

FOCUS ON GENDER: BRIDGING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE – WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY, PART TWO

Leymah Gbowee 0:07

So Hi everyone, my name is Leymah Gbowee. I'm a Liberian Peace Activist. I'm a trained social worker but for a moment, I thought I could do social work by I realized being an activist it's part of my DNA. I prefer field work and I'm happy to be on this call.

Anne-Marie Goetz 0:57

Hi everybody, my name is Anne-Marie Goetz. I'm a Professor of International Relations at New York University. I find it very hard to kind of label myself as a particular kind of expert but I've worked on women's rights my entire career and have spent long stints as a policymaker at the United Nations working on Women, Peace and Security.

Leymah Gbowee 1:20

Personally, I started, I'll go back to say I happened on peacebuilding because I grew up in a country like Liberia that was at war, for a long time, starting from when I was 17. And there was all this anger and primarily those who started, not just those who started the war but the foot soldiers. And the progression of my professional career, I think brought me to where I find myself. And that progression was beginning with working with child soldiers. And then we ended up going into being intrigued by their wives or the girls that they were living with, the ones who consider themselves wives of the soldiers. I wanted to know them. I wanted to know what was happening with them. But all of these interactions nearly brought me to a place where I realized that peace work was more than dealing with the foot soldiers. Yes. It had a lot to do with funding the war and those who were politically supporting from outside, illustration that people would use the deep conflict. It was a messy peace, as I was moving into peace work, like the onion, you peel one layer, you meet another layer, you peel another layer, you meet another one. So gradually, in this work, I also came to realize first that the women who were with the ex-child soldiers were more aggressive than the men who held the guns. And a lot of the soldiers were very, very afraid of their women. And then eventually I moved from that space into a space where I was working with grassroots women, with the understanding that we need to also be peacebuilders, but also the background that I came from, is that even though I came from this war narrative. I also came from a society of huge inequality. Liberia gained her independence in 1847. It was not until nineteen fifty something that women were allowed to vote. And the cause for women voting was women property owners. So, if you close your eyes and imagine a country of at the time 51 million people and you're saying only women who owned property. How many women do you think owned properties at the time. So, that background of women never really being involved in politics, being involved in any form of decision making that impacted their society was there and then the war came and all of the abuses compound it.

But, we started something a group of us activists called Women of Liberia Demand Action for Peace because it's very clear to us that we were a huge portion of our population, and we could not just sit by as the rape increased, as the killing of our children increased, the conscription of young children. There was a need for us to get involved in this conversation for peace. Once we got involved, I led Demand Action. We saw the success of our work. But there was this missing piece, which is still there. And the missing piece was that every meeting that I went to, in as

much as I have done this work and we had contributed to ending 14 years of war, in this huge meetings, especially where it was dominated by men. As long as you didn't have that doctor something something at the back of your name, people they didn't feel you were credentialed enough to speak. And so this led me to want to do my master's in conflict transformation and peacebuilding. I felt like this is where I want to be. If having a piece of paper is going to legitimize me in the field, I'm going to do that. Well, let me just say what my time at EMU did for me, Eastern Mennonite University, was broaden my horizon from conflict being just Africa to meeting students from Israel, Palestine, gets a broad understanding of global conflict, but also really made me to understand that the legitimacy for peace work is actually on the ground, and that academia is air and it will complement or supplement each other. And it should not be that one group but gradually, even as I left school and went back into the field, we continued to see that same missing link where women in the field are never really taken to be experts, but subjects. And I'll stop there and let Anne take it from there. Then we can have this conversation.

