



WOMEN IN PEACE AND SECURITY

By Jean Manes and Ron Granieri September 29, 2020

<https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/podcasts/manes-wps/>

Welcome to **WAR ROOM** the official podcast of the U.S. Army War College Online Journal. Graciously supported by the Army War College Foundation, please join the conversation at warroom.armywarcollege.edu. We hope you enjoy the program.

The views expressed in this presentation are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Army War College, the U.S. Army, or the Department of Defense.

Ron Granieri: Welcome to A Better Peace the War room Podcast. I'm **Ron Granieri** Professor of History at the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College and Podcast Editor of the War Room. It's a pleasure to have you with us. On October 31st, 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, which reaffirmed “the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building, the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.” Resolution 1325 helped create the Women in Peace and Security program or WPS. WPS has grown over the succeeding decades to link different governmental and non-governmental agencies in promoting better understanding of both the impact of international conflict on women and the role of women in security policy making. As we approach the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325, we at A Better Peace felt our listeners should learn more about WPS, its connection to the American defense establishment, and its possible work in the future. Our guest today, Ambassador **Jean Manes**, is deeply involved in these questions and has joined us today to discuss her work with WPS. Ambassador Manes has been since October of 2019, Civilian Deputy to the Commander and Foreign Policy Advisor to United States Southern Command. She is responsible for overseeing U.S. SOUTHCOM’s human rights and women, women, peace and security programs, and at building trust and strengthening relations with foreign and interagency partners. Ambassador Manes previously served as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of El Salvador. She's a member of the senior foreign service with the Department of State and has served under five presidents in her 27-year career. She's also served as Principal Deputy Coordinator for the Bureau of International Information programs, Director of Resources for the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, as a Public Affairs Officer in Afghanistan and as Consul General in the Azores among other postings. Ambassador Manes has a master’s degree in international administration from American University and a Bachelor of Science in foreign policy from Liberty University in Virginia. Welcome to A Better Peace Madam Ambassador.

Ambassador Jean Manes: Great, thank you for having me.

RG: Ambassador, how did you become involved with WPS?

JM: Well, you know I've been involved in women, peace and security known as WPS my entire career and I say that because overall, throughout my career, we've looked at how can you make this world more safe and secure? And it's impossible to do that if 50% of the population is not included. So, I've never really looked at it as separate. I've looked at it as an integral component of what we do in security, so if we want to improve security in the world, then women have to be a center component of that, and that's been throughout every job, whether it was in Syria, Afghanistan, El Salvador, they have to be at the heart of how we want to improve and work with host governments around those countries to improve security and improve peace around the world.

RG: Sure. What is the role of WPS and the role of your work specifically now that you're at SOUTHCOM, rather than as an ambassador in the foreign service?

JM: When I arrived at SOUTHCOM, the decision was made right at the beginning to move that portfolio to the deputy commander position, and the reason for that is to make it central to everything we do. So not a separate part of what we were doing, not a program, but integral. And so, what does that mean? It means that every time Admiral Faller, who's the Combatant Commander of U.S. Southern Command, and I traveled to a country in the region across Central South America and the Caribbean, every key leader meeting we raised this issue. And we raised this issue to see what each country is doing, how we can both learn from our partner countries and share experiences. So, I'll give you an example. We recently were in Colombia and we set up a meeting with 50 women of the Colombian Army. And it was the end of the day. And everybody was hot, tired, and they were grumbling. And it was, we don't have time for this women's event. And I looked at them and I thought you know, we just had an hour-long tour of a warehouse. You can't tell me that we don't have time to meet with these 50 women who have been waiting, probably for two hours, to meet with the head of the Colombian Army who they've never met as well as our combatant commander as well as myself. We got in the room with a skeptical group and then the room was electric. One by one these women kept telling their stories of why they joined the Colombian Army: to improve their country, to improve their communities, to improve security, their trials, their triumphs. And the room was just on fire and the energy level was so high that at one point I did look at my watch and I said, actually we really do need to go or the pilots are going to time out in terms of us getting on our airplane for the way back. And the Colombian Chief of the Army didn't want to leave. He'd never met these women. He didn't even know they existed, and that's something in the military and in cultures where it's so rank-conscious that he never would have interacted with this phenomenal group of women had we not insisted on it on the agenda in that key leader engagement. And so that's a key point: when the United States leads, when we put it on the agenda, when we signal that it's important, it matters.

