From 2000 to 2025 and Beyond: Assessing the Impact, Evolution, and Future of the WPS Framework

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Executive Summary

This report evaluates 25 years of Women and Peace and Security; it changes the foundational term from Women, Peace and Security to Women and Peace and Security to reflect a critical truth: women are not an add-on to peace and security—they are integral to it.

Codified in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and supported by nine follow-on resolutions, Women and Peace and Security has transformed global understanding of the link between gender equality and security. It recognizes that sustainable peace, democratic governance, and effective crisis response are not possible without the full and meaningful participation of women at every level of decision-making.

This report analyzes the historical evolution, institutional uptake, and future potential of Women and Peace and Security both globally and within the United States. It examines National and Regional Action Plans, examines U.S. WPS legislation, and evaluates agency-level implementation across the Department of State, Department of Defense, USAID, and the Department of Homeland Security. Drawing on 29 interviews with key stakeholders and a thorough review of U.S. and international practices, we assess both the legitimacy the framework has afforded civil society and the persistent gaps that hinder full operationalization.

Women and Peace and Security is not a symbolic or ideological gesture—it is a practical framework for strengthening state security, promoting resilience, and improving strategic outcomes. Yet despite measurable progress, it remains underfunded, inconsistently implemented, and often siloed from core security strategy. As the world faces new and compounding challenges—from climate insecurity to authoritarian resurgence—the next 25 years must be defined not by whether Women and Peace and Security is known, but by whether it is understood and used.

What is WPS?

Women and Peace and Security (WPS)

When learning about the intricacies of how the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 came to be, we had the opportunity to speak to Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury[1], who chaired the UN Security Council when UNSCR 1325 was initially introduced to the UN. Ambassador Chowdhury critiqued the separation of S from Women, Peace and Security as well by pointing out that in the agenda's name, "women is on one side, [and] peace and security [are] on the other side." While the comma in Women, Peace and Security was not an intentional grammatical mechanism to separate women from the field of security, it has removed emphasis on how all three components are integral. "We want women to be related to peace and security as a compact," as this shapes how we comprehensively implement WPS objectives (Ambassador Chowdhury, 2025). We will use the locution Women and Peace and Security when we speak of WPS; however, existing names using the original terminology will not be changed.

What WPS is Not

Before the paper delves into the intricacies of what Women and Peace and Security embodies, proposes, and claims about the role of women in national security spaces, it seems pertinent to discuss a few things that are not a part of the WPS framework. These are, most notably, common misconceptions about the WPS framework that distort the nature of its tenets and create artificial barriers that keep people and governments from fully engaging with the argument behind WPS.

WPS is not a policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). It does not impose a set of policy recommendations that identify women as a minority group in any way; in fact it identifies

[1] Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, Mar. 26, 2025

quite the opposite, that women make up an equal amount of the global population as men, and that as such their interests must be represented at every level of decision-making. WPS does not advocate for the lowering of standards so that women are able to reach positions of power they otherwise would not be qualified for; rather, it asks that qualified individuals who are women be taken into consideration as serious candidates for positions of power. As retired Chief Master Sergeant Julie Gudgel puts it,"if you can [do the job that demands a certain standard of operation], whether you're a man or a woman, then we should be putting you in those areas."[2] The challenge in WPS for some institutions is to simply remove the barriers that would keep qualified individuals from doing their jobs at a very high level. WPS further demands that experts across the board be consulted and taken seriously, regardless of their sex. As Jennifer Miller states, "there's been a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. WPS is not that. WPS is not a "gender ideology". It's all in the name of national security. It's all in the name of economic prosperity. It's all in the name of a safer, stronger, more prosperous nation."[3]

WPS is not Affirmative Action; it does not mandate the opening of governmental positions exclusively for women to fill and it does not assume that women are a disadvantaged community in need of injection into existing structure by virtue of being women. WPS is also not an ideology entirely alien to the fields of national security, economic development, war, peace, and trade; rather, it is an integral component contributing to the success of all endeavors.

What is the link between women and security?

