

Liechtenstein Institute at Princeton

Women Leaders in
International
Relations
and World Peace

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in
International Relations
and
World Peace

Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination
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of Public and International Affairs
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REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN LEADERS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Wolfgang Danspeckgruber

The role of women in the state and international relations is under-rated and under-examined. Nevertheless, female leaders from Katherine the Great and Empress Maria Theresia to Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir, Jiang Qing (Mao Zedong's widow), Indira Gandhi, Tansu Çiller, Angela Merkel, and Hillary Clinton have played or are today playing major roles in their respective states and thus are part and parcel of shaping the international system. While this female participation in shaping the global order is an accepted fact nowadays – at least in the US, EU, and among OECD members – the conduct of state affairs and interstate relations, i.e. diplomacy, has traditionally been a male bastion.

At the 1815 Congress of Vienna, all the formal and critical negotiations were conducted by such leaders as Metternich and Castlereagh without female participation. However, it is said that many of the key conversations were conducted and certain agreements were reached during the after-hours sumptuous dinners and large balls where men and women socialized, as it were *Wien wie es tanzt und lacht* (Vienna as it dances and laughs). Women's participation in international relations and diplomacy, thus remained largely informal until the early twentieth century when World War I brought about the end of three conservative European empires and ushered in an era of democracy and general suffrage. These changes coincided with women, albeit slowly in many cases, entering the highest levels of education and taking important positions in the sciences, medicine, commerce, and policy-making.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, the much wider access to education and information at the international level, as well as the wider acceptance of basic human rights in the global community, certainly fostered the general role of woman leaders in diplomacy. By the 1990s with the end of the Cold War, women's participation in the conduct of foreign affairs had visibly increased, a trend that has accelerated. In the course of my work on crisis diplomacy, I personally met top women diplomats who brilliantly represented their newly independent states, or who in even more challenging circumstances, were looking for international recognition of communities which wanted to obtain full sovereign rights and were working for secession.

It has to be emphasized however that on the communal and family level – as wives, mothers, grandmothers, and as maternal leaders of large families and clans – women have had always wide influence, not the least of which has been due to their roles as primary educators of the young. Women's leadership outside the formal channels of diplomatic and international relations also has deep roots. One only has to look at the examples of female leaders who have received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Women too have consistently lead in crisis situations in all parts of the world – whether by working to stem violence, exacerbating tensions in support of a cause, or supporting and safeguarding husbands, brothers, and sons. There are myriad examples of movements instigated and carried out by women that have been expressions of frustrations, demands for rights, and attempts to influence national politics, often in the face of significant challenges. Women have proven to be the sometimes quiet and behind-the-scenes but powerful and determined leaders against oppressors, as I observed during the Balkan Crisis, the Kosovo Crisis, and in Afghanistan under the Taliban.

The Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination (LISD) has been very much involved in the study of conflicts deriving from “secession” or “defining one’s destiny” since the 1990s, and through this work has engaged with women leaders and diplomats in conflict-ridden regions who publicly or privately exerted significant influence in the affairs of their respective states. From this long engagement, LISD recently initiated project work specifically on women leaders in international relations in order to delve more deeply into this important issue area.

The LISD project on the role of women in international relations is deeply rooted in IR theory. The realist school of international relations holds that domestic structure yields small influence over war, peace, and foreign relations, while the liberal school has introduced a wide variety of factors – e.g., the effects of democracy, leadership personality, societal structure, culture, and historical memory – that can potentially alter the traditional reasons behind the way states operate. For many of us the question hence arises: What is so different in the actions and influence between male and female actors in the international system? And, if it is nothing, then why are we so intrigued by the subject of women leaders? Furthermore, what are the dynamics of their roles in international organizations and in international business? Are woman leaders like Catherine Ashton or Mary Robinson in the case of international organizations, or like Jody Williams in the case of NGOs and civil society, the rule or the exception? It seems that women’s influence is still very much relative in spite of the fact that women comprise at least half of the world population. Factors ranging from religion to political culture to pejorative assumptions that women are the “weaker sex,” play key roles in women’s leadership opportunities and demand further study.

This collection of essays is based on the first event of LISD’s broader project on women leaders in international relations, a panel convened at Princeton University in December 2009 on the subject of “Women Leaders in International Relations and World Peace.”

In the lead essay, Nannerl Keohane, Princeton professor and former president of Duke University and Wellesley College, discusses the role of women in peace-building and in the implementation of human rights. She pointedly also demonstrates the role women have played in war-making and in leading armed forces into combat. Professor Keohane discusses the relative absence of women leaders in international di-

plomacy, noting that it seems that the three recent US Secretaries of State and their counterparts in Austria, Liechtenstein and several other states represent the exception rather than the rule in a community of 192 sovereign states.

Ursula Plassnik, Austria's former foreign minister and longtime chief of cabinet of the country's prime minister, delineates a practitioners perspective. She highlights the important role women play in societies in fostering interstate understanding. Ambassador Plassnik enumerates several key messages: that human rights apply to men and women alike; that women must accept to lead and view their leadership as legitimate as that of men; that there should be more "investment" in women; that women should have more access; and that women should offer concrete alternatives to violence and the use of force and should get engaged in peace-building efforts.

Alison Boden, Princeton's dean of religious life, discusses the role of women of faith in peace-making, women who often function outside of elite positions and are rather removed from formal positions of power. She asserts that in peace-making, grassroots movements are critical and women play typically an important role therein. However, Dean Boden suggests two important caveats: first, that women leaders can be staunch defenders of violence and, second, that religions can also be employed to sponsor violence. Nevertheless, religion can be an important contributor to peace-making and charitable activity, and although on a global scale, most women do not have access to power, those engaged in peace work may come to enjoy higher status in their communities.

Haleh Esfandiari, Iran expert and director of the Woodrow Wilson Center's Middle East Program, describes the importance of women leaders in contemporary Iran. She notes that women had much greater access to formal channels of power in Iran during the time of the Shah as they then had seats in the government and in the Parliament. This is not true today, but more women than men can now be found in universities. This and women's votes have offered women increasing influence in contemporary Iranian politics. These reasons are why, according to Professor Esfandiari, women generally face greater hostility by Iran's security services. For some, women's power is the embodiment of "soft power" and is therefore a threat.

Tamar Hermann, a political scientist and professor at the Open University of Israel, argues that women are only minor participants in the discussion on foreign and security matters in Israel. She explains that is because "women are kept away," but also that they "keep away." Hermann discusses that although Israel has had some female foreign policy leaders (as seen through Golda Meir and Tzipi Livni), they could be active in formally shaping Israeli foreign policies as members of Parliament, and are certainly key socializers as mothers and educators, in public opinion polls they tend to opt for "middle-of-the-road" positions on security and foreign policy issues.

Amaney Jamal, a Princeton politics professor, laments the disempowerment and pov-

erty of Palestinian women due to four elements: the Palestinian National Authority, Hamas, religious society and the personal status regime, and the Israeli occupation. She shows how in the post-Oslo period Palestinian women have been denied many of their previous opportunities, and that many women voted for Hamas in spite of its very traditional interpretation of the role of women because of its important role as social service provider. Professor Jamal argues that women have been disproportionately impacted by the Israeli occupation which has had wide-ranging negative effects for them.

The publication's afterword is written by Swen Dornig, Attaché at the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations in New York, who addresses the women, peace, and security agenda of the UN Security Council. Dornig discusses the role of women in conflict zones, both as victims and perpetrators, and provides an overview of the responsibilities of the UN to protect women and girls in conflict zones as spelled out in UN resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889. He concludes with some thoughts on how the UN can best forward gender-related and women's concerns in its policy-making.

In closing, I would like to thank my special assistant Jessica Sheehan for her work on this publication, express my gratitude to the contributors to this new LISD initiative on the role of women in international relations, and note with pleasure the enthusiasm of Princeton's student body in this new venture. As our objective is to foster the study of issues relating to the state, security, sovereignty, self-determination, borders, and ethnicity in both theory and practice, and to positively influence or ameliorate related crises, understanding the role of women in these matters is pivotal. It is through such understanding, as well as with efforts toward female empowerment, women's unhindered access to education, jobs, and policy-making positions, that we work toward greater global peace, stability, and prosperity.

WOMEN AS LEADERS IN PEACE AND WAR

Nannerl O. Keohane

I have no special expertise in the topic of women in international politics. I'll say a little about women as leaders more generally. I've just written a chapter for a book on leadership entitled, "Do Women Lead Differently from Men?" It's a complicated topic, but if you are asking whether all women have a distinctively feminine leadership style, the answer is surely no. Thinking that "all women" lead alike is equivalent to assuming there is a specific male leadership style that includes, for instance, Jimmy Carter and Genghis Khan. It's equally odd to assume that's true of Margaret Thatcher and Mother Teresa.

