

PRISM



women,

peace

&

inclusive security

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All the Elements of National Power

BY MICHAEL MIKLAUCIC AND CATHLEEN PEARL

Such is the diversity and proliferation of threats to the security of the United States and its allies that all the elements of national strength must be mobilized to meet the challenge. As we confront this onslaught, in a time of fiscal constraint, it is especially imprudent to tap only 50 percent of our population in support of national and international security. Failing to realize the human capital represented by women and other frequently excluded constituents weakens our ability to provide for the common defense and protect our interests around the world. Two of our authors write, “Politically and militarily we have consistently drawn from less than half of our available talent.” Noteworthy, and noted by authors in this issue of *PRISM*, our adversaries, including Boko Haram and ISIS, do not make the same mistake.

Terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking, cyber threats, hybrid warfare, climate change, mass migration and more have complicated the security environment in unprecedented ways. Whether these constitute an existential threat to the U.S. is debatable. While the gravity of these threats is contested, some believe that, “ISIS and al-Qaeda pose an existential threat because they accelerate the collapse of world order...”¹ Director of National Intelligence James Clapper recently stated, “In my 50-plus years in intelligence, I don’t know if we’ve been beset by a more diverse array of challenges and crises around the world.”² We can say with certainty that the accumulation of new threat vectors, compounded by more traditional dangers has thrown the national security community into disarray. Faced with such diverse challenges, the U.S. and its allies must step up with a response equally diverse, flexible, and adaptive.

As the era of the U.S. “big footprint”—manpower-intensive military interventions—winds down, the U.S. will inevitably depend to an ever greater degree on capable partners abroad to protect shared security interests. A regrettable truth, however, is that the number of capable partners available for such burden sharing is dwindling, even as our traditional European and Asian

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partners are struggling to meet their own local security challenges. Therefore, the interests of the United States, and its allies, are served by supporting state consolidation thus expanding the pool of capable partners to meet the unprecedented security challenges of the 21st century.

Better partners will only emerge through more balanced development and security. It has long been established that the quality of a state's economic and civic development is directly correlated to the active participation of women in economic and civic life. Several of the articles in this issue of *PRISM* indicate that there is also a strong correlation between effective gender equity and inclusivity, and a state's propensity to engage in violence, either domestically or internationally. The contributions and potential of women particularly to conflict resolution and sustainable peace are well established and documented. The case of Mongolia's successful transition from communism to democracy, described in this issue, was built on the robust participation of Mongolian women. Thus, it is in our interest to encourage the building of inclusive security in our partners; not just for their own sake, but also for ours. Only reliable and capable states, not at war with themselves, make effective partners in the struggle for order, peace, and prosperity in the world.

The burden does not fall on our partners alone. In order to support inclusive security abroad, it is incumbent upon us to adopt an inclusive security lens in our own security institutions, by which we mean not only the military, but all the elements of national strength. The diplomatic and economic elements, including development, are at least as important as the military. The authors in this issue of *PRISM* base their arguments in favor

of gender mainstreaming on the criterion of security, and specifically better security. No less an authority on national security than former National Security Advisor, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and Marine Corps Commandant General James L. Jones, Jr. USMC (Ret.) wrote in 2014 that what is needed is an "...approach to U.S. national security policy that leverages all tools of American power and statecraft."³ Surely the most powerful elements of our strength as a nation is the American people—all of them.

This issue of *PRISM* is about charting a pathway to better mobilization of our diverse national strengths, throughout the fields of defense, diplomacy, and development. The articles help map critical relationships between women, peace, and security. We explore the roles that women have played, and will play in conflict, conflict resolution, and sustainable peace. Anachronistic stereotypes regarding gender roles make for bad policy when providing for the common defense. Often consigned to the role of victims of conflict, women are also agents of conflict and mitigators of conflict. Women can play important roles in conflict resolution, in peacemaking, and in peacekeeping. Perhaps most significant is their contribution to the quality of security. It is no longer enough to limit our notion of security to the survival of the state. The security of populations must be the goal for leaders today. Security must be inclusive.

Sixteen years have elapsed since the passage of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace, and Security" (UNSCR 1325).⁴ That resolution "called for women's equal participation with men and their full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security."⁵ This multilateral effort reflects

the growing recognition and understanding of the integral role gender plays in the global security environment. Progress has been made; as of 2015, 55 countries have adopted national action plans in support of UNSCR 1325. A U.S. “National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security” was published in December 2011, and some of the articles in this issue document progress made along the guidelines set forth in that plan.

Women have been playing critical combat roles in the U.S. armed forces, beginning in Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989, and, in late 2015, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced that there will be no exceptions to women’s eligibility for all military jobs in the U.S. armed forces. Women play and have played critical roles in today’s security institutions, both in combat, in support, in policy, and in leadership. Today, a cohort of female generals and admirals have already set a high standard for the over 200,000 women in the U.S. Armed Forces who follow in their footsteps.

Despite progress, integration of women in military operations worldwide has not been without challenges. Sexual abuse within armed forces in and out of conflict areas, as well as in peacekeeping operations is a serious issue and is the subject of intense examination and contentious debate. This is an important subject, and its ongoing scrutiny is vital, but it should not detract from the larger issue—the security of the United States and the American people.

The question is, have we done enough? Are we drawing consistently and systematically on all the elements of our national power to meet today’s national and international security challenges? Our authors write, as we “adapt to ever-evolving and complex threats, we cannot afford to draw from less than 100

percent of our talent pool.” Are we drawing from 100 percent of our talent pool? *PRISM* is not a journal of advocacy, but rather a venue for informed and rational discourse. The Editors’ goal is to further American and allied thinking about inclusive security, and to ensure this discourse is not marginalized or relegated to a niche populated by gender or diversity advisors. We hope to open the aperture and get past biases about gender roles, to better meet the challenges of national and international security in the 21st century.

This issue of *PRISM*, “Women, Peace, and Inclusive Security,” represents an innovative public-private partnership between the Center for Complex Operations at National Defense University, the Institute for Inclusive Security, and the National Defense University Foundation. Any shortcomings of the final product are those of the Editor, but the issue could not have been developed and produced without the contributions of all three. The extraordinary contributions of Michelle Barsa and Marie O’Reilly of the Institute for Inclusive Security merit special thanks. The enduring insight of this collaboration is that we should always err in favor of inclusion. This is not political correctness; this is being prepared for the future. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ Frederick W. Kagan, Kimberly Kagan, Jennifer Cafarella, Harleen Gambhir, and Katherine Zimmerman, "Al Qaeda and ISIS: Existential Threats to the U.S. and Europe," Institute for the Study of War (January 2016). <<http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/PLANEX%20Report%201%20--%20FINALFINALFINAL.pdf>>.

² James R. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, Interview with WTOP radio, January 31, 2016.

³ General James L. Jones, Jr. USMC (Ret.), "Foreword" in "All Elements of National Power; Moving Toward a New Interagency Balance for US Global Engagement," Atlantic Council (July 2014). <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/All_Elements_of_National_Power.pdf>.

⁴ UN Security Resolution 1325 was adopted in October 2000. The text of the resolution can be found at <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>>.

⁵ UN Security Council, "Women, Peace, and Security: Report of the Secretary-General," October 13, 2004. <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/S-2004-814-E.pdf>>.

Pete Souza



President Obama signs S.614 in the Oval Office. The bill awards a Congressional Gold Medal to Women Airforce Service Pilots.

Inclusive Security

NATO Adapts and Adopts

BY SWANEE HUNT AND DOUGLAS LUTE

We met for the first time in Pristina. Both of us had labored to mitigate conflict in the Balkans, and we had great hopes when the Dayton Agreement was signed in 1995, ending the civil war in Bosnia. But only four years later, the limits of the agreement became clear. General Wesley Clark, a principal figure in the negotiations that ended the violence in Bosnia, led NATO in a bombing campaign against the regime of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic (later charged with war crimes), whose army was behind escalating violence against civilians in Kosovo. We had already seen how Milosevic's tactics played out in Bosnia.

Swanee Hunt: I'd been involved in the Balkans since 1993, when I became U.S. Ambassador to nearby Austria, hosting Bosnian negotiations in 1994 that led to a Muslim-Croat Federation. After half a dozen trips in Yugoslavia, I was starting to get a sense of the place.

Douglas Lute: I had worked on the Joint Staff for Wes Clark during the Dayton negotiations and later during implementation of the agreement when 60,000 NATO soldiers were committed to keep the peace in Bosnia. In May 2002, I arrived in Kosovo's capital Pristina, three years after NATO's bombing campaign to halt the humanitarian crisis there, to command 15,000 U.S. and Allied troops under the NATO flag. Kosovo was struggling to find its feet, still divided deeply with fresh memories of ethnic violence. Our military mission was halfway between conflict and peace.

Swanee Hunt: In 2002, American diplomats in Pristina asked if I would co-lead a two-day workshop with a brave Kosovar visionary, Vjosa Dobruna. My main contribution was to bring

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examples of countries worldwide where women's political advancement was having a positive impact on society.

Douglas Lute: *I can't remember exactly how I ended up in that meeting with Swanee. It may have been a welcome break from the daily routine of trying to keep track of the tensions in the southeastern quarter of Kosovo and working with the emerging Kosovar political and security institutions.*

Swanee Hunt: *Doug and I got together for an early breakfast at whatever hotel was hosting internationals like me. He listened with appreciated patience as I explained my improbable notion. In fact, he must have thought I was a little weak in the head, because everyone believed that for cultural reasons—and because they wouldn't win—Kosovar women wouldn't run for public office.*

Douglas Lute: *I was intrigued by this maverick of a diplomat, enough that I asked several of our female officers to sit in on the seminar she was leading to encourage local women to run for office. It would probably be a good professional experience for them and they would set a good example to the Kosovars.*

Swanee Hunt: *As it turned out, interactions like these were the beginning of a new understanding of the disproportionate impact war has on women and the impact empowering women could have on NATO's efforts to build and sustain peace.*

NATO's Evolution: Operational Necessity

Old film footage from 1949 shows a large roomful of men in dark suits, with nary an exception: no women were at the table when 12 founding states signed the Washington Treaty establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance. This year, when NATO leaders representing 28 countries gather for the Warsaw Summit, half a dozen women heads of government will be at the table with a score of female ministers behind them, including six women who serve as their respective countries' ministers of defense. This is a sign of progress, but not enough to declare victory on the goal of true gender equity.

Shift the scene to another piece of history captured on camera just outside Paris in 1951 at the dedication of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, or SHAPE. The uniformed commander, General Dwight Eisenhower, spoke deliberately and clearly: "In all history, this is the first time that an allied headquarters has been set up in peace, to preserve the peace, and not to wage war." Reflecting on his comment today, we realize that NATO's values have not changed: NATO is an Alliance of democracies with the goal of fostering peace, even as NATO troops have fought and died in two different theaters over the past 20 years. But while the mission remains the same, NATO has evolved in important ways, and operational experience has taught us vital lessons about how to preserve peace more effectively. Choosing the right partners and ensuring they can operate successfully together are fundamental. To do that, we have learned that we must stretch our thinking and get beyond biases.

From the original group of 12, the Alliance has grown to include 28 member

states and more than 40 formal partner countries. The varied contributions of every one of those countries are needed; national diversity has proven to be a strength. In recent years, NATO officials have recognized, however, that politically and militarily we have consistently drawn from less than half our available talent. For that and many other reasons, the Alliance's Women, Peace, and Security action plan was created to reduce the barriers to women's full participation in NATO decisionmaking and involve them in all policymaking, activities, and operations.

Why? Very simply, the inclusion of women has been shown to increase Alliance effectiveness in conflict management and preventing armed violence. In short, it is an operational necessity.

Alliance's First Operation: Understanding Women as Victims

In December 1995, following more than three years of horrific violence, a NATO-led force (Implementation Force, or IFOR) deployed to Bosnia to implement the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement. A year later, NATO transitioned from IFOR to the Stabilization Force (SFOR), which helped maintain security and facilitate Bosnia's reconstruction.

The bloody Balkan conflict included rape as a tactic of war. As in many wars throughout history, among massacres and other atrocities, systematic gender-based violence was employed as a strategy to intimidate and undermine enemy morale. Sexual violence used as a tool of war was now understood as not only a personal tragedy, but also a security issue—and squarely NATO's concern. For the first time, preventing it became an element in the Alliance's approach to conflict intervention

and a focus of the military mission. Thus, one of the underlying mandates for the Alliance in its first major crisis operation was the protection of women and girls from becoming victims of sexual violence. It should come as no surprise, then, that at the outset few within NATO considered the possibility that Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian women might be powerful contributors to security. Officials at Alliance headquarters had had little opportunity to see the powerful intelligence and political courage among Balkan women. It was not until 2010 that NATO created its first position of field "gender advisor."

Gender Blindness

Swanee Hunt: But I did have the opportunity to view these remarkable women in action. With 70,000 refugees pouring across their borders, senior Austrian officials naturally expected me to explain the context to Washington. I needed accurate information and made multiple trips to the former Yugoslavia. While there, I made it a point to meet with local women—from leaders to everyday citizens. My contacts included thousands of women, and I marveled at their resilience. Repeatedly, I saw women finding ways not simply of surviving, but of reconciling and reconstructing communities.

In 1994, we hosted at our embassy in Vienna two weeks of negotiations, which resulted in Bosnia's Muslim-Croat Federation, a step toward the Dayton Agreement that formally ended the war. It was only when I walked into the White House auditorium for the signing of the Federation agreement and looked out at a sea of grey-suited men that I felt ashamed

at my own blindness. The delegations were all male.

How was that possible? Yugoslavia had the highest percentage of women holding Ph.D.'s of any country in Europe. They weren't just scholars; they were political leaders and activists. And they were on "our side," doing everything they could, without external support, to prevent and then stop the war. Yet despite the extraordinary feats I knew women had accomplished next door, I had failed in Vienna to notice the lack of women at the table.

Regrettably, I heard from scores of Balkan women, also absent from the talks a year later, how different their views were from those of the negotiators. Many pointed out that, with their pre-war lives intertwined,

a country cut in half did not restore their home. Tanja (a Serb member of the Bosnian presidency) said: "I was against the division agreed upon at Dayton.... We have many cultures, traditions, ethnic groups. Any division was artificial." Another, Danica (a Bosnian Croat), explained her sadness at not only being forced from her home during the war, but also at being denied safe return for years afterward: "The greatest joy is, of course, that the war stopped. But if [the goals of] Dayton had been carried out, I'd be home. Instead, I'm here [in exile], just like the day it was signed." Women's perspectives had been missing at Dayton where, many told me, they would have made clear the "guaranteed" right of return would be meaningless without the apprehension of war criminals. How could anyone return to



The Central Intelligence Agency

Male political leaders sign the Croat-Muslim Federation agreement at The White House in March 1994.

a village where the police chief or mayor, still in office, had overseen genocidal rapes and murders?

Not ideology, but pragmatism was the common thread that ran through their words to me. But they had been excluded—first, by their own nationalist power brokers, and then by “the internationals” who rewarded extremists with all available seats at the negotiating table. The result was not only a flawed right of return, but also a country bifurcated.

Human Security Requires Inclusive Security

Ironically, three months before the Dayton agreement, the UN held its September 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing. Although First Lady Hillary Clinton had been strongly cautioned against making waves (given the politically fraught U.S.-China relationship), she electrified delegates with her pointed affirmation that “...human rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are human rights, once and for all.” Now seen as a watershed in the field of women and security, the conference resulted in a strong declaration, including: “Local, national, regional, and global peace is attainable and is inextricably linked with the advancement of women, who are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution, and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels.”¹

Simultaneously, debate was growing in diplomatic and academic circles over whether the true measure of security was the well-being of states, as it had traditionally been understood, or the well-being of individuals—“human security.” That concept was

introduced by the UN Development Program’s 1994 report, with a broad definition encompassing freedom from want and freedom from fear. These ideas fueled the arguments of those who said traditional security models, by focusing on external threats to the state, ignored most of the perils faced by women (not only sexual violence, but also maternal mortality, economic deprivation, food and water insecurity, and political marginalization). Many advocates for human security also blasted unequal levels of opportunity that hinder women from fully participating in decisions on issues affecting their lives. But it was only several years later, in 2000—when the UN adopted Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security—that it became clear the paradigm was shifting.

UNSCR 1325 calls out the disproportionate impact that modern armed conflict has on women. It also highlights that women bring new eyes to old problems because of their differing experience that can yield valuable insights for conflict prevention, stabilization, and peace maintenance. Critically, the resolution encouraged an increase in women’s participation in security operations. And, of course, it called on all nations to protect women from gender-based violence. The international community, at least rhetorically, had formally recognized that women could and should be agents of security. They are not merely victims.

Swanee Hunt: Returning more than 20 times to the Balkans (to research two books), I was struck by the enormous chasm between what I heard about the war from international policymakers and from the people affected by it. Over time, it became clear to me that if we don’t begin

our search for peace by incorporating the views of all segments of society—and, in particular, women as well as men—we cannot achieve true security. Around 2002, I dubbed this idea “inclusive security,” and set about analyzing and testing the theory with military fellows, scholars, government officials, and peacebuilders on the ground.

NATO’s Second Operation and a New Lesson: Military Needs for Women’s Engagement

Douglas Lute: Women in Bosnia clearly experienced conflict differently from men. Lessons learned from that deployment and the adoption of UNSCR 1325 led to NATO’s use of gender advisors and informed changes to Alliance education

and training, culminating in the gender mainstreaming policy. The policy is described operationally as “a strategy for achieving gender equality by assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, and programs in all areas and at all levels, in order to assure that the concerns and experiences of women and men are taken into account in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres.”²

While NATO’s progress on women’s inclusion has mirrored the political and social strides women have made around the world, at first the Alliance used gender



Tsgt Laura K. Smith, U.S. Air Force

Lithuanian Army 1st Lt. Ruta Gaizetute meets with local villagers during a Civilian Military Cooperation Team visit in Chaghcharan, Afghanistan.

*advisors only in the field, and mainly to enhance **protection** of women. But during NATO's next major deployment after the Balkans, to Afghanistan following the September 11, 2001 attacks, our forces became more aware of the need to tap women's potential **contributions** to security.*

In August 2003, NATO took the lead of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, leading—at the operation's height—more than 140,000 troops from 51 Alliance and partner nations. The security of ISAF forces as well as the success of the mission hinged upon contact with the local population. Our mostly all-male units were handicapped early on by their inability to interact with or serve half the Afghan population.

NATO recognized that a gap existed in its force composition—that is, we lacked officers who could both serve in combat and interact with Afghan women. Security of the population required engaging the population, both men and women, even though cultural norms in the countryside created a barrier between our troops and Afghan women. Whether to interview or search women—or even to make sure that the persons beneath burqas were female—the need for women among NATO troops became obvious, and some units began coming up with creative measures to bridge the gap.

Observers point to an experiment conducted in 2009 at the request of male U.S. Marines as an early effort. Seven female Marines and a female interpreter

interviewed a number of village women, gaining vital situational awareness. The news spread and, by the following year, the U.S. Army also had created female "Cultural Support Teams." (There were certain differences, but the women's units were often referred to by the same acronym: FETs, for Female Engagement Teams.) In short, these teams were created because of operational necessity—a demand-driven push from the field, supported by an efficiency-driven pull from the top.

Varied Missions for Women

The Institute for Inclusive Security documented how NATO came to rely on women soldiers in Afghanistan in multiple ways, often because of their access and ability to defuse tension or connect with others, male and female.³ When police and security forces searched Afghan men for weapons, tensions were inevitably high, but often less so when women were included in patrols.

One telling vignette of a woman soldier building personal connections occurred in Sangin, one of the most dangerous areas in Afghanistan. A female corporal assigned to an infantry unit struck up a friendly conversation with a local farmer over her enjoyment of his favorite crop—watermelons. As they talked, he decided to let her know that he had vital information. She asked if she might go and get others who would very much appreciate that information, and he agreed, but when several male colleagues returned without her, the farmer refused to say more unless his new friend was present. His information regarding roadside bombs and Taliban insurgents not only saved the lives of military personnel who

frequently patrolled the area, but also helped inform future operations.⁴

Commanders often sent FETs to engage and influence the community. Teams reported that the local women—including those with whom they were interacting—had a strong influence on their husbands, sons, and the community as a whole. Female troops capitalized on this social dynamic by creating solid bonds; they acted not only as role models for Afghan women, but also as information conduits to and from larger NATO units.

Those successes likely paid dividends in an Afghan society of close family ties, where the influence of mothers and sisters can guide others in the community away from political and religious extremism. There are many reports of local women supporting counterinsurgency operations after having gained a better understanding of the military's intentions through contact with NATO's female troops.

NATO's use of FETs in operations came to a close as NATO concluded combat operations and passed the lead for security to Afghan forces in December 2014. But by then the teams had played a major role and NATO had gained important lessons on the operational benefits of women's inclusion. Ideally, in future conflict settings, we will move beyond Female Engagement Teams. Troops train together for a reason, and last-minute grafting on of even the most talented outside units composed of women is less effective than making certain we have the necessary diversity integrated in our formations at every level.

Today, with new security challenges along its periphery, NATO is undergoing significant adaptation, incorporating some powerful lessons learned from operations over the past 20 years. First, having the right partners serving alongside NATO forces is crucial. And second,

diversity in force composition is not confined to nationality; gender is also a key component. Based on NATO's operational experiences, there may never be a more constructive time than now to draw on the doctrine of inclusive security.

It is clear that NATO's values—democracy, human rights, individual liberty, and the rule of law—underpin the work of integrating a gender perspective in all areas of the Alliance. That may seem an abstract philosophical choice, but research shows that countries providing extensive opportunities for women as well as men are both more peaceful and more prosperous than other nations.⁵

The Answer is Partly Political

The reverse is also true. Researchers cite the failure to be inclusive as correlated with failed states and fallen regimes.⁶ But while there is growing acknowledgement that exclusion drives conflict, there is scant practical guidance about what meaningful inclusion looks like and how to achieve it. How can we build security forces and institutions that address the varied needs and interests of increasingly diverse populations? In short, how do we create inclusive security? As we've described, having women troops deployed on the ground offers operational benefits, but we also need women making policy. NATO is more than a military organization, and its political strength rests on common values, including equal rights and the strength of diversity. In both realms, military and political, the Alliance depends on representatives of its 28 member states, from military officers to political office holders. So the role of women matters, from the battlefield to the policy table.

What is the current picture for them? In 1999, women represented just over seven

percent of NATO countries' armed forces. It took 14 years for that percentage to inch its way up to 10.6 percent. During this time, participation of female troops in NATO-led operations was only 6.7 percent.⁷ Social science experiments have shown that diverse groups are more adept at decisionmaking.⁸ And parallel research indicates that the benefits of including both genders fully kick in only when a critical mass of 30-35 percent is reached.⁹

There is also evidence of a persistent “brass ceiling” for women in officers’ ranks as promotion numbers decline rapidly with rise in rank. However, there are some signs that this may be changing for the better. The Alliance recently appointed our first-ever female NATO Commander, Brigadier General Giselle Wilz of the U.S. Army, at NATO’s headquarters in Sarajevo. While the cadre of women in the military ranks has been growing, more women also have taken seats at the policy table. When heads of government gather at NATO, approximately 16 percent are female. Currently, women account for 21 percent of Alliance defense ministers and 7 percent of foreign ministers, making the combined total for female NATO ministers 14 percent. On average, 27 percent of the members’ parliaments are female, and the number of women in other leadership roles is increasing.¹⁰ So a pipeline exists, even if the current flow is sluggish.

And the Answer is Partly Policy

Fortunately, NATO realizes the need for collaboration among Allies and partners in this effort, and its Policy on Women, Peace, and Security has been developed within NATO’s 50-nation Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). Five additional partners (Afghanistan, Australia, Japan, Jordan, and the United Arab

Emirates) participated in its development. The policy lays out a path for removing barriers to women’s participation in NATO’s decision-making process, and reducing conflict-related, gender-based violence. The path, otherwise known as the “Action Plan for the Implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace and Security,” is organized around NATO’s three core tasks—collective defense, cooperative security, and crisis management and operations. This body of work is led by Ambassador Mariët Schuurman as the NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative (SGSR) for Women, Peace, and Security. The SGSR position was established in 2012 as a voluntary national contribution and made permanent in 2014 at the NATO Wales Summit.

One of the capstone structural changes resulting from the women, peace, and security agenda is the integration of gender advisors throughout the military and civilian structures at NATO. The importance of their work cannot be overstated. These specialized advisors are part of continuing operations in Kosovo and the current non-combat Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, as well as at SHAPE and other NATO headquarters. They report directly to commanders and help military leaders apply a gender perspective in all security matters.

Education is fundamental, and the NATO/EAPC Action Plan includes extensive training for all personnel under the Alliance umbrella, including online modules for gender training. All NATO troops who engage local populations are required to have instruction on UNSCR 1325 prior to deployment.

Of course, organizational culture, particularly military culture, is deeply rooted and difficult to change abruptly. The structural

alterations put in place by the Alliance will take time to implement fully, but we are on our way—and have come a great distance from where we began. As we look forward, these efforts will continue with the overall aim of changing the institutional culture and mind-set.

National Action Plans

In 2004, the UN urged each member state to develop a policy document on women, peace, and security to make quicker progress on goals laid out in UNSCR 1325. As of late 2015, only 18 of 28 NATO Allies have developed such a plan. The United States released its National Action Plan in 2011.

At NATO, the member states work together, train together, and fight together; NATO Allies act as one. Thus, the standard for

ensuring women's inclusion ought to be the same in all areas where NATO is present: all member states need a blueprint to integrate women's perspectives and enable their participation.

NATO's 40 partner states, too, work to be interoperable. For those partners who are prospective members, going through the process of developing a national action plan is a step that helps to prepare countries to join the Alliance. Having and implementing a well-crafted policy document is a mark of readiness.

A Look Ahead

A year of global reflection, 2015 marked 15 years since the "No Women, No Peace" landmark UNSCR 1325 was adopted. Despite considerable progress, defining the roles of women still rests on the margins of



Lt. Kristine Volk, Resolute Support Public Affairs

Women with the Afghan Border Police and members of the Train, Advise, and Assist Command - South come together to discuss gender integration in the Afghan security forces, as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission.

international peace and security agendas. But the issues surrounding their roles are not marginal; they are fundamental to making headway in solving today's security challenges. A more systematic approach will help us develop targets, monitor implementation, measure the results, and report back to decisionmakers.

To address that need, NATO unveiled the "1325 Scorecard" last October. This new tool, developed by Women in International Security (WIIS) and the Belgrade Center for Security Policy, is designed to help Allies and partner nations measure their progress, identify gaps, and compare notes on implementation using the same metrics. Sponsored by NATO's Emerging Security Challenges Division, the scorecard provides a systematic approach for evaluating and tracking our collective progress on implementation of UNSCR 1325. Widespread use of this innovative and very practical tool can raise awareness of UNSCR 1325 by identifying the gaps where policy is lacking and help ensure that all Allies and partners meet the NATO standard of interoperability on gender issues.

Mainstreaming the gender perspective into everything the Alliance does is an ambitious and ongoing effort. As the Alliance and its partners explore other practical ways to carry out the women, peace, and security agenda, nurturing positive initiatives and achievements is also important. A good example is a NATO Trust Fund that was set up by nations to underwrite the costs of security and defense related projects focusing on supporting the Jordanian Armed Forces' efforts to increase recruitment and retention of women, and provide effective training on gender issues. Also, NATO endorsed military guidance on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in June 2015, which includes better

direction for commanders in the field. Best practices have been developed from experiences in NATO's operational deployments. Many partnership tools also include a gender component, including various trust funds, the Building Integrity assistance program, and research grants in NATO's Science for Peace and Security Program. Regular staff-to-staff talks foster learning about crisis management and peacekeeping among NATO, the UN, and other international organizations.

As NATO adapts, important lessons are being incorporated. So what more can be done? "NATO is doing a lot. But we need to do more, especially when it comes to promoting equal participation within NATO itself," said Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, NATO Deputy Secretary General, speaking recently at the UN Security Council High-Level Review of UNSCR 1325. "We need to increase active and meaningful participation of women."¹¹ In his speech, Vershbow pledged that NATO will:

- Share best national practices and valuable lessons learned among NATO Allies and Partners on increasing female participation at decisionmaking levels within national structures.
- Accelerate the advancement of women in NATO headquarters by establishing a Women's Professional Network and Mentoring Program.
- Actively encourage Allies to submit female candidates for NATO's most senior decisionmaking positions.
- Strengthen NATO partnerships for gender equality with other international organizations, including the UN, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, European Union, and African Union.
- Finance gender-sensitive research aimed at identifying drivers of radicalization and

violent extremism, and developing targeted and evidence-based responses, including the empowerment of women to safeguard communities.

- Establish a civil society advisory panel to institutionalize NATO's positive engagement(s).

"We face a rising tide of violent extremism and terrorism," Vershbow said. "And it will be women, once again, who are most at risk. It is therefore essential that women be involved at every stage, and every level, of our operations and missions."¹²

Operationally, it is not that NATO should have more women; it is that we must. That is because we need women to increase access to citizens, build bridges between conflicting parties, and gather more and better information. We need women's expertise and input on deployments, planning, and policy. As Allies contribute human resources to NATO, whether deploying troops to field exercises, filling headquarters billets, or advancing candidates for leadership positions, nations can advance inclusive security by putting additional well-qualified women in the mix. In sum, inclusive security should be incorporated in the military, political, and institutional adaptations of the Alliance to ensure that NATO is using all available resources to meet the security challenges of today and tomorrow. As the Alliance adapts to ever-evolving and complex threats, we cannot afford to draw from less than 100 percent of our talent pool. Diversity in all its forms is a powerful asset of NATO's 28 democracies. Likewise, for NATO as an organization, inclusive security is more effective, efficient, and smart security.

As Ambassador Vershbow said cogently, "Diversity gives us strength. Being inclusive

will allow us to achieve our common goal: lasting peace and security."¹³ [PRISM](#)

Notes

¹ Fourth World Conference on Women – Beijing Declaration, point no. 18 <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>>.

² Helene Lackenbauer and Richard Langlais, eds. “Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions,” Swedish Defence Research Agency, (May 2013).

³ Institute for Inclusive Security, “How Gender Can Make a Difference to Security Operations,” NATO: Gender Training, and Education,” (2011).

⁴ Ibid., Case Study Three, 28-29.

⁵ On peace, see Valerie Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett, *Sex and World Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); on prosperity, see OECD, “Gender and Sustainable Development: Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,” (2008) and the World Bank’s gender and development data at <http://data.worldbank.org/topic/gender>

⁶ Stephen Baranyi and Kristiana Powell, “Fragile States, Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness: A Review of Donor Perspectives,” The North-South Institute, August 11, 2005. <http://www.xn--knsnet-bya.dk/images/konsnet/pdf/Gender_FS_Paper_Donor_Perspectives.pdf>; Frances Stewart, *Horizontal Inequalities as a cause of conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

⁷ NATO Science for Peace and Security Program, “UNSCR 1325 Reload: An Analysis of Annual National Reports to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives from 1999-2013: Policies, Recruitment, Retention and Operations,” (June, 1 2015): 6 and 26-28.

⁸ Katherine W. Phillips, Katie A. Liljenquist, and Margaret A. Neale. “Is the pain worth the gain? The advantages and liabilities of agreeing with socially distinct newcomers,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 35 (2009): 336-350.

⁹ Sarah Childs and Mona Lena Krook, “Critical Mass Theory and Women’s Political Representation,” *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 725–736. [doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00712.x]

¹⁰ Parliamentary figures were calculated using data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, available at <<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>>.

¹¹ Remarks by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on the High-Level Review of UNSCR 1325 – Women, Peace and Security, October 13, 2015, New York NY. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_123768.htm>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Tim McKulka



Sudanese take part in “Citizen Hearings” in Musfa, Blue Nile State, on the border between northern and southern Sudan. The hearings were part of a 21-day process of popular consultations where residents could express whether the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) had met their expectations.

Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies: Exploring the Evidence¹

BY MARIE O'REILLY

Traditional approaches to ending wars—where armed groups meet behind closed doors to hammer out a truce—are falling short in the face of 21st century conflicts. The number of armed conflicts has been increasing over the past decade. In 2014, the world witnessed the highest battle-related death toll since the Cold War.² Belligerents increasingly target civilians, and global displacement from conflict, violence, and persecution has reached the highest level ever recorded.³ As new forms of conflict demand innovative responses, states that have emerged from war also persistently relapse. In the 2000s, 90 percent of conflicts occurred in countries already afflicted by war; the rate of relapse has increased every decade since the 1960s.⁴ Empirical analysis of eight decades of international crises shows that peacemaking efforts often succeed in the short-term only to fail in the quest for long-term peace.⁵

Partly as a means to address these challenges, calls for inclusive approaches to resolving conflict and insecurity have grown louder. In the field of international development, decades of evidence of women's positive impact on socioeconomic outcomes has changed the way governments, donors, and aid organizations do their work. The same cannot be said for the field of peace and security, where women have been thoroughly and consistently excluded. Despite a crescendo of calls for women's participation in decisionmaking surrounding peace and security over the last two decades, change has been slow to follow. For example, women made up just two percent of mediators and nine percent of negotiators in official peace talks between 1992 and 2011.⁶ And just two percent of funding dedicated to peace and security goes to gender equality or women's empowerment.⁷

The full impact of women's participation on peace and security outcomes remains poorly understood.⁸ But a recent increase in quantitative and qualitative research has the potential to transform the status quo. In outlining the existing data, this article shows how women's inclusion

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helps prevent conflict, create peace, and sustain security after war ends.

Women Prevent Violence and Provide Security

There is overwhelming quantitative evidence that women's empowerment and gender equality are associated with peace and stability in society. In particular, when women influence decisions about war and peace and take the lead against extremism in their communities, it is more likely crises will be resolved without recourse to violence.

Women's Participation Is a Predictor of Peace

Statistical analysis of the largest dataset on the status of women in the world today shows that where women are more empowered in multiple spheres of life, countries are less likely to go to war with their neighbors, to be in bad standing with the international community, or to be rife with crime and violence within their society. The causal direction is not yet clear, but it is evident that gender equality is a better indicator of a state's peacefulness than other factors like democracy, religion, or GDP.¹⁰ Similarly, gender inequality has been revealed as a predictor of armed conflict in a number of empirical studies, whether measuring conflict between states or within states.¹¹

Looking at the countries in conflict today, this plays out clearly. Fourteen out of the seventeen countries at the bottom of the OECD's index for gender discrimination also experienced conflict in the last two decades.¹² War-ravaged Syria, for example, has the third-most discriminatory social institutions of 108 countries surveyed—women face legal and social restrictions on their freedom of movement, only men can act as legal guardians over their

children in most communities, and judges can authorize marriage for girls as young as 13 years of age.¹³

Many studies show a direct relationship between women's decisionmaking power with regard to peace and conflict, and the likelihood that war will break out. For example, a cross-national quantitative analysis found that higher levels of female participation in parliament reduce the risks of civil war.¹⁴ Another, using data on international crises over four decades, found that as the percentage of women in parliament increases by five percent, a state is five times less likely to use violence when faced with an international crisis.¹⁵ In terms of political violence perpetrated by the state, statistical analysis of data from most countries in the world during the period 1977–1996 showed that the higher the proportion of women in parliament, the lower the likelihood that the state carried out human rights abuses such as political imprisonments, torture, killings, and disappearances.¹⁶

Women Moderate Extremism

Although more difficult to document, similar patterns arise when women are involved in prevention efforts beyond official decision-making roles. When it comes to preventing violent extremism, for example, there are countless cases of women in civil society adopting effective nonviolent approaches rooted in cooperation, trust, and their access to communities. In Pakistan, activist Mossarat Qadeem has a decade of experience deradicalizing extremists by working with legislators, religious leaders, and schools to talk young men out of committing suicide attacks.¹⁷ Her organization, PAIMAN Alumni Trust, has trained more than 655 mothers to deradicalize 1,024 young men and boys, rehabilitating

them and reintegrating them into society.¹⁸ In Libya, Alaa Murabit and her colleagues at The Voice of Libyan Women “walk into extremists’ homes, schools and workplaces.”¹⁹ They create a dialogue with those who feel they have no alternative, drawing on religious discourse and Libyan culture as entry points, while using education and media campaigns to change attitudes.²⁰ These are just two examples among many more.

Like men, women play a variety of roles when conflict threatens. A small minority of women join and support terrorist organizations for a variety of reasons, often when they perceive no other options to address their grievances.²¹ But interviews with 286 people in 30 countries across the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia suggest that women are often the first to stand up against terrorism,

since they are among the first targets of fundamentalism, which restricts their rights and frequently leads to increases in domestic violence before it translates into open armed conflict.²² For the same reason, women are well placed to detect early warning signals of oncoming violence or radicalization that men may miss. When women serve in police forces—which research shows are more effective at combating terrorism than militaries—this can be a particularly valuable skill, as they bring a complementary understanding of the threat environment in the communities they serve.²³ Women in police forces can access the female half of the population that may be closed off to men in conservative cultures, and women are more likely to report gender-based violence to female officers.²⁴ In addition, policewomen are more likely than their male colleagues to



Catherine Tierina

The Bangui National Forum took place in the capital of the Central African Republic in May, 2015, and concluded with the adoption of the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation, and Reconstruction.

de-escalate tensions and less likely to use excessive force.²⁵

Women Strengthen Peacemaking

When conflict does break out and social norms are upturned, peace and transition processes represent opportunities to both transform the underlying causes of violence and address its effects. Mediation is a more effective means of ensuring that conflict will not recur when compared to military victories.²⁶ However, it still has a mixed record of success: empirical analysis of eight decades of international crises shows that while mediation often results in short-term cessations of hostilities, this frequently comes at the expense of long-term peace.²⁷

New qualitative and quantitative research shows that women can change this picture. A study of 40 peace processes in 35 countries over the last three decades showed that when women's groups were able to effectively influence a peace process, an agreement was almost always reached—only one case presented an exception. When women did not participate, the rate of reaching an agreement was much lower. Once an agreement was reached, the influence of women's groups was also associated with much higher rates of implementation.²⁸ Statistical analysis of a larger dataset also shows that when women participate in peace processes, peace is more likely to endure. Measuring the presence of women as negotiators, mediators, witnesses, and signatories to 182 signed peace agreements between 1989 and 2011, this analysis shows that women's participation has its greatest impact in the long term: an agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in its creation.²⁹

Women Promote Dialogue and Build Trust

Women are often perceived by belligerents as honest brokers in peace processes, and they act accordingly. Conflict parties may see women as less threatening because they are typically acting outside of formal power structures and are not commonly assumed to be mobilizing fighting forces. This grants women access to conflict parties often denied to male leaders.

In Sri Lanka, for example, when talks were foundering and leaders of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam refused to speak with members of the Sri Lankan government and Norwegian negotiators, they asked Visaka Dharmadasa, founder of Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action and the Association of War-Affected Women, to carry messages to the government.³⁰ Negotiators involved in peace processes in Northern Ireland, South Africa, and Somalia report that, even when female participants initially met with hostility from their male counterparts, they ultimately developed a reputation for building trust, engaging all sides, and fostering dialogue in otherwise acrimonious settings.³¹

Women's roles as mediators are also reflected in community-level dispute resolution. For example, in Somalia women are known to serve as first-line diplomats, carrying messages between clans to settle disputes, since they have greater freedom of movement between the groups, partly due to intermarriage.³² Women in the Philippines' southern region of Mindanao report a long tradition of leading community-level dispute resolution, which ranges from mediating between conflicting clans to negotiating with the national army.³³

Of course, not every woman who participates in peacemaking will promote dialogue.

In particular, women representing the conflict parties in a peace process may prioritize toeing the party line.³⁴ Nonetheless, research across cultures demonstrates that, on average, women are less likely than men to be discriminated against by virtue of their race, religion, or ethnicity, making them well positioned to move between such groups during conflict.³⁵ Empirical studies show that both men and women are less fearful of women from a different social group than men from a different social group, so conflict parties may be more likely to trust women as intermediaries.³⁶ The fact that men are more likely to act as competitors and aggressors in interpersonal and intergroup relations compared to women—whether measured by laboratory studies, homicide rates, or all-out war—may also help to explain why women tend to be perceived and to act as peacemakers rather than as adversaries or competitors for power.³⁷

Women Bridge Divides and Mobilize Coalitions

Beyond their roles as intermediaries, women are adept at building coalitions in their push for peace. They frequently mobilize diverse groups in society, working across ethnic, religious, political, and cultural divides cracked open by conflict. In addition to this horizontal bridge-building, women also bridge the vertical divide between elites and the grassroots, which may in turn increase the chances that peace will last by promoting buy-in and generating legitimacy.

In the Philippines, for example, women in the high-level peace talks that produced the 2014 peace agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front continually pushed for a broader base of support for the peace process across Filipino

society. To facilitate understanding of the process and feed public opinion back to the peace table, they consistently consulted with civil society organizations and led extensive national consultations across 13 regions, ensuring that participants represented a cross-section of religious, indigenous, youth, and other groups. Female negotiators from opposing sides united in their efforts to persuade the public of the value of negotiation over conflict.³⁸ Women in civil society, many of whom had decades of experience in peacebuilding, worked in unison with the female officials and constantly pushed the elites to continue their pursuit of peace.³⁹ When the conflict parties threatened to derail the talks with violence in 2012, women led a peaceful protest, pressuring the spoilers to return to the table.⁴⁰

In Liberia, Leymah Gbowee and others organized Christian and Muslim women who, together, pressured warring parties into the 2002 negotiations that ultimately ended years of horrific war. Recognizing that achievement, the Nobel Committee awarded Ms. Gbowee the 2011 Peace Prize for her “nonviolent struggle for... women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work.”⁴¹ Indeed, these kinds of cross-sectoral alliances frequently devise creative approaches to breaking impasses during a stalled peace process, from nonviolent sit-ins to unorthodox tactics like blocking doors or even withholding sex from husbands. Liberia is one well-known case among many in this regard.

Although women have built such coalitions for peace in myriad ways in differing contexts, similar patterns of women uniting across divides and reconciling disparate groups have been documented in Colombia, Guatemala, Iraq, Kenya, Northern Ireland, Somalia, South Africa, and beyond.⁴² In fact, in-depth studies

of 40 peace processes show that no women's groups tried to derail a peace process.⁴³ This is not true of other societal groups—in Sri Lanka, for example, Buddhist monks and civil society organizations mobilized to protest against the negotiations.⁴⁴

Women's coalition-building across divides may be explained by the fact that women are much more likely than men to reject hierarchies based on group belonging. Analyzing studies with more than 50,000 respondents across 22 countries on five continents, social psychologists found that this was true across cultures, without exception.⁴⁵ This gender dynamic is particularly significant for peace-seeking initiatives, since so many wars are started by oppressed groups against dominant groups and vice versa.

Women Raise Issues That are Vital for Peace

Like men, women play a variety of roles during conflict, from peacemakers and political advocates to victims and perpetrators. Nonetheless, on average, women experience conflict differently from men. Men form the majority of combatants and are more likely to be killed in combat. Women are less likely to take up arms, but die in higher numbers from war's indirect effects—the breakdown in social order, human rights abuses, the spread of infectious diseases, and economic devastation.⁴⁶

Perhaps because of these unique experiences during war, women raise different priorities during peace negotiations. They frequently expand the issues under consideration—taking talks beyond military action, power, and territory to consider social and humanitarian needs that belligerents fail to prioritize. In fact, when women are included, they frequently advocate for other

excluded groups and address development and human rights issues related to the underlying causes of the conflict.⁴⁷ Both of these approaches help societies to reconcile and ultimately build a more robust peace.

In Northern Ireland, for example, the cross-sectarian Women's Coalition secured language in the April 1998 Good Friday Agreement on victims' rights, as well as provisions for reintegration of political prisoners, integrated education, and mixed housing—items that were not brought to the table by the main parties to the conflict.⁴⁸ In the negotiations leading to the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement in Sudan, women delegates pushed for previously neglected provisions addressing safety for internally displaced persons and refugees, food security, and gender-based violence.⁴⁹ In the political transition in Afghanistan, women in the constitutional assembly that convened in 2003 and 2004 advocated for the rights of the disabled and supported the Uzbek minority's efforts to gain official recognition for their language.⁵⁰

Indeed, when women are excluded from peace and transition processes, significant grievances and sources of instability are often overlooked. Former U.S. Ambassador to Angola Donald Steinberg suggests that women's absence from the 1994 peace negotiations in Lusaka between the Angolan government and rebel forces offers a cautionary tale in this regard. He later wrote:

The exclusion of women and gender considerations from the peace process proved to be a key factor in our inability to implement the Lusaka Protocol and in Angola's return to conflict in late 1998...Not only did this silence women's voices on the hard issues of war and peace, but it also meant

*that issues [such] as internal displacement, sexual violence, abuses by government and rebel security forces, and the rebuilding of social services ... were given short shrift—or no shrift at all.*⁵¹

Women Prioritize Gender Equality

When women participate in peace processes they frequently raise issues of gender equality and women's rights, which closely correlate with peace. This contributes to strengthening the representativeness and legitimacy of the new political order that follows. Women's significant participation in the transition in South Africa led to the enshrinement of gender equality in the country's new constitution. The constitution provided for a new Commission on Gender Equality and included a

requirement that women comprise 30 percent of all new civil servants.⁵² Women's contributions to the peace talks in Guatemala led to the creation of the National Women's Forum and the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women, as well as legislation against sexual harassment and efforts to make access to land and credit more equal.⁵³

Even when women's concerns are not ultimately included in peace agreements or new constitutions, women's mobilization in contexts where gender roles and political power are in flux appears to have produced positive outcomes for the political institutions that follow.⁵⁴ Studies show that across Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, there have been dramatic increases in the number of women in parliaments in post-conflict countries compared to those without conflict. In Africa,



UNAMID/Albert Gonzalez Farfan

Community policing volunteers bridge divides in Darfur. In the Zam Zam camp for Internally Displaced People in North Darfur, UNAMID police officer Grace Ngassa, from Tanzania (left), and Community Policing Volunteer Jazira Ahmad Mohammad (center) interact with a woman and her child (right).

women in post-conflict countries have almost doubled their rates of legislative representation compared to countries not in conflict—reaching 27 percent of members of parliament in post-conflict settings, compared to 13 percent in settings without conflict, according to a 2012 study.⁵⁵

Women Rebuild More Peaceful Societies

When war is officially ended, women's political and social participation can contribute to a more robust peace for everyone by reducing the likelihood of relapse into conflict and taking a more inclusive approach to post-conflict reconstruction.