The question of "what is Women and Peace and Security?" is one that must be thoroughly addressed before a deeper analysis of its history, significance, and future can be made. At its core, WPS asserts that national security is a domain belonging to both men and women in

[2] CMSgt Julie Gudgel, USAF (ret.), former Command Chief of the USAF Air Education and Training Command, Feb. 28, 2025
[3] Jennifer Miller, Foreign Policy Advisor, Office of Congresswoman Lois Frankel (FL-22), Apr. 15, 2025

society. WPS is a framework firmly concerned with ensuring that every male and every female can act and meaningfully participate in the assurance of their individual security through participation in matters of national interest (Kayla McGill, 2025).[4] WPS is fundamentally rooted in the idea that women, as constituents of half of the global population, must be represented at all levels of governance, peacemaking, and conflict prevention and resolution. "You cannot achieve a meaningful peace without including half the population of any country" (Leda Amrullah, 2025).[5] WPS posits that male and female members of society must both have "agency and a say in how their world works," as well as "the right to creation of" the systems and institutions that govern daily life (Tanya Henderson, 2025).[6] It also contends that "the fate of nations is tied to the status of women" (The WomanStats Project, n.d.). As such, domestic issues that affect the daily wellbeing of women within a country also have a ripple effect on a country's ability to develop, prosper, and pursue its national security.

The WPS framework also contends that the status of women is inextricably linked to state security and stability, with extensive quantitative evidence demonstrating that women's participation in peace processes reduces the risk of war, enhances the durability of peace, and fosters overall security. As Cornelia Weiss asserted in her interview, in no uncertain terms, "if you want insecurity, go ahead and exclude women… If you want war, then discriminate against women… If you want a weaker military, then exclude women… If you want to be poor, then you keep women down."[7] These assertions make up the backbone of the argument of why WPS is so important at a national level.

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[4] Kayla McGill, WPS Policy Advisor, U.S. Department of State, Feb. 26, 2025
[5] Leda Amrullah, Program Manager at the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and Development; Has first-hand experience empowering women in Afghanistan, Mar. 20, 2025
[6] Tanya Henderson, Founder and President of Mina's List, International Human Rights Lawyer, Feb. 13, 2025
[7] Colonel Cornelia Weiss, USAF (ret.), JD, Independent WPS Scholar, Apr. 1, 2025

Research shows that when women are included at the negotiating table, the likelihood of a peace agreement enduring for 15 years increases by 35% (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Furthermore, a study of 58 conflict-affected states between 1980 and 2003 found that when 35% of the legislature is female, the risk of conflict relapse is nearly zero (Demeritt and Nichols, 2014). Women's presence in peace negotiations increases inclusivity, transparency, and sustainability by forging connections across opposing factions (Hudson et al., 2012). One reason for this is that women, particularly mothers, often have a different perspective than men. Dr. John Mathiason (2025) notes that there is "some evidence that women leaders are more future oriented than men leaders."[8] Mothers are more likely to be concerned about their children's future, as well as future generations, which expands their perspective from focusing solely on issues that impact a singular, short-term moment. Additionally, studies show that a country's level of peace is more closely correlated with the status of its women than with GDP, religion, or democracy (Hudson, 2012). Countries that uphold gender equality and provide women with equal opportunities are more likely to sustain long-term peace compared to those that suppress women's rights (White House, 2010).

WPS is also highly conscious of the notion that women are not impacted by conflict the same way that men are. Women move through the world differently than men, which means that they interact with security and insecurity in intimately different ways from men, which creates a perspective that has not historically been considered in peace or security processes. Consequently, Hannah Proctor (2025) argues that "it's not that women are magically more peaceful than men," but rather that "women have a different perspective" which can positively contribute to peace.[9] Women's different lived experiences through conflict allow them to bring

[8] Dr. John Mathiason, Adjunct Professor at Cornell University, Mar. 18, 2025
[9] Hannah Proctor, Independent WPS Expert, Primary Drafter, Fourth U.S. National Action Plan on WPS, Mar. 6, 2025

valuable perspectives to peace processes, often ones that advocate for addressing broader human rights concerns and social inequalities that contribute to conflict-driving instability (Harris, 2016).