WOMEN'S EFFORTS FOR PEACE

So what about the familiar claim that women are particularly interested in peace? This stereotype has some truth behind it, but it's not the whole picture. It does reflect the image of women held by many people across the ages: famously in Aristophanes' comedy *Lysistrata* about a group of women in classical Athens who together decided not to sleep with their husbands until the men stopped the war.

My favorite feminist anti-war tract is Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* from 1938: Virginia Woolf was quite clear that making war is a man's business, not a woman's. When a male colleague asked her to donate to an organization for the prevention of war, her chilly response linked war-making very clearly with the male sex, and included this phrase: "if you insist upon fighting to protect me . . . let it be understood, soberly and rationally between us, that you are fighting to gratify a sex instinct which I cannot share, to procure benefits which I have not shared and probably will not share; but not to gratify my instincts, or to protect myself or my country." She was very much dedicated to peace and worried about the war clouds over Europe – as well she should have been.

More evidence: eleven women have won the Nobel Peace Prize, including Baroness Bertha von Suttner in 1905; Emily Greene Balch, co-founder of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and a distinguished professor of economics who was fired from Wellesley College for World War I peace activities and pacifism. Also there are the examples of Alva Myrdal and Aung San Suu Kyi.

There are countless examples of women who work for peace and social justice in a volunteer capacity. To name just two: Jane Addams, founder of Hull-House settlement house in Chicago and Progressive Party Activist, was elected to office in a number of national and international organizations, served for many years as president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and received the Nobel Peace

Prize in 1931. Eleanor Roosevelt, appointed by President Truman to the first US delegation to the United Nations, provided key leadership in the formulation of the Declaration of Human Rights.

But not all women, surely, have worked for peace. There are also prominent examples of women who have distinguished themselves as leaders in war.

WOMEN AS LEADERS IN WAR

Here, too, there have been some legendary figures. Think of the British warrior women Britannia and Boadicea; in France, Joan of Arc, and the fierce market women of the French Revolution.

Elizabeth I of England had a very clear sense of her own power and state. Historian G.R. Elton tells us that “Elizabeth’s character was of steel, her courage utterly beyond question, her will and understanding of men quite as great as her grandfather’s and father’s. She was a natural-born queen . . . the most masculine of all the female sovereigns of history.” (That this is the highest possible compliment – “the most masculine” female sovereign – is revealing in itself.) In a famous speech given on horseback to her army at Tilbury as they prepared to fight the Spanish Armada in 1588, Elizabeth emphasized her readiness to “lay down for my God, for my kingdom, for my people, my honor and my blood” in the dust and heat of battle. “I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman,” she continued, “but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England, too.”

More recently, Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, and Golda Meir were “the best men in their cabinets” by all reports, including their own. Each dealt successfully with a major war, which enhanced their reputations for strength and firmness. These three prime ministers provide an instantaneous rebuttal to the notion that all women work only for peace, or lead in a distinctively nurturing, empathetic fashion.

All of these prime ministers behaved in ways usually associated with masculinity, partly in order to be accepted as “real leaders.” Thatcher often used harsh tactics to achieve her goals. She regularly demonstrated that she had strong nerves and was implacable in the face of opposition, contemptuous of leaders less focused and weaker than she. She famously scolded Ronald Reagan when he seemed about to “go all wobbly” in pursuing their joint international goals.

Consider Golda Meir and Indira Gandhi as well as Thatcher. Each of the three took office in a situation of political infighting and was regarded as a compromise candidate, with colleagues assuming each could be easily manipulated. A recent book about their approach to power by Blema Steinberg says, “as prime ministers, all three women enjoyed a reputation as strong-willed, tough, and resilient.” And “none of them was

particularly concerned with exhibiting cooperative or empathic styles of leadership behavior.”

WOMEN AS DIPLOMATS

In one area where it seems likely that women could excel, there have been curiously few women in history engaged in it on a formal, international scale: diplomacy. Women are often educated and socialized to be gracious, diplomatic, shrewd, and sometimes have to be like that to make our way in a male-dominated world. The last three US secretaries of state – Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Rodham Clinton – have had very different styles and goals in office, but each has been quite successful in her own way. However, they have not escaped a searchlight focused on their style and personal attributes, based specifically on the fact that they are women. As a presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton was excoriated as overly male when she demonstrated strength and boldness, and dismissed as too womanish to be commander in chief if she showed nurturing tendencies. Many women sympathized with her, since this “Catch 22” is familiar to many of us.

Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, began her career in a ministry associated with women’s issues and used this as a path to higher office. Once she came to the chancellorship, she “learned to use ‘hard power’ to consolidate her political position.” And there is no question about her political ambition; we are told that she has a picture of Catherine the Great in her office. Several observers would say that Merkel has led Germany to a position of great influence within Europe in part because “she provokes no jealousy or competitiveness among the alpha males who rule large countries, and she inspires no fear among the citizens of smaller ones.” However she does it, most people would agree that diplomacy is one of Merkel’s strongest suits, an activity in which she outshines most if not all of her current male colleagues.

It is interesting to think about what the future will hold. The important thing is to *get involved* as women (as well as men): whether you are making peace, waging war more effectively, or improving the world through diplomacy. Take advantage of the fact that women can now be engaged on the front lines of peace, war, or diplomacy, and find your own niche to make a difference.

WOMEN LEADERS: A PRACTITIONER'S VIEW

Ursula Plassnik

Let me share with you some observations from the point of view of a practitioner. To begin, a basic fact we tend to forget because it is so obvious that it easily slips our minds is that 50% plus of each society around the globe is made up of women. What is more, women not only form 50% plus of their respective societies, but they teach and train almost 100% of it, the boys and the girls. That accounts for their extraordinary importance in transmitting role models, expectations, and perspectives to the next generation.

My basic assumption is that any society denying women their proper role, including their role in the public sphere, actually suffers from a self-inflicted loss of potential. Women are the most relevant emerging power in this century. Normally, when we speak of emerging powers, we tend to think in geographical, economic, and strategic terms – at least in my field of action, in foreign policy. We tend to think of China, of India, Brazil, and other countries. Let us attempt to see the world from outside of the box. Let us try to think of women as the single most relevant determining factor for the future of our global village.

The United Nations is very active in promoting women in many ways. Let me just mention two areas in which the United Nations is doing exceptional work. One is UN resolution 1325, adopted in 2000 about women in peace-building and female leadership. The other basic UN document is UN resolution 1820 of 2008, which addresses the issue of violence against women. These fundamental UN-documents illustrate the scope of action that we are called upon in the international community.

Briefly, I would like to now describe my interaction with women in international relations. I did not go into politics or become a diplomat because I was on an “empowerment agenda.” But as I went along in my work as a foreign minister, I began to realize that I could not get a good feeling for another society without being in contact with the women. Meeting the women is not part of the traditional agenda of a foreign minister. I therefore started making small gatherings in addition to my regular meetings with the people I had to meet on the regular track. I started organizing meetings with the women of the respective civil societies. This proved to be a most rewarding learning process.

The second trigger for my interest in women and international politics was the network of female foreign ministers, an initiative going back to Dr. Madeleine Albright, the former US Secretary of State. When I first heard about it, I must confess I was very reluctant because I had no clear idea of what this was all about. Twenty-seven out of 192 foreign ministers around the globe were women at the time, so why did I have

to go out to meet them? Was this a crocheting club at Hudson River level? I was very quickly converted into a firm believer in this small, informal network – in particular, also due to our African colleagues, whose biographies and scope of action and experience was truly amazing. I learned a lot from that network.

Today, I would like to share with you “messages of encouragement.” Women need encouragement around the globe. I had the pleasure to resume a discussion of important leading women a year and a half ago in Brussels, and I think you will find some of it relevant to your own experience.

First, human rights are the rights of not only men, but also women. No woman around the globe should be denied her full human rights because she is born in a certain place or grew up in a certain society or was educated according to certain traditions. This is fundamental, also in accordance with my convictions as a trained lawyer.

The next message is that women must accept to lead. Very often we find women reluctant to take leadership roles, so we need to encourage ourselves and other women to take responsibility also in the public domain. Leadership by women is as legitimate as is leadership by men. Women need more self-confidence, they should not shy away from taking their place in society. Women should request their contributions, diverse as they may be, to be valued and to be respected. Culture or religion must not be an excuse to restrict women. We should urgently press religious leaders to address women’s situations in a positive perspective and also to show us the border between tradition and religion – a difficult issue, I know, but we have to insist.

