

Consortium on
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**U.N. Security Council Resolution
1325 Three Years On:
Gender, Security and
Organizational Change**

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On Tuesday, January 20, 2004, the Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights brought together Felicity Hill, Carol Cohn, Cynthia Enloe for a panel discussion on the impact of UNSC Resolution 1325. Recognizing that 1325 breaks new ground by putting women squarely in the center of efforts to end armed conflicts and create sustainable peace, we came together to explore: to what degree is this merely a rhetorical shift? To what degree has it resulted in a transformation of United Nations' policies and practices? What are the barriers to institutional change at the United Nations?

Dr. Angela Raven-Roberts moderated the event.

Felicity Hill: Carol asked me to come and talk about how UNSC Resolution 1325 has impacted the way the UN works, but she has also given me a lot of other jobs to do before I get to that.

UNIFEM

The first job is to explain a little bit about UNIFEM. “UNIFEM” is the United Nations Development Fund for Women. It was founded after the first World Conference on Women in 1975. The Women’s Movement called for – even shamed – the governments into realizing that they did not have a fund for women, as they had for children. The agenda for this organization was set up there.

In terms of size, it is the smallest fund of the United Nations. I like to tell people that UNIFEM is the UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund) for women, but, if you can fathom, last year the budget of UNICEF was one billion 545 million, while UNIFEM’s was only 30 million. The international community thinks that women are worth three percent the value of children. When you think about why UNIFEM has had limited achievements, you have to recognize the scope of its objective, which is to achieve gender equality around the world – and compare that to the small size of its budget. It is a fund, and it works in developing countries only. It works on women’s economy and sustainability, mostly through small projects, showing the UN how to do gender equality work.

Then, in 1999 and again in 2001, UNIFEM was told by the governments, “We need you to work much more in conflict countries and on peace and security issues.” So while UNIFEM’s focus had been largely on development, it was now given a specific mandate to work much more in the peace and security field. We now have programs in 25 countries working on women, peace and security issues. That ranges from supporting women’s organizations, to becoming part of the peace negotiation process. It is also about creating programs for the post-conflict phase, when countries are putting themselves back together again, and it is time to integrate women and utilize the opportunities that we often have in a post-conflict situation: the constitution is being

re-written; the legislation is being re-written; the judicial system is being set up again--it is an opportunity for retraining and structural change. Maximizing those opportunities is what we are doing across the spectrum.

UNIFEM is part of the UN, but it is often treated like an NGO in the system. Being so small and working on gender issues, we are quite marginalized. Part of that NGO-feel made it easier for me, as a former NGO worker, to enter into the UN through this avenue. There have been a lot of different and unusual parallels between the treatment I received at the hands of governments as an NGO (with WILPF – the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom) and the way in which UNIFEM is treated in the system itself. That is something I will talk about a little bit later.

The UN

The second assignment Carol gave me is to give a short primer on the UN and the kind of work that it does. I think there are three central components: The first component is that the UN is a forum for dialogue. That is something that I really want to emphasize, because many people have the impression that the UN has an independent mindset, and Secretary-General Kofi Annan can make decisions. But he actually cannot. The UN is an entity of governments, and Kofi Annan must obey those governments, and all his staff must obey him. They only get to do things under government directive. The status of the UN is firmly and absolutely in the hands and the laps of the governments. Sometimes, that is misunderstood. The UN is a forum, a shell, a place where we can go, put on our earpieces, and listen to each other in six languages. The space of the consensus and the agreement that governments can find is the n what Kofi Annan and his staff can act on. This convening and consensus-building dialogue forum is one component.

Second, there is the emergency and humanitarian response function, where governments come together and agree to a program of action for providing food and setting up refugee camps and other programs to support these basic human needs. For example, throughout 2003, the World Food Program (WFP) delivered one ton of food to Iraq every hour, a function invisible to most people. Emergency and humanitarian responses that are conscious of gender involve ensuring that supplies for women get onto all of the standardized humanitarian lists of supplies that are sent to a place, which would not happen if gender were not considered.

The third component is ongoing development and government assistance, a place for technical assistance to be found for governments. For example, if a government wants to enhance the capacity of its judges, it often can go through the UN and gain access to that support. That is more ongoing and opportunity-raising – it is the process of discovering ways in which governments can cooperate.

UNSC Resolution 1325

One of the reasons I love the UN is because of this Security Council (SC) resolution that we are here to discuss today. The first time the SC discovered women was on Halloween in 2000, when 1325 was passed. Before this, there were seldom any references to women in SC resolutions. For a time there a few references to female UN workers in Afghanistan, and mostly, when women have been mentioned, the reference was to “women and children,” rather than to women as a legitimate, autonomous group. This resolution represents an enormous quantum leap

forward. Considering that it was the first time that the SC grappled with this subject, it was even better than we had hoped for.

But, in a way, I have to qualify my great enthusiasm for this resolution by saying that much of this material actually had been previously agreed upon by governments. Much of it had been discussed at the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 and the Nairobi Conference in 1985. In fact, Nairobi was even better on peace issues than Beijing, because the Cold War was at its height, and peace and security issues were being debated. So, 1325 is not composed of material that is brand new to other parts of the UN system, nor to the international community -- but it *is* absolutely new for the Security Council. Some people have said that it has only been in the last seven to ten years that we have talked about human rights at the SC. Then, in 2000, the discussion about gender comes to the SC as well -- perhaps the last part of the UN system that had been holding out against the concept of "gender mainstreaming."

In some ways, resolution 1325 accelerated some of the patterns we saw developing at Beijing. There, the international community agreed that there would be a thirty percent minimum quota for women's representation -- that was the goal. But what the resolution does, which is also typical of other SC resolutions, is a lot of "acknowledging" in the *preambular paragraphs*. It acknowledges the things that have been done in the past, as well as other international meetings that have happened, and it acknowledges that women are the vast majority of those adversely affected by war. That is a nice acknowledgement there! Thank you! It reaffirms the role of women in a whole set of circumstances—international humanitarian law, landmines, and peace keeping operations.

Then, in the *operational paragraphs*, the resolution sets out a statement of the way things *should* be in peace negotiations, in peacekeeping operations, and in post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution does not go into human rights. Instead, it mainly sticks to the areas that are under the control of the SC -- to try to avert and/or mediate conflict, to send in peacekeepers, and to have effective aid for the society. In a lot of these areas, it provides a bit of a "place holder" for us to get to work on. For instance, there is a full paragraph about DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration). Recently, that acronym has expanded to become DDRRR, which stands for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration. This one little line implies an enormous amount of work that the UN, donor governments and NGOs can do together.