Women Break the Conflict Trap

The effect of women's participation is particularly evident when it comes to breaking the

“conflict trap.” Once war has broken out, the risk that this society will experience further violent conflict greatly increases.⁵⁶ But just as women's empowerment is associated with reduced likelihood that conflict will break out in the first place, statistical analysis also shows that strengthening women's political and social participation diminishes the chances of conflict relapse after war has ended. In particular, increases in parliamentary representation and in female literacy reduce the risk that a country will experience civil war again. A study of 58 conflict-affected states between 1980 and 2003 found that when no women are represented in the legislature, the risk of relapse increases over time, but “when 35 percent of the legislature is female, this relationship virtually disappears, and the risk of relapse is near zero.”⁵⁷



Inclusive Security

The late Aloisea Inyumba, then gender minister in Rwanda, stands in a Rwandan village. She placed 500,000 orphans with families after the genocide, ignoring Hutu and Tutsi distinctions.

Rwanda's experience across three civil wars brings these statistics to life. While two spells of peace in the 1980s and 1990s both ended in conflict, women held 13 percent of parliamentary seats and the female-to-male literacy rate was 0.58, on average.⁵⁸ In contrast, women held an average 21 percent of parliamentary seats in the decade following the 1994 genocide and the literacy ratio jumped to 0.85. As of 2015, women's representation has increased to 64 percent—the world's highest percentage of women in parliament—and peace, though not perfect, has held for 20 years.⁵⁹

Women Broaden Societal Participation

The relationship between women's participation and peace duration may be partly explained by women's inclusive approach to governance in post-conflict environments and the perception of trust associated with them. Research demonstrates that gender quotas in post-conflict contexts make it more likely that other disadvantaged groups will gain access to parliament, depending on the prevailing electoral system, which in turn correlates with conflict prevention indicators.⁶⁰ Other studies show that women in politics are perceived as more trustworthy and less corrupt—a perception that is vital for maintaining the public's confidence in its new political institutions in the fragile post-conflict setting.⁶¹

Women who led the way in rebuilding their society in Rwanda also reflected this approach. Aloisea Inyumba, the country's first Minister of Family, Gender, and Social Affairs, directed the burial of 800,000 dead after the genocide, the resettlement of refugees, and a national adoption campaign that reduced the number of genocide orphans in Rwanda from 500,000 to 4,000. She led Rwanda's Unity and

Reconciliation Commission, where she used national public dialogues to promote reconciliation between Hutus and Tutsis. She was also responsible for the implementation of the Gacaca court system, a trailblazing participatory justice mechanism to address war crimes. Inyumba served as senator until 2011 and played a significant role in strengthening women's voices in local government throughout Rwanda.⁶²

Even in post-conflict settings where women are widely excluded from politics, or where the formal institutions of the state have been destroyed, women's empowerment still influences the success of peacebuilding outcomes. A cross-national analysis of postwar contexts since 1945 with a high risk of backsliding into conflict found that where women enjoy a relatively higher social status, the prospects for successful peacebuilding are greater, because the local population's participation in peacebuilding policies and activities increases.⁶³ In other words, women have a direct positive impact on post-conflict reconstruction because they have a voice themselves and they elicit broader societal participation. Indeed, analysis of levels of conflict and cooperation during UN peacebuilding missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone showed that in districts where women had higher status, UN peace operations have been significantly more effective.

Conclusion

The empirical evidence is overwhelming: where women's inclusion is prioritized, peace is more likely—particularly when women are in a position to influence decisionmaking.

There are several reasons why this is so. Women promote dialogue and build trust. They consistently bridge divides and build

coalitions for peace. They bring different perspectives to bear on what peace and security mean and how they can be realized, contributing to a more holistic understanding of peace that addresses long-term needs as well as short-term security. Whether preventing conflict, contributing to peace processes, or rebuilding their societies after war, women take an inclusive approach. Exclusion of identity-based groups—whether religious, ethnic, or cultural—is a significant contributor to war, poverty, and state failure.⁶⁵ With their collaborative responses to preventing conflict, making peace, and rebuilding societies, women consistently address this cause of conflict and instability, helping to ensure that peace will last.

The threat and onset of war can be used to reinforce and exacerbate women's marginalization, or it can be used as an opportunity to empower women and increase the chances of a peaceful outcome for everyone. Because when women are included, it benefits entire communities, not just women. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ A version of this article was first published in October 2015 by The Institute for Inclusive Security with the title "Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies," available at <<https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/why-women-inclusive-security-and-peaceful-societies/>>.

² Therese Pettersson and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2014," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 4 (2015): 536–550. The past 10 years also produced the year with the lowest number of conflicts in the post-Cold War period, demonstrating the fluctuations and fluidity in this trend.

³ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); UNHCR, "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2014" (Geneva: The UN Refugee Agency, 2015).

⁴ World Bank, *World Development Report 2011* (Washington, DC: 2011): 2–3.

⁵ Kyle Beardsley, "Agreement without Peace? International Mediation and Time Inconsistency Problems," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 4 (October 2008): 723–740; Kyle Beardsley, *The Mediation Dilemma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁶ Based on a study of 31 peace processes between 1992 and 2011. UN Women, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence" (October 2012): 3.

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Patrick A. Albright



Army Chief of Staff Mark A. Milley shakes hands with Capt. Kristen M. Griest, one of the latest Soldiers to earn the Ranger tab (Aug. 21, 2015).

Integrating Gender Perspectives Within the Department of Defense

BY ANNE A. WITKOWSKY

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, and the 15th anniversary of the passage of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. The Fourth World Conference on Women marked a critical shift in the conversation on gender equality and resulted in the unanimous adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a comprehensive agenda aimed at achieving the goals of equality, development, and peace for women throughout the world.¹ UNSCR 1325, adopted in 2000, recognized the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and underscored the importance of women's equal and full participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping.² Taken together, the Beijing Conference and the adoption of UNSCR 1325 are the seminal events that led to international consensus on the elevation of women, peace, and security (WPS) principles as priority issues for all states and firmly established the link between equality and rights for women, on the one hand, and the well-being of society overall, on the other.

When included as meaningful participants in the negotiation of peace agreements, women enlarge the scope of those agreements to include the broader set of critical societal priorities and needs required for lasting peace.³ For example, women played a key role in the negotiations that led to the 1996 Guatemalan Peace Accords and ultimately helped shape a deal with a significant human rights orientation, including gender sensitive provisions.⁴ According to NATO's Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence, greater awareness of gender issues results in an enhancement of overall situational awareness and better advice to senior decisionmakers, who can then make better-founded, judicious, and balanced decisions.⁵

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Recognizing that women's inclusion in conflict prevention, management, and resolution—as well as post-conflict relief and recovery—advances peace and security, in December 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama issued Executive Order 13595 directing the release and implementation of the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP). The NAP, developed by U.S. Government stakeholders in consultation with civil society and congressional staff, aims “to advance women's inclusion in peace negotiations, peacebuilding activities, and conflict prevention; to protect women from sexual and gender-based violence; and to ensure equal access to relief and recovery assistance, in areas of conflict and insecurity.”⁶

The Department of Defense (DOD) is committed to meeting the objectives of the NAP and has made significant gains through more than three years of implementation by integration and institutionalization of WPS principles into the Department and key DOD policy guidance. DOD strives to support programs that will increase women's participation in peace processes and decisionmaking, particularly through partner engagements and trainings, and is taking steps to advance activities that address the impact of violence and conflict on women. As a relatively new policy initiative, the effort to institutionalize and integrate these principles has required extensive cooperation throughout the Department of Defense, and commitment at a range of leadership levels in Washington and in the field. It will take time before the effort is fully integrated into the guidance documents and training cycles of the Department's activities. Much, however, has already been accomplished.

Integration and Institutionalization

The Department of Defense implements U.S. leadership's objectives through policy frameworks, strategic guidance, and planning documents. Infusing WPS principles into key documents is critical to establishing WPS policy, assigning responsibilities, delegating authorities, and identifying key objectives. In 2012, then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta issued a memorandum directing DOD implementation of the NAP, noting that the NAP's goal is critical to our national security. The Department also developed an implementation guide for the NAP that serves as a tool for applying the NAP objectives into the strategic, operational, and tactical environments. As a result of the issuance of the Secretary's memo and the implementation guide, the Department has taken a number of steps to integrate and institute WPS principles.

In an effort to address WPS in our education system, WPS was incorporated within the Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) system as a Special Area of Emphasis (SAE). JPME provides rigorous and thorough instruction to military officers “in an environment designed to promote a theoretical and practical in-depth understanding” of issues important to the services.⁷ SAEs constitute subject matter that senior leaders in the Department believe should be covered in the professional military education (PME) colleges and help ensure the relevance of the colleges' curricula. As such, the inclusion of WPS as an SAE underscores the importance of WPS principles and enables them to gain traction and increase understanding among the joint force.

Other steps have been taken by DOD's Geographic Combatant Commands, the entities responsible for command and control over

the joint military forces within a specific geographic area. WPS principles have been incorporated into some of the Geographic Combatant Commands' Theater Campaign Plans, which are plans that prioritize, organize, and integrate the Command's steady-state activities in a comprehensive manner.⁸ For example, WPS objectives found in U.S. Southern Command's Theater Campaign Plan include key tasks specifically addressing women's integration into partner nation militaries and ministries of defense. The inclusion of WPS in such plans is important to meeting DOD's NAP implementation objectives because it integrates WPS into the Command's day-to-day activities.

DOD's regional centers⁹ have also incorporated WPS into their guiding documents and have thus played a major role in making WPS a more integral part of DOD exchange

programming with partner militaries. The regional centers are institutions where military and civilian participants from nations across the globe engage in research, communication, and the exchange of ideas regarding security issues relating to a specific geographic region. The Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, for example, released a strategy document in support of the NAP with objectives that include ensuring WPS elements are incorporated into the curriculum, promoting and maintaining a WPS community of interest, and achieving a goal of 25 percent female participation in all resident courses.¹⁰

In order to promote a better understanding and integration of gender issues, many parts of DOD are also incorporating WPS into their regular training pathways. A number of DOD Components have developed specialized training on WPS to familiarize new personnel



André Gustavo Stumpf

The Brazilian Army was the first army in South America to accept women into its ranks.

with the topic. U.S. Africa Command, for example, has added a WPS briefing to the Command's Newcomers' Orientation Course. The briefing aims to provide staff with an awareness of why WPS topics are important through an overview of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the NAP, as well as how WPS issues are addressed in U.S. Africa Command plans, exercises, operations, and engagements. U.S. Northern Command developed a module on human rights and WPS for inclusion in the "USNORTHCOM 101" class that is provided to all new personnel. The module introduces WPS concepts to the command and increases personnel familiarity with basic WPS concepts. Similarly, U.S. Pacific Command introduced a WPS information brief to its Initial Staff Training and Orientation Program provided to all new personnel. Additionally, there has been an effort to increase senior-leader awareness of WPS and its value to operations. U.S. Pacific Air Forces, for example, introduced a WPS brief in its Squadron Commander's Course that is provided to all newly assigned Commanders in the Pacific. Ultimately, our intent is to improve overall mission effectiveness by providing DOD's workforce with the functional knowledge needed to integrate these areas into the Department's work.

Personnel training focused on combating trafficking in persons (CTIP) aims to enhance staff capacity to address gender considerations, specifically the protection of women and girls in conflict and crisis-affected environments. Forty-nine percent of the victims of trafficking are women and 21 percent are girls who also face physical health issues, including those related to reproductive health.¹¹ The Department's CTIP program office ensures that the DOD has the necessary tools to prevent

trafficking. CTIP general awareness training is mandatory for all military and civilian personnel. Additionally, combatant commands augment this training to provide instruction on trafficking issues specific to their area of responsibility, which is crucial as trafficking victims have been identified in more than 120 countries.¹² For example, U.S. Southern Command has released a CTIP module that covers specific CTIP issues relevant to the region, including forced labor and sex trafficking.

Of course, the efforts to integrate and institutionalize WPS and NAP objectives are insufficient without appropriate evaluation. DOD has sought to evaluate and learn from its work and has taken steps to improve data collection in order to track and report progress on WPS objectives, assess lessons learned, and identify best practices from existing programs. To that end, the Department has instituted a WPS Synchronization Group to coordinate WPS efforts within the Department, which is a valuable tool to further the sharing of lessons learned and best practices and advance the quality of future programs among the Combatant Commands, Military Departments, regional centers, and Senior Service Schools.

Participation in Peace Processes and Decisionmaking

The Department of Defense has a global presence, with personnel located around the world. This presence provides us with an unparalleled opportunity to convey WPS principles and the positive impact of women's participation in peace processes and decisionmaking to other countries and their militaries. The Department is committed to expanding the recruitment and retention of women in partner nations' security sectors and incorporating

women’s perspectives into partner nations’ peace and security policies. Through our peacekeeping training, seminars at our regional centers and the Combatant Commands, and our National Guard State Partnership Program, we work to integrate gender perspectives into partnership activities.

Core WPS issues are included in the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), a U.S. Government security assistance program funded through the Department of State that is intended to enhance international capacity to effectively conduct UN and regional peace operations by training partner countries. Women constitute approximately four percent of the military and police personnel deployed to UN peacekeeping missions and one of GPOI’s objectives is to promote the role of women and enhance gender integration in

peace operations.¹³ As part of GPOI training conducted by the U.S. military, all peacekeepers receive instruction on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, gender issues, and human rights. As of June 2015, GPOI has trained approximately 5,300 female peacekeepers and trained both male and female peacekeepers to more effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. In 2013, U.S. Southern Command, in partnership with the Naval Postgraduate School, created a specific GPOI-funded WPS program with the Chilean Peace Operations Training Center. The three-phase program aims to advance GPOI goals of increasing protection and integration of women in peacekeeping and peace building operations. Through Chile’s determined efforts and the support of such programs, Chile has



UN Photo/Martine Perret

Mongolian peacekeepers stand at attention as they receive their medals for their service in the Republic of South Sudan.

become a regional leader on gender integration in UN peacekeeping operations and is beginning to share its expertise with partner nations.

Another area where the Department has worked to advance the promotion of WPS principles with partner nations is through the National Guard State Partnership Program, which links a state's National Guard with the armed forces of a partner nation in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship. Examples include the Colorado National Guard's engagements with women from the Jordanian Armed Forces that focus on leadership development, empowerment, work/family balance, and sexual harassment; the Vermont National Guard's engagements with the Senegalese Armed Forces (SAF) aimed at the successful integration of women into the SAF; and the South Dakota National Guard's work with the Suriname Armed Forces on issues pertaining to women in the military.

Finally, training through the Combatant Commands provides an important avenue for furthering WPS aims and objectives. For example, U.S. Africa Command, along with U.S. Army Africa and the Namibian Defense Force, hosted a first of its kind week-long "Regional Gender Mainstreaming Seminar" in Namibia in 2014. The seminar brought together participants from seven African countries to discuss frameworks to promote, support, and encourage the integration of women into defense forces; best practices, challenges, and successes in integration; and the development of sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response initiatives.

Addressing the Impact of Violence and Conflict on Women

Protection from Violence

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflict, and sexual and gender-based violence is often used as a deliberate tactic to generate terror, societal destruction, and ethnic cleansing. As emphasized in the NAP, the United States is prioritizing efforts to prevent and respond to such crimes and DOD is committed to fulfilling the NAP's objective to advance the protection of women and girls from violence.

The Department has expanded its work to prevent and protect women and children from sexual and gender-based violence in crises and conflict-affected environments through its training, education, and awareness efforts aimed at increasing the capacity of partner nation militaries and security personnel to address these crimes. Among those efforts:

- U.S. Africa Command hosted a "Women, Peace, and Security Conference" at the U.S. Army War College in September 2014 with representatives from Africa GPOI partner nations and other select stakeholders to develop scenario-based training on preventing and responding to sexual violence in the context of peacekeeping missions. Recognizing the unique capability of scenario-based training as a means to prepare peacekeepers to address appropriately situations on the ground, the training is intended to be used when preparing units for a mission or while deployed in an operation.
- U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa, in coordination with U.S. Africa Command and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, conducts a biannual

Peacekeeping Logistics Course in Ghana. The course includes a module on “Gender in Peace Support Operations,” which addresses the specific vulnerabilities faced by women and children during conflict, including gendercide, rape, forced impregnation, genital mutilation, forced prostitution, and human trafficking. The goal of the module is to provide participants with information on gender concepts to enhance their capacity for gender integrated planning and implementation in peace support operations.

- WPS was integrated throughout the field training event of the U.S. Pacific Command-GPOI Capstone Training Exercise Garuda Canti Dharma, an Indonesia hosted and U.S. sponsored multinational exercise that took place in August 2014. The field training event included scenarios addressing women and children hostages, and protection of civilians. A subject matter expert also provided a day of classroom instruction on topics including sexual and gender-based violence, human rights, and equality. The exercise trained Indonesian National Defense Forces and GPOI partner nation defense personnel for deployment to UN peacekeeping missions.

- The Defense Institute for Medical Operations developed a leadership course to counter gender-based violence. The course is designed to empower healthcare policymakers and their implementing authorities to establish effective, evidence-based programs to combat gender-based violence. The five-day class, provided by a Mobile Education Team, uses case-based examples of successful intervention in gender-based violence in several contexts to show how successes can lead to clear-cut societal improvements in

women’s health, rule of law, and the stability, security, and progress of a society.

The Department of Defense has also advanced effective accountability mechanisms designed to address violence against women and girls. The Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS), whose motto is “*Justitia per orbem terrarum*” or “justice for all the earth,” develops and provides professional legal education and international engagement focused on human rights, international humanitarian law, and the law of armed conflict. Through mobile-education seminars on international human rights law and international humanitarian law, DIILS provides instruction on combating impunity for gender-based violence in the military. The seminars, conducted in-country, have included engagements with more than half a dozen countries within Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. DIILS also has a long-standing military justice engagement program in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which provides instruction to the Armed Forces of the DRC and magistrates on sexual and gender-based violence, including the responsibility of each soldier to report and assist authorities in apprehending and prosecuting those responsible for violations.

Conflict Prevention

One of the core principles of UNSCR 1325 is the recognition that women are disproportionately affected by conflict. The NAP also notes that rising discrimination and violence against women are often “early indicators of impending conflict” and conflict prevention efforts must be “informed by the differences in the experiences of men and women, girls and boys.”¹⁵ The Department has taken steps to

prevent or reduce the impact of conflict on women and girls. For example, the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management facilitates an annual Health Emergencies in Large Populations (H.E.L.P.) course to provide first responders with an understanding of the major public health issues, including sexual and gender-based violence, to be addressed among populations affected by natural disasters, complex emergencies, and internal displacement. Recognizing that investing in health can reduce the risk of conflict and mitigate its impact, the course prepares participants to respond more effectively to disasters and humanitarian crises as part of an international response by incorporating innovative approaches in the planning and delivery of public health interventions and providing students from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to build relationships prior to a devastating event.

Access to Relief and Recovery

The Department also seeks to address the distinct needs of women and children in reintegration and recovery programs. It does so through the delivery of relief and recovery services, regional center courses, and Combatant Command programs.

While generally acting in support of other agencies in disaster relief efforts, DOD is committed to addressing the needs of women and children in humanitarian assistance programs and disaster response planning and operations. The Department works with other U.S. government agencies, as well as civil society partners, to deliver relief and recovery services to women and children in communities affected by humanitarian disasters. For example, U.S. Africa Command's Humanitarian Assistance Program has funded construction

and rehabilitation of hospitals and clinics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo focused on treatment of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. U.S. Central Command established vocational training programs throughout Afghanistan to teach women trades, thereby providing them with skills they can use to earn income and lift themselves out of poverty. Additionally, through hospital ships such as the USNS *Comfort* and USNS *Mercy*, DOD engages local populations on gender health and protection issues during port visits in both peacetime and humanitarian response operations. The hospital ships' activities promote the sharing of healthcare knowledge and best practices and enhance the Department's ability to work collectively in support of relief efforts.

The Department's regional centers have been active in this area as well. For example, the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies incorporates disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration into combating terrorism elements of its in-residence and overseas workshop programs, and includes a special emphasis on the reintegration of women and child soldiers as well as the radicalization of women and youth. Additionally, the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies' Seminar on Transnational Civil Security provides civil security professionals from Europe, Eurasia, and North America with the skills to prevent and prepare for domestic and regional crises and disasters as well as manage their consequences. The seminar curriculum broadly addresses the needs of women and children in disaster preparedness and consequence management.

The Way Forward

In the years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the passage of UNSCR 1325, and the issuance of the NAP, the Department of Defense has taken important steps to institutionalize and integrate WPS principles into its guiding documents and activities, incorporate these principles into its partner engagements and trainings, support programs that will increase women's participation in peace processes and decisionmaking, and advance activities that address the impact of violence and conflict on women.

Nevertheless, the anniversaries provide an important opportunity to reflect on what more we can and should do. We must continue to incorporate WPS into our existing lines of effort and activities. We must continue to develop best practices, case studies, and lessons learned, so that we may focus our efforts on activities that have impact. We must be able to demonstrate—through research, monitoring, and evaluation—the ways in which NAP implementation directly contributes to a measurable increase in security and the success of military operations.

In our efforts to accomplish sustainable implementation of this initiative through integration of WPS principles into the Defense Department's daily business, it is also important to expand and promote a community of interest and support. This issue of *PRISM* serves as a valuable means of engaging a broader audience of security experts on WPS and underscores the growing attention to and promotion of WPS principles across security sector activities. We hope that this issue will serve to further the discussion on women, peace, and security, and in turn generate more action towards making it a fundamental

element of peace and stability operations.

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Notes

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- Washington, D.C., and the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) - Washington, D.C..

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Photos

Page 34. Photo by Patrick A. Albright. 151229-A-YG824-001.JPG. Army Chief of Staff Mark A. Milley shakes hands with Capt. Kristen M. Griest, one of the latest Soldiers to earn the Ranger tab (Aug. 21, 2015). From <<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/ArticleView/tabid/5563/Article/639417/2015-marks-enormous-advances-for-military-women.aspx>>. Reproduced unaltered

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In 2012, Captain Tara Robertson (right) took command of the Minnesota National Guard's 849th Mobility Augmentation Company and was the first woman to command the previously all-male unit. She was awarded a Bronze Star Medal as well as a Combat Action Badge following her deployment to Afghanistan.

Female Citizen Soldiers and Airmen

Key Contributors to Worldwide Peace and Security

BY FRANK GRASS

Women's entrance into the National Guard in 1950 was an historic moment in America's military history. From that moment on, women have been instrumental in building the National Guard into what it is today: a ready, accessible, and capable force that is an invaluable combat reserve for the active Army and Air Force. Women in the National Guard are essential to defending the nation, supporting our communities, and building partnership capacity. They exemplify our government's commitment to integrating women into defense, development, and diplomatic efforts.

Last fall, I passed the milestone of having served 46 years in our military. It has been an incredible journey, beginning with my enlistment in the Missouri National Guard in 1969 to my current position as the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Over the years, I have witnessed extraordinary change in the National Guard, particularly since 9/11 and the long period of war which followed. The National Guard has transformed from a strategic reserve to an operational force, requiring the skill sets of both women and men to maintain the high operations tempo while ensuring mission success. The need to organize, equip, and train for two wars while protecting the homeland has required the National Guard to be at its highest readiness state in history.

During my time in service, I believe one of the most important accomplishments in becoming a more ready force is by providing greater opportunities for our female Guardsmen. These opportunities have not occurred by chance, but rather, through a concerted effort of societal forces that recognized the need for inclusion of women combined with the passage of a series of resolutions, statutes, and policies that recognize the contributions that female service members can make to the military.

General Frank J. Grass is the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Thomas P.M. Barnett noted that when we look around the world the most successful and secure societies are those that do not marginalize women—those that allow for their economic and political participation.¹ Nations that embrace women in all aspects of their society participate fully in our era of globalization, political freedom, and international human rights. Whether it is in business, science, education, or politics, we have seen women creating, innovating, and leading our nation into the 21st century. It is accurate to say that without women’s contributions to our society, we would only be tapping into half of our nation’s reservoir of talent. Thus, I believe women serving in the military, expanding their roles in the military, and leading our military, are ideas that are natural and logical.

Since 1951, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services has been providing recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on women’s issues in the service; its efforts have contributed greatly to the advances we have made in the promotion and advancement of females serving in the military. These improvements led to a landmark moment in 1991, when Congress began lifting the ban on women serving in combat by allowing female pilots to fly in war zones.

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council met and passed UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) which recognized the nexus between gender and security. The Security Council recognized that women play an important role in bringing about peace and stability, whether serving as leaders in conflict mediation or as members of the security forces helping bring about a secure environment for women and their associated communities.

Measures such as the 2011 U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) illustrate our nation’s awareness that, “[d]eadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peacebuilding and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their experiences considered, and their voices heard.” In line with this principle, then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced in 2013 a plan that would continue to evolve the role of female service members by allowing them to serve in combat with ground forces by “[eliminating] all unnecessary gender-based barriers to service.”² In the 2015 National Security Strategy, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to the inclusion of women in all aspects of the nation’s defense by acknowledging that a society will not succeed, “if it does not draw on the potential of all its people.” In December 2015, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced that the Pentagon would open all combat jobs to women, without exception.

Today, women comprise nearly 17 percent of the 455,000 total National Guard force, while approximately 11 percent of 5,420 Army and Air National Guard command positions are occupied by females. The women of the National Guard are part of nearly every mission set that we have. Within the Army and the Air Force, the National Guard continues its efforts to better integrate with the active component and provide the capabilities necessary at a time when active duty forces are drawing down. The National Guard’s female citizen soldiers and airmen are key contributors to this effort.

At its core, the National Guard is a reflection of the communities we serve. Rather than

seeing inclusion and diversity as abstract goals, these characteristics are woven into the fabric of the National Guard and are what make us strong. I believe no other military organization is better equipped to implement our nation's inclusion policies within its primary mission sets than the National Guard. Female leaders in our communities are the same individuals who lead our Guard. They work in communities and understand the issues and concerns of women. In our overseas missions, the women of the National Guard bring unique skill sets that are utilized within the framework of our strategic efforts to strengthen our relationships with our allies. The National Guard's three primary missions—our mission triad—is built upon the *Warfight* abroad, securing and defending the *Homeland*, and building enduring and strategic *Partnerships*. Within each

mission set, the women of the National Guard serve capably and with distinction.

Minuteman

The Minuteman is the symbol of the National Guard's most valuable resource, the women and men who serve. The National Guard's origins date back to December 13, 1636, when the mission was the protection of the colonial settlements as a militia with Minutemen. Minutemen were non-professional soldiers during the American Revolutionary War, trained for rapid deployment in a minute's notice.³

Separate from the active component, the traditional Guardsman brings skill sets from civilian employment that balance well with military duties. Guardsmen who are airline pilots, attorneys, doctors, dentists, nurses, schoolteachers, corporate executives,



Staff Sgt. Mitchell Miller, U.S. Army National Guard

Army 1st Lt. Demetria N. Elosiebo, the first female African-American rotary wing pilot in the D.C. Army National Guard

investment bankers, and information-technology and cyber specialists can transfer and apply their valuable civilian expertise to their military specialties.

By fully utilizing these skills, the National Guard has proactively sought to increase opportunities for women over the last 65 years. The mission sets within the National Guard promote diversity and have empowered women in the National Guard to rise from the enlisted ranks to serving as Adjutants General (known as TAGs) for the 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia.⁴ The Adjutants General are responsible for the command, control, and supervision of the Army and Air National Guard units in their respective states, reporting to the Governor for state missions and/or the President for federal missions. The National Guard has had seven female Adjutants General to date, with four currently serving in the position in Alaska, Maryland, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Major General (Ret.) Jessica L. Wright is a great example of the National Guard promoting female leaders within its ranks. General Wright enlisted in 1975 with the Pennsylvania National Guard and later graduated from Officer Candidate School and the Rotary Wing Aviator Course at Fort Rucker, becoming the Army National Guard's first female aviator. Throughout her stellar career, she held many leadership positions, in Public Affairs, Recruiting and Retention, Flight Operations, as an Assistant Professor of Military Science, and in a variety of other headquarter, field, and staff assignments. She was also the first female maneuver brigade commander in the United States Army (28th Combat Aviation Brigade, 28th Infantry Division), and Pennsylvania's first female Adjutant General.

Until the recent announcement of her retirement, the Honorable Jessica L. Wright was a leader in the Department of Defense as the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In this position, she was the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Total Force Management as it relates to readiness; National Guard and Reserve component affairs; health affairs; training; and personnel requirements and management, including equal opportunity, morale, welfare, recreation, and quality of life matters.⁵

Senator Joni Ernst from Iowa is another former Guardsman who exemplifies the diverse background of our leaders in the National Guard. She was elected to the United States Senate in November 2014 and is the first female from Iowa voted into Congress, and the first female combat veteran to serve in the U.S. Senate. Prior to her recent retirement at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Senator Ernst served over 23 years in the U.S. Army Reserves and the Iowa Army National Guard, previously serving as the commander of the 185th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, which is the largest battalion in the Iowa Army National Guard. In 2003, she spent 14 months serving as a company commander leading 150 Guardsmen in Kuwait and Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.⁶

Through her years of experience in the National Guard and in combat, Senator Ernst brings a unique perspective to her role as a legislator, understanding the sacrifices and commitment of our service members. She carries this experience and knowledge as she serves in the Senate and on her assigned committees, including the influential Armed Services Committee which is empowered with legislative oversight of the nation's military.⁷

She also serves on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

Senator Ernst and Major General Wright both exemplify the National Guard's efforts to provide opportunities for our female Guardsmen to excel. They are just two of the many women who serve in the most difficult and challenging positions that help provide peace and security throughout the world.

Warfight

The military I entered in 1969 is in stark contrast to the one that I see today. I joined a force engaged in Vietnam and concurrently under the specter of conflict with our Cold War adversary, the Soviet Union. While the United States fought in Vietnam and faced the threat of bilateral nuclear engagement, the attitude and policies of the day on the appropriate role for women in the forces created many barriers to service and promotion.

The congressional legislation of 1991 and the Department of Defense policy of 2013 opened the door to allow women to be key participants in combat operations. From flying effective and decisive combat sorties in fighter, airlift, refueling, and helicopter aircraft, to serving on the ground with their male counterparts in the protracted conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Guard's mission sets allow our female Guardsmen the opportunity to serve and demonstrate the courage and patriotism that uphold the finest traditions of our military.

Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester is just one example. In March 2005, Sergeant Hester was serving in Iraq with the 617th Military Police Company out of Richmond, Kentucky. When her squad was shadowing a supply convoy, the

convoy was ambushed by insurgents. After a fierce firefight, her unit killed 27 insurgents, wounded 6 and captured 1. For her heroic combat actions, Sergeant Hester was awarded the Silver Star Medal—the first woman to receive the Silver Star medal since World War II and the first bestowed for close combat. Her military training saved her life and the lives of many of her fellow soldiers. On receiving her medal, Sergeant Hester said, "It really doesn't have anything to do with being a female, [i]t's about the duties I performed that day as a soldier....Your training kicks in and the soldier kicks in....You've got a job to do—protecting yourself and your fellow comrades."⁸ Sergeant Hester is one of a countless number of female heroes who have made incredible sacrifices for our nation and national security. Her heroic actions illustrate that courage is a trait that is not gender-specific.

As the role of American women in combat continues to increase and as the National Guard continues to develop mission sets that harness the unique capabilities of women, I believe women in certain parts of the world will be empowered as a result of this evolution.

Female Engagement Teams (FETs) are one example of how the National Guard operationalizes the unique aspects that women can bring to the Warfight in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq. FETs have been very successful in gaining information and winning the trust of females in Iraq and Afghanistan who are not permitted to converse with men outside their families.⁹ These units are deployed to interact with local women and gain a better understanding of their concerns.¹⁰ FETs support the objectives of the 2000 UNSCR 1325 and the 2011 U.S. National Action Plan for the inclusion and

empowerment of women by listening to these Afghan and Iraqi women on the ground, encouraging the rule of law, and allowing the women to feel more secure by decreasing the chances of violence through accountability.¹¹

Homeland

Americans now realize that geography is no longer an obstacle for our adversaries. As a result, our security strategy in the homeland has evolved to defy and prevent dynamic and asymmetric threats. The skill sets developed from our complex operations in the Warfight and the civilian capacity that part-time Guardsmen bring to their military positions has carried over into our homeland missions, enabling an enhanced capability. Women in the National Guard play a large role within our homeland mission. Women assigned to missions such as the Aerospace Control Alert that protects our skies and Ballistic Missile Defense are part of a critical component of maintaining and advancing national security and stability for our nation.

Lieutenant Heather “Lucky” Penney was serving a typical day in the 121st Fighter Squadron on September 11, 2001, until she was informed that the twin towers in New York City had been struck by two different airliners. Immediately after the Pentagon was hit, the Washington, D.C. Air National Guard was ordered to launch two F-16 fighter aircraft to intercept a possible fourth airliner being hijacked and on a vector for Washington, D.C. (possibly for the White House or the U.S. Capitol). The assigned flight lead chose Lieutenant Penney to be his wingman and prepare for an immediate takeoff. The 121st Fighter Squadron just returned from an exercise and therefore the aircraft were not loaded with weapons (no missiles, bullets, or bombs). The

flight lead told Lieutenant Penney that he would fly his F-16 into the cockpit of the hijacked airliner and she would strike the tail. Since terrorists were using an American airliner as a weapon, Lieutenant Penney and her flight lead had no choice but to use their F-16s in direct response. In the end, they could not find Flight 93 because the brave American passengers onboard rushed the cockpit to take back control of the aircraft, crashing into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Regardless, young Lieutenant Penney was prepared to give her life to defend her country and preserve, guard, and sustain national security. Penney stated, “Our duty was clear—to protect and defend.”¹²

Today, Major Penney continues to serve in an airlift squadron in the Air National Guard, flying distinguished visitors around the world.¹³ Outside of the National Guard, she is an executive with a major defense corporation and also leads an independent group that specifically researches female officer retention and recruiting for the military services. Major Penney’s exemplary contributions are part of the National Guard’s evolving homeland mission sets that include women in almost every capacity for consequence management and homeland defense.

Another great example is Missouri Army National Guardsman Colonel Sharon Martin, Commander of the 110th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. Prior to her current command, Colonel Martin was the Commander of the 70th Troop Command (largest Brigade in Missouri) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region VII Homeland Response Force. Her illustrious career includes experience as a Military Police Battalion Commander, service in critical roles in domestic natural disaster response, combat deployment, and completion of the Joint Task

Force Commander’s Training Course, which prepared her to coordinate military and federal responses to disasters—all in addition to her civilian job as a professional firefighter. Colonel Martin exhibits the finest traits of our citizen soldiers and airmen who serve our nation, our states, and our communities.

The National Guard is located throughout our nation and its members are leaders in their respective communities with strong ties to local and state officials and the community at large. Many times, the only military ties these communities have are with their local National Guard units. The unique abilities and talents that part-time Guardsmen bring from their civilian occupations are utilized in homeland missions. From assisting communities as first responders, to supporting state and federal missions responding to natural disasters and man-made threats, we are the first military

force to reach the scene. The inclusion, empowerment, and effectiveness of female Guardsmen in the role of homeland defense and security are crucial to our mission success. The National Guard ensures that those in its ranks reflect and understand the communities in which they serve.

Partnerships

The National Guard’s global, federal, state, and local partnerships have paid major dividends during times of crisis, disaster, and building partnership capacity for our national security. The local relationships that we forge provide daily benefits that improve the lives of our citizens. The National Guard also works closely with federal and state interagencies to forge a cohesive team in responding to singular and ongoing domestic missions. These partnerships have allowed the National Guard



U.S. National Guard Bureau

Colonel Sharon Martin in action.

to execute decisively and efficiently in supporting missions in the aftermath of disasters. With missions such as counternarcotics, the National Guard works closely with agency partners in interdiction and activities to combat illicit drugs, which impact the entire hemisphere and beyond.

On the global front, our State Partnership Program (SPP), established over 22 years ago, has evolved into lasting relationships with 76 partner nations that have a significant impact on building partnership capacity. These include partnerships with nations in all of our Geographic Combatant Commands—to include eight countries in the Asia-Pacific and eleven countries in Africa that are instrumental to the President’s rebalance objectives in the 2015 National Security Strategy.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, we began building long-term relationships with the nations of Eastern Europe, with the goal of encouraging military to military contacts with newly established democracies. The National Guard focused not only on traditional military to military contacts, but also included discussions and exchanges on disaster management, search and rescue, military education, civil-military relations, and senior leader visits. Joseph Nye, who introduced the term “smart power,” stated that “[b]y complementing its military and economic might with greater investments in its soft power, the United States can rebuild the framework it needs to tackle tough global challenges.”¹⁴ Today, the SPP encompasses nearly one-third of the nations in the world and provides our military with



1st Lt. Nicholas Mercurio, U.S. Air Force

The National Guard State Partnership Program has forged many promising relationships with partner nations, allowing successful exchanges of knowledge, techniques, and ideas. Here, the Iowa National Guard’s 734th Agribusiness Development Team and Afghan women from the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team gathered to celebrate Women’s Day.

the strategic reach that is required in an era where joint operations and interoperability are vital to achieving our national security strategy interests during austere times.

The SPP serves as an important vehicle for the inclusion of women in military and security issues. It provides a platform by which the Guard can engage women around the world, listen to their concerns, and better understand the complexities of local and regional histories. Beginning with the SPP selection process of partnering with nations that have common security cooperation goals, the National Guard can coordinate with partner nations to provide training and support to women in such things as security, medical, and civic matters. These engagements can lead to a more stable and secure region as women become more self-sufficient and become a part of the security process. For the National Guard, these exchanges provide a greater understanding of the region, which in turn leads to a more ready and operational Guard.

One focus area of these exchanges has been to promote the inclusion of women within the security forces of partner nations. For example, in April 2013, U.S. Africa Command sponsored a Traveling Contact Team from the North Carolina National Guard to hold a Women's Integration Working Group in Botswana. Participants discussed the integration of female enlisted personnel in the Botswana Defense Force (BDF) based on lessons learned from the previous integration of female officers in the BDF.

Members of the BDF and the North Carolina Army National Guard broke out in 6 working groups to discuss 15 topics surrounding women's integration and presented their recommendations to senior BDF leadership. The working group members gained significant

awareness of issues currently facing female BDF members, and identified the need for awareness training across the BDF and the adoption of policies and regulations in order to have known standards.

Sergeant First Class Tera VandenHeuvel from the Kentucky Army National Guard serves as a fine example of female Guardsmen fostering valuable relationships abroad. Sergeant VandenHeuvel is serving on an active-duty tour representing the National Guard on the Joint Staff at U.S. Pacific Command in the Strategy and Policy Directorate. In her prominent role as the Women, Peace, and Security Program Manager, she is responsible for the implementation of the U.S. National Action Plan in U.S. Pacific Command's policy directives, and Theater Campaign and Security Cooperation Plans. Sergeant VandenHeuvel's involvement is central in encouraging partners to advance the WPS agenda.

The State Partnership Program is a valuable means for leveraging the opportunities of gender awareness with our partners, as a force multiplier in maintaining stability and security in our Combatant Command areas of responsibility.¹⁵ By leveraging the full capacity of the National Guard and our partner nations, we are better able to work with our allies in times of crisis and provide a more secure presence forward in these geographically important regions.

Key Contributors for National Security

Women serving in the National Guard have made tremendous contributions to our communities and to our national security. Female citizen soldiers and airmen are key contributors to the ready, accessible, and capable combat reserve that the National Guard is today for the active Army and Air Force.

In an era in which an increasingly smaller percentage of the population has served in the armed forces, our Guardsmen serve as that critical link between hometown America and the military. Women who serve in these units create a more representative force and serve as leaders and role models for their communities, our nation, and for women around the world. Within each set of our mission triad—the Warfight abroad, securing and defending the Homeland, and building enduring and strategic Partnerships—the women of the National Guard serve capably and with distinction.

As we continue to build on the tremendous gains we have made over the past several years, we must be steadfast in our dedication and respect for every citizen, soldier, and airman. I am certain that the future generation of women serving in the National Guard will continue our commitment to national security both at home and abroad. **PRISM**

Notes

*The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government

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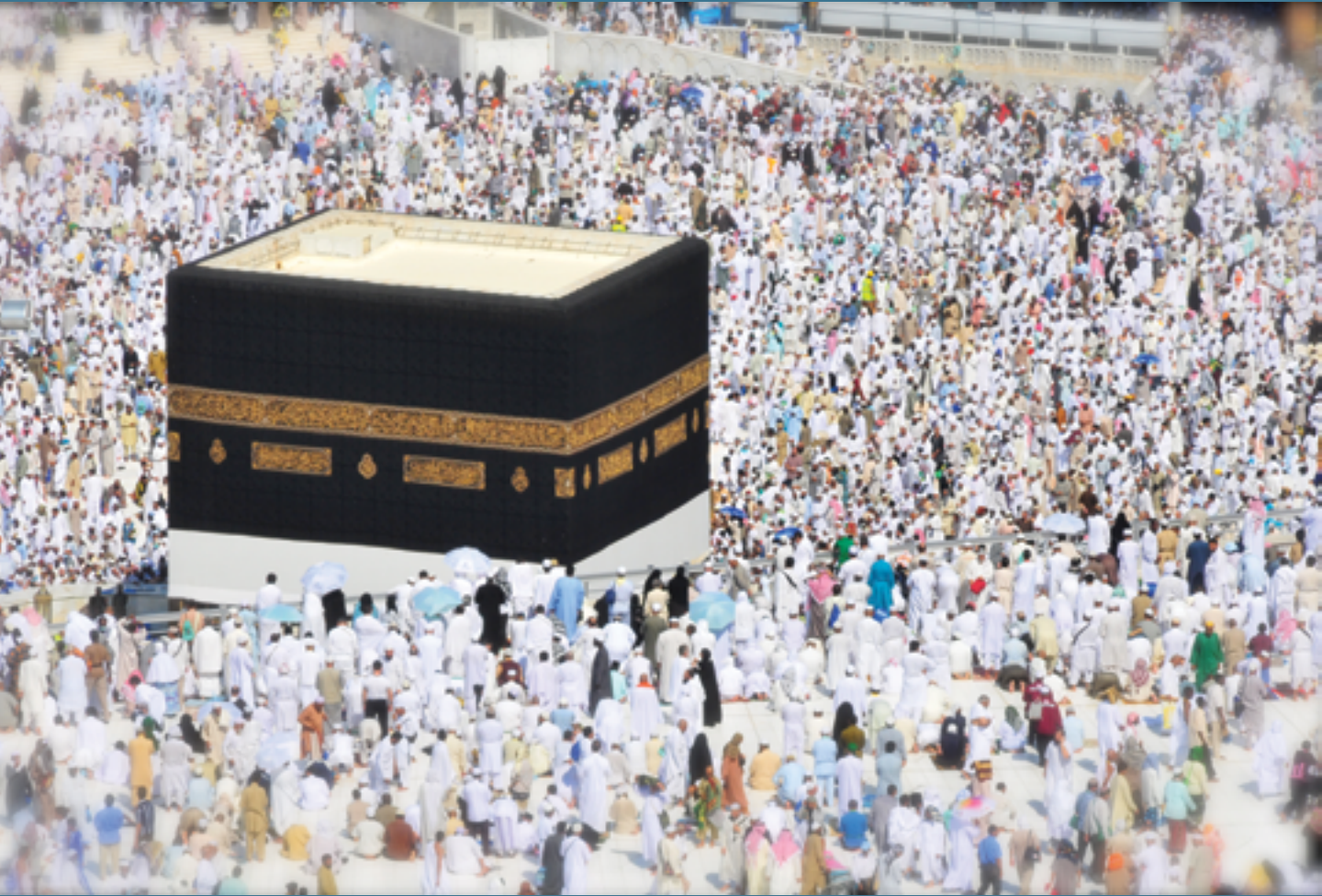
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¹⁴ Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2009. <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2009-07-01/get-smart>>.

