



THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF CANADA

CANADA IN THE WORLD:
YOUTH DIALOGUE ON WOMEN ,
PEACE, AND SECURITY

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PEACE, AND SECURITY



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Canada in the World: Youth Dialogue on Women, Peace, and Security
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	5
Women, Security, and the United Nations and NATO	6
Health and Development Programming in Fragile States: Advancing or Ignoring Women’s and Girls’ Health.....	8
Understanding the Contradictions of the Islamist <i>Jihad</i>	11
Female Radicalization, the <i>Islamic State</i> , and International Security: An Opportunity	14
Victimization and Agency: Exploring Media Profiles and Public Perceptions of Female Chechen Suicide Bombers	17
Confounding War & Security: The Gendered Militarization of International Relations Post-9/11	19
Leading by Example: Female Officers in the Canadian Forces and NATO Militaries	23
Gender Equality? Analyzing Women’s Agency in the Israeli Defense Forces	25
The Defence Gender Gap Extends Beyond the Military	26
Mothers & Wives: Women’s Roles in Countering Violent Extremism	28
The Overlooked Ally. Engaging Afghan Women: Failures and Lessons	31

INTRODUCTION

In the Post-Cold War era, Western military structures have strived to be more accepting of people of all genders. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325, on women, peace, and security, passed at the turn of the new millennium, reaffirms the importance of women's roles in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacekeeping and humanitarian responses, and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of the opportunity for the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Despite major gains in the last two decades, women continue to experience structural barriers to total inclusivity in Western security structures. This proves true of the roles of women in both state and non-state security organizations, including western military structures, non-state militant structures including Islamist terror networks, and the Ukrainian and Crimean grassroots pro-sovereignty movements. The Atlantic Council of Canada's Youth Dialogue on Women, Peace, and Security puts forward the notion that the failure of Western security structures to take into account the roles of women stems from a cultural and societal refusal to treat women as legitimate and independent political actors.

It will explore this failure through studies on the perception of women, and their experiences, as policymakers in national governments, as agents of Islamist terror, as participants in international peacekeeping and peacemaking missions, as agents of post-war reconstruction; and the use of the symbolic role of women as mothers and daughters of the nation to both justify and condemn political violence. In so doing, The Youth Dialogue on Women, Peace, and Security hopes to present a cross-structural analysis of women's varied roles in maintaining and challenging international security structures.

The Atlantic Council of Canada firmly believes that addressing today's challenges requires meaningful engagement with, and cultivation of Canada's next generation of leaders. In the spirit of a true dialogue, the Atlantic Council of Canada encourages all readers to send comments and responses to info@atlantic-council.ca. All messages will be promptly forwarded to the appropriate author.

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Women, Security, and the United Nations and NATO

Zaid Al-Nassir

During the 1990s, following civil wars that devastated Rwanda, Bosnia, and West Africa, concern over the negative impact of war on women swept through the NGO community.¹ As a result, intensified NGO lobbying and the timely action of members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), most notably Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah (Namibia) and Anwarul Chowdhury (Bangladesh), led to the submission and subsequent adoption of landmark Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) on October 31, 2000.² October 2015 marked the 15th anniversary of the resolution, but UNSC 1325 is still far from achieving its goals in a manner that corresponds with the true needs and capabilities of women in conflict-ridden regions.

Resolution 1325 sheds light on how war has a different impact on women than it does on men. It specifically emphasizes the participation of women "at all levels of peace and security governance including prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peace building"; the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence in "conflict and post-conflict settings"; the prevention of violence against women through the endorsement of "gender equality, accountability and justice"; and integrating a "gendered lens" to relief and recovery efforts.³

I. The Problem With the UNSC

Having monitored the Security Council's 2013/2014 sessions, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG), the very same organization that forcefully lobbied for Resolution 1325 in the 1990s, released a brief outlining trends it detected in the Council with regards to that resolution. The brief, titled Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council: 2013-14 (MWPS), found that the council made some drastic improvements in integrating women into peace and security processes in specific "country situations and within several thematic agenda items". Nevertheless, it identified a general "inconsistency in the Council's discussion of gender". This inconsistency, the brief states, is apparent throughout all phases of the Council's procedure, beginning with the initial information provided to the Council by the UN system, to the discussion based on that information and the proposed action and implementation of agenda items.

Initially, MWPS found that the agenda regarding women's incorporation into conflict settings was not

"truly internalized". This was demonstrated through a lack of debate on women in countries during crisis, despite the inclusion of such discussion in those very same countries in the absence of conflict. "When addressing a crisis..." the brief states, "discussions in the Council become blind to gender" but return to gendered dialogue "only when the focus shifts towards peace building". This ultimately conveys a belief (be it tacit or explicit) that women's roles should be restricted solely to post-conflict situations.

Similarly, the brief discusses the implementation of the participation aspects of the WPS agenda. It concluded that the Council had utilized an all-encompassing method in Afghanistan, Libya, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire by highlighting the "need for women's participation in peace processes, conflict prevention and peace building," and still maintaining the necessity of "protecting and promoting women's rights and preventing...sexual or gender based violence". However, these particular country situations were the only exemplary instances of a "balanced approach to the implementation" of the WPS programme, displaying a serious lack of commitment to the imperative role of women in every stage of conflicts everywhere.

Furthermore, MWPS found that engagement with local civil society organizations, an increasingly essential aspect of conflict settings, was also approached in a manner which did not prioritize women's roles therein. Establishing connections with local women's organizations is "not referenced or identified as a priority...and women's rights defenders are increasingly targeted, and their rights impinged upon" with negligible acknowledgment from the Council of the importance of maintaining functioning protective measures. In addition, the brief contends that the Council must fortify its operational mechanism by employing all its resources, including commission of inquiry, sanctions and cooperation with regional organizations" to endorse women's participation in decision-making, their protection in conflicts, and their crucial contributions to conflict prevention.

Each of the trends identified above by MWPS cannot be addressed without proper financial backing or an appropriate commitment of human resources. However, the brief identified that while "the Council strengthened the language in several mandates", "commensurate resources, both human and financial" were not provided in proportion with the strength of policy language. This

lack of resource allocation, alone, is a clear indication of the Council's insufficient commitment to the WPS agenda, as it drastically diminishes the capabilities available to address women's role in peace and conflict situations.

II. Proposed Solutions

Given the findings of the brief, and the clear lack of understanding and commitment towards achieving the goals designated 15 years ago in Resolution 1325, MWPS makes a few recommendations to "the UN system, the Security Council and all Member States....in order to meet their obligations". First, it proposes a "high-level political leadership in the UN system," with sufficient human and financial resources to ensure the implementation of all aspects of the WPS agenda. Second, it recommends a "follow-up process," whereby frequent and regular reviews are undertaken, specifically for the "core peace and security elements of the agenda", and improved streams of information are established to guarantee transparency and accountability. Third, the brief emphasizes the significance of the WPS agenda not only within the UNSC, but throughout the UN system and other international actors such as NATO and the World Bank. To that end, it recommends such actors undertake "capacity training and funding" to regulate and endorse the broad integration of women in all phases of conflict settings.

Additionally, the brief suggests including explicit analyses on women's security concerns in briefings from senior UN officials, producing critical reports that "reflect the reality of women's rights and the full scope of the WPS agenda", as opposed to broad information and activity briefings. It also proposes cooperating with local women's civil society organizations on a regular and more frequent basis, and "fully integrating WPS in [the UNSC field missions'] Terms of Reference" by meeting women who have been directly influenced by the conflict or crisis at hand.

III. NATO and UNSCR Resolution 1325

NATO has taken many steps towards the integration of resolution 1325 at every level of its operations. Developed in tandem with the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 2007, NATO's policy on implementing Resolution 1325 depends on adopting policy frameworks and working mechanisms.⁴ The establishment of the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative on Women, Peace and Security in 2012 as a permanent position, is one of many significant strides taken by NATO to further the causes of Resolution 1325 in its structure.

In addition, NATO has worked towards removing barriers that prevent the active involvement of women in NATO's defence and security institutions. It has also worked with its allies and partners to integrate gender perspective into policies with regards to the prevention and resolution of conflict. Crucially, as emphasized by MWPS, NATO has involved local civil societies, specifically women's organizations, and stressed the inclusion of a gender perspective in its conflict analysis and mission planning.⁵

Furthermore, NATO has emphasized the importance of improving the gender balance within personnel deployments, as well as the need to "provide direction" on how to react to sexual and gender-based violence.

During the 2014 Wales Summit, the participating heads of states and governments committed to furthering the WPS agenda, stating that they "attach great importance to ensuring women's full and active participation in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts, as well as in post-conflict efforts and cooperation". In that same declaration, it was made clear that NATO is committed to Resolution 1325 through policy, action plans, and regular progress reports. While NATO has made some commendable strides towards the integration of women in every stage of its operations, there is still much work to be done. Failing to recognize and manage the unique impact that conflicts have on women, and the distinctive role that women can play in conflict and post-conflict settings, is bound to impair global efforts to maintain an acceptable level of international security. Given the current state of world affairs, it is becoming clearer that the threat posed by extremist religious fundamentalist ideologies, such as those of ISIL, Boko Haram, and Al Qaeda, which are gaining ground all over the world, is not one we can battle solely with airstrikes and firearms. At no other time has the need to maintain international security been of such significance as it does today. With that goal in mind, it becomes quite obvious that by failing to support the WPS agenda, we are placing a significant obstacle in our own path to prosperity. Therefore, a commitment to the precepts of Resolution 1325 must be made a priority in order to guarantee the integration of women in conflict resolution and prevention.

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Health and Development Programming in Fragile States: Advancing or Ignoring Women's and Girls' Health?

Aanjalie Collure

In the past few decades, numerous states, civil society organizations, and advocates have insisted that women's and girls' universal access to essential health services is a basic and indispensable human right that ought to be prioritized, regardless of context. In 2004, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) stressed the importance of ensuring reproductive health services and information be indiscriminately available at both times of peace and war. Later, in 2000, the Beijing+5 document reiterated numerous government commitments aimed at advancing women's equality while paying particular attention to "violence against women, health, trafficking, human rights and armed conflict".¹ Despite such supportive rhetoric at international forums, however, women's and girls' accessibility to reliable and safe health services has been persistently undermined and under-prioritized. Indeed, with recent statistics reminding us that women and girls constitute nearly 80% of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees globally,² it seems inexcusable to de-prioritize their health-related concerns as ancillary—or even secondary—components of health and development programming in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Prevailing gaps in health and development programming in fragile states must be addressed to ensure healthy livelihoods for all women, regardless of the harsh circumstances they may face.

I. Women's Health in War

For the purposes of this article, I will be focusing my attention on the experiences of civilian, non-combatant women and girls in times of armed conflict and civil unrest. I will narrow in on gender-specific health needs (including, for example, obstetrics and gender-specific reproductive health services such as abortion), and vio-

lations, which, while certainly affecting both women and men, often have a statistically higher prevalence of female victims.