Anne-Marie Goetz 6:26

Thank you Leymah, that is fascinating and what really comes out of what you said for me is somehow you have the confidence to trust your instincts and your observations, and a lot of us are trained not to. Not to believe what we think and feel and see. And I think that's what's kind of a big problem, you know with with academia and feminist activism is, you were acting on your you know your, what you saw your experience and of course your extraordinary experience of organizing Christian and Muslim women into a peace movement that was...you were just driven by this conviction that this was the right thing to do and that women could be a non violent force for ending the war. What for me, one of the problems is at least with academia is that academia sometimes trains you into mindsets that kind of make you doubt your own experience and your own instincts and what you see, which is really one of the most sort of crushing things about academia and I think that that's changed in some places over time. But in my own case my own trajectory. I never, I knew I was a feminist from a very young age, but I never was offered any classes on women's rights or feminism ever in high school, not in my undergraduate degree and not even when I did my master's degree at the London School of Economics. I graduated in 1984 there so there was no excuse for the lack of feminist theory and classes on Political Science and International Relations. I went to Africa to work for the UN to Chad, and my first assignment was to manage an Agricultural Training College. I mean, and by that like God knows I was not qualified but I was just like moving the money around. And I went and visited it, of course, and saw that there were only men, learning about millet and sorghum and maize, and so on and I, you know. The first, I'm not an expert in Africa, wasn't then for sure. The first thing I thought was, well, men aren't in the fields, men aren't farming the millet and sorghum and the maize, it's only women. It's women doing ground nuts. And it's women who are in the market. So why aren't women here? So I asked this innocent question and I was told well they can't come because they're illiterate, and they're not allowed to travel, especially if they have small kids. And they're too busy with everything else they have to do--all their domestic chores, so they're not available. And, and the, the way that it was presented as it is what it is. We can't change it, no thought of, oh well we could perhaps redesign the program, bring agricultural training to the village, change the way we deliver it. Also work on women's, adult women's literacy. It was so alien to the mindset of these development practitioners, it was astounding. So I actually went back to school to get my PhD, because after that experience I was so frustrated by not having the conceptual tools, and the evidence and the facts that I needed to persuade people that that things could be

different, and that this was really wrong and it could be fixed. Now, when I went back to do my PhD, it wasn't, I'm dating myself for sure. I started in 1987-1988, doing my PhD in England in Cambridge. And even then, there weren't any classes on feminism, there was nobody able to help me to really think through any of this. Feminist economics hadn't even really been born as a field. So I was working it through myself and luckily thank god met a few brilliant anthropologists. Actually, as it happens, in particular Henrietta Moore, who really guided me and helped a lot. But, I mean I do, I do agree with you, Leymah, that you know universities and academic settings for feminist thinking, can be very helpful to activism, but I think a lot more needs to be done to actually, it's much better now than, you know, when I was studying and when you were studying but a lot more needs to be done. And I think this is kind of what our conversation is as well, to think about how to translate what does the activist need and too, what the academic can provide. What does the policymaker need and what can the academic provide. And just as a kind of quick reflection on that. I as an academic and I'm still an academic, I always believed, and I am wrong, but I always believed that good evidence helps to change the world. That if we have the evidence, we can change policymakers minds. And now I know that's not true. The evidence is very important for activists, because it builds our conviction. But policymakers minds are changed by emotion. By emotional experiences, and by competition because policymaking like politics is about competition and competition is about power. And that's where of course the activists come in because the activists experiences and stories. That's what changes people emotionally, and of course that's where, Leymah, you are incredibly important. Your experience and the documenting of that experience in Pray the Devil Back to Hell, that emotional experience has been enormously powerful in changing people's minds.

