

**Groundbreaking Strides without Transformational Change:  
The Integration of Gender Perspectives into US Department of State Peacebuilding  
Strategy Under Secretary Clinton**

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**Abstract**

Although peacebuilding aims to address root causes of conflict, while constructing stable institutions and social relations, conventional peacebuilding's negligence of gender in post-conflict societies and peace processes has restricted its potential. Most actors that contribute to peacebuilding efforts have participated in this ignorance, causing an outburst of feminist literature highlighting the severe need to integrate gender perspectives into peacebuilding. However, existing literature provides few specific recommendations and insufficiently examines mechanisms for integrating gender into state-led peacebuilding. Major actors, such as the United States, have recently embarked on attempts to incorporate gender perspectives into peacebuilding, creating large scopes of policy in need of analysis. This paper investigates the integration of gender perspectives into US Department of State peacebuilding strategies under Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who significantly elevated the importance of women's rights and brought attention to gender considerations in US foreign policy. Through the review of policy changes and the study of US peacebuilding in Afghanistan, this paper concludes that the integration of gender perspectives in Department of State peacebuilding efforts is incomplete, leaving policy altered, but not transformed, and inhibiting hopes for gender equality and inclusive, sustainable peace.

## **1. Introduction**

Over the last four decades, the international community has recognized the importance of peacebuilding in order to promote sustainable peace through constructing effective institutions, addressing root causes of conflict, repairing social relations, and addressing inequalities. More recently, feminist scholars and civil society actors have asserted that peacebuilding remains a gendered process, and thus unable to reach its potential. Post-conflict stages open up unique opportunities to make transformational progress regarding gender; however, gender dynamics have historically been ignored. To reverse this trend and enhance peacebuilding effectiveness, peacebuilding strategies must account for the gendered nature of conflict, its causes, peacebuilding institutions, and overarching power structures, while simultaneously examining and addressing gender relations and inequalities. While the full extent of this reversal has not yet occurred, some state actors and the United Nations have begun to realize the significance of gender to peacebuilding.

The United States plays a critical role in shaping and implementing peacebuilding strategies around the world due to its extensive international presence and power, especially when the United States has been involved in the conflict. Thus, US commitment to integrating gender perspectives into peacebuilding strategies, or lack thereof, significantly influences their formation and effectiveness. During President Obama's first term in office, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton led the US Department of State (DoS) in constructing and implementing US foreign policy such that gender consideration and women's rights receive significantly more priority. Previous administrations advocated for women's rights occasionally, but their foreign policies did not account for gender perspectives or advance gender equality on a large scale. Under Secretary Clinton, the DoS asserted that understanding gender relations and addressing gender inequalities are

critical to accomplishing its goals, and called for the integration of gender perspectives across all its policies and programs.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of peacebuilding, the DoS recognized that “For a peace/negotiations process to have a chance of success, it must entail building trust in the process, between parties, and among their constituents, with a special focus on including women.”<sup>2</sup> This suggests awareness that women should be present in peace processes, but does not address entrenched inequalities or challenge common conceptions of gender norms that often depend on asserting “inherent differences” between men and women, which help justify gender discrimination. However, the DoS has begun to recognize women’s roles as agents, not just as victims, and its policy includes undertaking gender mainstreaming, enabling women’s rights advocates, and creating specific offices and positions that aim to improve gender equality.

Similarly, DoS rhetoric regarding gender changed under Secretary Clinton. Clinton stated, “women are critical to solving virtually every challenge we face as individual nations and as a community of nations . . . When women have equal rights, nations are more stable, peaceful, and secure.”<sup>3</sup> Unlike her predecessors, Secretary Clinton argued that gender equality and women’s empowerment are matters of national security while convening foreign governments, meeting with women’s groups worldwide, presenting a TED Talk, or lecturing at universities. In Afghanistan, where peacebuilding is underway, Secretary Clinton stopped negotiations to inquire about the status of women and how the policies under review take women and girls into consideration. In order to get answers to these questions, she traveled all across Afghanistan to speak to diverse women,

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<sup>1</sup> “United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.” The White House, December 2011. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/179460.pdf>. 1.

<sup>2</sup> “Foreign Assistance Standardized Program Structure and Definitions.” U.S. Department of State, April 8, 2010. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/141836.pdf>. 18.

<sup>3</sup> “2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Leading Through Civilian Power.” U.S. Department of State, 2010. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153108.pdf>. 23.

which no Secretary of State had ever done before.<sup>4</sup> Melanne Verveer, the first Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, amplified Clinton's message and brought particular attention to women in peacebuilding by stressing the need to include half the population and all critical actors in post-conflict periods.<sup>5</sup>

While DoS rhetoric clearly changed under Secretary Clinton, the realization of the rhetoric is less clear. Given the disconnect, this research project seeks to answer the following questions: How has the US DoS integrated gender perspectives into its peacebuilding policies under Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's leadership and how do these changes, or the lack of change, affect the strategies' chances for success? The paper begins by placing recent DoS initiatives in historical context and exploring existing literature on the relationship between peacebuilding and gender. It then examines DoS prioritization of gender perspectives in policy directives and institutional mechanisms central to US peacebuilding approaches. Subsequently, the case study on Afghanistan explores DoS peacebuilding's focus on women's rights, and attempts at incorporating gender considerations, in a country where the United States has fueled the conflict and been deeply involved in pacification and peacebuilding. By the end of this paper, I aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the progress made thus far by the DoS, the extent to which changes have been institutionalized, and an assessment of gender integration in US peacebuilding in Afghanistan.

The research comes to find that during Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's tenure, the DoS integrated gender perspectives into peacebuilding strategies more than ever before; however, the DoS bureaucracy does not fully account for gender in its policymaking. Thus, peacebuilding policy has not been transformed, leaving gender inequalities unaddressed and limiting the success of peacebuilding strategies. In the case of Afghanistan, incomplete integration

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<sup>4</sup> Thompson, Lyric. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, February 21, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Verveer, Melanne. "Why Women Are a Foreign Policy Issue." *Foreign Policy Magazine*. FP Group, May-June 2012. <[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/23/why\\_women\\_are\\_a\\_foreign\\_policy\\_issue](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/23/why_women_are_a_foreign_policy_issue)>.

of gender perspectives in DoS peacebuilding restricts the advancement of women's rights and hurts the long-term chance for sustainable peace. Given this scenario, the paper will end with a number of suggestions of how to further integrate gender perspectives into DoS peacebuilding.

## **2. Methodology**

This research project was inspired by the extensive and groundbreaking attention that the DoS directed towards women's issues in US foreign policy under Secretary of State Clinton. DoS peacebuilding strategies are of particular importance because conflict situations have a unique and immensely powerful role in reinforcing, altering, and breaking gender norms. Periods of transition from conflict to rule of law and peace offer inimitable opportunities to restructure societal norms, improve equality, and reduce the chances of future conflict. Yet, peacebuilding processes are historically underfunded, constructed and implemented by men, and devoid of gender perspectives.

I choose to examine US peacebuilding strategy in Afghanistan due to the country's importance to US foreign policy objectives since 2001, the relevance of women's rights to the country situation, and the challenges the country faces in its peacebuilding process. While violations of women's rights were part of US justification for the 2001 invasion, women's rights may be sacrificed in the final stages of peace processes, hurting the potential for sustainable peace and contradicting the expressed goals of intervening. The case study outlines DoS attempts to increase women's inclusion in the peace process and integrate gender perspectives into peacebuilding strategies in Afghanistan, while it also evaluates the impact of these policy choices. The case does not attempt to generalize about US foreign policy, but instead, illustrates current DoS peacebuilding strategy in a high-priority situation with political tension, persistent security threats, and a great need for gender perspectives.

This paper is informed by semi-structured interviews, conducted over the phone, with State Department officials and women's rights advocates. During my interviews with DoS officials, I sought to discover how institutional and rhetorical changes under Secretary of State Clinton enabled and prompted the DoS, its offices, and its employees to advance women's rights and integrate gender perspectives in their work. I interviewed three women at the DoS using some overlapping questions and some specific to their function and experiences. I also interviewed an advocate for global women's rights at the International Center for Research on Women to enrich my understanding of recent changes and their effects from someone outside the DoS. Interviews were especially useful to gather information on recent developments and to learn about how gender is discussed within the DoS. This research also builds on interviews I conducted at the United Nations (UN), but the resulting findings on the UN women, peace and security agenda (WPS) are not heavily drawn on in this project.

Additionally, I gathered an extensive and diverse array of secondary sources for this paper. The secondary sources included DoS documents, such as press releases, speeches, policy directives, etc; news media; reports from related institutes and think tanks; books; and scholarly journals. Both interviews and secondary sources informed my case study research as well.

This paper will base its analysis on the definition of peacebuilding agreed upon by the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee in 2007, which reads as follows:

“Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “Peacebuilding and the United Nations.” *United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office*, 2013. <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pbun.shtml>.

Additionally, an understanding of gender theory is fundamental to this research paper. While there are many definitions of gender, this paper uses the definitions developed by Raewyn Connell and Carol Cohn. Connell sees gender as “the structure of social relations that cent[er]s on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes.”<sup>7</sup> Cohn’s more complex definition interprets gender as “not simply a set of ideas about male and female people and their proper relations to each other; gender is, more broadly, a way of categorizing, ordering, and symbolizing power, of hierarchically structuring relationships among different categories of people, and different human activities symbolically associated with masculinity or femininity.”<sup>8</sup> Cohn’s definition is especially relevant to this paper because it indicates the significance of gender relations throughout society and struggles for power, including those that affect both conflict and peacebuilding. As Cohn observes, “the institutions that are constitutive of the wider economic, political, social, and environmental processes formative of war are themselves structured in ways that both draw on and produce ideas about gender, that rely on gendered individuals in order to function, and that are permeated with symbolic associations with gender in their practices and conceptions of their missions.”<sup>9</sup> Yet, it is important to recognize that gender does not shape a society, or the dynamics of conflict, alone. Power structures are simultaneously created through various hierarchies, such as class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, and of course, gender.<sup>10</sup> Building off these ideas, incorporating gender perspectives into policies or processes requires exposing gender-based differences in status and power, and considering how such discrimination shapes the immediate needs and long-term interests of women and men.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Connell, Raewyn. *Gender*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Cohn, Carol. “Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework.” In *Women and Wars*. Polity Press, 2013. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> “Definition of Key Gender Terms.” *PeaceWomen*, <http://www.peacewomen.org/pages/about-1325/key-gender-terms>.

This paper does not base its analysis off the assumption that women are more peaceful than men considering the lack of genetic evidence and women's active involvement in recent wars.<sup>12</sup> Some feminist scholars, such as Cristina Posa and Swanee Hunt, maintain that women usually play the role of peace promoters during conflict.<sup>13</sup> They argue that women should be included in peace processes because of their perspectives on motherhood and the daily lives of communities, a willingness to cooperate with opposing parties, and a sense of urgency that speeds up the process.<sup>14</sup> While women definitely have the right to participate in peace processes and hold valid perspectives, drawing on women's innate differences from men does not advance gender equality or attempts to bring about peace.