While quantitative findings underscore the strategic imperative of women's participation in peace processes, beyond empirical evidence the inclusion of women is also a matter of justice and fundamental rights—ensuring that the whole population, not just half, has a voice in decisions that shape post-conflict societies. Women's involvement ensures that the issues uniquely affecting women during conflicts, such as gender-based violence and post-conflict economic marginalization, receive the attention they deserve (Moser and Clark, 2001).

In addition to enduring the physical and psychological trauma of war, women assume critical post-conflict roles in rebuilding communities, caring for the injured, and stabilizing households amidst widespread socio-economic challenges such as food scarcity, unemployment, and declining morale (Zuckerman and Greenberg, 2004). This important work further underscores the necessity of women's participation in peacebuilding, not only to mitigate the consequences of conflict, but also to ensure that future peace is resilient and inclusive. To neglect women's perspectives in these processes is to diminish the distinctive impact that conflict has on them and forgoes opportunities for more comprehensive, enduring solutions to violence and instability.

WPS is not pertinent to only women, but to all people, from a personal security level all the way to the level of the international system. Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury emphasized that "women bring important and different skills and perspectives to the policy making table in comparison to their male counterparts. Women's equality and participation makes our planet safe and secure" by using all potential and leaving no one behind. Women's equality and

empowerment is “relevant for humanity as a whole, for all of us. Without peace, development is impossible, and without development, peace is not achievable. But, without women, neither peace nor development is conceivable” (Ambassador Chowdhury, 2025).[10]

History of UNSCR 1325

Overview

The formalization of the WPS framework came about in 2000, when UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was officially adopted by the United Nations (UN). UNSCR 1325 officially affirmed the critical role of women in both peacebuilding and conflict, particularly the necessity for women’s participation in peace negotiation, conflict reduction, and the protection of women and girls who are disproportionately affected by crises (UNSC, 2000). This is highlighted through the inclusion of four fundamental pillars: Participation, which stipulates that women must be represented at all levels of decision-making; Protection, which highlights the imperative to protect women from all forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV); Prevention, which calls for the improvement of mechanisms that prevent GBV; and Relief/Recovery, which affirms the necessity of a gendered lens when addressing international conflict recovery (United Nations, n.d). This landmark resolution stands out for its dual emphasis on the need for protection of women during conflict and the acknowledgement of women as critical agents in conflict, peacebuilding, and reconstruction. In other words, UNSCR 1325 ensured that women were no longer being defined only as victims of conflict, but also as agents who participate in conflict and actors who must be included in discussions to end conflict and rebuild society. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 consequently urged UN Member States to make

[10] Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, Mar. 26, 2025

strategic changes for achieving state stability, such as the adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS (UNSC, 2000).

While we recognize that UNSCR 1325 was groundbreaking in recognizing women's security as central to international peace and stability, it is important to note that the resolution was predated by decades of evolving human rights frameworks aimed at protecting women from abuse during periods of peace and conflict. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), though they did not specifically address women's rights, established early principles of equality and protection for all human beings that would shape that effort in coming years. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), was the treaty instrument that explicitly reinforced the need to safeguard women's rights in all circumstances, including in war zones.

Despite the progress made through the development of international treaty law, enforcement mechanisms remained weak, and wartime gender-based violence persisted with impunity. These shortcomings, coupled with the increasing mobilization of women's rights advocates, set the stage for a paradigm shift in the late 20th century—one that would culminate in the adoption of UNSCR 1325.

Build-Up to UNSCR 1325

Precedence for UNSCR 1325 began as early as WWI, when women from both sides of the conflict collaborated for postwar peace, such as through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); however, wartime violence against women persisted (Tickner, 2018). During World War II, sexual violence became a serious issue: one such example was the Japanese Imperial Army's 1937 invasion of Nanking, which was characterized by the rape of an

estimated 20,000 to 80,000 Chinese women (Chang, 1997). In response to Western outcry, the Japanese military began systematically kidnapping and purchasing women, leading to the forced recruitment of approximately 200,000 women—primarily from Korea, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, and other Asian nations—into sexual slavery as "comfort women" to prevent further atrocities, though their comfort women system itself was an atrocity (Chang, 1997). The comfort women were subject to daily rape, physical abuse, and sexually transmitted infections. During WWII, German forces used rape as a weapon of war to dominate and dehumanize perceived "inferior" groups (Durojaye, 2020). In the wake of the German defeat, Soviet troops—and to a limited degree, Allied troops—also participated in the rape of women (Chiasson, 2015).