Leymah Gbowee 12:01

What I don't see, I don't see any conflict here, Anne, when we talk about the evidence versus the emotion that is to the story and the actual, not just because what I made for you devil back to hell, or the work that we did, it took it from an anecdote into an actual evidence-based document, documentary that people can use, see and use. But it is also appealing to the emotions of policymakers. My problem is that a lot of times when academia, enters the activist space. All of these emotions and experiences and raw data are taken and translated into evidence. And it what it does, what it tries to do is to whitewash for the lack of a better word, the activists, out of it, so once it is taken as this is the evidence, these activists are not seen in the process, as the experts, who provided us the raw material, and there's no way those who sell diamonds in the stores in this finished form will look at those who are mining the diamonds, diamonds, as non-experts, because in order for them to have that finished product, we need these people to dig deep dirty their hands. Get it out, go to the second person before it comes into the store. And I feel like that's the link. The link is in academia, there's not that kind of respect or acknowledgement for the expertise of the activists and this led me, Anne, and you know that into starting this program at Columbia, Women, Peace and Security program at the Earth institute because we're saying this is unfair, you know. When, when you come in, do your research. I shouldn't just be the subject of your research. I should be credited as a contributor as an expert to your research. Because whether you like me or not, if you have the PhD from Cambridge. I have my PhD from being in the fields in Monrovia, and that kind of recognition is needed,. But there is no need for special attention because we all need each other. I need you to take this raw emotion, raw story, raw, everything that I'm giving you and turn it into evidence, but at the end of the day, recognize me as contributing to this part, not just putting me, to your index.

Anne-Marie Goetz 15:02

Yeah. Yeah, I think that hits the nail on the head. And let's be honest because this is this I hope is supposed to be a kind of a constructive and truthful discussion. I think that there is. Well, a couple of points. First of all, I think, in the field of feminist activism and academia and policy making people move between these three different worlds quite a lot. I'm an example, I've been moving between a policymaking in academia. You've been moving between activism and academia, so that people move and shift around between these three worlds. And there's very few other fields that are like this, I think probably environmental activism and climate changes like this where activists, move into policymaking or academia and around. But I think there's many other fields that have become professionalized in different ways. So within the field of women's rights work, gender and development, women, peace and security there is a lot of movement between these three arenas. So that's a good thing, but each arena has a different set of incentives driving them. And I think if we're going to be honest about it. I think that there is, as you put you hit the nail on the head. There's a tension. A lot of times between activists and academics, actually, and also between activists and policymakers, because there's the feeling that both policymakers and academics are exploiting activists, are using their stories and not making them the center of the story, not necessarily not centering their experience. And that's true.

Let's just face it I mean I can't imagine how sick you are, of being called to be the, the person who comes to sit at the Security Council and, you know, it's sort of like the front for, you know, policymakers, we need to have a voice from the field. I did that I invited you to Wilton Park in 2008, I needed desperately to have a true voice from the ground, talking to Security Council policymakers. Remember in May 2008? We were talking about sexual violence and conflict and at that time there was no Security Council resolution. There was no special representative of the SG on sexual violence and conflict. You were there, and you spoke the truth to Security Council ambassadors and truly you could see the scales dropping from their eyes. They were suddenly able to hear what it meant to be a woman's rights activists in the context of mass rape and rape that's been weaponized as an instrument of warfare. So it was phenomenal. And by the way, I don't know if you remember, at that meeting at one point, I looked around the room and I said one day someone's going to get a Nobel Prize for this work. And I remember looking at the men, and they were all thinking, Hey, here's something for me. And you didn't react at all. I mean, with your classic kind of humility and modesty, you know, didn't react at all, and you were the one who got the Nobel Peace Prize,

Leymah Gbowee 18:13

You know, can I just jump in there? Something that you said was very important, I think, naturally the tension between activists, academia and policy maker is not about centering them., It's not about making them the attention, or the focus of this work. What's the frustration is, is the lack of change at the ground level. Yeah. Well, for, for the activists and the policymakers, we went to the UN in persistently for to talk about race and gender based violence or to talk about gender equality. And then you see appointments and receive maybe point 2% of 0.2% of women, when you see 48 point something something percent of men. So you ask yourself, so what was all of this 10 hours flight for? That's the exhaustion, with what I've seen you rarely find people on the ground being very selfish about, Oh I wasn't included in that statement so I'm upset. The key is did women get the kind of support they need? Is that going to be transformation in our

political system that will allow me to step out there? Is that going to be a change in the way sexual violence and other things are conducted in conflict context? We have COVID-19, and everyone is talking about health system and all of the different things, where does gender sit with all of this?? So that is the frustration. After all of this people will come back and say let's do our research that's, like, let's go to Liberia, let's go to Ghana, let's go all of these places, and they will write these exotic, fancy documents, but there will be nothing in there that will change the system to benefit women and I think at the end of the day, that is where the problem lies.