October 2000 was a very special moment. The resolution came about because of the convergence of pressure from within the UN system and from NGOs, and because there was the presence of certain governments—Bangladesh, Jamaica, Canada, the Netherlands, and the UK – on the SC at the time. Those five came together with the NGOs and the UN system and made things happen. Additionally, it was unusual that we had a woman on the Council (Patricia Durant of Jamaica -- at the moment there are no women at all on the Council, and there have only been two since 1992).

Since then, there has been a range of reactions to 1325 within the Council – from really anti-gender to full support. But what's key is that 1325 implies the potential for a really radical shift in how they think about peace and security, let alone how they deliver peacekeeping operations and peace agreements. This newfound potential has led to an enormous constituency built around Resolution 1325. This is quite unusual. A few other resolutions have constituencies,

such as the ones related to Israel/Palestine -- people can quote those numbers, 242 or 338, for instance. But not many people around the world usually know about other specific resolutions.

Advocates of 1325 have been working hard to ensure that it has a meaningful institutional life beyond its official passage in 2000. For example, it is the only resolution that has an anniversary. A year after 1325 was passed, we held an anniversary session of the Security Council, which is unheard of, and people came together to talk about it. Then, a year later, in 2002, the Secretary-General (SG) brought out a very detailed study, called *Women, Peace and Security*, and it is worth reading. It is an internal UN reflection on what 1325 could mean. Also, UNIFEM commissioned two independent experts to produce a study – and experts had a bit more leeway, in that they were not tied to the Secretariat and could go a little bit further. They traveled to 14 different conflict zones and brought out a document called *Women, War, Peace*, which is available on UNIFEM's website. Between these two reports, there is a real intent to open up 1325 and map out what this agenda could be.

To date, there have been three debates about 1325 in the SC. During the first one, the governments got the point that women are both victims AND agents – that was really neat. The next year's debate was over a staff position within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). At the time there was a debate going on in one of the committees about it, and some member states felt the need to state their position on this issue -- that yes, we need gender expertise in our headquarters. Although it was not very radical, it was a big issue. That was really what took up the second debate. The third debate, which took place last year in October, was a much more nuanced, thoughtful, provocative, diverse sort of debate. The governments are incrementally getting it, and a decent-sized bunch are now saying, "Let's go for it."

Impact of 1325 inside the UN

Now, I will discuss the impact 1325 has had on women in the organization of the UN itself. I think the resolution emboldened a lot of the people working on gender in the UN; it had a real psychological effect, because the SC finally "got it." The SC has a kind of weight and gravitas compared to other parts of the UN that usually address gender, such as a human rights organization or the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – so there was a way in which this suddenly became real. Because the SC could understand it and pronounced itself on the issue, it lent credibility and legitimacy to the topic of gender. Some departments have been inspired to really review what they do, and the Department of Disarmament Affairs, as well as the Office of Humanitarian Affairs, have both conducted department-wide exercises to create a gender action plan.

That's been a very interesting process. For instance, when staff members say, "I work in landmines, what has that got to do with gender?" people are able to say, "Well, often de-miners will go into a place and only talk to the men about where the priority areas for de-mining are. Whereas if they talk to the women, they might find different paths, different routes, different areas where people are, rather than just supply routes, transportation routes and the way to the pub." So something as seemingly gender-neutral as landmines has an enormous list of potential applications of gender.

Also, senior managers have been prompted to ask, “What is gender mainstreaming again? Could someone please help me with that?” Before, people often did not have the chance to ask these types of questions because it was not politically correct to not know. Gender mainstreaming exercises such as these provide a safe space for people to ask questions. It has been a good way to identify who needs what kind of advice and support. It involves a lot of checklists to try and remind practitioners what they are looking for. We are trying to change patterns and habits, and we are looking at how to encourage the staff we are training who do not necessarily know, and do not have the training to do this work.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has decided to have one new staff person helping the staff members in the field who are trying to do gender programs. They are also creating a resource package for all staff who work in peacekeeping operations, covering issues such as peace agreements, the disarmament process, and how to make sure that women are consulted about where the refugee camps might go. It has been an interesting exercise because they are inviting a lot of different people to help, to make sure they are getting it right.

It has also helped prompt DPKO to come clean about when peacekeepers misbehave. Just a few years ago, this was an incredibly political issue, not to be spoken about, and our chapter in the UNIFEM Independent Expert Assessment was very frowned-upon. We said that peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse reflects badly on the UN and that it must be addressed promptly. When people depend on the UN to support and protect them, and then peacekeepers violate people in the community, this violation and betrayal really undermines future operations. The DPKO, partly inspired by the chapter and the resolution, has actually responded, and recently the head of DPKO even talked about this in public.

Now, I will very briefly discuss recent UN peacekeeping operations. In the last year, there have been several new operations or increased and enhanced operations that require organizational process in terms of women. There are operations in Iraq, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan and Cote d’Ivoire. It is unusual for there to be this many new or increased-presence operations. When the UN goes into a place, it begins with a mandate from the Security Council. The SC decides that we need to have an international presence, and that is the intergovernmental consensus. Then it directs the UN to go and make that happen, in consultation with donors and the SC. Usually, what is called a “Needs Assessment” is done. The UN will go into a place and look around, talk to people and do consultations with governments and civil society to construct programs.

If you do not get any gender expertise at this Needs Assessment phase, what’s going to happen? You come back with a “Concept of Operations” that is gender-blind. That has been the case forever. But if we find out about or get onto those assessment missions, a gender expert will be able to provide the checklists. For instance, we can equip people assessing water and sanitation needs with questions to ask, or things to look for while they are there. We create little cheat sheets for them, because we really have too many experiences of them coming back and not having any idea of what women need, and then the agencies prepare to deliver the programs without responding to women’s needs. With the help of 1325, we have been trying to adjust these programs to include awareness of gender issues.

Because we have not yet systematized the processes to integrate and implement 1325, all of this aligning and activism is done in a very *ad hoc* way. We have to keep educating individuals because the system is not yet pushing individuals enough in a routine way to deal with gender. Considering that we have only had three years, sometimes I thump myself on the back. Other times, I am so frustrated about why we have to keep going and doing the same exercises, and we have to go and push and bully people into hearing us. There is a way in which we need to celebrate 1325, but at the same time, it is a statement of the obvious. In some ways it is very little, too late...but we have it.

Carol Cohn: I want to pick up where Felicity left off, and talk a bit more about what some of the barriers are to the implementation of 1325 at the institutional level.

The Significance of 1325

Before talking about all the problems, though, I want to affirm and add to what Felicity said about the importance of this resolution. 1325 not only recognizes that women have been active in peace-building and conflict prevention; it also recognizes women's *right* to participate, as decision makers at all levels, in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peace-building processes. It calls for the UN, member states, and humanitarian agencies to protect women in conflict zones; for an end to impunity for crimes of violence against women and girls; and for mainstreaming gender in all UN peace operations.

