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Toward a More Inclusive Approach to U.S. Security Assistance

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by Angelic Young.*

Passage of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 represents an important opportunity for the United States to make Women, Peace, and Security a vital part of its foreign policy strategy. The act mandates creation of a government wide strategy to increase participation of women in U.S. peacekeeping and security operations, within one year of the enactment of the law. A key part of these operations are programs to train foreign military and other security forces in law enforcement, rule of law, and professional military education. Most of these programs are considered security assistance.

U.S. security assistance, which includes military aid, amounts to nearly **\$17 billion** annually. This constitutes approximately one-third of the total U.S. foreign assistance budget, which constitutes about 1.3 percent of the overall budget.¹ The Departments of Defense (DOD) and State (DOS) share responsibility for security assistance through a complex web of authorities and associated accounts that cover training and equipping foreign militaries, conducting counterterrorism and counter-narcotics operations, and strengthening the capacity of foreign law enforcement agencies to provide internal security and combat crime.

Over the last 17 years, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda emerged out of a series of UN Security Council resolutions, beginning with UNSCR 1325. This landmark resolution marked the first time the Security Council recognized that women and men experience conflict differently and that women have an integral role to play in conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery. It urged international actors to increase women's participation in peace and

security processes and incorporate gender perspectives into all conflict-related efforts. Nearly 70 countries have adopted national strategies to implement UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions considered to be part of the WPS "suite". Despite progress, however, governments have devoted scant resources to the WPS agenda, including in the United States.

This policy brief examines U.S. security assistance accounts aimed at security sector capacity building in order to determine whether the current U.S. strategy for security assistance aligns with U.S. obligations outlined in its National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security (U.S. NAP).² It finds that the biggest gaps the U.S. faces in meeting its obligations under the NAP occur in countries receiving the largest amounts of security assistance.

National Action Plan Commitments

The U.S. NAP commits the U.S. government, including DOS and DOD, to more than a dozen distinct strategic- and operational-level actions intended to promote the inclusion of women in U.S. foreign policy, security, and military programs.³ This brief looks at four (emphasis added)⁴:

1. Assist partner governments in **improving the recruitment and retention of women**, including minorities and other historically marginalized women, into government ministries and **the incorporation of women's perspectives** in peace and security policy.

2. Provide common guidelines and training to help partner nations **integrate women and their perspectives into the security sectors** and increase partner nation **women's participation in U.S.-funded training programs**.
3. Assist partner nations in **building capacity to develop, implement, and enforce policies and military justice systems that promote and protect women's rights**.
4. Support **women's participation in efforts to deradicalize men and women** who have supported violent extremism, **promote tolerance and pluralism** in their communities, and **advance stabilization and reconstruction** activities.

- The **1206 Global Train and Equip** fund is a relatively new account, established in the aftermath of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to build partner capacity for time-sensitive “new and emerging” counterterrorist operations or to enable partners to support military and stability operations in which U.S. armed forces are a participant.
- Special military authorities include the **Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF)**, **Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF)**, **Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund (PCCF)**, and other country-specific train and equip authorities. These funds convey broad powers to DOD to build the capacity of nonmilitary security entities such as the Afghanistan Ministry of Interior, which includes the Afghanistan National Police.⁹

Security Assistance and Cooperation

Although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, security assistance and security cooperation are not the same thing. Typically, security cooperation refers to all DOD interactions with foreign defense establishments (such as the Afghanistan Ministry of Defense) aimed at building relationships to promote U.S. interests, develop partner capacity, and increase U.S. ties to its allies.⁵ Generally speaking, DOD considers all activities listed under Title 10 of the U.S. Code to be security cooperation. The Congressional Research Service estimates that DOD has more than 80 authorities to engage in security cooperation.⁶

Security assistance refers to a specific set of programs, some of which are appropriated to DOD, some to DOS, and both play roles administering:⁷ such as the following⁸:

- Through the **International Military Education and Training program (IMET)**, DOD provides professional education to foreign officials (typically military, but sometimes other security officials).
- Because **peacekeeping operations (PKO)** are provided as voluntary support for peacekeeping activities, they are considered as separate and distinct from regular U.S. contributions to the United Nations. Funds for PKO are used for security, though not necessarily for military purposes. For example, DOS has deployed police advisors to the UN Mission in South Sudan to support training and advisory operations.
- DOS uses **International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Control (INCLE)** to build the capacity of foreign law enforcement organizations.