RG: It is a way then for us to communicate that to our allies, to our partners, that if it matters to us, it should matter to them too.

JM: Absolutely and the U.S. still has a long way to go. We're not there yet let's be clear. When you look at the senior ranks of the military, we still have work to do, but it's work that we can all do together.

RG: I'm curious because that particular image of essentially the United States acting as a force to introduce the Commander of the Colombian Army to the women in his own service. Have there been any places that you've visited that you feel like they were already sort of at the place the United States is? Or perhaps even ahead of the United States when it comes to integrating women into peace and security?

JM: Well, one good example is actually in Jamaica. They really have done a phenomenal job. And I say that because usually the barriers to fully integrating women to fully taking advantage of the capabilities to make a country more secure are in different components. They're cultural barriers, they're institutional barriers and then sometimes it's just practical barriers. And in looking at what the Jamaica Chief of Defense has done, he's actually looked at all three of those, so the systemic institutional recruitment mechanisms, promotion mechanisms, but they're also very aware of why it's important to lead by example. And so, I would say Jamaica is a prime example of a country that recognizes that they have to incorporate women into their security so that they can be more secure. And again, if you look around not only our hemisphere but around the world, every Chief of Defense, every Minister of Security wants to be successful, and success looks like, when you turn your country around and you make your country more secure. And so, everybody's looking for how to do that and the incorporation of women, there's no doubt that that gets people on that path to being a more secure country. In general, the population views women more credible, they view women more trustworthy. Usually when you incorporate women into an institution, it brings that level of trust that's so critical between a security force and a population, and so there are many reasons that it's in their own self-interest. If they want to be a successful person, a Minister of Defense, Chief of Defense, the incorporation of women is in fact a no brainer.

RG: I'm fascinated with the work by the way that you are approaching this question in the conversation. Something that came up in preparation for this is that it's often—perhaps it's a little too common—that when discussions of the relationship of women to security policy initially come up, it's to bring up the very real point, that women are often the victims of violence or the victims of security policies going wrong. But to view women purely as victims in this process doesn't actually help the cause of women. And it sounds to me is that what you're saying is the goal is to include, to recognize the very real role that women can play in making policy as actors, not as passive victims or as bystanders or witnesses to what's going on.

JM: Absolutely. I'll give you an example of that. We were looking at El Salvador because it was the homicide capital of the world outside of war zone, and working with the Salvadoran government on how to improve security because that was leading to outward migration to the United States. So, it was a security issue for the United States and for El Salvador. And we were collecting loads of data, which I'm a firm believer in data, collecting data on the homicide rate on extortion, on kidnapping, all sorts of levels of crime to see, are we making a difference? Is the country getting better? And over a period of a year and a half, the homicide rate had dropped by half, 50%, yet the perception was that security had not improved in the country. And so, looking at that, it was where is the gap between public perception and the facts? Because if the homicide rate, as well as extortion, as well as other things had gotten better, why isn't the public convinced? So, we went back to the data and in the data, we looked at where people feel most insecure and in particular, women. Where do women feel the most insecure? Public transportation. When I say that, if there are any women listening to this, right away, you know that that's absolutely correct, that you have felt that feeling sitting at the bus stop with no light, or you're sitting at the bus stop alone, or you're walking to the bus stop to your house at night and you feel unsafe. And when we went back and examined what we were doing in partnership on the military side and on the policing side with the government of El Salvador, we had not done a single initiative, not one, focused on public transportation. We had missed it. And when I went back and looked at my own team to look at who was on that team, where we were determining the priorities, there was not a single woman. And I say that because I am 100% convinced if there had been even just one woman as part of that working group determining the priorities where to put the money to improve security. We would have caught that. And so that's the power of having women involved at every level.

RG: Interesting. How have you watched the role of women change within the foreign service over the course of your career as you moved up, up the chain to become an ambassador yourself.

