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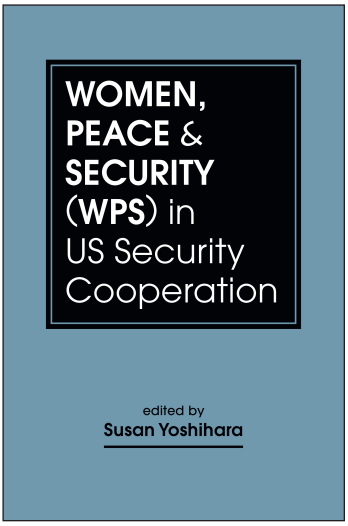
Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in US Security Cooperation



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Women, Peace, and Security

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LASTING PEACE IS HARD TO MAKE. HARDER STILL WHEN HALF the population is not invested in or involved in its success. The promise of promoting more lasting peace is the reason why the UN Security Council committed to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda in 2000, why the US Congress unanimously passed a bipartisan law on WPS in 2017, and why more than 100 countries have published plans in pursuit of reaping its promised gains. In the last quarter century, WPS grew in scope and has been adopted in policy documents internationally. WPS has been called an agenda, a framework, a paradigm, a lens, a perspective, an initiative, a program, a law, and, most worryingly, a political movement.[1] In this book we examine one application of WPS: the way the United States has implemented it as a tool of security cooperation with partner nations around the world. We do not comment on how other nations should employ WPS in pursuit of their own national interests. We seek to give the reader a snapshot of how the Department of Defense (DoD) has implemented the logic and grammar of WPS in practice.

One reason for the expansion of WPS has been the promise of a large return in peace and security for relatively modest investments in women's participation and protection. Such potential gains from employing WPS have been expounded in data and analysis that are well known in WPS circles. These assert, for example, that nations with higher rates of gender parity are more peaceful.[2] Data analysts also have claimed that peace agreements are 64 percent less likely to fail when civil society representatives participate and that women's participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years

by 20 percent and lasting fifteen years by 35 percent.[3] Women's safety is a necessary condition for their participation in security roles and diplomacy. This is an important reason why WPS initiatives have proliferated where violence against women persists and the reason US foreign policy helps to promote them. Conversely, evidence shows that the incidence of violence against women is correlated to more fragile, unstable, and violent societies.[4] This is why many WPS initiatives tend to emphasize the safety and security of women and girls.

Promoting republican governance and human equality, chiefly by the power of a good example, has been part of US foreign policy since its beginning. Since World War II, the United States has forged stronger relationships with partners and allies when they share these common characteristics, and WPS engagement is one recent reflection of those values. What is more, these values and the will to invest in people are a reason why most nations prefer the United States as a security cooperation partner to its competitors, China and Russia.[5] This preference for US partnership makes security cooperation an area of "U.S. strategic advantage in scope, quality, and multilateral alignment."[6] Security cooperation helps US military forces access bases, work more effectively with other militaries on shared interests, and build partner capacity to keep key regions more stable and peaceful. This is why the US Department of Defense chose to implement WPS through security cooperation. Security cooperation includes an array of activities ranging from billions in foreign military sales to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan to small mobile teams on the ground in Africa, Asia, Europe, or Latin America teaching technical skills.[7] While big military sales grab headlines, routine maintenance and support keep large weapons systems sustainable; therefore, building partner capacity is essential. Those technical engagements also include human rights training, as well as leadership and personnel development. They are carried out by Americans in US embassies and the interagency workforce with their counterparts in host nations. It can be intensely personal work. Contributors to this book have served in those positions on the front lines of engagement and worked to implement WPS where it has never been before. They have been part of building "the sinews of close, interoperable partnerships that can be called upon in crisis or war."[8]