Similarly, women are not universally victims of war and depicting them as such is counterproductive to peace processes and gender equality. Women's complex roles in societies and armed conflict are often collapsed by social and political dynamics that portray women as victims. However, in reality, women actively participate in conflict as well. They contribute to the activation, maintenance, and perpetuation of conflict,<sup>15</sup> and sometimes commit serious atrocities and abuses.<sup>16</sup> Carol Cohn sums of the multiplicity of experiences by writing, "[women] are politically supportive of wars, and they protest against wars. Women are raped, tortured, maimed, murdered, they are widowed, the children they have nurtured are lost to violence; but women are also members and supporters of the militaries and armed groups that commit these acts."<sup>17</sup> Additionally, women have expressed their agency by helping bring about peace. Characterizing women as either victims or agents during war is a false dichotomy with deleterious effects, notably an incomplete

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<sup>12</sup> Shoemaker, Jolynn. "In War and Peace: Women and Conflict Prevention." *Civil Wars* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 27–54. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Posa, Cristina, and Swanee Hunt. "Women Waging Peace." *Foreign Policy*, May 1, 2001. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ní Aoláin, Fionnuala, Dina Francesca Haynes, and Naomi Cahn. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 42.

<sup>16</sup> Karam, Aza. "Women in War and Peace-Building: The Roads Traversed, The Challenges Ahead." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3, no. 1 (April 2001): 2–25. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Cohn, Carol. "Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework." 1.

understanding of conflict that inhibits the creation of peacebuilding strategies. In terms of policymaking, seeing women as only victims leads to policies that attempt to address women's vulnerabilities, but fail to draw on women's strengths and capacities to create longer-term, sustainable solutions.<sup>18</sup>

### **3. Background**

#### ***Gendered Dimensions of Conflict***

Briefly exploring the gendered dimensions of conflict is essential before evaluating peacebuilding strategies based on their integration of gender perspectives, especially considering international recognition that women and men experience war differently and that women and girls are disproportionately affected by armed conflict.<sup>19</sup> Social arrangements, including gender hierarchies, set the "conditions of women's lives before war starts; the practices women engage in and vulnerabilities they experience during war; the ways in which women will be viewed in war by everyone from enemy soldier and political leaders to humanitarian assistance workers and policy makers; and the resources women can call upon to deal with wars' consequences."<sup>20</sup>

Gendered power relations increase women's vulnerability during conflict. Due to gendered division of labor, women are often responsible for gathering water and firewood, leaving them vulnerable to attack while searching for these resources. "Masculine" and militarized forces often encourage sexual violence against women during conflict due to patriarchal assumptions of women as men's property and the value of a women's sexual purity. As a result, targeting women is considered an effective way to attack the male enemy and undermine the cohesion of communities

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 31-32.

<sup>19</sup> "Beijing Platform for Action." Beijing: United Nations WomenWatch, 1995.  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>.

U.N. Security Council, 4213th Meeting. Resolution 1325 [On Women, Peace, and Security] (S/RES/1325). October 31, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Cohn, Carol. "Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework." 8.

and states.<sup>21</sup> Women are also especially vulnerable during direct attacks on communities, more likely to be forced from their homes, and frequently become internally displaced persons and refugees.<sup>22</sup> The layers of violence that women face during conflict cause disempowerment and entrench a sense of ‘othering’ that pervades the way in which women subsequently experience inequality, discrimination, and exclusion.<sup>23</sup> Thus, war is more complexly gendered than the common masculinized story portrays.<sup>24</sup>

Women also face unique challenges once the guns are put down. Gains women may have made during conflict are threatened, and advancing women’s rights is rarely prioritized. Even if women were active participants in liberation movements, “women are expected to return to their homes and limit themselves to being ‘mothers and wives’” when conflict gives way to peacemaking. Women’s employment opportunities are likely also reduced as men return home and female ex-combatants often find themselves unemployed, traumatized, and without resources. Reconstruction processes and the reintegration of populations can lead to worse conditions and institutionalized inequalities for women.<sup>25</sup> Women endure psychological trauma, physical health problems, poverty, refugee status complications, and economic constraints during the early stages of peacebuilding, which can contribute to their suppression throughout post-conflict stages.<sup>26</sup>

As demonstrated, gender dynamics of conflict and post-conflict stages ensure that women are unequal before, during, and after the conflict. Given the disproportional effects of war on women, feminist scholars argue that a gendered approach and an expanded notion of security, that includes its gendered dimensions, are needed to understand conflict and enhance peacefulness.

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<sup>21</sup> Cohn, Carol. “Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework.” 30.

<sup>22</sup> Shoemaker, Jolynn. “In War and Peace: Women and Conflict Prevention.” 34-36.

<sup>23</sup> Ní Aoláin et al. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. 46.

<sup>24</sup> Cohn, Carol. “Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework.” 1.

<sup>25</sup> Jacobson, Ruth. “Women ‘After’ War.” In *Women and Wars*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

<sup>26</sup> Kumar, Krishna. “Mass Crimes and Resilience of Women: A Cross-national Perspective.” In *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, 79–117. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2012.

### ***Historical Context of Gender Perspectives in US Foreign Policy***

Previous efforts to elevate gender considerations in international relations made the Obama administration's recent strides in integrating gender perspectives into its foreign policy possible. Feminist scholars significantly brought the absence of women and gender perspectives in international relations to light, but this section focuses on the evolution of the international debate on gender at the UN and within the Clinton and Bush administrations.

Since the 1970s, the UN has indispensably amplified the international dialogue on gender inequality. The global conferences on women in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995) and the Decade (1976-1985) prompted much of this discussion and gave women's rights advocates from around the world a coherent platform for their agenda.<sup>27</sup> The Beijing Platform of Action is especially relevant to this paper because it addresses women in armed conflict and stresses the need to promote equal participation of women in conflict resolution. In 1998, the UN Commission on the Status of Women focused on the issue as well, calling on states to implement the Program of Action, which consisted of ensuring gender-sensitive justice, addressing the specific needs and concerns of women refugees and displaced persons, and increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, pre- and post-conflict decision making and conflict prevention.<sup>28</sup> Developments at the UN have helped legitimize calls from within the United States to incorporate gender into aspects of US policy abroad.

The UN WPS agenda links gender and peacebuilding by asserting that gender equality is linked to peacefulness, women and men experience war differently, women are especially vulnerable to violence during and post conflict, and sexual violence is frequently used as a tactic of war or oppression. The agenda assesses that women are marginalized in all stages of conflict, and

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<sup>27</sup> Jolly, Richard, Louis Emmerij, and Thomas G Weiss. *UN Ideas That Changed the World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. 69-82.

<sup>28</sup> "Women 2000: Women and Armed Conflict." WomenWatch, June 2000.  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/fs5.htm>.

decides that women must actively participate in all stages of conflict prevention and peacebuilding to foster sustainable peace.<sup>29</sup> Security Council resolution 1325 passed unanimously in 2000 and called for the integration of women into all stages of peace processes, the adoption of gender perspectives in peace operations, negotiations, and agreements. Four additional resolutions have passed since, each addressing specific aspects of the WPS agenda and adding more enforcement mechanisms.<sup>30</sup>

The US Congress initiated US attention to gender in foreign policy with the Percy Amendment in the 1970s, which mandated the integration of women into the development process and created the Office of Women in Development to assist USAID in engaging women in its projects. However, a 1993 report by the Government Accounting Office found implementation of the Amendment to be minimal.<sup>31</sup> Under President Bill Clinton, Madeline Albright voiced pioneering support for women's rights as Secretary of State, but did not take significant action to integrate gender into her policy. At the DoS celebration of International Women's Day in 1997, Albright declared that "advancing the status of women is not only a moral imperative, it is being actively integrated into the foreign policy of the United States. It is our mission. It is the right thing to do, and frankly it is the smart thing to do."<sup>32</sup> This statement came after only two months as Secretary of State, by which time she had already instructed US diplomats around the world to make women's

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<sup>29</sup> U.N. Security Council, Resolution 1325. 2000.

<sup>30</sup> U.N. Security Council, 5916th Meeting. Resolution 1820 [On Women, Peace, and Security] (S/RES/1820). June 19, 2008.

U.N. Security Council, 6195th Meeting. Resolution 1888 [On Women, Peace, and Security] (S/RES/1888). September 30, 2009.

U.N. Security Council, 6453rd Meeting. Resolution 1960 [On Women, Peace, and Security] (S/RES/1960). December 16, 2010.

U.N. Security Council, 6196th Meeting. Resolution 1889 [On Women, Peace, and Security] (S/RES/1889). October 5, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Sharma, Ritu. "Women and Development Aid." *Foreign Policy in Focus*, October 5, 2005.

[http://www.fpif.org/reports/women\\_development\\_aid](http://www.fpif.org/reports/women_development_aid).

<sup>32</sup> Lasher, Kevin J. "The Impact of Gender on Foreign Policy-Making: Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice." Francis Marion University, 2005. <http://mediaresearchhub.ssrc.org/the-impact-of-gender-on-foreign-policy-making-madeleine-albright-and-condoleezza-rice/attachment>. 22.

rights a central priority of American foreign policy.<sup>33</sup> Yet, Secretary Albright infrequently brought up women's rights in contentious policy discussions and did not push for women to have a greater role in conflict resolution or peacebuilding.

Hillary Rodham Clinton began her campaign for international women's rights as First Lady by highlighting their importance and building networks among women abroad. She traveled to 82 countries, meeting with women's groups and holding roundtable discussions on issues particularly important to women. In 1995, she led the US delegation to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, where she advocated that "human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights."<sup>34</sup>

The Beijing Conference motivated the United States to intensify its support for international women's rights. In 1996, the Clinton administration instigated the *Gender Plan of Action* to fulfill the Percy Amendment and integrate gender dynamics into all USAID activities.<sup>35</sup> The administration also established the Vital Voices Democracy Initiative in 1997, which coordinated conferences around the world to unite thousands of emerging female leaders from over 80 countries. Similarly, Secretary of State Albright supported the Bosnian Women's Initiative, a grant program for business ventures by women of all three Bosnian ethnic groups, while USAID supported numerous NGOs developing women's leadership around the world.<sup>36</sup>

President George W. Bush did not prioritize women's rights, but he did not remove them from foreign policy agenda. Particularly important to current US peacebuilding, the Bush administration frequently cited the miserable condition of Afghan women under the Taliban, usually

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<sup>33</sup>Lippman, Thomas W. "State Dept. Seeks Gains For Women." *Washington Post*, March 25, 1997.  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/govt/admin/stories/albright032597.htm>.

<sup>34</sup>Clinton, Hillary Rodham. "Remarks to the U.N. 4th World Conference on Women Plenary Session." Speech presented at the 1995 World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 5, 1995.  
<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/hillaryclintonbeijingspeech.htm>.

<sup>35</sup>Sharma. "Women and Development Aid."

