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**Keynote Address**  
**Women in Strategic Trade Conference**  
**Singapore**  
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*Remarks as Prepared for Delivery*

It is a personal and professional honor for me to deliver the keynote address at the inaugural Women in Strategic Trade Conference. To do so in a region that is so critically important and with the friendly faces of our international partners in attendance brings me even more joy.

I am delighted to join in this gathering of women leaders in national security, international trade, science, technology, and engineering.

Events like this are more important than ever. They not only facilitate the exchange of ideas but also provide a foundation from which we can develop networks and collaborate on how to help each other successfully navigate and address workplace complexities and encourage future generations of strategic trade leaders.

Many of us who work in the strategic trade field are drawn to it because of a deep-seated interest in global security and counterproliferation. We may come from backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), national security, or economics. All of these fields are critically relevant to strategic trade and are historically male-dominated.

In a 2021 report, UNESCO found that women are under-represented in fields such as computing, information technology, engineering, and mathematics. Women make up just 28% of graduates in engineering, 40% in computer sciences, and just 22% of people working in artificial intelligence. Moreover, studies show that in the United States, 40% of women leave STEM jobs within just 5 years of starting.

One source that tracks women leaders in national security reports that over 50% of senior appointments in national security in the President Biden administration are filled by women. This is higher than any previous administration, but we still have a lot of work to do.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Ian Saunders tells me that fewer than 15 heads of customs are women. This has to change. Studies show that representation of women in the national security field drops considerably from the STEM statistics. Our challenge is to support women at every step of their career and to change systems that are designed to exclude them.

President Biden has observed, “When women are engaged fully in building and maintaining peace and security in their countries, we see more sustainable and more equitable outcomes, less conflict, and longer-lasting peace agreements. If we hope to succeed in building peace and prosperity and delivering real progress, women must be engaged at every step.”

That is why we are here as a group today. Our careers are dedicated to maintaining global peace and security, and stability, and we share the hopes that our controls on strategic technologies to malign actors will lead to fewer global conflicts.

Governments should help lead the way. The Biden Administration is committed to breaking down the barriers of gender inequality in many arenas, including in STEM and national security. It has spearheaded this effort by not only ensuring women are represented at all levels of government, but also, implementing, for the first time ever, a national strategy on gender equity and equality.

The United States is taking our efforts internationally as well. Through the U.S. Singapore Women in Tech Partnership Program, Singapore and the United States have committed to support female entrepreneurs. For example, through the program Singaporean mentors will support U.S. female entrepreneurs looking to get exposed to the Singapore tech ecosystem and U.S. mentors will support female Singaporean entrepreneur who want to succeed in the U.S.

To succeed in a digitally-driven future, we must engage the entire spectrum of society’s diversity and talent—especially women—to train and prepare the next generation of leadership and build the strong partnerships that will ensure technological advancement is being channeled to make the world more peaceful and prosperous.

The world is undergoing a fundamental digital transformation that is changing the way we live, work, and think. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and the Internet of Things are shaping every aspect of modern society, including national security.

Over the course of the next decade, nations around the world will face a unique geopolitical environment framed by great power competition, extreme climate events, and accelerating technological disruption. Wars will be fought on land, in the sea, in cyberspace, and potentially in outer space. Machines may replace human soldiers. And autonomous weapons systems will be leveraged to overwhelm conventional weapons systems. In the face of these emerging threats, the world needs problem solvers like you who can navigate a complex scientific and technological landscape.

The world also needs more women at the forefront of ethical innovation. The technologies of tomorrow have the potential to move humanity forward to a better and safer world, but alternatively could cause massive societal disruption.

We are already witnessing this on the world stage with dual-use technologies. State-actors leverage technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data to turn entire regions of the world into open-air prisons. They target populations for forced DNA collection and collect genetic information.

Many of these technologies have peaceful and legitimate uses—artificial intelligence can assist with image recognition to gather data on human rights abuses and forensic technology can reconstruct crime scenes and hold perpetrators accountable. However, in the wrong hands, these same technologies are being weaponized. Strategic trade controls are more important than ever in balancing the risk and benefits of dual-use technologies.

With the digital revolution at our doorstep, bringing women to the strategic trade table is more important than ever. There is ample evidence that people with different backgrounds and experiences bring different perspectives to policy conversations. Our diversity enriches our discussion and offers opportunity for progress.

In our field particularly, where national security, STEM, and international trade meet, we must be the leaders committed to building and sustaining inclusive workplaces. Strategic trade leadership must reflect the diversity of society, just as our controls affect all of society. Please join me in a commitment to use our leadership roles to promote these goals.

I look forward to collaborating with all of you over the course of this event and am excited to hear from our extraordinary panelists.

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