Security Assistance and the WPS Agenda

Evidence tells us that women can prevent violence, provide security, moderate extremism, bridge divides, strengthen peacekeeping, broaden societal participation, promote dialogue, and build trust.¹⁰ Gender equality is a better indicator of a state's peacefulness than democracy, religion, or GDP.¹¹ As the percentage of women in parliament increases, a state becomes less likely to use violence when faced with an international crisis.¹² A peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in its creation.¹³ WPS is not only an agenda—Women, Peace, and Security are inextricably linked.

Excluding women, ethnic or religious minorities, and other disadvantaged groups from access and providing input to the security sector creates distance between security actors and local populations. But where women, ethnic or religious minorities, and other disadvantaged groups do have access and do provide input to the security sector, countries can strengthen relationships within communities that are vital to the long-term success of peace and stability operations.

Establishing a more inclusive security sector breaks down into three objectives:

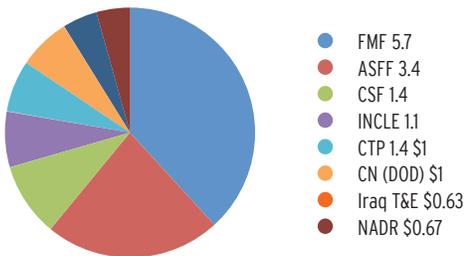
1. Increasing the number of women participating directly (e.g., overcoming recruitment, selection, and advancement biases in security institutions);
2. Expanding women's access to mechanisms through which they can provide meaningful input to security sector decisions (e.g., overcoming barriers to access and combatting actual or perceived bias in the value of information provided by women); and
3. Increasing the responsiveness of the security sector to women (e.g., ensuring security actors meet the needs of women by overcoming gaps in awareness, information, and training).

Security assistance–related programs provide significant opportunities to engage women more fully. For example, capacity-building programs can overcome barriers to recruitment, selection, and advancement for women in security institutions. Professional training (e.g., advanced military education) can overcome actual or perceived biases about the value and contributions of women or the lack of information and awareness about the needs of women. Broader reform programs can be leveraged to expand and improve mechanisms that would give women (and other disadvantaged populations) access and input to decisions about security in their communities. Relationships can be leveraged to promote the inclusion of women.

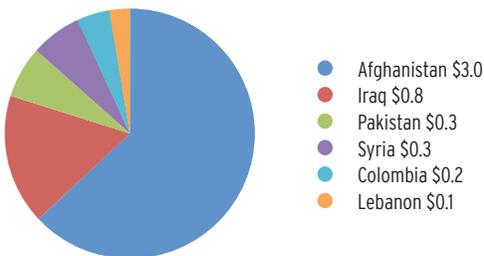
Security assistance is a substantial component of the foreign aid the U.S. government provides and an essential element of influence in its relationships with many countries around the world. It is thus a vital tool for strategically advancing the women, peace, and security agenda.

Gaps in Women’s Participation

Security Assistance by Account (in billions)



Security Assistance by Country (in billions)



Most of the money the U.S. government spends on security assistance goes to just six countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Colombia, and Lebanon.¹⁴

Unfortunately, there is little data publicly available on the degree to which IMET, PKO, 1206 Global Train and Equip, or other security assistance programs support women’s participation in the security sector. Nor is there gender-disaggregated data to show how many of these programs’ beneficiaries are male versus female. None of the publicly available reports on 1206 Global Train and Equip, for example, even mention women or gender.

Afghanistan is the one significant exception: The ASFF supports U.S. NAP objectives. Both the FY2016 and 2017 National Defense Authorization Acts included up to \$25 million to be used to support the recruitment, integration, retention, training, and fair treatment of women in the Afghan national defense and security forces. Further, DOD states that “the development of credible, legitimate, and professional Afghan security forces requires the promotion and implementation of equal human rights for men and women.”¹⁵

In contrast, there is **no indication that U.S. programs in Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, or Colombia targeted women’s participation in the security sector in the last three fiscal years.** In Lebanon, just three activities in 2015 and one in 2014 supported women’s participation.¹⁶ In fact, aside from Afghanistan and Lebanon, there are only a handful of countries where more than three WPS activities took place in the last three years: Brazil, Bulgaria, Kenya, Mozambique, and South Sudan.