<sup>36</sup>Hunt, Swanee. "Women's Vital Voices: The Costs of Exclusion in Eastern Europe." *Foreign Affairs*, July 1, 1997.  
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/53218/swanee-hunt/womens-vital-voices-the-costs-of-exclusion-in-eastern-europe>.

by mentioning their burqas, to justify US invasion.<sup>37</sup> This approach originally gained support from many women's and feminist groups, who later felt that they had been manipulated to legitimize regime change. Overall, the situation of Afghan women has improved since the Taliban was overthrown, as demonstrated by the 2004 Constitution that guarantees equal rights for women and men, but gains are currently under serious threat.

The Bush administration similarly characterized Iraqi women in the run up to the US invasion of Iraq. Examples of women's oppression in Iraq were used to justify Saddam Hussein's overthrow, but the Iraq war proved detrimental to Iraqi women's rights. Before the 2003 US invasion, women made up over 50 percent of the Iraqi workforce, held ambitious posts throughout society, and traveled and wore when and what they pleased. Afterwards, many women were jobless, forced to adjust their dress, under constant threat of attack, more likely to turn to prostitution, and restricted to their homes much of the time.<sup>38</sup> The war also caused greater instability, leading to high numbers of female refugees and a lack of mechanisms to protect women's rights.

The Bush administration cites its Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative and US-Iraqi Women's Network as examples of its dedication to women's rights during peacebuilding. The Democracy Initiative allocated \$10 million, an amount that has increased since its inception, to train Iraqi women in the skills and practices of democratic public life while the Network built a forum for information and resource sharing amongst US partners and Iraqi women's groups.<sup>39</sup> However, small-scale programs such as these had little effect on Iraqi female empowerment and today, Iraqi women's rights are severely undermined by violence and patriarchal laws and practices. The Bush

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<sup>37</sup> Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Robin L. Riley, and Minnie Bruce Pratt, eds. *Feminism and War: Confronting U.S. Imperialism*. London: Zed, 2008. 146.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 42-139.

<sup>39</sup> "Secretary of State Colin L. Powell To Announce Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative and Creation of the U.S.-Iraq Women's Network." *U.S. Department of State Archives*, March 8, 2004. <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2004/30223.htm>.

administration did not integrate gender perspectives into its policy in Afghanistan or Iraq, although it claimed to be acting on the behalf of women and girls.

This historical background illustrates how women's rights have sporadically received attention from US foreign policymakers, but neither the Clinton nor Bush administrations integrated gender perspectives into their policies.

#### **4. Existing Literature on Gender and Peacebuilding**

Early scholarship on peacebuilding tended to ignore the significance of gender relations to the promotion of sustainable peace in post-conflict societies; however, literature examining the relationship between peacebuilding and gender has proliferated in recent years. In order to set the conceptual and practical framework for my analysis of the integration of gender perspectives into DoS peacebuilding efforts, this section will review three bodies of literature. First, I engage the work of scholars who played an important role in the emergence and evolution of peacebuilding, but who nonetheless failed to consider the significance of gender relations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities. In fact, they tended to overlook social inequalities, the challenges of vulnerable groups post-conflict, and the value in ensuring participation of all sectors of society. Second, I explore the contributions of feminist International Relations scholars who study the inherent relationship between gender equality and conclude that peacebuilding efforts are bound to fail unless gender is taken into consideration at every stage of the peacebuilding process. I conclude with an analysis of more recent feminist scholarship that not only recognizes the central importance of gender, but also offers recommendations for how to effectively integrate a gender perspective into peacebuilding activities.

### *Peacebuilding Devoid of Gender Perspectives*

The initial scholarship on peacebuilding was motivated by the lack of tools available to the international community to promote and guarantee peace. In 1975, Johan Galtung declared that peacekeeping and peacemaking did not account for the range of activities needed to bring about sustainable peace in “Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding.” He wrote, “The mechanism that peace is based on should be built into the structure and be present as a reservoir for the system itself to draw up... structures must be found that remove the causes of war and offer alternatives to war.”<sup>40</sup>

Peacebuilding garnered further international attention when Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali highlighted its importance in his report *An Agenda for Peace*, which explained the characteristics of peacebuilding efforts and asserted that it would help “enhance the confidence that is so fundamental to peace.”<sup>41</sup> Boutros-Ghali furthered Galtung’s position by arguing, “only sustained, collaborative work to deal with underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems can place an achieved peace on a durable foundation.”<sup>42</sup> However, neither Galtung nor Boutros-Ghali acknowledged the challenges of addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, such as women and girls, or the overarching inequalities that contribute to conflict. While Galtung and Boutros-Ghali fundamentally formed the idea of peacebuilding, their vagueness and omission of gender perspectives undermined the potential of peacebuilding to overcome the root causes of conflict.

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<sup>40</sup> Galtung, Johan. “Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding.” In *Peace, War and Defense: Essays in Peace Research*, edited by Johan Galtung. Vol. Second. Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen, 1976. 297-298.

<sup>41</sup> Secretary-General. *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992*. New York: United Nations, June 17, 1992. [http://www.unrol.org/files/A\\_47\\_277.pdf](http://www.unrol.org/files/A_47_277.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

Elizabeth M. Cousens and Chetan Kumar add to the foundation provided by Galtung and Boutros Ghali by specifically reasoning that a political approach to peacebuilding will produce the best results. In *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies*, the authors suggest that there are two overarching approaches to peacebuilding, deductive and inductive. Deductive approaches are based off the definition of peacebuilding laid out by Boutros-Ghali in 1992. Cousens and Kumar argue that these approaches were a necessary step in the evolution of peacebuilding because they formed a road map to address the complex needs of war-ravaged societies, but they do not set priorities nor outline implementation plans, rendering them unsatisfactory. Inductive approaches attempt to determine what caused the conflict in the first place and address this concern in order to bring prevent future violence. The problem with this tactic, as asserted by Cousens and Kumar, is that an argument about the various root causes becomes the centerpiece while peacebuilding is delayed or weakened. Given these circumstances, the authors suggest viewing peacebuilding as politics and prioritizing the construction of strategic frameworks that privilege conflict resolution and the cultivation of political institutions.<sup>43</sup> While Cousens and Kumar call for “effective public institutions, meaning political inclusion, norms of fairness and access, legal protection for groups and individuals,”<sup>44</sup> the gender, class, and race realities that complicate achieving these goals are not mentioned.

Like Cousens and Kumar, Kathleen H. Hawk attempts to set out more specific goals for peacebuilding in *Constructing the Stable State: Goals for Intervention and Peacebuilding*. Hawk analyzes the role of external actors in peacebuilding, specifically strong states like the United States, and ends up giving greater depth to the suggestions of Cousens and Kumar. She argues that external actors’ strategies should focus on constructing states capable of exercising authority over

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<sup>43</sup> Cousens, Elizabeth M., and Chetan Kumar, eds. *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies*. Boulder: Lynee Rienner Publishers, 2001. 5-12.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

their territory, providing security to its citizens, resolving conflicts through their institutions, promoting the general welfare of its citizens, and delivering a political identity based on accepted legitimacy.<sup>45</sup> In order to achieve these goals, Hawk suggests processes of granting autonomy and authority to local governments, providing opportunities for economic and social associations, and implementing free-market economic reforms.<sup>46</sup> While Hawk contributes to the literature on peacebuilding, her lack of gender analysis, or attention to any pervasive inequalities for that matter, leaves much to be desired.

Galtung, Boutros Ghali, Cousens, Kumar, and Hawk all ignore men and women's variant experiences of war and post-conflict gender relations that continue to shape the state institutions after conflict ends, as well as the gendered nature of peacebuilding processes. While Hawk provides the most specificity, she fails to address concerns about peace processes participants, leaving the reader to assume that elite men will continue to dominate peacebuilding strategy development. Not only does the aforementioned scholarship disregard gender perspectives and the implications of gender inequality, but also some of the author's policy suggestions have the potential to restrict women's rights and exacerbate gender inequality. Much of the literature on peacebuilding remains devoid of gender perspectives, hampering its understanding and implementation.

### ***The Significance of Gender to Peacebuilding***

The Beijing Program for Action states, "Peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men."<sup>47</sup> Recent research supports this statement, providing a better understanding of peace and conflict studies and encouraging policymaking that takes gender into account and promotes gender equality. The authors of *Sex and World Peace* and *On the Frontlines: Gender,*

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<sup>45</sup> Hawk, Kathleen H. *Constructing the Stable State: Goals for Intervention and Peacebuilding*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002. 128.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 130-133.

<sup>47</sup> "Beijing Platform for Action." Beijing: United Nations WomenWatch, 1995.  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>.

*War, and the Post-Conflict Process* explain how women's physical security is directly linked to the stability and security of nations, a relationship that many scholars have overseen. Hudson et al confirm that more gender-equal societies are less likely to go to war, to use force first during conflicts, or to be involved in violent international crises.<sup>48</sup> Thus, Hudson et al and Ní Aoláin et al conclude that the extent that women's security and rights to participate in the public sphere are prioritized will determine a state's ability to enhance its security and peacefulness.<sup>49</sup> Specific to peacebuilding, Ní Aoláin et al explain that societies that do not address women's physical insecurity are "at greater risk for slipping back into disorder just as they are arguably more likely to become failed states in the first instance."<sup>50</sup>

Considering their similar stances on the relationship between gender equality and peace, Hudson et al and Ní Aoláin et al suggest corresponding steps to build sustainable peace. *On the Frontlines* draws particular attention to the necessity of changing the overarching notion of security utilized by most scholars and policymakers, including those previously mentioned, which is narrow, militaristic, state-oriented, and limits the potential for transformational change.<sup>51</sup> *Sex and World Peace* takes the approach of recommending specific policies that governments can undertake to target societal and legal norms of gender inequality both within their own countries and abroad.<sup>52</sup> Hudson et al and Ní Aoláin et al challenge the early scholars on peacebuilding, and those that continue to neglect gender perspectives, by arguing that without addressing the root causes of conflict, including gender inequalities, peace will be incomplete and containing cycles of violence will be impossible.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Hudson, Valerie M., Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett. *Sex and World Peace*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Hudson, et al. *Sex and World Peace*. 91.

Ní Aoláin et al. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. 68.

<sup>50</sup> Ní Aoláin et al. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. 68.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Hudson et al. *Sex and World Peace*.

<sup>53</sup> Ní Aoláin et al. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. 62.