Anne-Marie Goetz 20:11

I agree, and then I do wonder what's the answer, because I think that academics and activists and policymakers and activists work very well together in our field, in terms of building the narratives for change, shifting the paradigm so that we see the injustice and we become outraged and eventually persuading some policymakers. So I think that we work very well in kind of marrying evidence, and the story. I think that that's that's gone well. What hasn't gone well, is the competition to change actions on the ground and I am very very frustrated by this and I'm sure you are too. I agree with you that it's inconceivable that you would have a UN initiative now without saying, well, this is affecting women differently from men. There's a gender story here that has to be addressed, it's inconceivable. But when it comes to actions on the ground, that's not changing. And so that's where I think that issue of the politics of activism is really really important and funding for activism. Because, academics definitely have a political responsibility towards activists. And so do policymakers and I don't think that they are acting on their political responsibility enough. In other words, we should be working more closely in coalitions. It's, and I still don't know how to raise much more money for women's organizations to protect their freedoms to criticize their governments and to publish critiques and so on. And I'm very frustrated by this that we don't still seem to have the leverage to make substantial change

Leymah Gbowee 21:52

And it is also there is that need, there is that need that it all three cases that we can't be without each other. I mean, the activist ego in me would with say, we don't need academia, we don't need policymaker, but that's not true. You need the activists story to make your journal beautiful, to do your teaching... The policy makers need the story to raise the money and to do things, but the activists also need it, for the change to happen at the level of the ground. So it is a damned if you do, damned if you don't kind of relationship that we can't do without each other. And I think, and you're right, we don't have the answers but we really need to begin to ready to push, and that's where the push, I'm doing at our program at the Columbia University, bringing those grassroots activists at the University work to say these people are doing awesome work. We can transform. That's the question but also really repositioning them as experts in the field. And also, allowing those voices to be on there. Someone asks me, What do you hope for in five years of this program? And I said there are a lot of things I can hope for but one of the most tangible things that I hope for is that in five years, you'll walk into the university library and you'll see volumes of writings that will have the names of grassroots activists that students can cite, that their stories and the work that they're doing in Uganda, in Sudan, in Zimbabwe, will not just be anecdotes but will be something that has been written and along side them in academia, academics, working with them to publish these stories that students can now cite and say this happened here. Yeah, so it's not just going to be an Anne-Marie or a Leymah who has been, but you'll see some names that you'll probably Google and you won't be able to find except that it brings you back to that