In calling for all of this, 1325 puts women squarely in the center of efforts to end armed conflicts and create sustainable peace. This is tremendously important. It is a recognition that gender is central to security that has never occurred before. It is a recognition that still has not occurred in the academic security studies community, nor in most State Departments, Departments of Defense, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and so on. To give you a sense of just how radical it is, I just want to quote 3 short sentences that come from the most recent Security Council Open Debate on women, peace and security, held for 1325's third anniversary. I would like to suggest to you that as I read these quotes, you try to imagine them coming out of President George W. Bush's mouth, just to get a clearer sense of how far these are from dominant political discourses:

“In our view, only the full participation of women in global affairs can open up greater opportunities for achieving global peace.”

“No approach to peace can succeed if it does not view men and women as equally important components of the solution.”

“Peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men.”

Okay, does this sound too good to be true? Well -- it is, which becomes obvious when you know a little bit more about the sources of these quotes. For example, the second quote comes from the U.S. ambassador to the UN, John Negroponte, whose actions have never reflected this belief, to put it mildly. The third quote comes from an ambassador speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), who reportedly did not really want to give that speech; it took member states outside of the EU to lean on other states inside the EU, to make this statement happen.

So as soon as you know a bit more, the luster of these remarks begins to dim. Nonetheless, what is crucial is that these things *have* been said, on the floor of the SC -- and thus it becomes possible to hold people accountable to them, or at least to try to.

The other thing I would say about the “too good to be true” part -- and I am surprised Felicity did not mention this (as I learned it from her) -- is that it is *one* day of the year that SC ambassadors say these things. The Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) just did a study where they looked at all the 225 resolutions the SC has passed since 1325. Only 33 out of the 225 resolutions even mention the words “women” or “gender” at all.

Factors Contributing to the Adoption of 1325

If there is such a big chasm between the rhetoric around the resolution and what is actually going on day-to-day in the SC, one question you might ask is, “how did this resolution get passed in the first place?” The answer is a very long and fascinating story -- too long for this evening. I just want to bring a few things to the surface for those of you interested in organizational change.

First, NGOs played a tremendous role in this – they came up with the idea of getting a resolution through the SC, drafted the resolution, and came up with a brilliant strategy to influence the SC. And Felicity herself had a crucial role in a tremendous amount of this when she was still in the NGO world. I might add that the NGOs did this at a time when the first reaction of women’s advocates *inside* the UN was that this was not yet the time to attempt any such thing. So it took outsiders to instigate this process of institutional change.

Second is the key role of thoughtful funding: The NGOs did not have funds to try and bring this resolution forward, so they went to a program officer at the Ford Foundation for help, and she gave them a grant. Having the right person there, with the right funding priorities, at the right time made a huge difference.

Third, most of the member states that were really active in getting the resolution adopted were not permanent members. The SC is made up of 15 members, including five permanent (or “non- elected” members, as the elected members like to say) and ten members elected for two year terms, and the presidency of the Council rotates month by month. In recent years, it has been the elected members, the ones who are not there for the long-run, who are really the engines of change in the SC. Why does that happen? On one hand, people say that member states want “profile” and thus look for something special to do that will get them recognition. Also, as one ambassador (from an elected member state) said to me, “Look, the permanent five members, any change they make, they have to deal with, it adds one more thing they have to think about. Whereas member states that rotate in and out can go ahead and put things on the agenda, and that is fine.” So while elected member states are not exactly institutional “outsiders,” neither are they permanent insiders – and so they may be seen as potentially having both more motivation and fewer hesitations about instigating institutional change.

Finally, I want to emphasize a factor that Felicity referred to before, which is happenstance, and the accidents of who is where, when. In this case, a series of factors all lined up: the particular

member states that were on the Council at that time; not only which member states, but also what were the personal commitments of the specific individuals representing those member states; what were the backgrounds and experiences of the people working in the NGOs at that moment; who was in the foundations, and so on. The alignment of the stars was very important! Unfortunately, happenstance and individual personalities still remain terribly important in implementation of 1325, for exactly the reason Felicity referred to – three years after the adoption of 1325, there still has not been enough change at the level of institutional mechanisms and processes for it *not* to matter so.

Barriers to 1325's Implementation

So what are the barriers to transformation at the UN around this issue? Well, one way of thinking about it is that there are an awful lot of people who simply do not have the motivation to change around this issue. It is really not surprising when you think about it – there are a lot of people who have been doing their work for five, ten, fifteen years, and feel like they have been doing it well without thinking about gender. Why start now? Not only did they think that they were doing it fine, but if you ask them now to think about gender, many of them will have to acknowledge that they do not really know how to either think about gender or how to integrate gender analysis in their work -- and it is a difficult thing for most people to admit (what amounts to) their own ignorance and /or incompetence. So motivation is definitely an issue.

A second factor is the defensiveness, and, sometimes, contempt that are occasioned by talking about “gender.” Most people in the UN system, especially on the security side, aren’t quite sure they know what gender is, but they know *someone* believes it is supposed to have something to do with them, the work they do or the way they behave – and that there is something that they are not doing right – so it feels very threatening. Also, they may see it as a factor they may have to deal with political reasons, but not something to take seriously.

The defensiveness about and lack of understanding of “gender” is greatly complicated by a third factor – the confusing organizational strategy for dealing with gender within the UN. The UN has two major different strategies for achieving gender equality. One is called “gender mainstreaming” and the other one is called “gender balance.” Gender balance is essentially about personnel issues – it is about the numbers of women in different positions in different places in the institution. So, gender balance really *is* about each person’s job - their behavior, sexual harassment issues, promotion and retention, etc. Gender mainstreaming, on the other hand, is not about whether a man or a woman is in a particular job; it is about how people do their programmatic work. It means bringing a “gender perspective,” asking questions about how programs you are designing or implementing differently impact men and women, boys and girls, or, how planning and assessment processes can be inclusive of and responsive to both men and women. But despite relatively clearly defined differences between “mainstreaming” and “balance” within many UN documents, the two issues are confused all the time. Most people do not know the difference, and assume that “gender mainstreaming” simply means hiring more women.

This conceptual/policy confusion is made worse by staffing practices. The people who are tasked with the gender *balance* / personnel issues are called “focal points for women,” and the

people who are tasked with gender *mainstreaming* are called “gender focal points.” Not only do people not know the difference between these two job titles (or even that two different job titles exist), but very often the same person (almost always a woman) has been given both jobs! So imagine it – a man knows that “the gender person” is coming to talk with him. She maybe planning to talk about a programmatic issue, such as how he might think about brining a gender lens to landmine clearance – and all he can think is that she is there to berate him about sexual harassment or not hiring enough women. That would make productive conversation about the content of his work difficult.

