any way impacted her ability to get the job done.

And so, sure – so, sure enough, there is just incredible measures of success that shows that our success in Normandy would not have happened had it not been for what Virginia was doing there.

Like the U.K. – like her example in England, she would come back to the United States a real hero. She would be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Just like King George, President Truman would want to give it to her but she didn't want any part of that. Again, she was aghast that she was even

being given this award. She really didn't care about it. I think that might actually lead to why she wasn't considered for a Medal of Honor. She may have played a little bit of a part in this. She really wanted to go back into operations and she didn't want – she thought that if the president gave her this award that that would really put her in a position where she couldn't go back.

She never really did go back, which was really kind of sad. At this point, the war was over. She tried again to get into the Foreign Service, and this time they turned her down because they said they were having budget cuts, which is just crazy. CIA would be created in 1947. She'd go to CIA and would work there for actually 10 years, but mostly in desk jobs. They would never send her out as an operator again. There's actually a long story there about that I would love to share with you someday.

She would retire from CIA – at that point, the mandatory retirement age was 60 – and she would return to her farm. She got married to Paul in 1950. She would return to her farm in Barnesville, where she loved reading and gardening. She was – loved animals, especially her poodles. She had a series of 10 or 12 poodles. And she would die in July of 1982 very quietly.

And for the most part, nobody really knew much about Virginia Hall at this point, until the last five or six years where her story is being told. And she certainly has been inspiring to me and pretty much everybody who ever has read or heard about her.

So that's her story.

Ms. Spaulding: Yeah. Well, it's an amazing story, I think, and incredibly inspiring. You know, it was amazing to me, Ellen, in talking with you about this to realize that 3,500 people who have received this medal and only one of them is a woman.

Ms. McCarthy: Only one a woman.

Ms. Spaulding: Yeah. So that's pretty shocking in and of itself. But that aside, her story is incredibly inspiring, and I'm sure that those who've stuck with us here and listened to this story are inspired. And the question they're asking themselves, Ellen, is: What can we do? If we want to – we want to be helpful in the effort to see her appropriately recognized, what should we be doing?

Ms. McCarthy: Well, thank you so much for giving us this platform to talk about Virginia Hall and to offer some assistance. We've actually sent a draft letter to the Senate Select Committee for Intelligence and we're working with the staff to, ultimately, get Senator Warner and hopefully Senator Rubio to send a letter

to the secretary of defense and ask him to recommend that her Distinguished Service Cross be raised to a Congressional Medal of Honor.

You know, when you read the criteria for the Medal of Honor and you listen to her story, there's no question that she meets all the criteria. We had a number of folks at all levels in government sign this letter. We had over 200 signatures from Cabinet-level folks to heads of all the agencies, all the former heads of CIA and DIA and NSA. It's been just an incredible campaign, but it's a campaign that's not over. And so I would say to those who are listening to this, if you have an opportunity to send a note to Senator Warner or Senator Rubio or any of your congresspeople, asking that this press – that this campaign move ahead, we'd be most grateful for that.

Ms. Spaulding: Terrific. Well, there you have it, folks.

Ellen, thanks so much for coming over to CSIS today and sharing this terrific story with us. Thanks to Virginia Hall's family for making the photos available, and we will look forward to having you back to talk about some of the other issues that you've raised today. So thank you very much.

Ms. McCarthy: Look forward to coming back. Thanks so much.

Ms. Spaulding Terrific. Thank you. Take care.

So that concludes today's program. Thank you so much for joining us for these fascinating and I think really inspiring conversations on past and present intelligence heroes. Your support for Smart Women, Smart Power is really what keeps us going, fuels us every day, so thank you for that. Have a great rest of your day.