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Fadi El Binni



The Kaaba and the beginning of the hajj in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Inclusive Security for the Muslim World

BY HUSAIN HAQQANI

At 1.6 billion, Muslims comprise one-fifth of the world's population. By 2050, that number is expected to rise to 2.76 billion. Sixty percent of the world's Muslims fall between the ages of 15 and 59 years, with the median age being 24 years. 317 million of the world's Muslims live in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) and 344 million in India and Pakistan. The security of the Middle East and South Asia is inextricably linked with Muslim views of self and the world.¹

The Three Deficits

Muslim countries, however, have been late in embracing the notion of inclusive security, which was described by former U.S. ambassador to Austria, Swanee Hunt, as “not just political sovereignty and military strength, but also economic security, education, and personal safety.”² In 2002, the first Arab Human Development Report identified three fundamental deficits that plague the Arab world: the freedom deficit, the women's empowerment deficit, and the knowledge deficit.³ These deficits remain prevalent not only in the Arab world, but also in the greater Muslim world, and serve as impediments to inclusive security.

Of the 57 member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), only 4 countries are rated by Freedom House as “free;” 24 are rated “partly free” and 29 as “not free.”⁴ A number of these had or are still under authoritarian rule and have built extensive national security apparatuses. More resources are spent on defense than on social development, like education and health.

During the Cold War, massive amounts of military aid from western countries—including the United States—flowed in; but donors were seldom asked to invest in human security or development strategies that would improve social indicators and eliminate gender and other imbalances.

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The OIC countries collectively account for approximately 20 percent of the world's population, but only 7 percent of global output. The 23 Arab countries had a combined GDP of \$1.9 trillion in 2010, compared with the European Union's GDP of \$17.5 trillion. Spain alone produced \$1.43 trillion in GDP, without the benefit of natural resources, such as oil and gas.⁵ The wealth of Western nations comes from manufacturing and innovation, neither of which has found much favor in Muslim-majority countries.

The Muslim world's knowledge deficit also remains unaddressed. Roughly half of the world's illiterate adults are Muslims, and two-thirds of that number are women. Greece, with a population of 11 million, translates more books from other languages into Greek than the entire Arab world, which has a cumulative population of 360 million, does into Arabic. More books are published in Danish, the mother tongue of 5.6 million people, than in Urdu, which is the language of at least 300 million South Asian Muslims. Since the 9th century, when the Abbasid rulers of Baghdad patronized learning and built a huge library for its time, only 100,000 books have been translated from other languages into Arabic. The same number of books are translated from other languages into Spanish every year.⁶

A thousand years ago, Muslims led the world in the fields of science and mathematics. Today, they are noticeably absent from any list of recent inventors and innovators in science and technology. Since 1901, only two Muslims have won a Nobel Prize in the sciences, and one of them (Pakistan's Dr. Abdus Salam, Physics, 1979) is not deemed a Muslim in his home country because of his association with the Ahmadiyya sect.

The current weakness of the Muslim world is by no means the fault of Western colonialism and postcolonial machinations, as is widely believed by Muslims. For a century or more, overcoming that weakness has been the driving force behind almost every major political movement in the Muslim world, from Pan-Arabism to contemporary Islamism. Nevertheless, Muslims have made less effort to understand the causes of their decline over the past 300 years. Outrage and resentment—and the conspiracy theories that inform them—are poor substitutes for comprehending why Islam's lost glory has proved so difficult to resurrect.

Islamists see the world as polarized between the *Ummah* (the community of believers, whom they describe as one nation) and the rest. The West's rise, rather than the *Ummah's* decline, receives far greater attention from Islamist scholars and leaders. Their worldview is summarized in the Arabic-language title of a book by the Indian Islamist scholar Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi. Its English-language version is unremarkable enough—*Islam and the World: The Rise and Decline of Muslims and Its Effect on Mankind*—but the Arabic edition's title translates literally as, "What the World Lost by the Decline of Muslims."⁷ The civilizational narcissism is clear. "Our decline is the world's loss," it suggests. "We do not need to change anything. The West needs to fix things for us so that it does not lose the benefits of our civilization."

An open discourse among Muslims about their decline might identify the reasons why the Ottoman and Mughal empires refused to accept the printing press for more than two and a half centuries after Johannes Guttenberg invented movable type. It might also explain why Muslims failed to embrace the Industrial

Revolution, modern banking, insurance, and the joint stock company, even after these had emerged in Europe. Instead, most of the discussion focuses on real or perceived historical injustices. “We are weak because we were colonized,” Muslims tend to say, instead of recognizing that Muslim lands were colonized because they had become weak.

The most glaring insufficiency across the Muslim world is the gender gap, or the gender deficit. Women are excluded from the workforce in many countries around the world, but the practice is far more visible in the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. Most countries with Muslim-majority populations tend to place less emphasis on women’s rights and issues.

The Pew Forum’s 2013 study entitled “The World’s Muslims: Religion, Politics, and

Society” illustrates that traditional views of women’s roles have deep roots in most Islamic countries. Most Muslims in countries surveyed say that a wife should always obey her husband. In 20 of the 23 countries where the question was asked, at least half of the Muslims surveyed expressed that belief. Muslims in South Asia and Southeast Asia overwhelmingly held that view.⁸

In all countries surveyed in these regions, roughly nine in ten say that wives must obey their husbands. This includes 94 percent of those polled in Afghanistan and 88 percent in both Pakistan and Bangladesh. Similarly, in all countries surveyed in the Middle East and North Africa, about three-quarters or more say the same, including 93 percent in Tunisia, 92 percent in Iraq, and 74 percent in Lebanon. The views of women are often not different from those of men even though the issue



A sign in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia stipulates that women are not allowed to enter a hotel gym.

affects them directly, most likely because of religious and/or cultural issues. Only 34 percent of Muslims in a more liberal, but still predominantly Muslim, country like Kosovo agree with the notion of female subordination to men, but in absolute numbers, and as part of the global Muslim community, Kosovo is less influential than Afghanistan.⁹

Islamic countries tend to have weaker democratic norms, making it difficult to change entrenched cultures of discrimination through education and public debate. Of 131 countries with which the United States has military-to-military ties, 46 are Muslim-majority countries.¹⁰ A majority of these countries remain hostage to traditional views on gender issues. While some Muslim-majority countries have inducted women into their armed forces, at least at a symbolic level, most of them are unable or unwilling to accept gender equality as a critical factor in inclusive security.

Women of Jihad

As the international community gears up for a defining struggle against Islamist extremism, the worst manifestation so far being the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), it is important to examine how an inclusive security approach might help defeat both the extremist ideology and the terrorist groups that embrace and exploit it. While conventional militaries have hesitated in bringing women on board, terrorists across the ideological spectrum have used women for a wide range of tasks, ranging from logistics and recruitment to a frontline role, say as a suicide bomber.

In a majority of Islamist and jihadi groups, women's roles were traditionally limited to the spread of propaganda and incitement of husbands and male relatives to jihad.

In the last few years, the leaders of some groups are responding to both the change in context, as well as women's requests to play a larger role in offensive combat. This is reflected in the fact that between 1985 and 2010, there were over 230 suicide bombing attacks conducted by women.¹¹

There are many reasons why terrorist groups use women operatives, especially in the Muslim world. Women provide structural support, which can include inculcating in their children how to be defenders of the ideology, maintaining the household for the fighters, encouraging other women to join them in their task and in other tasks that can be done at home, such as producing or translating extremist propaganda. Women are also seen as being critical in encouraging or shaming their male relatives into joining the jihad. Women terrorists have an advantage in traditional societies as their concealing clothes, such as the *burqa*, provide them relative freedom from scrutiny. Women also provide an element of surprise when they participate in a terrorist operation and, according to experts, female terrorists have a four times higher kill rate than their male counterparts.¹²

In recent years, a larger number of women living in western countries has joined extremist Islamist groups, a phenomenon that can be traced to factors such as grievances about the Muslim world being under siege, belief that joining these groups gives them a goal in life, and a sense of contribution to a cause in which they believe deeply. In her book, *Bombshell: Women and Terrorists*, scholar Mia Bloom points out that there are also personal motivations, such as the desire to marry a true Muslim, existing bonds with other women who have joined these groups, the sense of community membership provides, and, finally,

a belief in having an obligation to provide support for jihad.

The recruitment of women as terrorists runs contrary to the traditional wisdom of Islamist ideology. Abul Ala Maududi, an ideologue respected by the Muslim Brotherhood and similar groups, argued that Islam desires complete segregation between the sexes, a position that is endorsed by most Islamist scholars. In his book, *Islam, Purdah, and the Status of Women in Islam*, first published in 1972, Maududi stated that, “the problem of men and women’s mutual relationship is indeed the most fundamental problem of civilization.”¹³ Maududi and other Islamist scholars insist that a society’s progress is determined by defining the “appropriate” behavior of women. In the final chapter of his book titled, “Divine Laws for the Movements of Women,” Maududi makes it clear that women may leave the four walls of their house only if absolutely necessary. He further asserts that permission to leave the house is strictly limited, as women are forbidden from mixing freely with men in social situations. Exceptions are made, however, for the exigencies of war.¹⁴

Even the most conservative of Islamist scholars, like Maududi, say that the *purdah* or hijab restrictions may be relaxed so that women may offer adequate support to male warriors. This includes administering first aid to the wounded and cooking food for them. While women are not obliged to wage armed jihad themselves, if the occasion demands, they may serve the fighters in the way of Allah.

ISIL has argued that the fundamental function for women is “in the house with [their] husband[s] and children,” but that they may go out to serve the community in a number of situations, the most important being jihad. This is allowed, “if the enemy is

attacking her country and the men are not enough to protect it and the imams give a fatwa for it.”¹⁵ Building on that argument, ISIL announced, in February 2014, the creation of its al-Khanssaa Brigade—an all-female brigade “whose purpose is to detect male activists who attempt to get through ISIL checkpoints by wearing women’s clothing.” Single women between the ages of 18 and 25 can join ISIL and are paid a monthly salary of 25,000 Syrian liras, the equivalent of about \$114 USD.¹⁶

In January 2015, a document titled “Women in the Islamic State: Manifesto and Case Study” was floated by online supporters of ISIL. The three-part document rebutted Western civilization on issues like women’s rights, provided eyewitness accounts of life in the Islamic State, and also offered a comparison of how women living in the ISIL regions are better off than their counterparts in the rest of the Muslim Middle East.¹⁷

Ironically, most independent sources suggest that ISIL fighters are “committing horrific sexual violence on a seemingly industrial scale.”¹⁸ The United Nations has documented that ISIL forced some “1,500 women, teenage girls, and boys into sexual slavery.”¹⁹ An Amnesty International report noted that ISIL “abducts whole families in northern Iraq for sexual assault.”²⁰ “In the first few days following the fall of Mosul in June 2014, women’s rights activists reported multiple incidents of ISIL fighters going door to door, kidnapping and raping the [city’s] women.”²¹

In October 2014, a female-specific jihadi media group calling itself *al-Zawra’a* announced its establishment and stated its aims as preparing “women for the field of jihad by teaching lessons in Islamic Sharia, weapons use, media creation, and sewing and cooking for male fighters.”²² The

announcement said, “We call upon our sisters the female supporters, those garrisoned on the frontlines of the media, to follow the work of this foundation that was established specifically for them, so that benefit comes to them and their brothers, by the power of Allah.”²³ It exhorted female Muslims to be distinguished by not being concerned with bridal gowns, homes, or clothing, but by [their] wish and “life consideration” for “the explosive belt.”²⁴ It urged women to pursue “martyrdom-seeking operation[s] that [afflict] the enemies,” and promised they would then be “immortalized among the joyous martyrs.”²⁵

ISIL is not alone in trying to recruit women. Between 1998 and 2003, the Pakistan-based terrorist group, Lashkar-e-Taiba, published a three-volume book, *Ham Ma'en Lashkar-e-Taiba Ki* (“We, the Mothers of Lashkar-e-Taiba”). Compiled by someone calling herself Umm-e-Hammad, the books were published by Dar-al-Andulus in Lahore. The three volumes carry the same cover, depicting a large pink rose with blood dripping from it, superimposed on a landscape of mountains and pine trees. They comprise a combined total of 1,410 pages, aimed at awakening “the fervor for jihad in the breasts of our mothers and sisters.”²⁶

Women at the Margins

It is clear that jihadi extremists have built a narrative for including women in their agenda, interpreting religious tradition in a manner that suits their objectives. The governments in Muslim-majority countries, however, are still not as ready as their enemies to fully embrace inclusivity. According to the World Bank, the percentage of women in the population of the Middle East North Africa region, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia nears or surpasses

the 50 percent mark. Job creation in these countries already faces the challenge of absorbing the large and growing number of young jobseekers, and women cannot compete on an equal footing in slow-growing economies. For example, young women face unemployment rates as high as 40 percent in many countries in the MENA region.²⁷

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD):

*The average median age in the MENA countries is 25 years, well below the average of other emerging regions such as Asia (29 years) and Latin America and the Caribbean (27.7), and well below the average of developed countries in Europe (40.2) and North America (36.9). These young populations represent a tremendous opportunity, both as a market and as a labor force. Currently, the ratio of people aged 0–14 to those in working age (15–64), or the child dependency ratio, is very high at 48.7.*²⁸

The youth bulge does not guarantee economic and social development and can easily become a threat instead of an opportunity, especially if half the youth bulge—women—have nothing to look forward to. OECD recommends that governments and civil society create well-functioning institutions and implement effective policies to promote employment, health, education, and housing in the Middle East and North Africa. It is equally important to spread these opportunities across genders to ensure that women are productively engaged, rather than being left to be recruited by extremist Islamists.

As the major supplier of military equipment to Muslim-majority countries as well as

the major donor of economic aid to several of them, the United States could play a key role in influencing changes in outlook and policy throughout the greater Middle East as well as South and Southeast Asia. In several cases, U.S. support has put the militaries of these countries in charge of most public policymaking. During the Cold War, strong militaries ensured that Muslim-majority countries were by and large inoculated against communist takeovers by a conservative national security apparatus.

In the current environment, however, national security states need to transform into prosperity oriented democracies that can protect their peoples from the ideological lure of Islamist fantasies. For example, Pakistan has the world's sixth largest army, which is also the largest force in the Muslim world and the only one possessing nuclear weapons. The country's per capita GDP ranks 147th out of 183 countries, while its nominal GDP ranks 42nd in the world. Pakistan's ranking in the World Economic Forum's 2013 Gender Gap Report, 135th out of 136 countries, reflects how its neglect of women is part of the reason for the country's oft-cited dysfunction. The United Nations Gender Inequality Index, which measures gender inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status, ranked Pakistan 123rd out of 148 countries indexed.²⁹

Women comprise 48.6 percent of Pakistan's population of 200 million. Of a labor force of 61.5 million, the female participation rate as percentage of total population of females was only 22 percent.³⁰ More significantly, 62 percent of girls in Pakistan between 7 and 15 years old have never spent time in a classroom.³¹ At the same time, there are a mere 4,000 women serving in Pakistan's armed forces, including a few female fighter

pilots who joined Pakistan's Air Force in 2006.³²

Economists have often pointed out that female employment has a positive impact on a country's economy, in addition to improving the wellbeing of women and families. Labor force data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank indicate that labor force participation of women in Pakistan is much lower than international standards.³³ A majority of the 22 percent of women who do work are found in informal sectors, such as subsistence agriculture.³⁴ The labor force participation (LFP) of women in Pakistan is one of the lowest in the world, well below the global average of 51.2 percent. Countries like China and some regions like East Asia have LFP of women as high as 67.7 percent and 63.1 percent, respectively.³⁵

Gender discrimination in Pakistan, and other Muslim majority countries, is said to be ingrained in political, legal, economic, and cultural factors. The approach to national security might, in fact, be a greater contributing factor. In building one of the largest armies and nuclear arsenals in the world, Pakistan has ignored its women as well as its economy. An authoritarian, top-down approach to governance in Pakistan (and other Muslim countries) has resulted in conferring disproportionate power on conservative religious leaders who exercise a virtual veto against women's empowerment. The authorities, eager to have the clerics on their side in maintaining hard power, concede far too much ground to them on social questions. Other policies, combined with social and economic failings, have made Pakistan a major incubator of jihadi extremism.

Pakistan has received \$40 billion in economic and military assistance from the United

States since 1950, of which \$23 billion in mainly military aid and reimbursements has flowed since September 11, 2001.³⁶ Pakistan's military, in particular, often looks to the U.S. for training, education, and equipment even though its worldview does not often coincide with that of the United States. This dependence gives Washington leverage over Pakistani policy that has not always been effectively used.

An inclusive approach to security, nudged by the United States, could result in Pakistan paying attention to women's inclusion in the workforce, as well as policies that produce sustained economic growth. This has to go beyond symbolic gestures, like token women in uniform showing up at military parades. It would require raising women's workforce

participation in general and ensuring that women are an equal part of Pakistani society.

Other U.S. allies and major aid recipients in the Muslim world are not particularly better off than Pakistan. Women constitute only 24.1 percent of the workforce in Egypt, one of the largest recipients of U.S. assistance—\$76 billion in the 35 years up to 2015, including \$48 billion in military aid.³⁷ Egypt's population stands at 89 million, of which 49.5 percent are women.³⁸ Of the total number of children that are out of school, 44.2 percent are boys and 55.8 percent are girls.³⁹ In the 2012 Egyptian legislature, women held only 10 seats, or two percent of representation in the national parliament.⁴⁰

Women constitute 30.5 percent of the workforce in Turkey and 15.42 percent in



USAID

Afghan women standing in line to vote for Afghanistan's national assembly.

Saudi Arabia. Jordan, often cited as a progressive Arab monarchy, reflects a similar pattern. It has a population of 6.6 million, 48.7 percent of whom are women. But women comprise only 16 percent of Jordan's 1.7 million workforce.⁴² Of the total number of children that are out of school, girls outnumber boys 15,545 to 9,382.⁴³ Additionally, women hold only 12 percent of the seats in Jordan's national parliament.

Arms and Influence

These statistics point to a policy error dating back to the Cold War era of building national security structures in most Muslim countries while neglecting social development, particularly gender equality. Governments from the Middle East and North Africa to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indonesia have invoked religion and tradition to avoid key social and economic reforms, including expanding literacy and education and involving women in the workforce.

The conception of security and power of most U.S. allies in the Muslim world depends almost exclusively on a hard power framework. The rise of terrorism and insurgencies fueled by radical religion-based ideologies is forcing a rethink of the primacy of hard power as the instrument to deal with the threat. Jihadist ideologues can replenish the ranks of their fallen fighters relatively rapidly. Thus, it is not enough to kill the foot soldiers; the tide of the beliefs that help recruit them must be stemmed.

The fight against Islamist extremism poses a challenge to social change in the Muslim world, but it also creates an opportunity to combine countering extremist ideology with major social change. Just as the radical Islamist groups have involved women in recruitment, education, motivation, and training of

terrorists, states and governments must involve women in systemic efforts to counter extremism. Women are an influential voice in keeping male relatives out of violent extremist groups, and can be for other men as well.

Empowering women to deradicalize would-be jihadis at a community level could increase the flow of intelligence from families about radicalized individuals. Several terrorist plots have been foiled due to tips from family members about the errant behavior of a relative. In 2009, the father of a Nigerian man charged with trying to blow up a transatlantic jet on Christmas Day had voiced concerns to U.S. officials about his son well before he tried to engage in a terrorist act.⁴⁴ The father's concerns in the Nigerian case were supported by his wife, the mother of the would-be terrorist.

Methodical information operations could target mothers and other family members to encourage them to inform authorities about extreme beliefs and plots, characterizing it as a way to save their family member and serve society, rather than as "giving him up." Women activists, in particular, can dissuade people from extremism as in the case of Pakistani activist Mossarat Qadeem, who works with mothers to keep young men from joining jihadis. Qadeem, a political scientist who left her teaching position at the University of Peshawar 13 years ago, lives in Islamabad. She drives "through checkpoints and dark mountain roads into the northern region of the country" to meet, at the invitation of mothers, with children who have joined radical groups.⁴⁵ "Qadeem is fighting extremism in Pakistan one child at a time," explained an article about her, adding that she meets "with mothers and their children to discuss the dangers of radical groups."⁴⁶

Once Qadeem meets radicalized young people, she asks them to help her understand why they joined these groups. She responds to their economic, political, and theological arguments and warns them that they would not be able to help their families if they were killed. Qadeem cites the Quran against suicide, as well as killing others. Her arguments have persuaded 78 young men to turn away from the path they have been led down by distorted religious texts and false promises. Her experience advances the case for creating “a nonviolent army of women promoting collaboration over confrontation as they lift up the moderate voices drowned out by radicals.”⁴⁷

The case for including women in fighting jihadists was made by Ambassador Hunt on the basis of her work in Afghanistan. “It’s not just [about] bringing in more soldiers,” she observed, “More soldiers are going to bring in, yes, one kind of security, but with tremendous resistance from terrorists. But if you were to take that money and instead give crash courses to support women leaders in every village, you would be fighting a bad idea—the Taliban—with a good idea—women’s empowerment—which is much more powerful than fighting a bad idea with guns.”⁴⁸ **PRISM**

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Photos

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Cpl. David Hernandez /U.S. Marine Corps



Members of a U.S. Marine Corps Female Engagement team on security patrol in Sangin Valley, Afghanistan.

Gender Perspectives and Military Effectiveness

Implementing UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security

BY ROBERT EGNELL

In January 2013 then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta rather unexpectedly lifted the ban on women in combat roles. This came after more than a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan where women had distinguished themselves in many ways—not the least of which included combat. The debate on the implementation of this decision has since raged, raising questions about physical standards and the impact on unit cohesion, among other things. The last few years have also witnessed a necessary discussion about the outrageous frequency of sexual assaults within military organizations. These debates—for good and bad—have placed gender issues in relation to military organizations high on the agenda of public debate.

The importance of a gender perspective in peace operations and military affairs has long been established by feminist activists and researchers, and recognized in a number of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) on women, peace, and security. Indeed, UNSCR 1325, as well as the subsequent resolutions within the area of women, peace, and security (most notably 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960), has created an international framework for the implementation of a gender perspective in the pursuit of international security and the conduct of peace operations.¹ And whether military organizations are seen as hurdles or supporters in the pursuit of peace and security, they are impossible to overlook as key components in any strategy to promote women's rights or a gender perspective in security affairs. Moreover, the U.S. National Action Plan on

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Women, Peace, and Security loudly calls for such implementation.

One might expect such advocacy from the women's rights movement or civilian politicians. However, at the very same time, military organizations around the world are coming to the same conclusion based on experiences in the field of operations—not least in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result of the need to address tactical level challenges, we have therefore witnessed a number of organizational innovations such as Team Lioness, Female Engagement Teams (FET), Cultural Support Teams (CST), Gender Field Advisors (GFA), and Gender Focal Points (GFP). Together, these innovative teams have sought to improve situational awareness and intelligence gathering by engaging local women, they have adapted order templates and impacted operational planning and execution, they have arranged female *jirgas* and executed projects in order to empower local women and improve their situation. In short, they have served as force multipliers within a context that often required their participation for maximized effectiveness. The jury is still out on the effectiveness and impact of these teams and advisors, but that should not distract us from the fact that they were not introduced as a politically correct nicety to please the women's movement, but as a direct result of operational necessities.

To further the discussion on gender in military affairs, this article discusses two questions: why should gender perspectives be introduced and implemented in military organizations? And how should this process be managed to do so successfully? Regardless of whether we agree that gender perspectives are important for military affairs or not, or if we simply obey the "orders" of the National

Action Plan (NAP), we are facing the challenge of implementing UNSCR 1325 in a vast organization with a culture that has traditionally been unkind to these perspectives. The process of implementation must therefore be approached as an uphill battle that will involve substantial resistance. The article draws on a major study of a similar process in Sweden that will serve to highlight general tactical choices, organizational hurdles, and policy implications for an international audience.²

To achieve these ends, a new interdisciplinary approach is necessary—one that connects gender perspectives and feminist scholarship with military theory and discussions of military effectiveness in both war and peace support operations. By marrying two previously separate fields of analysis and inquiry, this article not only makes an argument for the implementation of gender perspectives in the armed forces, but also addresses the more challenging question of how this process of change should be approached. The result of such processes are not only likely to lead to improved conditions for women around the world, but also increased effectiveness of military organizations employing force, or the threat of such force, to achieve political objectives.

This is, in other words, the smart thing to do, and the fact that it is also the right thing to do in terms of promoting gender equality and women's rights is useful, but is not central to the argument. The core task of military organizations is to fight and win the nation's wars and not to promote gender equality—and the organizational change process should therefore focus on these core tasks. That also means that the leadership of the implementation process should find its institutional home at the very heart of the military chain of command,

and as close to the core activities as possible—the joint staff and the combatant commands. While the integration of women in combat arms will be helpful, it is far from sufficient, and gender perspectives therefore need to be mainstreamed throughout the organization. Token women, gender advisors, or ad hoc female teams will simply not cut it.

Connecting Gender and Military Effectiveness

Feminist perspectives and traditional military values are indeed often seen as confronting one another in a zero-sum game. Within this game, implementing a gender perspective or including women in combat units simultaneously means lowering military effectiveness and fighting power. At the same time, efforts to increase military effectiveness are generally viewed as a step back for women's rights by supporting the existing patriarchal system in which the logic of war and violence prevails. This zero-sum view is both inaccurate and unhelpful for everyone seeking to improve international security and stability. The two viewpoints have much to learn from each other, and there are plenty of synergies to be explored. Let us therefore explore how gender perspectives can positively influence military effectiveness, and then look at how military organizations can support the implementation of gender perspectives, women's rights, and participation as prescribed in UNSCR 1325 and the NAPs. First, however, a closer look at what military effectiveness means in the contemporary strategic context is necessary.

Military Effectiveness and Fighting Power in a Changing World

An effective military organization is one that succeeds in performing the core tasks that the

political leadership asks of it. Traditionally, or ideally at least, this has meant fighting and winning conventional wars—and thereby defending the nation (or the constitution). The armed forces have therefore been organized, trained, and equipped, and have also developed a certain professional culture and ethos with the intention of maximizing their effectiveness in performing precisely that duty. The extreme nature of the task, or what the theorists of civil-military relations often refers to as the “functional imperative,” also means that military organizations have a right, and indeed a need, to be different from broader society.³ Discipline, loyalty, strength, obedience, “warrior mindset,” and unit cohesion are just some aspects of this ethos that may sound arcane or even worrying to some civilians, but that from a professional military perspective are considered absolutely necessary for the effective application of violence in the midst of war.

The need to be different has also meant that certain developments in civil society such as increased individualism, racial and gender integration, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights have been avoided within military organizations. The question is nevertheless to what extent these civilian developments would actually harm the effectiveness of the organization. The integration of African Americans and the LGBT community turned out to be just fine—why would women in combat and the implementation of a gender perspective not also be fine, or even good, for the armed forces?

While conventional inter-state warfare can never be declared dead, it is nevertheless fair to say that in the contemporary context, different forms of complex stability and peace support operations, as well as limited wars, are the

most common military tasks. The aims of such military operations have changed from the pursuit of concrete military strategic objectives to the establishment of certain conditions from which political outcomes can be decided.⁴ In this context, military activities often play a supporting role in so called “comprehensive,” “integrated,” or “whole of government” approaches and operations that involve a large number of actors and activities aimed at achieving more far-reaching political goals of stabilization, democratization, economic growth, and the implementation and maintenance of respect for human rights and the rule of law. Key tasks of military organizations in this environment therefore include the protection of civilians (PoC), including humanitarian and diplomatic activities, the establishment of order, and the prevention of sexual and gender based violence. The political

objectives are indeed the most important, and military organizations must not only operate to provide the platform from which civilian actors can achieve these aims—they must also take great care not to violate the principles that tend to govern the larger endeavor: respect for human rights, ideals of democratic governance, and gender equality.

In general, military theorists often describe military capability or “combat power” as a combination of physical factors (the means, meaning the size and materiel of the organization), conceptual factors (doctrine or the way the means are employed), and morale factors (the will of the soldiers). Within the debates about fighting power, traditional theories of military capability and effectiveness have often overemphasized physical military factors, such as troop numbers and the quality of equipment, while paying less attention to



Cpl. Mary E. Carlin/US Marine Corps

Combatives Tournament held in Monterey, California.

the more intangible factors that influence a state's capacity to use its material resources effectively—like morale, culture, education, and doctrine.⁵ However, the many cases where the numerically and technologically inferior win battles and campaigns suggest that such explanations of military capability are misleading—especially when they fail to acknowledge the importance of the policies for which the military instrument is used.⁶

Where do gender perspectives and female soldiers and officers enter this equation? While one should be careful about assigning special capabilities to female soldiers and officers, this article argues that adding women to combat units, and a gender perspective to military operations more generally, has the potential to add new capabilities and thereby also improve the effectiveness of operations.⁷

To begin, women can play a role with regard to the means, the material factor. Including the large portion of women who are physically fit for military service in the armed forces allows societies to maximize the size of those forces. However, the emphasis on “lean and mean” organizations rather than mass in 21st century warfare means that the main potential contribution is more likely to lie in how and with what conviction armed forces conduct operations.

Adding a gender perspective has the potential to transform the traditional military paradigm by including and creating an increased understanding of the importance of non-traditional security issues. Looking at the strategic process without a sound understanding of all aspects of the conflict—such as the actors involved, the political climate, the local culture, the economic situation on the ground, etc.—it is very difficult to establish what objectives the military and civilian organizations

should pursue in the quest for the political aim.⁸ A gender perspective casts a critical eye on an area of operations that involves the examination and understanding of social, economic, political, cultural, and religious practices; of how equality and inequality manifest themselves in the distribution of and access to resources and of decisionmaking power not just between rich and poor, but in all parts of society. Gendered dimensions of conflict can indeed be tremendously transformative by affecting *both* what the operation does and *how* it does it, in terms of its priorities and tactics. It affects the aims of operations, and expands the range of violence that must be addressed (including sexual violence and other violence directed at the civilian population, not just the violence of traditional warfare). Gender perspectives can also inform tactics, for example by shaping behavior along patrol routes, encouraging consultation with people in the local community, and so on.

Women can also provide specific competencies and perspectives that improve the conduct of operations. Women in combat units, as well as the implementation of a gender perspective in operations, clearly have the potential to increase the information gathering and analysis capability of units. Gaining access to local women not only allows a unit to develop a better understanding of local conditions and culture, it can also improve the unit's relationship with the community, its perceived legitimacy, and improve force protection of troops in the area of operations. The most obvious examples arise from Female or Mixed Engagement Teams, intelligence officers, cultural analysts, and interpreters who provide access to populations and areas that all-male units cannot engage or search. Another example is provided by the difficulty in achieving

civil-military coordination and cooperation in campaigns involving a broad set of actors. Male dominance of the military has been pointed to as one of the cultural features that create friction between military and humanitarian organizations.⁹ Female liaison officers could potentially build bridges between the two sets of organizations.

The UN rightly emphasizes that female soldiers and gender perspectives are absolutely essential for certain tasks in peace operations where military and civilian aims and tasks overlap. As an example, they help address specific needs of female ex-combatants during the process of demobilization and reintegration into civilian life. They can interview survivors of gender-based violence, mentor female cadets at police and military academies, and, as highlighted above, they can interact with

women in societies where women are prohibited from speaking to men.¹⁰ Moreover, female soldiers can also serve as role models in the local environment by inspiring women and girls in often male-dominated societies to push for their own rights and for participation in peace processes. While these competencies may be dismissed as unrelated to a traditional view of military fighting power, they may prove essential in the complex operations of today.

There are also some commonly expressed challenges or concerns expressed in relation to the impact of women and gender perspectives. The first is the idea that women, in general, are not fit for war; that their often lower physical abilities and/or supposed lack of mental toughness put at risk the combat effectiveness of the units. The second is the idea that the



Steven L. Shepard/Presidio of Monterey Public Affairs

Member of a U.S. Marine Corps Female Engagement Team watches over an Afghan girl while the girl's mother receives medical attention from another team member.

inclusion of women and gender perspectives will ruin unit cohesion and military culture.

In both cases, the problem with these concerns is that they assume that the existing standards are virtually perfect. Any change in standards or the way soldiers are trained and units formed, will therefore be perceived as a negative impact—especially if it is imposed by the political leadership. The issue of physical standards is nevertheless easily resolved by not making accommodations for women and maintaining the existing physical standards and tests. Let everyone who passed the requirements be eligible for the job. At the same time, any organization that wants to continue to evolve and improve should constantly seek ways of improving the existing standards and standard operating procedures—not least given the changing character of conflict and soldiering in the contemporary context. The Canadians completely threw out all old standards and started anew with a close look at the actual demands of the job in the field of operations, and then scientifically created standards and testing procedures based on that rather than tradition.

In terms of the more difficult debate about unit cohesion, there is very little data to fall back on. However, gender integration has existed in non-combat units for a long time and there are no reports indicating that it has had an impact on unit cohesion. Many other countries have also integrated combat units with a similar absence of negative reports. Outside the military sphere the business sector is reporting positive effects of integration and equality policies. Unit effectiveness measured in production increases, and companies with integrated boardrooms make more money. As a more general comment, it is rather suspicious to argue that the military has suddenly

arrived at the peak unit cohesion and that there is no room for change or improvement. Many traditional ways of training soldiers and units are already being thrown out—collective punishment, hazing, sexist and homophobic slurs. Again, no reports of decreases in unit cohesion can be found and one can only assume that professional drill sergeants have found new ways of achieving the same goals.

Finally, let us move into the realm of existing research on ground combat units. Professor Tony King is one of few who have studied and compared the impact of gender integration in different countries, with an eye on unit cohesion. He finds that in today's world of professional armies, it is not gender that determines cohesion, but training and competence. In other words, it is not the social cohesion of units that determines effectiveness, but rather a professional and more task-oriented form of cohesion. As long as women are competent and well-trained, they therefore do not effect unit cohesion negatively.¹¹

While there are plenty of potential benefits to be reaped from the inclusion of female soldiers and gendered perspectives, this should not, however, be seen as a silver bullet or be overly exaggerated. The impact is not going to be revolutionary, and without first changing the mindset of commanders and planners, the importance of women's perspectives, information, and analyses is likely to be undervalued within a more traditional narrative. The impact is therefore likely to be limited until a more general mainstreaming of a gender perspective on operations is achieved, and even at that time it is still only one of many components that determine the effectiveness of an operation.

Military Support of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

A closer look at UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security reveals that they are intended to be strategic frameworks for conducting more effective and sustainable peace negotiations, peacekeeping missions, and conflict resolution interventions by the international community. They encompass a range of complex issues, including judicial and legal reform (as part of state building), security sector reform, formal and informal peace negotiations, peacekeeping, political participation, and protection from and responses to sexual violence in armed conflict. UNSCR 1325 and four subsequent resolutions also under the umbrella of the women, peace, and security agenda (UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960) thereby lay out actions to be taken by governments, the United Nations and other international and national actors. Military organizations are at the very heart of this process. On the one hand they are seen as the “problem,” by virtue of being the perpetrator of violence against women and as maintainers of the existing patriarchal system. On the other hand, they are also called upon as protectors of women and civilians in violent conflicts. In other words, there is plenty of potential for substantial military contributions to the four main pillars of the resolutions on women, peace, and security:

Participation: This pillar speaks to the importance of full participation and inclusion of women (including civil society actors) in the decisionmaking and execution of activities related to peacemaking, post-conflict

reconstruction, and the prevention of conflict. Military organizations can support this process by working internally to ensure women’s full participation within their own ranks, as well as making sure that engagement with civil society and local leaders also includes and empowers women.

Protection: The protection of women and girls in armed conflict is an obvious military role that nevertheless requires profound understanding of gender perspectives to be effective. This would involve internal training of military personnel in the protection of women, including zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse of local populations, as well as making sure that gender becomes an integral part of advising and assisting, Security Sector Reform (SSR), and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) processes. Military organizations thereby have an opportunity to engage in both short-term protection, and more long-term activities that deal with the underlying reasons for the violence.

Prevention: The prevention of conflict-related sexual violence is a complex matter that requires changing the behavior of perpetrators. This may involve a range of activities depending on the nature of the perpetrator and reasons for the sexual violence. Preventing sexual violence used as a weapon of war requires changing the cost-benefit calculations of the perpetrating units by using force or the threat of force to deter such behavior. While such deterrence is ideally conducted by legal systems, in the midst of conflict it is often only the military that has the muscle to provide a convincing enough threat to change behavior. Addressing broader societal sexual violence

requires ending impunity by increasing the capacity of the justice system, as well as by changing the cultural values of the society. Protection of victims and witnesses may also be included in preventive activities. While these are not primarily military tasks, military organizations can serve as role models in how they treat women within the organization as well as in the local community.

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the often different implications for women and men of any plans, policies, and activities of all actors involved. UNSCR 1325 calls for the systematic implementation of a gender perspective in peacekeeping and peacebuilding by all Member States, especially in the context of peace missions led by the UN.¹² The ultimate

goal of mainstreaming is often described as achieving gender equality. This is slightly problematic for military organizations that emphasize the need to be different to ensure effectiveness in their core tasks. However, as described above, mainstreaming gender throughout the organization also has great positive potential in terms of supporting the analysis, planning, and execution of operations. The mainstreaming of a gender perspective throughout military organizations, both at home and in partner countries, is likely to serve as an important signal to the broader society. If women can make substantial contributions to what is surely the most masculine and patriarchal world of all, there are few limits left in terms of women's participation and empowerment in other sectors of society.



Spc. Kristina Trulock/US Army

A U.S. Army Sergeant writes down information from a local woman at the Woman's Center near the Zhari District Center, Kandahar province, Afghanistan.

In sum, there are a number of different ways that a gender perspective has the potential to not only alleviate the negative impact of war for women, and to improve women's participation and empowerment in society, but also to affect military effectiveness positively, primarily with regard to how force is applied to achieve political aims. There are also a number of potential benefits of a gender perspective that bear less relation to traditional views of military effectiveness, but that may have an important impact on operations as a whole. Examples would be supporting women's participation and status in the society, and building the foundation for representative governance and security structures and thus improving the quality of governance and development. Let us therefore leave the question of *why* this should be done, to instead focus on the equally challenging question of *how* this process should be undertaken.

Approaches to the Implementation Process

The only realistic starting point when attempting to integrate gender perspectives in military organizations is to first understand that we are dealing with a deeply skeptical organization that is likely to produce strong resistance. However, experience from countries like Sweden and the Netherlands indicate that this is not an impossible sell if the process is introduced and managed in a way that speaks to the core tasks of military organizations.¹³ This section discusses a number of tactical considerations in the implementation process, and simultaneously addresses a number of debates within feminist theory.

The most challenging task is to gain access to the organization, to begin the work. This is closely related to the issue of how the process

and its aims are described and communicated. Feminists often approach the integration of women and gender perspectives in military organizations as "the right thing to do." The aim of such a process would focus on UNSCR 1325 and speak of increased women's participation and empowerment as inherently good pursuits. While such arguments and aims may sound compelling to a civilian audience, they often fall on deaf ears within military organizations. The functional imperative of fighting and winning wars in defense of the nation remains too strong, and while military leaders might very well support the general notion of increasing gender equality in their society, the subject is simply not perceived as having anything to do with military operations. A "rights based" approach is therefore not likely to get the buy-in necessary from either key leaders or the broader organization. Instead, a better approach is to emphasize that the implementation process serves to strengthen the military in its constant pursuit of maximal effectiveness in its core tasks—that implementing gender perspectives is actually "the smart thing to do." While the aim of the process may indeed be more far reaching and also include change processes that have more to do with the implementation of the NAP, at the onset of implementation the aims should be kept limited. The reason for the limitation is to make sure that the process fits within the framework of the organization's core existing tasks, and thereby avoid some of the organizational resistance that is inevitable when aspiring to a more ambitious feminist agenda. In other words, gender perspectives should not be seen as an expansion of the military mandate, but rather as a way to improve the conduct and effectiveness of existing roles.

There is a great temptation to see these issues as add-ons, which then expands the role of the military into realms that military organizations are not particularly suited for. A study of Swedish gender advisors found that those who focused their work on advising internal personnel on gender issues had much greater impact than those who engaged in development and humanitarian projects among the local population. The internally focused advisors made sure that everyone in the staff and the operational units understood gender perspectives and that they could apply them in the conduct of operations; thereby having a substantial impact on the units' work. The externally focused advisors often had little internal influence, as the staff and the units felt that the gender advisor was taking care of the gender aspects of operations. Moreover, the development projects were often unsustainable and poorly executed, as they lacked the expertise and staying power of civilian actors.¹⁴

A central issue for feminists studying or promoting change is the extent to which "inside" or "outside" strategies are the most appropriate or effective. Diane Otto argues that the framework of UNSCR 1325 limits itself to "inside" strategies—working within mainstream institutional structures, rather than the activism and more radical work conducted outside the mainstream structures in a much more transformative or even revolutionary way.¹⁵ Military organizations, as highlighted above, are not just potential protectors of women and civilians—they are also described as "the problem." Not only are military organizations often the perpetrators of some of the worst atrocities conducted in the midst of conflict,¹⁶ but they also have more general problems highlighted by the high occurrence of sexual harassment and assault within and

around military garrisons in peacetime.¹⁷ There is, in other words, an uneasiness with which feminists approach military organizations, and a doubt about whether working within the existing institutional and cultural structures of the armed forces is sufficient or even appropriate, or whether a more transformative, radical activist agenda from the outside is necessary to successfully implement UNSCR 1325 and the NAPs. If so, what should this transformative agenda entail and to what extent would it have an impact on the effectiveness of the organization in pursuing its core task—employing organized violence? In any case, based on the limited successes of women's rights activists trying to influence military organizations, as well as the contrasting success of the Swedish Armed Forces, where the change agents within the organization decided to drive the process as a military imperative,¹⁸ this article promotes the inside strategy—working together with the organization and its leaders to create change from within.

Another tactical consideration is derived from the feminist debate about whether "gender balancing" (increasing female recruitment and representation) or "gender mainstreaming"¹⁹ (achieving gender equality by assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, and programs in all areas and at all levels) is the most effective and implementable approach to achieve organizational change. The most common assumption is that gender balancing is an easier and more implementable strategy than gender mainstreaming.¹⁹ This is supported by the many cases of Western armed forces that have successfully increased the representation of women in the armed forces, but that at the same time

struggle to implement a gender perspective. Interestingly though, Annica Kronsell challenges this assumption by studying the cases of Sweden and the European Union. She notes that in those cases, mainstreaming has been easier than recruiting and promoting women.²⁰ It is indeed important to stress that there is a difference between sex and gender, and that women are not by definition gender aware, or promoters of gender equality. Indeed, few women have joined the military to become advocates of women's rights or gender equality. Instead, just as their male colleagues, they have signed up because they believe in the cause of defending the nation, and they are drawn to the profession and culture of the military organization. As a consequence, to successfully promote gender perspectives within military organizations, a gender-aware man may sometimes be equally or more effective than an unaware woman.

A debate related to that between mainstreaming and balancing is whether the implementation process should focus on specific gender-related functions or experts, such as Gender Advisors attached to regular units, or broader mainstreaming within the organization. The risk with specific functions or experts is what Diane Otto refers to as the "exile of inclusion." Not only are the specialists expected to conform to the existing culture and structure of the organization, they also risk becoming isolated within silos of pre-existing organizations or in separate institutions. The organization is thereby more likely to remain oblivious or "blind" to gender issues when the experts are absent.²¹

Again, pragmatic thinking and accurate timing is necessary. Given the size, complexity, and likely resistance of the organization, broader gender mainstreaming from the outset

is likely to be difficult. Specific gender functions in the form of experts and advisors are less than ideal for broader implementation of a gender perspective, but as early agents of change that serve to pave the road for broader change processes, they may be the only option. It should, however, be stressed that their specific functions should be seen as transition tools before the organization is ready for broader mainstreaming of gender perspectives.

The balance between specific functions and mainstreaming is related to yet another debate within the literature on gender and military organizations that addresses a more practical question of implementation in the field of operations. What is the most useful makeup of military "engagement teams," which have the purpose of meeting and addressing local women and children? Should they be all female or mixed? Can all-female engagement teams (FETs) obtain access to men in traditional societies as effectively as mixed engagement teams can? Does the sex of the interpreter matter when attempting to engage local men and women? All-female engagement teams, which have been used more extensively by the United States, have been the focus of much attention and discussion. A study of the Swedish case nevertheless found that the lessons from Afghanistan point toward the use of mixed gender teams as preferential to FETs.²² One reason is that the number of female officers and soldiers remains low, and those available should therefore be used to form flexible mixed engagement teams that can interact more effectively with both local women and men. Mixed teams could also have the collateral effect of sensitizing the male team members. Moreover, a fully developed gender perspective should equally include male perspectives, which risk becoming lost in the

FET concept, just as women's perspectives are often lost in male-dominated organizations. The ideal would be to have gender diversity in all units to perform the necessary tasks. Either way, this means that more women must be recruited to the armed forces, in general, and to front line combat units, in particular.

Challenging the Instrumental Approach

Gina Heathcote describes a more fundamental tension for feminists when studying military organizations: the very idea of employing military violence and force to "protect" women.²³ On one side are some early feminists who promote the use of force or intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to protect or "save" women. On the other side are those who instead highlight the uneasy relationship

between women's rights, human rights, and humanitarian intervention, and who often criticize the early feminist's demands for the use of force to protect women in conflict zones.²⁴ For example, Anne Orford has described the use of military force, even when sanctioned or justified by law, as entrenching patriarchal and imperialist understandings of the role of law to "protect" and to "save."²⁵ The implementation of a gender perspective in military organizations is thereby inherently problematic for anti-militarist feminists, and is often seen as an instrumental interpretation of UNSCR 1325 and the NAPs that only seeks to increase military effectiveness and thereby support the patriarchal war system, rather than to transform or dismantle it.

