



POLICY BRIEF | WINTER 2021

# CONCRETE STEPS TOWARD A FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

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## INTRODUCTION

In order to increase the prospects for peace, stability, and security, and to demonstrate American leadership and commitment to human rights, foreign policy must integrate the goal of gender equality into national security strategies and approaches. The principles of women's rights, human security, and cooperation, and the need for the actions of the U.S. government to be aligned domestically and around the world are central to a feminist approach to foreign policy. This paper seeks to do one thing: to make recommendations about how a feminist foreign policy could be operationalized within the institutions and policy-making processes of the U.S. government, through the implementation of existing policy and legislation, most notably the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 (WPS Act). Feminist foreign policy can also be furthered with new policy and legislation.

The Women, Peace and Security policy framework and its implementation globally over the last 20 years are key drivers of any feminist foreign policy, as witnessed by the origination and development of feminist foreign policy agendas in other countries. This policy framework builds on earlier human rights and women's movements as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It widens the aperture beyond conflict prevention and resolution and supports a "rebalancing" of our approach to global engagement, so that the full range of diplomatic, development, and defense strategies are used to meet U.S. goals and objectives. Women, Peace and Security is a feminist approach to foreign policy because it broadens the definition of security to include human security and address overarching issues such as global health, climate change, and food security.

Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, the Women, Peace and Security agenda has challenged gendered assumptions about power and conflict resolution. These assumptions include the belief that the use of military force, or hard power, alone makes us more secure than the use of diplomacy, development, and other levers of soft power; and that human dimensions of security are less critical than geopolitics, which should mostly guide foreign policy and national security decisions. The Women, Peace and Security agenda and feminist lens on foreign policy fundamentally question these assumptions.

The recommendations made here for instituting a feminist foreign policy in the U.S. and fully implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda are not possible without strong leadership and political will.

To better advance U.S. national security objectives and to ensure lasting change, a focus on gender equality must be integrated into a broader approach to foreign policy, with regular senior-level attention and the capacity to coordinate different parts of the government with relevant areas of responsibility. As mentioned previously, these recommendations align with feminist approaches to foreign policy and international development agendas of other countries including Sweden, Norway, Canada, France, Luxembourg, and Mexico.

*To better advance U.S. national security objectives and to yield lasting change, a focus on gender equality must be integrated into a broader approach to foreign policy.*

## Summary of Recommendations:

- Diversify Representation
- Prioritize Gender in Information Collection and Analysis
- Ensure Input From Those Affected
- Reform the Institutional Structure
- Increase Accountability of Individuals and Transparency of Institutions
- Increase Resources
- Utilize Technology

## FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

Feminist foreign policy is both a transformative concept that integrates the goal of gender equality into national security and foreign policy, and a common sense approach to governing that includes a focus on who makes decisions (people), how and what policies are created (purpose) and how those policies are implemented (process). Strengthening recent policies enacted into law, specifically the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017, will ensure that gender equality is both a goal and a means to drive better foreign policy and national security outcomes.<sup>1</sup> A feminist approach to foreign policy values the contributions of all people, regardless of gender, addresses barriers to gender equality and diversity, and ensures that chronically marginalized voices—most often women’s voices—are part of policy-making processes.

Advocacy by women, particularly from the Global South, led to the Beijing Platform, and, later, the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and subsequent resolutions. These resolutions stress the necessity of applying a gender perspective to all peace and security decision-making and of involving women in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. The feminist foreign policy described here furthers the pillars of participation, prevention, and recovery by showing how Women, Peace and Security is not limited, and instead supports all foreign policy and national security issues. It also looks to transform the way that the U.S. government itself functions.

This paper is part of a robust debate on feminist foreign policy. Some practitioners and writers are focused on incremental change, while others are more radical. As this discussion continues, the diversity of definitions is a strength, because it sharpens our understanding of the complexity involved with transformational change.

Operationalizing and institutionalizing a feminist foreign policy in the U.S. context means informing existing frameworks with a gender perspective. This builds on past and current work by the U.S. government and civil society to include an overarching commitment to greater gender diversity and to a gender analysis of national security and foreign policy. This includes federal agency gender guidance, such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation Gender Policy (2006), the USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (2012), and the Department of State Gender Guidance (2014); foreign policy documents, such as the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (2010) and the U.S. National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security (2011, updated 2016); legislation, such as the Women, Peace and Security Act (2017) and the Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act (2018); and forward-looking civil society policy agendas. See *Annex Two* for examples.