“Invest in women” is another important message, as empirical data show that women are better investors, they have higher returns on investments, they are less prone to corruption, they are a success story when it comes to microcredits. In the Third World, women achieve amazing and admirable results with very modest means. This message is directed not only at women, but at all those who can provide microcredits, as well as “big money.”

Another major notion for me in my practical work was “access.” The notion of access might seem very theoretical, at first glance. But think about it in terms of access to health care – which is the number one issue for women around the world, for them and for their families – or access to education – which is the number two in most societies. Assuring access for women to rule of law, access to the judiciary, access to finances, access to leadership and responsibility in the public domain is indispensable. By the way, the rule of law is the main subject for the Austrian membership in the United Nations Security Council. We were quite deliberate in choosing that, it is of particular importance to women in providing predictability and sustainable development. The rule of law actually ends the rule of force and ends impunity or violence against women.

Women should work on offering concrete alternatives to violence and force. Experience shows that, in any society, extremism's first victims are women and children.

Women should get engaged in peace-building, on all levels, from the community to the global level. It is quite amazing to find out how little women are represented in peace work, including the United Nations and the European Union. In spring 2007 Dr. Condoleezza Rice, the then-US Secretary of State and myself examined the special representatives of the Secretary General of the United Nations. At the time, there were 54 such high level experts in four different regions of the world, in conflict and post-conflict societies. Not one of them happened to be a woman. This is not representative of and acceptable for the world we live in. In my part of the world, the European Union, Javier Solana, the High Representative for Foreign Policy, had nine regional representatives – again, none of them was a woman. The European Union is supposed to set an example and this is certainly not a good one.

My last point is to speak up for women whose voices are still weak. This is a particular task for women who have made it. It is not only important what we talk about, but who speaks and whose voice is represented.

WOMEN OF FAITH IN PEACE-MAKING

Alison L. Boden

The contribution that I can make to this panel – and the area of my own research and practice – regards women of faith at the grassroots level, at the very foundations of peace-making. We have heard about women's contributions to peace-making at the highest levels of diplomacy, and of national and international leadership. The women of whom I will be speaking are not at all elite and are quite removed from power. They are frequently in very disenfranchised situations because of their status as women, because of the poverty or low status of their broader community, or both. I believe that their contributions on the ground level are critical to all peace-making initiatives. Even the highest level of diplomacy needs as its foundation a public that is supportive, engaged, and able to understand the wider scope of issues that are involved. Grassroots work starts from the ground and works upward. Elite diplomacy works from the top down, and together they meet in the middle to create a seamless effort to promote peace and stability. Particularly in these days, I am tremendously excited by the potential of women of faith to be agents of constructive change for peace.

Often, when one speaks of women or of religion, disclaimers seem to be necessary. The first caveat regards gender: it is important not to essentialize women as caring, nurturing, or peaceable. They are sometimes the staunchest defenders of violence. The second caveat regards religion: religions are sometimes employed to sponsor violence and all things antithetical to peace and security. Each religious tradition has a very wide spectrum of theological interpretation and daily practice; the religions are not monolithic. Please permit me to speak, however, about women who proactively work from the foundations of their faith on efforts for peace, even though there are certainly examples to the contrary.

A very important contributor to religious women's peace-making is the power of religion to motivate people to action. Religions make claims to ultimacy. They associate themselves with the divine, with supreme or ultimate reality, or with a purpose or project of eternal importance. When one acts out of a religious commitment one may take inordinate risks (even those considered unthinkable by others); one may sacrifice one's life or one's self-interest for another's well-being; one may come to inhabit a level of courage not manifested in any other sphere of one's life. Numerous governments have restricted religious association and practice in hopes of curbing its organizing potential and the challenge of people of faith to the sitting regime. Arguably, the actions of religious communities were crucial to the ending of apartheid and of the East German state, and were the foundations of the challenges to legal racial discrimination in the United States and to colonialism in India.

Similarly, the moral power that inheres to individual religious actors is extremely po-

tent. Persons of faith, whether or not they are formal leaders in their communities, often carry a cache of ethical influence when they clearly participate in peace-making as an act of faith. Sometimes, religious identities provide a measure of physical safety, and result in access to members of the opposition that is not available to secular actors. This can be doubly true for women – they may be able to build bridges both because they are religious and because they are female.

The initial motivation of faith may be one of providing charity, but often the experience of charitable work on an issue or with a certain population blossoms into a genuine concern for justice. The charitable impulse results in exposure to situations that transform the person's political and theological perspectives. The deployment of women by religious communities (or their own self-initiative) to do charitable work can make them some of the most experienced, passionate, and articulate advocates in the area of peace-making.

A fact for many (perhaps most) women globally is that they do not have access to power or to positions of authority in international relations or any other area. Many have very, very little autonomy, very little decision-making power over their own lives, and very little education. They have very little "space." But often "space" is made for them if they are acting on the grounds of their religion, especially if their dialogue partners are other women. In such work they are experienced as a threat to no one, they are viewed as "good," "faithful," "virtuous." Their efforts and their new relationships are unimpeachable in their gendered and religious integrity. As women participate in such initiatives they find that their "space" – their agency – only grows. They acquire new relationships outside their immediate community. They may gain opportunities to travel and enjoy greater freedom of movement, greater mobility. They may enjoy an increase in practical autonomy, in having a voice, in decision-making. They may find themselves in possession of an "Archimidean standing place" – a real position from which to act with some authority and work for change. Their expanded exposure to opinion and experience becomes an education in and of itself. Their world-views grow immeasurably.

Simultaneously, depending on their peace work, they may come to enjoy a higher status in their community, becoming a person of some knowledge, or a producer of monetary income, or be seen as someone with a real place from which to advance her community's interests. She may grow in leadership and organizing skills that can be applied to many areas of her life, especially the needs she identifies in her own family or community. These women's agentive capacity grows and grows. There is a plethora of research about these phenomena, much of it very encouraging and also quite humorous, especially to the bemused subjects themselves. In the end, women are learning to do excellent peace work for its own good, but also to view such work as a catapult to an increased quality of life in every area. Of course, agency, equality, and empowerment need to be evaluated each in their own contexts, and the benchmarks applied to women of faith in one community must not be projected on to women in

another. What are truly massive gains in autonomy for some women may seem picaresque to others – not progress at all – while *in situ* they are actually staggering.

When people are not formally representing a country or specific sub-group they can be freed to express themselves more personally and with fewer boundaries about what information can be shared. Women of faith are often in this position. I think that the most transformative kind of engagement is the one that enables people to become fully *human* to each other, to deeply interact with those who have different identities and agendas, and to genuinely *identify* with the other. This is the strongest foundation for peace-building, and the unofficial nature of many religious women's work presents great opportunities for such relationships to be built. They are person-to-person rather than representative-to-representative.

The positive power of identity is difficult to underestimate in work for peace. Women may be greatly empowered in their work simply by connecting to one another as women, and additionally as people of faith. Religious commitment is a profound element to have in common with another. Women may be from radically different religious communities but their shared quality as people of faith is an enormous distinction from others. This shared commitment can make peace-making more possible in difficult circumstances.

The kind of peace-making that grassroots women of faith can do is effective even if very low tech. It is always helpful to have access to the internet or to a cell phone in terms of organizing, but many women still do not have these tools or access to the media. Still, such women make real strides in peace-making because their basic unit for organizing is their religious community itself and the personal relationships they make in their work. It is important to add that religious women may do their work without the explicit use of religious language or relationships. They continually translate their faithful mission and concerns into secular ways of communicating.

Examples help, and there are many. For instance, Hindu women in Nepal who have been victims of violence are advocating for peace talks with Maoist rebels (and also demanding a role in the negotiations). The organization Ruya in Sudan is run by Muslim women; they train others to be “women peace ambassadors.” Self Help Groups (SHG's) in Kandhamal, Orissa involve Hindu and Christian women to counter religious violence in their region. The Andean Women of Faith Network has evolved out of an interfaith women's initiative for peace and security in Peru.