As tragically summarized in a report by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), reproductive health indicators in conflict-affected states are some of the worst in the world. According to the report, the emotional and economic impacts of conflict and displacement often result in dangerous levels of stress and malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women.³

Maternal health concerns are often compounded by the crippling of health systems during conflict and the flight of skilled health personnel, including midwives, skilled birth attendants, OB/GYNs, ambulance drivers and other health workers. For example, the looting and flight of health workers in several areas of the western region of the Central African Republic due to ongoing military strife, has resulted in a situation where there exist no functioning health facilities outside the state capital of Bangui, with the exception of those provided by humanitarian organizations.⁴

As seen most recently in Syria, South Sudan, Ukraine, Gaza/Israel and elsewhere, regular attacks on health workers; the looting of medical equipment, medicines and ambulances; and the bombing and military occupation of health facilities have all severely disrupted the availability of consistent care.⁵ Although few studies have been conducted on the gendered impacts of attacks on health care, the absence of reliable and consistent health services is likely to be particularly detrimental for pregnant mothers who require constant monitoring during the continuum of maternal care; and women using oral contraceptives and HIV/AIDS medications whose prescriptions must be routinely refilled. Furthermore, the forced closure of certain transport routes and borders by

local militaries and militias has made it particularly difficult for local health clinics and humanitarian aid organizations to access commodities such as birth control pills, injectable contraceptives like Depo-Provera, and condoms which may otherwise be provided by outside partners.⁶

Consequently, the closure of public health facilities, the absence of skilled health workers, and the unavailability of modern contraceptive methods during times of war contributes to many women's reliance on unsafe pregnancy management, birth control and abortion methods. This was especially true in Burma, where many women routinely relied on home remedies from the local market as the major methods of family planning and pregnancy termination during the war, including "drinking alcohol, inserting sticks and other objects into the uterus and severe pelvic plummeling".⁷

Devastating rates of gender-based violence have also had enormous ramifications on women's health during war and unrest, including rape and sexual assault, female genital mutilation, forced prostitution, and the sexual trafficking of women and girls. In many contexts, women and girls have been systemically targeted where rape and sexual assault have been used as weapons of war designed to erode the family and community structures of the enemy.⁸ The high burden of sexual warfare on women has been noted by the UN in numerous conflicts: between 100,000 and 250,000 women were reportedly raped during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, more than 60,000 women during the civil war in Sierra Leone (1991-2002), more than 40,000 in Liberia (1989-2003), and at least 200,000 since 1998 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁹

Additionally, an increased demand for commercial sex workers has gone hand-in-hand with the rise of conflict; it has been largely addressed by the "sexual, physical, and economic exploitation" of women and girls, both by force and choice.¹⁰ In many contexts, this demand has been driven by both civilian and military men who have been separated from their families as a result of displacement and war, but also by foreign, "predominantly adult male" peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers who have frequently relied on paid sex workers for emotional and sexual comfort in traumatic settings.¹¹ In addition to forced prostitution, Cathy Groenendijk, the Director of *Confident Children Out of Conflict*, explains that orphaned IDP girls as young as 12 years old in South Sudan "are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation", with nearly 31% of 159 surveyed street girls entering the commercial sex trade in Juba alone.

Similarly, although limited research exists on the prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM) in emergency settings, a landmark study by *Too Many*, an organization working with African and Asian refugee camps, asserts that FGM is indeed a targeted and widespread issue for women and girls in these contexts.¹³ In *Too Many's* Nigerian case studies, IDP girls have reported having to undergo forced FGM procedures "to prepare them for prostitution, which was their only means of survival".¹⁴ Furthermore, in conflict-affected countries like Somalia where depleted government resources and poor inter-agency coordination is endemic, fewer effective, "multi-year and goal-oriented" anti-FGM campaigns have been enacted when compared with non-conflict countries such as Tanzania.¹⁵

These grave human rights violations and high-risk behaviors have enormous ramifications on the psychological and reproductive health of women and girls, and perhaps can be best illustrated by the high incidence of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), especially HIV/AIDS, during times of conflict.¹⁶ Female genital mutilation has also been associated with numerous overlooked obstetric complications, and can exacerbate sexual health complications should the woman be subjected to future rape or sexual assault — an unfortunately common occurrence in these contexts.¹⁷

Participation in the commercial sex trade is often unregulated in conflict-affected countries, resulting in a poor adherence to the use of contraceptives to prevent STI transmission by female sex worker. Low-end South Sudanese brothels, where younger girls often work, reportedly earn an average of \$10 USD a day — often too little to pay for basic food and shelter, let alone condoms and other consumables necessary for preventing STIs. The stigmatization often faced by victims of gender-based violence may further jeopardize the emotional and mental health of these women, resulting in high rates of PTSD, depression, self-harm, and suicide by female refugees.¹⁸

In a sample survey of Afghan mothers in two refugee camps in northwest Pakistan, 36% of surveyed women demonstrated common mental disorders, with 91% of those women experiencing suicidal thoughts in the previous month.¹⁹ These physical, sexual and psychological health outcomes of gender-based violence are staggering, but often poorly addressed.

II. Meeting Women's Health Needs in Fragile States

How have first responders sought to address the health concerns of women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected states? Some significant progress has been made in addressing these needs. The *Inter-Agency Working Group of Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations (IAWG)* underscored the importance of refugee camps to include "family planning, safe motherhood and emergency obstetrics; the prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence; and the prevention and treatment of STIs, including HIV/AIDS" as central to the reproductive health package provided in these settings.²⁰

Similarly, the WHO's New Emergency Health Kit-98 (NEHK-98) includes equipment for "safe deliveries and management of obstetric emergencies, infection control, and treatment for victims of sexual violence. The UN-FPA Reproductive Health Kit for Emergency Situations similarly contains condoms, oral and injectable contraceptives, emergency contraception methods for rape victims, and manual vacuum aspiration tools to treat post-abortion problems."²¹

As it stands, however, huge gaps remain in meeting these needs. The politicization of access to contraceptives and abortions has meant that numerous NGOs deny reproductive health services to the communities they serve, and have undermined the efforts of others to provide such services.²² A denial of access to safe abortion services and family planning information not only ignores women's needs following sexual violence, but also neglects the individual reproductive choices of women in refugee camps.

As discussed by *Marie Stopes International*, numerous surveys of women in refugee camps have revealed that the intentions of women in conflict situations differ drastically. While some women hope to delay pregnancy or prevent future childbearing altogether, others do hope to get pregnant.²³ Tailoring family planning services to women's self-identified needs are essential to preventing women from seeking unsafe alternative methods. Furthermore, many countries' disabling health worker tasksharing guidelines, such as those that limit the administration of tubal ligation procedures and contraceptive injections to doctors and nurses, also hinders the availability of these services in conflict-affected settings where there are chronic shortages of these skilled professionals.²⁴

Lastly, often when longer-term reproductive services and education services are provided, they are delayed to

the "second" or "third phase" of emergency health services provided in refugee camps and conflict-affected areas.²⁵ This is largely due to widespread assumptions that there is poor demand and great sensitivity surrounding the provision of these services.²⁶ However, according to a study conducted in northern Uganda from 2007-2010, modern contraceptive use increased from 7.1% to 22.6%, and increased long-acting family planning methods became more popular (from 1.2% to 9.8%). This study illustrates that women's demand for these reproductive health services in fragile states grows when these services are made readily available and easily accessible.

The poor funding of, and lack of prioritization for, psychosocial interventions in conflict-affected settings, further deprives many women and girls of the counselling and mental health support they need. In 2010, an analysis of emergency-response activities funded by the *Canadian International Development Agency* concluded that "not only is child protection badly funded, it is neither understood nor prioritized within emergency responses".²⁷ Upon reflection of the large numbers of young girls that have experienced gender-based violence and sexual trauma in conflict-affected settings, it becomes evident that this under-funding is no longer acceptable.

III. A Major Humanitarian and Global Health Priority

The unique health challenges faced by women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected states must be met with ardent efforts to address sexual violence, strengthen and protect health systems, and prioritize services integral to the self-identified needs of women and girls in these contexts. Further research on women's desire for, and accessibility to, reproductive health services in these situations is essential to informing evidence-based policies aimed at dispelling assumptions and standardizing processes. With negotiations for the UN post-2015 agenda currently underway, and regional consultations for the first-ever UN Humanitarian Summit continuing this year, the global community faces a critical opportunity to ensure that women's health in fragile states is prioritized in global humanitarian and health activities.

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Understanding the Contradictions of the Islamist Jihad

Kabir Bhatia

Jihad as political activity is riddled by moral, philosophical, and jurisprudential contradiction. Not only does the Islamist *Jihad* fail to display legitimacy according to international law and Just War doctrine, *Jihadist* political change violates the basic tenets of non-violence outlined in the *Quran*. Rather than wage war against the Hegelian *Other*, the *Jihadi* would be more apt to self-annihilate, and in the process overcome the contradiction posed by the Capitalist world order.

I. *Jihad* as a Universal Movement

Jihad has entered into our modern lexicon as a term used to describe an act of religiously-motivated violence waged on the enemies of Islam in an effort to usher in a new political order governed by *Sharia*, or Islamic law. It can be used to refer to a physical (external) struggle, as well as a mental and spiritual (internal) struggle. The motivation for physical *Jihad* tends towards the imposition of a divinely-sanctioned world order free of the sins

of modern-day "Babylon" by means of martyrdom, interpreted by *Jihadis* as an act of cleansing and rebirth.

The moral contradictions of those who believe in physical *Jihad* are evident from the outset. A *Jihadi* conceptualization of Islam, which translates to peace in Arabic, calls for the violent exertion of power over the political *Other* through *Jihad*, in order to attain a state of non-violence governed by Islamic ideals.

The modern-day *Jihadi* movement fails to recognize Just War principles, which are essential to 'legitimate' warfare. A contemporary understanding of Just War Doctrine, as developed out of *Catechism* 2309 of the Catholic Church, necessitates four key pre-conditions for a Just War. First, "the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain. Secondly, "all other means of putting an end [to the threat posed by the enemy] must have been shown to be impractical and ineffective". Thirdly,

"there must be serious prospects of success". Finally, "the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated".

The *Quran* itself contains a number of passages on Just War, of which two are particularly important. First, in Chapter 17 verse 33, the *Quran* specifically condemns taking the life of another "which God has made sacred—except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, We [God] have given his heir authority (to demand retaliation or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life, for he is helped (by the Law)".¹ Additionally, in Chapter 22 verse 39, 'just death' is defined as that which "is given to those upon whom war is made because [the war makers] are oppressed [by the form made because [the war makers] are oppressed [by the former], and most surely *Allah* [God] is well able to assist them". In failing to limit the act of war to an identifiable political enemy and instead targeting the whole of Western civilization, waging war without a foreseeable end, and carrying out acts of terror which outweigh the benefits of an Islamic *caliphate*, the *Jihadi* movement fails to display legitimacy according to both Western conceptions of Just War as well as Islamic jurisprudence.

Philosophically speaking, the Islamist *Jihad* can never succeed due to its preoccupation with the total annihilation of the political *Other* (including the *Other's* worldview, philosophy, politico-economic system, religion, etc.). According to the Hegelian dialectic, without the *Other* there can be no *Subject*, as the *Subject* requires the presence of the *Other* in order to define his own identity. That is to say, the Islamist is only the Islamist because he is not a Capitalist, a Christian, a Jew, a moderate Muslim, an atheist, etc., and he rejects Western democratic values. Therefore, without Christianity, Judaism, and Western democracy can be no Islamist.