*At its core, feminist foreign policy addresses power imbalances between the implementers of foreign policy and those impacted by it.*

At its core, feminist foreign policy addresses power imbalances between the implementers of foreign policy and those impacted by it, and structural constraints that exist within the U.S. foreign policy and national security institutions. These power imbalances and structural constraints create impediments to gender equality.

### WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER?

“Sex” refers to the biological differences that define people as male, female, intersex or a third sex. “Gender” refers to the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behavior, values, and to the relative power and influence that society ascribes to a person based on their biological sex. Gender is so embedded in our lives, our actions, and our beliefs that, unless questioned, gender roles seem completely natural. How gender is defined varies among cultures and changes over time.

Gender equality means that everyone has the opportunity to make life choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. It does not mean that women and men are the same, but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities should not depend on their sex. Importantly, effective policies and programs take into account the differing experiences of all people, including gender and address structural constraints to gender equality.

## WHY A FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY?

Studies that come out of two decades of Women, Peace and Security policy implementation document a correlation between security and gender equality. Specifically, research shows that countries that foster gender equality through the enactment and enforcement of laws are less likely to go to war, less likely to use force when in conflict, and less likely to use force first when in conflict.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, higher levels of women's political participation, as well as personal empowerment at the household level, decrease conflict and instability.

A feminist approach to foreign policy, as demonstrated by Women, Peace and Security policy and practice, aims to ensure that U.S. national security and foreign policy increases prospects for peace and security. Using gender analysis tools and increasing women's participation in decision-making in matters of international peace and security allows policymakers to be better informed and more effective.<sup>3</sup> Doing so also demonstrates US leadership on human rights, transparency, and accountability, enhancing America's reputation around the world.

A feminist approach to foreign policy supports a "rebalancing" of our overall approach to global engagement using the full range of diplomatic, development, and defense strategies to meet U.S. goals and objectives. This is made clear in the requirements of the WPS Act, which mandate the US Department of Defense, the US Department of State, the US Agency for International Development, and the US Department of Homeland Security integrate gender analysis and gender training in their work.

All four agencies are also required to consult with women, which elevates diplomacy and the civilian tools of power as policy options alongside the use and deployment of military force.<sup>4</sup> A hallmark of Women, Peace and Security is using a feminist perspective on international cooperation, including strengthening multilateralism, rebuilding alliances, and aligning the priorities of societies and recovery of economies. A form of this can be seen in Canada's feminist foreign assistance policy and programming. Canada's feminist foreign policy pushed sectors typically considered gender-neutral, such as trade, to understand the differential effects of their policies based on gender.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in 2019, the French government prioritized "equality between men and women" as part of the policy focus for its G7 presidency.<sup>6</sup>

A feminist foreign policy expands the diversity of information, analysis, and pool of decision-makers because a truly intersectional feminist approach aims to meaningfully include a diverse group of people in decision-making. Research shows that increasing gender diversity is an effective means

to address escalating challenges as well as to facilitate and accelerate progress toward sustainable development.<sup>7</sup> Further, the WPS Act requires the use of gender analysis, which increases the types of data collected, broadens the range of issues considered, and expands the scope of solutions considered beyond the traditional diplomacy, development, and defense spheres.<sup>8</sup>

### LANDMARK UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its successor resolutions underscore the centrality of gender equality to the maintenance of international security and are foundational for feminist foreign policy. In most peace processes, when men are the only negotiators at the table, they generally do not raise the full range of issues that affect all citizens' daily lives. When women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years.<sup>9</sup> Building on the earlier U.S. National Action Plans for Women, Peace and Security, the WPS Act was signed into law in 2017, and Agency implementation plans were released in 2020. The WPS Act, which commits the U.S. to women's participation in peace processes, needs to be fully implemented. *Other international commitments are set forth in Annex One.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS: OPERATIONALIZING FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

These are recommendations to implement a feminist foreign policy in the U.S., a country with a global presence, an expansive bureaucracy, and a large footprint. These recommendations build on the principles of UNSCR 1325, the U.S. National Action Plans, expand the requirements of the WPS Act and the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace and Security, and augment the current Agency implementation plans. They will help U.S. national security and foreign policy officials promote security, gender equality, and cooperation by integrating principles of gender equality and a gender analysis into decision-making and policy implementation.

Within the traditional defense, diplomacy, and development sectors, these issues must be addressed in every Bureau, Office, Embassy, USAID Mission, and DoD Combatant Command. They are not the sole responsibility of the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, the Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and the Office of the Undersecretary

of Defense for Policy. Rather, each entity must take on part of the responsibility so that gender can be mainstreamed across the US government.