JM: It's definitely changed over time. I remember throughout my career I was always the youngest one in the room and a woman and so back in the day, there were countries where they wouldn't send women because they thought, well the host government won't deal with them, and so you would automatically be excluded from being sent to very high level assignments in certain countries because of that country's policy and then we started changing that. We started sending people, women to Syria to Saudi Arabia, two countries where they might be not as forward leaning on women, insisting that no, this is the United States, this is our representative and we will send exactly the person that we think is the best person. And so, that definitely has changed, and it's definitely changed in terms of how you're viewed coming into a room. I think in general going through my career, I'd walk in a room and you were just underestimated. But then they quickly learned that that was a mistake. So, it definitely was an advantage at times to be underestimated.

RG: I can understand that. That's right. Well, when you know what you can do, it's just a matter of getting a chance to let them know too. Have you had the experience of walking into a room and have people not expect you to be the ambassador?

JM: I would say absolutely. It's an interesting dynamic when you're a couple. So, my husband and I are very aware of those types of biases against women and being in that position and so, we made the decision early on that where I would do most of my official events alone so that they wouldn't go to him. Because in the beginning, the men would go to him and say, hey, can you pass on this message to your wife? And my husband would say, she's the ambassador, why don't you just go over and talk to her? It's really not that complicated.

RG: Right.

JM: So, I think you know he would always refuse to sort of play that role of the message passer and force people to go up and approach me as the U.S. Ambassador as a woman.

RG: It's a subject all to itself, but I want to get back to WPS. The way that you've been describing the work of WPS, the work that you do within WPS that involves making sure that as the civilian advisor, making sure that these issues related to women and to gender roles are included in these conversations. Who are your direct counterparties? If you, as the advisor to SOUTHCOM Command, when you go on these trips, do other militaries have a similarly positioned civilian advisor, or do you find yourself interacting with foreign military officers?

JM: In most countries we are in fact working with their Minister of Security and their Chief of Defense or Minister of Defense. On the state side, we also work with the office of the Secretary of Defense in terms of policy as well as the State Department. But there's no doubt we're working with the host nations Ministers and Chiefs of Defense. So, I'll give an example with that. We had a Caribbean Chief of Defense conference at SOUTHCOM maybe about 6 months ago and we had a session on women, peace and security, and it was an interesting audience because not one of those Caribbean Chiefs of Defense is female and so it was all men in the room and it's the session right before lunch, so you can imagine everybody was, really, do we have to do this? And so, we got up and talked about it and then, as I mentioned, the forward-leaning Jamaica Chief of Defense, he stood up and said why it mattered and why it was making his country more secure and what he had done in terms of recruitment and retention. Then we headed into the lunch immediately following that because there's nothing more powerful than seeing your peers leading the way, and then you start to think, wow, maybe we should step up our game. Maybe we should try to be more successful, and in that sense, we got to the lunch and Chief of Defense after Chief of Defense wanted to share their stories after they heard from the Chief of Defense from Jamaica. So, one Chief of Defense said, I want you to know that in our

last recruitment class, the top five recruits were women. He said, I want you to know that. And I also want you to know when we recruit, we normally have about a 15 to 20% dropout rate. For women, the dropout rate is 0% because when a woman chooses this field, they are 110% committed and they will fight to the end to stay in. And so, one by one, each Chief of Defense began sharing those stories. But again, it was started by one of their peers having said, this is what we're doing to make our country more secure. And so, there's no doubt the convening power of the United States, the leading by example, that matters.

RG: It's the question of who acts as the icebreaker, and who can pull things along is a fascinating social question in so many areas. But here in particular, I could see it. Do you have counterparts within the other American combatant commands around the world? Are there people similarly positioned as you leading WPS in CENTCOM or NORTHCOM or any of the other combatant commands?

JM: So, I believe you U.S. Southern Command is the only one that's put this portfolio up with the Civilian Deputy Commander. Each of the combatant commands in other places do have gender advisers, but it was determined very early on to put it at the most senior leadership level for U.S. Southern Command because we thought it was that important. We wanted it to be front and center in every conversation and we wanted to make sure we highlighted it in those key leader engagements and across our area of operation in Central South America and the Caribbean. So, most combatant commands and agencies at this point have a gender advisor, but it differs in terms of how they position that area of expertise and where they put it in their command.