This last network is part of the global organization Religions for Peace (World Conference of Religions for Peace), an inter-religious institution with observer status at the United Nations. WCRP works simultaneously at the “top,” in high-level consultative circles with religious and political leaders, and also at the grassroots level, to advocate for peace in every area of the world. From their headquarters on United Nations Plaza the organization connects leaders with one another, fosters dialogue and partnerships,

and works to connect people at the grassroots level with the projects of the various arms of the UN (e.g., UNIFEM). On the local level, Religions for Peace has spawned Women of Faith Networks in every region of the world. In these communities women receive peace education, engage in substantive discussion on subjects of conflict, learn skills in consensus- and security-building, and how to “change hearts and minds” on matters of violence or instability. They learn how to articulate their own authentically religious perspectives and acquire resources for peace-making that have been created by other women. They work with multi-religious training manuals and publish working papers to broaden their ideas and engagement. They develop an inventory of religious women with expertise who can become advisers to local, national and international institutions. A few examples of the resulting direct action from these networks include the following:

- During Sierra Leone’s civil war an interfaith group of women was able to secure the release of a number of child soldiers. They also played an important role in the Lomé peace talks, earning the trust of all stakeholders.
- In Guinea, a women’s group helped to ensure that elections were fair and without violence by getting the parties to dialogue with one another in advance and to promise to ensure a peaceful process.
- In the Balkans, Orthodox, Jewish, Catholic and Muslim women have committed to being in dialogue with one another although it is profoundly painful to do so, reliving the horrors of the wars in their region that have brought such violence to their personal lives. As they come to trust one another they find themselves admitting publicly to feelings of absolute hopelessness. But they conclude, “We have forged a lasting partnership, working for peace with justice.” They are taking their partnerships back to their communities. This is not the ratification of a treaty or an accord, but it is the foundation of peace-making, as these women work to ensure that these communities remain “human” to one another, and never again devolve into violence. They are doing the crucial work that will create post-conflict societies based on justice and respect.

In summary, effective and powerful work is being done by women of faith to promote sustainable peace in every corner of the world. Their efforts, coming from the grassroots – from the bottom up – complement the diplomatic work that starts from the top down, all in the hope that the peace-building initiatives may meet in the middle, as it were, and form a seamless commitment to the flourishing of peace within and between all peoples.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND WOMEN LEADERS IN TODAY'S IRAN

Haleh Esfandiari

In their campaign for more equal rights, Iran's women have become an informal force in Iranian politics. They have developed a broad agenda and loose, yet effective, forms of organization and acquired recognized leaders.

Since the Islamic Revolution over three decades ago, women have been at the forefront of the resistance against the government's efforts to dictate how Iranians should live and structure their lives. Women fought the imposition of the Islamic dress code and the attempt to push women out of the workplace and to exclude them from particular fields of university training and employment. They resisted exclusion from the public space. In each of these areas they achieved striking successes, yet their struggle is hardly over. Despite arrests, lashings, imprisonment, and torture, the struggle for freedom and rights has continued.

Women came out in force to join the protest marches following the June 2009 presidential elections which many Iranians believed had been manipulated in favor of the incumbent, Mahmud Ahmadinejad. In their brutal crackdown on the protestors, the security forces showed they would treat women equally when it came to clubbing demonstrators and hauling them off to jail. Symbolically, a young woman, Neda Agha-Soltan, caught in a photograph while she lay bleeding to death on a Tehran street, became the iconic symbol of the post-election protests.

Three years earlier, a small group of women and men launched a door-to-door campaign to collect a million signatures on a petition demanding equal rights for women in marriage and inheritance, an end to polygamy, and stricter punishment for violence against women. They argued that their demands were in line with Islamic principles and in keeping with Iran's international commitments as a signatory to the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights. The convention requires signatories to eliminate all forms of discrimination in their countries.

Iran's organizers were following the example of Moroccan women who a decade earlier had successfully collected one million signatures for a similar petition which resulted in major changes in Morocco's personal status law.

In Iran, the activists formed a number of informal committees, drafted a manifesto, and recruited volunteers across the country to collect signatures door-to-door. The leadership of the campaign remained informal. As the government arrested and jailed prominent members, others took their places.

While the women's movement under the Islamic Republic is a continuation of the movement that began near the end of the nineteenth century and expanded under the

monarchy, it has changed in dramatic ways. Far many more women, politicized by the revolution, aware that gains achieved under the monarchy were at risk, and conscious of new opportunities, are engaged and involved in the current movement. A shift has also taken place in the character of the leadership. Under the monarchy, leaders in the women's movement tended to come from among the educated classes. They held positions in the government or served in Parliament, albeit in small numbers. They used their positions and their easy access to men in power to press for change. It was these women, backed by women activists who set the agenda for the movement, who brought about major changes in the status of women.

Today's women's leaders are not in the cabinet, in Parliament, or in decision-making positions. They most often are to be found working in NGOs and outside the government. They have influence and their voices are heard not because they have access to officials or are themselves in positions of power, but because their demands resonate with both educated, upper- and middle-class women, and also women from traditional classes. Their cause resonates particularly with the young; and among Iran's growing population of university-educated women. More women gain university admission in nationwide entrance examinations than men, and a large number of them come from fairly traditional backgrounds. Women from such backgrounds also aspire to jobs, opportunity, greater freedom, and equality under the law. They too want equal access to education and employment, participation in the political process, and stronger legal rights. No woman wants to forgo the custody of her child, or to remain subject to her husband's right to secure divorce on demand, to take multiple wives, or to contract temporary marriages. No woman wants to be barred from access to education or employment because of her gender.

Women in Iran also vote, and they have become an important constituency whose support is courted in elections. The former president, Mohammad Khatami, running on a reformist platform, piled up huge majorities in elections in 1997 and 2001 in part because women and the young voted for him in large numbers. The current president, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, a populist conservative, sought to court the women's movement by nominating three women to his cabinet at the beginning of his second term. (Parliament rejected two of his nominees and confirmed one, a former member of Parliament, as minister of health.) But women were not generally impressed by the president's gesture. All three nominees were highly conservative. As a member of Parliament, the new health minister had been a proponent of segregated medicine, meaning only female doctors would be allowed to treat female patients.

Precisely because they recognize the potential weight of an organized women's movement, government and security officials have tended to treat women leaders with hostility. Intelligence Ministry officials regard women activists as subversives, suspecting that their ultimate goal goes well beyond equality under the law. Along with influential members of the regime, the Intelligence Ministry has convinced itself that the women's movement and women NGOs are part of an American plot to overthrow

the Islamic Republic through the use of “soft power.” They fear a repeat in Iran of the “velvet revolutions” in Georgia and the Ukraine where, they believe, civil society activists, women’s organizations, and the intelligentsia led workers and people in mass protests that overthrew regimes in these two countries and in other states of the former Soviet Union.

During my imprisonment in Iran in 2007, my Intelligence Ministry interrogators came back repeatedly to this scenario, although they insisted that a similar “soft revolution” could never take place in Iran. Besides, they said, any dissent would be nipped in the bud. Yet in these men, I sensed a palpable fear of “women’s power” – a fear, I assume, shared by their superiors. The regime would not tolerate a large, strong, and politically engaged women’s movement whose demands could raise “havoc” in an orderly Islamic society, they insisted. The Islamic Republic had no problem with demands that remained within the strictures of narrowly-interpreted Islamic law, they told me. But the demand of women for legal equality went well beyond these parameters, they said.

Not surprisingly, the authorities tend to treat any gathering of women, whether to protest the arrest of a colleague or to mark International Women’s Day, as a threat to the regime. Every year, women who gather on March 8 to commemorate International Women’s Day are beaten, arrested, and sentenced to prison terms. Several women active in the one-million-signature campaign have spent time in jail. Members of an organization that represents the mothers of political prisoners and who gathered every Saturday in a Tehran park were routinely harassed and often carted off for intimidation or incarceration.

Spokespersons for the women’s movement and its aspirations tend to emerge spontaneously. Among them are the lawyer and Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi, and the author, university professor, and activist Zahra Rahnavard.

Shirin Ebadi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003, has emerged as the moral voice of the country. She was born and educated in Iran, served as a judge before the revolution and has been working as a human rights lawyer since the overthrow of the old regime. She is the founder of the Center for the Defense of Human Rights, works with fellow lawyers pro bono in defense of political prisoners, and speaks out on human rights issues. Ebadi also has criticized the allocation of the \$75 million by Congress during the Bush administration to promote democracy in Iran, arguing that such perceived interference only damages the activities of NGOs in the country. She staunchly opposes any US air strikes against Iranian targets. Since the contested 2009 presidential election, she has remained abroad, publicizing the violation of human rights in the post-election security crackdown.

To intimidate Ebadi, the government charged her with tax evasion, closed her center, and detained her partners. Authorities even broke into her bank safety deposit box and

confiscated her Nobel Prize medal – the first time such a thing has happened in the 108 year history of the peace prize. Faced with an international outcry, the authorities returned the medal. In the former Soviet Union, dissidents were expelled in vain hopes of rendering them irrelevant. Temporary exile has not effected Ebadi's standing with Iranians either. She remains relevant to the debate on politics and human rights inside Iran. Her followers believe that if she decides to run in the next presidential elections she will win.