It is not a matter of finding space within a country budget. Bulgaria and Kenya receive less than \$10 million in security assistance; Brazil and Mozambique receive less than \$1 million. Only South Sudan, which receives \$40 million, even comes close to the level of security assistance provided to the top six countries listed above. The United States has clearly managed to prioritize WPS within relatively small budgets.¹⁷

What the existing data reveal is that in countries where the U.S. government spends the most on security assistance it spends the least on training and capacity building to promote the participation of women or the integration of gender perspectives into security sector institutions (excepting Afghanistan and Lebanon).

Five out of six of the countries that receive the most U.S. security assistance have some of the world's worst gender gaps. The World Economic Forum's annual gender gap report ranks Pakistan and Syria as the second and third most unequal countries in the world, with Lebanon trailing not far behind.¹⁸ The OECD Social and Gender Institutions Index lists Afghanistan and Iraq as high offenders (on a scale of very low to very high) in gender-based social discrimination. All six countries suffer from a lack of women's participation in the security sector. Women constitute less than 1 percent of security forces (military and police) in each country save Colombia, where women constitute 9 percent of the military and only 1 percent of police.

Often, the argument is made that it is too difficult to implement programs in places where the gender gap is so large. Yet successes in Lebanon and Afghanistan demonstrate the contrary. It is hard, but not impossible, and the significant progress made in both countries exemplifies the impact that the United States could make globally.

What Leadership in WPS Requires

The United States has tremendous leverage to bring to bear in raising the profile of women in security decisions and activities. When it fails to implement the NAP in countries at the forefront of its national security agenda, it signals to the world that it is not truly committed to the WPS agenda.

The U.S. is missing an enormous opportunity. Taking its obligations under the NAP and the WPS Act seriously and integrating its objectives in all aspects of its security assistance will not necessarily require more funding, but it does require making wiser use of existing resources and the leverage they buy.

Addressing ongoing challenges with data collection—or lack thereof—is a key part of the wise use of security assistance dollars. The website Foreignassistance.gov is meant to be a repository of budget and performance for all agencies that implement foreign aid. Unfortunately, the vast majority of gender-disaggregated indicators were added only in the last two years, so data on these activities are not yet available. Better tracking of performance data will help us better understand the actual depth of the gap and how best to address it. There may be hidden successes—or additional challenges that analysts have yet to uncover.

For example, there are known activities related to WPS that have taken place but are not yet tracked in the database. Of these, the most promising is the Naval Education and Training Security Assistance Field Activity catalog, which lists available courses on topics related to various aspects of Women, Peace, and Security—meaning they could be part of an IMET, PKO, or another similar program. For example:

- The “Women's Integration in the Armed Forces” course was delivered in Lebanon in 2015 and 2016. The catalog says the course aims to “assist countries all over the world to develop and implement gender policies, in particular, policies aimed at improving or enhancing the representation of and the prospects for women in the military—including women in defense, women in uniform, women in combat.”¹⁹
- PKO funds were used to provide gender protection courses at the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units in FY2015. DOS's Political-Military Bureau highlighted women, peace, and security as an essential component of their Global Peace Operations Initiative, which has trained more than 6,500 female peacekeepers and resulted in increasing deployment of female military peacekeepers by 62 percent and police peacekeepers by 75 percent.²⁰
- In Lebanon, DOS's Bureau of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement provides basic and specialized training for the Lebanese internal security forces, supporting an increase in the number of women on the force from 2 to 610.

Nonetheless, it is clear that for countries receiving the bulk of U.S. security assistance, few if any such activities exist.

Recommendations

How can the United States close the gap between what the NAP and the WPS Act promise and what actual spending and programming say about U.S. priorities?

1. Data: Improve data collection and information sharing. It should be easier than it currently is to determine the number of women who have received U.S.-funded training or other assistance. Otherwise, a goal to “increase the number of women” means little. Gender-disaggregated data should be available, at a minimum, for all courses conducted using IMET, PKO, INCLE, and train and equip (e.g., ASFF, ISFF) funds. That data would help further shape the following recommendations.