One problem with an "instrumental" approach that stresses operational effectiveness



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A U.S. Army Staff Sergeant, with the aid of an interpreter, helps two local Afghan girls practice reading and spelling.

alone is that it may involve a more superficial remedy that does not explore the transformative potential of a gender perspective as rights-based arguments would. Feminists also highlight other risks involved in the instrumental approach.²⁶ One such risk is that the instrumentalist argument involves an essentialist view of women and their competences. If women are recruited as “peacemakers,” or for their oft-emphasized compassionate, diplomatic, or communicative skills, they are also most likely to play “character roles” within the organization where such skills are valued. In other words, within military organizations, women will be used to fill competence gaps (in most often what are perceived as non-essential and peripheral duties), rather than being allowed to impact the organization as a whole, or to compete with men on equal terms.²⁷

Another important risk is the selective or “tokenistic” engagement of feminist or gender perspectives. Otto has effectively highlighted the weaknesses of UNSCR 1325 in addressing what feminists view as the key structural causes of women’s inequality, stressing conflict prevention more than rhetorically, and also the goal of general disarmament and anti-militarism.²⁸ Otto cites Sheri Gibbings who dejectedly concludes that “[t]he route to peace and ending war in this approach was no longer a reduction in military spending, but the integration of women and a gender perspective.”²⁹

Carol Cohn takes the argument further by highlighting that the essentialist notion of “women-as-peacemakers” risks leaving the dominant political and epistemological frameworks of the war system untouched.³⁰ If Cohn is right in that many of the efforts to include women or a gender perspective fail to address the larger structural issues of a “masculine war

system,” two more risks naturally follow. First, there is a danger that feminist efforts are co-opted and used by the institutions for purposes that do not reflect the feminist agenda. This is particularly obvious when it comes to military organizations in which women can be used simply as tools for military victory. This debate is closely related to the problem of inside strategies discussed above. Or as feminist Audre Lorde effectively invoked the language of the U.S. civil rights movement by arguing that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.”³¹ Second, if the change processes only nibble at the edges of untouched structural problems they are unlikely to have much of an impact regardless of whether the aim is the empowerment of women or mere military effectiveness. If things go wrong, or if the changes do not live up to the expectations of increased effectiveness, the risk is that women or gendered approaches will be thrown out again.³² Kathleen Jennings, for one, highlights this risk—especially since many of the claims regarding increased military effectiveness as a justification for increased women’s participation in peace operations have limited quantifiable empirical support.³³

Conclusion

Military organizations use force, or the threat of force, to achieve political aims. The *raison d’être* of military organizations is not to improve women’s right, but to defend the nation from military threats. While these facts make military institutions problematic partners for women activists, the often violent nature of the international system, and the prominent role that military organizations play within that system, are unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future. Thus, there are two reasons activists would be wise to work

with military organizations to implement UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plans. First, collaboration and increased awareness can help mitigate the unnecessarily negative impact that gender-insensitive military organizations can have in the field of battle and peace operations—ranging from abuse, prostitution, and missed opportunities in terms of intelligence, situational awareness, or improved relationships due to lack of contact with the female part of the local population, to an unconscious reduction of women’s security and power. The second reason is the fact that military institutions can also be a powerful and sometimes necessary force for good in order to protect civilians in general, and women in particular.

The nature of the military instrument nevertheless also creates limits to what we can expect in terms of implementing UNSCR 1325 and the NAPs. For example, a military approach is seldom the most appropriate way to increase women’s political participation, promote human rights, or democratic development. The aims of military organizations in the area of implementing UNSCR 1325 should therefore be tempered. While military organizations can play important roles by positively modifying their practices, and by providing the necessary stability in the area of operations for the more important actors to conduct their work, they should work in a supporting role, rather than in a leading one.

In the end, implementing UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plans is important not only for the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality, it can also help military organizations maximize their operational effectiveness in a strategic context that demands local cultural understanding and great organizational diversity to tackle the often complex

tasks involved in stabilization. While military organizations generally have a culture that will resist the implementation of gender perspectives, the process of change is far from impossible. By starting from a solid understanding of and respect for the military organization and its core tasks, the change process can be placed within that framework in order to create buy-in from key change agents within the hierarchy. This also means that the initial focus of the implementation process should be on the organization’s core task—fighting—rather than on human resources issues of recruitment, career paths, and women’s rights. With time, the increased understanding of gender perspectives may indeed pave the way for more transformative and wide-ranging changes.

PRISM

Notes

¹ UN Security Resolution 1325 was adopted in October 2000. The text of the resolution can be found at <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>>.

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⁴ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 269.

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⁹ Donna Winslow, "Strange Bedfellows in Humanitarian Crisis: NGOs and the Military," in N. Mychajlyszyn, and T.D. Shaw (eds.), *Twisting Arms and Flexing Muscles: Humanitarian Intervention and Peacebuilding in Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 116.

¹⁰ United Nations, "Women in Peacekeeping" (undated), <<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml>>.

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¹² Definition from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted on July 18, 1997.

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¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Diane Otto, "The Exile of Inclusion: Reflections on Gender Issues in International Law

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¹⁸ Egnell, Hojem, and Berts, *Gender, Military Effectiveness, and Organizational Change*.

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²³ Gina Heathcote, "Feminist Politics and the Use of Force: Theorising Feminist Action and Security Council Resolution 1325," *Socio-legal Review* 7 (2011).

²⁴ See Karen Engle, "'Calling in the Troops': The Uneasy Relationship among Women's Rights, Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 20 (March 2007): 189–226.

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²⁷ See Valenius, "A Few Kind Women," 510; Kathleen Jennings, "Women's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations," 1.

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²⁹ Sherri Gibbings cited in Otto, "Power and Danger," 107.

³⁰ Carol Cohn, "Mainstreaming Gender in UN Security Policy: A Path to Political Transformation?," in *Global Governance: Feminist Perspectives*, eds. Shirin M. Rai and Georgina Waylen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 185–206.

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Photos

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U.S. Army RDECOM



DARPA's Warrior Web project. Technological advancements could fundamentally alter the equation of women in combat.

Women Warriors

Why the Robotics Revolution Changes the Combat Equation¹

BY LINELL A. LETENDRE

[This] should not be about women's rights, equal opportunity, career assignments for enhancement purposes for selection to higher rank. It is about, most assuredly is about...combat effectiveness, combat readiness, winning the next conflict....

— General Robert H. Barrow (retired), 27th Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps

So began the testimony of General Barrow before the Senate Armed Services Committee in June 1991 regarding his opinion on women in combat during which he gave his ultimate conclusion: “women can’t do it...and there is no military need to put women into combat.”² That is about to change. In the wake of women successfully integrating into submarines and graduating from Army Ranger School, an additional—and heretofore underappreciated—factor is poised to alter the women in combat debate: the revolution in robotics and autonomous systems. The technology leap afforded by robotics will shift the debate from whether women are able to meet combat standards to how gender diversity in combat will improve the U.S. military’s fighting capability. Over the next decade, the U.S. military will reap huge benefits from robotic and autonomous systems that will fundamentally change both the tools used on the battlefield and the approach taken to combat. Not only will robotic technology undermine the standard arguments against women in combat, but full gender integration across all combat roles will maximize American employment of autonomous systems and corresponding combat effectiveness.

To understand how robotics will change the equation of women in combat, this article first examines the current law and policy regarding women in combat positions, taking a close look at how the services are approaching the current Department of Defense (DOD) guidance to

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establish gender-neutral standards for all occupational specialties. While present policy and direction favors opening all combat career fields across genders, full integration is still more notional ideas than reality. To understand why, this article examines the arguments surrounding women in combat, both for and against. Next, the article highlights how robotics technology in development today will change the future battlefield by augmenting the physical capabilities of soldiers and lightening the loads carried by combat troops. Finally, this article assesses how robotic advancements will not only counter the naysayers of women in combat, but should also compel senior leaders to integrate women into

combat roles faster than currently planned. In sum, diverse combat teams will improve U.S. future combat effectiveness in a robotic and autonomous systems fight.

Women in Combat: Current Status of Law and Policy

Though women have served in the Armed Forces in every conflict our nation has faced since its founding, the numbers of women and types of roles or occupational specialties they have assumed have grown dramatically since World War II. This expansion of female participation in the military was driven in part by necessity following the implementation of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973 and in part by the



Frances Green, Margaret Kirchner, Ann Waldner, and Blanche Osborn. Members of the Women Airforce Service Pilots who trained to ferry the B-17 Flying Fortresses during WWII.

equal rights movement. Despite these drivers, combat participation was specifically forbidden by statute until 1993. Following the recommendations put forth by the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces in 1992, Congress lifted the statutory restrictions surrounding women in combat and instead left decisions regarding appropriate occupational roles for genders to the Department of Defense. While these changes allowed women to serve in combat aviation roles, DOD excluded women from assignment to any unit below the brigade level whose primary role was to engage in direct ground combat.³

Following a number of Congressionally-mandated reports and the expanding role of women in combat roles in the War on Terror, DOD replaced the ground combat exclusion with a requirement for gender neutral standards in 2013. In a joint memorandum by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, DOD committed to removing “as many barriers as possible to joining, advancing, and succeeding in the U.S. Armed Forces.”⁴ DOD called upon the military services to integrate women into combat units as “expeditiously as possible,” but no later than January 1, 2016. Prior to that date, services could recommend to the Secretary of Defense that a particular occupational specialty or unit remain closed to women if the service is able to justify with “rigorous analysis of factual data” that women lack the abilities and skills necessary for the combat role.⁵

Since this proclamation of full integration, services—particularly the Army and Marine Corps—have been working to integrate women into various combat preparatory courses such as the Army’s Ranger course and

the Marine Corps’ Infantry Officers Course. Services are also struggling to define the standards for combat readiness in terms of physical fitness expectations and warfighting skills. The Marine Corps, for example, established a Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force in October 2014 to develop a standards-based assessment for ground combat arms tasks.⁶ In September 2015, the Marine Corps requested a waiver from Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter that would exclude women from infantry and armor positions. On December 3, 2015, Secretary Carter denied that request and directed the services to open all combat jobs to women.⁷ This announcement, however, has not quelled the debate over women entering combat roles.

Women in Combat: Arguments For and Against

While General Dempsey justified the policy change as an attempt to “strengthen the joint force,” critics of the integration of women in combat remain vocal.⁸ Since serious discussions of lifting the combat exclusion began in the early 1990s, the main arguments surrounding women in combat have focused on women’s physical capabilities and the impact of gender integration on a unit’s ability to fight effectively. Opponents point to clear differences between men and women’s physical abilities: men typically have 30 percent more muscle strength and 15-30 percent more aerobic capacity than women.⁹ These differences can have meaningful consequences when considering that an infantry soldier may carry packs of 100 pounds or more into combat. Women and men also carry loads differently, with women shortening their gait or stride when under heavy loads. While a 1996 Army study showed that a 24-week physical training

course for civilian women enabled 78 percent of the group to carry and lift objects over 100 pounds and improved the women's ability to run with a 75-pound pack, the fact remains that most men can out-lift, out-carry, and outrun the average woman.¹⁰

Outspoken critics, like Elaine Donnelly of the Center for Military Readiness, assert that such physical differences "detract from mission accomplishment" by impacting the cohesion and effectiveness of combat units.¹¹ Social scientists who study group behavior have found that male groups thrive on competition, hierarchy, and conflict while female groups flourish on equality and cooperation. Men are more likely to be risk takers and be physically aggressive, while many women are culturally raised to be more nurturing and empathetic.¹² Opponents of women in combat view such differences in group behavior negatively and infer that dissimilarities in group dynamics combined with physical capability deltas will result in a decline in unit cohesion and, subsequently, degraded combat effectiveness.¹³ They cite concerns that male soldiers will seek to "protect" women and that sexual tensions in a mixed combat unit will destroy morale and trust.¹⁴ The sum of such disruptions, proclaim antagonists, will destroy U.S. combat capability.

Proponents of gender integration in combat units reject such claims of a loss of combat effectiveness. Though recognizing physical difference between genders, proponents ask that DOD simply adopt a consistent combat standard and allow women who meet the standard to join the combat ranks. Other women-in-combat champions view the physical prowess debate as a superficial excuse to cover deep-rooted resistance to women in the military generally. Supporters note that women have

fought in combat historically (e.g., the Soviet army in World War II and the "Long-haired Warriors" in Vietnam) and are successfully fighting in ground combat today.¹⁵ While not disputing differences of women's aerobic and anaerobic capabilities when compared to men, advocates reference that most soldiers in a 2008 Army Research Institute (ARI) study concluded that women *do* possess the physical strength, stamina, and mental capabilities to succeed in combat.¹⁶

Protagonists also dismiss claims that unit cohesion would suffer if women were integrated into ground combat units. Social science literature demonstrates that unit cohesion is comprised of two parts: task cohesion and social cohesion. When opponents trumpet potential degradation of unit cohesion based on differences between the sexes, they normally refer to aspects of social cohesion or the emotional bonds of trust between group members. Studies have shown, however, that task cohesion—or the unifying force of a team focused on a combined mission—is the overwhelming contributor to overall unit cohesion, not social cohesion.¹⁷

Similar arguments about risk to unit cohesion have been raised and disproven numerous times in our military's history to include racial integration of ground forces, females joining combat aviation units, and most recently the service of openly gay and lesbian service members. Each integration experience has demonstrated that well-led teams derive their cohesion from a focus on the mission itself not on the differences or similarities of social makeup or backgrounds. Additionally, women-in-combat advocates dismiss concerns of sexual assault and decreased discipline in integrated units as problems appropriately handled through leadership and professionalism.¹⁸

Opening up more military jobs to women, proponents contend, will promote greater equity in promotions and positively affect the overarching military culture.¹⁹

While both proponents and opponents of women in combat have evidence and rhetoric to support their positions, the debate has principally centered on whether or not women can accomplish the job. Indeed, most advocates of gender-integrated combat units simply seek the opportunity of equality—allow women who can meet combat requirements to participate equally in the defense of their nation. To date there has been little discussion about how advances in technology—specifically robotics and autonomous systems and the corresponding changes in concepts of operation—will alter the debate. To begin to understand this effect, this article will now highlight

a range of developing robotic and autonomous systems and their potential impact on the future of combat.

Revolution in Robotics: A Changing Battlefield²⁰

The battlefield of the future will look exceedingly different from today's combat fight due in large part to advances in robotics and autonomous systems. Not only is robotics changing how soldiers are able to individually perform and interact on the battlefield, but autonomous systems are changing the very nature of combat. The Defense Science Board recognized in 2012 that robotic systems were significantly impacting warfare worldwide by enabling persistent capabilities over the battlefield and expanding warfighter combat abilities.²¹ With over 50 countries estimated to



John F. Williams, U.S. Navy

CHIMP, or the Carnegie Mellon University Highly Intelligent Mobile Platform, approaches the door during the DARPA's 2015 Robotics Challenge.

have built or purchased unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for military purposes and a handful of countries (namely the United States and Israel) having demonstrated devastating kinetic capabilities using unmanned systems, the robotics and autonomous revolution possesses the potential to change the time, space, and nature of warfare.²² The U.S. Department of Defense has committed to maintaining technical dominance in the area of autonomy across all warfare domains.²³ The most applicable domain for the current women-in-combat debate, however, involves robotic technology affecting land warfare.

From exoskeletons to robotic mules, technology is reducing the weight of combat gear and improving soldiers' physical abilities and load-carrying capabilities. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) kick-started innovation in this area in 2001 by funding labs, industry, and universities under the Exoskeletons for Human Performance Augmentation (EHPA) program. The goal of that five-year program was to increase soldiers' strength and speed, provide greater protection from enemy fire, and improve soldiers' stamina while carrying loads. Some of the innovation DARPA funded under EHPA has transferred into demonstration projects in the services and fledgling programs of record. The Human Load Carrier (HULC), for example, is a hydraulic-powered exoskeleton made of titanium that allows soldiers to carry a sustained load of 200 pounds over a variety of terrain and to run at 10 miles per hour. While Lockheed Martin continues to upgrade HULC's battery power, the system currently allows eight hours of continuous field exercise or lasts several days for less exertive tasks like standing guard.²⁴

Another DARPA initiative, called Warrior Web, began in 2011 and is funding projects to explore how to prevent musculoskeletal injuries developed from carrying heavy combat loads. Final designs are expected to allow a soldier to carry 100 pounds with 25 percent less effort and enable soldiers to run a 4 minute mile. Under this program, Harvard is developing a soft exoskeleton comprised of soft webbing woven into wearable fabric that assists joint movements in a soldier's legs. Weighing just 13 pounds, the Soft Exosuit does 15-20 percent of the work associated with walking under heavy loads, thus enabling soldiers to walk farther.²⁶ Another research institute has developed a system that serves as a robotic exomuscle near a soldier's calf. The system activates as a soldier walks and provides enough metabolic gain to make a 100-pound pack feel like it weighs 50 pounds. Future system developments will allow the robot to learn and self-adapt the rate of firing based on whether the soldier is walking or running. The final versions of these Warrior Web prototypes will be ready by 2016.²⁷

Other exoskeletons are designed to augment a soldier's physical capabilities. Raytheon Sarcos developed an exoskeleton, the XOS 2, which uses hydraulic energy and allows users to punch through three inches of wood and lift 200 pounds hundreds of times without tiring.²⁸ A tethered version for military logistics is being fielded this year and an untethered version is due out in 2020. A DOD-funded research lab is developing an electrostatic forces gripper that will improve a soldier's ability to climb walls. Meanwhile, U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) began the Tactical Assault Light Operator Suit (TALOS) program in 2013 to bring the warfighter an array of special capabilities from full-body

advanced armor and enhanced situational awareness to thermal management and command and control. The exoskeleton suit will include wearable computers and health monitoring systems capable of stabilizing wounds until care arrives. SOCOM aims to field TALOS by 2018 and is capturing innovations from 56 companies, 16 government agencies, 13 universities, and 10 national laboratories.²⁹

Technological advances are also making equipment lighter for combat troops. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), for example, is researching a liquid body armor that converts to a solid in milliseconds after a magnetic field or electrical current is applied.³⁰ To cut down on the weight of battery packs carried by combat operators, the Office of Naval Research (ONR) is developing

a flexible solar panel to charge flat-form batteries with incredible efficiency. These batteries, called Marine Austere Patrolling System (MAPS), will weigh only six pounds and should be fielded in the next five years.³¹ Another DARPA-funded research center is developing an autonomously guided kite that generates tens of kilowatts of power simply through flight. Such a system would enable a combat squad to regenerate power autonomously and dramatically reduce the overall weight in batteries the unit must transport.

While such innovations will certainly help reduce the overall weight required to be carried by the individual soldier over the coming years, heavy loads will not be completely eliminated from a combat unit. Robotics, however, may change *how* the unit carries those loads.



Lance Cpl. M. L. Meier, U.S. Marine Corps

Military robotics, such as “Big Dog,” may level the playing field for women in combat.

DARPA's Legged Squad Support System (LS3) program created a robotic mule capable of carrying loads of over 400 pounds over a wide variety of terrain. Affectionately known as "Big Dog," the robot is able to traverse terrain in one of three modes: leader-follower (where the robot follows close behind the human leader), semi-autonomously (where the soldier selects the destination but the robot selects the path), or a leader-follower corridor (where the robot follows the human leader but has wider latitude to select its preferred path). Though continued work is underway to develop a quiet electric motor to power the system (vice the currently loud diesel engine), the LS3 could be operational in the decade.³²

Future combat units will also utilize unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) for carrying loads and battlefield resupply and logistics. Such UGV reliance is operational today in the State of Israel, which is currently operating over 200 UGVs in the field. Israeli UGVs range from the small, battery-powered, tele-operated UGVs, like RoboTeam's ProBot that can carry a payload of 550 pounds, to large UGV trucks and armored personnel carriers.³³ Some Israeli robotics companies have been building UGVs for over eight years and have over 70,000 hours of operational field experience. G-Nius provides an applique to the customer's preferred platform to convert it to an unmanned system. The UGV can then be tele-operated, drive semi-autonomously (where the system will stop when it sees an obstacle and rely on a human to resolve the obstacle before starting again), or operate fully autonomously, with the ability to recognize and resolve obstacles and make the best route planning decisions.³⁴ The United States has explored UGV technology (to include some Israeli UGV technology)

and laid out a roadmap for joint acquisition of UGVs in 2011.³⁵

Full integration and reliance on robotic and autonomous systems by U.S. ground combat units is far from a "next generation or so" idea. Former Army Chief of Staff, General Raymond Odierno, recognizes that robotics will be an integral part of the force of 2025 and included robotics development as one of just eight lines of effort essential to achieving the Army's ten-year strategy.³⁶ To that end, DARPA is investing in Squad X, a program that promotes man-unmanned teaming within a dismounted infantry squadron. Squad X capitalizes on the interface between robotic technology and soldiers to improve precision engagement, command and control, detection of threats, and overall squad situational awareness. Whether improving an individual soldier's personal performance, carrying equipment to the battlefield, or enhancing a squad's combat lethality, robots are poised to change the nature of ground combat.

Impact of Robotics Revolution on Women in Combat Debate

The most apparent consequence of this changing battlefield and growing reliance on robotics systems is the impact on the physical requirements necessary for ground combat forces. The combination of robotic-enabled enhancements of a soldier's physical capabilities with lighter combat gear and robotic mules will quickly level the physical capability gap between men and women. For example, the exoskeletons being developed today result in a 25 percent improvement of physical strength and endurance—enough to close the aerobic and anaerobic delta between the average man and the average woman. With the ability to run faster, lift more weight, and carry

weight for longer periods of time without physical injury, the average woman will meet or exceed combat capability standards—and that is before receiving targeted physical training and conditioning proven to improve women’s physical prowess.

Skeptics might argue that robotic and autonomous systems will simply make male soldiers able to run faster and lift more, thus eliminating any derived benefit for women. While in the initial implementation stages of robotic exoskeletons such argument may have merit, it would be myopic to think that technology will not one day eliminate all such distinctions. Indeed, the essential attributes of future warriors will almost certainly derive less from physical strength and more from technical abilities.³⁸ Furthermore, such skeptical thinking neglects the affirmative arguments for capitalizing on gender diversity in the future robotic battlespace.

The U.S. military needs gender diverse combat units to better implement robotic and autonomous systems technology on the future battlefield. Autonomy will not just change what tools soldiers use to fight but *how* the fight will be conducted. While advances like the Squad X system or TALOS may sound otherworldly, technological progress is not the major driver of combat capabilities. As one roboticist explained, “[h]istorically when one looks at major changes in combat, it hasn’t been due to the gadget itself; it is the gadget that enabled the CONOPS to change.”³⁹ To date, much of the U.S. military’s implementation of robotic and autonomous systems has simply been to replace an existing function performed by a human with a robot, especially when such a task is dull, dirty, or dangerous. Unfortunately, the potential of robotics will not be reached with such linear thinking.

The U.S. military must begin to field combat teams and grow combat leaders who are willing and able to think and implement autonomous systems in new and creative ways. To do this most effectively, combat teams need a diverse mix of individuals—including men and women. Diverse teams have been shown to think more creatively, accept change more readily, and solve problems more effectively.⁴⁰ The same has proven true in the technology field. As one commentator explained, “[w]omen bring unique talents and perspectives to the table in any field, but they are particularly vital to a world of invention and innovation shaped by technology.”⁴¹ A leading engineer in the defense industrial base remarked that she seeks out diverse teams especially in the area of robotics because such teams approach issues differently and find more effective and creative solutions to problems.⁴² It is this same creativity and problem-solving that the U.S. military needs in its future robotic-propelled combat forces.

Israel has already discovered the importance of utilizing women in the employment of robotic and autonomous systems. During the latest ground campaign, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) discovered that the best controllers of their UGVs were women. The IDF determined that their female soldiers possessed better focus and attention to detail—attributes necessary when viewing a multitude of sensors and employing robotic systems in ground combat. Additionally, IDF leadership found women displayed more self-restraint and deliberation before employment of weapons from the UGV, a skill set much in demand during a conflict where collateral damage or killing of non-combatants was heavily scrutinized. The benefits of woman-unmanned teaming were so great the IDF placed all UGV

operations in the hands of woman soldiers.⁴³ While (in this author's opinion) all-female employment of robotic and autonomous combat technology tips the balance too far, the United States can learn from the Israeli experience and recognize the potential benefits of integrating women into all combat units.

A Question of When...Not If

Given that robotic technology has the potential to minimize the physical distinctions between genders on the battlefield, and positive benefits exist for diverse employment of autonomous systems in combat, the question remains as to when to integrate ground units fully. Should the services proactively integrate women into ground combat roles in anticipation of a changing robotics battlefield, or should they wait for the technology to mature? In implementing the Secretary of Defense's

2013 guidance to set gender-neutral standards for ground combat units, the services have consistently stressed that physical standards and training will not change, while simultaneously trying to study and justify why those standards exist in the first place.⁴⁴ Simply put, the services are focused on determining what standards (physical and mental) need to be met for today's fight...not what qualities ground combat forces will need in the future. Such an approach will not position the force to maximize the potential of autonomous systems.

To best utilize robotic and autonomous systems, a diverse set of warriors needs to be both on the battlefield implementing the technology and in positions of leadership to develop CONOPs and policy. Men *and* women need to be in the room when deciding ethical questions surrounding autonomous weapons



Cpl. Zeev Marmorstein, IDF Spokesperson's Unit

Israeli soldier with UGV.

employment, when developing requirements for future technological advances in robotic systems, and when formulating creative ways to employ the nascent technology.⁴⁵ Women will not appear in the decision room overnight as the military grows its future leaders from the ground up. Every year the U.S. military delays full and proactive integration of women into ground combat is another delay in the pipeline of developing female military leaders with the ground combat experience necessary to positively impact the application of robots in the battlespace. Thus, the question for today's senior leaders should not be whether women can pass today's current combat course, but how soon the military can integrate women into ground combat squads in order to best employ robotic and autonomous systems against the enemy. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ As a student at the National Defense University's Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy (distinguished graduate), Colonel Letendre received the 2015 NDU Women, Peace, and Security writing award for this article. The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force Academy, the U.S. Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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¹⁵ Ibid, 57 and 59. Even critics recognize the contributions of women warriors throughout history. Maginnas, 12-18. The “Long-haired Warriors” denote the upwards of one million Vietnamese women who fought the French in the early 20th Century and later the Americans in the Vietnam Conflict. David E. Jones, *Women Warriors: A History*, (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books Inc., 2005): 33-36.

¹⁶ Skaine, 61.

¹⁷ Department of Defense, “Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’” (November 30, 2010): 98-99.

¹⁸ Skaine, 38-39 and 64.

¹⁹ Grossman.

²⁰ Unless otherwise noted, the research for this section was derived from numerous interviews with robotics industry engineers, academic research labs, and military personnel during the author’s study (2014-2015) at the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy.

²¹ U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Science Board, “Task Force Report: The Role of Autonomy in DoD Systems,” (July 2012): 62 and 1. <<http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/AutonomyReport.pdf>>.

²² Hugh Gusterson, “Toward an Anthropology of Drones: Remaking Space, Time, and Valor in Combat,” in *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, From Flying Fortresses to Drones*, Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, eds., (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014): 191, 193, and 196.

²³ Paul Scharre, “Robotics on the Battlefield Part II: The Coming Swarm,” Center for New American Security, (October 2014): 5.

²⁴ Jeremiah Cushman, “Rise of Men Inside the Machines,” *Military Periscope Special Reports*, December 18, 2014.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ American Society for Engineering Education: PRISM, “Wearable Technology: Power Suit,” November 2014, <<http://www.asee-prism.org/first-look-nov-2/>>; “U.S. Military Funds Soft Exoskeleton for Enhanced Soldiers,” *The Engineer*, September 18, 2014. “U.S. Military Funds Soft Exoskeleton for Enhanced Soldiers,” *The Engineer*, September 18, 2014.

²⁷ Jeremy Hsu, “The Weight of War: Modern Technology Tackles the Ancient Issue of Combat Loads,” *Popular Science*, (November 2014): D61.

²⁸ Cushman.

²⁹ John Keller, “Special Operations Needs Battle Suit with Cooling, Embedded Computers, and Sensors,” *Military & Aerospace Electronics*, October 2013; Cushman.

³⁰ Cushman.

³¹ Hsu.

³² Ibid.

³³ Roboteam, “Probot,” accessed March 19, 2015. <<http://www.robo-team.com/products/Systems/probot>>.

³⁴ G-Nius Unmanned Ground Systems, “Products,” accessed March 19, 2015. <<http://g-nius.co.il/unmanned-ground-systems/index.php>>.

³⁵ Department of Defense, Robotics Systems Joint Program Office, “Unmanned Ground Systems Roadmap,” (July 2011). <http://www.dtic.mil/ndia/2011MCSC/Thompson_UGSRoadmap.pdf>.

³⁶ Secretary John M. McHugh and General Raymond T. Odierno, Department of the Army, “*FORCE 2025 and Beyond - SETTING THE COURSE*,” (July 22, 2014). <http://www.arcic.army.mil/app_Documents/TRADOC_Memo_Force-2025-and-Beyond-Setting-the-Course_06AUG2014.pdf>; Department of the Army, “Training and Doctrine Command’s (TRADOC) Technology and Capability Objectives for Force 2025 and Beyond,” (August 4, 2014). <http://www.arcic.army.mil/app_Documents/ARCIC_InformationPaper_TRADOC-Technology-and-Capability-Objectives-for-Force-2025-and-Beyond_18AUG14.pdf>.

³⁷ DARPA, “Squad X Core Technologies Seeks to Bring Technological Advances to the Infantry Squad,” (February 9, 2015). <<http://www.darpa.mil/NewsEvents/Releases/2015/02/09a.aspx>>.

³⁸ Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, “Women and the Military,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 23, no. 4 (2000): 32 abd 45.

³⁹ Defense contractor, interview with the author (January 30, 2015).

⁴⁰ Howard J. Ross, *ReInventing Diversity: Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose, and Performance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011): 24-25.

⁴¹ Whitney Johnson, “Women are the Great Disruptors,” in *Innovating Women: The Changing Face of Technology*, eds. Vivek Wadhwa and Farai Chideya, (Diversion Books, 2014): chap. 1, Kindle. The STEM-gap between genders means that women with technical background and experience are in high demand. If the military hopes to compete successfully for such women, equality of opportunity across all occupational specialties must be real.

⁴² Katherine Lemos, interview with the author (March 8, 2015).

⁴³ The author learned about Israeli experiences through a variety of interviews of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) officials and contractors during her field studies while a student of National Defense University's Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy (March 6-11, 2015).

⁴⁴ David Martin, "A Few Good Women," *Sixty Minutes*, aired March 15, 2015 on CBS, <<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/female-marines-women-in-combat-60-minutes/>>. The Marine Corps hired the Neuromuscular Research Lab at the University of Pittsburgh to conduct a "thorough scientific approach to testing and analysis of tactical requirements and musculoskeletal and physiological profiles of Marines."; Neuromuscular Research Lab, "USMC Initiative Launched." <<http://www.nmrl.pitt.edu/news-story/usmc-initiative-launched>>.

⁴⁵ For commentary on why a feminist approach to ethics in employing autonomous systems is essential from an international relations perspective, see Eric M. Blanchard, "The Technoscience Question in Feminist International Relations: Unmanning the U.S. War on Terror," in *Feminism and International Relations*, eds. J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg, (London: Routledge, 2011): 146 and 162.

Photos

Page 100. Photo by IDF Spokesperson's Unit/ Cpl. Zev Marmorstein. 2012. Israel Defense Forces - Israeli Made Guardium UGV (3). From <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_Israel_Defense_Forces_-_Israeli_Made_Guardium_UGV_\(3\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_Israel_Defense_Forces_-_Israeli_Made_Guardium_UGV_(3).jpg)>. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported, <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>>. Reproduced unaltered



Women and children in the Fufore Camp for internally displaced people in Nigeria.

Women as Symbols and Swords in Boko Haram's Terror

BY MIA BLOOM AND HILARY MATFESS¹

In June 2014, a middle-aged woman riding a motorcycle approached the military barracks in the North Eastern Nigerian city of Gombe. While being searched at the military checkpoint, she detonated the explosives strapped to her body, ending her life and killing a soldier in the process. With this act, a new chapter in the destructive history of Boko Haram began: the group joined the ranks of terrorist groups around the world that have incorporated women into their organizational profiles. Since the first attack, women and young girls (between the ages of 7 and 17) have been coerced into targeting civilians at markets, bus depots, and mosques. The 89 attacks documented between June 2014 and January 2016, mostly of civilian soft targets, are responsible for more than 1,200 deaths and an even greater number of injuries. The adoption of female suicide bombers is not especially surprising as an operational adaptation to increased state surveillance of the group's activities; it has been a tactic adopted by secular and religious terrorist groups from Sri Lanka to Syria. However, Boko Haram depends on female operatives disproportionately, relative to similar insurgencies; for example, the Tamil Tigers used 46 women over the course of 10 years, whereas Boko Haram has deployed more than 90 women in a little over a year and a half.²

Though Boko Haram is known to be the most significant source of violence in Nigeria since the transition to democracy in 1999, the group's abuses against women have also earned it international notoriety. When the group abducted the Chibok Girls from their school in April 2014, impassioned advocates around the world promulgated the #BringBackOurGirls movement and popularized the hashtag on social media, demanding that former President Goodluck Jonathan mount a serious effort to rescue the victims. Not only did human rights advocates marshal support through NGOs and public awareness campaigns, but Nigeria's international partners, including the United States, also provided supplementary military support.³ The United States bolstered Nigeria's capacity to monitor the Sambisa Forest, where much of Boko Haram was

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located, and collect intelligence on the insurgency by providing drones and unmanned surveillance aircraft.⁴ The attention that the group garnered following these abductions, which facilitated the spread of its propaganda domestically and internationally, may have emboldened the group to rely more heavily on female operatives.⁵

Unfortunately, while the focus on the victimized girls helped garner international support, the effort overlooked the role that women and girls play in the insurgency's operations and ideology, depriving analysts of critical insights about the functioning of the group. The timing of the group's use of females as weapons conforms to the use of gender-based violence globally as a recruitment strategy by terrorist organizations in conflicts as diverse as Turkey, Sri Lanka, and Iraq. Further, Boko Haram's use of female suicide bombers connects it to the broader global extremist movement, which is increasingly deploying female fighters and suicide bombers.⁶ However, the forced conscription and deployment of young women and girls is a differentiating feature of Boko Haram among other terrorist organizations, many of which have benefited from willing female participation.⁷ The group's conceptualization of females has also distinguished it from other Islamist movements in North East Nigeria; given the group's origins as a dissident movement, methods of differentiation are critical aspects of the insurgency. Analyzing the group's propaganda and the local religious-political context in which it operates shows how women, and their position within the group's ideology, allow Boko Haram to differentiate itself from other Nigerian Salafi movements. Other Salafi groups have advocated for women's education and have coexisted with the Nigerian secular

state—by emphasizing its differences with such movements, Boko Haram portrays itself as the vanguard of “true Islam.”

This article analyzes the roles of women and girls within Boko Haram and its ideology to elucidate the motivations, capabilities, and strategies of the organization. Women and girls have become “swords” mobilized and weaponized to carry out attacks while also being used as powerful “symbols” of Boko Haram's ideology; understanding women in the insurgency requires an examination of ideology in the context of other Islamic actors in the region, and a determination of the factors that prompted Boko Haram's operational shift towards female operatives. Our research will explore the broader patterns of tactical violence against women globally before moving to a discussion of the diversity of female engagement in Boko Haram's militant activities, addressing women's roles as wives, coerced weapons, and willing recruiters. The article will then assess Boko Haram's rhetoric *vis à vis* women, including statements about the Chibok girls, as well as insurgents' statements about women's position within. Finally, we will address some preliminary conclusions garnered from our research and emphasize the importance of an inclusive deradicalization and counterterrorism program.

Background

Boko Haram's adoption of suicide bombing and its increasing reliance on female operatives occurred against a backdrop of mounting sexual violence against women for political ends throughout the African continent; according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), “rates of rape used as a weapon of political violence have been higher than average...since late 2012.”⁸ While this

may be the result of increasing availability of reports on the issue, ACLED's assessment suggests that there has been a significant rise in politicized sexual violence against women. This corroborates research conducted by Dara K. Cohen, which found that the overwhelming number of cases she studied in Africa have occurred during political conflicts, such as the one that initially triggered the creation of Boko Haram. Cohen also finds that rape leads to "peace fragility, primarily through the destruction of social trust," suggesting that conflicts that rely on sexual violence arise from and contribute to the unraveling of the social fabric, even following the cessation of the fighting which further complicates the already tortuous process of post-conflict reconciliation.⁹

While Cohen's research is concentrated geographically, her findings can be applied

more generally. Understood as a means of fostering cohesiveness among forcibly conscripted soldiers, while simultaneously undermining external social bonds and instilling fear, violence against women is particularly suited to the goals of terrorist organizations. This issue is not confined to Africa, nor is it a novel development; sexual violence against women is an unfortunate feature of many conflicts worldwide.

Despite the longevity of this issue, the seeming acceleration in the adoption of this tactic prompted the United Nations to release a report in April 2015 highlighting wartime sexual violence—focused on rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and forced pregnancy of women and girls—in 19 countries.¹⁰ The UN expressed "grave concern" over the numerous accounts of rape, sexual slavery, and forced



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Women and children comprise the majority of those living in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Nigeria.

marriage perpetrated by jihadist groups like ISIL and Boko Haram, as well as widespread gender-based violence by armed groups in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Libya, and Yemen.¹¹ This is especially disturbing as many jihadi groups herald women's "purity," defined in an oppressive and patriarchal way, as a main goal for the movement and emphasize in their propaganda the need to protect "their sisters in Islam" from abuse by secular communities. In light of the increasing prominence of gendered violence in jihadist groups that claim to operate in the name of Islam, understanding the operational and symbolic role of women is critical to counter the threat posed by these groups globally.

But women have not merely been disproportionately victimized by modern conflicts, they are playing an increasingly important role in the tactical operations of terrorist groups and insurgencies. Many, including one of the authors, have highlighted the role that revenge or retribution plays in galvanizing female participation and note the prevalence of widows among female militants.¹² Interestingly, some have suggested that economic incentives can motivate participation; in underdeveloped countries, economic growth "might be linked to women's diminishing share of the labor market," pushing them to join "terrorist groups out of desperation," whereas in advanced economies, "women may be attracted to terrorist groups more by their ideological or religious determination," rather than out of coercion or necessity.¹³ Indeed, anthropologist Scott Atran reflects that suicide attackers in general "are rarely ignorant or impoverished."¹⁴ While it is unclear what prompts women to join such groups (when they do so willingly), the value they add to the organizations is clear. As Angela Dalton and

Victor Asal assert, when discussing female suicide bombers:

*The very fact of being female is proven to enjoy several tactical advantages. First, women suicide terrorists capitalize and thrive on the "element of surprise." They can take advantage of cultural reluctance toward physical searches to evade detection. Given their seemingly feminine facade, they are categorically perceived as gentle and non-threatening. Further, they constitute a potentially large pool of recruits, a resource that terrorist organizations can draw from and cash in on. Symbolically, the death of women bombers is more likely to evoke a feeling of desperation and sympathy.*¹⁵

While in previous conflicts secular groups (particularly Marxist) were more likely to make use of female suicide bombers than religious groups, modern jihadist groups have increased their dependency upon female recruits and participation.¹⁶ Boko Haram and ISIL are perhaps at the cutting edge of this Salafist-jihadi tactical experimentation with religion, patriarchy, and war. While sexual violence against women and their incorporation into armed movements is a worldwide phenomenon, the increase of female participation in Boko Haram has taken on novel characteristics, specific to this insurgency's objectives and operational tactics.

The incorporation of women into Boko Haram's activities builds upon a history of tactical experimentation, undertaken in response to cyclical government responses and opportunities posed by regional trends in arms availability.¹⁷ Additionally, the symbolism of female-led attacks has been a means by which Boko Haram has distinguished itself from

similar movements and local rivals. Understanding Boko Haram's use of women is particularly critical, as it is the most lethal insurgency on the continent, having claimed an estimated 29,000 lives since 2002, and shows no signs of abating.

Operational Uses – Women as Swords

Boko Haram has used women and girls for a multitude of operational purposes. This section will review, briefly, how females have been used by the group to increase insurgent cohesion, add reproductive capacity, carry out attacks, maintain order within the camps, and as bargaining chips with the Nigerian government.

However, before discussing how women and girls have been used, it is critical to note that the vast majority of women within the organization are not participating of their own volition. Boko Haram's reliance upon women and girls is a part of an organizational shift that includes forced conscription as a means of generating support. The abductions of women and girls parallel abductions of young men, who were also forcibly conscripted into the movement in night raids—though there have not been reports of the young men being subjected to sexual violence. The abductions, both of males and females, followed the May 2013 declaration of a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States.

The state of emergency was accompanied by the deployment of security forces to the region and prompted the group to abandon urban guerilla tactics in favor of holding territory. Reports of mass kidnappings emerged during this period, alongside stories of individuals being abducted. Though both men and women were abducted, the novelty of female

abduction by the group drew the lion's share of attention.

The availability of women for sexual purposes became a means of satisfying insurgents and cultivating loyalty. A Civilian Joint Task Force commander, who participated in a raid that liberated women and girls, linked the abduction of women to the Nigerian government's counterterrorism deployment of security forces to urban centers; he asserted that when Maiduguri (Borno's capital) became "too hot" for the insurgents, they abandoned their urban wives and began "picking up women anywhere and using them to satisfy themselves."¹⁸ A Human Rights Watch report published in November 2013 claimed that Boko Haram raided villages and "after storming into the homes and throwing sums of money at their parents, with a declaration that it was the dowry for their teenage daughter, they would take the girls away."¹⁹

The women were not always abducted by men for the latter's own purposes; rather, some of the abducted women and girls were "gifted" to Boko Haram fighters for "marriage." This euphemism for sexual violence belies the strategic aspect of the abuse. Prior to the group's descent into violence, Boko Haram's founder Mohammed Yusuf helped arrange marriages for local men struggling to muster the necessary social and economic capital to marry; however, the group has since evolved and the new class of marriages constitutes sexual slavery. There is a horrific logic at play in the institutionalization of sexual slavery; research suggests that sexual violence may be effective for building group cohesion and fostering camaraderie, particularly in insurgencies that rely on forced conscription.²⁰

The "marriages" to abducted girls thus served multiple tactical purposes: increasing

group cohesion through the provision of women as prizes, cultivating loyalty through the enhanced status following “marriage,” and increasing local fear of the insurgents. Boko Haram’s violence against women is similar to other groups’ use of sexual violence as “a conscious strategy...employed by armed groups to torture and humiliate opponents, terrify individuals, destroy societies through inciting flight from a territory, and to reaffirm aggression and brutality, specifically through an expression of domination.”²¹

Stories of women being abducted were eventually followed by accounts of female conditions in captivity; as women escaped from Boko Haram and the military recovered territory from the insurgents, journalists provided graphic details of the women’s lives in Boko Haram. Reports found that hundreds were raped, many repeatedly, in what relief workers described as “a deliberate strategy to dominate rural residents and create a new generation of Islamist militants.”²² Despite Boko Haram’s strident declarations that many of the abducted women were brought into the Islamic fold, conversion did not necessarily improve a woman’s status. Regardless of religion, during their captivity almost all the women were repeatedly raped, gang raped, and subjected to sexual slavery. An internally displaced person who had lived under Boko Haram for two years reported that many of the footsoldiers have more than one wife.²³ Female captives were also subjected to non-sexual violence that served the insurgents’ needs; as a part of this, the women were denied food, forced to carry the insurgents’ possessions and weapons, deprived of sleep, and forced to cook.²⁴ The psychological trauma that these women have suffered is difficult to overstate. One escapee burst into tears

while telling reporters, “I can’t get the images out of my head. I see people being slaughtered. I just pray that the nightmares don’t return.”²⁵

While following in the pattern of other terrorist groups, Boko Haram has also exhibited particular characteristics unique to Northern Nigeria in its conceptualization of women’s roles and its use of rape as a weapon of war. In addition to rape for the purposes of torture, punishment, or humiliation, the group appears to be using rape to produce the next generation of extremists that will pursue Boko Haram’s particular brand of jihad.²⁶ The governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima, insists that, “the sect leaders made a conscious effort to impregnate the women...Some...even pray before mating, offering supplications for God to make the products of what they are doing become children that will inherit their ideology.”²⁷ It appears that Boko Haram’s fundamentalist ideology is being treated in the same manner that ethnicity was considered in conflicts in Rwanda and Serbia: a hereditary characteristic that can be bred into the population.

It is possible that this belief is being justified by a perverse interpretation of one of the *hadiths* narrated by Quranic scholar Abu Zayd, which contends that, “every infant is born with a natural disposition to accept Islam, but parents can socialize their infants to accept other religions.”²⁸ Prior to his extrajudicial execution, Boko Haram’s founder, Mohammed Yusuf, used this *hadith* as evidence for the detrimental effects of Western education in turning children away from Islam; the *hadith* was offered as a justification of the organization’s activities which he argued were a return to the “natural” order. Boko Haram has not issued a public statement regarding its impregnation campaign or religious justification of it, which

limits an exact analysis of its motives, however Boko Haram's systematic sexual abuse of women suggests that women's reproductive capacity is a critical aspect of its strategy as children would bolster the insurgency's strength by inflating its ranks.