Ebadi has long argued that equality under the law is compatible with Islam and has demanded an end to various forms of discrimination against women.

Zahra Rahnavard, already well-known as the first woman to become the chancellor of a university in Iran and as an author and a university professor, achieved particular prominence during the 2009 presidential campaign. Her husband, Mir-Hossein Musavi, emerged as Ahmadinejad's principal rival for the presidency, and Rahnavard became the first woman in Iranian history to campaign right alongside her husband. At her husband's campaign rallies, she often spoke first, warming up the crowd for her husband. In media interviews she spoke out forcefully on such issues as freedom of speech and assembly, the need for transparency in government, and for an end to government interference in people's lives. She endorsed the aims of the women's equal rights campaign, even as activists in that campaign were being sent to prison.

She was more outspoken than her husband in condemning the post-election security clampdown, the widespread arrests, the killing of demonstrators, and reports of torture and deaths in secret prisons. Even today, many months after the election, Rahnavard issues messages on behalf of Musavi's campaign, addresses supporters through the internet, visits families of detainees, and ensures people do not forget that the elections were stolen from her husband. Rahnavard has not only galvanized women, she has become an inspirational figure for the younger generation.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN FOREIGN AND SECURITY MATTERS: THE CASE OF ISRAEL

Tamar S. Hermann

Wolfgang Danspeckgruber and I were colleagues at Princeton's Center of International Studies in 1990. I should mention that in 1990, I was the first woman fellow at the Center for International Studies and when I asked them how come there was no other women fellow before, I was told that women were not that good in IR theory and political science. I recently taught a freshman seminar on democracies and war. I had, about 50-50, male and female students in the class. The female students were much more hesitant in participating in the discussions about war and international relations and so on, so I invited them to my office to ask them why they keep quiet in the discussions. We were only fifteen people in the class, so it was not a massive situation that might have been embarrassing for them. They said, you know, the boys know so much more about it than I do and they speak out so fluently and with such self-confidence about such matters that I feel intimidated. So I told them that their speaking with such self-confidence did not mean that they know more about anything. Now that meeting didn't immediately change the atmosphere in the class, but it shows you that in 2009 there are still huge obstacles for women to overcome in foreign and security matters.

I was asked to talk about Israel and I wish I could come here and tell you that the situation in Israel is marvelous in this regard. I wish I could tell you that the image of Israel as an egalitarian society in this regard is correct as far as these matters are concerned, but unfortunately I cannot. I cannot. Women in Israel are only minor participants in the discussion about foreign and security matters. In this respect, certainly, they are underrepresented in every decision-making forum – be it diplomatic, be it parliamentary, be it in the cabinet. I wish I could tell you this is because women are kept from decision-making positions by their male colleagues, but this would be incorrect. Women are less interested in taking part in these sorts of deliberations. To start with, it is very crowded in there. They prefer to opt for other rooms in which it is easier for them to get visibility and to get a voice. The matter is highly controversial and women avoid getting involved in such highly controversial matters in Israel. And there is still this perception – that we were discussing before in security matters – that it is not feminine enough. So it is not that women are just kept away, but they also keep away. Therefore it would be much easier for me to point to male politicians and to say they are to blame for it, but this would not be correct.

We also have some quite solid empirical evidence about women at the grassroots level and their attitudes about foreign and security matters. Of course, women in Israel are deeply involved, by serving in the army, by being the mothers of soldiers, by being the relevant others of soldiers, by being part of the conflict and particularly by being members of a society which operates all the time in the shadow of the conflict. This,

in a way, prevents them from getting into more prominent positions because societies that are involved in military conflict tend to maintain the classical gender differentiations. In a society which is always involved in military conflicts, the status of the men who do most of the military jobs and because of that are perceived as experts on national security matters, it is very difficult for women to change the balance of power in this regard and they also do not want to challenge the existing order. Of course, there are some women who are trying to challenge this situation, but thus far, they have had little success.

Also, I share with you the fact that women are some of the best socializers in military conflict. As mothers and educators, they transmit the message of conflict to the kids and to the pupils in class. They only very rarely challenge the mainstream perception of the “they” and the “we” and they do not challenge the idea that the military solution is the best solution for the conflict. They do not put forward any conceptualization of the situation.

I have been doing public opinion polls on a monthly basis with my colleagues since 1994 on matters related to the peace process – I have to refer to it now as the “political process” because there is no peace there – and I was always looking for the gender effect. There is no significant difference between women and men on the definitions of the conflict, on preferable solutions, on the image of the other side and so on and so forth. The same demographic factors and the same social-economic factors which influence the population in general also influence women. For example, orthodox and ultra-orthodox women are to the right in the way that orthodox and ultra-orthodox men in Israel are on the right, so gender doesn’t play any significant role in that.

The only thing that is different between men and women – and it is also very weak from the statistical point of view – is that women tend to opt for middle-of-the-road positions. They are much more highly represented in the “don’t know” group in the surveys and they opt more for the “so-so” options. But generally speaking, gender doesn’t play a significant role, nor on the Jewish-Israeli population, nor on the Arab-Israeli population. The same goes for the Arab sector, although obviously, the opinions and the attitudes of the Arab sector on the conflict are very different than those of the Jewish sector.

As for the former political level, women politicians do address here and there matters of international relations, conflict and peace-making. By the way, as of today, we have 21 women female members out of 120 – which is the highest number ever for women in the Israeli Parliament. We have never had a woman as a minister of defense. They are making a prophecy that we will not see a woman as a minister of defense at least for ten years from now, maybe even more. Twice, we had a female minister of foreign affairs. One was Golda Meir, mentioned previously, and the second was Tzipi Livni. You should know that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is weak in Israel compared to the Ministry of Defense and other ministries, so the fact that they were ministers

does not mean that the foreign policy was really shaped by them. It was mainly being dominated by the Prime Minister's office, so they didn't bring any different voice to the foreign policy at that time.

We had elections earlier this year and there were three main candidates – Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, and Tzipi Livni. Although they were competing with each other, Barak and Netanyahu actually joined forces in undermining Livni's ability to deal with the security matters. They both attacked her on that ground and they said that she is totally incompetent in making decisions on such matters and it resonated very well with the voters. So the fact that they used it openly as a means of attacking her only shows you that they read very well what is acceptable and what is not acceptable among the Israeli general public.

We do have women on the parliamentary committee on security affairs. They are always a very, very small minority. Right now it is one woman out of sixteen and as always, women do not have a voice in there. There was not even one woman in the negotiating team with the Palestinians throughout the year despite UN resolution 1325. No woman was present there. I mean, there were secretaries there for administrative stuff, but there was no negotiating female in the team.

There is some hope, however, on the extra-parliamentary level because we do have quite prominent women in the peace movement. There are several peace movements, women-only peace movements. We have mixed gender peace groups as well, but certain women decided to have their own groups. We had the Mothers Against Silence in the early 90s, we had Women in Black in the late 80s, we had Four Women in 1997, and we have now Machsom Watch, which is the latest. They are supervising what is going on at the checkpoints and report to the media.

Unfortunately, as you know, the peace movement in Israel is quite dormant. It does not have much influence. It is not widely accepted. It is being ostracized by the mainstream, but still the presence of women there might be an opening for more active participation from women in this very important realm.

PALESTINIAN WOMEN: OBSTACLES TO EMPOWERMENT

Amaney Jamal

I was asked to speak about Palestinian women and the obstacles they might face to their own empowerment. I was trying to lay out the major sources of their disempowerment, if you may, and I have basically identified four major institutions. First of all we have the Palestinian National Authority, the government itself; we have Hamas and religious society; we have the Israeli occupation; and then we have the international human rights or gender regime as well.

The Palestinian National Authority basically comes back to the West Bank in 1993 to establish a system of governance. That system of governance more or less is corrupt, it's inefficient. We could say that arguably, it is another authoritarian state. As a result, women, basically not having access to adequate governing institutions, to affect legislative or judicial processes, were basically denied many of their opportunities through legal channels in this post-Oslo PNA phase. This came as a huge blow to the women's movement and Palestine, especially because a significant sector of the women's movement had engaged in the first intifada of 1987-88, 1988-89. They were basically the backbones of that first intifada, more or less a non-violent movement, a social movement for equality, for enhancement for their children and members of the Palestinian society, but also, there was very strong commitment among the women's movement for their own emancipation and liberation. So once the PLO was resurrected and reconciled and brought back to the West Bank under the guise of the Palestinian National Authority, it's there that we witnessed women being set back by the institutional realities of state-building.