Women, Peace and Security is a feminist agenda that expands the definition of what constitutes security. It addresses cross-cutting issues, such as global health, climate change, economic security, trade, and migration, all of which must be included in foreign policy and national security decisions. Accordingly, the number of government agencies relevant to the formulation of foreign policy must be broadened beyond those identified in the WPS Act.<sup>10</sup> Agencies to include in existing and future legislation and policy are the Department of Commerce, the Peace Corps, the Development Finance Corporation (formerly OPIC), the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and the Treasury Department, as well as the international programs of the Departments of Education, Agriculture, and Labor.

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The recent numbers of women at the Departments of State, Defense and USAID:

- Only three of the 70 Secretaries of State have been women: Madeleine Albright (1997-2001), Condoleezza Rice (2005-09), and Hillary Clinton (2009-13). Only two of the 26 Directors of National Security have been women. As of 2020, 28 percent of current U.S. Ambassadors are women, down from 36 percent in 2016.<sup>11</sup> There has never been a woman U.S. Ambassador to approximately 25 countries, including Afghanistan, China, Germany, Iran, Israel, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, each of which is central to U.S. foreign policy and national security.<sup>12</sup> At the Department of State, 31 percent of the Senior Foreign Service, and 42 percent of the Senior Executive Service, are women.<sup>13</sup>
- There has never been a woman Secretary of Defense or a head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As of 2019, 19 percent of all officers across the military are women.<sup>14</sup> Women comprise 19 percent of Army and Navy officers, 21 percent of Air Force officers, eight percent of Marine Corps officers, and 23 percent of Coast Guard officers.<sup>15</sup>
- Only two of the 18 Administrators of USAID have been women: Henrietta Fore (2007-09) and Gayle Smith (2015-17). Approximately 36 percent of USAID Mission Directors are women.<sup>16</sup>
- In 2019, 36 percent of foreign service promotions went to women.<sup>17</sup>

## Recommendation One: Diversify Representation

As the Administration fills senior leadership positions, there must be gender parity and other types of diversity in appointments at all levels to ensure that our foreign policy and national security agencies can effectively carry out their missions. To date, most decisions in this arena have been made by a small group of (mostly white) men in centralized and closely held processes.

Currently, there are not enough women in senior level positions. Efforts should focus on increasing the number and diversity of underrepresented groups in leadership positions across policy and security fields, including arms control, counterterrorism, homeland security, intelligence and analysis, and military strategy, as well as trade, commerce, and global health.

Beyond increasing the number of women, we need more feminist voices—men and women—and more individuals and institutions dedicated to a gender analysis of foreign policy and national security. Being a woman does not mean you are a gender expert. Not every woman is a feminist; not every person with a feminist voice is a woman. Special attention should be paid to engaging male leaders to champion gender equality within and across existing institutions. Men can, and do, advocate for a feminist analysis and policy, and women, depending on their differing life experiences, ages, classes and ethnicities, bring nuanced views.

Given the slow speed by which the number of women in foreign policy and national security is growing, U.S. government institutions should take immediate and ongoing actions, such as:

- **The President** should commit to a gender-balanced and diverse cabinet, and instruct the head of each executive branch agency to name a gender-balanced group of political appointees at every level.
- **The White House Office of Presidential Personnel** should develop a system for sustained identification and recruitment of a gender-balanced and diverse group of potential appointees. In addition, staff in this Office should understand the importance of gender analysis skills and knowledge for every position.
- **The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and all relevant Agencies** should overhaul the civil service and foreign service recruitment and selection processes to more easily recruit and promote qualified women already working in think tanks, academia, non-governmental organizations, the



private sector, and other parts of the government, and offer a path for those returning to government. This includes new hiring mechanisms to bring in a more diverse group of mid-level, mid-career foreign policy and national security staff.<sup>18</sup>

- **The President** should commit to a gender-balanced and diverse set of appointments to regulatory and other collegial boards and commissions.
- **The Secretary of State** should ensure gender parity on every delegation representing the U.S. abroad.
- **The Department of State** should expand the Franklin, Pickering and Rangel Fellows programs, and pay Franklin Fellows. **USAID** should expand the Payne International Development Fellows program.
- **All relevant Agencies** should ensure that the composition of fellows in all existing programs, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Democracy Fellows and Grants Program, is gender-balanced and diverse.
- **All relevant procurement offices** should collect and report data on the sex, ethnicity, and race of individual contractors hired to implement development, diplomatic, and defense programs.
- **The U.S. Congress** should request data on the number of women holding Senate-confirmed and other senior foreign policy and national security positions and commit to publish these statistics every three to six months.
- **Congressional leadership** should mandate that there be an equal number of men and women testifying as non-government witnesses in committee hearings regarding foreign and national security policy.<sup>19</sup>