II. The Particulars of the Female *Jihad*

Raised an Irish Catholic, Samantha Lewthwaite, aged 30, led an inconspicuous life in the pastoral haven of Buckinghamshire, England with her husband Germaine Lindsay, and their four children. The daughter of a British army veteran who dedicated his life to fighting IRA extremists in Northern Ireland, Lewthwaite is suspected of being the mastermind behind the four-day gun and bomb attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, which led to the deaths of an estimated 67 people and scores of other casualties. To this day, Lewthwaite is on the run from Interpol and Scotland Yard, and is wanted for questioning in over 200 countries. She has recently been reported to be fighting in Syria for the *Islamic State* where she is suspected of training a female

suicide bomber squad.

Lewthwaite converted to Islam at the age of 17, and has been identified as one of *Al Qaeda's* main recruiters in East Africa, according to sources in the *Al-Qaeda* affiliated Somali terror group *Al Shabaab*. Known colloquially as the "Black Widow", Lewthwaite's association with Islamist *Jihad* can be traced back to the attacks on the London Underground in 2005, when her husband and three other *Jihadists* blew themselves up, along with 26 other transit passengers, in what was infamously dubbed the 7/7 attacks. Like the notorious Chechen Black Widows who emerged from the Second Chechen War, and the female suicide bombers of the Second Gulf War and the Second *Intifada*, Lewthwaite's decision to wage Islamic *Jihad*, or armed struggle 'for the cause,' is both fascinating and deeply disturbing.

While the Lebanese terrorist group *Hezbollah* has been using female suicide bombers since the 1980s to guard Lebanon against encroachment from the Israeli state, female martyrdom remains a fairly alien concept to Islamic *Jihad*. According to Mia Bloom, "between 1985 and 2006, there have been [only]... 220 women suicide bombers, representing about 15 per cent of the total".² This is due to the deep contradictions that female *Jihad* presents to the movement. Dorit Naaman of Queen's University states that Islamism generally adopts a misogynistic fundamentalist interpretation of Islam that constructs female identity as inherently non-violent and espouses that a woman's place is in the home. Female martyrdom, thereby, forces a re-evaluation of the nature and role of women in Islam from that of submissive and passive, to possessing the potential for assertion and even aggression.³

According to the writings of Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek, female suicide attacks would act as subjectively violent activity on the objectively (non-)violent symbolic order of Islam, which includes the politico-economic system mandated by the religion. Zizek would claim that fundamentalism is a response to the loss of the symbolic balance of Islam as a result of its confrontation with western modernity.⁴ The contradictions of female *Jihad* cannot, therefore, be overcome without a re-evaluation of Islamic doctrines. This must begin with the values we assign to female Islamist martyrs.

The most dangerous choice that Western media can make is to sympathize with female martyrs. According to Anne-Marie McManus, "sympathetic female terrorists...occupy a strange border zone between normativity and abjection".⁵ Adopting sentimental terror narratives when describing female *Jihadists*, or by describing them

in romantic terms such as the brides of Islam, or brides of their nation,⁶ serves to recognize female *Jihad* as symbolically legitimate to Islam. We must, instead, strive to understand what drives women to pursue *Jihad* outside of coercion, by recognizing the choice to pursue *Jihad* as a sovereign and political choice, thereby distancing ourselves from the Islamic symbolic order.

Bloom believes that outside of a purely religious commitment, women may pursue Islamic *Jihad* "to avenge a personal loss, to redeem the family name, to escape a life of sheltered monotony and achieve fame, or to equalize the patriarchal societies in which they live".⁷ The inclusion of women in the *Jihadi* movement increases the potential legitimacy of the movement by mobilizing the fear of what Jacques Lacan would describe as 'symbolic male castration'.⁸ Propaganda mobilized by Chechen Islamists in 2003 read "women's courage is a disgrace to that of modern men",⁹ in effect signaling to the wider male population that 'if our mothers, wives, and sisters are willing to risk their lives for the cause, why aren't you?'. As Bloom adds, the participation of women in the *Second Intifada* had global reverberations, including an increase in the recruitment of female suicide bombers by *Al-Qaeda* affiliated terror cells in Pakistan.¹⁰

According to Chris Coulter, "By becoming a perpetrator, one perhaps also feels that one escapes being a victim, and perhaps the only way to gain even the least bit of control over one's own life in this milieu was to take up a weapon and assume the role of a killer".¹¹ In a religious community where women oftentimes must submit to the rule of their fathers or husbands, *Jihad* offers women the opportunity to express themselves politically and violently, where otherwise this is not sanctioned.

Contrary to the promise of female empowerment through *Jihad*, female participation has not led to increased women's rights or the recognition of a woman's right to exist on her own terms. Instead, the prevalence of female Islamist *Jihad* signals to the wider Muslim female community that women "are more valuable to their societies dead than they ever could have been alive".¹²

III. Self-Immolation to Decouple the *Subject* and the *Other*

In setting out to annihilate the *Other*, the *Jihadist* becomes as the *Other*, in that she creates a condition in which the *Other* is unable to live a free life of his or her own choosing and according to his or her own values without fear of harm. This parallels the *Jihadist's* belief

that the *Other* wants to create the same condition for her by means of the expansion of Western democratic and capitalist values.

For the *Jihadist*, pure self-annihilation presents an opportunity to overcome many of the contradictions inherent to *Jihad* without obstructing its core objectives. Self-annihilation would allow the *Jihadist* to observe a moment of sovereign activity, which can be understood to be the ability to live in a particular moment in history "without having anything [or anyone] else in view but [the] present time", thereby allowing her to break her ties to the *Other*.¹³ Carrying out an act of self-annihilation would additionally ensure that no innocent blood be spilled, and would ascribe a mythic value to the act of *Jihad*, as the *Jihadist* would be considered a martyr willing to die for her beliefs. As a martyr, the Muslim self-annihilator would also obtain a position of righteousness and would be guaranteed a place in paradise.

Self-immolation as a means of self-annihilation serves as a legitimate alternative to the annihilation of the *Other* because it necessitates self-sacrifice for the greater good, and so can be deemed a selfless act. Contrary to pure self-immolation, war against the *Other*, as reflected in the *Jihadi* suicide bombing, is always a selfish act, as the *Other* is put in the way of physical harm, subjecting him or her to potential death. In effect, war necessitates robbing the *Other* of his or her sovereignty or his or her ability to live for himself or herself and express his or her own ideals.

Canada should be concerned about the rise of female Islamist *Jihad* and its potential to increase the legitimacy of the *Jihadi* movement in the Middle East. Since the rise in female *Jihad* stems from the desire for self-empowerment, political recognition, and gender equality, Canada should support the education and employment of women and girls in the Middle East, by continuing its support of Non-Governmental organizations like the Aga Khan Development Network and others, which have displayed a proven interest in social development in the region.

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⁵ Anne-Marie McManus, "Sentimental Terror Narratives: Gendering Violence, Dividing Sympathy," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* no. 2, 9 (2013): 81.

⁶ Namaan, *op. cit.*, 946.

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⁸ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis Book XI* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, Inc., 1981), 73.

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¹⁰ Bloom, *op. cit.*, 5.

¹¹ Chris Coulter, "Female Fighters in the Sierra Leone War: Challenging Assumptions," *Feminist Review* no. 1, 88 (2008): 61.

¹² Bloom, *op. cit.*, 9.

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Female Radicalization, the *Islamic State*, and International Security: An Opportunity

Geneviève Zingg

It has not been often in history that the list of the world's most wanted terrorists has contained female names. Yet in recent years there has been a marked rise in female terror. In 2004, the FBI named Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, an *Al-Qaeda* fugitive, as one of its seven Most Wanted Terrorists, with US Attorney-General John Ashcroft singling her out as the "most wanted woman in the world". In 2013, Interpol issued a Red Notice warrant for Samantha Lewthwaite, the White Widow, and an alleged member of the Somalia-based radical Islamic militant group *Al-Shabaab*, stressing "the danger posed by this woman, not just across the region, but also worldwide" and putting 190 countries on alert.¹ And in February 2015, after a three-day string of violence terrorized France and resulted in the deaths of seventeen people, France's most wanted list was suddenly topped by a 26-year-old woman named Hayat Boumeddiene, allegedly a driving force behind the massacre at *Charlie Hebdo*.

Female terrorists are not a new phenomenon. Women have previously played active roles in groups like the Russian *Narodnaya Volya*, the *Irish Republican Army*, the *Baader-Meinhof Gang* in Germany, the Italian *Red Brigades*, and the *Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*.² Rarely, however, have women been part of a terrorist network's central body or key strategic focus. The responsibility most often expected of women has been "to sustain an insurgency by giving birth to many fighters and raising them in a revolutionary environment".³ The *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)* has identified women as fundamental to its objectives and operations for this very reason, and subsequently tailored its recruitment campaigns to specifically target females.

Currently controlling a territory in the Middle East larger than the United Kingdom, *ISIS* poses an explicit threat to international peace and security, but is espe-

cially dangerous in its unique and deceptive focus on women. The terrorist group has targeted women through various forms of social media, most notably Twitter and Tumblr, and developed intensive propaganda campaigns and recruitment methods meant to incite female *jihad* in Muslim women living in both the West and the Arab region. The *Islamic State's* skilled use of gender-specific social media campaigns has thus far proven successful in recruiting young women to its ranks.

According to the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), as many as 550 women have fled the west to join *ISIS*.⁴ As of March 2015, approximately 10 percent of the *Islamic State's* Western recruits are women, who have left Europe, North America, and Australia to join the group in *ISIS*-controlled cities like Raqqa and Mosul.⁵ In France, the number of female recruits is startlingly higher: roughly 63 of the 350 French nationals believed to have joined the group are women, or just under 20 percent. Previous terrorist organizations, including high-profile *jihadi* groups in Afghanistan during the 1980s and 90s, have never attracted anywhere near this number of foreign women, and especially not Western ones.⁶ The *Islamic State's* focus on women is central to their objective of longevity: in order to create a genuine state, they need women to bear children and raise them under their radicalized belief system.

Bearing children and homemaking, however, are not the only duties of female *ISIS* recruits. Female activity within *ISIS* reportedly includes all-female brigades enforcing female morality codes requiring modest dress and sex segregation; operating checkpoints and conducting home raids; recruiting and training female suicide bombers; and acting as fundraisers and propagandists.⁷ Some evidence suggests that women are also being asked to travel throughout Syria and Iraq collect-

ing intelligence.⁸ Moreover, some young *ISIS* recruits have told their relatives via telephone calls and social media messages that they are being trained to use machine guns and operate other weaponry.⁹

From an Arabic manifesto about the ideal role of women living in an Islamic state, published by the *al-Khanssaa Brigade*, a women's activist group within *ISIS*, it is evident that female recruits are being trained to wage *jihad* alongside their male counterparts if the need arises. Indeed, the manifesto explicitly states that women will be called to the frontlines of battle against the West: "Secondary functions of a woman include *jihad* — if the enemy is attacking her country and the men are not enough to protect it and the imams give a *fatwa* for it, as the blessed women of Iraq and Chechnya did..."¹⁰ Evidently, then, *ISIS* has tapped women first as the only means of growing the population of its territories and second as an additional resource of fighters, essentially acting as a standing army. To mitigate this urgent threat to international security, it is necessary to disarm *ISIS*' ability to attract Western women.