Regarding Palestinian women on the negotiating team, consider Hamin Ashrawi. Immediately, because she was a strong critic of the authoritarian tendencies of the PNA, Arafat relegated her to the Minister of Tourism, which was a huge insult to Ashrawi. She therefore resigned from the Palestinian National Authority and is now in civil society, running her own NGO. So that's the first element of the Palestinian National Authority and how its institutionalization led to the marginalization of women. But also, there is this other element which I am going to talk about in more detail and elaborate on in a bit, but there is the issue that the Palestinian National Authority has the objective of consolidating its rule, maintaining the security environment in order to move forward in the peace negotiations with Israel. So part of what the Palestinian national authority has to accomplish is to maintain peace and security within the territories in order to basically signal to the Israelis and the Americans that it is a credible institution that can maintain peace and order if there is indeed going to be a two-state solution. In order to do that, it has had to basically, more or less, create one of the largest security forces in the world on the per capita level, which means there are unpopular measures on the ground in Palestine and when the Palestinian National

Authority is trying to appropriate consensus and legitimacy internally – what it has had to do is basically negotiate away women’s rights for the security environment. Hence, as the peace process has been moving forward, we’ve witnessed some setbacks for women and their rights are being compromised for the security situation.

Then there’s Hamas and religious society. Let me talk about religious society and I think my colleague, Dr. Esfandiari, talked about this a bit. The personal status regime, in my opinion and in the opinion of a lot of my colleagues, I think remains one of the most serious obstacles to the equality or the empowerment of women in the Arab world, in the Muslim world actually. More precisely, in the Arab world – and we see this in the Palestinian territories – it’s there that I think the world community, the international community, the domestic community and audiences haven’t been able to deal or think about how to deal with the personal status regime. It is part of religious society, it is embedded with religious mentality. I don’t think we’ve wrapped our minds around how to deal with religious society from an external perspective or from an international standing.

So that’s the first element. There’s religious society in the personal status regime and the interesting thing there about the personal status regime is that there is enough variation now across the Muslim world that leads us to believe that you can from within the logic of the personal status establishment begin to promote a stronger gendered consciousness or at least laws that are more favorable toward women within the larger, even the framework of the personal status establishment.

But then there’s Hamas. In 2006, we had a very unpopular election because that unpopular election resulted in Hamas winning the election. Of the people who voted in the Hamas election, 46% were women. The vast majority of those women voted for Hamas. Hamas is a movement that has mobilized along conservative policies, vis-à-vis women. It basically privileges male access to employment opportunities before those of women. It’s very traditional in its treatment and its symbolic association of what women can and should be – mothers first, primary caregivers, sustainers to their husbands – yet women turned out significantly and they voted for Hamas. Nobody ever talks about, interestingly, the gender dimension of the support for Hamas. Hamas remains the most viable social service organization in Palestine. When you can feed their children, they’re going to turn out and vote for the organization. In other words, you cannot talk about gender empowerment, in my opinion, and I’m sure everybody supports my position, without dealing with the glaring, humiliating, daily material grievances that Palestinians face. Palestinian women are impoverished; the vast majority of Palestinian women live under the poverty level. In Gaza, close to 95% of women are living under \$1 subsistence a day. So when we go in there and talk about empowerment and women’s rights, they’re asking us to feed their children first. So, that’s a major issue. So that’s Hamas and Hamas is basically saying to these women: we will allow you to participate within the movement, we will empower you, but here is the box and here is the conditionality of participation. And so women are negotiating

– or if you may, cognizantly giving up some rights in return for Hamas’ protection or patriarchal protection in that sense.

Then, you have the Israeli occupation and the Israeli occupation has not been conducive to the empowerment of women. There are several reasons. Of course, the occupation has led to the impoverishment of the Palestinian people, which means women are disproportionately affected by those occupation policies.

You have the limitations of freedom of movement, especially with the war and the system of checkpoints. These policies on the West Bank especially have disproportionately affected women. Women, especially in traditional societies don’t like to be handled by Israeli males at checkpoints or be patted down or searched or humiliated. In that sense, it is an issue of honor. We see this as a major issue right now in Afghanistan in terms of how the occupation is dealing with its problems there.

Fathers and mothers will not send their daughters to schools in the cities if they know that male Israeli occupation forces will be “harassing” their daughters at these checkpoints. As a result, what we’ve witnessed since the institution of these systems of checkpoints, is that female access to education has decreased, the marriage age has decreased, people are preferring to marry off their daughters rather than giving them the opportunity to seek an education and then quite honestly, even if they are able to escape those pressures and obtain an education, there are not adequate employment opportunities to absorb this human capital. So, then the consensus is you’re much better off marrying, establishing a family and finding patriarchal support, rather than being out there alone in a world that’s very dangerous and subversive in that sense.

Further, the occupation in general has feminized the entire Palestinian population because it’s a hegemonic presence of Israel in the Palestinian territories, which means that men are basically struggling with their own masculinity and this has disproportionately also affected women psychologically.

Finally, there’s a stigma in terms of women participating in the peace process or in terms of addressing the root causes of the occupation and trying to end the occupation. There’s still a stigma in terms of Palestinian political participation because women risk being imprisoned by the Israeli occupation forces and once women are imprisoned, there’s this issue that they must have been molested or sexually abused in prison, and this carries a social stigma.

To close, I just want to mention or talk a little bit about the international human rights agenda, especially as it pertains to women. I think the big issue here is that the international regime, as normatively committed as it is to issues of gender, still maintains or insists that it must establish the parameters of the debate around women, right? In other words, it reifies certain issues that are not necessarily the issues that the women on the ground are basically complaining about. And this has, I think,

been the big problem. One of my favorite examples from the Palestinian situation is when I was doing my own research for *Barriers to Democracy*, there was a lot going on about the multimillion-dollar initiative that had gone into Palestine to establish this domestic hotline system, which was great because women who were domestically, sexually abused or raped could use this domestic hotline system. On the ground, this wasn't being received well, primarily because 50-plus percent of Palestinian villages did not have access to phone lines. So you have to talk about the material grievances, the infrastructure that is lacking in a lot of these societies before we begin to think about ways we might empower women.

I think the international regime needs to better be able to deal with religious society. Still I think we're confronted with this issue of, with modernization, with development, with human development, religion was going to go away. This is obviously not the case in the Middle East or the Muslim world. I think we need to think constructively and find leaders from within these movements that we can embrace. We still have a problem with funding any civic association that is Islamic.

We don't want to deal with Islam. We're afraid of Islam. So this has been problematic because when we talk about female leadership, there is often a disjunction sometimes in terms of what Western audiences identify as adequate Muslim leaders and what the local population basically says: here are our leaders. And leaders need to be able to communicate to a Western audience, but they also need to be able to go back to their domestic audiences and communicate and have constituency support there as well. I think this gap is missing. Finally, I think for Palestinian women, the international, human rights, gender regime will deal and wants to deal with issues on women, but they don't want to deal with occupation. So, by ignoring the occupation and how it has affected women, it has basically harmed donor efforts to help women to begin with.

THE WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY AGENDA OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL: CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES TO ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Swen Dornig

When we hear about women in war, it is usually as the victims of sexual violence, which is often brutally used as a method of warfare to achieve military and strategic ends. However, it would be wrong to perceive women only as victims of armed conflicts. As social protagonists they play an important role during the various phases of the conflict cycle. In pre-conflict phases, women build networks that can encourage social and political groups to take preventative measures at an early stage. During conflict, women often take responsibility for providing for their families. In post-conflict societies, women can play a key role in peace processes and in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. As participants in peace processes and reconstruction efforts, women's presence signals that an inclusive and participatory peace is being built. As the body primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council must therefore address gender and women's concerns in its policy-making. The Council has recognized its responsibility to do so in its four thematic resolutions on women, peace, and security – resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889. These resolutions form the policy framework for the work on women, peace, and security at the UN, which extends all the way from the international to the local level. With the upcoming tenth anniversary of the adoption of the ground-breaking resolution 1325 in mind, let me provide you with an overview of the development of the women, peace, and security agenda over the last decade. At the end, some of the main obstacles to full and effective implementation of women, peace, and security obligations will be identified.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION 1325

On October 31, 2000, following a long period of intensive lobbying work by international women's rights organizations that were supported by UN organizations such as UNIFEM, and by members states such as Namibia, Bangladesh, and Canada, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325. The resolution was based upon a number of relevant existing United Nations instruments such as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Action Platform for Action, and the 2000 Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Groups. In resolution 1325, the Security Council for the first time specifically acknowledged the negative effects of armed conflicts on women and girls. The resolution aims to overcome the one-sided view of women as victims of armed conflicts and emphasizes their decisive role in preventing conflicts and consolidating peace. The addressees of the resolution

include, aside from the Council itself, relevant UN bodies, all UN member states, the Secretary-General, conflict parties, as well as stakeholders involved in DDR and DDRRR.¹ Member states are urged to ensure that women are more strongly represented in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms geared toward preventing, coping with, and reconciling conflicts at all decision-making levels. The Secretary-General is urged to appoint more women in leading positions at the UN. The involvement of women in United Nations field missions should be expanded, especially as military observers and civil police. With resolution 1325, the Security Council manifests its willingness to integrate a gender perspective into peacekeeping missions. All parties involved in peace negotiations are requested to take the special needs of women and girls into account. Conflict parties are requested to protect women and girls from gender-specific violence, especially to protect them from rape and other forms of sexual abuse. Furthermore, all conflict parties are requested to respect the humanitarian character of refugee camps and to address the special needs of women and girls during construction.