Complementary to the previous assertions, Cynthia Cockburn argues that not only is gender inequality a root cause of conflict, conflict also intensifies gender identities and inequalities in her article “Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War.”<sup>54</sup> The valorized masculinities, victimized femininities, and unique dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment of conflict construct, or reconstruct, post-conflict gender relations. The intensified gender identities that often simultaneously challenge and reinforce gender norms, “tend to feed back perennially into the spiraling continuum of armed conflict, for ever predisposing a society to violence, forever disturbing the peace.”<sup>55</sup> Thus, Cockburn joins Hudson et al and Ní Aoláin et al in their criticism of conflict studies and peacebuilding strategies that discount the cyclical relationship between gender and peace. Albrecht Schnabel and Anara Tabyshalieva agree as well, particularly regarding the significance of gender identities in post-conflict societies, but also employ a number of thorough, country-specific cases to demonstrate previous attempts to address gender inequalities through peacebuilding and common challenges that were faced.<sup>56</sup>

Additionally, Schnabel and Tabyshalieva build off the previously cited scholars’ recognition of prevailing gender inequality, and their own case studies, to conclude that post-conflict processes continue to serve the interests of male-dominated parties.<sup>57</sup> This is especially problematic because peacebuilding holds the potential to address entrenched gender inequalities. De Alwis et al explain that peace agreements usually address concerns such as restoration of law and order, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, and resettlement/relocation of displaced populations, as well as set out longer term agendas regarding the division of political power, constitutional reforms, and social, economic, and political inequalities and exclusions that need attention. Considering the expansive

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<sup>54</sup> Cockburn, Cynthia. “Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12, no. 2 (May 2010): 139–157. 152.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Schnabel, Albrecht, and Anara Tabyshalieva, eds. *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 335-336.

agenda, agreements provide a critical opportunity to form more equitable gender relations and construct corresponding peacebuilding strategies.<sup>58</sup> However, feminist scholars maintain that peace processes are deeply gendered and often reiterate gendered and other power hierarchies and inequalities, restricting their potential.

Cohn and de Alwis et al elaborate on the gendered nature of peacebuilding institutions to provide a better understanding of the barriers to gender-sensitive, effective peacebuilding. In “Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework,” Cohn argues that men are perceived as “the default assumption both in their own staffing and in their work practices” and women are rarely asked to speak to these concerns for themselves.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, women’s needs, priorities, and interests are left unconsidered, leading to the loss of some of their wartime gains and ignorance of critical components of a post-conflict society.<sup>60</sup>

De Alwis et al build off Cohn’s overview of the status of peacebuilding by describing the two tracks of peace talks, which exemplify the marginalization of gender perspectives and women’s voices in peacebuilding. Track I involves the warring parties; the facilitating country, organization, or individual; representatives from neighboring and donor states and/or regional and international organizations. Track II refers to the secondary stakeholders who seek influence on the Track I process. While these tracks occur in parallel, Track I participants wield much more power while Track II is perceived as the feminized space of civil society. Women’s organizations or stakeholders advocating for gendered perspectives in peace processes are almost always sidelined to Track II.<sup>61</sup> Policymakers acting in Track I have been known to argue that gender equality or “women’s issues”

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<sup>58</sup> De Alwis, Malathi, Julie Mertus, and Tazreena Sajjad. “Women and Peace Processes.” In *Women and Wars*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013. 171.

<sup>59</sup> Cohn, Carol. “Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework.” 20.

<sup>60</sup> De Alwis et al. “Women and Peace Processes.” 171.

<sup>61</sup> De Alwis et al. “Women and Peace Processes.” 173

are not relevant to the discussion surrounding peace talks.<sup>62</sup> This analysis helps other scholars understand the difficulties of integrating gender perspectives into peacebuilding strategies, while it also assists policymakers construct approaches that evolve past the problematic norm.

To help strengthen the argument that conventional thought on peacebuilding, as articulated by Galtung and more recent scholars, does not account for widespread gender dynamics or conditions of peacebuilding, Ní Aoláin et al illustrate how patriarchal views that transcend cultures and countries contribute to the continuation of gender inequalities during peacebuilding. Despite cultural differences between men local to post-conflict communities and international men that are sent to assist the peacebuilding process, internal and external elites share similar patriarchal views, which “operate in tandem to exclude, silence, or nullify women’s needs from the transitional space.”<sup>63</sup> While this analysis does not provide specific policy recommendations, its explanation of the gendered dynamics of multinational peacebuilding contributes to the conceptual foundation necessary for constructing strategies that integrate gender perspectives.

Given persisting gender inequality and women’s marginalization in peace processes, various scholars and activists have constructed rationales for women’s participation in peace processes. De Alwis, Mertus, and Sajjad describe common arguments before stating that none of them are sufficient. For example, some women have highlighted their important contributions to societies as mothers in order to gain entry into peace processes. While this strategy is aimed at expanding women’s roles in public life, it draws on women’s stereotypical roles in society and highlights men and women’s differences.<sup>64</sup> The chapter also outlines arguments based on women’s peacefulness and victimization during war,<sup>65</sup> which draws on problematic assertions of femininity. Others state that women can help transform gender relations across a post-conflict society, benefiting the society

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>63</sup> Ní Aoláin et al. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. 50.

<sup>64</sup> De Alwis et al. “Women and Peace Processes.” 176.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 174-178.

as a whole.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, some feminists, such as Azza Karam, argue that women have the right to participate in peacebuilding due to their equal citizenship and the negative implications of excluding half the population, such as the omission of women's perspectives.<sup>67</sup> Karam asserts that women are half the population and embody ideas, experiences, and hopes of many other sectors of society.<sup>68</sup> In her words, "women's interests need to be prioritized, not because they are gender-specific, but because they are the basis of the articulation of the needs of any society."<sup>69</sup> De Alwis et al evaluate the aforementioned rationales, but decide that women should participate in peace processes because they are political subjects with rights; they do not need to draw on their stereotypical roles or be better at peacebuilding to deserve a political voice.<sup>70</sup>

Feminists may vary on their justifications for the participation of women in peace processes, but they generally agree that including women alone will not guarantee the integration of gender perspectives or more effective peacebuilding. Karam, for example, argues that the ideology of women participants, not just their gender, matters. Participants, both male and female, must be attuned to the gender issues at play and must reflect a diverse array of perspectives.<sup>71</sup>

The scholars mentioned above assert that a society's security is partially dependent on the status of gender relations, requiring peacebuilding to integrate gender perspectives to maximize their effectiveness. The literature on gender and peacebuilding disputes the conventional conceptions of peacebuilding that neglect the significance of gender by calling attention to the limited notion of security, the gendered nature of conflict and post-conflict stages, and the unique opportunity that peacebuilding offers to address entrenched gender inequality. While justifications for female participation in peace processes vary, feminist scholars agree that policymakers must

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Karam. "Women in War and Peace-Building: The Roads Traversed, The Challenges Ahead." 22.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>70</sup> De Alwis et al. "Women and Peace Processes." 191-192.

<sup>71</sup> Karam. "Women in War and Peace-Building: The Roads Traversed, The Challenges Ahead." 10-11.

undertake strategic processes of integrating gender into peacebuilding to address root causes of conflict and aid the construction of sustainable peace.

### ***Integrating Gender Perspectives into Peacebuilding Strategies***

Literature exploring the relationship between gender and peacebuilding has quickly grown, as demonstrated above. Significantly fewer authors have provided specific recommendations of how to carry out the integration of gender perspectives into peacebuilding. The recommendations that exist can be divided into four categories: broad guidelines, policy priorities, specific recommendations, and suggestions of how to allocate responsibility. There is an obvious need for further research in this area in order to transform theoretical literature into policy change.

Due to feminist scholars' assertion that the common notion of security is gendered and does not produce comprehensive peacebuilding strategies that account for gender perspectives, Ní Aoláin et al suggest the establishment of security in the broadest sense, with a particular emphasis on social and economic rights, and planning to ensure that these rights are sustained.<sup>72</sup> Thus, the first broad guideline to follow when designing gender-sensitive peacebuilding efforts is to function under a notion of security that accounts for gendered inequalities. Although this recommendation is vague and difficult to put into action, it would generate an overarching impact on the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies. The scholars also prescribe broad guidelines for the long term, which include moving beyond the masculine bias in post-conflict allocations and gender-central justice that stresses the protection from violations of social and economic rights.<sup>73</sup>

Slightly more explicit, some literature provides gender policy priorities to follow while integrating gender perspectives into peacebuilding. To start, Schnabeland and Tabyshalieva put extended emphasis on increasing women's political participation, but they express hesitancy

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<sup>72</sup> Ní Aoláin et al. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. 96.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

towards simplistic quota systems. Additionally, the authors argue that enhancing women's physical security must be a central principal of peacebuilding, particularly by spreading the idea that violence against women is not tolerated as customary, culturally legitimate behavior. Other priorities include expanding economic resources available to women and efforts to actively recruit, retain, and advance women in security institutions.<sup>74</sup>

Most helpful to policymakers is the literature that spells out specific recommendations. For example, Ní Aoláin et al present suggestions on how to undertake gender analysis: assess the situations of men and women, the role gender played in the prewar society, and how gender relations were affected by the conflict. The potential role of gender in the negotiation process and the conceptualization of post-conflict reconstruction strategy should be examined as well.<sup>75</sup> Due to women's existing leadership roles, Shoemaker claims that peacebuilding activities should focus on expanding the capacity of women's organizations and forging partnerships with them.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, Shoemaker suggests taking advantage of the most obvious steps to integrate gender. In the case of reconciliation programs, invite women to participate in community dialogue programs after conflict, which usually only comprise male representatives.<sup>77</sup> Other scholars, such as Schnabel and Tabyshalieva, and practitioners highlight the role education on the UN Security Council Women, Peace and Security resolutions can play in raising awareness about women's capacity as peacebuilders. On an interpersonal level, Schnabel and Tabyshalieva support women-only dialogues and community mechanisms to address conflict related trauma.<sup>78</sup> In order to

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<sup>74</sup> Schnabel and Tabyshalieva. *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*. 345-351.

<sup>75</sup> Ní Aoláin et al. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. 95.

<sup>76</sup> Shoemaker, Jolynn. "In War and Peace: Women and Conflict Prevention." 43.

<sup>77</sup> Shoemaker, Jolynn. "Women and Wars Within States: Internal Conflict, Women's Rights and International Security." *Civil Wars* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 1-34. 24.

<sup>78</sup> Schnabel and Tabyshalieva. *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*. 345-351.

measure the success of gender perspective integration throughout the process, an evaluation mechanism should be developed and implemented.<sup>79</sup>

Lastly, authors allocate responsibility of integrating gender perspectives and including women in peacebuilding to the international community, civil society, and the research community. Schnabel and Tabyshalieva, for example, call on the UN to utilize more female special representatives to the Secretary-General and throughout UN missions and the donor community to support women's organizations and employ aid conditionality based on the inclusion of vulnerable groups in peacebuilding. The scholars also voice a common appeal to state actors to complete and implement National Actions Plans on Women, Peace and Security; provide gender training before deploying peacekeepers; and facilitate equal participation of women in all aspects of humanitarian activities.<sup>80</sup> Considering the growing relevance of regional organizations, Shoemaker argues that they have an important role to play in changing predominant norms and specifically, promoting the participation of women.<sup>81</sup> She points to the European Parliament's recommendation to ensure equal participation of women in diplomatic initiatives and the promotion of gender sensitization in peacebuilding operations.<sup>82</sup>

Although the literature on how to go about integrating gender perspectives into peacebuilding is growing, it remains vague and insufficiently developed. While policies must be designed according to local circumstances, additional policy recommendations would advance the efforts of incorporating gender into peacebuilding. Both successful and unproductive policies should be further analyzed to construct best practices. This paper attempts to fill the gap in the existing literature by examining the efforts of the US DoS to integrate gender perspectives into its peacebuilding strategies abroad. In particular, this paper will explore the role of policy directives

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<sup>79</sup> Ni Aoláin et al. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. 95.