The perspective of the contributors is therefore that of the practitioner. The practitioner is familiar with difficulties. He or she knows how hard it is to get things done. As the military strategist Carl von Clausewitz said, "Everything is very simple in war, but the simplest thing is difficult."[9] Just so for implementing new programs like WPS and for secu-

rity cooperation in general.[10] The reader will therefore encounter in the following chapters an emphasis on the difficulty of surmounting barriers and overcoming resistance to reach the DoD practitioner's stated objectives, including improved operational effectiveness, force readiness and modernization, and better military relationships in key regions. Through sober reflection on their experiences, the contributors offer future practitioners and policymakers a better chance of understanding what WPS is and is not, what it can and cannot do, and what advantages and disadvantages it can bring to operations. Since 2018, competition for security cooperation partners has been part of great power competition for influence in target states. Security cooperation and a WPS component, therefore, must be nested in broader US security and defense strategies.[11] Where WPS does not support security interests and readiness, it is not well suited.

When President Donald Trump signed the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, the United States became the first country to turn the WPS idea into law. The act set out to promote "the participation, protection, and rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations" through the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security and the US Agency for International Development.[12] In 2019, the Department of Defense formally tied the law's implementation to security cooperation.[13] Congress authorized the DoD to spend security cooperation funds on WPS activities in 2021.[14] Between 2021 and 2024 the WPS budget and workforce grew, combatant commands integrated WPS advisors onto staffs, the Joint Staff trained more than 1,000 practitioners, and WPS was integrated into foundational security cooperation education and training.[15] Yet, despite all this, little academic work has been done on DoD's WPS policy and practice. Such an examination is essential to making American WPS more practicable and aligned with national interests and defense objectives. In this study we aim to contribute to that inquiry.

Most WPS scholarship has been undertaken from a feminist perspective. Scholars have pored over evidence, conducted countless interviews, and provided defense planners and operators with valuable vignettes.[16] Yet the logic and rhetoric of feminism was a stumbling block to WPS implementation at DoD.[17] In fact, the capabilities achievable through WPS can be analyzed through various theoretical lenses. In this book we take a multidisciplinary approach with a view to clearing the hurdle put in place by an undue emphasis on critical theory in WPS studies. Some contributors take a realist, national security approach while some take a feminist approach. All of the authors assume rather than test evidence

from the quantitative data sets that correlate the peacefulness and resilience of nations with their laws and policies guaranteeing equal liberty to men and women.[18] Many of the contributors have served on faculties at civilian and military graduate institutions and have many combined decades of teaching, and learning from, US and international military and civilian national security practitioners. In my own classroom, I heard often from senior military officers who expected "another lecture on diversity and inclusion" and instead left the class with practicable tools for improving security cooperation, military planning, and operations. We hope this book leads to many such moments for readers.

About the Book

Some nations are eager to include women to increase military end strength and gain technical skills; others are reticent if they believe doing so undermines professional or cultural traditions. The contributors selected cases where they saw positive effects and potential for increased institutional capacity for partner nations. Where possible, they have identified solutions to the challenges of attaining those effects.

In Chapter 2 Susan Yoshihara examines the origins and evolution of American WPS implementation and the inherent tensions and diverging visions of WPS that impeded its progress toward becoming a practicable tool for US national security.

In Chapter 3, Shirley Graham and Nina Plateroti examine advising and analysis. Through interviews with advisors in Niger, the Sahel, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, they deliver the perspective of advisors who grapple with challenges, and they identify ways to overcome barriers.

In Chapter 4 LisaRe Brooks Babin argues that the challenges faced during 2021's Operation Allies Refuge and Operation Allies Welcome could have been avoided at the planning stage. She proposes ways to improve military decisionmaking for crisis response that offers a more facile approach within military decisionmaking models and that identifies and accounts for human and cultural considerations.

Chapter 5 is the first of six case studies. Grace Hoffman examines post–World War II Japan, showing how WPS principles existed in US foreign policy before WPS was articulated in a UN framework and a US law. She provides one of the book's two cases of postconflict application of WPS, at stark variance with Polly Cegielski's examination of US efforts in Afghanistan in Chapter 6 and DoD's operationalization of WPS during its twenty-year interventions in Southwest Asia.