2. Strategy: Include language illustrating direct connections between security assistance and U.S. NAP goals in all strategic planning documents, including the following:

- Integrated country strategies connect U.S. foreign assistance activities for individual partner nations to U.S. national security priorities and security sector assistance objectives.²¹ These strategy documents already include language on gender considerations as a matter of practice. But they should also include specific references to U.S. NAP objectives and targets as they relate to country priorities.
- The Defense Security Cooperation Agency's strategic plans (currently Vision 2020), as well as its Security Assistance Management Manual (SAMM), guides DOD components on how to implement security cooperation programs. The SAMM should explicitly reference the U.S. NAP and guide users through conducting a gender analysis before implementing a security cooperation program.
 - Such an analysis need not be complicated. It can be as simple as asking whether there are women in the security forces, how the security of local women could be affected positively or negatively by the assistance, and whether the country would benefit from a targeted gender initiative.
- Theater Security Cooperation Plans and Country Security Cooperation Plans, when developed by geographic combatant commanders should be in consultation with the State Department's country teams and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency Strategic Planning and Integration Division.
 - Together with the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the Joint Staff should review commanders' campaign plans to ensure security cooperation planning guidance on women's integration has been followed.
- All strategic planning documents (including but not limited to those referenced above) should emphasize consulting women in the target countries—particularly those in civil society organizations—to ensure that activities reflect unique priorities, are not duplicative, and are optimally designed so they may be implemented effectively.

3. Training and Education: Expand the use of training programs that provide “how to” guidance on recruiting, retaining, and integrating women into government ministries and incorporating women's perspectives in peace and security policy. Specifically, DOS and DOD should work together on the following:

- Take stock of existing security assistance training and education curriculum, and evaluate successful interventions to develop or refine courses on women's integration.

- Compile a list of best practices, lessons learned, and resources for implementers/practitioners. Include contributions from civil society.
- Require any partner nation that receives U.S. security assistance (including but not limited to IMET, PKO, INCLE, ASFF, and 1206) to participate in at least one course on women's integration into security policy and sectors. (Level and type of participation matters. These courses should be delivered to entry-, mid-, and senior-level staff—and not solely to representatives of units explicitly focused on gender issues.)
- Require the composition of partner nation training delegations to reflect, at a minimum, the gender balance of the partner nation's security force. Given that the objective of the U.S. NAP is to *increase* women's participation, this requirement should be clearly treated as a minimum. For example, if women constitute 7 percent of police in one country, they should constitute at least 7 percent of all U.S.-sponsored police trainings, conferences, or workshops. If women constitute 9 percent of military forces, they should make up at least 9 percent of all beneficiaries of military training. If a partner nation nominates an all-male delegation, the operating guidance should be to reject the nomination.
- Elucidate commitments to increasing women's participation in formal agreements with partner nations, such as letters of agreements, memorandums of understanding, or similar mechanisms. Handbooks including guidelines for the use of foreign assistance or DOD counterparts (e.g., the Defense Security Cooperation Agency manual series, for example) should explicitly reference the U.S. NAP and make clear that security assistance can and should be used to fulfill those commitments.

4. Authorization bill language and funding: Collaborate to develop integrated language in the appropriations bills for State, Foreign Operations, and Regulated Programs (SFOPS) and DOD that explicitly describes how NAP commitments will be resourced and implemented in key programs:

- FME, IMET, and PKO;
- INCLE, NADR and ESF;
- Global train and equip; and
- Programs that fall under defense trade and arms transfers; humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and mine action; international education and training, and defense institution building.