Formed from the initial group of member states who supported the resolution's adoption, and ever-growing in membership, the 1325 "Group of Friends" consisting of 35 States continues to lobby – under the leadership of Canada – for the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions 1820, 1888, and 1889.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL: RESOLUTIONS 1820, 1888, AND 1889

In the past two years, after several years of rhetoric but insufficient action, the activities of the Security Council regarding women, peace, and security have significantly increased. Three further resolutions now strengthen the normative framework of the WPS agenda. In resolution 1820 (2008), the Security Council recognized conflict-related sexual violence as a war crime and a threat to international peace and security. In order to better coordinate the UN system's response to sexual violence in conflict, resolution 1888 (2009) mandated the position of a Special Representative of the General-Secretary on Sexual Violence in Conflict and a Team of Experts to combat impunity. Resolution 1889 (2009) strengthened the role and involvement of women during the post-conflict and reconstruction periods.

In June 2008, the Security Council adopted resolution 1820. This was the first time that a Security Council resolution was co-sponsored by a number of non-members of the Council. These states wanted to make a statement of unity in the fight against sexual violence. Compared to resolution 1325, resolution 1820 is more precisely worded and, in many respects, substantiates and expands the content of its predecessor. The

1. DDR is Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration; DDRRR is Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reinsertion, and Reintegration.

resolution recognizes that addressing the systematic use of sexual violence as a tactic or method of warfare can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. The resolution thus effectively puts the topic of sexual violence in armed conflicts on the Security Council's agenda. Resolution 1820 notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide, and stresses the need for the exclusion of sexual violence crimes from amnesty provisions in the context of conflict resolution processes. Member states are called upon to carry out their obligations to criminally prosecute acts of sexual violence and to ensure that all victims of sexual abuse and violence – especially women and girls – are provided with the same legal protection and given the same access to the justice system. The Security Council affirmed its intention to take targeted measures against conflict parties that commit rape and other forms of sexual violence. By demanding that all parties to armed conflict take appropriate measures to debunk the myths that fuel sexual violence, the resolution makes a significant contribution to a long-overdue discussion about the causes of sexual violence. The Security Council seeks to increase the participation of women in conflict management by urging the Secretary-General and his special envoys to invite women to participate in discussions pertinent to the prevention and resolution of conflict, the maintenance of peace and security, and post-conflict peace-building. To prevent, recognize, and confront sexual violence the Secretary-General is requested to develop and implement an adequate training program for the entire peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel. The Secretary-General was furthermore required, within one year, to present an implementation report regarding resolution 1820. Aside from general information, the report should include an analysis of the prevalence and trends of acts of sexual violence, strategies for the fight against these crimes, as well as criteria to measure progress in this endeavor.

On September 30, 2009, under the Presidency of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Security Council adopted resolution 1888. The resolution mandates the position of a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in order to improve the coordination of UN efforts. The resolution requests the deployment of expert rapid response teams to situations of concern. Through capacity-building, this team of experts should help states combat impunity, in particular by promoting a comprehensive domestic approach to combat sexual violence. The teams should also submit recommendations for improved coordination of domestic and international efforts. Furthermore, the Security Council reiterates its intention to consider designation criteria pertaining to acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence when adopting or renewing targeted sanctions. Peacekeeping and other competent missions and United Nations bodies, in particular the Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflicts, are requested to forward any information pertaining to sexual violence to the relevant Security Council sanctions committee. The resolution calls for the appointment of "Women Protection Advisors" (WPAs) within peacekeeping missions and their gender advisory or human rights protection units. These advisors shall support the reporting of sexual violence and the implementation of the resolution's protection mandate.

Member states are encouraged to deploy more female military and security personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Issues regarding sexual violence should be included on the agenda of all peace negotiations led under the auspices of the United Nations. In addition, the Secretary-General is requested to continue to provide the Security Council with an annual report on the implementation of resolution 1820. The next report, which is due by the end of September 2010, should include a “naming and shaming” mechanism that provides information on conflict parties that are suspected of committing systematic rape or other forms of sexual violence. Furthermore, the Secretary-General is requested to ensure that all relevant reports to the Security Council contain the systematic details on the existing tendencies, new attack patterns, and early warning indicators for the use of sexual violence in armed conflicts.

In October 2009, the Security Council, under the presidency of Vietnam, passed resolution 1889. Building on resolution 1325, it addresses the exclusion of women and their interests from peace processes and related institutions. More women should be integrated into the political and economic decision-making process during the early phases of post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit within six months a set of indicators for use to track implementation of resolution 1325. These indicators could then serve as a common basis for reporting by relevant international and regional organizations and Member States on the implementation of resolution 1325. The Security Council has not endorsed a final set of indicators but expressed its willingness to take action on the comprehensive set of indicators on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 in October 2010. Furthermore the resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Security Council within twelve months on addressing women’s participation and inclusion in peace-building and planning in the aftermath of conflict. The Secretary-General is also requested to present an assessment of the process by which the Security Council receives, analyzes, and takes action on information regarding 1325.

To better understand the complex obligation that derives from the four resolutions, it is helpful to conceptualize the WPS agenda via four pillars:

- *Participation:* Member states are urged to increase the representation and active involvement of women at all levels of peace processes and security policy, especially at the level of political decision-making in national, regional and international institutions. Measures to ensure women’s participation in all peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building are essential to this issue.
- *Protection:* The agenda highlights the need for respect for and protection of the human rights of women and girls. Therefore the Council calls on all conflict parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence and to end impunity for such crimes.

- *Prevention:* The agenda emphasizes that gender perspectives should be included at all levels of peace-making, peace-keeping, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction to both prevent and mitigate the impact of conflict on women, and to ensure that women are integral to all measures taken to prevent conflict. The Council stresses the need for gender-sensitive training for mission personnel and highlights the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures.
- *Relief and Recovery:* The agenda stresses that the special needs of women and girls should be addressed in relief, early recovery, and economic recovery programs. Furthermore, the Council urges that processes of national dialogue, transitional justice, reconciliation, and post-conflict governance reforms as well as DDR and Security Sector Reform (SSR) programs should be gender-responsive.

CHALLENGES TO THE FULL AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPS AGENDA

Despite the progress made in the normative framework, implementation, action on the ground, and accountability is seriously lagging behind.

Women's Participation at Decision-Making Levels in Conflict Resolution and Peace Processes

The contribution of women to conflict management is still lacking and undervalued: women are frequently excluded from decision-making processes in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction. According to available statistics, only 2.4 percent of signatories to peace agreements are women – and no woman has ever been appointed as a chief mediator by the UN. The lack of participation in peace negotiations and mediation efforts is accompanied by a lack of representation of women in the peace-keeping structure of the UN. Only six out of 33 Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and their deputies are women. Within the Secretariat women occupy only 25 percent of all high-level posts. The Security Council must therefore increase its support of women's participation in peace processes and peace-keeping and ensure that the specific concerns of women in post-conflict reconstruction are met. This would strengthen the perception that women are stakeholders, as opposed to only victims or aid recipients. Furthermore, the Security Council must encourage the Secretary-General to continue to appoint more women to senior positions at the UN.