<sup>80</sup> Schnabel and Tabyshalieva. *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*. 352-360.

<sup>81</sup> Shoemaker, Jolynn. "In War and Peace: Women and Conflict Prevention." 50.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

and the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) in operationalizing the arguments for integrating gender into peacebuilding that have been presented in this review, while also investigating the case study of Afghanistan.

## **5. Gender Perspectives in Department of State Peacebuilding Strategies**

The Department of State significantly progressed in integrating gender into its policies under Secretary of State Clinton. The following section outlines the new institutional mechanisms used to incorporate gender considerations into peacebuilding strategies, particularly policy directives and the elevation of the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues. However, the commitments made in the directives have not been fulfilled, the insufficient capacity of the S/GWI and gender working groups limit integration, and perspectives on gender within the DoS vary. Incomplete follow through on the integration of gender perspectives into DoS peacebuilding strategies indicates that further steps must be taken to bring gender into policymaking and enhance peacebuilding strategies.

### ***Policy Directives***

A number of policy directives have enabled the recent integration of gender into DoS policy. In particular, they have helped provide a shared framework for translating the commitments of the Obama administration into action across US foreign policy, as articulated by a S/GWI expert. Additionally, the directives provide what DoS officials call "top cover," which allows DoS staff looking to promote women's participation in peacebuilding or gender perspectives more broadly to point to existing commitments as justification.

Input from across the DoS and government agencies was gathered to inform the policy directives, giving people with gender expertise an opportunity to shape policy. Going forward, there is space for individuals to decide how implementation occurs.<sup>83</sup> This flexibility is positive in the

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<sup>83</sup> Bigio, Jamille. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 8, 2013.

sense that policy will better fit contextual circumstances and that individuals at all levels of foreign policy can be a part of the final goal of integrating gender perspectives. However, with flexibility, there is a greater need for monitoring and prioritization of gender at the highest levels to ensure that commitments come to fruition.

Increasing the focus on gender in DoS policy directives under Secretary Clinton began with the *2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (QDDR), which highlights the importance of women's participation and gender analysis in US grand strategy. The QDDR announces that promoting gender equality is a guiding principle of US foreign policy, "women are at the center of our diplomacy and development efforts—not simply as beneficiaries, but also as agents of peace, reconciliation, development, growth, and stability."<sup>84</sup> The QDDR emphasizes the relevance of gender throughout foreign policy by mentioning women and girls 133 times across 220 pages.<sup>85</sup> The section "Focusing on Women and Girls" calls for greater attention to gender in public diplomacy, programming, DoS headquarters, field operations, and training.<sup>86</sup> While including "women and girls" means little on its own, the QDDR demonstrates Secretary Clinton's dedication to ending the marginalization of women and gender perspectives in US foreign policy.

The Obama administration's gender-specific policy directives were initiated by *The United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* (NAP), released in 2011, that attempts to empower half the world's population as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace in countries threatened and affected by war, violence, and insecurity.<sup>87</sup> Secretary Clinton spearheaded the effort to publish the NAP, and used her political clout to dedicate resources and create mechanisms for its implementation. In regards to peacebuilding, the NAP incorporates many

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<sup>84</sup> "2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Leading Through Civilian Power." 23.

<sup>85</sup> Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach. "The Hillary Doctrine." *Newsweek Magazine*, March 6, 2011.  
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2011/03/06/the-hillary-doctrine.html>.

<sup>86</sup> "2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Leading Through Civilian Power." 57-58.

<sup>87</sup> "United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security." 1.

of the assertions of the previously cited scholars. Its approach assumes that integrating women and gender considerations into peacebuilding processes helps promote democratic governance and long-term stability, thus enhancing US objectives.<sup>88</sup> The reasoning of the directive is as follows: when women are included as meaningful participants in conflict resolution and the creation of peace agreements, they enlarge the scope of agreements to include the broader set of imperative societal priorities and needs required for lasting and balanced peace.<sup>89</sup>

The NAP also insists that the United States must serve as a model for the inclusion of women in talks and negotiations concerning conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and political transitions and integrate women's and gender perspectives into these processes. In order to spread this practice, it calls on the DoS to assist other governments in their recruitment and retention of women into government ministries and security forces.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, the NAP recognizes the specific needs of women in reintegration and early recovery and mandates the United States to support corresponding reintegration programs for refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration programs for female ex-combatants. Expanded gender analysis is requested to enhance DoS understanding and ensure that policy is fittingly constructed and implemented.<sup>91</sup>

Additionally, the NAP stipulates more training for American troops, diplomats, development experts, foreign soldiers, foreign judicial sectors, DoS officials, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) staff, and others on issues such as gendered dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding. The NAP even extends requirements of training to civilian contractors and aid workers.<sup>92</sup> Increased training on gender issues across agencies, as opposed to concentrating

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

training within offices that focus on women's rights and/or gender, will further the integration of gender perspectives into overarching foreign policy.

The NAP specifically outlines the roles of all foreign policy agencies in accomplishing its mandate and ensures that gender, which has historically been categorized as "soft" and largely irrelevant, is not left to one department. While this paper focuses on the DoS, all foreign policy agencies are required to report their progress on NAP implementation to the White House, which has increased participation of the Department of Defense, for example, in the conversation on gender more than ever before.<sup>93</sup> Throughout the NAP, Secretary Clinton aimed to institutionalize the integration of gender perspectives in US foreign policy in the hope that her legacy would live on even if future Secretaries of State are less committed to promoting gender equality. All together, the NAP's comprehensive approach attempts to mainstream gender, empower champions for the cause, and institutionalize lasting mechanisms. The unresolved question is implementation.

The *United States Department of State Implementation Plan of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security* attempts to address this question by spelling out more specific means of achieving the NAP's goals by drawing on recommendations of academics and civil society. In line with calls for improved knowledge on gender perspectives within the DoS, the directive describes the courses and bureau-specific training programs on gender at the Foreign Service Institute.<sup>94</sup> To better understand the gendered impact of DoS policy, the directive outlines enriched means of data collection.<sup>95</sup> For example, the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) has developed an indicator to measure the increase in the number of local female leaders and female-led partner organizations taking action to prevent and mitigate conflict as a result of CSO

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<sup>93</sup> Thompson, Lyric. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, February 21, 2013.

<sup>94</sup> "United States Department of State Implementation Plan of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security." U.S. Department of State, August 2012. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/196726.pdf>. 10.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 16.

engagement.<sup>96</sup> Civil society actors endorse follow up documents such as the *Implementation Plan*, which help to evaluate gains and gaps in policy, and specifically welcome the level of detail that the DoS has incorporated into its policy directives.<sup>97</sup> However, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security has requested that civil society be invited to participate in the NAP monitoring and follow-up process due to its promotion and critical role in the creation of the US NAP. The administration has not satisfied this request thus far.<sup>98</sup>

While implementation remains incomplete, the NAP and its *Implementation Plan* have brought about positive strides. The DoS has hired more people with gender expertise and gender advisers with the particular role of reviewing and addressing gender issues in policymaking and programming.<sup>99</sup> Additionally, the DoS has intensified its efforts to train women leaders to maximize their political gains during transitions and its support for civil society that advocate for including gender perspectives in peacebuilding strategies.<sup>100</sup> Funding for women's empowerment during peacebuilding has increased as well, demonstrated by a recent pledge of \$1.5 million will go towards training women police officers in Nepal, supporting female political candidates in Yemen, and developing women's peace tables to influence formal peace talks in the Philippines.<sup>101</sup>

The 2012 release of the internal DoS directive, *The Secretarial Policy Guidance on Promoting Gender Equality to Achieve National Security and Foreign Policy Objectives*, helped illustrate the significance of previous directives to people throughout the Department. It outlines new duties for Chiefs of Missions and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries, advances gender-sensitive budgeting, develops new definitions related to gender issues, and ensures the participation of gender experts in all regional and situational task forces, priority embassy and regional

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Thompson, Lyric. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, February 21, 2013.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> "United States Department of State Implementation Plan of the National Action Plan."

<sup>101</sup> Webster, Lee. "USA Leads the Way for UK by Funding Women's Peacebuilding." *Womankind Worldwide*, August 2012. <http://www.womankind.org.uk/2012/08/usa-leads-the-way-for-uk-by-funding-womens-peacebuilding/>.

initiatives, country team meetings, and emergency planning.<sup>102</sup> Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Verveer claims that this policy directive ensures that "advancing the status of women and girls worldwide is officially a requirement in every U.S. diplomat's job description."<sup>103</sup> While this directive is not specific to peacebuilding, it advances principals that will contribute to the integration of gender perspectives into peacebuilding strategies.

Some bureaus and offices have also established their own internal policy directives to integrate gender into their peacebuilding policy and programs. CSO, which significantly contributes to DoS peacebuilding, created the first bureau-specific implementation plan to help operationalize the NAP.<sup>104</sup> Consequently, CSO includes gender considerations in its analysis of conflict situations, which shape its engagements in country-situations. However, once CSO employees are in the field, gender analysis is usually reduced to counting the number of women in the room without assessing overarching gender relations or their implications.<sup>105</sup>

USAID issued its *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* in March 2012 to bring about change in the Agency's Program Cycle. In regards to peacebuilding, the policy directive focuses on utilizing an inclusive approach that addresses existing gender relations and the unique challenges of conflict-affected environments. Subsequently, USAID created the Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and hired Mission Gender Advisers, which act as internal advocates for integrating gender perspectives. USAID's policy realizes that more women in leadership, programs, and decision making positions is not enough to guarantee the integration of gender perspectives, yet the starting point of its approach focuses on augmenting the number of

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<sup>102</sup> "Fact Sheet: Promoting Gender Equality To Achieve Our National Security and Foreign Policy Objectives." U.S. Department of State. Office of Global Women's Issues, March 27, 2012. <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/rls/other/2012/187001.htm>.

<sup>103</sup> Verveer, Melanne. "Why Women Are a Foreign Policy Issue."

