

Influential Women Distinguishes Kathleen Brett As Program Analyst, Space Security & Stability At Secure World Foundation

ARLINGTON, VA, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Bringing an Interdisciplinary Perspective to Space Governance, Counterspace Capabilities, and the Emerging Space-Nuclear Nexus

Arlington, Virginia — Kathleen Brett is a Policy Analyst and Researcher specializing in space security, international diplomacy, and strategic stability, bringing an interdisciplinary perspective to some of the most consequential policy questions surrounding the future of outer space. She currently serves as Program Analyst, Space Security & Stability at Secure World Foundation, where she contributes to global initiatives focused on space governance, counterspace capabilities, and the evolving relationship between national security and emerging technologies.



Kathleen also serves as Co-Editor of the 2026 Global Counterspace Capabilities Report: An Open Source Assessment, a leading publication examining military and strategic space developments across thirteen nations. Through her work, she focuses on translating complex technical and security issues into accessible policy discussions that can support informed decision-making and international cooperation.

Her path into space policy was not entirely linear. Kathleen originally majored in history at James Madison University and added political science as a double major after study abroad plans were cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic. That unexpected change ultimately introduced her to international affairs and helped establish the foundation for a career focused on security, diplomacy, and strategic policy.

Kathleen later pursued a Master of Public and International Affairs in Security and Intelligence Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. During graduate school, she recognized that she could either remain a broad generalist or develop specialized expertise in a distinct field. She chose space policy, recognizing it as one of the most dynamic and forward-looking areas within international security.

While completing her graduate studies, Kathleen joined a research group focused on space policy and attended a conference at the U.S. Air Force Academy dedicated entirely to space issues. The following year, she led a collaborative working group with the U.S. Space Force and the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFWERX), examining the future weaponization of space. The work culminated in a presentation at the Pentagon, an experience that solidified her commitment to the field.

Before joining Secure World Foundation, Kathleen served as an NGFP Graduate Fellow with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), supporting the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) on issues related to nuclear security policy, stockpile sustainment, and strategic security frameworks. Although opportunities specifically focused on space policy were limited and often highly technical, Kathleen's policy expertise and interdisciplinary background ultimately positioned her at the intersection of nuclear security and outer space governance.

Today, the growing space-nuclear nexus has become increasingly relevant to her work, allowing Kathleen to draw upon experience developed across both sectors. In addition to her professional responsibilities, she has presented research at international conferences on subjects including BRICS space cooperation, defensive coalitions in orbit, and the future of space governance. She is also pursuing a Graduate Certificate in Air and Space Law through the University of Mississippi School of Law, further strengthening her understanding of the legal and diplomatic dimensions of outer space security.

Kathleen attributes much of her success to the independence and drive she developed throughout her life. As an only child, she learned early to embark on new activities independently, experiences that helped shape the self-reliance she carries into her professional career.

Her years in marching band also played an important role in developing her leadership skills. From eighth grade through college, Kathleen participated in and served as a section leader in marching band, gaining firsthand experience in responsibility, teamwork, and being part of something larger than herself.

In college, she led a team of over 60 people within her section, working on a leadership team of 7. This experience continues to influence how she approaches her career today.

Kathleen is adamant that leadership skills do not disappear simply because someone is early in their career. She finds it helpful to remind herself that her previous leadership experience

remains valuable and that those skills can be applied in different ways depending on the circumstances.

One of the best pieces of career advice Kathleen has received is also one of the simplest: write the date and place where a person met someone on the back of their business card.

Kathleen keeps every business card she's collected in a box, and this practice makes it easier for her to reconnect with individuals while remembering where and when she met them. In Washington, D.C., where there are numerous professional events and people working across her industry, she has found this simple habit particularly useful for career growth.

Her approach to networking is also grounded in balance. Kathleen believes people do not need to attend every networking event or remain at every event for its entirety. She and her boyfriend have what they call the "happy hour rule": if a person is not happy after an hour, they can leave.

With multiple networking opportunities sometimes taking place in a single week, Kathleen believes it is important to recognize that professional development should coexist with a robust personal life.

Kathleen's own experience has also shaped the advice she offers young women interested in entering space and technical industries.

In graduate school, she realized that she did not have to be a "STEM person" to contribute meaningfully to the space sector. That realization has become something of a personal motto: "You can still contribute to the space/technical industries without being perfect at math."

For Kathleen, the space sector needs people with different backgrounds, perspectives, and skill sets. Her own journey from history and political science into security and intelligence studies and eventually space policy demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary experience.

She also encourages women to be confident in what they personally bring to the table rather than comparing themselves with their peers. Kathleen recognizes that approaches to supporting women can differ across generations. Many women earlier in their careers found themselves as the only women in the room and consequently had to stand out. As a member of Gen Z, Kathleen actively considers what support and collaboration can look like for her generation and how she can contribute to creating opportunities for other women early in their careers.

One of the biggest challenges Kathleen identifies within space policy is the difficulty early-career professionals can face when trying to break directly into the industry.

There are relatively few policy positions focused specifically on space, even though space is an area that many professionals want to enter after graduation. Rather than viewing that limited number of opportunities as an insurmountable barrier, Kathleen encourages aspiring

professionals to consider adjacent industries and identify where space fits within those fields.

That approach can provide opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge while strengthening an individual's personal brand and demonstrating the value they can bring to the space sector.

Kathleen experienced this firsthand during her time in the nuclear security industry, where she embraced being known as “the space girl.” She believes that positioning helped her better understand the increasing overlap between the space and nuclear industries, knowledge that she now applies in her current role.

Her experience demonstrates the potential value of entering a related field, developing expertise, and identifying connections between disciplines rather than waiting for a perfectly defined position in a desired industry.

While Kathleen is passionate about her work, she also places significant importance on maintaining interests, relationships, and sources of fulfillment outside the workplace.

She believes everyone should have things outside of work that fulfill and support them, wherever their found family may be. For Kathleen, those relationships provide perspective, encouragement, and balance.

She credits her boyfriend with helping her avoid becoming a workaholic early in her career. She recognizes that without his encouragement, she might be more inclined to lean in that direction. Her friends also play an important role in encouraging her to disconnect from work and enjoy the life she has outside the office.

Kathleen believes having a support system outside one's immediate workplace is crucial to long-term success, particularly for women, but also for professionals generally. She values having people outside her immediate work circle who can serve as a sounding board, offering advice and feedback from a different perspective.

For Kathleen, professional success is not simply about advancing within a specialized field. It is also about remaining open to unexpected opportunities, carrying leadership skills forward, building meaningful relationships, and developing a life that extends beyond the workplace.

As she continues to expand her expertise across space security, international diplomacy, strategic stability, and the space-nuclear nexus, Kathleen Brett is building a career defined by curiosity, interdisciplinary thinking, and a willingness to pursue opportunities that may not initially appear to fit a traditional path.

Learn More about Kathleen Brett:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Kathleen-Brett>

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