A fourth impediment to 1325 implementation is that even if the other obstacles have been overcome – you are motivated, and have figured out the difference between gender balance and gender mainstreaming, you are committed to mainstreaming -- you still have the problem of figuring out how to do it. It is often not self-evident how to mainstream gender. I had an experience, for example, where somebody said to me “Well, of course, road-building is obviously gendered.” And I looked at her and said “Huh?” When she explained to me 18 different things about how you think about who uses the roads, in which different ways, going to which different places, and the different choices one can make about how what kinds of roads get built, as well as how they are built, when you are doing post-conflict reconstruction, it *did* seem perfectly self-evident. But not until she explained it to me.

I think if you are assuming goodwill for some number of people, and prodding for a bunch of others, this still remains a big issue. How you do gender mainstreaming is not self-evident. And here we run into the fifth issue – there is a tremendous dearth of institutional resources devoted to gender in the UN. There is some gender training, but on the whole, there needs to be an enormous amount more, and a lot more gender expertise available within the UN. So far, there has been a lot of reliance on short term consultants to provide normative work, and this really forestalls the accumulation of a depth of knowledge among people who are there in the UN long term, among the regular staff. It does not leave an opportunity for continuity, institutional memory, or for development.

To the extent that gender positions do exist, they tend not to be senior enough (the sixth problem). The UN is a highly stratified institution where your rank determines not only how much power and influence you have, but even who you can talk to and who you cannot.

The seniority issue gets further compounded by another problem – to the extent that gender positions do exist, they stunningly often have no budget attached. Somehow or the other, for example, gender advocates might get a gender advisor assigned to a large multidimensional peacekeeping operation, and when she gets to field, she has no budget to undertake activities! How can she act, what kind of programs can she put into place with no budget? The same is true not just for gender advisors in peacekeeping operations, but also within UN headquarters itself.

On the issue number 8, now --there is not only a lack of gender positions and budgets for those positions that do exist; there is also a lack of clarity about where expertise about and responsibility for gender mainstreaming lies. Right now, there are a number of different entities within the UN that most UN personnel know “have something to do with women,” including

UNIFEM, OSAGI, the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW), this little alphabet soup. But many, many people not just outside the UN but also inside the UN do not have a clear sense of what the different briefs and responsibilities of these different entities are. And certainly, the fact that some also have overlapping responsibilities helps contribute to that problem I mentioned before about gender balance and gender mainstreaming and getting confused.

I could go on enumerating barriers to change for quite a bit longer, but then we would miss the opportunity to hear from Cynthia Enloe (and I will talk some more about impediments to 1325 implementation in a longer Boston Consortium presentation at CGO on February 10th). I'll just add that gender mainstreaming, insofar as it is an effort to avoid ghettoizing women in some little part of the larger institution, and to ensure that women's participation, concerns, needs and abilities are built into every bit of programming, is a great idea. But it has in no way had the resources that it would need to actually be effective. At the same time, since there aren't any good monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, departments can claim "we have mainstreamed gender in our programs, we don't need a gender advisor or dedicated budget for women's projects," without really having done much of anything. That, unfortunately, is happening too often. Or funders say, "well, we are not going to fund women any more because we are going to fund gender mainstreaming." But really, we need both; you need to do gender mainstreaming seriously, *and* you also need to continue programming specifically dedicated to women. I fear that we are increasingly on the way to neither.

However, lest I leave you on a negative note, I want to conclude by saying that especially given all of the difficulties I have been discussing, we should appreciate that all of the achievements that Felicity talked about are really astounding, and a source of great hope. Also, we have so much collective knowledge and experience in this audience, I want to ask you to help me think about this problem. Given that gender mainstreaming is intellectually complicated, not the least bit self-evident, and can be personally threatening—how do you think an institution that is serious about its rhetorical commitment to gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping could more effectively create the necessary institutional change to make 1325 implementation a reality? I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this.

Cynthia Enloe: One of the themes that Carol and Felicity have underscored so usefully has been this relationship between "insiders" and "outsiders." That is, when trying to make women more visible in UN operations and trying to have the concept of "gender" taken more seriously in all sorts of UN affairs, it's worthwhile to keep our eyes on who is deemed insiders and who outsiders, with what results.

I am really one of the "outsider outsiders," in the sense that I have had to be tutored, first by Angela Raven-Roberts, my first tutor in "UN-ese," and then by Felicity and Carol. I have had to learn these things and it is, just like plunging into any other organizational culture, endlessly fascinating. One of my most recent learning experiences was as a participant at a conference, called an Experts Conference, organized this past July (2003), in New York at the UN

headquarters – which is actually not just the glass building but also the offices across the street. The gathering's theme was “gender and small arms.”

“Small arms” is the international language for guns, land mines and grenade launchers. “Small arms” are not tracked by a lot of the people who track the transfer of weapons. The easiest weapons to keep track of are tanks, large scale armored vehicles of other sorts, jets, submarines, ships, missiles. You can keep track of those. It is not easy, but at least there are now groups like the Swedish International Peace Institute (SIPRI) that do it. If you go online to SIPRI's site, you will find one of the most authoritative annual chartings of who is selling what big stuff to whom, and it is very interesting. Everybody has said for a long time that you cannot chart the small stuff, but it is the small stuff that will kill you, so it is equally important to track that as well.

About twenty years ago, a really nice smart guy, Mike Klare, began to insist that we try to chart who is selling what small arms what to whom—legally and illegally, both are important, particularly in small arms. Rifles, handguns, grenade launchers, ammunition. At that point, Mike Klare and I each were doing research on police forces, and I remember how hard it was for Mike and me to get other people who were thinking about arms sales and arms uses to even take small arms seriously. Everybody was really interested in the big weapons. I mean, they were right to be interested, but not exclusively.

When this meeting was held down in New York in July, I was very eager to go. I did not really know a lot, but I figured I would learn. I was very respectful and admiring of the people who have, within the last several years, actually created a UN forum and several UN proclamations on trying to limit the illicit international sale and trade of small arms. Note here that I am talking only about the *illegal* sale and trade of small arms. The legal sale and trade of small arms, which is equally dangerous, is not even considered an issue, although it should be.

What I learned at this recent UN meeting was that a lot of people who are committed now to talk about the trade in small arms still do not want to talk about gender. That is what the savvy folks who organized this July meeting reported to the rest of us. The most energetic critics of, and experts on the international trade in rifles and grenade launchers do not want to talk about masculinity. They cannot even imagine why you would want to talk about femininity.