thing. That's the first thing. The second thing is which is like a far fetched dream but I look forward to the day where we can bring one of the old women, from one of the villages, plan a course together and implement that course in a way together, even if it means that we need translators in the room, while the professor is giving the theory, she's giving the practical example. Those are things that we need because really and truly, I've made my rounds. In many universities in the US, I worry that our future policymakers will make the same mistakes that we're seeing happening because there is total lack of connection with some of the theories that they've been taught at the ground level. I'll give an example. At one of the schools that I worked at long ago, several years ago a student was so fascinated by sex work and her fascination was that it is a choice. At that moment, or during that period of working with her working with my students, I was invited to France, when President Holland was President of France. And they were celebrating the anniversary of women getting the right to work in France. And we're sitting at a dinner table at the palace in Paris, and as the staff they're talking about from one thing to the other. One of the things that occurred in that meeting was that thinking in Holland where sex work is like a legal trade. But we're not having many women register for this work like register for trade. And so the President was saying to the head of the new agenda session at the time which is to say, we need to do this, why is it that, why not. And then my comment at the time was that then you have to look at all of the socio-economic and political factors, because maybe you have a lot of sex workers who are illegal immigrants who have been trafficked. These are all different things that affect women coming to Europe that you need to take a look at. Long story short, go back to class and my student said she had...So as we're talking about these things. And I was fortunate to bring some other activists to the class. But she was bent on this is a choice. We didn't want to throw her theory out the window. But one of the things we won't understand was that, while it is a choice, there's also a lot of women in that trade who, if they had another option, would not choose to be in that trade. So you also need to have an open mind about the percentage, who are, who you think are doing this because of the choice or whatever. Again, she's actually have gone to Holland, to do internship. And in that internship, she went to work with sex workers, and then I asked her how many sex workers did you work with? Oh, no, she really didn't go on the field. She sat in the office and took notes, for some organization that was pro sex work. So, all of the money she raised, for all of the internships she went for, she never actually interacted with any real sex worker to say this is my story, this is why I'm in this thing, and I choose to be here because even though I have a doctorate, but this is the work that I love... So, after all that, I was like, okay so this girl is brilliant. She's able to raise tons of money. What if she lands at the UN with this kind of mindset, never really dealing with people on the ground, or what if she lands at the State Department? What's going to happen to women in the field that she's going to be making policies for. And that is my fear and that's why I'm pushing for this program at Columbia so much that we work on, to say, let's really try and bring all of the experts and all of the different people together with us with you so that they see that the other side of theory is practice, but the other side of practice is reality.

Anne-Marie Goetz 28:27

And that also touches on a big long-standing debate in feminist methodology, which is, how do you know what you claim to know? And the basic foundation of any feminist research has always been believe women, talk to women, ask women and recognize also that women may not always be in a position of complete freedom to tell you everything. Women who suffered from domestic violence may not admit it. You know, for all kinds of reasons. So that's what makes

feminist research so complicated as well is, under what conditions can you really claim to know what women want and need? And I think also, you're touching on a problem I think that does really come from, from academia, which is a sense that there, there's a tendency to frame women as victims so we're almost going the other way and assuming, or honoring agency at all times and it's very important to do that, because otherwise we keep getting framed as less than human or less than fully adult. And of course, as activists know, there are all kinds of pressures that distort people's choices and incentives and agency and really getting to the bottom of that is very, very hard and that's why this kind of conversation is very useful to have between activists and academics and real people in the real world, making extremely difficult painful compromises and choices.

So I these are, these are really important points and they're exacerbated I think by North/South power differences White/Black power differences, and you know the kind of presumption that a lot of privileged people have, that they're entitled to make assumptions, which is very, very dangerous and once again that's why it's essential that academics ground their work in activism and in listening to activists. One of the things, I've got to say, that I love about your initiative at Columbia University. And as you know, I was very privileged and thankful to be invited to your first seminar, with American grassroots activists, which for me was an eye opener actually because a lot of this activism was relatively new to me instantly there was a sex workers rights activist there too. She, and I've stayed in close touch with her since then. But that eye opening meeting, I thought, showed a couple of things about the need for strong connections between activists and academics for several reasons. One is, and you've alluded to this. There's a long-standing problem of translation, where both speaking English activists and academics are both speaking the same language, but they're not understanding each other. Academics are constantly trying to find frames for thinking about things or concepts. Sometimes they work and sometimes they're truly irrelevant, and they may get you a promotion to professorship in your institution, but they're not necessarily going to be all that useful on the ground. And I really felt that acutely in that meeting, that there's a real problem of translation and not enough listening going on, on the part of the academics there. At the same time, I also felt like that, the activists they have a yearning for some frameworks to put their thoughts into a real yearning for it. It really helps. And it's a practical problem, it's a, it's a real practical project and the challenge is how do you translate it? How do you make that transition between, you know, the communication between activists and academics? So I was thinking you know one thing that would help a lot. Well first of all, obviously the kind of thing you're doing helps a lot because it gives activists, a space to reflect and think about, What do I need to know? What do I need to say? And there's other examples like that that are important like the Joan Kroc school in San Diego, which brings activists for a retreat of up to three months or more where they can write with an academic they write their story. And that helps, I think therapeutically as well as in terms of communication. But I also think that activists could reach out to academics more or we need to find a way for activists to express, What do you need? What information do you need what analysis, do you need? And this relates back to something you said earlier Leymah, about anecdotes and converting an anecdote into an evidence-based argument that shows that this was true and it did happen. And here's some facts around it. And here's how things can change.