## WHAT IS GENDER ANALYSIS?

Gender analysis is a socioeconomic analysis of quantitative and qualitative information to identify, understand, and explain differences in access, opportunity and impact between people because of an individual's identity, which includes gender, sex, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, age, economic status, education level, ability and other factors. In this context, it includes conclusions and recommendations to enable national security policies and interventions to narrow these differences based on gender and increase gender equality. *See Annex Three for an example of a feminist foreign policy case study.*

## Recommendation Two: Prioritize Gender in Information Collection and Analysis

Those who gather intelligence about what is happening in a country, or on an issue, should include information and analysis about women and gender issues. Briefings to policymakers from the foreign policy, national security, and intelligence communities must include a gender analysis. All issues, including traditional security issues, like non-proliferation or arms control, should be analyzed with a gender lens. This is in addition to the program design and targeting requirement in the WPS Act.<sup>20</sup>

Further, gender analysis should be used to analyze the impact of government funding and resources, policy frameworks, and their implementation. Beyond the standard "F" indicators,<sup>21</sup> there must be new ways to measure accountability regarding the participation of women in security, political, and economic processes, and to track U.S. government budget expenditures to implement feminist foreign policy and to measure outcomes. U.S. government institutions should take immediate and ongoing actions, such as:

- **The President** should mandate gender analysis in every decision memo that comes to him and that goes to the heads of foreign policy and national security agencies and entities.
- **The Intelligence Community** should include a gender analysis of each issue in the President's Daily Brief.
- **All relevant Agencies** should ensure that sex-disaggregated data about program implementation and impact is collected beyond what is required by the WPS Act<sup>22</sup> and is made available publicly. Agencies should use existing gender data sources (Data 2X, the OECD Development Assistance Committee) to place the "F" indicator data into a broader context.
- **The Department of State and USAID** should employ qualified, full-time gender advisors in all Embassies and Missions.
- **The U.S. Congress** should require that the Congressional Research Service reports on the impacts of proposed legislation or spending contain a gender analysis.
- **The Government Accountability Office** should require that its investigative and audit reports include a gender analysis and gender impact statement.

### Recommendation Three: Ensure Input From Those Affected

Foreign policy and national security decision-makers must consider the views of those most affected by our policies in order to deepen their understanding of how actions and interventions will not only have an impact, but how those actions are perceived. Going beyond data analysis provides a human lens and diminishes potential flashpoints that should be factored into decisions. For example, women and girls suffer disproportionately during and after conflict, as existing inequalities are magnified, and social networks break down. The process for gathering this information can help build stronger relationships at the grassroots level with people outside the formal power structure, who often say what they think the U.S. government wants to hear. U.S. government institutions should take immediate and ongoing actions, such as:

- **All relevant Agencies** should systematically take into account the perspectives of those outside of government and powerful elites in all U.S. government policy-making regarding its foreign policy. This must include both women and men. The WPS Act already requires agencies to take these views into account in conflict prevention activities and strategies.<sup>23</sup>
- **The Department of State and USAID** should provide actionable guidance to Embassies and Missions about engaging people in-country and should consistently reach out, and listen, to women and the organizations that represent them. This should include ensuring that women and leaders of women-focused civil society organizations are included in meetings during high-level visits by government officials, Members of Congress, and their staff.
- **The Department of State and USAID** should provide long-term, general operating support to women's rights organizations that work collaboratively to transform social, legal, and political systems in their countries.
- **Every U.S. Embassy** should establish a regular cross-agency, mission-wide gender working group headed by the Ambassador or Deputy Chief of Mission. The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues should convene these working groups regularly to ensure coordination. Each Embassy should also have a Mission-wide Gender Strategy, with implementation overseen by the Gender Working Group.
- **The Department of State** should ensure that there is a systematic and structured way to capture the insights of participants in programs, such as the International Visitor Leadership Program and the International

Women of Courage Awards. The Department should also ensure that all levels of regional and functional bureau staff at the relevant agencies have the ability to learn about the participants' insights and use them to inform policy.

- **The Department of State** should develop a program modeled on the Young African Leaders Initiative to invest in the next generation of women leaders and to focus on "new ways of thinking about foreign policy and global security."