Reports of these atrocities helped raise international awareness of sexual violence in war: survivors' testimonies and persistent advocacy efforts not only pressured governments for accountability but also laid the groundwork for later global recognition of sexual violence as a war crime.[11] The next leap was taken when the United Nations Charter (1945) proclaimed to "reaffirm faith… in the equal rights of men and women." This reaffirmation in the equality of men's and women's rights at an international scale further solidified the foundation that would later be built upon to create UNSCR 1325 (Olsson and Gizelis, 2013).

Women's civil society groups began to advocate publicly for the inclusion of women's voices and to push for global conferences and frameworks focused on elevating the status of women worldwide. As a result, by 1975 the UN began to hold conferences to champion women's rights, one of which led to the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (UNGA, 1979). In addition, female activists helped catalyze the 1998 Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, and secured commitments for

[11] The Nuremberg trials failed to try Nazi war criminals for sexual crimes against women (Khen & Frey, 2013). The International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo Trials) included in indictments the sexual violence committed by Japanese forces during the 1937-1938 Nanjing Massacre (Kuo, 2002).

youth and victim involvement in reconciliation, political prisoner release and reintegration, and integrated education and housing (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, 2018 December). Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 for their efforts in ending the violent conflict there, raising the profile of women peacemakers (The Nobel Peace Prize, 1976). The Good Friday Agreement (1998) in Northern Ireland "has stood the test of time…[and] kept the peace," providing a concrete example of how grassroot women's participation in peace negotiations leads to more successful and sustainable agreements (Ambassador Melanne Verveer).[12] This and other instances of women's leadership in post-conflict transitions contributed to the growing recognition that gender-sensitive peacebuilding was not merely aspirational, but essential—an argument that would gain traction in the lead-up to UNSCR 1325. By 1989, almost one hundred nations agreed to be bound by CEDAW and commit efforts to advance women's rights (UNGA, 1979).

The 1990s saw two other such key events that furthered the development of international humanitarian law with special reference to women: the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the 1992-1995 Bosnian War. These events were characterized by the brutal use of sexual violence and rape as weapons and tools for ethnic cleansing. By and large, prior instances of wartime sexual violence stemmed from the so-called "Soldier's Bargain"—which posits that in exchange for giving their lives to the nation, soldiers are given impunity to rape and pillage enemy territory—but these conflicts in the 1990s saw commanders systematically encourage, even order, rape as a way to control and terrorize the population and increase cohesion among soldiers (Skjelsback, 2001). An estimated 100,000 to 250,000 women were raped during the three-month period of the Rwandan Genocide and an estimated 20,000 to 50,000 women were raped during

[12] Ambassador Melanne Verveer, Former United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Executive Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, Mar. 3, 2025

the Bosnian war (UN; Cleverly, 2021). Since 1993, the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia (ICTY) "has charged 161 individuals in 70 proceedings;" most notably, in 1998 the ICTY convicted Zdravko Mucić, Esad Landžo, and Hazim Delić of committing rape as a form of torture (United Nations, n.d). On September 2, 1998, the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda convicted Jean-Paul Akayesu of genocide, and for the first time in history recognized rape as a component of genocide. These rulings pioneered the way for rape to be codified as a crime against humanity in international law through the International Criminal Court's (ICC) 1998 Rome Statute (International Criminal Court, 1998). Dr. Ellen Haring (2025) pointed out that it is incredible progress that "rape is not just a byproduct of war, it's a crime"—this is a testament of the impact of women's civil society organization and activists in altering traditional understandings surrounding violence against women.[13]

