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Prior to joining CNAS, Howell worked as an intelligence analyst at a risk consulting firm in Washington, D.C. She also formerly worked as a counterterrorism researcher at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and the Elliott School of International Affairs, and as a staff assistant on Capitol Hill.

Howell's commentary and analysis has appeared in outlets including *The Economist*, *Lawfare*, *The Diplomat*, and *Voice of America*. She holds an MA in security policy studies from the George Washington University. She received her BA in medical humanities and bioethics with a minor in political science from Baylor University.