Lack of Progress in the Protection of Women from Acts of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts

Despite the normative framework provided by the Council in recent years, there has

been an alarming increase in sexual violence in various conflicts around the world. Sexual violence is increasingly used as a method of warfare to achieve military and strategic ends. The cessation of hostilities does not guarantee an end to the perpetration of sexual violence, and indeed the opposite is often the case. The influx of returning refugees and displaced persons, the presence of large numbers of demobilized ex-combatants, a widespread lack of economic opportunities, and a general breakdown in social norms all contribute to increased levels of sexual violence in post-conflict settings. The gender-based violence that women experience is often exacerbated by the absence of effective judicial institutions and the resulting impunity. Resolutions 1325 and 1820 both emphasize the responsibility of all states to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for war crimes – including acts of gender violence. Formal justice systems nevertheless often lack the required resources. The call of resolution 1888 on the Secretary-General to offer on-demand a team of experts, which can be deployed rapidly to assist national authorities in strengthening the rule of law, is therefore a step in the right direction. The Security Council must address the protection of women in more country-specific resolutions by condemning all acts of sexual violence and calling for their immediate cessation. The Council must unequivocally demand compliance with international humanitarian law by all conflict parties and call for accountability in cases where massive and systematic violations have occurred. Women must be consulted about their security needs and concerns, as well as actively engaged in their own protection through participation in the design and implementation of protection strategies and programs. The Council must request that reports by the Secretary-General on country-specific situations include both information on sexual violence and disaggregated data on the gender and age of victims. In addition, the Council must insist on the development of mission-specific strategies and plans of action that prevent and respond to sexual violence as part of a broader strategy for the protection of civilians.

Country-Specific Resolutions Currently Make Insufficient Reference to the Role of Women in Conflict Prevention

These references primarily focus on increasing female involvement in decision-making processes related to conflict prevention, and stress the importance of equal female participation in all efforts to maintain peace and security. An analysis of the references reveals notable gaps. To overcome these gaps, the Security Council should emphasize the active role of women in conflict prevention in far more country-specific resolutions. In addition, it should request that reports of the Secretary-General on country-specific situations include information on aspects related to women and conflict prevention – and in particular sexual exploitation and abuse. One of the main obstacles to the effective prevention of sexual violence is the continued disconnect between mandates of peace-keeping missions and the conditions on the ground. Mandates are often drafted in a vague manner and subject to multiple interpretations. Future mandates must therefore provide clearer guidance (in particular to commanders) on how to protect girls and women from sexual violence. The establishment of an expert group

on the protection of civilians is a crucial step forward in this regard. Council members must ensure that issues related to the protection of women are subject to consultation with the expert group on a regular basis prior of the adoption of relevant peacekeeping mandates. To further increase knowledge of the situation on the ground (and thereby improve the drafting of mandates), issues relating to WPS must become an integral part of the terms of reference of Security Council visits to conflict-affected countries. Those visits should include meetings with both female peace-builders and women affected by armed conflict. Since the personal appearance of victims of armed conflicts has in the past often left a deep impression with Council members, they should more regularly be included in open debates and Arria formula meetings at the Security Council. Pre-deployment and field-based training programs must instruct police, security and humanitarian personnel on how to prevent incidents of sexual violence. Furthermore, the Security Council must ensure that those who are assigned to provide protection never become perpetrators themselves. All acts of sexual violence committed by peacekeepers, including sexual exploitation of local women and child prostitution, are unacceptable. Such acts severely undermine the credibility and effectiveness of not only the peace operation in question, but also the organization as a whole.

More Needs to Be Done to Address the Specific Needs of Women and Girls During Relief and Recovery Programs

Women and girls bear enormous hardships during and after humanitarian emergencies. Women are particularly vulnerable in situations of displacement as they are forced to adopt new strategies to provide for themselves and their families. As a result, many become sex workers, trade sex for food, or leave the relative safety of refugee camps to collect firewood. Humanitarian assistance is an important part of providing protection and security for women and girls in conflict and post-conflict countries. However, only little has been done so far by the Security Council to address the link between gender-based violence and livelihoods in displacement settings. The Council must therefore ensure that relief efforts address the specific needs of women and girls and that women's equal access to aid distribution mechanisms and services are guaranteed. It must address the widespread exploitation of women during the aid distribution process and call for gender-sensitive training for humanitarian aid actors. Furthermore, the Security Council must ensure that women participate in the planning and implementation of aid programs.

THE WAY AHEAD

One of the main obstacles to the full and effective implementation of the WPS agenda is a lack of accountability. This accountability gap, is manifested in a lack of leadership, a lack of systematic approaches to implementation, and the absence of concrete and effective monitoring mechanisms. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace,

and Security has developed a proposal for a “System of Implementation” that would build on and enhance existing monitoring procedures, act as an early warning system to prevent violence, and result in concrete consequences for flouting the Council’s directives.² This system, which is in line with the Council’s request in OP 18³ of resolution 1889, would provide oversight and coordination, information analysis in real time, and could suggest action to prevent imminent or further infractions.

The key ingredients of this comprehensive and transparent system of implementation are:

- *Oversight and leadership within the Security Council:* This leadership, which is vital to the Council meeting its obligations on women, peace, and security, could be provided by one or two Council members, using a model such as the Council currently uses for sanctions committees and on other thematic areas.
- *Consistent, meaningful information on the key areas of the women, peace, and security agenda, delivered regularly to the Security Council:* This would be information provided by the global indicators on women, peace, and security, to be presented by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in October 2010, and from other sources relevant to women, peace, and security. All of the indicators, which should be endorsed by the Council in October 2010, would be reported on in all country reports, and in an annual report that would provide an overview and evaluation of implementation of the entire WPS agenda. In addition, thematic reports should include information from the indicators when relevant. To provide the necessary expertise, analysis, and contextualization of this information, in addition to ensuring all relevant information is brought to the Council’s attention in a timely manner, a specialized women, peace, and security unit within the recently established UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) must be established.
- *Clear and established “good practice” for the Council to take action on women, peace and security:* A clear set of options for the Security Council and UN entities to fully implement the women, peace, and security obligations should be established. These options would include “good practice” for

2. NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security, “Brief on a System of Implementation for Women, Peace And Security,” September 2010.

3. Requests the Secretary-General, within the report requested in S/PRST/2007/40, to also include a review of progress in the implementation of its resolution 1325 (2000), an assessment of the processes by which the Security Council receives, analyzes, and takes action on information pertinent to resolution 1325 (2000), recommendations on further measures to improve coordination across the United Nations system, and with member states and civil society to deliver implementation, and data on women’s participation in United Nations missions.

addressing WPS issues in, *inter alia*, Security Council missions, mandate renewals, Arria formula meetings, and clarity on what needs to be enhanced in the Security Council's current toolbox, such as sanctions regimes and Protection of Civilians measures.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS AND OSCE DECISIONS, DOCUMENTS, AND STATEMENTS ON WOMEN AND GENDER ISSUES IN CONFLICT ZONES AND PEACE-BUILDING

UN SECURITY COUNCIL

2000

Resolution 1325 (on Women, Peace, and Security): This landmark resolution introduced a wide-ranging call for women's active and complete participation in peace-building. This marked the first time the UNSC officially recognized the unique position of women in conflict, and their abilities to contribute to conflict resolution and peace.

2008

Resolution 1820: Reaffirming resolution 1325, resolution 1820 expands upon the issue of sexual violence in conflict zones, and expresses concern that women face a disproportionate amount of the violence due to sexual exploitation and abuse. Resolution 1820 emphasizes its commitment to considering such gender-based crimes as war crimes, crimes against humanity, or even a "constitutive act with respect to genocide."

2009

Resolution 1888: Resolution 1888 expresses deep concern about the apparent "lack of progress" on mitigating sexual violence in situations of armed conflict against women, including young girls.

Resolution 1889: Resolution 1888 continues to express concern of the vulnerability of women in conflict zones, and actively welcomes and recommends polices by the Secretary-General to see to it that gender-sensitivity becomes an important aspect in responding to armed conflict.

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

2004

OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (Decision No. 14/04): Building upon previous meetings, such as the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, the 2000 Action Plan for Gender Issues, and Beijing Platform for Action in 2000, the OSCE's Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality in 2004 encourages gender main-

streaming, gender sensitivity, and gender balancing.

2005

Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation (Decision No. 14/05): The OSCE recognizes the importance of “concrete action” to involve women in the activities of the OSCE in the fields of conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation.

2008

Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit: This OSCE publication introduces a toolkit of best practices and recommendations to encourage a gender perspective within the field of security sector reform. It provides a framework for gender-integration within policy-making with regards to national security.

2009

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Statement on Women, Peace, and Security: ODIHR announced that a significant number of OSCE participating states have undertaken additional steps to establish the correlation between security and women’s rights. This is administered by participating states through reporting on UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security through the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation’s Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

Gender and Early Warning Systems: This OSCE publication reports on the importance of integrating gender sensitivity into the implementation of early warning systems. This is because decision-makers often do not consider the “conflict-specific” gender differences between men and women in terms of perceptions of threats and security.

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LIECHTENSTEIN INSTITUTE
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