As recognition of the human rights abuses and gender-based violence experienced by women increased, advocates pushed for stronger action and collaboration between governments and civil society. This helped lead to the Fourth World Conference on Women that was organized by the UN in 1995 in Beijing, China. This historically important conference brought together over 30,000 activists and 189 governments to create a comprehensive agenda for advancing gender equality. Melanne Verveer (2025) noted that "women's rights as human rights was echoed throughout and it was the first time in international convenings that finally women's rights were chiseled in international human rights law."[14] At the culmination of this conference, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, established twelve critical areas of concern, including violence against women, women's political participation, economic empowerment, access to

[13] Dr. Ellen Haring, Senior Research Fellow at Women in International Security, Retired US Army Colonel, Mar. 10, 2025
[14] Ambassador Melanne Verveer, Former United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Executive Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, Mar. 3, 2025

education and healthcare, poverty reduction, women's roles in armed conflict, media representation, environmental sustainability, institutional mechanisms for gender equality, human rights protections, workplace rights, and the well-being of the girl-child (UN Women, 2015). The Beijing Conference shifted international discourse by recognizing gender equality as not only a social issue but also as a prerequisite for international economic development, peace, and security.

Championing this discourse was Hillary Clinton, who at the conference declared, "if there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, let it be that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights once and for all" (Clinton, 1995). This proclamation became a rallying cry for global feminist movements and placed gender equality firmly within the international human rights framework. The Platform for Action influenced subsequent global commitments, leading to the adoption of gender mainstreaming policies within international organizations and governments, and served as a precursor to the Women and Peace and Security framework.

As the millennium drew to a close in 1998, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) debated how to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, and in due course the WPS framework began to take center stage (Hill et al., 2003). Bangladeshi Ambassador Chowdhury, who presided over the UN Security Council (UNSC) at the time, provided encouragement and enthusiasm to the conversation, sparking a group of NGOs and the Women and Armed Conflict caucus to organize events that further emphasized the importance of WPS in issues of conflict and peace. After the CSW ended, the NGO Working Group on Women and International Peace and Security was created and pushed to convene a special session of the Security Council on WPS (Hill et al., 2003).

The resolution was debated during an open UN Security Council session under Namibian presidency where the council members acknowledged the disproportionate impact of war on women and the negative impact of the continual exclusion of women's voices from peace discussions. Even though several nations, such as Russia and China, had initial reservations about the removal of women's issues from domestic affairs potentially interfering with state sovereignty, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 passed unanimously on October 31st, 2000 (USIP, n.d.). The resolution specifically addresses how women and girls are disproportionately impacted by violent conflict and war and recognizes the critical role that women can and already do play in peacebuilding efforts. UNSCR 1325 affirms that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflict, the delivery of relief and recovery efforts, and in the forging of lasting peace.

Provisions of UNSCR 1325

UNSCR 1325 was groundbreaking in its recognition of women as both "victims and agents of conflict" (Singh, 2017). This dual acknowledgement—encapsulated in its four foundational pillars of participation, protection, prevention, and relief/recovery—set the stage for a transformative shift in how the international community approached gender in conflict. UNSCR 1325 commits Member States to the support of women's initiatives, increased women's representation throughout the UN system, providing Member States with training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights, and needs of women as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures (Willet, 2014). UN Member States are called upon to adopt a gendered perspective in peacekeeping operations; implement gender training for all military and civilian peacekeepers; account for the special needs of women and girls during conflict and post-conflict reconstruction; increase women's participation in conflict

prevention, peace-building, and post-conflict reconstruction; and to prosecute perpetrators of gender-based war crimes.

While UNSCR 1325 encouraged the adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs) to operationalize its principles, the resolution itself contained no binding enforcement mechanisms. As a result, the extent and effectiveness of implementation varied significantly across Member States. In general, these NAPs were meant to outline the actionable steps a government plans to take to implement the core objectives of the WPS framework (Facts and figures, 2024). Additionally, NAPs were also meant to bridge the gap between the broader commitments laid out in UNSCR 1325 and the concrete state-specific steps outlined for government and civil societies. Ambassador Chowdhury noted that "national action plans are important because they can engage civil society with the government."[15] Every key actor is given guidelines for steps to take, and how they can effectively collaborate in implementing UNSCR 1325. However, without strong enforcement mechanisms, many countries have failed in adopting and/or maintaining their own NAPs. As of 2025, 108 out of 193 UN Member States have adopted at least one NAP since 2000 (WILPF, n.d.).