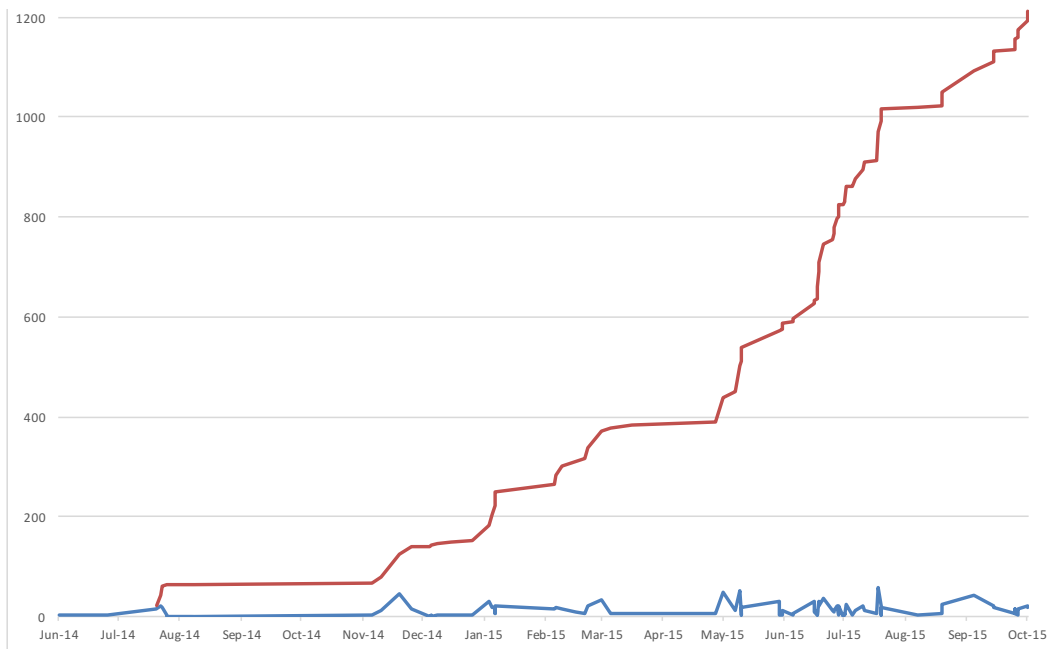
Even more directly than through their (re) production of future militants and the group cohesion that "marriage" may foster, women have contributed to Boko Haram's campaign by carrying out attacks. Between the Chibok abductions and October 2015, there have been nearly 90 attacks with female perpetrators.

These attacks have typically been against "soft targets," such as markets, mosques, and bus depots and have taken place in urban settings. Boko Haram, like other terrorist groups, has used women because they draw less attention and are less likely to be subjected to searches than men. Since Nigerian

counterterrorism efforts increased in urban centers as a part of the State of Emergency and Multi National Joint Task Force, women have become tactically important for the group to maintain an urban presence.

While the majority of these attacks have been suicide bombings, this is perhaps a misnomer as "suicide bomber" implies that the perpetrator's decision to martyr oneself is made of his or her own volition. Yet, many of the Boko Haram attacks were conducted by girls too young to have agency; others, such as rape victims and those subjected to psychological trauma, have been robbed of their autonomy to make that choice. In some instances, the bomber may have not even understood what was happening. A military source speaking to Nigerian news went so far as to suggest that, "some of those girls might not really know they were strapped."³⁰ In

Figure 1: Deaths from Boko Haram Female Suicide Bombers over Time



Graph illustrates cumulative (red) and incident (blue) death tolls over time in the Lake Chad region.

some cases, the Nigerian military preempted female suicide bombers who offered little resistance, suggesting that they were not fully committed to, or even necessarily aware of their “mission.” Some reports suggest that family members coerced the girls to join the organization; in July 2014, a 10-year-old girl accompanied by her older sister and an older man was arrested while wearing a suicide bombing vest.³¹ One 13-year-old girl detained by the state reported that her father, a supporter of the insurgency, had encouraged her to join.³²

One source cited by Awford suggested that, of the women that have participated willingly, some might have been homeless or beggars who had been banned from Kano, where many of the bombings occurred. The source asserted that such women and girls “are easy to recruit and [may] have fallen prey to Boko Haram members who have lured them with a few naira notes. They may also be ignorant of what they are being asked to do.”³³

Others might have been married to “slain or arrested members of the Islamic sect who have been indoctrinated and brainwashed to take revenge on behalf of their husbands.”³⁴ Revenge-motivated female participation in terrorist activities is a well-documented phenomenon globally. Regardless of motivation, there is evidence that women have indeed actively participated in Boko Haram’s activities. For example, several Nigerian soldiers were shot by women in the Sambisa Forest while rescuing the women, suggesting that some of the women have developed allegiance to the terrorists. Additionally, a soldier posted in Adamawa State, in North East Nigeria, confirmed reports of female fighters, “wearing burqas and guns.”³⁵

In addition to sexual and physical abuse, Boko Haram perpetrated psychological abuse of the captives in order to maximize the utility of women and girls to the group’s mission.³⁶ According to a social worker in Maiduguri, “[t]he militants feel it is easier to intimidate and brainwash young girls than adult women. Besides, these girls come cheap, and most of them are extremely loyal....”³⁷ Perhaps because of this pliability, girls and young women have been employed frequently by the insurgency in suicide bombings, despite the fact that the first such attack was conducted by a middle-aged woman. The treatment of young women as malleable and expendable echoes how terrorist leaders in other conflicts have viewed female participation in conflict, not as members of the organization with autonomy, but as another form of artillery.³⁸

Women who have escaped or have been rescued by Nigerian soldiers report exposure to, and/or forced participation in, extreme violence. The militants have used girls they claimed were from the Chibok abductions as “enforcers,” parading them in front of kidnapped women and telling them that, “these are your teachers from Chibok.” During raids “people were tied and laid down and the girls took it from there...the Chibok girls slit their throats.”³⁹ Within the camps, the Chibok girls were used “to teach groups of women and girls to recite the Qur’an.... Young girls who couldn’t recite were...flogged by the Chibok girls.”⁴⁰ Such reports suggest that “exposing women to extreme violence [is] a strategy to strip them of their identity and humanity, so they can be forced to accept the militants’ ideology” and contribute to maintaining order within camps.⁴¹

Several of the women and girls have suffered from the double trauma of abduction

and sexual exploitation, as well as efforts to convert them to Boko Haram's ideology through brainwashing and consistent exposure to propaganda.

The question remains whether the women who are victimized have been genuinely radicalized, whether women related to the insurgents might share the same ideology, goals, and purpose as the men, or whether the women are suffering from severe trauma, causing a form of "Stockholm Syndrome."⁴² It is difficult to discern women's motives for participation in Boko Haram's activities, as the women's bodies are often too "mutilated to... identify them," let alone recognize and put a name to the women, a source within the Nigerian government told the authors.⁴³

The group has also used women as bargaining chips with the Nigerian government. After a raid on the Borno State village of Bama in 2015, Boko Haram released a video in which abducted civilians were paraded in front of the camera. In the footage, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau threatened that if the Nigerian security forces "do not release our wives and children, we will not release theirs."⁴⁴ Just two weeks later, President Goodluck Jonathan ordered the release of women and children imprisoned for their connection to Boko Haram. In return, Boko Haram released its captives. Boko Haram has also offered to exchange captive women for insurgents captured by the state.⁴⁵ Shekau routinely makes threats, for example to kidnap President Goodluck Jonathan's daughter. He also framed the abduction of the Chibok girls as retribution for abuses perpetrated against Muslim communities and has issued threats against the wives and daughters of other state officials. In 2012, he released a video in response to the detention of 10 women related

to Boko Haram members, in which he stated, "since you are now holding our women, just wait and see what will happen to your own women...to your own wives according to shariah law."⁴⁶ Shekau's statements rely upon examples of the "proper" treatment of women; in this way, women within Boko Haram are a symbol for the Islamic rule envisioned by the group, in addition to being valuable targets to gain the government's attention. These interactions allow the group to portray itself as a "protector" of Muslim women and source of justice against un-Islamic actors.⁴⁷

The use of women as bargaining chips straddles the line between the operational and rhetorical advantage women have given Boko Haram; within the group, women and girls serve as symbols and swords. The image of persecuted Muslim women, the model of the righteous Muslim wife, and the symbol of Muslim women as vessels for the next generation of jihadi fighters are valuable propaganda tools. Additionally, the tactical advantages gained by using women in coordinated attacks have allowed the group to maintain a presence in urban areas despite significant Nigerian and regional efforts to push the insurgency out.

Rhetoric and Ideology – Women as Symbols

The Chibok abductions and ensuing controversy provided the first nationally and internationally recognized symbol of the group's violence against women. Shekau successfully used the Chibok girls' symbolism and visibility as a megaphone to telegraph the group's strength and ideology.⁴⁸ Violence against women and girls "is often intended to humiliate their families and communities, wherein women and girls are 'bearers of honor,' and men are shamed for failing to protect 'their' women."⁴⁹

In this way, sexual violence is a mechanism of destroying family and community, making it a valuable tool for terrorist groups.⁵⁰ Scholar Ruth Seifert observed that, “rape is not an aggressive expression of sexuality, but a sexual expression of aggression...a manifestation of anger, violence and domination,”⁵¹ making violence against women a way for terrorist groups to project power and demonstrate their capacity to intimidate civilian populations.⁵² Boko Haram’s attitude towards women terrorizes Nigerians at the national level, and also serves to differentiate the group from other mainstream, nonviolent Salafi movements locally, such as Yan Izala, which advocate modern education for girls and boys.⁵³

In a propaganda video released in May 2014, shortly after the Chibok abductions, Abubakar Shekau claimed responsibility for the raid. The abducted girls were not just used

for gendered labor within the camps (though reports suggest that such work was integral to their condition), but were also a valuable tool to illustrate the implementation of Boko Haram’s vision of shariah. Shekau asserted that he would, according to holy directives, sell the non-Muslim women. In later videos, Shekau proclaimed that the Chibok girls had converted and were married to Boko Haram militants.

According to Shekau, Boko Haram “would marry them out [sic] at the age of 9 or 12.”⁵⁴ He justified his actions within the context of his interpretation of Islamic history and “marrying off” a girl as young as nine “like it was done on [his] mother Aisha and the wife of the Prophet” (there are varying accounts of how old Aisha was when she was married).⁵⁵ Shekau contended that the girls should have never been in school in the first place as they



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At St. Therese Church in Yola, a displaced girl rests.

were old enough to be married.⁵⁶ By going to school, the girls had supposedly violated shariah in a variety of ways; not only were they participating in an educational system that contradicted Islamic teachings, but their attendance in school was considered a violation of their role as women.⁵⁷

In these videos, which sometimes featured images of the abducted girls fully dressed in burqas, Shekau positions himself as the abducted girls' savior from the infidel lifestyle and institutions, while offering salvation to those willing to support his violent process of "reclamation" of society, notably through the overrunning of territory, the destruction of secular, modern institutions, and the abduction of women and girls. He taunted, "don't you know the over 200 Chibok schoolgirls have converted to Islam? They have now memorized two chapters of the Qur'an. They have seen themselves in the Books of Luke and John that Christians have corrupted the Bible. Girls from Chibok [are] confessing [that] Islam is the true religion."⁵⁸

Shekau is not a fixture in all of Boko Haram's propaganda, suggesting that the group saw the girls as a valuable publicity opportunity. The group used this global platform to threaten communities and increase the audience for its ideological proselytization. In one video, Shekau insisted that Nigerians could avoid being targeted by espousing their Salafi-jihadist interpretations of Islam. "If you turn to Islam...you will be saved. For me anyone that embraces Islam is my brother."⁵⁹ He also threatened Nigerians that "nothing will stop this until you convert."⁶⁰

Boko Haram's use of women has served to distinguish the group from other Salafi groups in the region. In a 1987 interview, Abubaker Gumi, the leader of the largely non-violent

Salafi Islamist Yan Izala movement, said that, "politics are more important than prayer" and that Muslim men should allow their women to vote and "to mix in public, especially in times of impending elections" to further the political Islamist agenda.⁶¹ Gumi's statements carried significant weight because of the prominence of Yan Izala in Northern Nigeria as a source of religious authority. Yan Izala has established a number of educational institutions for women; these schools impart both traditional Quranic education and, in some instances, "Boko" learning. The headmasters of Izala schools for women "uniformly stated that they were founded 'to help society to know their God and to know how to worship their God,'" according to academic Elisha Renne's review of such institutions in the North Eastern city of Zaria.⁶² Yan Izala is far from progressive with regard to gender relations; the practice of female subordination and seclusion is regularly practiced among the Izala and "for wives and daughters of the Yan Izala, membership...means wearing the *hijab*—a veil that ideally covers much of their bodies—and living in total or partial seclusion," according to Adeline Masquelier.⁶³ However, while Yan Izala promotes some conservative practices such as female veiling, the progressive notion of female education was seen as equally critical for its religious and political legitimacy; Renne notes that "women's pursuit of Islamic education has strengthened the position of the Izala movement in Zaria."⁶⁴

By asserting its position on women's "proper" role and attire, Boko Haram is reaffirming its role as an Islamist reformist movement and differentiating the group from rival Islamists. It is worth noting that Boko Haram's founder Mohammed Yusuf worked alongside

Ja'far Adam, a Salafi scholar in the Yan Izala movement, before founding his own offshoot with a different ideology than Adam's teachings. When Adam and other Muslims (including mainstream Salafis) spoke out against Boko Haram, they were targeted in violent attacks.⁶⁵ This illustrates the stakes of intra-Islamic debate following the implementation of shariah across northern Nigeria following the adoption of the 1999 constitution. As the Boko Haram insurgency has escalated, mainstream Salafis, according to Alex Thurston, have been placed in "a complicated position vis-à-vis both Salafi-leaning audiences in the state."⁶⁶ While Yan Izala has "worked to undermine Boko Haram's messages and Salafi credentials," it has simultaneously "criticized the state's response to Boko Haram."⁶⁷ Thus, the debate over women's proper role in society

is a contentious battleground in the debate between Salafi groups in Northern Nigeria.

Preliminary Conclusions

Women serve the dual purpose of serving as symbols of Boko Haram's ideology as well as swords bolstering the insurgency's operational effectiveness. Boko Haram's abuse and use of women provides a clear example of how women who are victimized may in turn victimize others because of coercion, honor-bound cultures, and (mis)conceptions about how identity and ethnicity are transmitted from one generation to the next—a process that is, unfortunately, being replicated globally.

In 2015, African troops in Nigeria (composed of soldiers from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger) liberated almost 1,000 women, indicating that the total number of women abducted far exceeds the 276 Chibok



Isabel Coelho

A woman displaced by Boko Haram prepares a meal at an IDP camp in Yola, Adamawa.

students.⁶⁸ In the aftermath of the women's rescue, human rights groups alleged that the vast majority of the women were pregnant.⁶⁹ Nigerian religious leaders and the members of the *ulema* have intervened to prevent the women from being shunned by their own families and communities. The reintegration of these abused women will be difficult, given the conservative values and "honor culture" that discourages premarital sex and extols virtue. The women's experiences have justifiably instilled a fear and loathing of Boko Haram among a diverse population.

Women who have escaped report psychological trauma and rejection by their communities despite the best efforts of religious leaders. Particularly for those who have been forcibly impregnated, reintegration is practically impossible. In honor-bound societies, women who have been raped are often blamed for sexual violence and fear retribution from the community, especially if children resulted from the sexual abuse. In light of the humiliation faced by these women, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, has spoken out forcefully urging "the most compassionate possible interpretation of the current regulations in Nigeria to include the risk of suicide and risks to mental health for women and young girls who have suffered such appalling cruelty" and may wish to terminate their pregnancies.⁷⁰ Currently, Nigerian laws permit abortion only in instances where the mother's life is at risk. However, even if Nigerian restrictions were eased for victims of Boko Haram, it is likely that traditional women would not seek such services because of the accompanying stigma. John Campbell, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria noted, "there is law, and then

there is social custom and social custom is much stronger than law in many parts of Nigeria."⁷¹

Victims' legitimate concerns about being shunned by their communities are compounded by their fear that the militants will return and track them down. One woman interviewed by *Al Jazeera* feared that her Boko Haram militant husband would "kill her for running away;" at the same time, in her community she is considered "an outcast...they remind me that I have Boko Haram inside me," since she was impregnated.⁷²

Rescuing the women from the insurgents is only one part of the solution. Providing psychological support, health services, and community reintegration is critical to the success of Nigeria's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategy. In June 2015, Dr. Fatima Akilu, head of the Countering Violent Extremism Department of the Office of the National Security Advisor, announced that 20 women and girls who had been recruited by Boko Haram had been "saved" and were "undergoing rehabilitation and de-radicalization," though the details of the program were not released.⁷³ One woman whom the authors spoke to had gone through the rehabilitation program after being abducted and held by Boko Haram, and spoke enthusiastically about the program; however, the woman was uncertain about her future and lacked freedom of movement and access to livelihood generation programs.⁷⁴ The approach to treatment has to be multi-layered and sensitive to the experiences of these women who have been victims many times over. Further, "as long as the basic social and economic context does not decisively change—specifically, Nigeria's on-going inability to achieve sustained economic growth as well as some degree of social

justice—militant movements such as Boko Haram will rise again,” meaning that a wholesale reformation of the socioeconomic landscape of Northern Nigeria must be undertaken in the quest to recover from the Boko Haram insurgency and prevent such conflict in the future.⁷⁵

As academics Bradley Thayer and Valerie Hudson note, improving women’s status results in decreases in overall levels of violence; they assert, “when society’s male members develop ways of relating to women other than through physical dominance and violence, and when women begin to take coordinated action to dampen the most oppressive features of their society, positive change will spread to broader social realms, and even affect interstate relations.”⁷⁶ In conflict-afflicted and post-conflict contexts, the state must take an active role in asserting the equality and value of women through legislative equality and socioeconomic programs aimed at female empowerment. Doing so will help counter ideological conceptions, like Boko Haram’s, of female subordination. Just as women and girls have become an integral part of Boko Haram’s strategy, the Nigerian state must cultivate a robust strategy of female empowerment and reintegration to counter the insurgency’s long-term consequences.

PRISM

Notes

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Photos

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An Afghan girl attends a female engagement team meeting in Balish Kalay Village, Urgan District, Afghanistan (March 2011).

We Are Not Helpless

Addressing Structural Gender Inequality in Post-Conflict Societies¹

BY VALERIE M. HUDSON, DONNA LEE BOWEN, AND PERPETUA LYNNE NIELSEN

The causes of state fragility are of pressing concern to U.S. foreign policymakers. The concept of state fragility denotes “a fundamental failure of the state to perform functions necessary to meet citizens’ basic needs and expectations... [including] assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, [and] providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens.”² The stabilization of fragile societies has become an important emphasis of U.S. national security policy—so much so that our most recent National Security Strategy asserts that: “within states, the nexus of weak governance and widespread grievance allows extremism to take root, violent non-state actors to rise up, and conflict to overtake state structures. To meet these challenges, we will continue to work with partners and through multilateral organizations to address the root causes of conflict before they erupt and to contain and resolve them when they do. We prefer to partner with those fragile states that have a genuine political commitment to establishing legitimate governance and providing for their people.”³

Exploring the causes of state fragility and instability thus has profound ramifications for policy choice. In an era of shrinking resources, the most effective use of policy instruments must be sought to lay the foundation for sustainable peace.

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing awareness that state stability is integrally tied to the situation and status of women in society. In a very real fashion, the relationship between the two halves of humanity within a given society sets the horizon of possibility for peace, security, prosperity, health, and good governance.⁴ Like the roots of a tree, unseen and yet determinative, gender relations underpin all macro-level phenomena within a society.

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For example, in an empirical analysis of Muslim societies, M. Steven Fish suggests that Islamic societies are disproportionately authoritarian, and that this finding cannot be attributed to differences in national wealth, ethnolinguistic fractionalization, colonial heritage, religiosity, and other conventional explanatory variables.⁵ Rather, Fish uncovers two indicators that better explain the variance in levels of conflict and of authoritarianism throughout the Islamic world: sex ratio and the literacy gap between males and females. He hypothesizes that the oppression of females—one of the earliest social acts observed by children—lays the foundation for other types of oppression, including authoritarianism.⁶

In the same vein, Mary Caprioli links measures of domestic gender inequality to higher levels of state conflict and insecurity

with statistically significant results. Furthermore, states with higher levels of social, economic, and political gender equality are less likely to rely on military force to settle disputes.⁷ Caprioli and Mark Boyer also note that states exhibiting high levels of gender equality also display lower levels of violence when they do become involved in international crises and disputes.⁸ Caprioli extends this analysis to include militarized interstate disputes, a broader category than international conflicts, and finds a similar relationship: states with the highest levels of gender equality display lower levels of aggression in these disputes, and were less likely to use force first.⁹ Virtually the same pattern was found with respect to intrastate incidents, as well.¹⁰ Hudson et. al. added to this corpus by demonstrating that the best overall predictor of state peacefulness and



Tanya Halouna

Young girls reading at a Jordanian primary school. Education and literacy are key elements of achieving gender equality.

relations with neighboring countries is its level of violence against women, and that even among democracies, those with a high level of violence against women, such as Zambia, Kenya, and Nigeria, were more likely to score considerably worse on the Global Peace Index than those with low levels, such as Denmark, Austria, and Finland.¹¹

In sum, while space does not permit us to comprehensively review the empirical literature of this subfield, this growing body of scholarly work demonstrates that the promotion of gender equality goes far beyond the issue of social justice and has important consequences for international security.

Policy Translation in the United States

With the growing realization of the linkage between what is happening with women and what is happening with state security and stability has come a determination by state, interstate, and non-state actors to foreground this relationship in a policy sense. One of the most critical turning points was the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000, which urged member states, among other things, “to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict,” and to “take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence . . . in situations of armed conflict.”¹² UNSCR 1325 has been followed in turn by UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, and 2122, which reiterate, extend, and focus these same efforts.

Even in the absence of U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the

mandates of these resolutions are legally binding on the United States. More specifically, in 2004, the Security Council called on member states to develop National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement UNSCR 1325.¹³ In December 2011, under the leadership of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the United States unveiled its own National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security, for which it is now accountable before the international community.¹⁴

As informed by the provisions of UNSCR 1325, the U.S. NAP identifies five primary areas of concern: 1) national integration and institutionalization of a gender-responsive approach to diplomacy, development, and defense; 2) strengthening women’s participation in peace processes and decisionmaking; 3) protecting women from sexual and gender-based violence; 4) the promotion of women’s role in conflict prevention; and 5) gender-sensitive access to relief in the case of humanitarian crisis.

After the NAP’s appearance, other pieces of a U.S. foreign policy strategy were assembled, including a Counter-Trafficking in Persons Strategy, a Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment, an Implementation Plan for the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, a Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally, the Equal Futures Partnership, and a Vision for Ending Child Marriage and Meeting the Needs of Married Children.¹⁵

In addition to this strategic planning framework, U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq over the past decade has also provided an operational component to the vision implied in UNSCR 1325. For example, the Lioness Teams in Iraq and the Female

Engagement Teams (FETs) in Afghanistan were pioneering in their “asymmetric” use of female soldiers in ground operations and stabilization efforts. Though these teams were disbanded with the drawdowns in each nation, the FET concept was subsequently taken up by Colombia, which now boasts its own “EFEO” teams (*Escuadrón Femenino de Enlace Operacional Rural*), based on the FETs of Afghanistan. Indeed, the Colombian EFEOs will enjoy a number of capabilities that the U.S. Marine FETs did not, including full arresting authority. Noting that U.S. Marine Corps reports show a “direct correlation between the presence of a FET in an area and the reduction of tension and violence against U.S. forces,” the hope is that the same magic would happen for Colombian forces.¹⁶

Furthermore, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been heavily involved in developing innovative programs to further the goals of the U.S. NAP. For example, one of the most important USAID programs for Afghan women is PROMOTE, which is USAID’s five-year programmatic response to the 2014 drawdown of U.S. troops, designed to shore up the gains Afghan women have made since 2001. Announced in July 2013, the \$410 million project is easily USAID’s largest-ever gender programming effort, though half of these funds are to be provided by partner nations and have not fully materialized. Target beneficiaries are primarily Afghan women who possess at least a secondary education, for the hope is to establish a female quota of at least 30 percent within the Afghan Civil Service. Future components of PROMOTE are designed to facilitate the entry of women into the Afghan economy and related initiatives. This is but one of the many gender programs implemented by USAID and

the State Department to empower women, in line with the 2010 and 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Reviews which heavily spotlight women as a special target of development programming.

A Deeper and Largely Unseen Structure

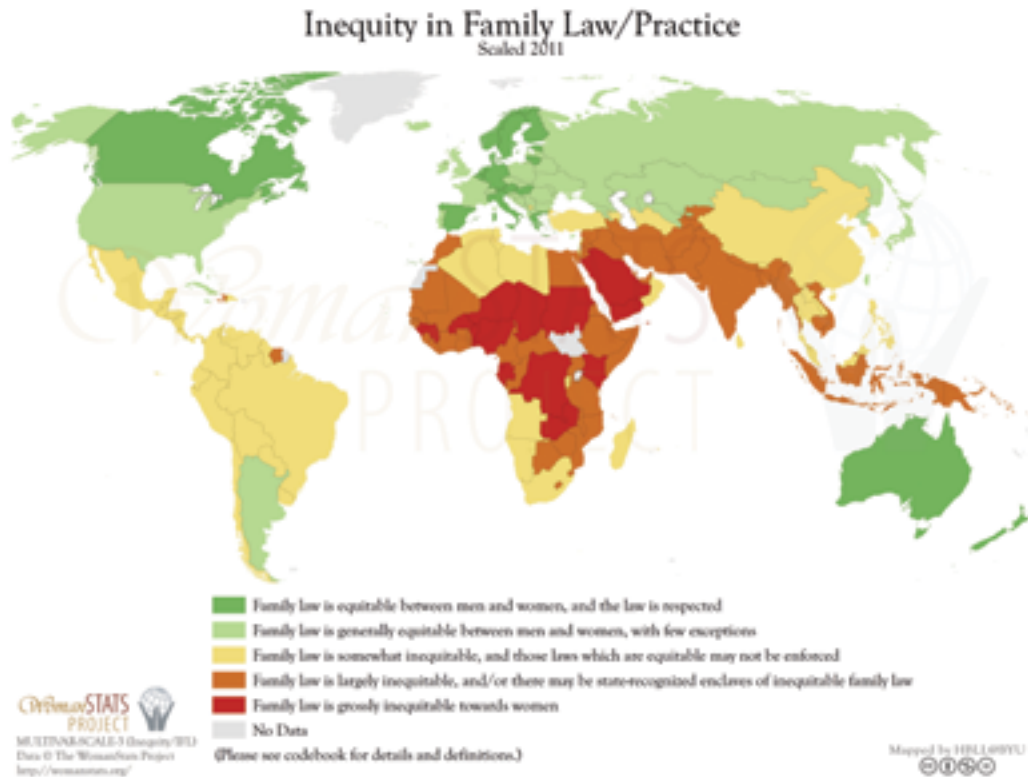
We have reviewed how explicit attention to gender has developed within contemporary U.S. foreign policy, catalyzed in part by the international community’s women, peace, and security agenda, and increasingly become a focus of operational planning and programming. While the UNSCR 1325 framework and programs like Female Engagement Teams and PROMOTE are laudatory, we argue that an important dimension of the relationship between women’s security and state security is still, generally speaking, overlooked in U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. NAP. We believe there are deeper roots entwining these two securities that remain largely untouched by current efforts. It may well be that the addition of female soldiers in ground operations or greater numbers of female students in universities or more female civil servants in the government or even additional female legislators in parliament will not be enough to put a post-conflict society on a stable foundation without attention to that deeper level.

That deeper level is the legal structure under which women must live their lives in the family setting. Family law, enshrined in the formal legal system as well as myriad social customs, establishes the relationship between the two halves of humanity in every society. In this article, we assert that the impact of family law extends far beyond individual families and impacts more macro-level phenomena, such as national stability and resilience.

“Family law” refers to the statutory and customary law that regulates marriage, parenthood, and to a great extent speaks to how a given state or society views the relations between men and women. It establishes the legal order which defines how males and females, with their resultant kin-based groups, whether families or tribes, relate to each other and the rights each individual holds as part of a family under the state. Included in the arena of family law would be such things as minimum age of marriage, the form of consent in marriage, decisionmaking rights in marriage, property and inheritance rights in marriage, divorce and custody rights in marriage, sexual rights in marriage, the right to “discipline” a spouse in marriage, and so forth.

A woman may vote, she may work, and she may have a graduate degree and even be a Member of Parliament, but if she cannot in practice obtain a divorce or custody of her children or hold property in her own name or inherit as a widow or refuse an arranged marriage or an underage marriage, she is a *de facto* (and sometimes even a *de jure*) subordinate to the men in her life and, by extension, her society. According to our most recent scaling of the WomanStats Inequity in Family Law Index, 38.3 percent of nations have either high or extremely high levels of such inequity (N=174).¹⁷ The day-to-day effects of these inequitable family arrangements underpin the general subordination of women to men in the society. It is this deep governing structural gender inequality that lays a sandy foundation for

Figure 1. Map of Inequity in Family Law/Practice



state stability. Societal sanction for the subordination of women as expressed in family law is, we argue, an overlooked wellspring of societal instability and violence.

The history of family structure is a story of historical asymmetry where men's rights have prevailed over those of women in their marriages and families from the days of the first organized legal code, the Code of Hammurabi, on down to this very day. In the early 20th century, women pursued and obtained the right to vote in most countries. Even so, women lacked other rights that they considered much more vital to their day-to-day lives. Legal codes enacted by states denied them rights to divorce, inheritance, and property rights—even basic physical security—within the family. Even within the Western liberal tradition, where women were considered autonomous and deserving of fair and impartial treatment under the law, legal sources based on patrilineal social traditions retained significant bias for a very long time. As late as the 1970s in the United States, for example, marital rape was not illegal, and it was difficult for a married woman to obtain credit under her own name.

While this type of legal discrimination is largely a thing of the past in the United States, gross inequities in family law remain for a large percentage of the world's countries (Figure 1). So, for example, in Saudi Arabia, women are minors first to their fathers, and then upon marriage, to their husbands. They may not travel or become employed without their guardian's formal permission. Saudi women voted for the first time—in municipal elections—in 2015. Saudi husbands may practice polygyny, and a Saudi husband may divorce his wife at will, without even appearing before a judge. A Saudi wife would have to

prove one of several situations to obtain a divorce, such as seven years' worth of abandonment, or insanity or criminality of their spouse in order to divorce. Custody of the children devolves to the father and his family at age seven for boys and nine for girls. For many Muslim states such as Saudi Arabia, family law became the final bastion of Islam as other areas such as education became secularized and put under the purview of the state.

This disparity of power expressed through inequitable family law codes has already been empirically shown to be significantly associated with higher levels of violence against women.¹⁸ We can certainly understand why that should be so, but is there a larger horizon to see as well? Is there a linkage between inequitable family law and levels of state stability? And how might an understanding of that linkage inform U.S. foreign policy towards post-conflict states?

Family Law's Effects on State Stability

The lines of battle over family law are hotly contested because of how foundational choices regarding the relations between males and females are to any society, and even in the 21st century, family law systems differ fairly substantially across societies. While some states enshrine relatively equitable family law, others, as we have seen, do not. The situation is ever-changing; in most cases, the direction is towards greater equity and safeguards for women in marriage and family matters, but we also see instances where the change is not in the direction of greater equity or safeguards. Regression in the family codes of several "Arab Uprising" nations has led women's rights activists to conclude that this period constituted an "Arab Winter" for women. For example, one of the very first acts of the

newly-established regime in Libya following Qaddafi's overthrow was the re-legalization of polygyny.

In every human society, we find a universal phenomenon: human beings are divided into two roughly equal-sized groups, both of which must be involved in the production of the future of their group in the form of offspring.¹⁹ This simple parameter gives rise to some foundational decisions to be made in all human societies about what we call the "First Difference:"

1) Status in the context of difference: Will these two groups engage each other as equals, or as subordinate and superordinate?

2) Decisionmaking in the context of difference: Will decisions in the society be made by one group or by both groups?

3) Conflict resolution in the context of difference: If the two groups disagree, how is that disagreement to be resolved?

4) Resource distribution in the context of difference: Which group will control resources necessary for survival and persistence—such as food, land, weapons, children, and wealth—or will control be shared?

5) Agency in the context of difference: Can one group be coerced to provide what is required for survival and persistence of the group against its will?

Consider what type of society is formed when the answers are: One group, group "A," is superordinate over the other ("B"), and makes all important decisions in the society. The second group, "B," may be ignored or punished if it protests this arrangement. "A" will monopolize and control all resources necessary for survival and persistence, including land, wealth, and children. "B" can be coerced into providing what the first group needs

through physical violence until acquiescence is obtained. "B" becomes, in essence, another resource controlled by "A" from which rents are extracted by coercion and subordination.

What type of society originates from such choices? The groundwork will have been laid for an inequitable society ruled by monopolistic rent-seekers prepared to assure continued flow of their rents through corruption and violence. Worse yet, such societal arrangements will seem "natural and right" given the original choices made with regard to the "First Other," the first "B"—woman.

All recognized differences within the society—ranging far beyond the originary difference of sex—will entail subordination, and physical violence will be used if necessary to effect that subordination. All "others" in the society—those of different ethnicity, religion, ideology, etc.—will be relegated to the lower status accorded to the female, that is, in a sense, "feminized"—because their status, agency, and so forth, correspond more to that of females in society than to males.

That is why the structure of relations between men and women in any society is so important; it is important because the answers given above concerning the First Difference normalize inequity, violence, and a parasitical and monopolistic rent-based economy within the society. Such a society, we argue, will be inherently unstable. Since the clearest way to "see" the structure of relations between men and women is to examine family law and customs, inequity in family law should be a strong determinant of societal stability.

And indeed it is. In our latest empirical research, we were able to demonstrate that societies maintaining inequitable family law and custom prove significantly more fragile and less peaceful than those which do not.²⁰

Figure 2. Countries with very inequitable family laws are least peaceful²⁴

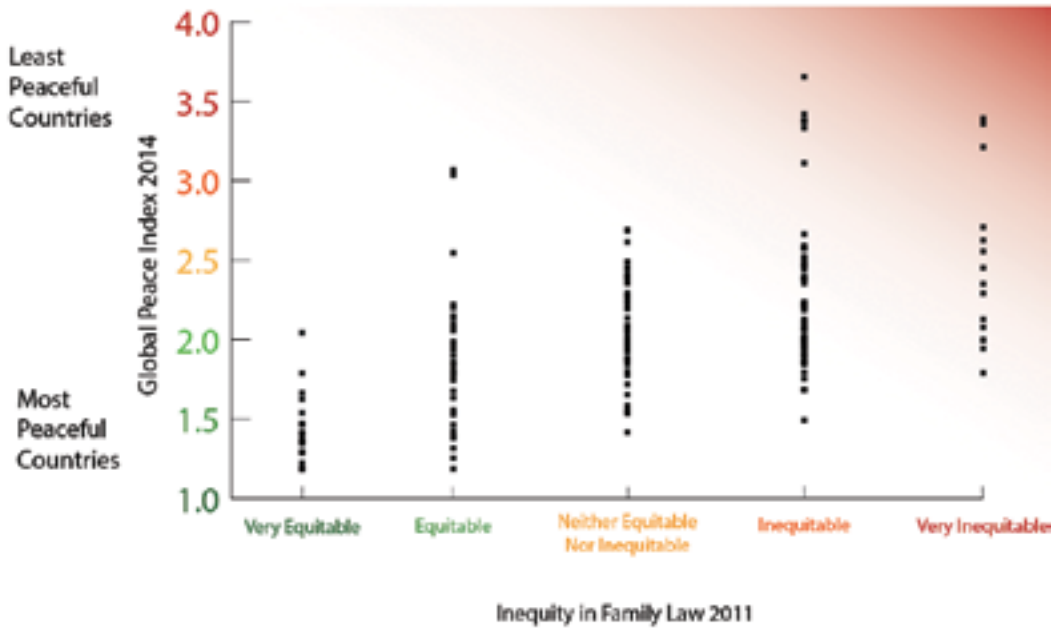
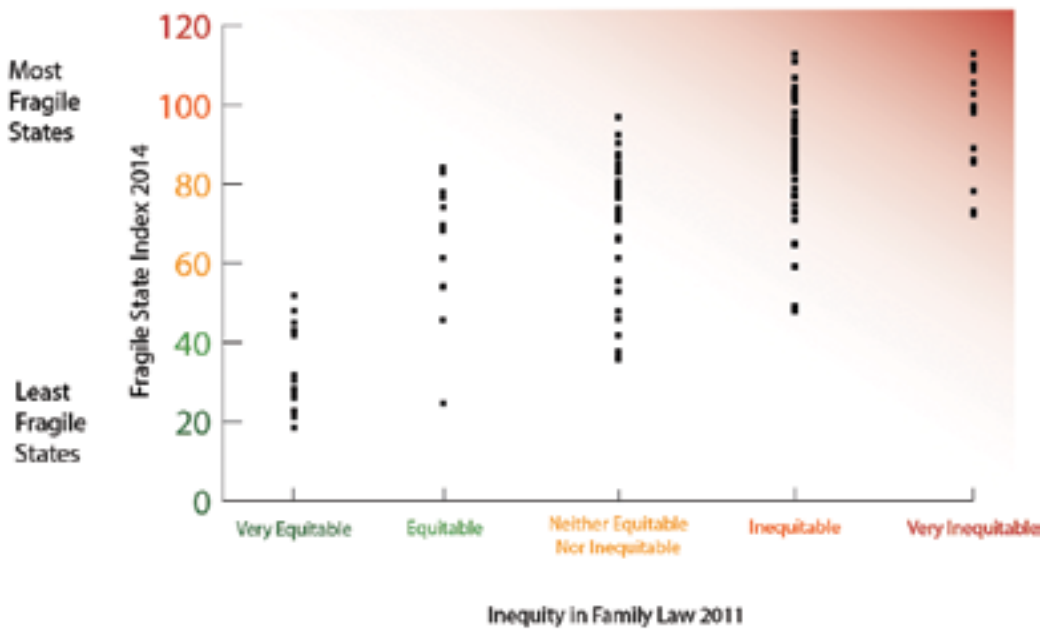


Figure 3. Countries with the most inequitable family laws are the most fragile²⁵



The WomanStats Database has a five-point scale of the degree of Inequity in Family Law and Practice disfavoring women. Inequity in Family Law²¹ has a moderately strong correlation with the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index ($r = 0.5477$), and a relatively strong correlation ($r = 0.7549$) with the Fund for Peace's Fragile State Index. Multivariate regression models including Inequity in Family Law alongside more conventional variables such as level of democracy and literacy show moderate strength in predicting Global Peace ($r^2 = 0.43$) and great strength in predicting fragile states ($r^2 = 0.72$).²² Taken overall, these results suggest the ability to predict the level of state fragility and peacefulness is significantly enhanced by examining Inequity in Family Law, in addition to more conventional explanatory variables.

Figures 2 and 3 display in clearer detail the relationship between Inequity in Family Law and our two indicators of state fragility and instability.²³ Figure 2 shows that countries with very inequitable family laws are the least peaceful, and Figure 3 shows that countries with very equitable family laws are the least fragile and those with the most inequitable laws are the most fragile.

The Case of Afghanistan

Attention to inequitable family law may well prove to be one of the most potentially powerful policy levers for the stabilization of fragile societies. There are both strong theoretical reasons and complementary empirical work that suggest this is no spurious relationship, but rather a deep intertwining of the foundational choices made by any human society with regard to sexual difference, on the one hand,

and the macro-level sequelae of those choices in terms of fragility and corruption.

We submit that while entirely laudatory and worthwhile, efforts in U.S. foreign policy to increase female secondary and tertiary education, increase female participation in the police and the armed forces, and increase female participation in government, will only go so far in stabilizing at-risk states. The deeper level of inequitable family law must also be addressed for societies to escape from an endless cycle of state fragility. Surely this is one reason why Rule of Law programming by the U.S. and other countries in Afghanistan often includes a gender component.

And yet these are admittedly some of the most intractable and contentious issues of all, because they touch on issues of self-identity, religious identity, and power within the family and within society. We can see that clearly in the case of Afghanistan. After over a dozen years in that country, amazing advances in the education and empowerment of women have taken place. The 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan guaranteed equal rights to men and women, not to just "citizens," and a quota of 25 percent of parliamentary seats were reserved for women in the lower house and 17 percent in the upper. Afghanistan also signed on to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW (without reservations, remarkably), and the International Criminal Court (ICC)—which is noteworthy because the U.S. government has refused to adopt any of these three international treaties. In addition, the new Afghan government also established a Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA). Women also initially headed several other ministries, including public health, labor, social affairs, and the ministry for the disabled.²⁶

Women have also made inroads in local politics: the first female governor of an Afghan province is Habiba Sarobi in Bamiyan, appointed in 2005 (who also ran for Vice President in the 2014 national election). In early 2013, the first-ever female district governor was appointed. Furthermore, Afghanistan now has a National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), approved by the cabinet in 2008, which sets goals for the advancement of women in that country. One goal, as we have seen, is to have women make up 30 percent of the civil service by 2018. Women are increasingly participating in the police force (1,974 female police officers in 2013, compared to less than 500 in 2007) and in the legal field (150 female judges in 2012; 300 female defense lawyers and 250 female prosecutors in 2013).²⁷

In addition to the expansion of women's rights, education and health indicators for women have significantly improved. Ashraf Haidari notes, "Of nearly five million children in grades one through six, 36.6 percent are girls. The number of girls in high school almost doubled from 2007 to 2008, from 67,900 to 136,621 students. Some 8,944 university students graduated in Afghanistan in 2008. Of them, 1,734 were female students. These numbers have continued to rise in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012."²⁸ Haidari adds that infant mortality has decreased by 23 percent since 2001. Maternal mortality has seen impressive drops as well; the World Bank estimates that the rate has been reduced to 327 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013, down from 1600 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2001. Though still ranking next-to-last in



Staff Sgt. Larry E. Reid Jr., U.S. Air Force

An Afghan National Policewoman (ANP) stands at attention

maternal mortality, this is a stunning improvement.²⁹

But the context in which women live their lives still strongly constrains their voice and their security. Provincial quotas for women were lowered from 25 to 20 percent, even before the U.S. troop drawdown in 2014. And in a 2013 parliamentary discussion over fully “instating” the Elimination of Violence Against Women presidential decree, male MPs attempted to strip the proposed legislation of provisions that curbed polygyny, early marriage, forced marriage, domestic violence, rape, and so on, on the ground that these provisions are “un-Islamic.”³⁰

Moreover, less than a year later, the Afghan parliament voted in February 2014 to ban all testimony from family members, doctors, and lawyers in domestic abuse cases. Even the victim herself would be banned from testifying. While the legislation is still in limbo—hopefully a permanent limbo—after the recent election of Ashraf Ghani, this is a startling legal reversal that would have offered impunity to those who abuse family members.³¹ The moral is clear: years of effort by Afghan advocates (and supported by the U.S.) can be undone overnight, and will be unless vigilance and leverage is mustered.

Assassinations of women in the public sphere have increased significantly even during this time of advancement for women in education and health. A 2015 Amnesty International report concludes:

There has been a significant increase in threats, intimidation, and attacks against people at the forefront of promoting and protecting women’s rights, in particular in the south and south-eastern parts of the country. Many women human rights

defenders have been threatened and their homes or family members have been attacked. Some have even been killed for their activities, while others have had to flee the country for fear they will be next . . . Women human rights defenders face threats and violence not only from the Taliban and other armed opposition groups but also from state actors, and in particular, law enforcement and security officials. They are also at risk of harm from powerful commanders and warlords, who are either connected to state authorities or are the local officials themselves.³²

It is important that the United States study this saga carefully. In Afghanistan, the U.S. changed the surface structure for women—which was very important and very significant—but the deep structure of family law remains untouched. As a result, we see a creeping clawback of women’s rights over time. The U.S. ensured legislative quotas for women; they are being eroded. The U.S. made sure Afghanistan acceded to CEDAW without reservations, but that has produced no substantive change for Afghan women. The U.S. provided the programming to enable more women to become educated in Afghanistan, but violence against women is arguably rising, not falling. Because these changes were perceived as being imposed by an invading power, despite the fact that they had been strongly advocated by Afghan women’s groups—and because of the predictable backlash against such a perception—real reform of Afghan family law seems as distant a possibility as it was before the U.S. invasion. It may be that the increasing education rate of women will eventually produce reform and Afghanistan may one day be able to follow a different path, but while the surface

structure and the deep structure remain at odds, the country will continue to be highly unstable.