### Recommendation Four: Reform the Institutional Structure

In envisioning a feminist foreign policy, we note the unique role of the U.S. and its large footprint in global economic and political affairs. The U.S. federal government is large and complex, employing over two million people,<sup>24</sup> with 15 executive departments or agencies and an annual budget of \$4 trillion. There must be thought given to how to best integrate this policy across the White House, Executive Branch agencies, and the U.S. Congress. U.S. government institutions should take immediate and ongoing actions, such as:

- **The President** should signal his commitment to gender equality by designating a Senior Director for Gender Equality and Female Empowerment/Assistant to the President at the National Security Council (NSC) with full-time staff.
- **The President** should issue an Executive Order and/or Presidential Directive on gender, including agency gender positions and a requirement for gender analysis. Further, the President should promote gender equality as a key strategy and policy priority within the National Security Strategy and create metrics linked to national security.
- **All relevant Agencies** should ensure responsibility for the gender portfolio and agenda at the highest possible level by designating a full-time point person on these issues, reporting to the Secretary or Agency head.
- **The Secretary of State, USAID Administrator, and leaders of other relevant Agencies** should ensure that all documents for their review are cleared by the offices of gender equality within their agencies.
- **The U.S. Congress** should codify the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues at the Department of State, headed by an Ambassador-at-Large, and an Office of the Senior Gender Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at USAID. These positions should both be Senate-confirmed.

- **The Senate Foreign Relations and the House Foreign Affairs Committees** should each create a subcommittee that has distinct responsibility for overseeing global gender issues and ensure that the subcommittee names reflect the expanded scope of work.<sup>25</sup>

### Recommendation Five: Increase Accountability of Individuals and Transparency of Institutions

Feminist foreign policy requires a transformation of government institutions to increase accountability for, and transparency about, actions taken to increase gender equality. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment must be a shared responsibility of all who work in foreign policy and national security. This work must be prioritized by leaders, carried out at every level, and not only be the purview of "gender offices" and "gender experts." Accountability should be shared beyond the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, the Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. Further, information and metrics regarding the implementation of the proposed Executive Order on gender equality must be made public and accessible. U.S. government institutions should take immediate and ongoing actions, such as:

- **The President** should create an Office of Management and Budget-wide support office to oversee spending on gender issues in foreign policy and national security across agencies.
- **The National Security Council** should require all relevant agencies to gather and publicly report on data about their personnel, gender-related processes and programs on an annual basis. This includes all Embassies, Bureaus, Missions, and all other relevant agencies.
- **The Department of State** Human Rights Report should again fully report on issues relevant to women and girls, and gender equality, and capture information regarding the treatment of women and girls in the broadest possible manner. This includes gathering information on maternal mortality and access to reproductive health services.
- **The Department of State and the Department of Defense** should require that participating countries increase the number of women in International Military Education Training.
- **All relevant Agencies** should brief and report data and metrics to the U.S. Congress as required by relevant legislation.<sup>26</sup>

- **All relevant Agencies** should create at least one entry-level course on gender analysis for all national security and foreign policy staff, as well as integrate gender into all courses at the Foreign Service Institute, USAID University, and military schools and academies. This includes the Foreign Service A-100 class. Additional, ongoing gender training should be available by sector, in the field and online. This is in addition to the requirement of the WPS Act that "appropriate" personnel receive training in conflict prevention, protecting civilians, and international human rights law.<sup>27</sup>
- **All relevant Agencies** should develop work requirements related to increasing gender equality in annual performance evaluations and promotion criteria.
- **All relevant Agencies** should ensure that their human resources or talent management offices report sex- and race-disaggregated data about recruiting, hiring, retention, and promotions. The Agencies should also ensure accountability for improper personnel practices of all kinds, including hostile work environments and sexual harassment/abuse.
- **The U.S. Congress** should require all relevant agencies to evaluate on a regular basis the implementation of existing gender guidance, such as the USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, the State Department's Policy Guidance Promoting Gender Equality and Advancing the Status of Women and Girls, the Millennium Challenge Corporation's Gender Policy, and the Development Finance Corporation's 2X Women's Initiative.

### Recommendation Six: Increase Resources

Along with setting a new policy framework, both the Executive and Legislative branches must ensure that funds allocated to meet foreign policy and national security goals promote gender equality, and that a gender analysis guides these expenditures. Support to programs specifically focused on gender equality and women's empowerment remains consistently low, and 62 percent of global development assistance is gender blind.<sup>28</sup> U.S. government institutions should take immediate and ongoing actions, such as:

- **The President and the U.S. Congress** should fully fund activities set forth in this paper, including program implementation, and the hiring of gender advisors, as well as building the capacity of all U.S. foreign policy and national security staff on gender equality.