These small arms specialists are the good people, really progressive folks, people worried about the wars begun and stubbornly sustained, not by access to fighter planes and tanks, but by seemingly unlimited access to guns and ammunition. But it is in part this perception of themselves as progressive that turns out to be one of the things that make them so resistant – most of them feel as though they are already working against the political odds, that they are already doing what nobody else is willing to do.

This self-perception means two things. First, when pressed to take the workings of masculinity seriously, they will say, “Our plate is already full. Nobody takes us seriously anyway, and you want us to start talking about masculinity? Give me a break.

Secondly, many of these hard working small arms specialists think that they are the ones who are already doing progressive work, so you/ we should not be lecturing them. “Go talk to the arms traders, don’t talk to us who are trying to chart and reverse the international sale of guns,” they say. Now, the small group of us brought together in July was the “meeting after the meeting.” You know “the meetings after the meeting”? First of all, they are full of irreverent laughter, recalling follies that had just transpired in the bigger official meeting. It is a rather macabre laughter, trying to keep collective spirits up after experiencing the silencing or marginalization that characterized the larger meeting just ended. Felicity was one of the organizers of this particular “meeting after the meeting,” so you know there would be plenty of laughter.

The official meeting that had just concluded across the street in the UN was the big biannual international UN-sponsored meeting on small arms trade. In the days of discussion, according to the participants who had organized our subsequent, more informal and smaller gathering, there had been almost no discussion of gender. Reminder: This July, 2003 official meeting was being held a full two and a half years after the Security Council had passed Resolution 1325.

Our small meeting was instigated by activists and researchers, insiders and outsiders, committed to making sense of, and thereby rolling back the deadly trade in small arms. But, when they are together there with their fellow anti-small arms trade colleagues in the big UN forum, they find that they cannot be heard, are shunted aside. The people who do command attention do not, in fact, want to hear about gender.

Out of the group of about thirty people who attended the small meeting-after-the-meeting, there were maybe seven or eight men and the rest were women. There were women from Mali, the Congo, Jamaica, Norway, Canada, the US and Australia. Some of them work in big international NGOs based in Geneva or Oslo. Others are working locally as activists, like the woman from Mali and the woman from the Congo.

How does marginalization happen? How do considerations of masculinities and femininities get silenced? It is a process. Sometimes, you really have to put your heads together to figure it out. And this puzzling was indeed one of the topics on our agenda. Why were their allies in the critical small arms international campaign so resistant to any gender analysis? I listened, I learned.

Here were some of the tentative explanations they traded around the table. One of the first reasons that it seems so hard to get gender taken seriously or even to get it on the floor as a topic might be that most of the people who chart the international flows of small arms do not think women have anything to do with those flows. However, they do not investigate that shared assumption. Time is short, and so they are not going to start talking about something that, in their confined investigations, they have never run into and so consider irrelevant.

For instance, most of the UN small arms conferees and experts have never asked (which this group around the table *has* asked and therefore does have information on), how are small arms moved when they get within a region. Not just tracking the small arms as they travel from Hartford to Cote d'Ivoire or Sierra Leone, but the flows *within* West Africa. As these very gender-smart, gender-curious feminist-informed activists and experts explained to the rest of us, "Well, you know in Africa especially, women are long-distance traders. Somali women have a particular reputation for their enterprise in long-distance trading. That is true of other regions as well. If you want to know how guns get carried from country to country or from area to area within a country, then you have got to at least ask what proportion of women are carriers of guns, and when are women likely to be the carriers of guns?" Thus, they knew, because they took women seriously, that if you leave that out women as long distance traders, you cannot accurately (reliably) explain how guns get from here to there. But since so many of the experts in the big forum thought they already knew how guns get traded and did not want to ask about the micro-trading that goes on, they assumed they didn't have to be curious about women.

A second form of resistance, they reported, was took the form of a cultural presumption. Remember that these international small arms experts invited to the big conference are people who are on e-mail with each other, they read each other's reports, they meet at conferences together, sometimes they go out to the pub together after the formal sessions (never underestimate the culture of the pub in the lives of international experts). The gender group reported that one thing that traveled around the emerging culture of the big official gathering was this: "You are not going to be really taken seriously in this discussion unless you can disassemble and reassemble an M-16."

Frankly, I was astonished. Take apart an M-16? Now watch what this means. It means that you are not going to be taken seriously in public discussion about how guns are used, how guns are traded, how guns are used to intimidate, unless you have the rep of being personally familiar with the nuts and bolts of the weapons themselves. This revelation prompted another insight: many of these small arms experts do not (this is something that Felicity and Carol both alluded to) want to talk about gender because it means that they have to talk about their *own* relationship to guns.

What does it mean to be somebody who is really at ease with talking about – and handling (even if not producing, selling or firing) - guns? What was the unnamed micro-culture emerging amongst these "good people"? The women around the table in our group underscored the implications by offering a stark alternative. "Just think how different it would be if internationally recognized small arms expertise were instead defined in these terms: You have got to know what it feels like to be the object of somebody wielding a gun to be taken seriously in this international discussion. Then, all of a sudden, every woman who has ever been intimidated in a domestic dispute by a male partner who said or implied that they had a gun in the back room or were holding on to it in the moment, these women would be the experts."

One of the UN projects that has been most affected (not necessarily transformed, but has at least been put under pressure) by the passage of 1325 is the DDR – that's UN-ese for the post-

conflict efforts to achieve disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. The gender-conscious and gender-curious activists and researchers trying to transform the international politics of small arms warned that we will never figure out how to get men to give up guns as part of a peace-building operation unless we learn to talk usefully about masculinity.

If we do not talk about local and regional and household definitions of manliness, they warned, then we are never going to have an effective program to get men – and boys - to hand in their guns. Think about a society, village, or city having experienced gun-fueled violent conflict for the last three or five or twenty years. If during that time, boys have grown up into adult males imagining that the possession of a gun fulfills the chief criterion for being recognized as manly, you had better start talking about changing definitions of manliness or you are never going to have an effective DDR program.

One of the fruits of the July meeting on gender and small arms was that a couple of people in the room, a fellow named Nick Marsh, a young Briton now in Oslo, and a Norwegian woman named Elise Bart, put their heads together and said, “Maybe we can get the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), a smaller government-funded research institute, to have a follow up meeting on this.” So they did. It happened just last month, in December.