Policy Recommendations

If it is family law that undergirds the real position of women in the society, the next horizon for U.S. foreign policy is to devise creative and effective means of encouraging states to view inequitable family law as a barrier to internal stability, and of rewarding states that choose to prioritize positive legal reforms in this area. Even so, these issues are extremely sensitive ones; as we have seen, inequitable family law is the quintessential expression of foundational societal choices about the First Difference, which may underpin all other social arrangements in the society. So, for example, after its progressive overhaul of family law in 2004, Morocco's stability was improving according to outcome measures such as the Fragile States Index, until the advent of the regional upheaval engendered by the Arab Uprising. Many would argue that the 2004 reform of the Moroccan family law code, which not only recognized the important role that women play in family and society, but offered state protection of women's financial and legal position, was a factor in helping to stabilize the country and dampen the appeal of extremism during this critical time in 2011-2012.

The United States should not make matters worse by tempting apologists of the status quo to reject positive change in family law as a rejection of "Westernization." Some policy guidelines seem appropriate in view of the sensitivity of the subject area:

- Let respected state elites take the lead and encourage them to do so. Since most regard inequity in family law as a woman's

issue, it is critical that, where possible, male leaders be in the forefront of reform. For example, in Morocco, family law reform was led by the Prime Minister and legitimized by King Mohamed VI's support. A Million Women March in favor of reform of the Moroccan family law code drew attention to the need for change. Religious elites are also important to involve. For example, the King drafted religious scholars, both men and women, to work with legislators and civil society activists, again both men and women, to negotiate and write the new code, which passed in 2004.

- Consult a wide range of local experts, take signals from them, and leave management of change in practice or law in their charge. "Shaming" or calling out states for violations of CEDAW or inequity in family law codes is likely to be counterproductive. Although this tactic may produce useful responses for other human rights issues, gender issues are linked to deeply-rooted sensitivities, and negative publicity often produces backlash.

- Recognize religious and cultural boundaries. Turning to Morocco once more as a good example, during negotiations for the reform of Morocco's family code, King Mohamed VI stated flatly that if a precept is found in the Qur'an, it could not be contravened. He also stated, however, that there might be ways to put fences around practices that are often abused. Thus, polygyny in Morocco can be regulated, and therefore discouraged, but cannot be outlawed.

- Use soft power. Western actors should aspire to remain in the background. Advocates from countries in the same region, or cultural or religious traditions may be better able to speak to the

advantages of equitable family law. So, for example, in Malawi in February 2015, the age of marriage was raised after a concerted campaign by Malawian civil society actors and parliamentarians, but it is also true that regional forces were at work, since Malawi is a signatory to (and has ratified) the Maputo Protocol of the African Union, which obligates signatories to just such action. Soft power practices include steady rhetorical support of equitable human rights law, noting that inequity in family law is recognized by the United Nations as a human rights issue. Some family law issues may permit a rhetorical emphasis on health benefits to women and families resulting from greater equity (e.g. child marriage). The U.S. might, for example, fund international conferences to draw state actors together for consultation on best health practices, some of which may have ramifications for family law.

- Work on a long timeline. For example, despite the fact that over 40 sub-Saharan African nations had signed the Maputo Protocol by 2005, it has taken a full decade for most (though still not all) of these nations to raise their legal age of marriage to 18. Change has come, but it was by no means instantaneous. Similarly, in 2004, when the Moroccan reforms were passed, there was an initial outcry from both conservative women and men. Furthermore, judges in Morocco lacked training in the new code and consequently made faulty judgments. In time the majority of the society backed the reforms, largely because of the quiet steady leadership of the King, key state actors, and respected religious officials and scholars, all of whom played a role in negotiating the reforms.

- Understand that any regime change will almost certainly be accompanied by efforts to roll back women's rights under family law; be vigilant in watching for signs this is happening, and react by using any leverage at the disposal of the United States to convince newly powerful actors that there are other, more pressing, priorities to which they should attend first. Women's rights are slow to win, but fast to lose. If the United States can use its influence to delay or stall regress, it may well prevent unwanted change from taking place at all, such as the successful U.S. efforts to help stymie the official rollback of Afghanistan's Elimination of Violence Against Women Act (EVAW), as well as pushback against Karzai's attack on the personal status of Shia women in Afghanistan. Though the Shia Personal Status Law was deemed a done deal, international pressure brought it to the Justice Minister's bailiwick to decide which portions would have to be repealed because they were unconstitutional. In essence, many of the law's provisions are in legal limbo to this day. In Tunisia, early announcements by Ennadha leaders that they would be seeking to re-legalize polygyny and to found Tunisian law in sharia, were stymied by female parliamentarians through the lengthy process of constitutional reform,³³ and these MPs had the support of international actors, as well.

The take-away is that inequity in family law in post-conflict states deserves far greater attention by the United States (or any other third party actor) than it has received to date. Action can be undertaken, but only if done wisely and carefully. One recent example where the United States is making a positive

contribution in this regard is the growing worldwide campaign against child marriage, in which the United States is heavily involved along with the United Nations, other concerned state governments such as the UK, and a plethora of nongovernmental organizations. Legalized child marriage is an important element of inequitable family law, and has far-reaching effects on state fragility.³⁴ In the 2013 provisions of the Violence Against Women Act, the U.S. Congress mandated the president “direct the Secretary of State to develop and implement a plan to prevent child marriage, promote empowerment of girls at risk of early marriage, and target countries where a high prevalence of child marriage is known to occur.”³⁵ Furthermore, USAID has developed a “Vision for Ending Child Marriage.”³⁶

In Yemen where there is still no minimum age of marriage for girls, and where

lawmakers have come to blows over the issue,³⁷ USAID funded a project (before the recent descent into chaos), called the Safe Age of Marriage Project, in two districts in rural Yemen to attempt to raise the age of marriage through community mobilization. USAID reports:

In 2010, community members pledged to ban child marriage and set marriage dowry at approximately \$2,000 to deter trade marriage. As a result, the most commonly reported age of marriage of girls rose from 14 to 17 over the duration of the project. The project also helped avert child marriages and helped the first ever female school principal be appointed in Al Sawd District, encouraging parents to enroll and keep their daughters in school. From baseline to endline, there were statistically



Dana Smilie / World Bank

Students read in class at the Shaheed Mohamed Motaher Zaid School in Sana'a.

significant increases in the proportion of people identifying benefits to delaying marriage (e.g., from 45 percent to 79 percent agreed that delayed marriage provides more opportunities for girls' education and from 36 percent to 67 percent agreed that delayed marriage leads to healthier pregnancies). The intervention is now being replicated in two new districts, and it will be managed by the Yemeni Women's Union. Due to the entrenched beliefs that Islam condones child marriage, the Yemeni Women's Union is planning to engage a larger proportion of religious leaders as community educators to address these religious misconceptions. In addition to assuming the management of Safe Age of Marriage activities, the Yemeni Women's Union has been actively lobbying the Yemeni government for a change in Yemeni law that would prohibit the marriage of girls under age 17.³⁸

If change in customary age of marriage—long advocated by Yemeni women's groups—can be facilitated by USAID programming, we are convinced the U.S. is not helpless in the face of inequitable family law and custom.³⁹ Not only is the U.S. not helpless, but we have recently seen how toleration of abusive gender-related customs, such as the sexual slavery of young boys in Afghanistan by U.S.-supported Afghan commanders, can redound to the detriment of U.S. foreign policy interests.⁴⁰ No one benefits when the U.S. overlooks these issues. Even though these are difficult and sensitive issues, if U.S. policymakers look for opportunities to make a positive difference, they will find them in abundance.⁴¹ As Ambassador Swanee Hunt has put it, our goal must “not be simply the absence of war, but a

sustainable peace fostered by fundamental social changes.”⁴² The most fundamental social change imaginable, we submit—one that would strongly promote stability and peace—is facilitating change of inequitable family law.

The struggle to dismantle inequitable family law will be with us for a long time. Battles that were won will be re-fought, over and over, because the rewards to certain societal actors for adopting inequitable family law and safeguarding it are just too tempting. But if “the subjugation of women is a direct threat to the security of the United States,” as asserted by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton,⁴³ U.S. foreign policymakers must begin to consider how the reform of inequitable family laws disfavoring women might be prioritized. State fragility is rightly a key concern of U.S. foreign policy today, and inequitable family law must be understood as one of its primary wellsprings. **PRISM**

NOTES

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Photos

Page 122. Photo by DVIDSHUB. 2011. Afghan women voice concerns to coalition forces. From <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dvids/5577207534>>. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license, <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>>. Photo reproduced unaltered.

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Courtesy of the Democratic Union of Mongolia



Demonstrations for democracy in Mongolia's capital city, Ulaanbaatar, in 1990. Women were deeply involved in the nation's democracy movement its earliest stages.

The Secret Driving Force Behind Mongolia's Successful Democracy

BY OYUNGEREL TSEDEV DAMBA

Twenty-five years after Mongolia's first free and democratic election, the country is commemorating the peaceful revolution that radically changed this country. Throughout these celebrations, we are reflecting on both the result of the changes of the past 25 years and the means by which those changes occurred. Not only are Mongolians marking the occasion, the nation is finally being heralded by the international community as an example of peaceful democratization. In my role as a member of the State Great Hural (parliament) of Mongolia, I am often asked, "How did you manage to do it?" Or, less frequently now, "How did we never notice Mongolia's democracy before?" Hearing these queries so frequently prompted me to seriously reflect upon the process by which Mongolia transformed from a Soviet satellite state into a robust and thriving democracy.

The harsh winter of 1989-1990 was a critical juncture in my country's history. It was too cold for any foreign reporters to come here and witness first-hand Ulaanbaatar's demonstrations. Peaceful, modest demonstration started on December 10, 1989, at the Youth Square of Ulaanbaatar to celebrate International Human Rights Day, and to announce the birth of the new non-communist movement "Democratic Union of Mongolia." The demonstrations grew bigger and filled the square by mid-January. Mongolia's weekend used to be only one day—Sunday—and the demonstrations took place almost every Sunday from January through May.

There was no bloodshed, no windows broken, and not even a fist fight during those frigid Sunday demonstrations for democracy. The media all too frequently overlook the dog that didn't bark in favor of reporting on the rabid dog that bites; Mongolia's peaceful demonstrations would not make for catchy headlines, and thus were neglected by international media in favor of splashier events elsewhere. Mongolia's democracy rallies and events happened at the same time as

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protests were coming to a head in Eastern Europe. The international press was focused on Eastern Europe, leaving Mongolians to the process of demanding and constructing our own democracy.

Mongolia's successful transition, though overlooked until recent years, has profound implications for the international community. When I escorted high-level government, NGO, and media representatives from Myanmar during a recent visit to Mongolia, I was asked many questions regarding issues that we take for granted. As the head of the Mongolian-Myanmar parliamentary group, I extended my best wishes to the Myanmar people's effort to reform their country into a thriving democracy. I further promised to share my knowledge and experience whenever asked. As the head of the Mongolia-Kyrgyzstan Intergovernmental Committee, I also had a chance to share our stories with Kyrgyz politicians who have bold aspirations to change their country peacefully and successfully "like Mongolia."

Compared with many post-communist Central Asian countries, and even some Eastern European countries—most notably Russia—Mongolia's public is the least nostalgic about the past communist years. According to the Sant Maral Foundation, an independent polling nongovernmental organization (NGO), over 90 percent of the Mongolian public voted "No" every quarter for the past 25 years when asked, "Do you regret that Mongolia chose democracy in 1990?" This is the highest level and the most consistent national consensus among other regular, repetitive questions that Sant Maral asks in its quarterly polls. From the family point of view, it means that almost every family in Mongolia—which was the world's second communist country after Russia (the USSR) less than a

century ago—appreciates the democratic choice that the nation made.

Why is this important? It is a big responsibility for Mongolia to act as a democratic model to those countries that aspire to be "like Mongolia." We must critically examine our democratic history and share that experience frankly so that other countries are not lulled into thinking that democracy is easy to achieve. We should tell the full truth about the open and hidden forces that led to our success. Mongolia's new political parties, its activist student leaders, our non-communist associations, and our high level decisionmakers were the key driving forces behind Mongolia's peaceful transition to democracy. But these groups alone cannot explain Mongolia's transformation; women have also played an integral part in Mongolia's democratic history.

Ladies with Pigs and Horses

It is at times hard to believe Sant Maral's numbers—after all, Mongolians refer to the transition to democracy and a market economy as "the hard years." Even politicians use this term in their election campaigns, while Mongolian journalists can expect to use the phrase hundreds of times over the course of their careers. It has become a trope when speaking about the transition away from communism.

As Mongolia made its economic transition from a centrally planned socialist economy to a market economy, and a political transition from one-party communist party rule to multi-party democracy, all the consequences of this rapid simultaneous transition fell upon our citizens in the hardest way. The first result of disconnecting Mongolia from communism was to reorient our national economy—meaning that we severed the ties that brought Soviet assistance and trade. Our state budget

collapsed; we lacked the ability to pay the salaries of thousands upon thousands of people. At the same time, higher education and many health services stopped being free. The effects of these changes were seen even in stores, where shelves were empty of everything but salt. Given the hardships our people faced, nostalgia about our communist past could have surged. But it did not. Mongolians agreed with then President Ochirbat's call, "to tighten our belts," and proceed further with democratic changes and the development of a market economy. President Ochirbat's "tighten our belts" formula is a very familiar phrase used by almost all fathers and mothers when family food is scarce. In addition, there was another valuable proverb widely circulating: "It is better to suffer at your own right than to live plentiful under someone else's power." Democracy and the market economy offered a simple herder not only the freedom to speak his or her mind, but also the freedom to own sheep and horses, as many as he or she could herd. Compared to the communist ban on all private property, including herds that exceeded six sheep per family, the market economy opened the door for herder families as wide as the steppe grasslands. However, families still had to go through immediate economic hardships first.

At least one of every two working persons in an average family either became unemployed or was forced into early retirement on a miniscule pension by mid-1992. Construction and investment on any new building project came to a standstill. The engineers and technicians were the first to lose their jobs. As other offices cut their employment, women were the first to be fired or sent to early pension. If a woman raised four or more children, she was offered her pension at

the age of 45 instead of the usual 55 years. During and after the transition, women consistently remain more unemployed than men. According to the National Statistical Information Service, the average percentage of women among the registered unemployed during the period 2000-2014 was 54.48 percent.¹

The government of Mongolia, while seeing almost one-third of its less than one million person workforce become unemployed and witnessing the disappearance of goods from the stores, started issuing "foreign passports" to its citizens in early 1991. A foreign passport meant a Mongolian citizen could travel abroad—a right tightly guarded and controlled under communism. Suddenly, hundreds of thousands of Mongolian citizens had the freedom to travel abroad that they had not enjoyed since 13th century, the time of Genghis Khan. The numerous Mongolians who sought their fortunes abroad would return with big bags of goods to sell in Mongolia. Those bags, due to their round shape and fully stuffed image, received the nickname "pig." And the men and women who did such trading and brought much needed goods and food to local stores were called "pig carriers." Among the first "pig carriers" were young people who couldn't find jobs after their graduation from schools, and women with life experience who had been "liberated" from the state workforce. Instead of being nostalgic about a state-provided salary, women went into trading, herding, farming, sewing, and opening new, private companies. Nobody counted them in the 1990s, and there was no official statistical data on how many women became "pig carriers." Of them, some switched to the official labor market as the economy improved, some became big business owners, but the majority of women remained small scale traders. In

2012, the Mongolian Parliament passed a law that allowed everyone who did not have an official work record during the 1990-2000 period to apply for a “10 years of employment” credit, so that those who are reaching the pension age would be eligible for a full pension based on employment of 25 years or more. “During 1990-2000, people were unemployed not because they were lazy, but because they worked day and night throughout the big shift without an official labor record,” I argued in support of the new law before Parliament. When the law was implemented 552,000 people applied to register and 54.5 percent of them were women.²

Following the 1991 livestock privatization, where herding, after 32 years, again became a

family living rather than a state-owned communist cooperative, thousands of herder women became the major income earners for their families. Young pensioner women and recently fired women went into herding in order to raise the few animals that their children and relatives received thanks to privatization. Women on horseback rounded up their private animals, milked their cows, migrated from pasture to pasture, and fought through winter blizzards.

Women, with unexpected dynamism and optimism, became the most resilient force during Mongolia’s economic transition crises. Even when inflation reached 100-500 percent, women still managed to bring bread to their families, and their role in the family increased



Courtesy of Oyungeel Tsedevdamba (2006)

Narantsetseg Baasan, a single woman living and making her way alone with her son by northern border of Mongolia (near Siberia) in Erdenebulgan soum, Huvsgul province.

significantly as a result. The number of single mothers skyrocketed during these years. Families fell apart as depressed, violent, and drunk men abused their wives. A new social term, “family headed by a woman,” was introduced in social discussions. While the “head of family” was traditionally a man, the fact that the 14-15 percent of Mongolian families are consistently “led” by women has forced the Mongolian government to collect official statistical data on the gender of the “heads of families” since 2003. According to the National Statistical Information Service, 73-77.8 percent of 81,902-103,192 single “heads of families” were women during the period 2003-2014.³

Without women’s active participation in Mongolia’s economic transition, the prospects for Mongolia’s democracy would have been much gloomier. Women worked hard to ensure their families were resilient amidst the sweeping changes. They were a critical force pushing society towards an overwhelming national consensus to further democratic transition throughout some of the most challenging stages.

Peaceful Transition on Paper

When the Mongolian Democratic Union, the first ever non-communist movement in Mongolia, held a huge rally in mid-January 1990, over 100,000 Mongolians filled Sukhbaatar Square in front of Government House, holding various signs expressing their dreams about a new society. Of course “Democracy,” “Human Rights,” and “Freedom,” were the most common and the loudest demands of the gatherers, but there was another famous symbol among them. It was Genghis Khan’s portrait—but with an artistic, political twist.

I can still vividly remember that placard. It was a small blue and white sign. There was a frozen window depicted on it. Those who never lived in Mongolia prior to the vacuum window era, cannot imagine what a frozen window is. It means that ice is forming on the inside of a building’s windows; opaque ice crystals spread across a window so that no one within can see out.

The famous sign depicted just such a frozen window, and on it was a human hand called “democracy” wiping away the window’s ice so that from within one could just make out the face of Genghis Khan—Mongolia’s great hero and law-giver, whom the communists had tried to erase from the public memory. Even to utter his name was a crime.

The sign exactly described the feelings of the Mongolian people of that time. Finally, we did not have communist censorship of our media, culture, literature, movies, and holidays. We were wiping aside a frigid past that had obscured our traditions. The search for a new national identity for the new non-communist Mongolia had begun.

As the country moved toward ever more rapid transition, it required an enormous amount of intellectual work, writing, translating, speaking, and reporting. Translations about democracies and market economies were needed, new laws had to be enacted, new standards, norms, and guidance had to be drafted and advocated, new songs needed to be sung...if we truly wished to create a new democratic society through peaceful means. Free print media and the newly free radio and television channels carried all manner of information to assure that citizens kept up with the rapid changes.

During this busy period women overwhelmingly carried the burden of the

paperwork of transition by their enormous capacity to learn, adapt, and get things done on time. However, the salaries of teachers, cultural workers, lawyers, and doctors experienced a free fall during the early years of democracy that caused the majority of the male workforce in these sectors to quit their positions in favor of work in the rapidly expanding private sector. Today Mongolia's biggest gender gap exists in politics, mining, education, and health; in the first two sectors males are dominant, while women comprise 75.8 percent and 81.4 percent of the education and health sectors, respectively.⁴

When we look back at the changes we made in our laws, almost all of them had hard-working women in the project teams. They were modestly named as advisers, vice-directors, assistants, or officers—their bosses were almost always men. But women learned foreign languages earlier than their male counterparts; they completed new schooling while having babies; and they devoted their time to studying solutions to our pressing problems. Without Mongolia's new class of writing and drafting women, Mongolia's new laws, rules, and regulations could not have come out in such numbers as they have over the past 25 years.

Women have continued to play a prominent role in Mongolia's intellectual landscape. Today, in Mongolia's biggest bookstores, books by women authors dominate the best seller lists. In cinemas, women produce movies equally with those of men. In civil society, the longest serving, most passionate activists and leaders are women. Indeed, nearly 90 percent of civil society leaders are women. In public media, 6 of 11 daily newspaper Editors-in-Chief and a majority of journalists are women.⁵

Shortly after I was elected President of The Democratic Women's Union—the women's organization of the Democratic Party of Mongolia—in spring of 2011, I was invited to a women's rights day gathering at the Buyant-Ukhaa Sports Palace in Ulaanbaatar. I was seated among 10 honorable male guests; they were all elected officials from the Democratic Party (DP). The 6,000 seats of the sports hall were filled with women who actively worked for the Democratic Party's political campaigns—many for the past 25 years. I was given only two minutes to speak to the audience.

"Do you see these gentlemen?" I began my speech as loudly as I could. "Please raise your hand if you worked at least once to get these gentlemen elected?" All raised their hands.

"If you worked twice for the election campaign in support of the DP, please raise both of your hands!" I called out. All raised two hands.

"If you worked for every democratic election campaign, please stand up," I announced. All 6,000 women stood up cheerfully shouting, "Yes!"

Then I turned to the male MPs elected from Ulaanbaatar; "If you don't approve a women's candidate quota in the election law, if our party turns down the women's quota like it did in 2007, we shall not work for you in the coming 2012 election campaign!" All the audience shouted, "Yes!"

The election law was changed soon after, and Mongolian women got their quota. For the first time the number of women elected to parliament reached 14.5 percent. It was a big jump compared to three percent in the previous parliament.⁶

Women from not only the Democratic Party, but from every political party are the biggest force in spreading campaign messages to the voters. The vast majority of election campaign staffs consist of women in the major parties. They write speeches. They draft press releases. They speak to voters door to door. They organize meetings and they work tirelessly during every election campaign and make sure the democratic process has ever deepening roots in Mongolian society.

Freelancers and Watchdogs

Throughout the communist period, the only job provider was the state. The state sponsored all literature and all media. Even attorneys were state-provided people who did not serve as a defendant's independent attorney in a

case. The state sponsored children's, youth, and women's organizations, the trade union, and the only legitimate communist party. In fact, the state budget delegated to the Central Committee of the former communist party exceeded the budget delegated to the entire education sector of the government. The communist party tax was the highest tax a party member would pay per month, and because of the party's economic interest, every highly-paid employee of a state job was required to be a party member.

When communism fell, the state stopped its sponsoring role for most of public life. Democracy leaders demanded that the state end its involvement in social affairs. New laws on advocacy and NGOs were passed in 1997 allowing citizens to operate independently



Courtesy of Azjigal Dashseren

A Democratic Women's event in 2011, Ulaanbaatar

from state guidance and, in many cases, against the preferences of state stakeholders.

It required courage and expertise to take advantage of these new opportunities. The history of political repression against those who complained about state agencies or the decisions of high level officials were fresh in the minds of Mongolians. The first independent attorneys who could defend a common citizen in court were trailblazers in their autonomy from the state.

Those first defense attorneys were self-employed by necessity. They had to live with modest income from odd jobs as Mongolians hadn't yet become accustomed to paying for such services. Curiously, the first independent defense attorneys were senior women who already had modest incomes from their pensions. As in the case of the trading pioneers,

the pioneer human rights defenders were women who were forced to leave their previous jobs prematurely. To name a few who have become iconic watchdogs: women's rights defender Ms. Zanaa Jurmed; Ms. Tsend-Ayush, a defense attorney representing hundreds of victims of human rights violations; Ms. Naranjargal Khashkhuu, a tireless advocate of press freedom. In civil society as well, women took a leading role in the proliferation of NGOs. These groups were human rights activists, press freedom advocates, women's rights networkers, democracy promoting trainers, and transparency and accountability watchdogs. By 2002, five years since the law on NGOs was adopted, Mongolia had over 30 human rights watchdog organizations, all of which had women executive directors and women spokespersons.



Courtesy of Oyungereel Tseveddamba

Oyungereel Tseveddamba setting up an office for the Liberty Center, a human rights watchdog, in August 2000. She served as its Executive Director from 2000 – 2004.

Was it because most of these jobs weren't paid and required an enormous amount of time and altruism? Partly yes. Men of their generation were busy building up the private sector of newly capitalist Mongolia, and struggling to build a new consumer market in the country. Meanwhile, necessary issues for the new democratic society were addressed by un- and underpaid women. Being over worked and underpaid became a lifestyle of an entire generation who worked multiple jobs among which at least one was entirely or partly philanthropic. Multi-tasking young women had to do careful family planning and the birth rate dropped by half for the first two decades of the democratic era (from 36.94 percent in 1990 to 17.9 percent in 2005).⁷

The other reason for women's dominance in the earliest watchdog positions was related to their courage and independence from "brotherly" networks. As mentioned above, a major change happening in the country, along with democracy, was the search for a new national identity. For the first time since 1953, the national holiday, Lunar New Year, was allowed to be celebrated without state constraints and control; and, for the first time since 1959, the Naadam festival allowed private horse-trainers to celebrate their horses in the Naadam. Men's horse-training communities were immediately formed in many provinces and *soums* (districts). The number of wrestling clubs jumped as many young men sought opportunities to join. Interest in archery and knuckle-bone shooting surged uniting men team by team. Just these four national sports brought together half a million men in little more than three years. They became "brothers of culture." Meanwhile, the rapidly growing business sector was helping

men to network among and become dependent upon each other.

When it comes to independent watchdogs, there remained only a few male journalists, accompanied by a handful of media and independent voices. Political parties would pinpoint the mistakes in each other's decisions, but would not serve as the protector of human rights or advocate a specific individual's case. The regularly and reliably operating watchdogs were not being formed from the men's world. They were to be born outside of the current legal system, and the outside of the comradesly and cultural brotherhood network.

Therefore, it was natural for educated women to take on these responsibilities. Luckily, Mongolia had enough highly educated women who were passionate about these issues and who were not afraid of helping to protect human rights and individual freedom during the ups and downs of our transition period. Even today, not all basic human rights are fully guaranteed in Mongolia and watchdogs are scarce. But if Mongolia is to remain democratic, free, and peaceful, there must always be watchdogs to remind the state to address and resolve mistakes on human rights, the environment, and the other major issues of our times.

A Natural Maturity Embraced by Families

A distinct consensus emerged during the period of Mongolia's democratic transition to leave the old communist party intact. In February 1990, following a hunger strike led by Bat-Uul Erdene—a young teacher at that time, but now the Mayor of Ulaanbaatar City—the State Deputy Hural made a change in the constitution to enable a multiparty system in Mongolia. The phrase, "The Mongolian

People's Revolutionary Party must be the leading and guiding force of the country," was eliminated from the Constitution.

At the same time, the Eastern European countries were banning their domestic communist parties from participating in state affairs and in the multiparty systems that were forming. Even in 1993, when Russia joined the democratization process, it banned the communist party for a five-year period. Mongolia did not follow suit. Instead the old communist party of Mongolia was allowed to reinvent itself as an ordinary, competing political party.

Perhaps as a consequence, the former communist party remained in power for the majority of the 25 years of our nation's democratic changes. Newly formed political parties had no other choice than to "grow up" in

order to compete with the old communist party's established national political network.

It took six years for the new political parties to win in a national parliamentary election for the first time, and 22 years for them to achieve enough success in local elections to compete on a national basis with the former communist party, now the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. The Democratic Party of Mongolia, to which I belong, had to build and unify itself through the merger of 11 new parties that were born in the earliest phase of the democratic revolution.

The seemingly long and hard road of the Democratic Party of Mongolia, the Civil Will Party, and other younger political forces had national appeal. As the new parties grew naturally—without banning the older political force—Mongolians became convinced that



Courtesy of Oyungerel Tseveddamba

Campaign debate between Oyungerel from Democratic Party of Mongolia and Enkhtuvshin from Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in Huvsgul province in 2008.

transformative political and economic changes could be achieved without killing, banning, or hating others.

This process created an important peace of mind for women, who typically bear the brunt of feuding children. A mother no longer had to confront the hard dilemma of her two children belonging to two different parties. It was acceptable for one child to remain loyal to the party of his or her parents while the other decided to support a new political party, as political competition became the norm. Anxiety within families decreased and members of extended families with a range of political preferences were much more cordial with each other when the former communist party was allowed to transform itself, rather than being forcibly dissolved. But, the pressure to democratize always existed, and still exists today. Today all the political parties of Mongolia are under public demand to democratize their practices, make their budgets transparent, and enact higher gender quotas.

I recently visited my herding and farming relatives in the far north of Mongolia. It was a ceremonial family reunion where everyone was dressed up for the occasion. I teared-up when I saw them wearing their medals of honor. Half of them wore pins and medals awarded from the Mongolian People's Party, the former communist party, and half of them wore medals like "Freedom Order," given for their contribution to the democracy struggle, but mostly given to those who worked for the newly formed parties. They were all proud of who they were and their role in Mongolia's peaceful transition to democracy.

When we started discussing politics, they were all very pragmatic, arguing what the central and the local governments should do, how we should change the laws, and which

national policies were making it difficult for them to make a living. I knew that this varied group would vote for different parties and that each of them had grievances with certain policies and parties. But, more importantly, I knew that if a Sant Maral poll taker were to ask them, "Do you regret that Mongolia chose democracy in 1990?" they would say, "Never!"

I enjoyed looking at my own pluralistic extended family. How different it was from what my mother saw when all her relatives had to be communist party members. How very different it was from my grandmother who saw her father, and most of our Buddhist relatives, shot dead during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s.

Mongolia is fortunate to have made its transition to democracy so peacefully, but every step of it was hard work. Each and every reform required its own meticulous "kitchen chores." Without the involvement of free, educated, dynamic, and courageous women, Mongolia's democratization could not have succeeded so well so quickly. "Kitchen chores" at home include those tasks that no one notices, no one pays, and no one gives awards for. Everyday cleaning, everyday cooking, baby-sitting, child-caring, livestock rounding, and so on are still underappreciated. It took a woman Minister of Agriculture, Ms. Burmaa Radnaa, to notice that the Mongolian government gives the award of "Best Herder" only to a male member of a family and that there was no woman best herder in our entire history. Beginning from 2015, "the best herder" award is given to both the husband and wife of the winning herder family.

While women herders of Mongolia rode their horses and rounded their animals in freezing temperatures during the winter of 1995, I watched news about an amazing event

on the television. Women leaders from around the world gathered in Beijing at the Fourth World Conference on Women to inspire us—women of all countries. I watched the news holding my breath in order to grasp every word about the importance of women’s rights and gender equality.

In the evening, after my two children went to bed, I picked up my pen and paper and began working on my second job—translations, for which I earned \$3 per page. Over that weekend, I woke up early to teach primary English to a group of local people in order to augment my \$40 monthly salary by another \$5 per week. Like many Mongolian women, I worked a handful of jobs to make ends meet as a single mother then. All three jobs combined—working as a government officer, translating, and tutoring—brought just enough income to feed my family and provide for our small needs, and donate up to 30 percent of it to my local Democratic Party activities, human rights causes, a school, and a kindergarten.

Throughout the past 25 years, I always donated a substantial portion of my income to political campaigns, human rights causes, and humanitarian projects, despite the fact that my income never reached what even a low-wage worker in Europe or the United States would earn. I donated my time and money because I always felt rich; I knew I was blessed to have the freedom to contribute to my country’s political development and I was always inspired and proud to contribute to my country’s transformation to democracy.

So, too, were many Mongolian women. Democracy has grown in Mongolia from the seeds planted by these women in the private sector, civil society, the political realm, and their own homes. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ Mongolian National Statistical Office, <<http://www.1212.mn/>>.

² Data obtain by author from Mongolian National Social Insurance Office.

³ Mongolia has 700,000 families. As of 2014, 103,000 families have single parent. These data were obtained from the Mongolian National Statistical Office, <<http://www.1212.mn/>>.

⁴ Women in education sector number 61,557 out of 81,204 in total. Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, “Statistical Information of the Education sector on Academic Year of 2014-2015, part 1,” Ulaanbaatar, (2015). [Боловсролын салбарын 2014-2015 оны хичээлийн жилийн статистикийн мэдээллийн эмхэтгэл-1]. Data collected from pages 18, 78, and 117.

⁵ Women in health sector number 37,495 out of 46,057. Source: Center for Health Development, “Health Indicators 2014,” Ulaanbaatar, (2014). [Эрүүл мэндийн үзүүлэлт]. Data collected from page 124.

⁶ Internom’s 50 bestselling author’s list includes 15 Mongolians – 10 of these are women and 5 are men. <<https://www.internom.mn/%D0%B1%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%B%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%80/>>.

⁷ The State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, Member List: <<http://www.parliament.mn/who?type=3>>.

⁸ Mongolian National Statistical Office, <<http://www.1212.mn/>>.

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Stuart Price, United Nations Photo



Aftermath of an attack on Abyei Town, South Sudan, in May 2011

Engendering Responses to Complex Emergencies

Lessons from South Sudan

BY AKINYI R. WALENDER

Like so many before it, the current crisis in South Sudan is a classic example of what humanitarians term a “complex emergency”—a major humanitarian crisis that was not caused by a single natural disaster, but by a combination of political and ethnic conflict, social inequality, poverty, and many other interrelated factors. As such, those looking to end the emergency and pave the way for long-term peace in South Sudan have a range of dynamics to consider, from the causes of the conflict and the protection of civilians to addressing basic humanitarian needs and building a foundation for a stable society. Yet, whether they are delivering security assistance or food aid, national and international organizations frequently overlook another dynamic that runs through all of these areas: the gender dynamic.

Over time, strategies such as gender mainstreaming have been devised with the aim of integrating gender issues into development programming; however, incorporating gender into humanitarian efforts and efforts aimed at resolving conflict are still challenged by a perception that one must choose between efficiency and gender sensitivity during crisis. Understandably, emphasis tends to be placed on addressing the immediate needs of affected communities, such as saving lives and providing water, food, and shelter, at the expense of addressing gender issues which are thought to require a concerted medium- to long-term vision. However, integrating a gender perspective into responses to complex emergencies from the outset can help security, humanitarian, and development organizations to better understand the nature of the crisis at hand and bolster the effectiveness of their response—for both women and men—in the affected communities.

But what do the gender dimensions of a complex emergency look like? And how can they be addressed? This article explores some concrete examples from South Sudan to shed light on what gender-sensitive approaches to restoring security could look like in South Sudan, and possibly in

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other protracted situations of humanitarian crisis and conflict, such as those in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mali, to name but a few in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this article, I will draw on my own experience working with men and women in the midst of crises, as well as cases and insights documented by others. I offer examples that illustrate how a gender lens can be applied in analyzing the causes of a complex emergency, improving the protection of civilians and humanitarian responses, and supporting efforts to resolve conflict and restore security and stability.

A Gendered Lens on the Causes of Conflict

The people of South Sudan rejoiced when they gained their independence from Sudan in 2011. However, alongside ongoing tensions and conflicts with their newly separated neighbor to the north, numerous low-intensity tribal wars within South Sudan became more pronounced in the years that followed. These conflicts between and within cattle-owning pastoralist communities spilled over into neighboring agriculturalist communities and have left thousands of people dead and many more displaced. These tensions have, to a large extent, paralyzed the young nation.

Although political leaders have played a significant role in the most recent outbreak of war in South Sudan, inter-tribal conflicts frequently characterized by cattle raiding, unresolved political and tribal animosities, pillage of resources, and human rights abuses have also contributed to this and other complex emergencies in South Sudan in recent decades, which have frequently coincided with natural calamities such as floods, cattle diseases, drought, and major famine (in 1998 and

1999). While others will examine the role of elites and exclusive governance in the outbreak of war, the locus of recurring inter-tribal conflict at the community level also offers an illustrative example of gender dynamics that contribute to the root causes of conflict, but may not be immediately visible to international actors seeking to restore stability.

The majority of the population in South Sudan is pastoralist or agro-pastoralist, so for most people livelihoods are defined by keeping livestock and subsistence agriculture. For the country's largest ethnic groups, the Dinka and the Nuer, as well as for many others, cattle are prized as a source of livelihood as well as social status. The prevalence of male-dominated cattle raiding has been well documented in intra- and inter-tribal conflict in South Sudan, as well as the cycles of violence and revenge that accompany it. Poverty, inequality, and competition over access to grazing land and water contribute to this conflict dynamic, but gender identities also play a role. Pastoralist communities in South Sudan are generally polygynous and patriarchal. Men head the household and are expected to defend; women are perceived as caretakers of honor and community identity. In many communities, participation in violent cattle raiding and the cycles of revenge that follow are associated with perceptions of men's roles as defenders of the community and its honor. In addition, in South Sudan the "bride price" is paid by the prospective husband to the bride's family. This form of dowry is typically paid in cattle or in some combination of money and livestock. A variety of research has shown that increasing bride prices have been driving male youth to intensify cattle raids as a means of raising funds for marriage, which in turn is considered a significant step for social

advancement.¹ And women take pride in the number of cattle paid for them.

Beyond the particular example of cattle raiding, gender roles also come into play in broader conflict tactics and strategies. Rape and sexual violence have become very common in times of war as a means of subjugating enemy communities, and South Sudan is no exception. Women represent cultural identity; they are the pride of the communities, so raping women is a way to hit at the heart of a community's identity. When nomads fight farming communities, women and girls often become targets as a means of disrupting communities' coping mechanisms, such as harvesting crops and the collection and sale of wild fruits and other products, which are predominantly carried out by women. Nomads have

also used these practices to force communities away from the land they are seeking to use as they expand their access to scarce natural resources. In parallel, men's disproportionate exposure to combat—sometimes exacerbated by perceptions that a wife has been purchased as property—contributes to the elevated levels of domestic violence against women in South Sudan. Women and girls suffer most from rape, but there is an increasing stock of evidence that boys and young men are vulnerable to rape as well.

Communities' expectations of men and women, as well as conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity, therefore play a role in escalating violence in South Sudan, and logically need to be addressed in order to break conflict cycles. "Engendering" interventions,



Aimee Brown

Cattle auction, Lankien, South Sudan

therefore, requires taking both men and women into account. The specific challenge posed by bride prices and cattle raiding also demonstrates how gender sensitivity is derived from cultural knowledge and that any assessment of key players and power relations needs to be context-based. Locals have the best knowledge about their culture, values, and norms, so international actors need to engage locals to inform a thorough, gendered conflict analysis that will inform any programs or projects that follow.

Gender Analysis in the Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Response

Crises cause instability, displacement, and disruption to peoples' normal ways of life. This has adverse and long-term effects on both women and men. In most cases, the indirect effects of humanitarian crises that lead to death, such as disease, starvation, and breakdown of social order, go unrecognized and unreported—and these affect women disproportionately.² As such, gender analysis can also strengthen humanitarian response and help international security actors to better protect civilians in times of crisis.

The nexus of food security, gender, and violence is illustrative in this respect. For predominantly pastoralist and agriculturalist populations, recurring crises and displacement in South Sudan have caused major disruptions to livelihoods and farming, leading to significant food shortages, which various humanitarian organizations have sought to address. Household food security in South Sudan relies predominantly on subsistence production, including activities related to keeping cattle, fishing, growing cereal crops, and collecting wild fruits. Both men and women cultivate the land; men dig while women weed and harvest

the crops. In some communities there are equal rights to land for both men and women, despite the common assumption that women generally do not have rights to land. Where fish is the main source of food, fishing is the role of men; on the other hand, in the same communities women are responsible for the collection of wild fruits. Women also collect firewood and water, and as a result they bear the largest burden in food production.

From this, we can conclude that the gender roles ascribed to women in ensuring food production and generally maintaining households' food security create levels of vulnerability that are different from men in times of crisis. Women are required to travel outside their homes, trade, look for food, gather firewood and wild fruits, fetch water, as well as weed and harvest. These daily chores expose women to risks of violence and rape, which are often perpetrated strategically by the conflict parties, as noted above. However, rampant sexual abuse and exploitation of women can also come from external sources: during the previous conflict in South Sudan, aid workers were accused of soliciting sex from women in return for food and of impregnating local girls. Children born out of these liaisons were sometimes named after the respective organizations that employed these male aid workers. Beyond these human threats, women and the children who accompany them to collect water, food, or firewood also face the ever-present risk of anti-personnel mines. These mines were planted around water points and fields in South Sudan. Many women, girls, and boys have become victims of mines and lost their limbs or lives.

Despite the challenges, I repeatedly witnessed the strength and tenacity of women contributing to the humanitarian response in

what is now South Sudan. I remember meeting a group of women in Tonj County in 1998, at the height of the famine that left over 100,000 people dead. Long before the humanitarian community arrived, a group of women organized themselves to form “TAWA” (Tonj Areas Women’s Association) and set up a feeding center. These women mobilized their own resources to buy cows. They then slaughtered the cows, boiled the meat, and fed the famished people. They kept the people alive before the humanitarian community arrived.

Women’s disproportionate roles in food production, as well as their particular exposure to insecurity in the process, shows why it is not enough to target women exclusively as beneficiaries of humanitarian and security assistance—whether this relates to food aid, demining, or the protection of civilians. Women need to be involved in the planning stage of these activities, given their access to different kinds of information, as well as in implementation, given their frequently distinct skill sets. At the same time, security forces, peacekeepers, law enforcement personnel, and humanitarian agencies need to improve staff training on gender perspectives and better link their mandates to gender-sensitive interventions, at the very minimum ensuring that sexual abuse and exploitation are not tolerated under any circumstances.

Inclusive Conflict Resolution

Given the diverse impacts of complex emergencies on women and men, and the various roles that they play, how can we ensure that women have space to contribute to altering the course of crises in their communities? Despite all the evidence, the voices of women remain significantly under-represented from emergency response to peace processes to

development planning. It is in decisionmaking arenas that voice and influence matter the most. Where are the women?

South Sudan and Sudan present a great example of women mobilizing themselves across the warring borders to play an instrumental role in catalyzing the events that led up to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. The women I met yearned for peace and fought for it, because for many, their lives had been characterized by multiple tragedies of death, hunger, war, and crisis; they were simply tired of living a life that held no promise for their sons’, daughters’, or their own futures; they simply became tired of watching their dreams trampled on over and over again. Their persistent advocacy for ending the conflict and tenacity in forging cross-border relations and putting pressure on their governments to end the war made them instrumental for peace. In a similar way, they were vital for the people-to-people peace process within South Sudan in the decade that followed.

Despite these contributions, women remained largely on the periphery of the negotiations leading to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the more recent peace negotiations to end the crisis within South Sudan, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In the former, they managed to secure an affirmative action clause of a minimum 25 percent representation for women at all levels of peace negotiations, but the implementation of this has been challenging.

Of course, women do not always mobilize for peace. In South Sudan, a small number of women carried arms; others fed, nourished, and sustained the soldiers. In Sudan’s Darfur region, where communities have not only waged war against other communities, but also

against the oppression of the Sudanese government, the powerful female poets known as *hakamat* have played a role in motivating their men to fight. They say that the *hakamat* can put a man down or raise him up. When they target a man in public negatively or positively, they shape public opinion, and their skill is a source of power and income.³ They have likely fueled conflict by massaging men's egos and taunting them through song and poetry, challenging their manhood; and to prove their manhood, men charge into war. However, many *hakamat* are now choosing to chant for peace, calling on men to "put the gun down."⁴

Regardless of the roles they choose to play, women are not passive in conflict. This common assumption cannot be further from the truth. Women are motivated by the same passions that drive and motivate men. They are

involved in the issues that impact their lives and societies so dramatically—whether political, economic, or religious. They cannot be perceived solely as innocent bystanders because they have a big stake as members of their communities. In many African communities, a woman's visibility in the public sphere does not correlate with the power she wields behind the scenes, in her household or community. The example of the *hakamat* shows that women often have strong influence and play significant roles in shaping decisions made by men. The lesson is to involve women in the solution. As the *hakamat* have shown, the same medium used to incite violence—song and poetry—can also be powerful tools for changing public opinion and forging peace.

To overcome the institutionalized and deliberate exclusion of women from public



Albert Gonzalez, UN Photo

Women in line at polling center in Nyala, South Darfur, on the first day of voting in South Sudan's referendum on independence in January 2011.

affairs, many women and civil society organizations are fighting for their place. Yet, it often happens that when women make it to the public sphere, they have been selected because they are women who cannot rise, confront, or challenge the issues on the negotiation table, or they are included without due consideration for caliber, knowledge, and capacity to represent the constituencies and issues relevant to their communities. For meaningful inclusion, women themselves should have a say in who represents them in the public sphere, and those women in decisionmaking positions should be mentored and supported to better represent their diverse constituencies, not least the female constituency.

Conclusion

The example of South Sudan shows the importance of applying a gender lens to all phases of complex emergencies, as well as the all-too-frequent failure to do so. Yet, all is not lost. Over time, the gender dimensions of complex emergencies have become a lot more evident and recognition of the importance of a gender perspective and an inclusive approach has grown. There is now a growing consensus that women can play an important role before, during, and after conflict and crisis. This is now captured by many players who are advocating for engendering peace and conflict resolution processes, as well as humanitarian response.

However, there is still a lot to be done to educate national and international actors in these environments. Part of this education involves an approach that remains continually adaptive to the changing context at hand. Just as conflicts and humanitarian crises place great stress on the socioeconomic capacities of communities, they frequently lead to the disintegration of social networks, and women's and

men's statuses and roles become destabilized. During emergency situations, social barriers break down, the normally accepted gender practices and attitudes of different communities frequently change over time—for example, due to displacement in South Sudan, women have taken on responsibilities for cattle and fishing, while men too have taken on food production activities. As the stress mounts, women sometimes become more conservative and withdrawn, overburdened by the increased societal expectations and responsibilities placed upon them because of crises. Women are usually expected to care for the injured and the sick, as well as for the children and the elderly. They often have to risk their lives to go out in search of food and water to fend for their families. They are vulnerable to assault and rape along the way. Very often they pick up the pieces, gather their strength, and continue to carry out their expected responsibilities. Very often there is no protection mechanism, legal or otherwise, in place to protect women during emergencies. On the contrary, those responsible for assisting them may inadvertently exacerbate their situation or even intentionally exploit them further.