International NAP Data

National Action Plans

Following the US Department of State's Countries and Areas List, six geographic regions have been identified: (Sub-Saharan) Africa; East Asia and the Pacific; Europe and Eurasia; Near East (Middle East and Northern Africa); South and Central Asia; and Western Hemisphere. Out of the 197 countries recognized by the Department of State, 35 have a current NAP, 70 have had

[15] Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, Mar. 26, 2025

a NAP at some point but have not renewed said NAPs, and 92 have never had a NAP (WILPF, n.d.). The East Asia and the Pacific region have the largest proportion of states that have never adopted a NAP (75%). The Europe and Eurasia region has the smallest proportion of states that have never adopted a NAP (18%) but it also has the largest proportion of states that have unrenewed NAPs (54%). There is no region that is comprised of more than 31% of its states retaining a current NAP, and their percentages are approximated as follows: Near East (5.56%), Western Hemisphere (5.71%), East Asia and the Pacific (15.63%), Africa (18.37%), Europe and Eurasia (28%), and South and Central Asia (30.77%).

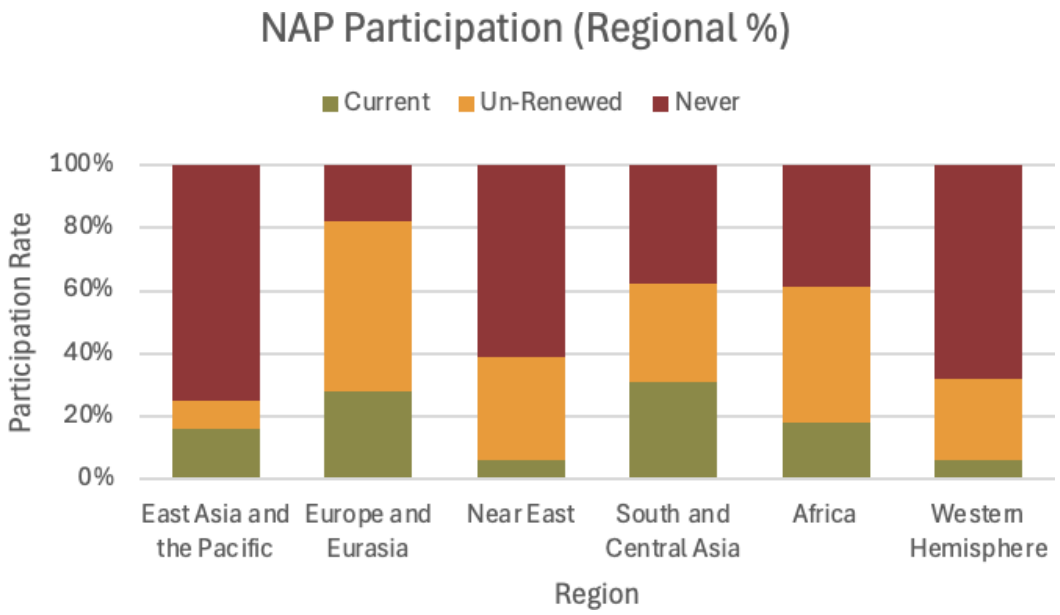

Figure 1: NAP Participation by Regional Percentage

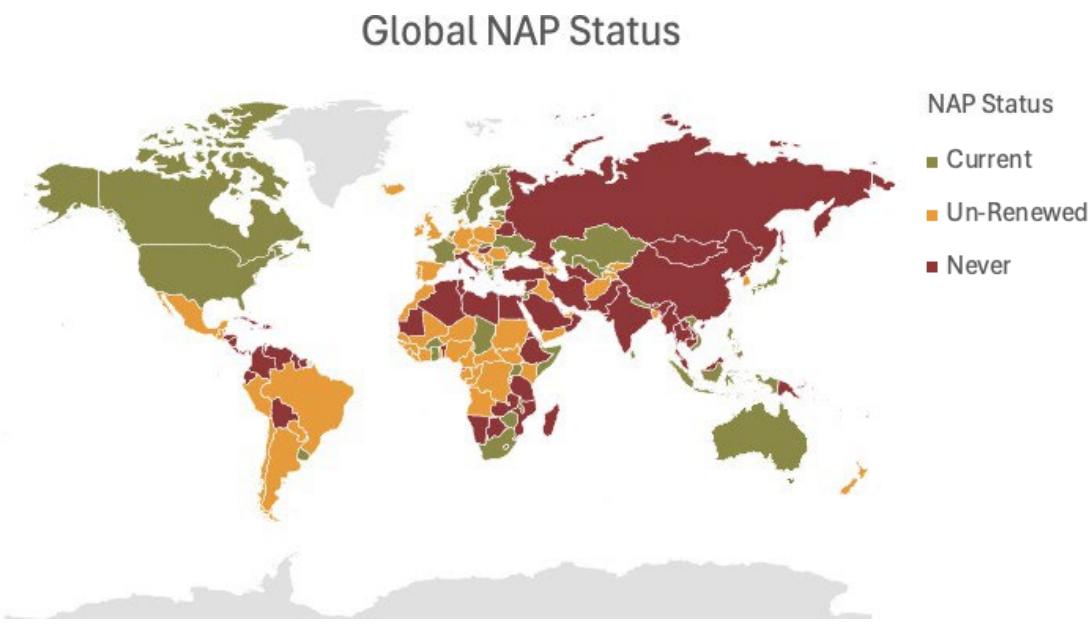

Figure 2: Global Map of NAP Status

Regional Action Plans

Regional Action Plans (RAPs) also play a critical role in advancing the WPS agenda across various global regions, especially in regions where NAPs may be lacking. These plans are designed to enhance women's participation in peace processes, ensure their protection in conflict and post-conflict situations, and address gender-based violence (GBV) in a regional context. The RAPs span diverse geographical regions, each with unique political, cultural, and security dynamics that influence the design and implementation of these plans.