To decrease the number of Western women being successfully recruited by *ISIS*, it is crucial to understand their motivations in joining. The first factor is also common to male recruits. Dr. Erin Saltman, whose research at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) specializes in processes of political radicalization, argues that *ISIS* presents its struggle as a necessary effort to fight against oppressive 'global powers' turning against Muslims.¹¹ A recent ISD report echoes this sentiment. "The women sampled for the report said that Muslims around the world were being oppressed and that there was a larger war against Islam being waged by the *kuffar*, or infidels".¹²

The feeling of oppression and marginalization seems to resonate particularly strongly among Muslim women. Jayne Huckerby, Director of the International Human Rights Clinic at the Duke University School of Law, has noted that European women in the *Islamic State*-controlled regions cited alienation and restrictions on religious practices back home, like France's ban on wearing the *burqa* in public, as factors that pushed them into joining *ISIS*. Dr. Katherine Brown of the Defence Studies Department at King's College London points to the perceived failure of Western states to give young Muslim women "a sense of belonging, purpose, and value as Muslims and citizens", noting that radicalized females "talk about the failings of Western societies, speak negatively about restrictions on how they can practice Islam and criticize the political system".¹³ Mia Bloom, a security studies professor at Massachusetts University, argues that joining *ISIS* allows young

women a sense of being "agents of change" and having a participatory role "that is at some level psychologically empowering".¹⁴

Umm Haritha, a 20-year-old *ISIS* recruit from Canada, began to wear a *niqab* four months before joining *ISIS* in Syria. In a recent interview, Ms. Haritha claimed to experience harassment when she began to wear the *niqab* in Canada: "I would get mocked in public, people shoved me and told me to go back to my country and spoke to me like I was mentally ill or didn't understand English. Life was degrading and an embarrassment and nothing like the multicultural freedom of expression and religion that they make it out to be..."¹⁵ She is not alone in pointing to discrimination and harassment as a major motivation to join *ISIS*. Shayma Senouci, an 18-year-old from Quebec who joined *ISIS* in 2014, complained via social media about Quebec's proposed secular charter that, if passed, would have limited religious symbols and dress in the public sector.¹⁶ Another Canadian woman who radicalized and joined *ISIS* stated that she suffered from anti-Muslim bigotry and told her family that the Canadian government was "failing to protect Muslim people".

It is easier to understand the power of the *Islamic State*'s female-oriented propaganda against this background of intolerance, harassment, and religious discrimination against Muslim women in the West. According to Mia Bloom, women already living in *ISIS*-controlled territory use social media to portray Syria as a utopia for Muslim women, creating a very positive and powerful idea of a sisterhood in the *caliphate*. This brand of belonging and identity politics is particularly strong to young Muslim women in the west who may feel alienated, marginalized, or discriminated against by their peers. Erin Saltman, at ISD, says: "There is a strong sense that you are joining a family. *ISIS* really plays up the fact that you are among sisters. Part of it almost plays out a feminist narrative, which says that the West sexualizes women and, in *Islamic State* territory, you are treated with respect".¹⁷ Aqsa Mahmood, also known as *Umm Layth* ("Mother of the Lion"), left Glasgow for Syria and has since become an active *ISIS* saleswoman, using various social media accounts to counsel, advise and recruit new 'sisters' to the *caliphate*. It is women like Mahmood who sanitize the image of *ISIS* online, manipulating the poor treatment some Muslim women experience in the West to create its opposite in *ISIS*: a warm and inclusive state of belonging, value, and respect for young Muslim women who have grown disillusioned with their treatment at home.

It is precisely this link between marginalization and radicalization that presents an important opportunity to

the West. To counter female radicalization, policymakers must first honestly and extensively evaluate the experiences of young Muslim women in Western countries. If accounts of harassment, discrimination, and alienation go ignored, the West risks giving legitimacy to the *Islamic State's* claim that the western social model has failed Muslim women. The West must take measures to address the social, economic, and political marginalization of Muslim women, and ensure that counter-narratives be developed to reach a specifically female audience. The fact that terrorism, security, and defense are primarily male-dominated fields, with the majority of both combatants and political commentators being men, may account for the failure to sufficiently integrate women to this point. By failing to adequately include and represent Muslim women, we are failing to fully integrate them into our society, leaving them at risk of radicalization and recruitment.

In Canada, the *niqab* was recently the center of debate. Prime Minister Stephen Harper dismissed the *niqab* as an instrument of female oppression stemming from a culture that is at its core "anti-women", a comment that sparked fierce debate on social media and the national press circuit. Harper was accused of "stoking anxiety and fomenting fear"¹⁸ in Canadians, and it is this *Islamophobia* that the west needs to avoid if it is to stem the flood of women fleeing to Iraq and Syria. Demonizing Islam and singling out the dress, practices, and other traditions of Muslim women in particular, is not only damaging to Western ideals of freedom and liberty, but also dangerous in that it leaves Muslim women vulnerable to racism and humiliation, marginalization, and persecution. The future of the *Islamic State* is biologically and socioeconomically dependent on women. Women are the support system of *ISIS*, and an integral part of the infrastructure necessary to set up a new society. The *Islamic State's* aggressive focus on female radicalization poses both a significant threat to international security and a critical opportunity to the west. Dismissing young women who join *ISIS* as "brainwashed" or simply "naive" is not an adequate response to this issue, and fails to account for the unique factors driving females to radicalization and terrorism.

The *Islamic State's* widely documented atrocities against women — including brutal sexual violence, forced marriages, and the use of Yazidi "sex slaves" — make the success of their female recruitment process especially staggering, and highlights the immense importance of analyzing and understanding female radicalization independently of the male experience. Further marginalizing Muslim women by attacking the

niqab and other elements of Islamic culture will only serve to push more women towards the sense of identity and belonging that *ISIS* promises. Instead, the West must actively seek insight into the specific motives and experiences of female *jihadis* to develop and apply a gender lens to Western defense and security policy towards the *Islamic State*.

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Victimization and Agency: Exploring Media Profiles and Public Perceptions of Female Chechen Suicide Bombers

Jenny Yang

On October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously passed *Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security* calling for increased participation of women in all UN peacekeeping and security efforts, in addition to special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in instances of armed conflict.¹ Traditionally, under normative gender categories, wars have been associated with men, with women relegated to subordinate positions such as nurses and caretakers, or portrayed as victims of war and sexual violence.²

Russian and Chechen media have attempted to validate their own cause through different portrayals of Chechen female suicide bombers in the media. By casting them as 'black widows' or 'zombies', Russian media have sought to discredit the Chechen cause by portraying female Chechen suicide bombers as brainwashed victims or the aggrieved relatives of Chechen men. On the other hand, the Chechens have used the women to win public sympathy, by portraying them as victims of Russian violence. Both portrayals are problematic because they oversimplify the conflict by perpetuating gender stereotypes, often framing men as warmongers and women as victims of war.

Chechnya is a landlocked region located in southern Russia, bordered by Dagestan to the east and north, Stavropol Krai and North Ossetia to the northwest, Ingushetia to the west, and Georgia to the southwest. For nearly two centuries, Chechnya has been a 'thorn' in Russia's side, after the Russians claimed the region for themselves in 1859.³ The Second Chechen War was launched after Chechen fighters crossed into the Russian Republic of Dagestan to declare an independent Islamic state in August 1999. The rebellion was quickly quashed by the Russian government, yet sporadic attacks by Chechen separatists continue, with the most recent attack leaving 16 casualties in 2014.

Female suicide bombers were first deployed during the Second Chechen War. The first highly publicized case was that of Khava Barayeva, who in June 2000 drove a truck into the Achhoi-Martan checkpoint, killing seventeen Russian soldiers.⁴ Since 2002, female suicide bombers have engaged in a number of attacks against Russian domestic targets, including an attack on a Moscow rock concert in July 2003, the Dubrovka theatre hostage taking in October 2002, the Beslan elementary

school attack in September 2004, and the downing of two planes in August 2004.⁵ Of the 28 suicide attacks carried out by Chechen terrorists between 2000 and 2005, women participated in 42 per cent of the attacks and accounted for 46 out of 110 total suicide bombers.⁶

During the Second Chechen War, the Russian government realized the importance of information warfare. According to Major General Boris Alekseyev, "there are two wars going on — the actual hostilities and an information war".⁷ The role of mass media in the conflict is important due to its ability to inspire myth and shape public opinion. Even when discussing a suicide attack, it is estimated that attacks by women receive eight times the media coverage as the attacks carried out by men.⁸ Despite evidence that women were involved in a range of operational roles within the Chechen uprising, including generalized combat in Grozny, there has been little official state acknowledgment of the central roles played by Chechen women in the conflict.⁹ Russian state officials regularly dismissed early female suicide attacks as "fiction".

However, since the 2002 Dubrovka hostage situation, in which 40 Chechen militants took 912 theatre-goers hostage, about one hundred Chechen women have disappeared in Chechnya.¹¹ In 2003, the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a directive to security forces to focus their attention on women in headscarves or other traditional Islamic clothing. In official statements to justify why these women in particular were targeted, Russian state officials note that extremist Chechen groups target mourning women in order to turn them into 'zombified' suicide bombers.

Russian state officials often portray Chechen female militants as young "black widows" or "zombified" victims forced into attacks through coercion or sexual assault.¹² According to Sergei Yastrzhembsly, Putin's Senior Advisor on Chechnya, "Chechens are turning these young girls into zombies using psychotropic drugs...I have heard that they rape them and record the rapes on video. After that, such Chechen girls have no chance at all of resuming normal life in Chechnya. They have only one option: to blow themselves up with a bomb full of nails and ball bearings".¹³ The zombie typology portrays women as pawns of Chechen men and foreign extremism, ignoring the possibility that Chechen women are making a conscious choice in their enactment of extrem-

ist violence.

While Russian media outlets regularly report on Chechen women being kidnapped, raped, or drugged, reports to the contrary question the legitimacy of Russia's "zombification" premise. According to Drozina and Astashin, however, narcotics are not part of Chechen culture, and sexual offenders have always been severely ostracized and punished by the local community, including their own families.¹⁴ There also exists strong evidence suggesting that most membership is a result of self-recruitment, particularly as a reflection of nationalist sentiments and in response to the loss of loved ones or relatives.¹⁵ The previously referenced three-year study carried out by Speckhard and Akhmedova lists the main motivating factors for Chechen female suicide bombers as nationalism and their exposure to militant *jihadist* ideology, with self-recruitment being a common outcome.

On the other side of the front, Chechens have made deft use of radio and television stations, as well as Internet sites, to share poignant photos from the battlefield and interviews with prominent Chechen figures, communicating this information in Russian, English, and Arabic. There exists some evidence that Chechen groups use female suicide bombers to shame men into fighting. Abu al-Walid, a commander of Arab combatants in Chechnya, channels these sentiments: "these women, particularly the wives of the *Mujahideen* who were martyred, are being threatened in their homes, their honor and everything are being threatened. They do not accept being humiliated and living under occupation. They say that they want to serve the cause of Almighty God and avenge the death of their husbands and persecuted people".¹⁶ Just as Russian media outlets have sought to portray Chechen female suicide bombers as 'black widows' stricken by the loss of their male relatives or brainwashed 'zombies', Chechen groups have used female suicide bombers to recruit male fighters by eliciting feelings of 'shame' and appealing to traditional sentiments of male honour.