The gender issues I have outlined here are not exhaustive, but they are among those that frequently come up during conflict and emergency situations. They clearly illustrate the need for gender analysis and the inclusion of women along the entire continuum of assistance provided during complex emergencies. A concerted effort to address the challenges and opportunities that gender dynamics raise in the midst of crisis can also provide a foundation for more inclusive and sustainable approaches to tackling the root causes of conflict, poverty, and instability in our societies over the long-term. When men and women

have equal opportunities to fulfill their potential and contribute to the growth of their countries, then we will begin to see real gains made all around. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ Marc Sommers and Stephanie Schwartz, "Dowry and division: youth and state building in South Sudan," United States Institute of Peace (November 2011); Saferworld, "People's peacemaking perspectives in South Sudan" (March 2012); Ingrid Kircher, "Challenges to security, livelihoods and gender justice in South Sudan," Oxfam (March 2013).

² Thomas Pluemper and Eric Neumeyer, "The Unequal Burden of War: The Effect of Armed Conflict on the Gender Gap in Live Expectancy," *International Organisation* 60, no. 3 (2006); Nicholas Kristof, "Starvation as a Product of War," *New York Times*, July 23, 2015.

³ "Hakamat" is the plural of "hakama."

⁴ UNDP, "Hakamas Promote Peace-building in Darfur," February 8, 2012. <http://www.sd.undp.org/content/sudan/en/home/ourwork/crisispreventionand-recovery/successstories/hakamas_peace_building.html>. See also UNDP, "Fighting for Peace: Hakamas in Darfur," <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/crisispreventionand-recovery/projects_initiatives/fighting-for-peace--hakamas-in-darfur.html>.

Photos

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Child in a rebel camp in the northeast of the Central African Republic

Innovation in the Prevention of the Use of Child Soldiers

Women in the Security Sector

BY ROMÉO DALLAIRE, SHELLY WHITMAN, AND SAM HOLLAND

“Our collective failure to protect children must be transformed into an opportunity to confront the problems that cause their suffering.” – Graça Machel

Of all the characteristics that define contemporary conflict, the use of child soldiers presents one of the farthest-reaching and most disturbing trends. As of 2015, according to the United Nations Special Representative for the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, of the 59 countries identified by the organization’s Secretary General for grave violations against children in war, 57 are named for the recruitment and use of child soldiers.¹ The deliberate use of child soldiers by armed forces and armed groups “is a way to overcome their weak starting point as far as recruiting, organization, and other state-centered systemic barriers to growth.”²

One hundred and five United Nations Member States have committed to the Paris Principles defining a child soldiers as:

any person below 18 years of age who is or has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities.³

In spite of a widely accepted comprehensive definition, Member States still lack a unified response.

The international response to the use of children as soldiers has leaned heavily on strategies of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). However, this strategy fails to stem the recruitment and use of children in the first instance—the international community has opted

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to fix the broken rather than to protect the whole. The lack of significance given to preventative strategies has caused the global community to stand idly by as children's rights are horrifically violated in conflict zones.

The prevention of the use of child soldiers has been relatively low on the overall peace and security agenda when addressing armed conflict. Until most recently, child protection has been relegated as a social issue, placed in the hands of civil society organizations and NGOs, allowing international donor countries as well as national governments who commit to protecting children to frequently shirk the responsibilities. However, child soldiers are a security concern that needs—and deserves—to be placed at the top of the security agenda.

The shortcomings of the current efforts to prevent the use of child soldiers are further evidenced by the lack of attention paid to child protection and the prevention of the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict within peace agreements and treaties. Since 1999, child protection has been featured in

cessations of hostilities, ceasefires, comprehensive peace agreements, and other materials. Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, an organization informed by a network of NGOs based in New York, reviewed 407 eligible documents between 1999 and 2014. They found that only 79 of these documents made reference to child protection; 56 of the 79 included language concerning children and armed conflict. The most prominent grave violation cited within the 56 documents was the recruitment and use of children by armed groups and state groups.

Solving the problem of global recruitment and use of child soldiers requires a comprehensive solution. At the core of the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative's (herein the Dallaire Initiative) approach is a suite of scenario-based, prevention-oriented training programs that prioritizes the protection of children through a security sector approach. These trainings are designed to better prepare security sector actors (military, police, and prison personnel), who are often the first point of



The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

Women from the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) work on a village mapping exercise in Kampala during Dallaire Initiative's Women and Security Sector training. The village mapping exercise teaches training participants areas where children may be susceptible for recruitment by armed groups and how to prevent this.

contact for child soldiers. The innovative preventative approach of the Dallaire Initiative aims to fill knowledge gaps and bridge the divide between international policy and legislation with the realities faced by the security sector. This approach seeks to change attitudes and behaviors that in turn lead to holistic systemic change that eventually makes the recruitment and use of children as soldiers unthinkable.

Distinct and Undervalued

To date, the Dallaire Initiative has trained security sector personnel from over 60 different countries. However, only 13 percent of security sector personnel trained have been women. In part, this imbalance is due to the low percentage of women that make up security forces worldwide and the limited professional development opportunities that are made available to them. Despite these low numbers, the women who participate in our training sessions demonstrate a keen desire to be at the forefront of the fight against the use of children as soldiers.

In the Dallaire Initiative's work around the globe, we have recognized that women security sector actors can make distinct and valuable contributions to peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding efforts. Women offer important perspectives on communities and cultures, and provide the possibility of new preventative approaches to dealing with the use of child soldiers. "As a female military observer, I can return from a patrol with very different information than my male counterparts, just by virtue of being a woman," stated a Zambian Female UN Military Observer during a research interview in Bukavu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in August 2010.

In 2014, the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, stated that although there had been incredible strides taken "to move beyond viewing women as only victims of conflict to seeing them as agents of peace and progress,"⁴ the current state of affairs around the world continues to hinder the capability of women to engage in formal peace and security processes. While many recognize the importance of women in attempting to end sexual and gender-based violence, we see that this must be extended to other issues key to the overall peace and security agenda, such as the protection of children, in general, and the prevention of the use of child soldiers, more specifically.

The Existing Evidence – in Literature

In contemporary conflicts, women and girls are specifically targeted for human rights violations because of their gendered roles in society. While sexual violence is universally denounced, the international community still lacks an understanding of how the security sector, in particular, can be leveraged to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict; this knowledge gap is similar to the one that has prevented the international community from enacting a more robust response to the global child soldier issue.⁵ The international community needs to be resolute in its response and engage in a more effective preventative approach.

The idea that women can play critical roles not just in the prevention of the recruitment of child soldiers, but in the security sector as a whole, is not new. The United Nations specifically highlights critical reasons for increasing the recruitment of women peacekeepers, listing the following reasons:

- Empowering women in the host community;
- Addressing specific needs of female ex-combatants during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into civilian life;
- Helping make the peacekeeping force approachable to women in the community;
- Interviewing survivors of gender-based violence;
- Mentoring female cadets at police and military academies; [and]
- Interacting with women in societies where women are prohibited from speaking to men.⁶

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 highlights three specific issues: “the representation of women at all levels of peace and security governance; the meaningful participation of women in peace and security governance; and the protection of women’s rights and bodies in conflict and post-conflict situations.”⁷ However, the follow-through by UN Member States has been “deeply inconsistent.”⁸

Despite the UN’s assertion that women peacekeepers can “perform the same roles, to the same standards, and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts,”⁹ efforts to increase positions for women in the security sector have been heavily weighted on the sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) issue above all else.¹⁰ In over 20 years the percentage of women included in global peacekeeping operations has climbed from one percent of all uniformed personnel to less than four percent in 2013.¹¹ A slight increase in numbers does not represent equity. More women working in the SGBV field is not the end goal, and the paltry improvements in female representation certainly do not call for celebration. Without question more needs to

be done to institute effective change that will impact the women, peace, and security agenda.

Karen Davies and Brian McKee argue that the real hurdle for women in participating fully in military operations today has little to do with their physical and mental abilities, but rather revolves around social and cultural issues characterizing the “warrior framework.” Historically, the warrior is understood to be male and assumed to share characteristics such as masculinity, superior physical and moral attributes, an aggressive nature, a proclivity to violence, and a “will to kill.”¹² In other words, the discussion on the inclusion of women over emphasizes ideas of combat operations without proper regard for the broader range of roles in peace support, humanitarian efforts, and domestic operations. This must be addressed in light of the contemporary challenges posed by the tactical and strategic use of child soldiers. How does the “warrior framework” prevent new capabilities and approaches to such non-traditional and ethical dilemmas?

As an example, Liberia, which experienced a tragic and horrific civil conflict, has emerged from the chaos and violence with some important lessons learned. Unlike the experience of its neighbor Sierra Leone, women’s civil society groups were highly active throughout the Liberian peace process following the civil conflict. During this time, the women’s groups aimed to “‘increase the role of women in the security sector reform by engaging women-led civil society organizations in: transforming public perception of the military and police, strengthening disarmament, and recruiting women for the armed forces and police.’”¹³ The determination by Liberian women to be present within the Liberian post conflict security sector reform (SSR) process produced tangible and progressive outcomes: the creation

of a women and children protection unit within the Liberian Police Force; the adoption of a 20 percent quota for the inclusion of women in the Liberian National Police and armed forces; and cooperation between women's rights activists and government officials to operationalize the needs of Liberian women within the SSR process.¹⁴

The United Nations Mission in Liberia has also played a key role in championing women security sector actors. In 2007, India deployed the UN's first all-female police unit to Liberia as part of a UN effort to increase the inclusion of women in peacekeeping missions. The unit actively combatted street crime by night and was assigned to stand guard "outside the Monrovia headquarters of the Liberian president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf."¹⁵ The Indian female force has also had a positive effect on

sexual assault reporting instances. Prior to the introduction of the female police force, the UN reported 47 sexual abuses committed by peacekeepers (2005). However, after their introduction, reports of sexual abuse dropped to 18 (2009).¹⁶ The presence of the all-female Indian force also made an impact on the Liberian National Police, resulting in a tripling of the number of female applicants one month after the Indian contingent was deployed.¹⁷ Overall, Liberia's commitment to mainstreaming women's participation within its security structure is an example that many countries can learn from.

Despite the more general literature on women, peace, and security and the inclusion of women in peacekeeping missions, there is virtually no literature that specifically



UN Photo/Christopher Herwig

Members of the all-female Indian Formed Police Unit of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) perform a martial arts exercise prior to receiving medals of honor in recognition of their service.

highlights the connection to the prevention of the use of child soldiers.

The Existing Evidence – The Dallaire Initiative in Practice

In July 2010, the Dallaire Initiative conducted a research mission to the DRC with the main aim of exploring the tactics employed by adult commanders to recruit and use child soldiers. This research fed into the creation of the handbook for security sector actors that guides our training. During this mission, the Dallaire Initiative interviewed peacekeepers as well as community members and former child soldiers.

During a set of interviews with male UN Military Observers, the question was posed as to whether or not their gender affected their ability in any way to conduct their roles in communities. The response was categorically “no!” However, at that time, a female UN Military Observer walked past the room where interviews were taking place and Dallaire Initiative staff took the opportunity to request an interview with her. The same question was posed to her and the answer was markedly in contrast to her male counterparts. She detailed how, simply by virtue of her gender, women and children from communities she operates in are more comfortable approaching her than the other UN Military Observers. She also replied that her male counterparts saw the children as a “nuisance” and would often tell them to “go away.” Conversely, her reaction to the children was more open, enabling children and women who had suffered human rights violations to relay their stories to her in confidence.

In addition, during this mission, questions were posed to male peacekeepers about the presence of girl soldiers in the armed

groups and forces. Each time the question was posed, the response was “there are no girl soldiers here in the DRC, only wives or girlfriends of the Commanders.” However, during a set of interviews with former girl soldiers in the DRC, we asked whether or not girls are used in active combat in the DRC. The girls revealed that they are used on the frontline, but that their roles will vary from day to day. Some days they may choose to go to the frontlines to avoid the “domestic duties,” duties that often involved being sexually violated. On other days, they would choose to stay back and face the sexual violence instead of facing death on the frontlines.

On a subsequent mission to the DRC, the Dallaire Initiative had the opportunity to conduct a set of trainings with the DRC’s national army. After a session focusing on girl soldiers, women security sector actors within the group quickly came to a realization that they faced the same plight within their armed force as their younger “sisters” in armed groups. In other words, that they must conduct duties during the day for the military and then are forced to conduct domestic activities, which may also include sexual violence, during the evenings.

The revelations from these experiences highlighted the need to better address the unique and undervalued perspectives of women in the security sector towards the prevention of the use of child soldiers, and created a catalyst for further inquiry. The women who have participated in the Dallaire Initiative’s training have provided new knowledge and highlighted their effectiveness and desire to prevent the use of child soldiers and better protect children writ large. Additionally, women that have received our training have gained new leadership responsibilities and

advancement opportunities, paving the way for other women moving through the ranks; in this way, the Dallaire Initiative addresses two obstacles to global peace. With new regional trainings in the Dallaire Initiative's prevention-oriented program on child soldiers, we plan to amplify the impact of these women leaders within their forces and on the ground.

This is highlighted by the effects of our work in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone endured a

brutal civil conflict from 1992-2002, characterized by the use of child soldiers (some reports allude to approximately 10,000 active in the country throughout the conflict) and gender-based sexual violence perpetrated by rebel forces, government troops, and, in some instances, peacekeepers.¹⁸ In spite of the unanimous passing of UNSCR 1325, among other related conventions and treaties, Sierra Leone lags far behind reaching its goals. Following



The Romeo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

A small group of male and female Sierra Leonean security personnel work in their syndicate group in Freetown, Sierra Leone in November 2013.

the civil war, Sierra Leone made minimal progress in promoting the participation of women in government and security institutions as well as the overall well-being of the country's female population. Currently, Sierra Leone ranks low in human development, coming in at 183 of 187 on the UN's Human Development Index on Gender Equality.¹⁹

The underwhelming post-war performance in Sierra Leone compelled the Dallaire Initiative to pilot a program specifically aimed at preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers by working with the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), Sierra Leone Police Force (SLP), and Sierra Leone Prison Service (SLPS). Throughout the first year of the pilot program (2013), the Dallaire Initiative took particular interest in the women participating in the training program as security sector actors. There was limited representation of women in the program, only 18 percent, yet the female participants made their presence known by bringing new perspectives to the training, particularly in modules on girl soldiers, sexual and gender-based violence and stigma.²⁰

Program participants shared their experiences working in the SLP's Family Support Unit which was established in 2001 and increased the police's ability to seek justice for crimes of sexual violence. However, the creation of the Family Support Units and "Gender Acts"²¹ have not been sufficient to curb the prevalence of sexual violence: "reports of rapes, especially involving child victims, steadily increased in the post war period from 2001 to the present."²³ Training participants spoke out about the hardship and lack of resources to effectively respond to and investigate the overwhelming reports.

In May 2014, immediately following the completion of the Training of Trainers (ToT) program, the Dallaire Initiative received a request from the Sierra Leone Police Service Assistant Inspector General to instruct a group of 75 female police officers who were chosen for pre-selection training for UN peacekeeping missions. We felt it critical to take this unique opportunity and engaged one of the newest female police graduates from the Dallaire Initiative's Program to co-facilitate the class.

Despite the limited resources and challenging conditions, the female police officers were keen to engage in the training activities. These women were acutely aware of the challenges still facing children in Sierra Leone in the post-war period and the dangers this may pose for peace and stability in the country. At the same time, they felt at ease to openly discuss their experiences and opinions and wanted to be leaders in protecting children. Our female police graduate who co-facilitated the class was also visibly invigorated by the experience and was clearly viewed with respect by her female peers.

Building off of our experience in West Africa, we are dedicated to mainstreaming the participation of women in security sector training. Our training with the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) began in 2015 and the female participants provided evidence for the need to engage and build on the existing capacity and agency of women in the security sector. In particular, one female participant, who had just returned from a year-long mission in Somalia, shared a creative way that women security sector actors in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) had made progress to prevent the use of child soldiers by al-Shabaab. She explained that she had formed a working group of female

peacekeepers that held informal meetings with wives of al-Shabaab leaders. Through the meetings, peacekeepers would negotiate the release of children held by al-Shabaab. It was clear from the male UPDF participants in the training room that they had not been aware of these innovative approaches being taken by their female counterparts in the AMISOM mission.

The distinctive operational advantages to mainstreaming women security sector actors was further evidenced during our engagement with military chaplains. During our Chaplain Roundtable event with military chaplains from Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, we led a discussion on the varied experiences of female and male chaplains while on deployment and the various interactions they have with children in mission settings. In an effort to promote open conversation, the facilitators divided the participants into breakout groups dividing the men from the women. Although there are significantly fewer women than men in military chaplaincy, female participants stated that female chaplains have a vastly different experience when on mission, and interact with children and other civilians in a very different manner from their male counterparts. According to some female participants, these interactions are possible because women have a strong sense of community, are empathetic, and have a nurturing quality that enables them to engage with women and children on a different level than their male counterparts. The female participants also voiced that they are not given sufficient space to share their lessons learned as women in the field, further evidencing the disconnect between policy and what actually happens in theater.

Since UNSCR 1325 was passed, seven other Security Council resolutions have been passed with respect to women and security,²³ and another eight resolutions have been passed with respect to children and armed conflict;²⁴ however, these documents have not been translated into tangible progress in the areas that need it most, nor have the resolutions tied the two issues together in any meaningful way. Demonstrating the disparity between rhetoric and action, the 2014 report of the Secretary General on Women, Peace and Security observed that in 2012 “only 0.35 percent of aid allocated to conflict, peace and security activities [was] marked as having a gender focus.”²⁵ In its latest report on women and security, Human Rights Watch further highlights that donor countries lack practical support for programs specifically aimed at helping women and girls in armed conflict — “too often [...] officials assert it is not the right time to push for women’s rights, that security is somehow a prerequisite for women’s rights rather than inextricably linked with them, or that they do not have the leverage to act.”²⁶

Forcing the Winds of Change

Based on the literature and our practical experience, we at the Dallaire Initiative believe that women security sector actors can provide unique tactical and strategic advantages to preventing the use of children as soldiers. Embracing women in the security sector will provide peace missions with tactical and strategic advantages that they have been missing. The female experience in conflict is diverse and vastly different to that of their male counterparts. Yet, the international community continues to view women largely as passive victims during conflict, rather than active

participants in peace. In the Dallaire Initiative's experience, training and advocacy efforts combined with sufficient donor support resulted in the development of a training program specifically targeted to women security sector actors. Our goal for the Women Security Sector Actor Project is to bridge the gap between policy and practice. The project will bring together female security sector actors (military and police) from across East Africa for a series of focus group sessions partnered with training on the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The Dallaire Initiative recognizes that women security sector actors offer distinct advantages when addressing the issue of child soldiers and a capacity to lead and enhance operations.

The Women Security Sector Actor Project will take place with Ugandan and Regional

security sector personnel. This will allow the Dallaire Initiative to build off of the Ugandan national project and continue to leverage the strategic importance of Uganda in the fight against the use of children as soldiers. Uganda has become a key troop contributing country to United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions, most notably in South Sudan and Somalia—two countries experiencing conflict with reported use of child soldiers and sexual violence.

Uganda will be the base for the Women Security Sector Actor Project, which aims to bring together women security sector actors from surrounding countries so as to best disseminate the training and experience to the region. The resulting findings will be shared with national governments and international organizations, such as the UN Department of



The Romeo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

Two female Uganda People's Defense Force soldiers participate in the Dallaire Initiative's Women and Security Sector training in Jinja, Uganda.

Peacekeeping Operations, the African Union, and specific peacekeeping missions.

As a result of the Women Security Sector Actor Project, the opportunity to ask key questions and to further explore research in this area will be critical. Potential questions that can be explored are categorized in four broad areas:

1. Women as peacekeepers
 - What challenges do women peacekeepers face?
 - Are women better placed to be the liaisons to child protection groups, such as the UN Children's Rights & Emergency Relief Organization (UNICEF)?
 - If women are high in the hierarchy of peacekeeping, police, and military missions, how does this impact the prioritization of child protection?
 - Do women recognize the plight of children in vulnerable situations differently from their male counterparts? Do they react differently? If so, how?
 - Do women report interactions with children differently than men?
 - Are women affected differently by the trauma of interacting with child soldiers in combat than their male counterparts?
2. Women in national security sector roles
 - Can and do women influence their male colleagues in the military and police to react differently to vulnerable children?
 - Do women communicate differently with others or work with groups outside of the security sector with more ease than their male counterparts; if so, how does this influence child protection?
3. Women as peace brokers/negotiators

- Can women be more effective as brokers/negotiators of peace to assist with the release of children from armed groups?

- Would having women focused on child soldiers lead to new leadership roles for the women in the security sector, as this is a key element to the overall peace and security agenda?

4. New tactics to prevent the use of child soldiers from a women's perspective

- How do child soldiers perceive women in uniform (police or military) differently from their male counterparts? Does this create more opportunity for prevention?

- What examples currently exist to highlight some of the potential new tactics and strategies that women may employ to assist in the prevention of the use of child soldiers?

- What roles do women undertake—nationally and in peacekeeping missions—that could create more interactions with children?

- Are there unique opportunities for women to assist with giving visibility and assistance to the plight of girl soldiers?

Conclusion

Ending the use of child soldiers requires holistic, incremental approaches that are innovative and grounded in reality. The Dallaire Initiative will use the outcomes of the Women's Security Sector Project to improve training, research, and advocacy efforts to influence policy and practice at local and national levels. As the Dallaire Initiative strives to incorporate its security sector training into the global strategy for the prevention of the use of child soldiers, new avenues, such as the Women's Security Sector Project, will help to create momentum

to empower the security sector to prevent the use of children as soldiers. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ UN News Centre, "On International Day, UN demands end to use of child soldiers in conflict," February 12, 2015. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50065#.VpaN5vnR_IU>.

² Peter Singer, *Children at War* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006): 95.

³ UNICEF, "The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups," February 2007, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/ParisPrinciples_EN.pdf>.

⁴ UN News Service, "UN Reaffirms Importance of Women's Empowerment for Global Peace, Security," (2014). <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49186#.VcKQUp1Viko>>.

⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping, "Women in Peacekeeping," (2015). <<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml>>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Laura Shepherd, "Expert Analysis: Advancing The Women, Peace And Security Agenda: 2015 And Beyond," Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, (August 2014): 1. <http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/c023ddcf55e94a08197a7224a857fe44.pdf>.

⁸ Ibid, 2.

⁹ "Women in Peacekeeping."

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, 3; Sahana Dharmapuri, "Core Issues Stall Women's Participation in UN Peacekeeping," *IPI Global Observatory*, (2013). <<http://theglobalobservatory.org/2013/03/core-issues-stall-womens-participation-in-un-peacekeeping/>>.

¹² Judith Youngman, "The Warrior Ethic," in *Women in Uniform, Perceptions and Pathways*, Kathryn Spurling and Elizabeth Greenlaugh, eds. (Canberra: School of History, Australian Defence Force Academy, 2000).

¹³ Megan Bastick, "Integrating Gender in Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform," Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, (2007): 158. <<http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Integrating-Gender-in-Post-Conflict-Security-Sector-Reform>>.

¹⁴ Ibid, 158-159.

¹⁵ Doreen Carvajal, "A Female Approach to Peacekeeping," *New York Times*, March 5, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/06/world/africa/06iht-ffpeace.html?_r=0>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Bastick, 159.

¹⁸ Hazel MacFerson, "Women and Post-Conflict Society in Sierra Leone," *Journal Of International Women's Studies* 13, no. 1 (2012): 141. <<http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1056&context=jiws>>.

¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Report 2015: Work for human development: Briefing note for counties on the 2015 Human Development Report – Sierra Leone," <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/SLE.pdf>.

²⁰ Shelly Whitman et al., *The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative: Sierra Leone Project* (Halifax: The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, 2014), <<http://www.childsoldiers.org/?portfolio=desert-mini-planet>>.

²¹ "Gender Acts": On June 14, 2007, the Sierra Leone Parliament passed three 'gender bills' into law. The new Acts—the Domestic Violence Act, the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, and the Devolution of Estates Act—will together help to radically improve the position of women in Sierra Leone.

²² United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Sierra Leone 2013 Human Rights Report," (2013): 18.

²³ See UN Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, and 2242.

²⁴ See UN Security Council Resolutions 1379, 1460, 1539, 1612, 1882, 1998, 2068, and 2143.

²⁵ United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security," September 23, 2014. <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2014_693.pdf>.

²⁶ Human Rights Watch, "Our Rights Are Fundamental To Peace," (August 2015). <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/our_rights_are_fundamental_to_peace.pdf>.

Photos

Page 169. Photo by UN Photo/Christopher Herwig. 2011. UNMIL Honours Indian Police Officers. From <https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/3331240081>. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic, <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>>. Reproduced unaltered

Jorge Cardoso / Brazilian Military Defense Archive



Brazilian female peacekeeper in Haiti

Brazil and UN Security Council Resolution 1325

Progress and Challenges of the Implementation Process¹

BY RENATA GIANNINI, MARIANA LIMA, AND PÉROLA PEREIRA

Emerging powers have recently become significant players in promoting peace and stability in unstable settings affected by conflict and violence. These countries have the experience, capabilities, and legitimacy to support counterpart governments seeking to build security and safety in their societies. What is more, the High Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HLP) has emphasized the need for peace operations to become more people centered. This is an important capability that emerging powers—some of the top troop-contributors to UN peacekeeping missions—have arguably developed in the last few years.² Peacekeepers from many emerging countries, including Brazil, have been widely recognized for their professional conduct and empathy—which many attribute to their own experiences with economic, social, and political crises.

As the UN and its member states increasingly recognize that peace and stability depend on inclusivity and gender equality, are troop contributors from the Global South adequately prepared to implement gender-sensitive approaches to international peace and security? The UN Security Council has adopted seven resolutions on women, peace, and security (WPS), of which the most sweeping is UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, adopted in 2000.³ Together these set out a gender equality strategy that attempts to ensure that the particular needs of both women and men will be carefully considered in all UN actions in the field. But the UN faces challenges

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in disseminating these norms among its members and in its peace operations. Gender equality in UN peacekeeping remains a long way off. And a central challenge emerges when member states responsible for carrying out the UN's mandate in the field do not adapt their own national policies on gender norms.

A number of emerging powers have already taken steps to support the UN in this endeavor, and Brazil's achievements and challenges offer valuable insights in this regard. The Brazilian Armed Forces have incorporated some gender approaches in their peacekeeping activities, particularly in Haiti. Brazil is also implementing an array of international cooperation projects with fragile and violence-affected countries. In settings as varied as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea Bissau, and Haiti, Brazil has worked to promote access to justice and enhance national capabilities to prevent and reduce sexual violence. These are critical examples of South-South cooperation, and do not necessarily follow the more conventional models of aid assistance practiced by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) members. Indeed, such initiatives are based on best practices identified in Brazil including police training, health service provision, and legislation formulation.

Whole-of-government policies undertaken by the Ministry of Defense (MoD), Ministry of External Relations (MRE, in Portuguese), and the National Secretariat for Women's Policies (SPM, in Portuguese) have also led to gender mainstreaming commitments and cooperation mechanisms to improve the country's track record on women, peace, and security. The country has further signed up to a range of international efforts to end war crimes and mass atrocities, which include conflict-related

sexual violence. Although at times uncoordinated, these are relevant steps that are likely to have a positive impact on the country's capacity to adapt to the UN's gender equality strategy.

Nonetheless, Brazil has made only partial progress in meeting the UN standards. Just seven percent of the country's military is composed of women, with most of them serving in administrative and medical positions.⁴ As a result, less than one percent of all Brazilian military personnel deployed to peace operations are women (out of the 40,000 troops sent to Haiti over 10 years, only 140 were women).⁵ A top-down decree to improve women's access to military schools represents a key initiative that could help to change this ratio, but other obstacles remain.

This article analyzes Brazil's efforts to implement the UN's women, peace, and security agenda, and highlights some "southern grown" efforts to promoting peace and gender equality. The article is divided into four sections: 1) women in the Brazilian Armed Forces; 2) Brazilian participation in peacekeeping operations; 3) steps to implement UNSCR 1325 in Brazil; and 4) the question of a National Action Plan. The conclusion focuses on the main obstacles yet to be overcome in order for UNSCR 1325 to be effectively implemented in Brazil.

Women in the Brazilian Armed Forces

Women were initially incorporated into the Brazilian Armed Forces during the re-democratization process, beginning in the 1980s, as a symbol of a less violent political system and a strong democracy. However, efforts to integrate women into the various branches of the military were not guided by a coherent national policy or a coordinated effort.⁶ The

first to open its doors was the Navy, followed by the Air Force, in 1980 and 1982 respectively. It was only 10 years later, in 1992, that women were allowed in the Army, when they were permitted to join the service's administration school. Today, the presence of women remains limited in many branches, partly reflecting the persistence of traditional perceptions of women's roles in Brazilian society.⁷

Indeed, the first efforts to integrate women reflected the traditional gender divide in Brazilian society and perpetuated stereotypes about women's roles. Women in the military were only authorized to exercise functions that were already generally carried out by women, and their participation was justified on the grounds that they are more sensitive and caring than their male counterparts. As such, women initially participated in the military through the "female auxiliary corps" in health and administrative positions.⁸ There was a general lack of support for these first female pioneers. The female corps was separated from its male counterparts, and as a result, there were no clear guidelines as to how these women could progress in the military hierarchy.

More recently, women's relative absence from combatant positions has also reflected these divisions and stereotypes. After 1992, women were authorized to join several branches within the professional corps of the military, but at present the only force to authorize women in combatant positions is the Air Force. Since 2003, women have been allowed to serve as aviators.⁹ However, there has been a lack of female candidates—a fact that certain military officers have used to justify not opening other combatant positions for them. The Air Force was also the first to allow women to join the logistics branch, followed by the Navy

in 2014. It will only be in 2017 that women will be allowed to join the logistics and weapons branches of the Army.

In 2014, women comprised seven percent of the Brazilian military, amounting to 23,787 personnel. Their presence is usually in technical, administrative, and health-related areas—with the exception of the aviators in the Air Force. Although the latter has the smallest proportion of women in comparison to the other military forces, the presence of women in absolute numbers is the highest: there are currently 9,927 women in the Air Force, as compared to 6,700 in the Army and 5,815 in the Navy.¹⁰ These numbers are likely to increase significantly after 2017, particularly in the Army, where they will be allowed to take on an expanding number of roles.

As shown in the graph below, most women in the Brazilian Armed Forces are lower-ranking officers. The main reason for their low rank is that these women are frequently from the professional corps, primarily serving as doctors, lawyers, translators, etc. Because Brazilian women are not allowed to serve as non-commissioned officers, this category is not considered in the graph below. However, this is another key issue for consideration in the debate over women's presence in the Armed Forces in Brazil.

Despite the limited number and reach of women in the Brazilian military, the progress that has been made is worth celebrating. In 2012, a woman reached the upper echelons of the military hierarchy: Dalva Mendes, a doctor in the Navy, was granted the rank of Admiral in 2012, opening up the way for others to follow suit. Both the Air Force and the Army have women as Colonels, the highest rank achieved by women in those services. The recent initiative to extend women's access to the logistics

and weapons branches of the Army, mentioned above, also represents a significant step since women will finally be allowed to join the most traditional of the military schools.¹¹

Nonetheless, obstacles to women’s full participation persist, not least in terms of resistance to changing the modus operandi that has been in place for centuries. Including women in the military is important for gender equality, but there is also growing recognition that it matters for operational effectiveness—including the effectiveness of international peace operations.

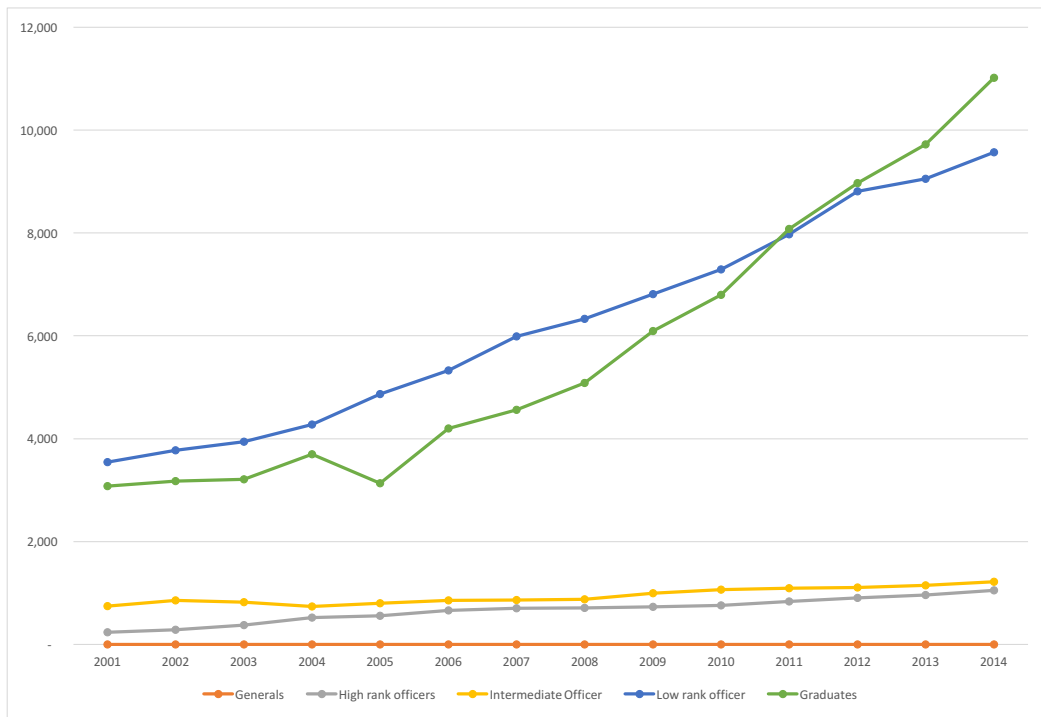
Brazil in Peacekeeping Operations: Incorporating a Gender Perspective

Women’s roles in national militaries have a direct effect on the quantitative and qualitative participation of women in international peace

operations, which rely on troop contributions from participating states. Brazil has long been a strong supporter of multilateral efforts to promote peace. In recent years, its contribution (with police, military experts, and troops) to peace operations has increased steadily (by more than 1,500 percent from 2000 to 2015), becoming a major pillar in Brazil’s foreign policy.¹² The country currently has one battalion in Haiti and one company in Lebanon. Brazilian military observers serve in at least seven missions: Western Sahara, Cyprus, Central African Republic, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan.¹³ Yet, Brazil’s efforts to mainstream a gender approach in its international peace operations are below optimum.

The absence of Brazilian women in combat positions means that few Brazilian military

Figure 1: Women in the Brazilian Armed Forces



Ministry of Defense, Jan. 2014

women are in the field. For example, in 2014, the UN Mission in Lebanon, where a Brazilian Frigate is stationed, had one woman from the Brazilian military (the Navy) in a contingent comprised of 267 troops. Only one Brazilian woman has ever served as a military observer in a peace operation, deployed from the Navy in 2013 to the UN's Mission in Côte d'Ivoire. For women in other military branches, beyond the Navy, a range of limitations in terms of what kind of arms, training, and rank officers should have in order to join a UN mission as a military observer prevents them participating in this role.

Indeed, the types of functions women can pursue in the Brazilian national context pose an impediment for effective deployment of women in international operations more generally. Given the restrictions on the types of jobs women in the Brazilian Armed Forces may hold, those who do participate in international peace operations (as in Haiti, discussed below) have very limited contact with the local population. According to the UN resolutions on women, peace, and security, the presence of female peacekeepers on the ground is an operational necessity. The participation of women affects a range of military tasks, from checkpoints and search operations to more complex activities such as engaging with victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Uniformed women can also serve as role models for women and men in the local society, showing that women and men can pursue the same careers, even those often associated with the dominant construct of masculinity.

In stable conditions, Brazilian military women are allowed to participate in patrols and play key roles as doctors, nurses, or dentists when the troops offer medical services to the local population. However, health

professionals sent on peace operations are usually dedicated to their own internal personnel, within the battalion, so it is only on the rare occasions when specific civil-military actions in the field are organized that they treat the population directly. According to soldiers who have been to the field, these interactions have been key to identifying actual and potential victims of sexual and gender-based violence.¹⁴

In fact, though women's participation remains limited, there are now signs that a broader gender mainstreaming approach is being implemented by Brazilian troops in the field. This is particularly true in Haiti, where the Brazilian contingent is the largest among troop-contributing countries.

Attempts at Gender Mainstreaming in Haiti

Women started joining the Brazilian troops on the ground in Haiti in 2006; since then 124 women in the Army have deployed to that country, mostly dentists, nurses, translators, and engineers.¹⁵ As of April 2015, out of 1,678 Brazilian troops deployed globally, only 18 (about one percent) are women, and are all in Haiti.¹⁶ Field research carried out by the authors in 2011 and 2012 uncovered a variety of attempts to mainstream gender considerations in Brazilian troops' actions there.¹⁷

For example, Brazilian peacekeepers have implemented Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) designed to empower local women and improve their status in Haitian society. There is a conscious effort to use local female translators in patrols and in QIPs targeting women's empowerment. Coordinated activities with the gender unit associated with the UN mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) were also observed, including lectures on pregnancy, use of contraception, breastfeeding, and violence against women. These are key outreach activities that

have the potential to decrease women's vulnerability and strengthen their status in society.

Fort Liberté, a clinic in one of the Brazilian bases, has treated several victims of gender-based violence. This same base also hosts a UN Police commissariat and a Haitian Police Unit, both of them specialized in sexual and gender-based violence. Though the UN Police commissariat does not have the executive mandate, it exercises an important mentoring role, including on issues related to sexual and gender-based violence.

In some cases, access to justice was facilitated by this close contact with police institutions. However, Brazilian soldiers also commonly expressed the view that violence against women, which is so prevalent in Haiti, was a cultural trait, and as such very hard to address.

This counterpoint affects their perception of the relationship between a lasting peace and gender equality. In addition, the issue of peacekeepers exchanging sex for protection or food emerged in some interviews; here, officers believed that the presence of military women could potentially curb that kind of behavior. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) is a major concern for the United Nations. It is unfortunately common and must be thoroughly addressed. Although no case against Brazilian troops has ever been brought to the public, it is an issue that deserves further attention.¹⁸

Interviews with military women in the field indicated that overall they perceive a positive impact from their presence in Haiti. For example, interviewees of different nationalities



Courtesy of Renata Giannini (2011)

Jean Marie Vincent IDP camp, where Brazilian troops often carried out patrols.

underlined that they usually receive “a lot of attention” from the host population and that this has a positive effect on their interactions with locals.¹⁹ What is more, they felt that they served as positive role models for local women, and that their presence showed local communities that women can play a decisive role within their societies and be an active part of the peacebuilding process. Among doctors and nurses that participated in civil-military activities and offered health services to the local population, interviewees noted that many would come with sexually transmitted diseases and that the presence of female peacekeepers was fundamental to treating those cases.

However, female officers from all nationalities underlined that because of their relatively low numbers within each battalion they are constantly “watched.” Most seemed unhappy about the attention of their male counterparts. That did not necessarily indicate sexual harassment or abuse, but rather that their actions were constantly monitored.

Women in the Brazilian military in particular had very limited contact with the population. Interviews with them were mostly carried out in the presence of male counterparts and commanders. In some cases, it was emphasized that there was no difference between a female and a male officer, and that the host population praises the Brazilian troops. In other cases, Brazilian women underlined their role in the medical service as being beneficial to local women. In particular, they highlighted that the lectures they conducted attempted to transmit key ideas of gender equality. In fact, in the case of the Brazilian contingent, between 2011 and 2012, understanding of gender mainstreaming generally improved. It may be that the training on

gender improved or that it was the personal leadership of that commander that enhanced the knowledge within that battalion.

There are two key takeaways from the Brazilian experience mainstreaming gender in military operations. First, a significant change in the impediments to women’s participation in the military at home—and their access to combatant roles, in particular—would greatly contribute to improving the presence and participation of Brazilian women in peace operations. Second, the lessons learned from these early gender-mainstreaming initiatives in the Brazilian battalion in Haiti should be expanded and adopted as part of its regular activities. After all, gender equality goes beyond gender balance to empowering women and addressing their specific needs.

Recent Steps to Implement UNSCR 1325

Although Brazil experienced a threefold increase of women in its Armed Forces between 2000 and 2014, the country has no comprehensive policy or plan to promote women’s full participation in its forces.²⁰ However, political momentum appears to be leading to a change in the status quo. As a country that considers international peace one of its top foreign policy priorities, Brazil has been influenced by international pressure surrounding the women, peace, and security agenda and bilateral efforts by a handful of countries in the field of peace and security. As a result, it can no longer continue to ignore this issue. In addition, one significant top-down decision at the national level will undoubtedly influence the country’s implementation of UNSCR 1325: a presidential decree has now obligated the Armed Forces to accept women in their military schools beginning in 2017.

Against the backdrop of this international and domestic momentum, there is an increasing understanding that Brazil's efforts internationally are a reflection of its national context. If Brazil is to reaffirm its commitment to international peace, then it needs to adapt its approach to gender and security. As such, although Brazil has not adopted a national action plan based on UNSCR 1325 (discussed in the next section), the country has developed converging actions in the three main axes of the resolution: participation of women in peace processes, protection of women in conflict situations, and prevention of violence against women. In addition to these three pillars, the fourth, unifying element mandated by

UNSCR 1325—gender mainstreaming—also plays a role and is reflected in the country's new Gender Commission.²¹

Participation

As outlined above, the limited participation of Brazilian military women in peace operations is a direct result of their limited presence in the country's Armed Forces. At the same time, Brazil has been increasing its efforts to enhance women's participation in different levels of decisionmaking processes in peacekeeping operations, and this is likely to have a positive impact in the country's gender balance in the field. The participation approach can be



Courtesy of Renata Giannini (2012)

Bolivian peacekeeper providing medical and dental support for internally displaced persons in Cité Soleil, Haiti.

analyzed on two levels: national and international.

At the national level, four main initiatives have contributed to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Brazil: the Multi-Annual Plan (PPA, in Portuguese), the National Plan on Policies for Women (PNPM, in Portuguese), the establishment of a Gender Commission in the Ministry of Defense, and the creation of a Gender and Race Steering Committee in the Ministry of External Relations, also known as Itamaraty.²²

The current Multi-Annual Plan, which guided the government's annual budget preparations between 2012 and 2015, does not have any high-level objectives concerning gender. However, two proposals address gender under

the objective relating to international peace and security: (1) greater cooperation between the Itamaraty and the Brazilian Joint Center of Peacekeeping Operations (CCOPAB, in Portuguese) to improve gender training of Brazilian contingents in peacekeeping operations and special political missions, and (2) increased participation of civilian and military women in peacekeeping operations.²³

Under the rubric of the National Plan on Policies for Women 2013-2015, the Secretariat of Policies for Women and the Ministry of Defense signed a memorandum of understanding in 2014, which identified six necessary actions:



Courtesy of Renata Giannini (2011)

An all-female Formed Police Unit from Bangladesh, serving with the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

- Identify skills women in the Armed Forces already possess and map those that are necessary for peace operations;
- Enhance peacekeepers' capacity and training on gender perspectives;
- Strengthen sport practices as an instrument of peace in places where Brazilian military personnel are deployed;
- Establish partnerships to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and combat sexual violence as a weapon of war;
- Develop strategies to combat gender-based violence in the context humanitarian crises; and
- Develop a more articulated process for South-South cooperation, more precisely with Haiti.²⁴

The establishment of a Gender Commission in the Ministry of Defense and of the Gender and Race Steering Committee in the Ministry of External Relations can also be considered an important step in increasing the value placed on women's participation in both defense and foreign policies. Taken together, these are significant mechanisms not only for improving gender balance in these government structures, but also, potentially, for supporting coordinated efforts to implement a National Action Plan in Brazil.

At the international level, Brazil has been following the UNSCR 1325 prescriptions by engaging in multilateral initiatives. In 2012, during the Rio+20 Conference, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of External Relations signed a cooperation agreement with UN Women to promote gender equality in two programs: the Executive Program for the promotion of South-South technical cooperation, and the Brazil-UN Women Partnership Program. The programs aim to contribute to

gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean by sharing the Brazilian experience. The implementation of the Brazil-UN Women Partnership Program takes into account Brazil's principles concerning South-South cooperation, which is demand driven and based on the dissemination and exchange of successful experiences, best practices, and lessons learned, adapted to each country's particular context. Some projects have already been implemented and others are underway.²⁵

Also on the multilateral front, Brazil has been active in the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR, in Spanish) South American Defense Council (CDS), which is undertaking an assessment of women's integration into the defense sector across South America through its Defense Center for Strategic Studies (CEED). Member states first raised the issue and placed it on CEED's agenda in 2012, and the center has since been collecting data on the situation of women at all levels of the defense sectors across the region.²⁶ These efforts will not only enhance understanding of the situation in each national context, they will also inform the elaboration of a South American common regional policy for better inclusion of women in different areas of defense.