In Chapter 7 Duilia Mora Turner looks at relationship building, a key part of US security cooperation efforts. She offers the testimonial of an advisor working on a four-star, combatant command staff, along with offering a glimpse of how WPS is perceived at the strategic level and how it was advanced through strategic communications, exercises, and key leader engagement.

In Chapter 8 Erica G. Courtney describes her role as an advisor on a female engagement team in Operation Allies Welcome in the United States. She illustrates the ways WPS advisors supported higher-level guidance and worked to enhance operational effectiveness in refugee resettlement operations.

In Chapter 9, Nicholas Tomb examines the connection between WPS and civil-military affairs. Through his experience with the Ghanaian forces, Tomb shows how the cultural context is often difficult to grasp but essential to understand when implementing a program like WPS. Tomb also identifies ways in which women's perspectives complement men's and how their participation helps militaries navigate social contexts that often influence military operations.

In Chapter 10 Nicholas W. Mull examines the potential alignment of WPS with another priority in miliary planning and operations: civilian harm mitigation and response (CHMR).[19] Mull, who integrated WPS into his courses with international-partner military legal advisors, draws from his experience to create a notional framework for the alignment of WPS and CHMR.

In Chapter 11 Susan Yoshihara concludes the book by exploring the future of WPS, synthesizing the cases, identifying areas of ongoing debate, and making recommendations for further research.

Notes

1. Swanee Hunt and Alice Wairimu Nderitu, "WPS as a Political Movement," in Davies and True, *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, 76–87; Cock and Luxton, "Marxism and Feminism."

2. Caprioli et al, "Putting Women in Their Place"; Hudson et al., *Sex and World Peace*.

3. Council on Foreign Relations, "Women's Participation in Peace Processes."

4. Herbert, "Links Between Gender-Based Violence and Outbreaks of Violent Conflict"; Hudson et al., *Sex and World Peace*.

5. Mazarr et al., *Security Cooperation in a Strategic Competition*.

6. Ibid.

7. DoDD 5132.03, "DoD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Cooperation" (2016), defines security cooperation as "all DoD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US

security interests, develop allied and PN [partner nation] military and security capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to allies and PNs." Section 333, Title 10, United States Code, authorizes the secretary of defense, with concurrence from the secretary of state, to conduct or support programs to provide training and equipment to foreign countries to build partner capacity (BPC). BPC cases are funded with US government appropriations and administered within the foreign military sales infrastructure. DoD security cooperation includes the DoD-administered security assistance programs and international armaments cooperation. Security assistance is one element of security cooperation and is funded and authorized by the Department of State and administered by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. Security assistance programs, authorized under Title 22, United States Code, enable the United States to provide defense articles, military education and training, and other defense-related services to PNs by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. DoDD 5132.03 defines security cooperation organizations as all DoD organizations, regardless of actual title, located in foreign countries that are responsible for carrying out security cooperation management functions under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended. DoD, Inspector General, *Special Report: Lessons Learned from Security Cooperation in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa*.

8. Mazarr et al., *Security Cooperation in a Strategic Competition*.

9. Clausewitz, *On War*, 119.

10. DoD, Inspector General, *Special Report: Lessons Learned from Security Cooperation in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa*, 6. The report found systemic challenges with US security cooperation, including training and equipping of partner nation security forces and ministries, providing advisory assistance in support of partner nations, developing and sustaining logistics, ensuring accountability and control of US-supplied equipment, managing US contracts, managing and overseeing US security cooperation funds, screening and vetting, and training foreign security forces on human rights.

11. Mazarr et al, *Security Cooperation in a Strategic Competition.*

12. US Congress, Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-68).

13. DoD, "WPS Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan,"2019.

14. US Congress, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, Section 1210E.

15. White House, "U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Congressional Report 2022."

16. See Davies and True, *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security.*

17. Hegseth, "Cancelling WPS."

18. See, for example, WomanStats.org.

19. US DoD, *Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan*.