And I was just thinking about two examples of that, that I've been through that ended up really well I think, and I, if there's time I'll, will just very quickly mentioned them. The first was when I

first joined UNIFEM in 2005. I was actually quite new to women peace and security work. I had mostly worked on gender and development more like economic frameworks micro finance, before them. And everyone said You know it's a disaster there's no women peace talks there's never any women peace talks. And I said, Oh, is there any data? Is it zero women at the start, is there any data on how many women have ever been at a peace table? There was no data at all, because as you know what is, what doesn't count in policy isn't counted. And so I asked an intern to actually find me data on the number of women at peace talks and she absolutely couldn't, and we had to do some pretty crude research and by crude I mean, calling up people saying, We're at that table, do you remember seeing a woman, was she doing anything besides delivering tea? Looking at the photo of the signatories to peace deals and saying how many women you could count? Were there any names, did any of the names on the peace deal look like a woman's name? That's literally how we had to do it. It was unbelievable. This was non-documented and that's how we came up with the figure that took a long time, I think, 2008 or 2009. We came up with the figure of 9% of the negotiators in peace agreements have been women, 2% of mediators. So that is not structured research at all. That is just that I had the resources to get somebody to try to track that down. That figure, unfortunately has become kind of like, truth, you know it's treated as truth, even though it was very much rough research, although it's been subsequently corroborated, but it became more useful for activists who could say with conviction, We know fewer than 10% of negotiators are women. That's less than half the pitiful amount that you get in national governments. You get even less than that in a more important process, which is negotiating the peace of your country. So that was like one example of, like, communication between academics and activists.

And then the other example actually is from microfinance from my days in microfinance in Bangladesh, where a lot of activists, feminist activists were uneasy about microfinance and they were saying yes this is a fantastic success story. And it's getting us on the map, it's really great news. But we're not really sure that it's actually bringing women out of poverty or. We're not even sure that they get their hands on this money. And I was just a PhD student and I was like, how can you say that? The money is handed to them in person, in cash. And I went to study this with my research partner of Mina Sangupta, and we observed with our own eyes, that it was just routine, that women are given the cash in the microfinance programs and the ones that we observed, and this is a long time ago, they handed it over to their husbands. And the husbands invested the money. And it was only widows, divorcees, and the rare single adult women who would invest the money themselves. Now, we can debate the pluses and minuses. I mean obviously, in the family, money is fungible etc. But it was you know, we wrote a paper about this and then it turned out to be extremely useful to activists who were saying, Well if, if our interest is women's financial empowerment. Then what is the exact empowerment that they're getting out of this, if we're just handing over the money? So those are just two examples of the of activists generated questions that academics can usefully explore

Leymah Gbowee 37:22

There's no way you can fight for gender equality, especially around women, peace, and security, where first we do not really do a shifting of how we see peace and security and this is something that we can talk about another time. In most of our world, when people talk peace and security, it is militarism. So, when we started the Columbia program, one of the first things that people, especially the US activists, because they were very intentional about having that program not just