Women's status as victims humanizes the conflict and widely solicits sympathy, both at a national and international level. Dan Fayutkin states that the Chechen leadership organized human roadblocks and mass protests by Chechen women.¹⁷ Chechen media outlets often portray female Chechens as rape victims, violated by Russian soldiers, who have lost their husbands and family members to the same Russian brutality.¹⁸

In a July 2003 poll, the Public Opinion Foundation of the All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion found that 84 percent of Russians surveyed believed that

female suicide bombers were controlled by someone else, with only 3 percent believing that the women acted independently. This displacement of responsibility away from female militants can be problematic, giving way to essentialist understandings of women as peaceful and men as violent, with any woman resorting to violence being seen as a "brainwashed" pawn of male extremist groups rather than a rational actor choosing to engage in political violence.

In conclusion, both Russian and Chechen media have sought to utilize the various profiles of female Chechen suicide bombers to justify their own causes. On the Russian side, state media portray Chechen women as victims of brainwashing, grief-stricken relatives, or pawns of Chechen men. On the Chechen side, media have attempted to win public sympathy and use women to shame Chechen men into taking up arms.

Even terms used by international organizations, such as the UN, can only exacerbate these gender stereotypes, casting women as "bridge-builders" and peacemakers".¹⁹ These terms can perpetuate gender stereotypes, systematically depriving women of conscious behaviour and absolving them of personal responsibility for committing heinous acts of violence. Thinking of gender and violence in binary terms only serves to distort the issues, leading to a stilted understanding of the conflict. Ultimately, in order to portray a comprehensive understanding of the Chechen conflict, media portrayals need to be more nuanced, by shifting focus away from the prevalent discourse portraying women as victims of violence.

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Confounding War and Security: The Gendered Militarization of International Relations Post-9/11

Saman Rejali

Since 9/11 the nature of warfare has drastically changed.¹ Security has been put forward as the main reason for war— both in the preemptory war waged by the United States against Iraq, and in the NATO allies’ war against terror in Afghanistan. In these processes, however, “security” and military ambitions are often fallaciously confounded, leading to reverberating repercussions for international relations and gender rights.²

National security has been cited repeatedly after September 2001 to justify the exuberant military expenditures and interventionist policies of America and its Western allies targeting Middle East and North African (MENA) countries ranging from Iraq and Afghanistan to Syria, Yemen, and Libya.³ Compared to fellow NATO member states, America’s level of militarism is by far the most outstanding. With an annual military expenditure of \$700 billion USD per year, the United States’ allocation of funds to its military sector falls not only above any other nation, but also exceeds that of the “next 14 biggest spenders combined.”⁴ America’s aggressive military spending has averaged at the same rate as it has undergone an economic crisis and accrued unprecedented debt, which as of February 2015 stands at \$18 trillion USD.⁵

As of April 2015, under the Obama administration the United States has successfully reached the framework agreement for a nuclear deal with Iran, to be finalized by June 30.⁶ The agreement places significant restrictions on each of Iran’s nuclear installations, amongst many

other major concessions. Nonetheless, with a Republican-packed Congress, opposition to the deal even after the preliminary agreement has been vehement amongst Republicans who advocate for crippling sanctions⁷ and military action⁸ rather than attempts at negotiation with Iran, citing the deal as “a threat to peace and security in the region.”⁹

As a key member state of NATO, a leading global superpower, and Canada’s closest partner, America’s approach of ensuring its national security through militarization, as advocated by the American right-wing, not only creates more *national insecurity*, it also *genders* security by perpetuating constructed gender norms for masculinity and femininity, and further privileging the narrowest version of masculinity.¹⁰ This version is associated with war, military superiority, and stern no-compromise stances against the opposing side— framed as sub-human or outright irrational—¹¹ over more “feminine” stances of engaging in dialogue, understanding opposing points of view, and being open to compromise and negotiation.¹² This is a militarized approach that not only has an impact on gender-rights, but also has wide-reaching adverse implications outside America’s borders for both regional and international relations.¹³

Militarization, as Sutton and Novkov outline, refers to “how societies become dependent on and imbued by the logic of military institutions, in ways that permeate language, popular culture, economic priorities, education

systems, government policies, and national values and identities.”¹⁴ When militarization is confounded with security interests, as is currently the case in America, security can become gendered in two ways, with adverse impacts on inter-state relations and women’s security: (1) soldiers are disciplined, trained, and ultimately *created* to kill and die for the state, but have trouble functioning as post-conflict peacekeepers while adhering to the reinforced norms of acting the part of a hyper-masculine soldier (2) positions of public office as well as foreign policy approaches are pervaded with norms of militarized masculinity; impeding peace-making processes and inhibiting the strengthening of international ties. These gendered facets to security not only perpetuate patriarchal gender norms, they also hinder nuanced approaches to foreign policy entailing negotiation, compromise, and peace-making development processes.

I. The Gendered Creation of Soldiers

Systemic militarism feeds off national security arguments of protecting the homeland and protecting “us” from “them” in order to recruit men and create soldiers. Promising to turn boys into “real men” military indoctrination serves to create soldiers through a two-part process. Primarily, recruits are “broken down” and stripped of their affiliations and bonds, both physically and mentally.¹⁷ Their heads are shaved, they are all given the same uniforms, and they are subjected to the same schedule of eating, sleeping, and even going to the bathroom.

Second, recruits are subjected to humiliating training exercises that are part of a larger system of military hazing.¹⁸ In order to minimize deviation from institutional norms, soldiers in the military are ‘rebuilt’ to adhere to the same disciplinary mandates.¹⁹ Instructors begin to reward soldiers for their obedience, and punish them for disrespecting protocol. At the same time, soldiers are required to work in groups that facilitate bonding and team-work. As a result, the soldiers come to see their unit as their new “military family” and a sense of “us” emerges, that distinguishes the unit from the “Other,” in this case, the outside world upon which wars are waged.²⁰

By creating an “us versus them” dichotomy²¹ through military indoctrination, soldiers begin to see the world around them through the constructed viewpoint of a “safe, or civilized, space ‘inside’” and “an ‘outside’ whose identity often appears strange or threatening.”²² When these soldiers are tasked with peacekeeping missions, they bring this mentality into those missions. As

such, they act in violent ways against the very people they are supposed to protect because they view “them” as sub-human, “foreign” outsiders.²³

Throughout the training process, the overarching norm that is consistently re-enforced is the hyper-masculine soldier.²⁴ Recruits are required to cultivate their masculinity by acting as “protectors”, willing to employ violence against “them” on the outside to protect the “us” on the inside. This is done through the ‘denigration of anything that could be considered feminine,’ because according to the military’s ideology soldiers are not “supposed” to be womanly.

Thus, during training, soldiers are consistently punished through patriarchal and gendered insults that identify the feminine as inferior to the heterosexual and masculine.²⁷ Soldiers showing emotions, consideration for “Others,”²⁸ or doubt about military protocols are tarnished as “whores,” “sissies,” or simply, “women.”²⁹ The deference to a soldier’s sense of masculinity is evident in marching chants, such as one involving “holding one hand on rifle and the other to crotch,” while chanting “this is my rifle. This is my gun. This is for pleasure. This is for fun.” Such routines, amongst others, are designed to inculcate respect for the military hierarchy, while ensuring “the psychological coercion of young men through appeals to their (uncertain) manliness.”³⁰

Problematically, as recruits deviate more drastically from the norm of a heterosexual male, they are less likely to advance within the military. Thus, both women and homosexual recruits have faced immense barriers in terms of being accepted as soldiers.³¹ “The presence of the ‘Other’”, as Whitworth notes, “makes the strategies of recruitment, basic training, and the inculcation of an appropriate militarized masculinity all the more difficult to accomplish, and those involved in recruiting and training have long understood this.”³²

The adverse effects of the militarization of masculinity are commonplace. They extend from peacekeeping missions overseas, to a sense of insecurity in soldiers both during enlistment and upon return. These soldiers are taught that “being caring, emotive, human beings who feel a connection with other human beings” is not “masculine,” and has no place in the military. In this respect, the end result of militarization, as evidenced in such incidents as the Abu Ghraib torture³³ and the Somalia Affair is not more security, but more insecurity.³⁴

II. The Gendered Militarization of Public Office and Foreign Policy

Another facet of security that becomes confounded with militarization is the ability of world leaders to fulfill the requirements of their posts aptly, without recourse to military-centric and pre-emptive foreign policy doctrines. There are numerous measures that assess world leaders in terms of their domestic and foreign policies.

To date, however, the aptitude of politicians is often rated by their degree of “maleness”³⁵ or perceived level of “masculinity.”³⁶ By giving too much credence to leaders’ ability to exude “masculinized toughness” in terms of their personal mannerisms and political foreign policy approaches, a gendered politics of masculinity emerges, which ultimately impacts countries’ foreign policy practices.

Socio-politically constructed³⁷ gender norms advocating for “manly” leaders, with “tough,” “no-nonsense,” “uncompromising” stances, perpetuate military-oriented approaches to conducting foreign policy, which leave little room for compromise, and ultimately undermine international stability.³⁸ Thus, under pressure to showcase their “masculine strength and power” world leaders are more likely to take harsh military stances, reject possibilities for negotiation, and inhibit the potential for peace-making processes.

As two of the world’s leading powers, the presidential posts in the United States and Russia are among the most notable cases illustrating the force of masculinized militarization on public officials and foreign policy decisions.³⁹ In the United States, the president is legally obligated to be a “gender neutral, civilian democratic” public official. Yet, as seen in past American presidential elections, since the American President is also the Commander-in-Chief, candidates’ military credentials are often central in legitimizing their bid for the presidency.⁴⁰

Such politics of masculinity are presented as “natural.” It is espoused that “effective” leaders demonstrate their masculine strength, by marking their territory through force, or the threat of force. Yet, the Bush years exemplify the negative international implications that ensue when militarized masculinity is intertwined with the foreign policy decisions of civilian-leaders in positions of high public office. By the time Barack Obama took office in 2008, he faced the prospect of keeping his campaign promises to end the war in Iraq; withdrawing troops from Afghanistan; and managing America’s economic crisis.

In contrast to Bush, however, Obama’s terms in office have been defined by-and-large by his “failure” to not only deliver on his campaign promises, but also uphold the militarized image of a “macho” leader who employs the same force-first foreign policy strategies as a uniformed senior military official.⁴¹ In choosing to take a more nuanced approach that leaves room for complex peace strategies, diplomacy, and negotiation, Obama has been chastised by the Right for failing to exude a “masculine,” and thus, militarized approach to foreign policy decisions.⁴² Accordingly, the President’s proclaimed foreign policy stance of employing “diplomacy first and war as a last resort” with respect to Iran as an aspiring nuclear power, Bashar Al-Assad’s regime in Syria, the crisis in Ukraine, and the fight against terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa region has been characterized by Right-wing pundits as signaling “weakness, dithering, [and] inaction.”