<sup>104</sup> Evans, Jessie. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 9, 2013.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

women.<sup>106</sup> In its peacebuilding policies, the Agency has grown on its longstanding women-targeted programming while also mainstreaming gender analysis into its \$26 million Reconciliation Program worldwide. USAID has also launched a new research program examining the relationship between gender inequality and the risk of conflict.<sup>107</sup> Carla Koppell, USAID's Senior Coordinator for Gender and Women's Empowerment and Senior Adviser to the USAID Administrator, was hired in 2011 to help ensure that gender perspectives inform all of USAID's work and her experience working on security and peacebuilding issues have positively impacted the Agency's peacebuilding strategies.<sup>108</sup>

The above policy directives have immensely impacted DoS peacebuilding policy. They reflect and enable the concrete steps that Secretary Clinton took to integrate gender perspectives into the DoS. While these directives do not guarantee seamless integration, they set the foundation for progress, some of which has already taken place. Particularly important are the directives' assertion that no matter your position or office, all DoS and USAID staff must take gender seriously and work to advance gender equality, and designation of individuals to direct specific attention to gender concerns and women's rights at all levels. Whether the DoS is developing an entire scope of work, assistance policies, or programs that may be aimed specifically at women and girls or not, policymakers are mandated to incorporate gender perspectives.<sup>109</sup> Additionally, the policy directives help ensure that attempts to advance gender perspectives in DoS peacebuilding are provided financial support and institutional legitimacy.

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<sup>106</sup> "Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy." USAID, March 2012.

[http://transition.usaid.gov/our\\_work/policy\\_planning\\_and\\_learning/documents/GenderEqualityPolicy.pdf](http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/policy_planning_and_learning/documents/GenderEqualityPolicy.pdf).

<sup>107</sup> Verveer, Melanne. *Women as Agents of Change: Advancing the Role of Women in Politics and Civil Society*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State. Office of Global Women's Issues, 2010.

<http://www.state.gov/p/io/rm/2010/142907.htm>.

<sup>108</sup> Steinberg, Donald K. "Beyond Victimhood: The Crucial Role of Marginalized Groups in Building Peace." American University School of International Training, February 6, 2012. <http://www.usaid.gov/news-information/speeches/remarks-usaid-deputy-administrator-donald-k-steinberg-american-university>.

<sup>109</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

*Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues*

The expansion of the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues' (S/GWI) scope and responsibilities helped institutionalize the consideration of gender in DoS policy by providing in-house advocates and expertise. This office existed under the last two administrations, but with less standing, staff, and influence and without an Ambassador-at-Large. Secretary Clinton ensured that the S/GWI was revamped, given a direct line of communication to the Secretary, and represented by a leader with experience and clout. She advocated for, and President Obama appointed, Melanne Verveer as the office's first Ambassador-at-Large. Clinton and Verveer previously worked closely with each other on a range of issues, frequently related to women's rights, while Verveer was First Lady Clinton's Chief of Staff. The Ambassador-at-Large is charged with collaborating with a wide variety of actors to advance the political, social, and economic rights of women internationally and ensure that women's issues are integrated into all aspects of US foreign policy. In addition, the revitalized office proactively draws attention to women's agency, their varied perspectives, and their diverse and complex roles during and after conflict, demonstrating S/GWI efforts to bring a gender lens to peacebuilding strategies.<sup>110</sup>

As a whole, the S/GWI plays a number of roles that contribute to the integration of gender perspectives into peacebuilding. S/GWI staff and gender advisers throughout the DoS provide guidance and support to other offices. For example, Jamille Bigio, lead on WPS and African specialist, works with partners across the Department, interagency, and international community to communicate the importance of NAP implementation; identifies the gaps and opportunities of policy; and constantly seeks means to help others move forward on integrating gender in their areas of work.<sup>111</sup> This guidance is critical, but it must be improved and expanded. For example, Jessie

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<sup>110</sup> Verveer, Melanne. "A Conversation With Afghan Women in Nangarhar Province." *DipNote*, August 30, 2012. [http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/site/entry/a\\_conversation\\_with\\_afghan\\_women\\_in\\_nangarhar\\_province](http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/site/entry/a_conversation_with_afghan_women_in_nangarhar_province).

<sup>111</sup> Bigio, Jamille. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 8, 2013.

Evans, who works at CSO, argues that S/GWI, and the DoS more broadly, needs to work on casting women's participation and gender integration in peacebuilding as more than a human rights issue considering that it affects credibility and efficiency as well.<sup>112</sup> Thus, DoS officials of all rankings need more training on how to make the case in a way that draws on practical gains, such as enhanced credibility and effectiveness.

Furthermore, the S/GWI helps evaluate the implementation of the previously mentioned policy directives. For example, the S/GWI writes the annual DoS report to the White House on NAP implementation. To assemble the 2012 report, the S/GWI reached out to bureaus and selected embassies to discover where change was greatest, lessons learned, and gaps that need to be addressed going forward.<sup>113</sup> Also in a collaborative manner, the S/GWI coordinates the DoS Working Group on Women, Peace and Security that engages the gender points of contact from each bureau, and has helped amplify the DoS discourse. However, Jessie Evans voices her concern that very few men engage in the Working Group, limiting the integration of gender perspectives across the DoS bureaucracy and equating gender perspectives with women's voices.<sup>114</sup>

The S/GWI also employs the Small Grants Initiative to address gender inequality in peacebuilding. The grants support a number of capacity-building projects aimed enhancing women's agency in countries in conflict, post-conflict, or transition. Projects include: creating networks of people advocating for women's political rights in Egypt; building leadership, management, and technological skills of women in the Palestinian Territories; and empowering young women to engage the democratic system in Ukraine.<sup>115</sup> These examples demonstrate the integration of gender into programmatic policymaking; however, they do not prove that

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<sup>112</sup> Evans, Jessie. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 9, 2013.

<sup>113</sup> Bigio, Jamille. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 8, 2013.

<sup>114</sup> Evans, Jessie. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 9, 2013.

<sup>115</sup> "Office of Global Women Issues Programs by Region." *U.S. Department of State*, 2012. <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/programs/region/index.htm>.

peacebuilding strategy has significantly transformed to incorporate gender considerations and address entrenched gender inequality.

Moreover, the limited human capacity of S/GWI, which cannot keep up with the expansive DoS bureaucracy, restrains the integration of gender perspectives in DoS peacebuilding strategies. The S/GWI employs about 30 people to support gender integration efforts across all bureaus, offices, and embassies. While each bureau has at least one person who acts as the point of contact on gender, they are likely responsible for other issues and are expected to cover a wide spectrum of issues relating to gender.<sup>116</sup> Thus, the S/GWI cannot provide thorough assistance to the entire DoS in a speedy manner or identify all programs and policies that would benefit from greater gender analysis. For instance, the S/GWI's ability to monitor the integration of the WPS agenda into all UN Security Council resolutions, one of its responsibilities, is restricted by limited human capacity and poor communication between offices. Less than half of country-specific Security Council resolutions contain language on women and gender,<sup>117</sup> and the United States infrequently proposes language in line with the WPS agenda in order to change this trend.<sup>118</sup> The staff and reach of the S/GWI is not yet large enough to review all US policy at the UN, or DoS policy in general. This example also demonstrates that gender integration in peacebuilding is not yet the international norm, meaning that the S/GWI is fighting an uphill battle.

Due to DoS prioritization, the S/GWI has been able to dedicate more attention to integrating gender perspectives in some areas or country situations more than others, such as South Sudan. The Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan has received funding and diplomatic support to increase women's participation in the political progress and implementation of peace

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<sup>116</sup> Bigio, Jamine. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 8, 2013.

<sup>117</sup> "Resolution Watch." *PeaceWomen. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*, November 4, 2009. [http://www.peacewomen.org/security\\_council\\_monitor/resolution-watch](http://www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/resolution-watch).

<sup>118</sup> Official of the United States Mission to the United Nations. Interview by Jessie Durrett. In person, October 29, 2012.

agreements.<sup>119</sup> The DoS, with particular support from the S/GWI and Ambassador Verveer, hosted a symposium to increase women's participation and engagement in peace processes for South Sudan in 2011. The event was organized and attended by South Sudanese civil society, US and South Sudanese government officials, UN Women, the World Bank, and the US-based Institute for Inclusive Security.<sup>120</sup> Additionally, although the United States does not consistently advocate for the inclusion of WPS language in Security Council resolutions on country-specific situations, all resolutions on South Sudan, which are drafted by the United States, specifically mention women's participation or gender.<sup>121</sup> Likewise, the S/GWI still largely focuses its efforts on women's economic empowerment, not peacebuilding efforts, generating unequal integration across areas of policy.

### ***Internal Perceptions of Gender***

Before delving into the case study of Afghanistan, it is critical to briefly explore the knowledge and perceptions of gender within the DoS. True integration requires that every member of an institution understands the significance of gender perspectives and the necessity of prioritizing them throughout the policymaking process. The DoS is not at that stage yet. As Jamille Bigio describes, the prioritization of gender perspectives is increasing, but people within the institution still fall across the full range of understanding gender and dedicating their time to enhancing gender equality. While some people are fully invested, others believe in the importance of gender but do not know how to create or implement policy accordingly, and several maintain that gender should not be a major consideration of the DoS.<sup>122</sup> On an optimistic note, Lida Noory points to the fact that

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<sup>119</sup> Bigio, Jamille. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 8, 2013.

<sup>120</sup> Whitman, Tobie. "Increasing Women's Participation and Engagement in Planning for Peace: The 2011 Gender Symposium and South Sudan International Engagement Conference." In *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security*. New York, 2012.

<sup>121</sup> "Country Statistics." *PeaceWomen. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*, August 10, 2012. [http://www.peacewomen.org/security\\_council\\_monitor/resolution-watch/statistics](http://www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/resolution-watch/statistics).

<sup>122</sup> Bigio, Jamille. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 8, 2013.

individuals throughout the DoS are seeking out information, guidance, and background on gender and women's rights to inform their policy design and implementation.<sup>123</sup>

Moreover, the prioritization of gender perspectives still varies by bureau and office depending on leadership. Although CSO has led other bureaus in gender integration, partially due to its evolution alongside NAP creation and implementation, CSO leadership infrequently brings up gender concerns. When leadership is not asking about the gender implications of policy, staffers are less likely to prioritize gender perspectives in their work.<sup>124</sup> Overall, the lack of understanding of gender perspectives remains a challenge, but the desire to promote gender equality is growing.

## **6. Afghanistan: A Case Study Examining the Department of State's Peacebuilding Strategy**

Some US foreign policymakers argue that the United States should curtail its efforts in Afghanistan. Others argue that the United States must remain actively involved in Afghanistan's security and political situation. Opinions on how to design and support peacebuilding strategies in Afghanistan vary as well. As these debates persist, Afghan women continue to fight for their rights to go to work and to school, to lead their communities, and contribute to the future of their country. The decisions of international actors have the potential to deeply threaten their current and future achievements. When international actors have thought to ask Afghan women their opinion on the future of their country, they frequently respond with concern and fear. Fawzia Koofi, a female politician, suggests, "If the international community decides to leave tomorrow, women will be the first victim of the Talibanization of the government."<sup>125</sup>

In Afghanistan, concerns about the prioritization of gender considerations and women's roles in peace processes are growing as international actors are looking to reduce their role and the

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<sup>123</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

<sup>124</sup> Evans, Jessie. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 9, 2013.