- **The President and the U.S. Congress** should rebalance foreign policy and national security spending to enhance non-military tools of engagement. The fiscal year 2021 budget request was \$740.5 billion for national security, \$705.4 billion of which was requested for the Department of Defense.
- **The President** should develop a unified national security budget proposal that would illustrate a more comprehensive National Security Strategy including planning guidance on areas for increased investment and decreased spending. This should include increased funding for this gender policy framework.
- **The Department of State** should establish an initiative, modeled on the Full Participation Fund, to fund embassy-generated gender equality programs.
- **All relevant Agencies** should prioritize contracting with, and purchasing goods and services from, women-owned and/or women-led businesses, in order to level the playing field and increase the number of these businesses in the U.S. government supply chain.
- **The U.S. Congress** should mandate a gender analysis of all funds allocated and spent on national security and foreign policy.
- **All relevant Agencies** should ensure that, as they promote technology as a tool to collect and disseminate information, they take into account, and do not reinforce, the gender digital divide.
- **All relevant Agencies** should systematically gather information about the status of women and girls, sex-disaggregated data and information regarding gender issues, and analyze them in a way that informs foreign policy decisions.
- **All relevant Agencies** should prioritize contracting with, and purchasing technology from, women-owned and/or women-led businesses, in order to level the playing field and increase the number of these businesses in the U.S. government supply chain.

## Recommendation Seven: Utilize Technology

The use of technology, from electronic devices to communications systems to online applications, is transforming the lives of millions of people around the world. Technology can improve communications within the U.S. government and between the U.S. government and our partners abroad; increase the diversity and quality of data used by decision-makers; and expand access to U.S. government-provided services and information. But, like any other tool, technology used for foreign policy will not be as efficient or effective without planning that acknowledges the gender and other gaps that exist in access to, and use of, technology and in the data and information being collected. U.S. government institutions should take immediate and ongoing actions, such as:

- **The National Security Council** should convene relevant foreign policy and national security agencies, gender experts, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to develop a roadmap ensuring that women and girls have equal access to information and services provided by the U.S. government.



## ANNEX ONE: INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The frameworks below have formed the basis of U.S. government participation in international affairs and its overall relationship to the rest of the world since the end of World War II. Having said that, the U.S. has not consistently adhered to its international commitments.

### Human Rights

International human rights law sets out the obligations of governments to take action, or refrain from it, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. It applies equally to women and men: “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

A series of international human rights treaties and other instruments adopted since 1948 have expanded this body of law. They include the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), among others.<sup>29</sup>

### Women’s Rights

In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), often described as an International Bill of Rights for Women. CEDAW explicitly defines discrimination against women and sets forth an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. To date, 189 UN Member States have ratified CEDAW, although the United States has not ratified CEDAW. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action asserted women’s rights as human rights and committed to specific actions to ensure respect for those rights.

### Women, Peace and Security

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace processes,

humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of equal participation and women’s full involvement in maintaining peace and security. UNSCR 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts. It calls on all parties in conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse. Under UNSCR 1325, and its nine successor resolutions, each nation-state committed to a WPS national action plan.

The United States adopted its first National Action Plan in 2011 and its second in 2016, although both are superseded by the current U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security. In 2017, the Women, Peace, and Security Act (WPS Act) was signed into law. The WPS Act codifies the principles and objectives of UNSCR 1325 and previous U.S. NAPs. In June 2019, the White House released its strategy for implementing the WPS Act; specific plans from departments and agencies were released in June 2020.

## ANNEX TWO: POLICY LANDSCAPE

### Other Countries with a Feminist Foreign or Development Policy

#### *Sweden (2014)*

Equality between women and men is a fundamental aim of Swedish foreign policy. Ensuring that women and girls can enjoy their fundamental human rights is both an obligation within the framework of Sweden's international commitments, and a prerequisite for reaching Sweden's broader foreign policy goals on peace, security and sustainable development.<sup>30</sup>

#### *Norway (2016)*

The fundamental aim of Norway's gender equality efforts is to increase the opportunities available to women and girls, promote their right to self-determination, and further their empowerment. "We are aiming high. We will keep our promise to work tirelessly to promote gender equality for all women and girls."<sup>31</sup>

#### *Canada (2017)*

Canada's feminist International Assistance Policy targets gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. "This is a matter of basic justice and also basic economics. We know that empowering women, overseas and here at home, makes families and countries more prosperous."<sup>32</sup>

#### *France (2019)*

The French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs spearheads the French government's feminist foreign policy, advocating that gender equality is taken into account in all issues from inequality reduction to sustainable development, peace and security, defense and promotion of fundamental rights, and climate and economic issues.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Luxembourg (2019)*