RG: Interesting. Is that, as far as you know, is that because of the particular personality of the SOUTHCOM commander or of his deputy, his civilian deputy, that is you? Or is there a specific policy decision that SOUTHCOM is a place where these issues are especially important?

JM: It definitely was a decision by Admiral Faller, the Combatant Commander for U.S. Southern Command, to put it at this leadership role. Similar to the way we do, we have an office of human rights which is also forward-leaning worldwide. And so, I think it takes a senior leader to make it relevant, and so once we got that running space, I think we've shown to him over the last nine months, the real power there is in putting this at the forefront of the agenda and how it can really change the game on security having women at the forefront.

RG: Right. Well, that's why I'm thinking it's similar to your discussion of the role of the Jamaican Defense Chief in opening the eyes of his colleagues, that SOUTHCOM's decision to do this and the positive impact that it's having on relations within the area of responsibility, one would think or one would hope that other commanders are watching and could perhaps take a lesson from SOUTHCOM on this.

JM: I hope so too. And the other thing we're doing is really engaging on social media and other traditional media. So, we have a policy where we're highlighting women's achievements on our social media handles. We do it very deliberately and consistently to showcase women who are becoming, maybe it's the new Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the first time that there is a female Chief Master Sergeant in any of the services was just named. Or it's somebody in the hemisphere, a woman who's attained a senior position. Again, making the invisible, visible, so really elevating what women are doing not only in the United States but in the countries in the hemisphere. And again, people take notice. I highlighted one woman on social media in Uruguay, and within 15 minutes the Head of Public Affairs for the military in Uruguay said, hey, I saw you highlighted this woman in our armed forces. We have others, can you highlight them? So, then it gets to be a little bit of a competition, which I like.

RG: Well, that's the way it should be, right? It should be encouraging everyone to try to raise the bar higher. Do you get a feeling within SOUTHCOM that the United States, its partners, that there really is a kind of, if the United States is making this a priority, then this is going to get their attention? And does that mean on the other side of the coin, that if a different SOUTHCOM Commander had different priorities, that that would also send a message to American partners in the region?

JM: There is no doubt that leadership matters. I think as part of the leadership team with Admiral Faller U.S. Southern Command, we're in it to make the structural changes and try to move the bar far enough to where again, people see that it's in their own self-interest. So, you as a Chief of Defense, you as a Minister of Security, you realize that if you want to be successful, the incorporation of women is essential at every level. And everybody wants to be successful. So, I think the point is to try and get people far enough along to realize this isn't a box checking exercise. Yes, it's the right thing to do, but it's also going to make your country more secure.

RG: Right. Well, what do you consider the biggest challenge facing WPS as a program right now? What is the next big thing that you think needs to be done?

JM: I think part of it is not looking at it as a program but look at it just as policy. Again, anytime you look at a problem, how can you be successful and how can you achieve the end goal, which is to make our countries more safe and secure? And when you go back to that and you see how to do that, women have to be at the very foundation of that, particularly in the Western Hemisphere where you have so many women who are single households. You have a high level of domestic violence. You have high outward migration rate. Again, taking it back to, this is not a program, this is not an add on, this is fundamental to a Minister of Security or a Chief of Defense being successful in making their country more secure. I think that's really the next step where it's just generally recognized. I look at on social media when we highlight, this is the first woman Chief

Master Sergeant, or this is the first woman to graduate from the Green Beret course, or this is the first woman... I'm looking forward to the day when we get past the first, when we get past the fifth, when we get past the tenth, and when it simply becomes unremarkable.

RG: Right.

JM: When it becomes unremarkable and we don't even have to highlight it, or it's not even anything we notice, then I think we will have met the goal.

RG: Right. It is fascinating because the idea is that one wants to be as creative and as encouraging as possible to the point where the encouragement is no longer necessary, right? That people simply adopt it as part of the water in which they move, let's say. I am curious for you as POLAD, as political adviser to U.S. SOUTHCOM, are these positions based on a term and rotation basis, or what do you see ahead for yourself?