The prevalent acceptance of gender norms perpetuating militarization reduces the perceived aptitude of leaders to their degree of “manliness.” Leaders are coopted— whether knowingly or unknowingly— to act the masculine parts they feel obliged to play and perform. However, when leaders abide by such gender norms they perpetuate the false notion that the only way to protect a country’s security interests and advance foreign policy is through militarized strategies, culminating in warfare. What’s more, a patriarchal gender hierarchy is created whereby the embodiment of “masculinity” is placed above that of “femininity,” even if such “feminine” traits include taking more nuanced, less destructive approaches that minimize conflicts, strengthen international ties, and give strength to marginalized voices.

Security is necessary but national militarization is often neither necessary, nor justified— particularly when its by-product is indeed more *insecurity* both at home and abroad. Gendered frameworks for security perpetuate military-oriented approaches, which leave little room for peacekeeping, negotiation, and compromise; ultimately eroding rather than enhancing both domestic politics and international relations.

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Leading by Example: Female Officers in the Canadian Forces and NATO Militaries

Paul Pryce

There is a growing consensus in the international community that gender-based approaches should be integrated into the employment of humanitarian interventions in conflict zones around the world. The adoption of Resolution 1325 by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in October 2000 was an important milestone in this process. Unanimously adopted, it acknowledges the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls, setting out an agenda for the UN to ensure that women have agency at every stage of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. The subsequent adoption of UNSC Resolution 2212 in 2013 also made available new tools to regional organizations to address gender-based violence.

NATO itself has done much to meet the goals and standards described in these UNSC Resolutions, such as appointing a Special Representative for Women, Peace, and Security. The appointment in late 2014 of Dutch diplomat, Mariët Schuurman, who has extensive experience in conflict-affected areas, helped demonstrate NATO's commitment to empowering women in conflict.¹ The role played by such a high-profile figure on behalf of NATO also serves to somewhat combat the traditional narrative that "maleness" or "masculinity" is essential to the statesmanship of managing conflict, potentially inspiring other women to follow the example of Ambassador Schuurman.

In addition to the Special Representative, NATO has been officially assisted by its Committee on Women in the NATO Forces (CWINF) since 1976. In 1998, two years prior to the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1325, the Office on Women in NATO Forces was established as a permanent office in the International Military Staff at NATO headquarters in order to support the work of CWINF. In 2009, the mandate of CWINF was extended to the implementation of the aforementioned UNSC Resolutions under the NATO framework and was redesignated the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (NCGP).

Individual NATO member states have been discernibly less successful at integrating gender-based approaches and perspectives into their respective defence institutions. In June 2009, the CWINF held several days of meetings in Brussels just prior to the Committee's redesignation, bringing together representatives from most NATO member states to discuss their progress to date in

implementing the objectives of UNSC Resolution 1325. Unfortunately, only 12 of the 28 NATO member states delivered a report. While Albania and Croatia cannot be faulted, given that they had only joined the Alliance two months before the CWINF meeting, major contributors to NATO missions failed to update the Committee, including France, Germany, and the United States.

According to Canada's submission to the CWINF, approximately 14.8% of Canadian Forces (CF) personnel are women.² Among junior commissioned officers, women are well-represented: 23.0% in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), 19.0% in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), and 16.4% in the Canadian Army. However, the numbers become deeply concerning when one looks at the proportion of women among flag officers; that is, those personnel at the rank of Brigadier General or Commodore and higher. Women comprise 8.0% of RCAF flag officers and 3.0% of Army equivalents; there were no women among RCN flag officers.³ Based on these figures, there certainly remains a 'glass ceiling' among female CF members.

Nevertheless, among those member states to deliver a CWINF report in 2009, Canada leads the Alliance in integrating women at all levels of the military. The others reporting were Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The closest of any of these countries to matching Canada's total rate of female enlistment in the military were Portugal (14.1%), the Czech Republic (13.3%), and Greece (13.2%). Meanwhile, only 1.5% of Polish soldiers and 3.2% of Romanian soldiers were women.⁴

Even less encouraging, very few of the reporting members have women among their flag officers: Romania (2.6%), Greece (1.4%), the United Kingdom (0.6%), and one officer from the Czech Republic. At 4.0%, Canada is NATO's outlier. This lack of women in senior leadership roles among NATO member state forces is a challenge to the implementation of gender-based approaches. Women serving as flag officers could encourage greater female enlistment, demonstrating that the military can be a viable career for women and that advancement through the ranks is possible. Furthermore, female flag officers fulfilling their duties would go some way toward combating the perceived "macho" culture of the military and warfare.

In still other NATO member states, the macho mentality has become endemic. As Sweden ended its conscription program in 2010, Jaak Aaviksoo, Estonia's Defence Minister at that time, defended his country's policy of male-only mandatory military service on the basis that it helps younger generations "learn to share values that unite our whole nation".⁵ It is unclear if military service is essential to learning Estonian values, why conscription is not extended to Estonian women, and why Estonian women are ineligible for combat roles in their country's armed forces. Such a blatant association of military service and patriotism with masculinity marginalizes women as potential contributors to conflict resolution, violating the spirit of UNSC Resolution 1325. Finland, Greece, and Turkey also maintain male only conscription programs.

Despite Canada's leadership in the recruitment of women to leadership positions, there is still much to be done as indicated by the relatively low number of women among flag officers. One possible solution might be to follow Romania's example and institute quotas at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC) and other training institutions relevant to Canada's Regular Force. According to the Romanian CWINF submission, it is required that 25% of entrants at the Army Academy and Navy Academy be women, while 30% of entrants at the Air Force Academy must be women. Such quotas are reserved to ensure greater female participation in military professions where women are under-represented; for example, there is no gender-based quota at the Military Medical Institute, where approximately 70% of entrants are women. These quotas, which one could compare to Germany's recent requirement that women comprise 30% of the corporate boards at 100 of the country's largest listed companies, go some way toward explaining the narrow gap between the rate of women's participation in the Romanian military and women's inclusion in that same military's top ranks.

Adopting a similar approach to quotas at the RMCC might help to ensure that the Canadian Army enjoys a comparable degree of women's participation to the other two CF branches, for example. It would not, however, address the relative lack of female role models in the RCN. Rear-Admiral Jennifer Bennett has been responsible for many milestones within the CF, becoming the first woman to command a Canadian naval formation, the first to be appointed Commander of the Naval Reserve, and the first to reach the ranks of Commodore and Rear-Admiral. But the fact that despite nearly a quarter of the RCN's junior commissioned officers being women, that there is only one woman among that branch's flag officers, speaks to a deeper cultural issue. Intensified public education about the role of the

Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) during the Second World War could go some way toward raising awareness of women's long-term contributions to Canada's maritime presence.⁶ However, it is apparent that a national conversation is needed to explore why so many female officers have not made it to the rank of Commodore and beyond.

Clearly, the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 is uneven across NATO's 28 member states. While women serve prominently throughout every branch and profession in the Canadian Forces, other member states, like Estonia, regard military service as an important part of attaining "manhood". Few countries outside the Alliance can boast as much progress as NATO in advancing the role of women in peace and security, but the NCGP must place pressure on all 28 member states to perform better in this area. Leading figures like NATO's Ambassador Mariët Schuurman and Canada's Rear-Admiral Jennifer Bennett, should not be the exception to the rule, but merely examples of how women can lead on the battlefield and in the boardroom.

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Gender Equality? Analyzing Women's Agency in the Israeli Defense Forces

Brian Merry

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF), established in 1948, is one of Israel's most prominent institutions, exerting influence on several facets of the state. Women have had a central role in state security throughout the history of the Israeli nation, even preceding the establishment of the state in 1948. Since the early 1900s, women have served alongside men in guerrilla and paramilitary militias fighting to establish settlements in Palestine.

Israeli security has been consistently challenged since the state's formation, which reflects the IDF's current, and unique, organizational makeup. The Israeli Defense Forces has set an international precedent with its high female military participation rates. As an institution, the IDF has served to foster a positive societal transition towards greater gender equality in what has traditionally been a patriarchal society. Yet, barriers to full equality persist. Female influence in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, and an increased willingness on the part of Israeli women to fight for the Israeli nation, have brought about constitutional changes which have promoted greater equality. Nevertheless, Israel continues to struggle to ensure socio-economic development and an equality of opportunity for women, both during and after military service.

Following the establishment of the IDF, a constitutional framework for gender equality within the armed forces was not made a priority. Since the turn of the 20th Century, the Israeli military was largely ordered around the notion of 'male superiority', and patriarchal attitudes persisted even after the creation of the Haganah defence forces in 1920.¹

While the Haganah conscripted both men and women, women were segregated within its ranks. In 1948, the Haganah conducted an assessment to determine whether to integrate women into men's units or to form separate all-female battalions — the government chose the latter option.²

Women's inclusion in the IDF came about as a result of the government's desperation for military personnel following the birth of the Israeli state. Immediately after independence, Israel faced multiple invasion attempts as its Arab neighbors frequently violated the 1949 armistice agreements.³ The loss of the Yom Kippur War, paired with the 1970 Israeli Feminist Movement, helped

bring about changes which reflected the importance of women in the military.

The creation of a fully gender-inclusive military force was intended to promote a cohesive security union. Instead, sexual harassment, rape, and other demeaning forms of abuse became prevalent in the IDF. For example, it became common practice for pretty young female soldiers to become "trophies" of the commanders they served, and this practice often went unspoken outside of the military.⁴

In an address to the Knesset in early 2014, candidate Sarah Eliash said that "the mixing of men and women is really problematic" for Israel's military, and further argued that the "principles of modesty within Jewish tradition [are] infringed when women serve in the army, especially in mixed units".⁵

Instances of sexual violence against women destabilize the ideas about protection that have been established by the state system. Many women are burdened by societal pressures to stay at home rather than pursue a military career. These women are pressured to exempt themselves from service by getting married, becoming pregnant, or adopting a religious way of life.⁶ However, men and secular Israeli women do not have the same options. These attitudes, which are supported by the Israeli Defense Service Law, serve to counter the fundamental principles of gender equity which make up the Western normative order, an order which Israel often uses to legitimize its international choices.

Within the military, women are taught to conduct themselves in a way which differs greatly from the standard practices expected of men. For example, female standard practices emphasize 'correct' femininity with regards to cosmetic appearance, which often forms a significant part of their training.⁷ With such differing gender expectations, it becomes difficult to determine exactly why women join the IDF. While some women are motivated to fight for the state, others join simply in an effort to exercise their right to act for themselves, in a society which is otherwise heavily governed by separating gender roles.

Male IDF retirees have historically been provided greater employment opportunities in attractive, high paying industries upon completion of military service.

While a transition into politics and finance are common for male veterans, similar employment opportunities are not evenly distributed or made available to women.⁸ Women's absence from the "dual system of military and political influence renders them invisible in all aspects of the political process", particularly in the production and reproduction of the systems of identity creation and national protection.⁹

Despite some protest,¹⁰ conscription is still supported by the mainstream population in Israel. Many women contribute to the preservation of Israeli national identity through civilian service instead of military service, yet half of all Israeli women still enlist in the IDF, compared with 70 percent of the nation's men. On paper, the IDF has one of the most gender-neutral militaries in the world.¹¹ However, while over 92 percent of all IDF jobs are now open to women, just 3 percent of all enlistees serve in combat roles.¹²

Female conscription may be a longstanding tradition in Israel, but as times progress, so must laws. For the most part, conscription laws within other Western militaries have been abolished. However, as the threat to Israeli nationhood shows no sign of abating in the near future, it is unlikely that Israel will abandon its long-standing tradition of conscripted military service.