Nick is an expert on international data about small arms trade. Now that is a “manly” enterprise, working with hard numbers. So Nick might be expected to have a stake in preserving that. But you know what? He gave that up. He said, “Maybe I have missed something in this.” But he felt a bit stymied. After all, he wasn’t out in Liberia with a DDR team. So even if he now thought they were important questions to ask, he didn’t have the chance, in his Oslo office, to ask: “What will motivate a young man, or a not-so-young man, to give up his weapons?” Or: “What will motivate his mother or his wife to urge him to give up weapons?” Nick said, “I deal with the numbers. I look at commerce department and trade ministry figures in the sale of arms, and international police force reckoning of illicit trades. There is nothing gendered there— numbers are numbers.” He paused, stepped back and looked afresh at his work. He got support from his colleague Elise. Elise told Nick, “Maybe you should read work by Carol Cohn.” Nick said, “Well, I don’t know anything about Carol Cohn’s work.” And Elise, prepared, replied, “Well, I just happen to have a copy.” Nick read Carol’s piece on the discourse around weaponry (and Carol’s classic piece is around nuclear weaponry, but he imagined small weaponry), how the very language that is used around weaponry masculinizes it and hides that masculinization. He wondered whether that was something crucial he had so far missed in the legal international sales of small arms.

He told us at the conference at PRIO last month, “I have never done this before and it is not my field, but...” and then he presented this great slide presentation taking us in the audience through *Jane’s Defense Weekly* (*Jane’s* is one of the big organizations that charts military personnel and hardware all over the world). *Jane’s Defense Weekly* is something that all defense ministry people and procurement people read. It carries ads. For the first time he paid close attention to the imagery and the language that small arms producers used to sell small arms to governments. He thought, “I wonder what I will find?” He had been reading these ads for years, but he never

had asked the gender questions that he now had in his head, thanks to taking seriously the questions raised in New York among his colleagues.

What Nick Marsh discovered was that company after company used not only very phallic symbols, but also very specific kinds of masculine cues in their corporate efforts to sell arms to male officials of governments, men sitting in offices, men wearing suits and ties, perhaps with brass buttons. He said, “Now, look, maybe in fact this kind of masculinized language between producer and international procurement officers inside the governments builds trust. Maybe that is what helps build legitimacy. Maybe that makes invisible what in fact are the costs and the consequences of making profit off the sale of guns and buying guns as if they were the path towards national security.”

What struck me was the change in the definition of what Nick *took seriously*. If you have a chart with two columns, and if on one side of the chart you put all the language used to gain legitimacy and credibility, and most of it is also wielded in order to masculinize that credibility and masculinize that legitimacy, the top of the list would be the topic “serious.” Under this topic, would be the question, “Whose analysis, topic and data are taken seriously?” The second topic on the list would be “rational,” which would beg the question, “What kinds of questioning, what kind of alarm is considered rational?” Third topic—“urgent,” asking “What is considered a matter of urgency?” Fourth—“danger.” Here we would ask, “What is considered a danger to the world?” If it is a danger, you must treat it as if it were urgent and take it seriously. Also, “What is considered a threat? What is considered gravitas, to use Felicity’s term, (meaning what UNIFEM does not have in the eye of the beholder, while the SC does)? What kind of language and what kind of topic language is assumed to have gravitas in the larger forum?

On the other side of this chart is what “can wait until later” (and this is what gets feminized no matter whether the speaker is male or female). Anything that is not “urgent,” not a “threat,” and not so “serious” can be dealt with “later.” And that is everything to do with gender. It is like saying, “That is interesting but it is a luxury.” What is a luxury? Well, a luxury is something that is not very urgent and does not have to do with anything that anybody else thinks is serious or dangerous or a threat. Later versus serious. A luxury versus practical.

This kind of privileging and marginalizing language gets used inside and outside of the UN. By taking part as a learner in these gender-smart discussions, I have gained a new appreciation for how the feminist-informed people, who are trying to change the language and the practice of small arms distribution and use, have actually challenged precisely this kind of discourse. It is very exciting, but very difficult work.

Angela Raven-Roberts: Now I will discuss my own observations from having worked with the UN and also from working with a research center that works with organizational change in three UN organizations, WFP, UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). I only want to say two things. First, just as a vignette and follow-up, when I was in the UN working on mainstreaming gender, it is instructive to know that we were collectively referred to as “the

Gender Gestapo” during that time. I think that gives you enough of an idea of the kinds of resistance we received from our peers. I have written a chapter for a forthcoming book on gender and peacekeeping operations called “Mainstreaming Gender: Talking the Talk and Tripping over the Walk.” I will not tell you more than that.

We are learning a lot from anthropology and the anthropology of policy about getting perspectives and tools with which to analyze the organizations as a way to understand why there is certain resistance to a lot of policy issues. We are learning about the two issues that we are discussing here: On one hand, there is gender, and on the other there is peace, security and conflict. These are two very large, very provocative issues in and of themselves. We are learning how agencies work with women and address their issues when the agencies realize that women are both victim and agent. The challenge for organizational change is that there is no conceptual agreement for them to begin with. That lies at the bottom of the reason why change is still a long time coming. It is personal and it is political, and that is where the two issues come together. We still have a long way to go. We still need many different kinds of examples about how to put this agenda forward for the good of everybody.

Questions

Q: I work on women in the military. One of the things that has struck me is that, as Professor Enloe pointed out, we need to think about how to build solidarity. That is really fundamental to integrating a gender perspective into peace. One of the things I would be interested in hearing the panel address is what efforts have been made to acknowledge women in the military who are working towards equality in the military world. Also, what effect might that have on peace efforts?

CE: Any government that contributes to a UN peacekeeping operation, for instance in Liberia or Cote d’Ivoire (not Iraq), gets to define what kinds of troops they will send. Oftentimes, what is happening -- and this is certainly true of a number of governments -- governments define a peacekeeping operation as something that should be done by their “combat troops.” I put quotes around it because combat is not involved. Peacekeeping operations are the best paid and are where you get your promotions. So often you have a profound masculinization of peacekeeping soldiery because the governments choose to send the most masculinized units inside their military. It is true that some governments, such as Norway and several others, have a different take on this and have uniquely included more women. But again, a woman is not automatically good at peacekeeping in a country she has never been in before if she has not, in fact, had proper training. There is some discussion in some militaries that if you increase the number of women, at least you will be able to take more seriously and address women’s insecurity operationally. That is, women as soldiers oftentimes can have an interaction with people in the local population that male soldiers cannot have. But there is nothing innate about this, and governments get to determine which units they send. Also, you get a better chance of promotion if you have been on a peacekeeping operation if you are from, say, Pakistan, from Fiji or Malaysia or Ghana. Doing peacekeeping is what your government’s overseas military does. That is the way to get ahead. You are not going to pass that opportunity around, especially not to the girls.

