Please welcome the President and CEO of the Truman Center for National Policy, Jenna Ben Yehuda. [Applause]

Good morning, everybody. Welcome, welcome. Are we awake? I said, good morning! Good morning and welcome to TrueCon 2023. We are so glad you're here at Truman. Our mission is to unite and equip a diverse community of American leaders to produce timely, innovative, and principled solutions to complex national security challenges.

We come from different backgrounds, we look different, we have different histories, but we share the same principles and the same values. We achieve impact by advancing four strategic priorities. We identify, recruit, and retain best-in-class national security leaders of today and tomorrow who reflect the diversity of America. Those are our Truman members, and they're all around you and will be on this stage throughout the day. They are incredibly talented leaders who advance our work in every corner of this nation.

We modernize national security institutions because we know that solving 21st-century problems takes more than accepting the rigidities of 20th-century institutions. And we promote principled American global engagement that leads with diplomacy and partnership, that centers human rights and a respect for human dignity, and which is reinforced by all instruments of American power. And we seek to fortify the domestic foundations of America's global strength because we know that America's ability to advance our interests globally is directly tied to the strength of our democracy at home. And we have a lot of work to do.

Our time here today is a reflection of these priorities. This morning, we're featuring panel discussions about three aspects of national security that we think a lot about: why diversity in our national security institutions is essential, how America can be a technological leader and
an economic powerhouse amidst rapid innovation and a contested global order, and how political polarization at home is ravaging our nation and our global standing.

Then, this afternoon, we're thrilled to feature three fantastic leaders and unique voices: our keynote speaker Rachel Maddow, the most recent recipient of our award for exceptional moral courage in public service Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, and this year’s honoree Congressman Jamie Raskin.

What knits together much of the content you'll see today is how Truman defines national security, in short, broadly. So many of the challenges and opportunities we face today are part of America's national security, from climate change to how cities engage with the world, to building a more humane and secure immigration system. You'll hear about many of those issues and more from our speakers here today.

We are thrilled to feature our members of the Truman National Security Project throughout the day today, especially in our discussion of political polarization in the United States. Our members are leaders in their fields and at the core of everything we do.

And if all of this has you wondering what it takes to become a Truman member, you can get on the list now to be notified when our applications for the class of 2024 open in July. You can also ask anyone at the registration desk to be connected to our membership team. We'd love to share more information on the process and notify you when the application is live. In fact, if you pull out your phones now, there should be a QR code popping up, and it's also at your tables. You can be added to our membership mailing list and be the first to know about upcoming events.

Lastly, some thanks. I'd like to thank all of our 23 sponsors who've made this convening possible. If you like what you see here today, we invite you to support the Truman Center for National Policy. Tax-deductible always helps. trumancenter.org/donate/truecon23 or you can scan the QR code on the screen and the center of your table. We really appreciate your support of principled national security policy on a range of topics that advance democracy, human rights, prosperity, and security at home and abroad.

I'd also like to thank the members of our terrific inaugural Truman Member Steering Committee who were great partners in building the agenda and more. To the phenomenal staff team at Truman here, who have really outdone themselves. They have built an incredible conference for all of you. And if you see someone with a staff badge around the halls here, please stop and thank them and maybe ensure they're staying hydrated.

Folks, we've got a great show for you here today. Please engage, ask questions, allow your beliefs to be tested and your minds expanded. Meet some new people and engage online using the hashtag #TrueCon23. Welcome to TrueCon. Let's go! [Applause]
Please welcome the moderator of our opening discussion, a senior foreign affairs correspondent at HuffPost, Akbar Shahid Ahmed. [Applause]