While the IDF continues to legitimize conscription as a tool to promote gender equality within its military ranks, challenges persist therein. So far, IDF conscription laws have failed to promote total equality as men and secular women do not receive exemption. Israel has some way

to go in translating its legislative framework for gender equality in the IDF into practice.

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The Defence Gender Gap Extends Beyond the Military

Daniel Woodburn

The debate surrounding women's role in military affairs is a relatively recent one, and yet the controversy it stirs up belies its age. While it has been examined from all angles, it has mainly been dominated by considerations of gender equality, and on the flip side of the coin, concerns about practicality.

The following article is based on the undeniable premise that women have been largely excluded from warfare in its purest form, with a few exceptions such as Joan of Arc, Gaddafi's personal all-female security detail, and Queen Boudicca of the British Iceni tribe. Of course, women have been instrumental in a number of conflicts throughout history. Take Britain during the Second World War as an example, where without its female

population's efforts, the nation simply would not have been able to mobilise its economy for the purpose of 'total war', and would not have lasted very long at all in the struggle. In fact, laws were altered so that women between the ages of 18 and 60 could be conscripted, although they were not allowed to bear arms. A few isolated instances aside, women have by and large been limited to non-combatant roles. The exceptions have often been in response to an immediate threat posed to the continued wellbeing or existence of their nation, as evidenced by the formation of all-female Kurdish brigades as a response to the *Islamic State's* activities and the Syrian Civil War.¹ In other words, desperation is all too likely to lead to the forsaking of perceived gender roles, and when all is said and done, an untrained female

recruit has just as much capability, or lack thereof, as an untrained male one, brute physicality aside.

We can gauge a country's trend towards egalitarianism in the military quite accurately nowadays. A nation in which women have more or less equal access to the same number of military roles as men do is an undeniably progressive one — at the very least at the military level. For this to hold true, it would have to be so in times of relative peace and stability on the home front, not in times of security crises.

Obviously there is a *caveat* to the idea of a direct link between the number of women in the military and a country's propensity for egalitarianism — only a handful of countries allow women to take part in combat roles in the infantry. As strange a measure of a society's egalitarian tendencies as women's presence on the front lines may seem, the latter is more likely to indicate equity in society than any other aspect of women's involvement in the military. It is no coincidence that 19 of the 22 countries which grant women access to the front-line are considered to be functioning democracies.²

In any event, one would be forgiven for assuming that a relative degree of equal opportunity in the armed forces would translate to the same thing at the level of politics, in this case in defence ministries. Yet, it would unfortunately and undoubtedly surprise very few to learn that of the 160 countries with a defence ministry, 92.5% of these are headed by men. This equates to as few as 12 female Ministers of Defence.

Very few countries can claim to have been consistent in appointing women to defence ministries over the past half century or so, with the appointment of a woman to a defence ministry first occurring in 1960 in Sri Lanka. Although the 12 countries whose defence portfolios are currently in the hands of a woman set the example for the remaining 84% of the world, in the majority of these cases, we are unlikely to see a female defence minister for some time once the incumbent leaves office.⁵ The Pacific and Arab regions aside (the two to have spurned egalitarian political practices the most systematically over the years), every major region can claim to have at least one country with a female Minister of Defence. Europe leads the way with six, Africa comes second with four, and the Americas and Asia each have one apiece.

While Nicaragua cannot be said to represent the entire American continent, it has a fairly strong tradition of appointing a woman to the position. On the other hand, when Bangladesh, the sole Asian country with a woman in possession of the defence portfolio, will next get a

female defence minister is anyone's guess. After all, the portfolio, held by Prime Minister Hasina Wajed, is only one of two held by a woman in a government consisting of 30 ministers. The fact that a portfolio as important as defence is held by a woman, and one who is head of government on top of that, is something of an anomaly and conceals the fact that women only represent 6.7% of the cabinet.

As for Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, six and four female defence ministers respectively is fairly underwhelming considering both regions consist of 53 and 47 countries respectively. Just one of those in Europe — Norway — can lay claim to having entrusted a woman with the portfolio more than once, where from 1999 to 2013 it has had five different female defence ministers. For the remaining five European countries, this is their first time having a woman at the head of their defence ministries.

The truth is that only a handful of countries can expect to appoint a female Minister of Defence and not have their decision be met with surprise, or condescending applause accompanied by assertions of 'steps in the right direction'. These countries are Norway, Sweden and Nicaragua. As evidenced by a level of female representation in politics ranging around, and often surpassing, the 50% mark in the past three editions of the UN-IPU Women in Politics Map, gender equality in politics has been something of a strong suit in Nicaragua over the past decade. Although it is by no means a given, this is more likely to translate to a higher than average number of female appointments to the Nicaraguan Ministry of Defence, where the country has seen four female defence ministers since 1990.

It comes as little surprise that the other two of these three forerunners — Norway and Sweden — are Scandinavian, an identity commonly associated with progressive social policies. Even so, Sweden only boasts four female Ministers of Defence in its history, the first being in 2002. Norway, as we saw, has known five female defence ministers. Two other countries, Canada and Australia, have had a relatively elevated number of women involved in defence-related matters at the top level of government, however figures of four and six respectively are misleading insofar as the women generally occupied the roles of 'Assistant Minister for Defence', 'Defence Industry Minister' or 'Minister for Veterans Affairs,' with Kim Campbell, who served as Minister of Defence for six months in 1993, being the exception. None of these roles handed their tenants anything comparable to the responsibility which comes with a defence portfolio.

Whether seasoned veterans of gender equality politics or tentative newcomers, in appointing a female defence minister, twelve countries have done what only approximately 27% of the world's countries, or a total of 52 states, have ever been willing to do. While this figure is by no means dismally low, when one considers that 42 of these 52 have only ever had one female defence minister, the picture isn't quite so promising. France features on this list, its sole female Minister of Defence, Michèle Alliot-Marie, coming into office as late as 2002. Although the US has seen a couple of female Secretaries of the Navy or the Air Force, a woman has never assumed the role of Defence Secretary. Worse still, the UK has never seen any sort of female leadership in its defence ministry.

Appointing a woman to the leadership of a Ministry of Defence is undoubtedly more telling of egalitarian tendencies than handing out token portfolios of a softer nature, such as Social Affairs or Women's Affairs (of the 170 or so Social Affairs portfolios in the world, 103 are held by women; women also hold 74 of the world's 80 Women's Affairs portfolios). However, even from the perspective of a superficial overview of the issue, the numbers paint a fairly bleak image, which points towards very marginal reductions in the gender gap over the years. Delving deeper into the figures and facts, as attempted above, does little to attenuate this picture, and only one conclusion can be drawn from all this: there remains an unfortunate amount of room for improvement.

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Mothers & Wives: Women's Roles in Countering Violent Extremism

Andrew Majoran

Women — and mothers in particular — possess the unique ability to recognize early warning signs of radicalization in their children. They can play a key role in curtailing violent extremism".

— Dr. Edit Schlaffer

The responsibility of countering radicalization and violent extremism — by protecting citizens and assets—has traditionally been placed on governments, security officials, and private corporations. Heightened security and the influx of public and private spending to bolster our defence against terrorist violence has coincided with the steady rise of terrorism around the globe. Never before has terrorist violence threatened the west and western interests as it does today, leaving many to wonder: What else can we do to protect ourselves? Protection from threats related to violent extremism does not necessarily require an influx of government and private defence spending. Modification can be as simple and as inexpensive as altering policy to inspire change at

the grassroots level. This article will explore how the role of women as mothers and wives can potentially counter the growing threat of radicalization and violent extremism, and how their influence at home and in the community can be used as a social force in at-risk areas.

This article does not aim to generalize all women as caregivers and influential family leaders; there is no denying that women play important roles in all aspects of public and private life. Moreover, it is important to recognize the role of women as wives and mothers in the average family structure, both in the western world and elsewhere. Inside family structures, women are commonly viewed as emotional leaders, as well as platforms for stability, support, and compassion.¹ Because of their important role, women can be highly influential, and act as a force of social authority for husbands and children who may be prone to extremism. This unique role is not present everywhere because different cultures have different family structures. Even in places where religious extremism has virtually silenced women, there is signifi-

opportunity for growth through education and empowerment.

Women can act as powerful role models against violent extremism, as the shapers of familial and social norms, and promoters of tolerance and societal engagement.² Currently, countering violent extremism falls onto the "shoulders of government and the defence and security industries—fields where women are significantly under-represented. Women currently make up 14.8% of all Armed Forces personnel in Canada³, a figure that is equally as low in the United States (14.6%)⁴, and even lower in the United Kingdom (9.9%).⁵ From a policy perspective, women only make up 21.9% of Federal Government representatives globally.⁶ In addition to an obvious lack of engagement of women in public safety matters professionally, women are also not formally engaged in counter-radicalization efforts in their social roles as mothers and wives. By ignoring the unique social role of women, we are excluding a large sector with the potential to counter the rising threat of violent extremism more effectively and less expensively than modern military and policy tactics have allowed. Women's prominent roles within families gives them the ability, when engaged and empowered, to shift from passive victims of violent extremism to agents on the frontline of resilience.

It is unreasonable to say that security officials are failing in their capacity to curb the upward trend of violent extremism, especially in at-risk communities. However, it is also important to understand that more needs to be accomplished at the grassroots level in order to extinguish extremist ideology. Women, particularly mothers, possess a unique ability to recognize early warning signs of radicalization in their children and partners and, therefore, play an integral role in identifying the precursors to violent extremism.⁷ "Mothers are strategically located at the core of their families and, therefore, typically are the first to deal with their children's fear, resignation, frustration and anger".⁸ Children listen to their mothers because they view them as figures of respect and authority.

It is imperative for mothers, and parents in general, to promote positive life choices for easily influenced younger generations, and to steer them away from violent extremist ideologies. Unfortunately, in some cultures and societies, women, as mothers and wives, are not viewed as authorities or household leaders. It is in these communities where the presence of outreach programs and government initiatives are integral to the success of women's abilities to counter violent extremist ideology.

In areas where women are not viewed as family and community authorities, they must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and self-awareness to become active in the prevention of extremism in the security arena.⁹ In such societies, it is imperative to promote concepts such as self-confidence, competence, and empowerment in women in order to ensure that they are able to attain and maintain a position of respect within the community, and a family structure that is unchallenged. Governments and charitable organizations must step in to give them the necessary tools to become agents for change. Organizations like *Women Without Borders*¹⁰, and *Sisters Against Violent Extremism*, are anti-terror platforms tailored exclusively for women, encouraging them to use their powerful roles as mothers and wives to deter violent terrorist activities and radicalization.

Through community engagement projects, anti-extremism training, political dialogue, and expert discussions, platforms such as SAVE and WWB engage women in breaking through barriers such as nationalism, religion, and ethnicity in order to encourage critical thinking, reflection, and action against radicalization leading to violent extremism. A significant form of community engagement that has proven effective in at-risk areas is the Mothers School initiative, which has been integral in equipping women in areas of prevalent violent extremism to raise delicate issues within their family structure, create a safe environment for conflict resolution, and to inspire other women to take up similar roles within their community and family.¹¹

Mothers School programmes are workshops or forums that enable mothers and wives to come together to discuss issues related to violent extremism in their home, develop strategies for dealing with the threat of radicalization, share experiences, and promote a community-wide change from within the family structure.¹² The classes are designed to introduce soft-skills such as listening, dialogue, de-radicalization techniques, and empathy to improve the process of child development and family communication. Mothers School meetings last between 2-3 hours, and are conducted over a 10 week period. The workshops have empowered women in at-risk areas in Tajikistan, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Indonesia, and many other places to employ family based communication techniques to improve communitywide de-radicalization efforts.