FH: I think some of the NGOs have commented on this issue a lot. In response to 1325, two strategies have come up. First is training, training, training, as though in three hours we can undo the patriarchy. I like training, but I also do not overestimate the impact of a three-hour course. The other is “add women, stir.” A lot of women’s organizations that have been working on these issues, wanting to achieve peace, are very worried about the militarization of more women as an answer to anything. I want to put that on the table, because that has been this response. At the same time, what Cynthia said is true—in situations where the UN is present, women police officers in particular have made an enormous impact and have opened doors and have solicited a lot of cooperation and information from women in the community. It has been a way for women’s concerns to bubble up. Japan, for example, sent a team of women police officers to Timor who set up a women’s police station, just for women, as a place to report crimes. The criticisms of the NGOs are right, and at the same time I do not underestimate the very, very positive impact of this kind of proof. But as Cynthia said, that is almost accidental and is often not by design. The reason these women are sent is not typically to give local women a police force, but increasingly, it becomes their purpose.

Q: I had the good fortune of learning with Angela last year so I am grateful to be here to continue learning. I have several questions. First, how could you get inside of the Global Compact, the business arm of the UN, and how do you get them on board in experimental ways, to get them invested in a belief system level, to make them see how they are impacted in their daily life by gender issues? Second, in terms of civil enterprise curriculum, how could you get students, such as international Sloan Fellows at the MIT Business School, to begin to think about these ideas and bring them into a seminar, for instance, to actually hash it out? (I am going to a conference next week at MIT where ninety people are going to be involved in a social entrepreneur workshop. I do not know how many men and women are going to be there.) Third, I paid a visit to the UN Association in Boston, and I was learning about their curriculum via the Model UN. Model UN is great; you get to see these issues on a micro-level -being worked out with high-school age young men and women. I started thinking about how the gender issues were being played out. I asked about that, and they said “Oh, yeah, no problem, it’s fine.” Clearly, they did not grasp the relevance of gender, because they were not practicing gender consciousness within their model. I wonder how gender mainstreaming could be implemented in such cases from a top down or bottom up approach? Then you could get teachers involved in these issues and have that maybe impact from the bottom. Finally, I was curious about whether UNIFEM comes into contact at all with the Global Compact.

FH: The Global Compact is an idea of Kofi Annan’s to try to engage the business community more in the work of the United Nations. When it first came out, there was some controversy around the issue because it was setting up voluntary mechanisms that businesses could sign up to when standards already existed that were legally binding by the UN. There was a feeling of, “Why are you doing this, Kofi?” This was considered the height of globalization, and there were already some interesting critiques of the business world, so some people wondered why would this be the response of the UN? People who wrote the Compact, which is 9 principles on human rights, environment and labor, say that it was a way of engaging, a way of getting these people in the same room together. It involves NGOs as well. For instance, Amnesty International is a part of it. It also has a series of workshops, and several have been about the role of businesses in

conflict prevention and the role of businesses and the for-profit world in post-conflict reconstruction.

When the Compact first came out, we pondered the opportunities and work it could do. People said, “Look, the motivations of the for-profit world and the motivations of the UN are absolutely different. They cannot come together, sorry.” These people have since changed their tune, and businesses have come to the table, so it has been used. This engagement by UNIFEM has been with a couple of companies, especially in terms of information technology and putting technology in women’s hands. With the Compact, *per se*, we have not been a part of it.

I love your idea about the United Nations Association (UNA) of the USA and the Model UN. I am definitely going to follow that up and provide some modules for them on how to do this practice. It is really heartening as a non-US American to go to these practices and to see these amazingly quality debates in recognition of the UN’s role in the world. In terms of curriculum, I could not agree more. I think there are a lot of opportunities to give legitimacy and to open people’s minds. In fact, we just put together this web portal, and one of my dreams is that academics will credit their students to look at one of the gender profiles or countries and ask them to monitor, watch, expand and deepen it. I think there is a lot of possibility for cooperation on very concrete things like information, having the data, but also having the analysis. But there is just a plethora of research that needs to be done, there is so much that we do not know yet, or that we need to be able to say with much more authority. I see Swanee Hunt is here, and she has contributed a great deal to this research, but there is so much that we need to study. In terms of trying to engage the academic world to put this on the curriculum, you are right.

CC: I am just going to piggyback on to that for one minute and say that one of the things the Boston Consortium is looking to do is to collaborate with Felicity and other places in the UN to see how we can help bring some of those resources to them. Also, we are working to figure out the kinds of research they need and to see whether we can encourage more work in those areas. So any of you who are teaching or are graduate students who are interested in participating with us on that, please come and talk to me.

Q: I am from the Department of International Development and the Women’s Studies at Clark, and I spent a lot of time looking at the economic impact of conflict, particularly in the Horn of Africa, and I have noticed (not to pick on the UN, so I will broaden it) that the international community in general (NGOs, donors, the UN) are not really good at either working in conflict situations or in post-conflict situations, really, because they do not really know what to do when there’s a war going on, particularly the civilian agencies. What they tend to do is dry up their aid, suspend their development aid, and that puts an economic stranglehold on these societies. Angela, I am sure you have found that as well in Ethiopia. When the economic opportunities for the whole society shrink, those for women shrink even more. Cynthia has written a lot about the massive prostitution rings around military barracks. Angela, when you asked about ways of thinking about mainstreaming or what would be on a wish list you may want to add to 1325, there might be the idea of looking at the economic impact of conflict on societies and thinking about ways in which women’s economic role could be enhanced. What tends to happen is that people say “Oh, women are becoming prostitutes, let’s give them HIV/AIDS education and

condoms” and that is what they get as their assistance. There is a lot more that could be done that would bring in some of these agencies.

Q: I am a student in Dispute Resolution at the University of Massachusetts. My question is: What are you doing in terms of mentoring women of color to work in this area and to be with you in this work, as well as what is the role of culture when you talk about some of these issues?

CE: This is a good use of the question of what is considered “urgent,” which I discussed earlier. Particularly in this country, but also in others, people are making sure that women of color are part and parcel of the definitions and implementation of solutions, including the implementation of 1325. Something that is really striking to me is who is interested in going into women’s studies programs that have an integral international politics stream. Not all women’s studies graduate programs do have that, but a lot more do now. There are now ten women’s studies PhD studies programs in the US (there used to be just two), and a number of the new ones are also deliberately adding an international politics stream, and part of that is a serious interest in conflict and war and post-war reconstruction. Once that is put out there as being explicitly a feature in the program, then the people who apply become much more racially diverse. I hope I am not overstating this too much, but how one defines a graduate training program really affects who thinks it is *their* program, and who thinks they will learn skills and have a career that matters to them. I do not think at Clark we did so knowingly. I think it has actually resulted in that, but over the years I think the majority of PhD students at Clark have not been white women, at least 50/50. Some are US African-American women, and some are of other countries or are not identified as white. So that is one thing that needs to happen. Those of us who are doing work – and I mean whether you are a graduate student, or a faculty member or staff or a donor doing work in regular programs – need to define the subfields in ways that really make this attractive to and send out the message to a diverse range of women ethnically and racially and nationally. You need to send the message, “this is a program that you can make use of.” The other thing is that the word ‘international’ has in the past been particularly associated with International Relations, which has been really a white guy’s field, and it has been dead as a result. It has not asked very interesting questions. That is beginning to change. The more internationally- and feminist-informed the study of international politics has become, the more a diverse range of women and men have seen it as a field that could really be theirs. Partly, it is about what it means to be an international politics specialist (forget about expert), and that is beginning to change, but it has only been in the last ten years, and there is a lot more work to be done.