JM: We have a number of foreign policy advisor positions across the world, and this really started—I want to say about 15 or 20 years ago—when we were really trying to take our two institutions, The Department of Defense and Department of State, and try to figure out how we could work together more to advance foreign policy and to meet the mission. And we're fundamentally different institutions. We think differently, function differently, and now we have military attachés, military advisors that are embedded in the Department of State, and we have foreign policy advisers from the State Department that are embedded across the Department of Defense, including the combatant commands which is where I am. These positions in general at this level, the senior position is almost always a former ambassador and really trying to integrate and make sure that we're doing the best for the people of the United States, that we're really looking at every aspect, both the military and foreign policy. So, what's next? Generally, these positions are two to three years. I'm thrilled to be in this position because I love looking at the regional trends and how we can structurally make a difference. And then after that, we'll see. It could be another ambassadorship, could be another role, we'll just see what's out there. But right now, I'm fully committed at U.S. Southern Command and excited to be part of our team.

RG: Fair enough. I know that you happened to come on board this past fall, just in time for the entire world to change around you. And so, the kind of travel, the kind of face-to-face meetings with colleagues that would normally be part of your job, have largely been put on hold I imagine since March. Do you have a sense of when you will resume traveling and meeting and doing the sort of regional diplomacy that is part of your job?

JM: Well, I will say since we've been under the COVID restrictions since about mid-March, I think, at least for U.S. Southern Command and I will say probably for the broader Department of Defense and Department of State, we've probably advanced technologically about 10 years in

three months. All because we've been forced to get people that are in my age group comfortable with all the new technology and figuring out a way to do these things in a secure way and to do our jobs and meet the mission. And so, while the in-person has stopped, we have really kept up all those key leader engagements virtually and continue to do that on a daily basis. And so, meetings with leaders in the Caribbean or Central America or individual Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of Defense, we're still doing that all virtually. The other part that we've transitioned is the Department of Defense has the humanitarian assistance program. And we have really ramped that up since day one. So, the commander has authority for \$15,000 small-scale projects, which is now been up to \$50,000 during the COVID environment, and that's to get basically first responder assistance on the ground. So, PPE, medical supplies, all those things. In 70 days, we have done close to 200 projects across the hemisphere. We have people working around the clock to partner with our partners in the region and make sure that we're being that good faith partner, being that partner of choice to the countries where we have such good relationships.

RG: Interesting. I want to end with a question for you as a diplomat, as a civilian, but from the State Department working within the Department of Defense. When you explain or when you when you speak to colleagues in the Department of State about working within the Department of Defense, within the military, what is the one thing that you find yourself most needing to explain to civilians about working with the United States military?

JM: Okay, we could do a podcast just on that.

RG: I've always wanted to ask this question as a civilian employee of the United States Army, I'm always curious what people think about this. What would you like to say on this?

JM: I would say, it is the planning process. If you look at the State Department and the Department of Defense on a scale of 0 to 10 on planning, the State Department is probably a 2 on planning and the Defense Department is probably a 12. The Defense Department plans to plan, and it is an endless process to get to that action phase. That's probably the hardest thing to explain to my Department of State colleagues. I've had the privilege to work with the military throughout my career. While I was in the Azores, we have a large presence out there and as well as in Afghanistan. And then in every embassy there is a significant Department of Defense team. But that probably is the one, the planning process, and what seem like endless meetings to get to an action point.

RG: This is interesting. Well, with that in mind, we planned to speak for about a half an hour, and we have spoken for about half an hour, Madam Ambassador. It's been a real pleasure to talk about this, to talk about your work with WPS. Thank you so much for joining us today on A Better Peace.

JM: Well, thanks for having me and always glad to participate.

RG: You bet. And thanks to all of you for listening in. Please send us your comments on this program and all the programs. Send us your suggestions for future programs. We're always happy to hear from you and please, after you have subscribed to A Better Peace because, of course, you want to subscribe to A Better Peace, please rate and review this podcast on your pod catcher of choice because that helps others to find us as well. We will see you here next time, but until next time, from the War Room, I'm Ron Granieri.