It is this type of community engagement that Dr. Edit Schlaffer talks about in her article "Mothers of Extremists: The Unlikely Allies for a New Female Security Paradigm". Dr. Schlaffer outlines that through her engagement with women in the West Bank, especially

with mothers who have lost their sons, there is a newly formed sense of optimism. Mothers begin to engage as community leaders to rebel against the recruitment of their children into terrorist ideologies. During her visit to the West Bank, Dr. Schlaffer met a series of women lending their voice to the counter-radicalization movement. One mother, Samira, stated that:

When they come to recruit our sons,
we must rebel! A mother will gain
nothing; her son is more important
to her than anything else, and if
you promise me the whole world
and even heaven I wouldn't change
it for the life of my son.¹³

This is a far cry from the previously prevailing sentiment in the West Bank where mothers would be honoured by their son's martyrdom.¹⁴ In the West Bank and elsewhere, the number of women involved in extremist crimes has risen from 1% to 23% in a decade, as poverty combined with animosity towards the state for the imprisonment or death of their relatives, has inspired women to promote, and even join, extremist groups.¹⁵ However, women like Samira who live in conflict areas with high degrees of radicalization have found their voice through community programmes like Mothers School. Women's stories of loss to violent extremism is an inspiring lesson for everyone. This is especially true for young women who represent the era of new female diplomacy that has emerged globally, as women are becoming more involved in developing solutions to traditional security concerns.

Empowering women as mothers and wives to counter violent extremism goes beyond charitable organizations and outreach groups. Governments must contribute heavily to ensure the successful inclusion of women at the grassroots level. The United Kingdom has established a women's stakeholder group to advise the government on how to better engage women in counter-terrorism measures at the community and family level.¹⁶

The same types of initiatives have also been employed in recent years in Canada and the United States, as programmes aimed at countering the growing radicalization narrative in at-risk communities have increased. The Somali community in the northern United States is an excellent example of this initiative in North America, as the United States Homeland Security efforts to counter violent extremism at the community level has been present in that community since 2011.¹⁷ The Somali community in Minneapolis, Minnesota has been subject to heavy extremist recruitment efforts from terrorist organizations like *Al-Shabab*, making a government funded community polling approach necessary to support the

strengthening of family units, and involving women specifically in counter-extremism initiatives.

In Canada, initiatives to counter radicalization focus primarily on community outreach. According to Dr. Anna Gray-Henschel, Senior Director of National Security Policy with Public Safety Canada, Canada's strategy to counter violent extremism starts with building resilience by developing co-operation with communities.¹⁸ Contact between foreign terrorist fighters and radicalized individuals can be limited by way of prevention initiatives, increased law enforcement capacity through inclusivity training, and targeted intervention programmes in at-risk communities. Essentially, in order to successfully operate a community based approach to countering violent extremism, Canada's Department of Public Safety insists that authorities must engage with at-risk communities respectfully and transparently, whilst providing a culturally sensitive means of advising against radicalization and violent extremism.

A community outreach approach to countering violent extremism is available in Canada, especially through programs like "Settlement, Resettlement and Interaction" in conjunction with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which delivers services to citizens and newcomers by assisting with socio-economic integration and resilience building in communities especially prone to social isolation or violent extremism.¹⁹ However, a community based approach exclusively targeting women would be beneficial, as women's roles as mothers and wives in families and communities cannot be understated as a means of countering violent extremism from the ground up.

There is a noticeable trend in counter-extremism efforts in the West to better engage with women to ensure that counter-narratives reach family structures and eventually the targeted community as a whole. It remains to be seen what type of impact a women's stakeholder group will have on government decisions, but recognizing the unique role of women is an important step towards a gender inclusive remedy to violent extremism.

In conclusion, it is evident that women hold a very important role in the future of countering violent extremism, and excluding women from community based deradicalization efforts is counter-intuitive. Globally, women as mothers and wives possess the ability to inspire positive change within families and in their communities. Professionally, much has been done to ensure that women and men are seen as equals, and although there is still a long way to go to achieve complete equality in this respect, the progress made over the last decade has been astounding. It is imperative that governments and international organizations work

to engage and inspire women as mothers and wives to promote safe and healthy communities by countering extremist ideologies, especially in at-risk communities.

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¹⁹ *Public Safety Canada*, "Community Outreach and Engagement to Counter Violent Extremism," *Canada*, March 2014, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrnt/cntr-trrrsm/cntrng-vlnt-xtrmsm/cmmnt-trch-eng.aspx>.

The Overlooked Ally. Engaging Afghan Women: Failures and Lessons

Benjamin Felsher

At the 2014 Wales Summit, NATO proclaimed the value of "strengthening efforts to implement the rights of women and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and to include women fully in political, peace and reconciliation processes".¹ In this declaration, it committed to strengthening the common objective shared by government agencies, NGOs, and the United Nations to strengthen the central role played by women in international development efforts. Initially, the necessity to engage half of any given population in policy and program delivery was not obvious to western commanders in Afghanistan and Iraq. Until the Female Engagement Teams were deployed in 2009, the US Command and the ISAF failed to sufficiently engage women in their successful Counter-Insurgency (COIN) operations.

Afghanistan is an overwhelmingly rural country whose population adheres to a traditional gendered division of labor. In the early days of the war, when the United States and its allies were just waking to the unconventional conflict they had stumbled into, it was understandable that their strategy focused mainly on enemy-centric tactics. Air power was used to clear insurgents from cities like Kabul, and strongholds such as the Tora Bora Mountains, where B-52 bombers decimated Taliban bunkers. But as the ground forces approached, they confronted an enemy that could not be tamed by the overwhelming technological superiority of the United States. In 2010, the Afghan surge led by the new Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, General David Petraeus, made population-centric counter-insurgency the foundation of the remaining Afghan mission.

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Counter-Insurgency is a hybrid strategy combining civil and military participation in order to achieve operational goals. "It requires Soldiers and Marines to employ a mix of familiar combat tasks and skills more often associated with nonmilitary agencies".² In consequence, it is not surprising that the recent U.S. Counter-Insurgency Manual bears the signatures of not only the Secretary of State and Chief of Staff, but also the Director of USAID. Inter-agency collaboration is at the core of the Counter-Insurgency Doctrine, which formed the basis of the U.S. missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The armed forces have closely collaborated with civilian agencies in a COIN situation, because the Islamist threat is not primarily a military one. This was apparent in Afghanistan, where the Taliban was driven out by little more than a handful of troops in the early days of the war. Rather, COIN is a long-war strategy, mobilized for a protracted conflict in which the more powerful actor must necessarily achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

COIN operations must employ restraint, must allow the host nation as much autonomy as possible, and most importantly, must protect the population from insurgents. However, in the pursuit of winning hearts and minds, the directive to Engage Women outlined in the Petraeus Counter Insurgency Manual was dangerously ignored. The manual addressed the role women play in their societies, rightly describing them as "hugely influential in the forming the social networks that insurgents use for support".³ It continuously stressed that "getting the families is a big step towards mobilizing the populace...". Considering that in order to defeat insurgents, "a solid majority [of population support] is often essential", it is difficult to understand why it took so long to formally engage 49% of the Afghan population.

Entirely female units bridged the gap between soldier and trust-builder which was desperately lacking in traditional male combat groups. In Afghan society, foreign men, and especially male soldiers, are essentially forbidden from interacting with local women. However, when approached by female units, such as Team Lioness, Afghan women responded with ease and surprising comfort. In Afghanistan, the Female Engagement teams (FETs) were expected to "meet with Pashtun women over tea in their homes, assess their need for aid, gather intelligence, and help open schools and clinics".⁴ In their duties, the FETs accomplished the equivalent of male commanders convening tribal leaders, and as such, their importance to the overall mission cannot be overstated.

Counter-Insurgency is a doctrine that requires precise implementation. Political bungling or obstruction can destroy the credibility of forces within the host country, and foster irreparable cleavages. Trust bonds in the country could not be sustained without engaging women in COIN operations. When Female Engagement Teams finally reached Afghan women in 2009, the country had been occupied for 8 years and 30,000 international troops were deployed on the ground.

The Afghan counter-insurgency was doomed from the start, because coalition planners had not anticipated the protracted nature of the conflict. They did not consider the influence women had in their families, and deployed FETs far too late in the war. While the FETs that were eventually deployed were a step in the right direction, they were only as effective as their small numbers allowed.

The results of the FET program are difficult to measure, and a number of academic attempts have been made to devise a metric for the program's success. However, the measurement schemes by which conflict-researchers have tried to measure FET success rates ignores the unique uncertainty of COIN operations. As Eric Jardine and Simon Palamar pointed out in an article on the Canadian mission in Kandahar, "military planners can select the 'right' strategy, but an overall counterinsurgency campaign can still fail".⁵ The fact that in many cases the concrete results ascribed to Female Engagement Teams are conflicting is due to the difficulty of tracing the degree to which coalition forces won "the hearts and minds" of the Afghan population. With that being said, it is to the credit of the coalition commanders that they eventually recognized the need to engage women in their counter-insurgency efforts. The effort was too little and too late, but the shift in military thinking will hopefully make way for more effective efforts in future missions.

Governments in the post- 9/11 world find themselves operating in an uncertain international environment. The armies that so easily drove the Taliban out of Afghanistan found post-war institutional restructuring to be a long and difficult process. By means of guerilla warfare, Taliban insurgents persistently harassed the victorious forces, inflicting substantial casualties and incurring heavy financial costs for the new western-backed Afghan government. COIN operations recognize the broader social context of the Afghan conflict, and seek to deny the enemy local support. However, 'grassroots' counter-insurgency is a difficult and expensive endeavor, and may soon fall out of fashion as more conventional state-based threats demand NATO's attention. In order for COIN operations to function with maximum effectiveness, the military must find a way to engage both Afghani women and men.

The use of Female Engagement Teams in Afghanistan was a step in the right direction, but was implemented far too late in the campaign. It would benefit future soldiers and military planners in COIN environments to heed the advice of the UNSC Resolution 1325 on peace-keeping, and "incorporate a gender perspective" in all future operations.⁶

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¹ NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration On Afghanistan*, Wales, 2014.

² Sarah Sewal, John A. Nagl, David H. Petraeus, and James F. Amos, *The U.S. Army & Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2.

³ *ibid*, A6.

⁴ Elisabeth Bumiller, "For Female Marines, Tea Comes With Bul Lets," *New York Times*, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/03/world/asia/03marines.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

⁵ Eric Jardine and Simon Palamar, "From Medusa Past Kantolo: Testing the Effectiveness of Canada's Enemy-Centric and Population-Centric Counterinsurgency Operational Strategies," *Studies In Conflict & Terrorism*, 2013: 604.

⁶ UN Security Council, 2015, *Resolution 1325, United Nations*.