Luxembourg is implementing a feminist foreign policy that acknowledges women's rights as human rights and systematically defends the fundamental rights of women and girls. These fundamental rights include political and economic rights, as well as the right to sexual self-determination. "A feminist foreign policy is not only in women's best interests, but in everyone's best interests, and contributes to our commitment to a stable and secure world."<sup>34</sup>

#### *Mexico (2020)*

Mexico's feminist foreign policy is based on five principles that rule all foreign-policy activities: 1) conducting all aspects of foreign policy with the intent to advance gender equality and a feminist agenda; 2) achieving gender parity at all levels of staff in the foreign ministry; 3) combatting all forms of gender-based violence, including within the foreign ministry; 4) making equality visible; and 5) practicing intersectional feminism.<sup>35</sup>

### Select Relevant Papers on Feminist Foreign Policy in the U.S.

[Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice](#), July 2019.

[A Feminist Agenda for a Green New Deal](#), September 2019.

Lyric Thompson, Gayatri Patel, Gawain Kripke, and Megan O'Donnell, [Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States](#), International Center for Research on Women, May 2020.

Jamille Bigio and Rachel Vogelstein, [Understanding Gender Equality in Foreign Policy: What the United States Can Do](#), Council on Foreign Relations, June 2020.

## ANNEX THREE:

### CASE STUDY: COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE) THROUGH DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

**Background:** Violent extremism is a destabilizing force globally, wreaking havoc across countries and communities. While most members of terrorist groups are men, 10 to 15 percent of members are women.<sup>36</sup> Based on data from 2014 and 2015, 10 to 20 percent of Westerners traveling to join the Islamic State were women and 13 percent of fighters were women.<sup>37</sup>

While the causes of violent extremism are complex, multifaceted, and often rooted in personal experience, members of violent extremist organizations consistently attribute their support for violence to feelings of injustice wrought from a system perceived to be rigged against them. Development deficits, such as marginalization, exclusion, corruption, or gender inequality exacerbate these perceptions.<sup>38</sup>

The U.S. government engages in efforts to prevent or counter violent extremism and to encourage peace in support of national governments and civil society partners. USAID's CVE programs are designed to:

1. Reduce the risk of recruitment and radicalization to violence; and
2. Build the capacity and commitment of partners in government, civil society, and the private sector to prevent and counter the violent extremist threats they face.

Given that the factors leading to or creating conditions conducive to violent extremism impact men and boys differently than women and girls, to be effective and sustainable it is critical that CVE strategies incorporate a strong gender analysis.

A gender analysis of CVE would include:

- Data collection: sex-disaggregated data that reflects the intersection of gender with other characteristics such as age, marital status, income, ethnicity, race, disability status, geographic location, sexual orientation and gender identity, or other socially relevant categories as appropriate;

- A review of laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices that influence the context in which men and women act and make decisions;
- A review of cultural norms and beliefs (often expressed as gender stereotypes) about what are appropriate qualities, life goals, and aspirations for males and females;
- An examination of how labor and time use is divided between productive (market) economic activity and reproductive (non-market) activity;
- An examination of the types of jobs that men and women take on in these organizations;
- An analysis of whether females and males own and/or have access to and the capacity to use productive resources – assets (land, housing), income, social benefits (social insurance, pensions), public services (health, water), technology – and information necessary to be fully active and productive participants in society; and
- An analysis of the ability of women and men to decide, influence, and exercise control over material, human, intellectual, and financial resources in the family, community, and country.<sup>39</sup>

A Women, Peace and Security approach to CVE also ensures the following:

- Those working on CVE policy include a diverse set of men and women;
- Data collected on CVE include women and girls as victims of terrorism, women as perpetrators, facilitators, and supporters of terrorism, and women as agents in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism;
- Gender analysis of push and pull factors, including masculinities, that lead to violent extremism;
- Input from those impacted by violent extremism on policy and program development and implementation; and
- Input from those impacted by violent extremism on how they might be affected, both in the short- and long-term, by U.S. government interventions.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 The Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 (WPS Act) and the Women Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018 (WEEE Act)
- 2 *Sex and World Peace*, Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett, p.3
- 3 “Gender equality and public policy: How women can improve decision-making,” Interview with Paola Profeta, July 22, 2020, <https://voxeu.org/content/gender-equality-and-public-policy-how-women-can-improve-decision-making>
- 4 “Adviser on Biden’s foreign policy: Start at home and repair alliances,” Comments made by Jake Sullivan, The Atlantic Council, August 21, 2020, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/adviser-on-bidens-foreign-policy-start-at-home-and-repair-alliances/>
- 5 For other examples, see The Council on Foreign Relations, “Advancing Gender Equality in Foreign Policy”, April 7, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/report/advancing-gender-equality-foreign-policy>
- 6 “Making Gender Equality a Priority at the Next G7,” Marlène Schiappa, January 26, 2019, [www.frenchly.us/marlene-schiappa-gender-equality-priority-G7/](http://www.frenchly.us/marlene-schiappa-gender-equality-priority-G7/)
- 7 “Women as Levers of Change,” <https://www.womenasleversofchange.com/static/pdf/Women-As-Levers-Of-Change-English-Executive-Summary.pdf>
- 8 Handbook, Sweden’s feminist foreign policy, 2019, <https://www.government.se/4ae557/contentassets/fc115607a4ad4bca913cd8d11c2339dc/handbook---swedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf>
- 9 “Women’s Participation in Peace Processes,” Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes>
- 10 The relevant federal departments and agencies identified in the WPS Act include USAID, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and any other department or agency specified by the President. WPS Act, Sec. 9 Both the 2011 and 2016 Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans expanded the agencies engaged in their implementation beyond the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Defense.
- 11 As of August 2020, this percentage is based on counting the number of women Ambassadors (43) on the list of existing Ambassadorial appointments (189). It is also worth noting that 40 Ambassadorial appointments are vacant. Tracker, U.S. Ambassadors, U.S. Department of State, <https://afsa.org/list-ambassadorial-appointments>
- 12 “Few American Women Have Broken the Glass Ceiling of Diplomacy,” Pew Research Center, [https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/22/few-american-women-have-broken-the-glass-ceiling-of-diplomacy/?utm\\_content=bufferc7225&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/22/few-american-women-have-broken-the-glass-ceiling-of-diplomacy/?utm_content=bufferc7225&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)
- 13 Department of State -- Full-time Permanent Workforce by ERGD as of 06/30/2020, [http://www.afsa.org/sites/default/files/0620\\_diversity\\_data\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.afsa.org/sites/default/files/0620_diversity_data_for_web.pdf); see also Congressional Research Service, Diversity in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Service: Background and Issues for Congress, July 2, 2020, available at [www.hdsl.org](http://www.hdsl.org)
- 14 Demographics of the U.S. Military (2020), Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/demographics-us-military/>
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 As of August 2020, this percentage is based on counting the number of women on the list of USAID Mission Directors. See USAID, Mission Directors, <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/organization/mission-directors>
- 17 Lara Jakes, “A Reckoning with Race to Ensure Diversity for America’s Face Abroad,” *The New York Times*, June 27, 2020.
- 18 As an example, see H.R.7673, the Represent America Abroad Act of 2020, introduced by Rep. Bass on July 20, 2020.
- 19 “Foreign policy congressional committees need to call more women experts,” Stephenie Foster and Susan Markham, *The Hill*, July 8, 2020, <https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/506382-foreign-policy-congressional-committees-need-to-call-more-women-experts>
- 20 WPS Act, Sec 5; Gender analysis is also required in the WEEE Act, Sec. 3.
- 21 The “F indicators” are standard foreign assistance indicators, used by the U.S. Department of State and USAID, to measure and illustrate the impact of foreign assistance.
- 22 WPS Act, Sec 4
- 23 WPS Act, Sec. 4.
- 24 Congressional Research Service, Federal Workforce Statistics, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43590.pdf>
- 25 Currently, oversight of global women’s issues is in subcommittees with differently configured jurisdictions. In the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights and Global Women’s Issues has jurisdiction. In the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the sub-committee covering global women’s issues is the Sub-Committee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations.
- 26 For example, see requirements set forth in the WPS Act, Sec. 8 and the WEEE Act, Secs. 3 and 4.
- 27 WPS Act, Sec. 6.
- 28 “Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment,” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/aidinsupportof-genderequalityandwomensempowerment.htm>
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- 31 “Concrete Steps Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy,” Government of Norway: [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/fn/womens\\_rights.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/fn/womens_rights.pdf)
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- 38 USAID CVE Policy: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/10.6.2019-CVE-Policy.pdf>
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## ONE EARTH FUTURE

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## OUR SECURE FUTURE

[oursecurefuture.org](http://oursecurefuture.org) 

Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference (OSF) is a department of the Colorado-based One Earth Future Foundation. OSF works to strengthen the Women, Peace and Security movement to enable effective policy decision-making for a more peaceful world.

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Women Make the Difference

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