<sup>125</sup> Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach. "U.S. Must Not Abandon Afghan Women to the Taliban." *CNN*, March 15, 2012. <http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/15/opinion/lemmon-afghanistan-women/index.html>.

Karzai government demonstrates more sympathy to conservative voices. However, the DoS attempts to promote women's rights throughout its policy in Afghanistan, as demonstrated by the establishment of the Civilian Assistance Strategy for Afghan Women, published in December 2010, which focuses on women's access to health and education, leadership and civic participation, security, access to justice, and economic empowerment.<sup>126</sup> While still in office, Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Verveer maintained that Afghan women would not be left out of the future of Afghanistan. Clinton said, "Any peace that is attempting to be made by excluding more than half the population is no peace at all."<sup>127</sup> Verveer argued that women's active participation in Afghan peace processes "is not a favor to the women of Afghanistan... It is a necessity. Because any potential for peace will be subverted if women's voices are silenced or marginalized."<sup>128</sup> However, DoS policy largely omits the importance of overarching gender dynamics beyond the obvious need for enhanced women's rights. Plans for Taliban reintegration continue and neither women nor gender perspectives have been fully integrated into peace processes.

In order to protect the rights of women, the United States asserts that any Taliban wishing to enter government must respect the Afghan Constitution, renounce violence, and sever their ties with al Qaeda.<sup>129</sup> Since the 2004 Afghan Constitution guarantees equal rights for women and men and requires a 25 percent quota for female representation in Parliament, the conditions for Taliban participation do include protecting women's rights. Nevertheless, it is still uncertain how these

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<sup>126</sup> Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. "Status Report: Afghanistan and Pakistan Civilian Engagement." U.S. Department of State, November 2011. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/176809.pdf>. 15.

<sup>127</sup> Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach. "Washington's War for Afghanistan's Women." *Foreign Policy Magazine*, April 17, 2012. [http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/04/17/washingtons\\_war\\_for\\_afghanistans\\_women](http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/04/17/washingtons_war_for_afghanistans_women).

<sup>128</sup> Verveer, Melanne. "The Vital Role of Afghan Women in Peace, Security, and Economic Development Processes." Speech presented at the Empowering Afghan Women Conference, The Hague, Netherlands, September 7, 2011. <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/rls/rem/2011/172451.htm>.

<sup>129</sup> Hadley, Stephen, and John D. Podesta. "The Right Way Out of Afghanistan." *Foreign Affairs*, July 1, 2012. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137696/stephen-hadley-and-john-d-podesta/the-right-way-out-of-afghanistan>.

conditions will play out.<sup>130</sup> The Karzai government has become less willing to stand up for Afghan women over the last few years and has attempted to negotiate with the Taliban.<sup>131</sup> To ensure that the Karzai government stays true to its women's rights commitments and gives further attention to gender considerations, the DoS must advocate both publically and privately.

### ***Afghan Women's Participation in the Peace Process***

Over the last three years, there have been a number of major international conferences on the Afghan peace process, during which women have participated to varying degrees. These conferences are not only part of current peacebuilding efforts; they also determine future peacebuilding strategies that may or may not account for gender perspectives depending on their participants and their attention to gender issues.

In January 2010, the United Kingdom and the UN organized the London Conference on Afghanistan and only invited one woman, who was expected to represent all of Afghan civil society.<sup>132</sup> No one from the Afghan Women's Network was invited to attend the conference so Secretary Clinton requested that a number of women from the Network come to her press conference, where she acknowledged their courage, necessary role in the future of the country, and exclusion from the conference. However, at the same conference, an anonymous US senior official said, "gender issues are going to have to take a back seat to other priorities ... There's no way we can be successful if we maintain every special interest and pet project. All those pet rocks in our rucksack were taking us down," demonstrating that not all US foreign policy officials have internalized the NAP.<sup>133</sup> The lack of Afghan women in London was especially problematic because the international community negotiated the terms of the Afghan Peace Jirga at the conference.

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<sup>130</sup> "United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security." 6.

<sup>131</sup> Lemmon. "U.S. Must Not Abandon Afghan Women to the Taliban."

<sup>132</sup> Tax, Meredith. "Can Afghan Women Count on Hillary Clinton?" *The Guardian*, July 4, 2011.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/jul/04/women-afghanistan-taliban-clinton>.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

Fortunately, Secretary Clinton was able to convince President Karzai to augment his original proposal of 50 seats for women at the Jirga, out of 600, to 25 percent. The DoS also provided training to female participants in the Peace Jirga before it began through the Small Grants Fund.<sup>134</sup>

Notwithstanding, women were sidelined during the Peace Jirga session held in June 2010. Only one woman was elected as a chair of a committee and the Jirga gave President Karzai permission to negotiate with the Taliban, against the will of the women present. In the end, women's participation helped legitimize the Jirga and President Karzai, but did not reflect gender considerations or result in guarantees for women's rights.<sup>135</sup> While the United States advocated for increased women's participation and helped train female participants, the Jirga reinforced gendered power dynamics and marginalized women in Afghan peacebuilding processes, demonstrating the challenging context and the need for the United States to do more.

In August 2010, Ambassador Verveer visited Afghanistan to secure women's representation on the High Peace Council. During her advocacy, Verveer recommended that women make up at least a third of the Council. In response, Karzai advisers argued that many men have never worked with women, especially Taliban, and cannot handle starting now. When the list of councilmembers was announced in October 2010, women were only allotted nine out of 70 seats while warlords and religious fundamentalists are prevalent.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, female representatives are prevented from fully utilizing their political voice, as shown by their prohibition from joining delegations for peace talk trips within the country.<sup>137</sup>

The Kabul Conference in July 2010 was the first gathering of international donors in Afghanistan. Afghan women were rightly wary of the Afghan government and international

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<sup>134</sup> Verveer. *Women as Agents of Change: Advancing the Role of Women in Politics and Civil Society*.

<sup>135</sup> Reticker, Gini. *Peace Unveiled*. Public Broadcasting Station Women, War & Peace Series, 2011.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/full-episodes/peace-unveiled/>.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ayubi, Najla. Q&A: Survey Findings Reveal Ongoing Challenges for Afghan Women. Interview by Alma Freeman, November 16, 2011. <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2011/11/16/qa-survey-findings-reveal-ongoing-challenges-for-afghan-women/>.

community's dedication to women's rights before the Conference began.<sup>138</sup> Even after extensive advocacy, the Afghan Women's Network was only allowed three minutes for one representative to voice the concerns of all Afghan women. Secretary of State Clinton met with the Network and mentioned the importance of women's participation in Afghanistan's future during her remarks, but no stipulations for women's rights were made.<sup>139</sup> As peace efforts moved forward, gender perspectives remained unexpressed.

In 2011, Afghan women's representation began to increase during critical peace process events, largely due to advocacy from Secretary Clinton and the S/GWI. At the Bonn Conference in December 2011, 16 of 34 civil society delegates were women, but unfortunately, only one Afghan woman was allowed to speak at the ministerial level talks.<sup>140</sup> The July 2012 Tokyo Conference reflected a better picture. Women from various provinces made up half of the civil society delegation and significantly, male delegates raised issues regarding gender.<sup>141</sup> Due to poor representation of women at the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago, Amnesty International hosted a shadow summit focusing on Afghan women's rights and their role in the future of the country.<sup>142</sup> Ambassador Verveer represented the United States at the summit, where she argued for upholding Afghan women's rights throughout the peace process, but did not discuss the overarching gendered picture.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach. "A Warning in Kabul." *The Daily Beast*, July 19, 2010.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2010/07/19/kabul-conference-afghan-womens-warning-for-international-donors.html>.

<sup>139</sup> Reticker. *Peace Unveiled*.

<sup>140</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> LaFranchi, Howard. "At NATO Summit on Afghanistan, Few Women's Voices Heard." *Christian Science Monitor*, May 20, 2012. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Foreign-Policy/2012/0520/At-NATO-summit-on-Afghanistan-few-women-s-voices-heard>.

<sup>143</sup> Rogin, Josh. "'Shadow Summit' Calls Attention to Plight of Afghan Women." *Foreign Policy Magazine*, May 21, 2012.

[http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/05/21/shadow\\_summit\\_calls\\_attention\\_to\\_plight\\_of\\_afghan\\_women](http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/05/21/shadow_summit_calls_attention_to_plight_of_afghan_women).

The information above provides insight into women's participation in Afghan peace talks. While the United States advocates for greater participation and promotion of gender equality, Afghan women are noticeably marginalized throughout the peace process. However, it remains difficult to monitor the prioritization of gender perspectives and women's rights from the outside. As discussed in "Women and Peace Processes," the real decision-making of peace negotiations occurs in secret. Lyric Thompson, women's rights writer and advocate at the International Center for Research on Women, asserts that while Secretary Clinton painstakingly stressed the importance of women's rights to Afghanistan's future, the behind-closed-door nature of the talks complicates monitoring processes and women's rights advocacy efforts. Additionally, Thompson points out that there is little analysis of the Afghan women representatives who are theoretically representing all Afghan women and their unique perspectives.<sup>144</sup>

### ***Women and Gender in Local Peacebuilding***

Overall, the DoS peacebuilding strategy in Afghanistan attempts to account for the priorities of the Afghan people, including issues that are particularly relevant to women. Lida Noory, the Senior Adviser for Afghanistan in the S/GWI, articulates that the US approach in Afghanistan is based on empowering local civil society to maximize its ability to lead the country to sustainable peace. This perspective is universal in the S/GWI and common throughout the DoS.<sup>145</sup> Jamille Bigio, the lead on WPS in the S/GWI, says US policy and success in Afghanistan is dependent on building champions, networks, and partnerships with civil society and state actors. She specifically emphasizes the goal of empowering individuals and groups to best respond to Afghan women's views and needs,<sup>146</sup> such as maternal health and the protection of women's political rights. In 2010, the US Government allocated \$20 million for capacity building of Afghan women-led NGOs and

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<sup>144</sup> Thompson, Lyric. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, February 21, 2013.

<sup>145</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

<sup>146</sup> Bigio, Jamille. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 8, 2013.

another \$25 million to fund the programs of such NGOs.<sup>147</sup> Additionally, the DoS substantially supports Afghan civil society networks such as the Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition and Afghan Women's Network. These networks and organizations carry out important tasks such as assessing gender as a security indicator in Afghanistan and drafting concrete recommendations for the High Peace Council,<sup>148</sup> including 25% budget allocation for women's specific needs, representation of women's groups in the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program, enhanced involvement of women in the High Peace Council, prioritization of women's security, and increased female participation in provincial peace councils.<sup>149</sup> This DoS approach of supporting the capacity of civil society aligns with scholar Jolynn Shoemaker's suggestion of focusing efforts to integrate gender perspectives into peacebuilding on expanding the capacity of existing organizations.