References

1. Curt Tarnoff and Marian L. Lawson, *Foreign Aid: An Introduction to U.S. Programs and Policy*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, June 17, 2016), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40213.pdf>.
2. Rather than on accounts primarily for equipment and services. For example, the U.S. provides Foreign Military Financing (FMF) to partner nations as a grant (non-repayable) or direct loan (repayable) to purchase U.S. manufactured goods and services—this brief will not explore FMF.
3. The first action is to integrate NAP objectives into appropriate strategic guidance and planning documents and to provide training for its US government personnel on WPS issues. This policy brief does not address the integration of NAP objectives since DOD is currently creating (or updating, where appropriate) DOD-specific guidance. (And DOS and USAID have already taken steps to fulfill this obligation.)
4. This is not to suggest that any lines of action not covered in this brief are of lesser importance. There is a significant need for additional research and reporting on activities related to the provision of disaster relief and other humanitarian services, for example, but one policy brief cannot cover the breadth of all activities related to U.S. security assistance.
5. DOD Directive 5132.03.
6. Nina Serafino, *Security Assistance and Cooperation: Shared Responsibility of the Departments of State and Defense*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 23, 2016), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R44444.pdf>.
7. For a more detailed discussion of the difference between security cooperation and assistance, see *Management of Security Cooperation*, chapter 1 (Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, 2017), http://www.iscs.dsc.mil/documents/greenbook/01_Chapter.pdf.
8. This is not an exhaustive list of authorities related to security assistance. See also Serafino, “Security Assistance and Cooperation.”
9. DOD has on occasion transferred ASFF, ISFF and PCCF to DOS to enable DOS to implement specific activities.
10. Marie O’Reilly, *Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Society* (Washington, DC: the Institute for Inclusive Security, October 2015).
11. Valerie Hudson et al., *Sex and World Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Mary Caprioli, “Gendered Conflict,” *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 1 (2000): 53–68; Mary Caprioli and Mark Boyer, “Gender, Violence, and International Crisis,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (August 2001): 503–18; Patrick M. Regan and Aida Paskeviciute, “Women’s Access to Politics and Peaceful States,” *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 3 (2003): 287–302, cited in O’Reilly, *Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Society*, 4.
12. Caprioli and Boyer, “Gender, Violence, and International Crisis,” 514, cited in O’Reilly, *Why Women?, Inclusive Security and Peaceful Society*, 4.
13. Statistical analysis by Laurel Stone, in Marie O’Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz, *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women’s Roles in Peace Processes*, (New York: International Peace Institute, 2015.), 12–13, cited in O’Reilly, *Why Women?, Inclusive Security and Peaceful Society*, 6.
14. This excludes countries that receive mostly or solely FMF. Egypt, Israel, and Jordan all receive large amounts of support exclusively through FMF (though Jordan has historically received other kinds of support). Since FMF is used mostly to purchase equipment and services such as logistical support, it has been omitted from this brief.
15. Unclassified Justification for FY2017 Overseas Contingency Operations Afghanistan Security Sector Forces Fund, http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2017/FY17_J-Book.
16. The indicators now being tracked on Foreignassistance.gov related to women, peace, and security are relatively new. It is possible that additional activities have taken place but have not been tracked or have yet to be reported. Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of NAP implementation and results is one of the gaps that still needs to address, though the addition of WPS-specific indicators, as well as several vital gender-disaggregated indicators, is a welcome signal of progress.
17. More than half of the countries where the U.S. emphasizes women’s inclusion have a smaller gender gap than the U.S. does, and all except Lebanon rank in the middle or top third of countries. Women constitute 7 percent of police in Brazil, 6 percent in Bulgaria, 8 percent in Kenya, and 5 percent in Mozambique. Although there is insufficient evidence to establish a causal link between U.S. WPS programming in these countries and these data, it is worth noting that Kenya launched its first NAP in 2016, Brazil in 2017, and South Sudan in 2015. It is at least possible that US prioritization of WPS in each of these countries helped nudge them toward inclusion. If there is a connection, better data will help illustrate the link.
18. Data are not available for Iraq or Afghanistan; <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/>, (accessed August 29, 2017).
19. “Women’s Integration in the Armed Forces” (masl # P309465), <https://my.nps.edu/documents/103449429/106035045/P309465.pdf/efcec4af-6352-47ad-> (accessed August 29, 2017).
20. Factsheet: U.S. Peacekeeping Capacity Building Assistance, April 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/270963.pdf> (accessed September 20, 2017)
21. http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_20_20172305.pdf.

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Angelic Young worked at the U.S. Department of State for over ten years serving in multiple positions including as senior coordinator for Haiti programs and deputy director of the (formerly-named) Office of Civilian Police and Rule of Law at the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and as senior coordinator for peace and security in the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance. After her departure from DOS, she joined the Institute of Inclusive Security, where she helped national governments design high-impact, measurable strategies for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as Director of National Action Plans. She now serves as Director of Training for Law Enforcement at the Anti-Defamation League, and has been an adjunct faculty at George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government for eleven years. Angelic is also a Truman National Security Project Fellow. The views expressed in this paper are entirely her own.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this policy brief are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. CSWG as a whole or its individual members.

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The U.S. Civil Society Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security (U.S. CSWG) is a nonpartisan network of 39 civil society organizations with expertise on issues involving women, war, and peace. Established in 2010, the working group acts in its capacity as an engaged, voluntary coalition to support the U.S. government's efforts to implement national strategies, plans, and policies related to Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).