be a program for the global South where there is the sagging breasts, poor women, refugee women, war victims. We wanted it to have a balance that if we are going to do a program in the global South, we do the same program in the global North. And so once we started the US program, we started hearing from activists that we do not fit into the WPS agenda. Because the whole world has made Women, Peace and Security a militarized issue, an issue about war. My first statement to one of the woman was, please help me, what kind of work do you do? Well I have a program for kids. What kind of kids? Kids that have 80% of their fathers, incarcerated, at least, 80% of the mothers have been victims of violence. At least 60% of these kids have seen some form of gun violence, and at least half of them cannot afford breakfast, lunch and dinner. So, my program brings them food in the morning. So what they're really explaining it seems from the community that has been at war, because most of the men are either gone away, and most of the women are single head of household. Half of these kids have seen violence at another level. Some people say, Oh you're dealing with housing justice and you look at the number of people who have nowhere to go, even with concern of displacement. And that's a women, peace and security issue. Or we're dealing with gun violence. Well, what this do they say, Anne-Marie, the statistics is that if we have 10,000 deaths as a result of one it's equal to a civil war, you are in a civil war kind of situation. So, technically we have to literally break it down. So for me, before we can even have this conversation of academia policy, and activism, we need to do a reframing of peace and security to include the basic human security needs. That's the first thing. The second thing is there has to be an understanding and many people have to, there has to be this intentional thing between all three sides of the divide to say, we can't win this fight in silos We've been doing it for hundreds of years and we're not winning, we're not going anywhere. We need to embrace this new idea of collective working together, taking the raw data and making it evidence and coming together activists and academics, going to policymakers to say Hey, if we let you do this, and this, and this, how do we reframe some actions, so that the community benefits. I think that's the only way we can win this. Other than that, no way. That's my take.

Anne-Marie Goetz 1:09

Leymah, I love that, I just, I love that and I'm going to slightly rephrase it into the three things that I think make all the difference in our struggle. I don't know if they solved the problem of competition for power, but reframe the narrative, number one, I couldn't agree with you more. That is the most powerful thing that feminists--do they've always done it. You're being beaten by your husband. That's your problem. You know what we've done is reframe the narrative the personal is political. If that's what's happening. It is not that you had it coming. It is that there is a profound structural imbalance that let's him get away with this and that has to stop. Reframing the narrative. Remember that's what we did in May 2008: sexual violence and conflict. Boys will be boys, can't stop it it's it's collateral damage. It just happens we can't do anything about it. We left that meeting with a Security Council resolution. That said, if there's sexual violence and conflict, and there's command knowledge of it, whether it's ordered, or being tolerated and not stopped by commanders. Then there's command responsibility. If there's command responsibility that can be prosecuted. It is a tactic of warfare, whether you order it deliberately or you just allow it to go on, that was a huge reframing of the narrative. It's a tactic of warfare. And just like any other tactic. You can stop it. So reframe the narrative is the first thing and I agree with you completely our understanding of peace and security is so warped. Why was it more important for Osama bin Laden to be killed, than it was to restock the nation's stockpile in the USA with

personal protective equipment, 700, million masks were needed. That never happened. Instead, you know we invest in killing the terrorists overseas. So that's number one is like changing the narrative about what is peace and what is security. The second thing that I think you've said is that we have to build alliances across silos, both between feminists across silos. But as I've always found in the policy world. We need alliances everywhere we can get them, and often in very unfamiliar places so as you know one of the most effective allies around the struggle to stop sexual violence and conflict was a military commander Patrick Cammaert, who had been a force commander in a peacekeeping force in eastern Congo. So building alliances, even with very unfamiliar types. Security Council ambassadors, military police. That's also very valuable. That helps to build leverage of course as well for policy change. I think the third thing, and I think you're an example of this, one of the best I know is, don't ask for permission. Don't wait to be allowed. Because you're never going to get the permission. Just trust your judgment and your instincts. And what you did and what you've done in many many arenas has been nobody you're not waiting for permission you're not waiting to play by the rules that everybody imposes on you. You're saying there's something wrong with this system. I've got to do it this way. I'm going to surround the conference hall in the Golden Tulip Hotel or wherever it was in Ghana, you know with activists. I'm going to stop people from coming out of the room, you know, while seen as an outrageous thing to do, it made all the difference. So those are three things that I think are the keys to moving the agenda, we're all doing it. What I still am grasping at is, is where do we get the political power to really make a difference after all that, on the ground.

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