The S/GWI actively monitors and advocates for women's rights in US policy in Afghanistan, which it does in close coordination with American and Afghan counterparts.<sup>150</sup> For instance, the S/GWI helped develop DoS reporting standards for women's rights in Afghanistan that inform policy and funding allocation, which have contributed to increased reporting to decision makers.<sup>151</sup> The S/GWI also advocates for adherence to the Afghan Constitution as a clear red line for the United States in negotiations and for meaningful engagement of women in the High Peace Council and provincial peace councils. Due to advocacy efforts, the Afghan government required at least three women participants in each provincial peace council. However, as Lida Noory points out, not only are these numbers small, but also women are often held to a higher standard and not taken seriously. Thus, continued capacity building and increased efforts to engage men are necessary, and

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<sup>147</sup> Tarnoff, Curt. *Afghanistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance*. CRS Report for Congress. Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, August 12, 2010. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40699.pdf>. 8.

<sup>148</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

<sup>149</sup> "Position Paper on Women and Peace: Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program Review Conference." Afghan Women's Network, May 2011. [http://www.afghanwomennetwork.af/Latest%20Updates/AWN-Position\\_Paper-Peace\\_Conference-Final\\_English.pdf](http://www.afghanwomennetwork.af/Latest%20Updates/AWN-Position_Paper-Peace_Conference-Final_English.pdf).

<sup>150</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

<sup>151</sup> Evans, Jessie. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 9, 2013.

existing female representatives must be encouraged to reach out to the greater population, particularly women and girls.<sup>152</sup>

Every four to six weeks, Ambassador Verveer and the Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs in Kabul convene a videoconference meeting with the interagency Afghanistan Gender Task Force. DoS staff working to improve women's rights in Afghanistan have found this mechanism to be one the most effective ways to share information about developments at the local, provincial, and national levels and inform policy.<sup>153</sup> However, the Task Force's makeup, 19 women and one man, demonstrates the DoS's shortcoming in engaging men in the discussion on gender issues at play in Afghanistan.<sup>154</sup>

The DoS and the United States could do more to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated into long-term Afghan peacebuilding and rebuilding strategies. Thus far, DoS strategy emphasizes women's participation in peace talks, but little attention has been directed towards designing long-term development strategies that incorporate gender perspectives and aim to address the root causes of gender inequality.<sup>155</sup> Likewise, while the US government frequently advocates for women's rights, there is less attention to overall gender relations and their role in conflict and peacebuilding, limiting the potential to integrate gender perspectives throughout policy, beyond women's token representation.

Moreover, the DoS has taken programmatic actions to advance the status of women in Afghanistan, such as maternal health initiatives, girl's education programs, and policies that integrate women into Afghan security forces. For example, the DoS Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs have trained over 500 female policy offices, many of which

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<sup>152</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Evans, Jessie. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 9, 2013.

<sup>155</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

are employed in Family Response Units devoted to domestic violence cases.<sup>156</sup> USAID's Afghanistan gender team, which is the largest of any,<sup>157</sup> encourages and informs the integration of gender perspectives in programs that specifically target women and throughout US programming. USAID's new \$300 million Women in Transition program aims to advance women's standing and decision-making power throughout Afghanistan's public, private, and civil society sectors. One of its initiatives attempts to institutionalize internships in various government ministries for women, including foreign affairs and finance, which have afforded women the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity and complete for influential positions. Lida Noory suggests that programs like these are particularly significant because they prove that women can be valuable assets as well as bring women into the inner circles of decision-making.<sup>158</sup>

Unfortunately, over the past few years, prioritization of women's rights in USAID initiatives on land reform and municipal governance in Afghanistan has faded. When USAID sought bids for a \$140 million land reform program in March 2010, it insisted that the winning contractor increase the number of deeds granted to women by 50 percent, ensure regular media coverage on women's land rights, and make teaching materials on women's rights available to secondary schools and universities. Since then, the requirements related to women's rights have been sharply cut. Now, the contractor must only evaluate the Afghan inheritance laws, gather input from women's groups, and draft amendments to the country's civil code. This downgraded attention to gender is clearly contradictory to the NAP and highlights the gaps between rhetoric, policy directives, and implementation.

USAID also lowered gender-specific requirements for a \$600 million municipal government program awarded in 2010. Originally, the contractor was asked to employ an experienced gender

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<sup>156</sup> "Fact Sheet: Advancing the Rights of Women and Girls: Keys to a Better Future for Afghanistan." U.S. Department of State, January 29, 2010. [http://www.state.gov/s/special\\_rep\\_afghanistan\\_pakistan/2010/136250.htm](http://www.state.gov/s/special_rep_afghanistan_pakistan/2010/136250.htm).

<sup>157</sup> Thompson, Lyric. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, February 21, 2013.

<sup>158</sup> Noory, Lida. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 1, 2013.

specialist, develop and implement a gender strategy to ensure women's representation in municipal government, teach gender awareness course, and provide training to women in relevant areas of municipal government. In the revised version of the contract, gender is no longer a specific line item. Instead, it is listed as a "cross-cutting theme." Senior officials have justified these changes by arguing that prioritizing gender is not realistic and that women's rights are a "pet project" that could weigh on success.<sup>159</sup> Although USAID's *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* recognizes land reform and governance initiatives as important tools to advance women's rights and improve peacebuilding, the Agency has not consistently adhered to its own policy directive.

DoS policy in Afghanistan does take into account many of the academics' suggestions that are covered in the literature review. The Department has incorporated gender analysis into the construction of its peacebuilding policies more than ever before, while it has also hired specialists to provide guidance and advocacy and increased funding for programs targeted at women. Some of the specific recommendations, such as enhancing representation of women in peace talks, have been prioritized, while others, such as pursuing more gender-equal property laws, have been largely abandoned. Despite efforts at the rhetorical and programmatic level, gender has not been fully integrated into US peacebuilding in Afghanistan, reducing its effectiveness and increasing the chance that women's rights gains will be reversed as the international community withdraws.

The future of women's rights in Afghanistan appears uncertain. Thus, the stability and success of the country is uncertain as well. International actors are planning to reduce their presence in the country and the Afghan government's influence will continue to expand. Although foreign countries and international organizations arranged previous conferences on Afghanistan, the Afghan government will chair the Bonn II Conference, giving it the power to decide women's role in the

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<sup>159</sup> Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. "In Afghanistan, U.S. Shifts Strategy on Women's Rights as It Eyes Wider Priorities." *The Washington Post*, March 6, 2011. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/05/AR2011030504233.html>.

conference and influence the perspectives voiced. Afghanistan has made positive strides, but detrimental gender relations persist and the country remains unstable and unsafe, while progress is likely to deteriorate.

## **7. Conclusion**

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton championed a number of institutional changes during her tenure that prioritize specific attention to women in the creation of US foreign policy and elevate gender perspectives in peacebuilding strategy. The rhetoric and mechanisms of the Obama administration, however, do not guarantee full and effective integration of gender perspectives throughout DoS peacebuilding efforts. Gender perspectives do not receive the necessary funding or policy prioritization. On a positive note, my interviews suggest that under the leadership of Secretary Clinton people within the DoS are “more frequently and at a higher level talking about gender equality across the board.”<sup>160</sup>

The case of Afghanistan demonstrates the kinds of efforts undertaken to integrate gender into DoS peacebuilding, allowing for an early assessment of their effects. The DoS has consistently advocated for women’s participation in the peace process, while also bringing women and gender considerations into peacebuilding programming. DoS officials argue that Afghanistan has no chance at sustainable peace without the participation and safety of women. Yet, DoS peacebuilding, and US policy in general, has not been thoroughly transformed to include an understanding of gender dynamics, rendering DoS peacebuilding efforts incapable of accomplishing their goals. As previously cited scholars have mentioned, if women’s safety and unequal gender relations are not addressed, true peace will remain unreachable. Post-conflict stages offer unique opportunities to address underlying problems that hamper development, good governance, and security. Inconsistent attention to gender perspectives in Afghan peacebuilding is insufficient to dramatically change the

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<sup>160</sup> Bigio, Jamine. Interview by Jessie Durrett. Phone, March 8, 2013.

course of patriarchal power, violence, and instability, and reversal of the country's progress on women's rights remain likely.

Secretary of State John Kerry will unlikely be a champion for women's rights and gender equality to the extent of Secretary Clinton, but his efforts thus far are promising. As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kerry helped establish the first Subcommittee on Global Women's Issues. During his confirmation hearing, Kerry affirmed that the DoS would continue to prioritize the advancement of the status of women and that the S/GWI and the position of Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues are not going anywhere.<sup>161</sup> In his first days as Secretary of State, John Kerry met with Burmese women working to build a sustainable peace in their country and launched the Full Participation Fund, which will support bureaus and embassies' work to achieve gender equality.<sup>162</sup>

Considering that DoS peacebuilding strategies incompletely account for gender perspectives, further steps must be taken. To begin, a specific DoS policy directive outlining the importance and means of integrating gender perspectives into peacebuilding would amplify the discourse, provide practical steps, and mandate follow through on this area of policy. This directive would mandate the continued use of existing evaluations processes while introducing new instruments to review peacebuilding. In particular, faults in implementation, demonstrated by the reversal of USAID policies, must be scrutinized through program evaluation.

In order to enhance gender analysis within the DoS, Assistant and Deputy Secretaries of State must encourage training that improves officials' theoretical and practical understanding of gender. Training must focus on enabling DoS employees across all areas of work to articulate the

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<sup>161</sup> Kossen, Janine. "From Clinton to Kerry: Keep the Promise to Women, Youth." *POLITICO*, February 1, 2013. <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/02/from-clinton-to-kerry-keep-the-promise-to-women-youth-87005.html>.

<sup>162</sup> Kerry, John. "Remarks at the International Women of Courage Awards." Speech presented at the International Women of Courage Awards, Washington D.C., March 8, 2013. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/03/205892.htm>.

need for NAP implementation, beyond moral imperatives, and construct policies that take women into account. Additionally, the training curriculum must cover the relevance of gender relations to peacebuilding and the importance of addressing gender inequalities across sectors of post-conflict states, including political representation, property ownership, refugee programs, and education, to name a few. DoS leaders must also incentivize participation in task forces and working groups that focus on gender, helping ensure that women are not the only ones engaging on gender or women's issues. If officials have greater gender expertise, and are rewarded for using it, they will be more capable of integrating gender consideration into their work and likely to convince their local counterparts to do the same, while requiring less guidance of S/GWI staff. On a similar note, the DoS must examine and undertake means of enhancing the capacity of the S/GWI so that it can better contribute to the construction of peacebuilding strategy.

Lastly, the DoS must continue its diplomatic efforts to improve the status of women during peacebuilding, taking into account local culture, and working where possible, with local groups, other countries, and international organizations towards this goal. The United States must instigate and support greater international dialogue on the significance of gender dynamics in conflict and post-conflict stages. While collaborating with post-conflict countries, the United States should encourage new or reconstructed state institutions to proactively address internal gendered dynamics and incorporate gender considerations into their work. While the United States should continue to publically reinforce its commitment to gender equality, it must be wary of causing backlash due to the women's rights agenda appearing western, and appropriately employ private advocacy.

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