Protection

Brazil's protection efforts carried out in the field include gender-sensitive practices undertaken by Brazilian troops in host nations, such as foot and mobile patrols to dissuade threats, QIPs focused on empowering and benefiting local women, and the use of female translators to facilitate contact with possible victims.

Training is a key component of Brazilian contributions to UN peacekeeping operations.

CCOPAB is responsible for “support(ing) the preparation of military, police, and civilian personnel from Brazil and friendly nations for peace missions and humanitarian demining missions.”²⁷ Currently the training center does not have a specific training module on gender-related issues. Nonetheless, gender is considered as a cross-cutting theme and is included in most courses and preparatory stages for military personnel who will be employed in peacekeeping operations, either in individual missions or as part of a contingent. Prevention of sexually transmitted diseases/HIV, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual violence as a weapon of war, and gender-based violence are some of the topics raised to commanders during training, while a UN standardized course on the subject is passed on to the contingent as a whole.

Gender-sensitive training is an important tool for instructing the military and preventing improper actions by the troops in the field. It can also facilitate and improve discussions on practical measures for increasing the participation and protection of women in the context of peacekeeping operations, as well as gender mainstreaming across all peacekeeping activities in the field. Another important tool in this regard is the Military Prosecutor Office, which is responsible for the prosecution and trial of members of the Brazilian military, including those deployed in peacekeeping missions. According to one military prosecutor, disciplined troops are essential; once a deviated behavior is identified, it must be quickly and effectively investigated, so that Brazil’s credibility and operational effectiveness are not undermined.²⁸ To date, there have been few cases tried within the context of the military justice system concerning Brazil’s performance in peacekeeping missions—none related to

sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) or SEA; on the contrary, the performance of the Brazilian troops is considered a source of pride.

Prevention

Prevention efforts by Brazil are identified first and foremost in its Federal Constitution. It affirms the need to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and the need to address human rights violations in conflict situations. Other Brazilian documents, such as the National Defense Strategy (2008, 2012) and the Human Rights National Program (2010), also provide guidelines for the incorporation of human rights, including women’s rights, in the curricula of both civilian and military schools and colleges.

Brazil also seeks to operate through multilateral mechanisms and South-South technical cooperative agreements (for example, transfer of social technologies), as discussed before.²⁹ In 2002, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) established a project in Haiti focused on addressing violence against women. Since that year, actions towards improved coordination on health, justice, and security services for victims of violence have been emphasized. For this purpose, in 2011, 185 Haitian professionals were trained in health and public safety aimed at curbing violence against women.

Brazil also established trilateral cooperation with Guinea-Bissau and UNFPA for the “Strengthening and Technical Training of Health Care Institutions for Women and Adolescents Victims of Gender based Violence and Health Promotion.” The project started in 2010 with an 18-month term and had three main axes: (1) health care for women and

adolescents in situations of violence; (2) youth mobilization and promotion of sexual and reproductive health for youth and adolescents; (3) monitoring and evaluation. Interchanges between Brazilian and Guinean technicians were held by means of eight missions to Guinea-Bissau for conducting technical capacity building activities about the two components of the project: women's health in violence situations and furtherance of juvenile and adolescents' health. Unfortunately, Brazil's cooperation projects with Guinea-Bissau were suspended in 2012, after a coup d'état in the country. Internationally recognized presidential elections were held in May 2014; currently, Brazil is analyzing the possibility of resuming cooperation with the country.

Gender Mainstreaming in Defense: The Gender Commission

The creation of a multi-sector Gender Commission at the Ministry of Defense could prove central to the advancement of the women, peace, and security agenda in Brazil, especially within the military. The Commission was created in September 2014, with a reasonably well defined mandate and membership. According to the normative document that launched it, the body has a consultative and not deliberative mandate. Its purpose is to incorporate a gender perspective in the formulation and execution of public policies within the Ministry of Defense's areas of work. Its membership configuration includes almost all



Courtesy of Renata Giannini (2011)

Brazilian soldiers of the MINUSTAH peacekeeping contingent on a routine patrol in Cité Soleil, Haiti.

sectors of the ministry: the Minister's cabinet, the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces, the Strategic Affairs department, the Joint Operations department, the Human Resources and Education department, the Pandiá Calógeras Institute,³⁰ and the Navy, Army, and Air Force Commands, among others. It can also occasionally host representatives of civil society and nongovernmental organizations in its meetings, but only through an official invitation.

The Commission's creation was one of the most important steps in a series of initiatives undertaken during the term of former Minister of Defense Celso Amorim (2011–2014) and the current Minister Jaques Wagner (2015–present). One of these initiatives was a Letter of Intent signed in 2011 between the MoD and UN Women's office in Brazil. This articulated UN Women's interest in cooperating with the MoD on: (1) incorporating a gender perspective into the training of Brazilian peacekeepers in CCOPAB, (2) advancing South-South cooperation on this matter (mainly through other regional training bodies), and (3) promoting programs focusing on sport activities with a gender dimension. The letter also set forth the possibility that UN Women would cooperate with the MoD to find ways in which the Ministry could promote the implementation of UNSCR 1325. It had some significant results, such as the incorporation of mandatory activities on gender into CCOPAB's curriculum and the promotion of the campaign "Unite to End Violence Against Women" during the World Military Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2011. However, many of the objectives set forth in the letter have not been achieved. These include the incorporation of a robust gender module in peacekeepers' training and the promotion of a broader dialogue between

the MoD and UN Women regarding how the Ministry might best implement UNSCR 1325.

A second related initiative was the Protocol of Intent signed in 2013 between the MoD and the National Secretariat for Women's Policies (the ministry for women's affairs), which commits both parties to coordinate efforts while identifying, analyzing, and implementing actions and policies to promote gender equality in all phases of peace and security processes. Although the Protocol has produced few concrete results since its signature, one sign of progress is the generally fluid coordination between the MoD and the National Secretariat. This is because the Ministry leads on gender matters and selects the participants in all general meetings held by the secretariat with other governmental and nongovernmental actors, as well as who is invited to the periodic discussions on the broader National Plan on Policies for Women.

Since its creation, the MoD's Gender Commission has had one training seminar on the Commission's role in creating gender equality in the Brazilian security sector and two operational meetings. Its Plan of Action was approved in June 2015. Although the members have not yet had the opportunity to discuss matters regarding gender equality in the Ministry or in the Armed Forces more deeply, one of the Commission's first activities will be a research project to assess the status of the Ministry and the Armed Forces in terms of gender equality. Even at this preliminary stage, it is quite clear that some issues that are perceived as taboos, such as sexual abuse, are not going to be tackled easily. The Commission's work is probably going to be more challenging when it comes to the phase of effectively planning concrete actions or proposing

Brazil's primary initiatives for implementing UNSCR 1325	
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ South-South cooperation in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establishment of an evaluation mechanism of the participation of women in all levels of the defense sector by the South American Defense Council.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Multi-Annual Plan 2012-2015: Expansion of women's participation, both civilian and military, in peacekeeping operations. ■ National Plan on Policies for Women: Identify the skills women in the Armed Forces already possess and map those necessary for carrying out peace operations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The participation of women in the Brazilian contingent deployed to peace operations is only one percent. ■ The admission of women in military academies is likely to positively impact their participation in peace operations, but the impact of this development will not be seen for another 10 to 15 years.
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National Plan on Policies for Women: Enhance peacekeepers' capacity and training on gender perspective. ■ National Plan on Policies for Women: Build strategies to combat gender-based violence in the context of humanitarian crises.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Military Prosecution Office overseeing of Brazilian troops' performance abroad, to maintain the country's credibility and operational effectiveness in peace operations.
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Brazilian Joint Center of Peacekeeping Operations training considers gender as a cross cutting theme and includes it in most courses and preparatory stages for the military to be employed in peacekeeping operations, either on individual missions or as part of a contingent.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National Plan on Policies for Women: Establishment of partnerships to prevent sexually transmitted diseases/HIV and combat sexual violence as a weapon of war.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ South-South technical cooperation (for example, transfer of social technologies).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Civil-military coordination activities (CIMIC) and quick impact projects (QIPs) designed to benefit local women.
Gender Mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Ministry of Defense's Gender Commission and Itamaraty.

recommendations, though they will not be compulsory due to its consultative mandate.

Some of the Commission members, representing both the military and MoD internal sectors, support the position that each Force is already developing its own path to incorporate women, and that additional measures to accelerate women's inclusion in the combatant branches are unnecessary and could undermine efficiency. They argue that: (1) women's inclusion will jeopardize military missions since men are naturally protective of women and therefore will be distracted from their mission objectives if a woman gets hurt; or (2) women simply do not have enough physical strength, meaning that admission and evaluation parameters would have to be relaxed and operational effectiveness in the field may be compromised.

The counterarguments are also exposed and debated during the Commission's meetings, including through presentations of studies and research that undermine those positions. For example, some months ago the Commission received a legislative consultant who is a former military officer from the Army's Special Forces and now covers public security and national defense themes at the Parliament. He had just finished a study about female presence in the Brazilian Armed Forces and presented very objective counterarguments to defend the elimination of limitations on women in the Armed Forces and the operational contributions they can make. According to him, guaranteeing unlimited access to women is a "matter of equality and justice."³¹

In sum, the Brazilian MoD finds itself at a curious juncture in the gender inclusion debate. On the one hand, the creation of a Gender Commission and some strategic documents and institutional partnerships have

advanced the discussion around gender, along with the personal interest of some key staff members. On the other hand, some important challenges persist, not least the fact that the Commission includes many members without much influence in the Ministry and retired military officers who are very resistant to gender inclusion or who believe that gender equality has already been achieved within the Armed Forces and the MoD.

A National Action Plan for Brazil?

The initiatives outlined above show that Brazil's efforts to implement UNSCR 1325 and promote the women, peace, and security agenda can have a real impact on the participation of women in the country's peacekeeping activities and have the potential to contribute to the promotion of gender mainstreaming at all levels. At the same time, however, these actions are diffuse and uncoordinated. This lack of coherence deeply compromises their effectiveness, especially in the long run, as well as their accountability.

Against this backdrop, the adoption of a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR 1325 could have many positive impacts on the Brazilian case, not least by strengthening the women, peace, and security agenda nationally and enabling this agenda to evolve independent of any given leadership's political will or the wider political conjuncture. At the same time, the process of creating a NAP itself could be transformative, especially if it is inclusive and democratic, so that broader swathes of society can engage with it and be represented by the plan. Specific indicators and accountability mechanisms could bolster the implementation process and the efficacy of the plan itself, in turn impacting the

continuity of Brazil's engagement with the WPS agenda.

However, Brazil has not formally decided if it will adopt a National Action Plan or instead continue to undertake ad hoc measures to implement the UNSCR 1325—a debate that is not unusual in the South American context. The countries that have adopted a NAP so far are largely northern countries and conflict-affected countries. In South America, a generally peaceful region,³² Chile is the only country that has adopted a NAP to date, though Argentina has now written (if not yet adopted) its plan.

Many actors who directly engaged in the decisionmaking process on this matter argue that Brazil already takes enough measures to implement UNSCR 1325, even without a specific plan of action. Indeed, the federal government has already approved and implemented three editions of the Brazilian National Plan of Policies for Women, a broad document that guides Brazilian policies in a way that comprises all ministries and sectors. This Plan does not have, however, significant measures in the field of peace and security or women in peacekeeping. Its main focuses are economic empowerment and fighting domestic violence in a domestic rather than the international context.

Conclusion

Even if uncoordinated, Brazil has taken important steps towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325. At the same time, societal constructions of femininity and masculinity impose practical obstacles to effective implementation. It is widely accepted that certain constructions of masculinity are closely tied to power and the use of force, especially within very patriarchic institutions such as the Armed

Forces. In Brazil, this has been consistently used as a justification for not opening up the military to women, as if their presence would impact Brazilian troops' capacity to act and its operational effectiveness. In fact, comments regarding women's physical capacity to be in the front line and how their demise would impact the morale of the troops are constantly cited as impediments to their effective integration in combat positions.

As such, a primary challenge to implementing UNSCR 1325 is the construction of masculinity itself within Brazilian society. Arguing that the demise of female officers has a bigger impact than that of a male counterpart, for example, may indicate that female officers are quickly and often associated with wives, sisters, and mothers, rather than colleagues. In fact, women's image is commonly associated with vulnerability and thus the need for protection. Having women in combatant positions is an inversion of this logic and entails certain challenges for its overall acceptance.

Addressing this challenge requires a long-term process of cultural change, not only in the military, but also more broadly. A generalized reconstruction of the role women can play socially is needed so that, on the one hand, more women consider themselves as an absolutely fundamental part of peace and security processes and of their country's defense sector and, on the other hand, more men recognize the importance of including women to achieve sustainable peace and representative defense policies.

Beyond changing mentalities, logistical changes are also needed—as well as the time and financial investments to implement them. At a very basic level, infrastructure needs to be adapted so that women can play a role in

traditionally all-male places, such as military schools and ships. Although the common excuse that “there are no female restrooms” may seem flippant, it is true that some of these structural changes are costly and require planning. In Brazil, however, it is clear that normative changes are fundamental to accelerating both attitudinal and structural change.

The limited participation of Brazilian female officers in peacekeeping operations is a direct consequence of the obstacles facing women at home as they attempt to enter the highest and most traditional schools of the Armed Forces, mainly the Army, and the combatant branches. At the same time, Brazil has not traditionally contributed civilian personnel to UN peacekeeping missions alongside its military contributions, which also reduces women’s participation in international peace and security processes. Therefore, the country should pursue a double strategy of accelerating equal access for both men and women to the highest levels of the Army and Navy’s combatant branches and promoting civilian participation in peacekeeping as well.

Brazil finds itself at an interesting juncture regarding the WPS agenda. Although the subject’s impact in the general media and the Parliament is still limited, some important institutional actors such as the MoD, CCOPAB, and the Ministry of External Relations are considering new possibilities and inclusive policies in peacekeeping. Brazilian think tanks such as the Igarapé Institute and the Pandiá Calógeras Institute, alongside international organizations such as UN Women, are also helping to advance the agenda in the country through collaboration, research, and debate. A significant question that remains is whether Brazil will adopt a National Action Plan to unify and accelerate its efforts in this field.

Regardless of which specific strategies are adopted, it is paramount that the evolution of this agenda and its policies become progressively independent of particular decisionmakers and be strengthened as a foreign and defense policy priority in favor of sustainable international peace. [PRISM](#)

Notes

¹ The authors are fully responsible for the opinions and ideas presented here, which do not correspond necessarily to the official positions of the Brazilian Ministry of Defense.

² More than 90 percent of military and police contributions to UN operations come from developing or less developed countries. For a complete relation, see The United Nations, "Ranking of Military and Police Contributions to UN Operations," (2015). <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/aug15_2.pdf>.

³ UN Security Resolution 1325 was adopted in October 2000. The text of the resolution can be found at <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>>.

⁴ Data retrieved from the Ministry of Defense by e-mail, January 2014.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Indeed, there was a ten-year gap between the incorporation of women in the Navy—the first to open its doors—and the Army, the last one.

⁷ Mariza Rivas D'Ávila Almeida, "Contexto político-institucional do processo decisório sobre a admissão da mulher militar," in Eduardo Svartman, Maria Celina d'Araújo, Samuel Alves Soare (eds), *Defesa, Segurança Internacional e Forças Armadas: II Encontro da ABED* (Campinas: Mercado das Letras, 2008): 9.

⁸ There is an important and exceptional historical participation of women during World War II, when a considerable number of nurses voluntarily enlisted. They received basic military training and were sent to Europe to support medical teams.

⁹ Renata Giannini, Mariana Lima, and Pérola Pereira, "Implementing UNSC Resolution 1325 in Brazil," <<https://igarape.org.br/implementing-uns-resolution-1325-in-brazil>>.

¹⁰ See: Defesanet "As mulheres estão cada vez mais presentes nas forças armadas brasileiras," (2013). <<http://www.defesanet.com.br/defesa/noticia/9978/Mulheres-estao-cada-vez-mais-presentes-nas-Forcas-Armadas-brasileiras>>.

¹¹ Law 12.705 /2012 will allow women—from 2017 onwards—to join certain military schools that are still closed to them.

¹² See: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Troop and Police Contributors," data 2000-2015. <<http://www.un.org/>

[en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml)>.

¹³ Eduarda Hamann, "A força de uma trajetória: O Brasil e as Operações de Paz da ONU (1948-2015)." Igarapé Institute Strategic Note 19 (2015). <<http://www.igarape.org.br/pt-br/a-forca-de-uma-trajetoria/>>.

¹⁴ Interviews carried out in fieldwork coordinated by the Latin America Defense and Security Network (RESDAL) in May 2011 and September 2012.

¹⁵ Data retrieved from the Ministry of Defense by e-mail, January 2014.

¹⁶ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "UN Mission's Summary detailed by Country," April 2015. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/apr15_3.pdf>.

¹⁷ Interviews carried out in fieldwork coordinated by the Latin America Defense and Security Network (RESDAL) in May 2011 and September 2012.

¹⁸ "Proceedings from 'Promoting Gender and building Peace: bridging gaps and overcoming challenges' Conference." Igarapé Institute, Pandiá Calógeras Institute and the UN-Women (March 2014). Military Justice representatives confirmed that there has not been, up to now, any case of misconduct related to SEA or SGBV to be tried in Brazil, against Brazilian peacekeepers.

¹⁹ Interviews were carried out between 2011 and 2012 through a project coordinated by RESDAL. Interviewed troops included: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay.

²⁰ Data retrieved from the Ministry of Defense by e-mail in January 2014.

²¹ Barbara Miller, Milad Pournik, and Aisling Swaine, "Women in Peace and Security through United Nations Security Resolution 1325: Literature Review, Content Analysis of National Action Plans, and Implementation." IGIS WP 13/GGP WP 09, (2014): 2. <http://www.gwu.edu/~igis/assets/docs/working_papers/igis_wp13_ggp_wp09.pdf>.

²² The Multi-Annual Plan is a mid-term governmental planning, valid for four years. It establishes guidelines, goals, and initiatives of the federal public administration for the period it is in force.

²³ Ibid. and Ministerio do Planejamento PPA 2012-2015, Anexo I, (2012): 254.

²⁴ Haiti has been the main recipient of technical cooperation from Brazil.

²⁵ All projects are available at <http://www.abc.gov.br/Projetos/pesquisa>.

²⁶ The final report is expected to come out by the end of 2015.

²⁷ "Mission of the Center." Brazilian Peace Operations Joint Training Center <<http://www.ccopab.eb.mil.br/index.php/en/ccopab/missao>. Retrieved June 12, 2015>.

²⁸ Interview with the military prosecutor Najla Palma to NU Radio. "Atuação do Ministério Público Militar em missões de paz da ONU é tema de oficina no Rio" ONUBR, August 18, 2014. <<http://www.onu.org.br/atuacao-do-ministerio-publico-militar-em-missoes-de-paz-da-onu-e-tema-de-oficina-no-rio/>>.

²⁹ Social technologies could be defined as methods, techniques, or products designed to solve any kind of social problem, attending to criteria such as simplicity, low cost, easy applicability, and high social impact.

³⁰ The Pandiá Calógeras Institute is a governmental think tank created by the Minister of Defense in April 2013. Its mission is to approach national defense and international security strategically and to provide the MoD with qualified research and information on these matters. A team of one director, five researches, and one administrative staff currently composes it.

³¹ Vítor Hugo de Araújo Almeida. "Mulheres nas Forças Armadas Brasileiras: situação atual e perspectivas futuras," Estudo para Consultoria Legislativa (2015). <http://www2.camara.leg.br/documentos-e-pesquisa/publicacoes/estnottec/areas-da-conle/tema21/2015_291_estudo-sobre-mulheres-nas-forcas-armadas-vitor-hugo>.

³² South America is a reasonably peaceful region with no interstate war or civil wars. The only exception is Colombia, and even then, a peace agreement is underway.

Photos

Page 178. Photo by Ricardo Stuckert/PR. 2004. Brazilian Army soldiers, part of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. From <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EB_Haiti.jpg>. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Brazil, <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/br/deed.en>>. Reproduced unaltered



A young child protests in Yemen against the ruling class.

Inclusive Political Settlements

New Insights from Yemen's National Dialogue

BY THANIA PAFFENHOLZ AND NICK ROSS¹

Periods of exceptionally high social and political conflict present an opportunity for the fundamental remaking of a society. These conflicts are often resolved outside normal political institutions—whether through expanded police powers due to the declaration of a state of emergency, outright military victory in a civil war, the collapse of the old political order, or through the renegotiation of the political order by peace agreement, a political transition, or both. Since the 1990s, negotiated settlements have become important vehicles to renegotiate the social contract of countries. More recently, negotiation processes that provide for the inclusion of additional actors (e.g., civil society, political hardliners, women's groups, religious organizations, etc.) aside from the primary political—often armed—parties have become more common. National Dialogues (sometimes called National Conferences) are a highly inclusive negotiation format, involving large segments of civil society, politicians, and experts, and are usually convened in order to negotiate major political reforms or peace in complex and fragmented conflict environments, or to draft a new constitution.

The objective of this article is to analyze the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference for a New Yemen held between 2013 and 2014. The article begins with a summary of the theory and practice of inclusive negotiations. We then describe briefly the context and process of the Yemeni National Dialogue Conference (NDC), including the challenges and successes of the process. Finally, we analyze these challenges and success factors with reference to the findings of the “Broadening Participation” project at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

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Inclusive Negotiations in Theory and Practice

Mediation practitioners generally argue that broadening participation in negotiations unnecessarily complicates the process of reaching an agreement by increasing the number of positions represented in negotiations. However, new research from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva challenges this narrative with evidence.² Studying 40 qualitative in-depth cases of inclusive negotiations from 1990 to 2013, this research shows that inclusive processes have a far higher likelihood of agreements being reached and implemented. However, this only holds if additionally included actors had significant influence on the process. This finding also challenges previous simple correlations which hold that a mere increase in the number of actors will lead to more peace.

Inclusive negotiations are usually held in order to increase general public support, or to gain the buy-in of a particular constituency. Mediators and external actors also push for inclusion for normative reasons. Actors may be included out of a commitment to democratic values of participation, or a commitment to the human right to participate, both in general and for particular groups, such as the commitment to the inclusion of women by all UN agencies pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, adopted in 2000. It is important to note that, unlike other actors, women are almost never included for pragmatic reasons. Instead, women's inclusion only occurs through the advocacy and support of women's organizations within a country (as can be seen in the recent peace process in Colombia), or due to external pressure from

the international community (as in the Yemeni NDC).

Another important reason to pursue inclusive negotiation processes is that they can offer a way to address the underlying causes of conflict, particularly the dimension of exclusion. Research has clearly demonstrated that exclusion—in particular, exclusion based around issues of ethnic, religious, or cultural identity—is one of the most important factors associated with overall violence,³ civil war,⁴ state failure,⁵ and economic underdevelopment.⁶ This is particularly pertinent to the National Dialogue format, which is often implemented at pivotal moments—windows of opportunity—for inclusive political reforms, and in response to disenchantment with the prevailing exclusive political order. Little is known about how some societies are able to reach stable, inclusive, political settlements, while others experience decades of social conflict over access to an exclusionary form of power. In particular, the relationship between inclusive political negotiations and subsequent political practice and institutionalization is poorly understood.

Inclusive negotiations occasionally lead to more liberal and democratic political practice, as seen in the political transition and constitution writing process in South Africa between 1990 and 1997; whereas, in other cases, they can provoke decidedly illiberal and repressive reactions. Converting inclusive political negotiations to ongoing inclusive political practice is a particular challenge for women, who often struggle to ensure the recognition and representation promised in peace and transition agreements. The recently concluded aforementioned multi-year research project entitled “Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation” sheds light

on the dynamics allowing some inclusive negotiations to generate inclusive social contracts, while others find their influence severely constrained, or their inclusive program vetoed by powerful elites or recalcitrant armed groups.

The Broadening Participation project found that for included actors to be able to change the nature of the political settlement through an inclusive negotiation process, several essential components must be addressed. Included actors must have some significant degree of influence over the negotiations. Influence requires included actors to have the capacity to make their preferences heard during a negotiation process, and ensure the appearance of those preferences in any resulting agreement or political configuration. It also requires that the negotiations not be derailed, ignored, or superseded by national elites, regional powers, or armed groups.

This is no doubt an exacting set of preconditions, and inclusive negotiation processes frequently fail to achieve the hopes of their supporters. However, cases such as Northern Ireland—where the Good Friday and St. Andrews Agreements, which included broadly representative constituencies through political parties with widespread electoral support, put an end to decades of bloody and divisive conflict—show that a lasting and inclusive peace is not an unattainable goal.

National Dialogues are an inclusive negotiation format usually pursued in cases where the entire social contract is to be rethought and renegotiated. Unlike negotiation formats that pursue broader inclusion through consultations or referenda, National Dialogues generally bring a wide variety of societal actors to sit at the same table as powerful political elites, including representatives of political parties and armed groups. National Dialogues are,

therefore, often vested with the hope that they can address the dimension of exclusion underlying a conflict, and renegotiate a more inclusive social contract or political settlement. National Dialogues have recently been held in Tunisia and Yemen, but have previously appeared under different names in different contexts, such as Round Table Negotiations (in Central Europe after 1989) or National Conferences (in West Africa in the early 1990s), where they have been used to find common ground on the future direction of the country.

National Dialogue in Yemen

The Yemeni National Dialogue Conference (NDC), held from March 18, 2013 to January 21, 2014, hoped to bring about a peaceful transformation of the civil strife precipitated by the Arab Spring protests and the resignation of the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, but suffered from longstanding problems of poor governance and social and political exclusion. Alongside general geographic, gender, economic, and demographic causes of exclusion, exclusion issues related to the 1990 unification of the Republic of Yemen—comprised of the Yemen Arab Republic (in the north) and the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (in the south)—played an important role. The unequal terms of the unification, which combined two very different polities with well-entrenched political leaderships under a centralized government, rapidly led to a civil war, which was won by the Northern forces led by President Saleh in 1994. After the civil war, the marginalization of the South, as compared to the North, became more egregious. In addition, an essentially Zaydi Shia political confederacy from northwest Yemen, known as Ansar Allah (the “Supporters of God,” a.k.a. “the

Houthis,” after their late founder Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi), built a substantial base of supporters among those disenchanted with the corruption of the Saleh government and the economic marginalization of the north-western area around Sa’ada. This led to six rounds of major fighting between Houthi and central government forces between 2004 and 2011.

The hope, at least among international supporters of the NDC, including the United Nations, as well as core constituencies of the protests, such as women and youth, was that the NDC would bring about a new, inclusive political settlement for Yemen. The Yemeni NDC was concluded in January 2014, touted by UN Special Advisor on Yemen Jamal Benomar as “a model for comprehensive national dialogue, based on transparency, inclusivity, and active and meaningful participation of all political and social constituencies.”⁷ Yet, by late 2014, the country began spiraling into factional violence followed by a war involving neighboring Saudi Arabia and other countries from the region.

So why was the successfully-concluded Yemeni NDC not successfully implemented? The NDC was meant to be an inclusive and participatory response to the primarily elite deal negotiated and agreed to in November 2011 between northern, southern, and central elites, presided over by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). After a massive wave of protests in 2011, the November deal saw the resignation of President Saleh, his replacement by his deputy, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, and the formation of a Government of National Unity led by opposition groups, known as the Joint Meeting Party (JMP), and the General People’s Congress (GPC, Saleh and Hadi’s Party which had dominated politics in Yemen for decades). These deals reflected the preexisting configuration of elite politics in Yemen and excluded important constituencies central to the Arab Spring protests, including young people and women. However, this is not always a factor that prevents sustainable and inclusive solutions to political change from occurring. Exclusive elite deals have been followed by the successful implementation of inclusive transition processes in other countries, as seen, for



Ibrahim Qasim

Air strike in Sana'a

example, in the Solomon Islands from 2000 to 2013. This highlights the importance of articulating an inclusive *implementation* process in the initial, exclusive deal. In this regard, the NDC was started with the right goal. It was intended to be representative of the country's demographics, and not only of the politically powerful.

A Promising Design

To understand the successes of the NDC and the failure to implement them, we will first look at the NDC's process design followed by an analysis of the context in which the NDC took place. The Broadening Participation project identified the following design elements as crucial factors for successful achievement and implementation of such a transition process: the mandate of a Dialogue; the procedures put in place to select participants, conduct the dialogue, and make decisions; and the available support structures. How were these elements addressed in the Yemeni case?

The mandate of a National Dialogue refers to the specific objectives of the negotiation process, as well as the degree of authority delegated to the dialogue. The Gulf Cooperation Council Agreement, which set out the transition process in Yemen, mandated that the Yemeni NDC initiate an "open conversation about the future of the country."⁸ It was not mandated to draft or approve a new constitution. The GCC Agreement seems to suggest that the NDC findings would be taken into account as recommendations by the Constitutional Drafting Commission (CDC); in fact, this was what happened in practice, though the agreement was not explicit about how and to what extent the CDC would take into account the findings of the NDC. When the CDC was sworn in, they had to swear that

they would take into account all recommendations of the NDC in drafting the constitution and that the constitution would not go against any of the recommendations.

In terms of selection criteria for participation, the NDC operated on the basis of quotas, with 40 seats each allocated to youth, women, and civil society (i.e., each group would constitute 7.08 percent—and, together, 21+ percent—of the 565 NDC delegates), which were intended to be independent constituencies (though in practice this did not always occur). In addition, the (other) various political factions were to include representation of 50 percent southerners, 30 percent women, and 20 percent youth.⁹ All constituencies, even the predominantly northern-based Houthis, consented to these quota provisions as they conferred the moral weight of the status of national (rather than regional) political actors.

The Houthis received 35 seats; Islah, a political party formerly in the opposition, received 50; and al Hiraak, also known as the Southern Movement, received 85 seats. By comparison, the GPC received 112, and an additional 62 seats were allocated at President Hadi's discretion. These discretionary seats were used by Hadi to include important political figures in Yemen who did not fit into one of the main political parties, including tribal elders, senior civil servants, and members of the judiciary. It is important to note that all parties consented to the initial allocation of delegate spots to the NDC, so there is no evidence to suggest that the disparity in dialogue seats had any impact on the process.

The Yemeni NDC was an extensively inclusive body, though women and youth groups nonetheless felt unfairly marginalized by quotas less than what they had hoped for, and accused the process of having been

hijacked by traditional political elites. Selection of the independent constituencies was done by the Technical Preparatory Committee (TPC) for the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, which advertised throughout the country, saying there was going to be a number of seats reserved for each group. People then applied to be part of the conference, and there was a remarkable response with around 10,000 applications received in just two weeks.

Though some applications were clearly connected to better-known conflict and political parties, others were more genuinely representative of civil society and social networks. Given the proliferation of civil society groups and actors seeking access to the negotiations, as well as security issues and the deliberate attempts of some armed groups to access negotiations under the civil society banner, it was hard to determine the “independence” of some actors from conflict parties or others who were already represented. A TPC subcommittee of 10 went through the applications attempting to achieve representation from all 21 Governorates, as well as demographic balance and diverse geographic representation so as to ensure the widest degree of diversity and inclusion. The subcommittee selection process was conducted on a highly personal basis, and involved reading through applications and looking for family names that the committee members recognized from certain regions. The committee then looked deeper into these individuals, by calling personal contacts in these cities or regions to ask about the legitimacy of these individuals as civil society actors. Nevertheless, it is important to note that efforts to ensure the autonomy of independent constituencies were far from perfect, and the

political parties and other elites had a lot of say in the selection of the independents.

Decisionmaking procedures—the formal structure through which decisions are taken and a final outcome is reached—are a key factor in the design of negotiations. Decisionmaking procedures can negate the benefits of inclusion by sidelining included actors or marginalizing their contributions. For example, in almost all of the National Dialogues studied in the Broadening Participation project, despite widespread consultation with all groups, ultimate decision-making power rested with a small group of already powerful actors. The Yemeni NDC was unusual in this respect, in that decisionmaking was both based on consensus and binding. In terms of decisionmaking, the NDC was divided into nine Working Groups (WGs). While each WG could organize its own agenda and conduct of discussions, decisionmaking was to be by NDC “consensus” defined, in the first round, as no more than 10 percent of delegates objecting, and, should there be need for a second round, by a vote of 75 percent in favor. Seventy-five percent of the members of the “the Southern Issue” working group were “southerners,” 50 percent of whom were from the Southern Hiraq constituency—an effort aimed at ensuring that southerners concurred with any decision specifically affecting their status and situation.

Another important process factor identified by the Broadening Participation project was the presence of support structures for included actors. The Political Development Forum, a small Yemeni NGO, set up a joint “1.5 track”¹⁰ forum, entitled the “National Dialogue Support Program,” together with the Berghof Foundation, in order to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders after the signing

of the GCC Initiative Agreement. Their National Dialogue Support Program can be considered track 1.5, as it enjoyed high-level participation, including several former Yemeni Prime Ministers. Moreover, it set up various local dialogue networks, which were later utilized by the NDC working groups for regional public meetings.

Considering these factors, the Yemeni NDC seemed well set up to allow included actors to have substantial influence. Indeed, women, youth, and civil society constituencies, had they operated as cohesive blocs, would have had veto power over the consensus position for each of the WGs, except for the WG on the Southern Issue. This is an unusually high degree of influence to be given to such constituencies, as compared to other National Dialogues. The Broadening Participation project, through researching 22 cases, found that National Dialogues often struggle to make the transition from consultations and recommendations to concrete policy action because of a lack of clear decisionmaking procedures. This allows already powerful elites to simply ignore the outcomes of National Dialogues, or undermine them in the implementation stage.

The NDC was brought to a close on January 21, 2014. Hadi's decision to close the dialogue occurred in the context of a longer than expected dialogue process and the assassination of Ahmed Sharaf al-Din, a law professor and member of the Houthi delegation, on the final day of the conference, prompting the withdrawal of Houthi delegates. The Yemeni NDC's recommendations, which numbered over 1,800, included a variety of inclusive policies. While some have criticized the vision of a federal structure in which the South only received two states to the North's four, this was nevertheless a landmark achievement of

power-sharing in the region and in Yemen. The commitment to equal North/South representation in the parliament and the military was also an important inclusive policy. In addition, women and other delegates in favor of a gender quota in the Yemeni government were able to secure the endorsement of a recommendation in the NDC Outcome Document that at least 30 percent of those serving in all levels of government be women.

The recommendations of the NDC were then submitted to the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), which was smaller and less inclusive than the NDC. Hadi allocated the 17 seats in the committee personally, and most seats went to representatives of Islah and the GPC parties, while the Houthis were excluded. Prior to the CDC, Hadi convened a small committee to settle the issue of the federal structure of the Yemeni state. This became a subject of extensive debate and dispute in the Southern Working Group and resulted in the establishment of a 16-person North-South committee (also known as the 8+8) to resolve the deadlock.¹¹ The North-South committee was also unable to resolve the dispute about the structure of a federal Yemeni state; however, it was able to secure an in-principle commitment to federalism. The federal structure subsequently proposed by Hadi's specially convened committee did not grant the Houthis' political strongholds in the Governorates of Amran, Sa'ada, and Dhamar, access to Yemen's oil and gas resources, or access to the sea.¹² The Houthis perceived this as yet another move to marginalize them; they responded with an insurgency against the central government and seized the capital of Sana'a in September of 2014.

As of late 2015, Yemen is divided between multiple claimants to executive authority: the

Houthis, who currently occupy the capital Sana'a, a coalition made up of the exiled Hadi government, as well as a variety of international backers including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt. The Houthis forces are supported by Iran and are currently allied with militia groups loyal to former president Saleh. The conflict between these factions has already claimed nearly 6,000 lives and caused a humanitarian crisis in Southern Yemen. Peace talks between the two sides may soon take place in Geneva, accompanied by a ceasefire.

Challenges to an Inclusive Settlement and Its Implementation

How, with this in mind, can we evaluate the successes and failures of the Yemeni NDC, in the context of the overall transition process? The experience of the Yemeni NDC reveals important lessons about the difficulty of converting inclusive dialogues and negotiations into an inclusive and sustainable political settlement. Inclusive agreements may fail in the implementation phase and generally do so due to either weaknesses in the design of the process, or adverse context factors which have not been offset in the negotiations. Problems arose for the NDC at three points. First, the NDC had some internal process design flaws. Second, the overarching transition process, of which the NDC was a part, was insufficiently inclusive. Third, there were a number of adverse contextual factors that were exacerbated by or not addressed in the transition process. The main contextual factors that were not addressed were the lack of full cooperation and commitment of major political elites in the country, the political interests of regional actors, as well as diminishing public support over time.

Despite the good overall process design, there were a number of process flaws. First, despite the quota system, Southern representation was problematic: the al Hiraak faction was treated as a political party in the selection procedures for the NDC, analogous to the GPC; whereas, in reality it is more of a leaderless political movement. Due to the difficulties in applying an internal nomination process in a factionalized and acephalous movement, the al Hiraak constituency was in effect chosen by Hadi.¹³ This substantially undermined the legitimacy of Southern representation in the NDC. It also meant that the al Hiraak representatives that signed the North-South committee's "just solution"—a document affirming a commitment to a federal structure of the Yemeni state—were not in a position to guarantee the support of the entire al Hiraak movement, as the "hardliners" represented the majority of the South, whereas the "moderates" were close to Hadi.

Second, included actors did not use the full extent of the influence they were given. Even though the "independent" included actors in the Yemeni NDC (young people, women, and civil society) technically constituted a potential veto bloc, they were unable to agree on more than a narrow range of issues during the negotiations. This limited the capacity of these groups to wield influence over the negotiations. Given that the "independent" actors arrived only shortly before the beginning of the process and came from all over the country with different political backgrounds, the formation of genuine "constituencies" with common interests was difficult. The Broadening Participation project found that the capacity of included actors to reach a common position on issues of importance depends on the overall level of capacity and

preparedness of included actors, as well as the existence of social polarization or (non-)cohesion. Nevertheless, common positioning can be supported by the provision of preparatory workshops that bring together diverse groups of included actors. Such workshops did in fact occur in the lead-up to the Yemeni NDC; however, they were of a very short duration. This is, unfortunately, a common feature of preparatory workshops, in which a wide variety of diverse actors are asked to build trust and cohesion in a period ranging from a single afternoon to a week. Another weakness in process design relates to the selection of representatives of the independent constituencies, as political factions worked hard to stack these constituencies with their own supporters (apparently with at least some success).

Third, the level of discretion afforded to Hadi in the process may have facilitated a strategic miscalculation: the marginalization of the Houthis in the post-NDC federal structure of the state.¹⁴ It is possible that had the NDC itself maintained control over the design of the federal structure of the Yemeni state, despite the difficulties experienced in reaching compromise on this issue, the marginalization of the Houthis might have been avoided. Additionally, the prior allocation of delegates by the Technical Committee to Prepare for the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference had the effect of fixing the relative power of the various armed parties within the NDC, completely independent of the changing realities of military power on the ground.



Al Jazeera English

Yemeni protestors, August 2011.

Fourth, the designers of the process may have been overly focused on the NDC, at the expense of the broader political transition context. In the approximately three years between Saleh's resignation and the conclusion of the NDC, most of the important political positions in the country remained divided among the former elites. This was a product of the elite GCC Agreement. President Hadi was Saleh's former deputy, and the transitional government was divided between Saleh's GPC and the former opposition coalition, with its most prominent member being al-Islah, a firm ally of the Saleh regime for decades. In stark contrast with the National Dialogue process, neither the non-elite political factions (the Houthis, al Hiraak, etc.) nor the independent constituencies were given a role in the transitional government. Hadi's transitional government was reportedly more corrupt and dysfunctional than even that of the Saleh regime.¹⁵ Infighting between governing factions meant services were not delivered, contributing to growing public alienation from the central government and the increasing power of alternative governing structures throughout the country, including the Houthis.¹⁶ This experience illustrates the importance of thinking holistically about process design and context in political transitions. Even considering the extensively inclusive negotiation process taking place in the NDC, the experience of the majority of Yemenis between 2011 and 2014 was of everyday governance, not of ambitious political negotiations. A transitional arrangement which excluded most constituencies aside from the political elite and continued the same corrupt governing practices that had precipitated the collapse of the previous regime was unlikely to be able to maintain the confidence of the population over three years.

The political influence of regional actors is decisive for peace and transition processes and has often been more important than that of other international actors.¹⁷ This is especially true when regional actors feel that their core national interests are at stake. The Yemeni NDC was itself a regional initiative formed in a partnership between the United Nations, which was concerned about the potential for a weakened and fractured Yemeni state becoming a haven for extremist organizations, and the six countries of the regional Gulf Cooperation Council. This regional coalition had two important negative impacts on the process. First, during the early stages of the transition, the Gulf States were more focused on political unrest at home—as well on the more strategically important countries of Egypt, Iraq, and Syria—and remained less than involved in the ongoing process in Yemen. Second, major regional power Saudi Arabia had two goals in the transition that added complexity to the negotiations. Saudi Arabia has an uneasy relationship with its own Shia minority population, and with Shia powers in the region, and was anxious about the emergence of a Zaydi Shia Houthi-governed federal region bordering its own Shia-majority territories in the South. The Houthi insurgency also became entangled in the longstanding contest between Iran and Saudi Arabia for regional influence.

Conclusion

The Yemeni NDC is a landmark National Dialogue due to its substantial and careful elaboration, the high initial hopes for its success, and its highly inclusive design and process in a context where political exclusion had been a longstanding norm. The Yemeni NDC is also a prominent reference point in the

experience of many peacebuilding professionals. Beyond Yemen, the National Dialogue format remains prominent and continues to be vested with hope as a way of achieving a more inclusive political settlement in a variety of contexts, with national dialogue projects being proposed or underway in Myanmar, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Nigeria, Ukraine, and Lebanon. Therefore, it is important to arrive at a clear picture of what went wrong in the Yemeni NDC, as well as of its strengths. The most important question is whether a differently designed National Dialogue process, or an alternative negotiation format, could have produced a stable and more democratic political settlement in Yemen. This article illustrates that there were several core points of contention among the major armed parties to the negotiations. These were related to the issues of federalism versus secession, and the regional distribution of power in the new Yemeni state. We argue that the design of the dialogue and the overall process was not sufficient to allow the various factions in Yemen to reach a consensus on these issues. In addition, the focus on a highly inclusive National Dialogue was not accompanied by attention to the dysfunctional and elite nature of ongoing government in Yemen, which cost the transition process public support.

These weaknesses aside, the outcomes of the Yemeni NDC remain an important moral weight in the country, and the 2014 constitution is likely to be an important aspect of any future political transition. It is crucial to safeguard the gains of the process as next steps to come in Yemen. Further, the Yemeni NDC process demonstrates that the empowerment of actors marginalized for decades is a long-term project that often encounters setbacks in the

short-term. The focus of attention should, therefore, be on creating not only the process, but also the political conditions (i.e., the power) for influential participation of marginalized actors. Hence, continued efforts to support the vitality of Yemeni civil society and democratic constituencies still have the potential to bear fruit. **PRISM**

Notes

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² Results are drawn from the project "Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation" (2011-2015). The data from the project is now housed at the Inclusive Peace and Transitions Initiative also at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. The case study phase of the project was conducted in cooperation with Dr. Esra Çuhadar at Bilkent University in Ankara; case study research additionally benefitted from a cooperation with Tufts University in Boston. A special word of thanks goes to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources for ongoing advice to the project.

³ Frances Stewart, *Horizontal inequalities as a cause of conflict: a review of CRISE findings* (Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity at Oxford University, 2010).

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⁵ Alina Rocha Menocal, *Inclusive political settlements: evidence, gaps, and challenges of institutional transformation* (Birmingham: International Development Department at the University of Birmingham, 2015): 13.

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⁷ "Senior UN official congratulates Yemen on concluding National Dialogue," *UN News Centre*, January 21, 2014, <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46975#.VIR2KHArQgs>>.

⁸ “Agreement on the implementation mechanism for the transition process in Yemen in accordance with the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC),” unofficial translation of the original Arabic text, Paragraph 15.G (2011). <http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/YE_111205_Agreement%20on%20the%20implementation%20mechanism%20for%20the%20transition.pdf>.

⁹ Individuals could contribute to multiple quotas. Hence, one person could be young, female, and a southerner, and would be able to contribute to each of the allocated quotas. Therefore, theoretically, there could be as many as 50 percent “non-quota” seats.

¹⁰ High-level problem-solving workshops (track 1.5) typically bring together representatives close to the leaders of the conflict parties. These workshops can take place prior to, or in parallel with, official negotiations and they generally aim to help parties reach compromises on positions that had previously been viewed as non-negotiable.

¹¹ The possibility of special committees within the working groups was provided for in the architecture of the NDC.

¹² Noel Brehony, “Yemen and the Huthis: Genesis of the 2015 Crisis,” *Asian Affairs* 46, no. 2 (2015): 243.

¹³ Interview conducted by Thania Paffenholz and Nick Ross with John Parker, a member of the UN Standby Team of Mediation Experts.

¹⁴ Interview conducted by Thania Paffenholz and Nick Ross with a member of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development who is familiar with the situation on the ground in Yemen and wished to remain anonymous.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Thania Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peacebuilding,” in *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Thania Paffenholz (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010), 43-64; Thania Paffenholz, “Briefing Paper: Broadening Participation Project,” The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies’ Centre on Conflict, Development, and Peacebuilding (March 2015), <<http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/sites/ccdp/shared/Docs/Publications/briefingpaper-broader%20participation.pdf>>.

Photos

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