FH: UNIFEM is an international organization working all over the place, and the staff really does represent that, which is the positive part of working inside the UN. Personally, I take interns, which is causing a revolution internally already. We have a quota on how many we are allowed to have from the US, because we are here in the US and there are all these wonderful Ivy League colleges. Only 20% of our total interns can be from the US, which builds a very diverse work-base. UNIFEM has also been working with WILPF on translating the resolution into as many languages as possible, which has been important in getting it out and around (thirty languages now, and they are all available at PeaceWomen.org). UNIFEM has found radio to be a really important way to get information out.

I wanted to talk about the role of culture, because there is one way in which culture has been used to hurt us. There is a prevailing logic at the moment within the UN that it is really wrong to “impose a culture.” This is especially heard when it comes to human rights and women’s rights; when it is about the privatization of water, the very same people can see that as a completely cultural-value-free, neutral concept! The way that “culture” is being used is sometimes really scary. We could say much more about the theoretical pitfalls of that and how it erupts, but it is used very manipulatively at the UN, this discourse of, “it is my culture, bugger off.” It silences people a lot, and finding ways to articulate what is wrong with this use of “culture” rhetoric is becoming increasingly important in places like the Commission on the Status of Women, which is breaking down over this issue. It is framed as a battle about “Western culture,” and supposedly anything to do with women’s rights is “Western culture.”

Q: I am a PhD candidate at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and I am writing my dissertation on the active prosecution of what Gandhi called non-violent conflict, war without weapons. So there are all these figures, -- the Gandhi, the Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, and some of these others such as Nelson Mandela. But very rarely do we know the women who are the worker bees in these incredible movements, such as those that have taken place recently in Georgia, Serbia and some of these other places. My question is more about broad strategy than specifics. I have not worked inside the UN system, but given the uphill battle that there must be in mainstreaming gender at the UN and other institutions, would it make more sense to focus on women as agents and on what they can contribute in a conflict situation or a post-conflict situation rather than women’s needs or women as victims. I think you will tackle the latter by concentrating more on the former. I wonder if that is not a better way to bring men, military people, etc. into the debate, more than viewing women as the victims in the conflict. What is the value added of women in specific situations? I wonder if that framing would help contribute to the promotion of gender mainstreaming at the UN.

FH: That is the “utility argument.” As I was doing this, my former boss, Jennifer Klot, said that there is this impulse in the feminist movement now to get happy, to really not portray women as victims any more. While this is a very healthy impulse, it can render invisible the great vast suffering and absolute facts that are going on in war zones, especially in conflict areas. We are constantly having these discussions down at the UN and out in the field about how to grapple with the enormity of the graphic, awful, depressing body of information that is inevitable when you look at the nexus of women and war. It is hard stuff, just to sit in an office and read it every day. There are just days when I want to slash every artery in my body, it is so depressing. There is a way in which it is comforting to talk about the positive and about what women have to offer, trying to sell our work as, “We can help you do your job better.” That is a very good technique and it has been working because it is raising their eyebrows about what is positive and what will not be excruciating to listen to.

At the same time, it is not all fun and laughter and value added and advantages. In order to bring women into the discussion, we have to recognize from where they come, and so it is difficult. We are accused of doing an oversell and that is dangerous. It is really not either/or, it is both. Demonstrating what women have to offer includes making space for them to share their

experiences and opportunities and ideas about how to prevent conflict. We cannot silence that. At the same time as it is tempting to do so for ourselves, we have to let them deliver this stuff, which absolutely builds up walls. We are doing a disservice to women's stories and women's experiences by silencing them. We are also doing a disservice to their stories by just putting them all in this terrible diary of doom. We must attach these stories to the policy and passion that takes place. That is where we can do both, and what you said works. It does work to talk about what women offer and how we can help them do their jobs better, but sometimes that is also not challenging the kind of job they are doing in the first place. It is getting us into a cycle that is not about stopping the cycle, but about joining it, and so there is not an easy answer.

CC: I just want to add a bit more. On one hand, we do have to pay attention to and confront what happens to women in war, the terrible ways in which women are victimized. On the other, the utility argument can be very effective, but it can also be very worrisome to some people, in part because if you are selling women's usefulness as the basis for their inclusion, you are not making the argument that "This must be done because it is women's right." But women have a right to be there at the peace table, even if we do not make it easier to reach an agreement. We have the right to have our interests represented at the negotiation table, even if it makes it harder to come to an agreement. I think that, in some sense, the utility argument, rather than a women's rights perspective, has been a part of this entire gender mainstreaming enterprise. Even though the ECOSOC definition of gender mainstreaming says that the ultimate goal is gender equality, in fact, mostly it is not framed in those terms. If gender mainstreaming is typically framed as a kind of fix to reconstruction programs or peace negotiations and so on, the point is that it makes those go better – rather than necessarily leading to gender equality or any kind of redistribution of power. A critical problem in moving away from the women's rights argument into the gender mainstreaming utility argument is that *power* falls away too easily -- so that even when you say "we can help you do your job better", it is still *your* job we are doing. The men are still the ones defining the job, which may be the wrong job, or might not be the most important job to do. That is what really gets lost in the utility argument. So it is very, very tricky. There are ways in which the utility argument works, but it is also very dangerous regarding what gets left out entirely if that is the argument that you are making. The other smaller danger is if you are saying that women help you do your job better and you get one or two women in there and they do not help you do it better, you say "Oh well, that was a nice experiment but it did not work! Goodbye."

Biography

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Carol Cohn, Ph.D., is the Program Director of the Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights. Her current research examines gender mainstreaming in international peace and security institutions, focusing on the passage of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, and the ongoing efforts by NGOs and UN entities to ensure its implementation.

Cynthia Enloe, Ph.D., is a Research Professor at Clark University. She has written numerous books since 1970, which have been published in several different languages including Swedish, Turkish, and Korean.