As of 2025, four RAPs are still active, including the InterGovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) RAP (2023-2030), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) RAP (2021-2025), the African Union RAP (2018-2028), and the League of Arab States (LAS)RAP (2015-2030). These plans continue to guide and propel regional efforts on the WPS agenda, even as Member States struggle with implementing their National Action Plans. Moreover, nine RAPs have expired or are no longer active without renewal, such as the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) RAP (2024), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) RAP (2020-2024), European Union (EU) RAP (2019-2024), Pacific Islands Forum RAP (2012-2015), the East African Community (EAC) RAP (2015-2019), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) RAP (2018-2023), Southern African Development Community (SADC) RAP (2018-2022), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) RAP (2020), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) RAP (2020). Each of these plans reflects a unique set of priorities for their regions, but all are aligned in their commitment to improving women's roles in peace processes, enhancing legal frameworks, and addressing the aftermath of conflict.

With that said, the data on RAP membership can be misleading upon first encounter. The data explicitly shows that nearly all African countries are members of a RAP; however, upon further inspection, it becomes clear that many of these countries lack a current NAP. What is happening is that countries sign onto one RAP, but upon expiration of that document the countries simply move onto another already-existing RAP as a way to avoid having to make the state effort to write and sign a NAP. This makes tracking progress on WPS based on RAPs difficult, and benchmarks cannot be adjusted due to the turnover of African countries from one RAP to another. We also have to notice that, as is seen in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), sometimes states sign onto different RAPs at the same time. It is worth noting that the countries that tend to do this do not tend to be those which are high-ranking in various indices for peace and WPS, but rather countries where the situation of women is and has been deteriorating for quite some time. Signing onto more than one RAP at a time, in this case, could be construed as an attempt from these countries to virtue signal to the rest of the world that they are, ‘clearly’, in the business of caring about women’s issues.

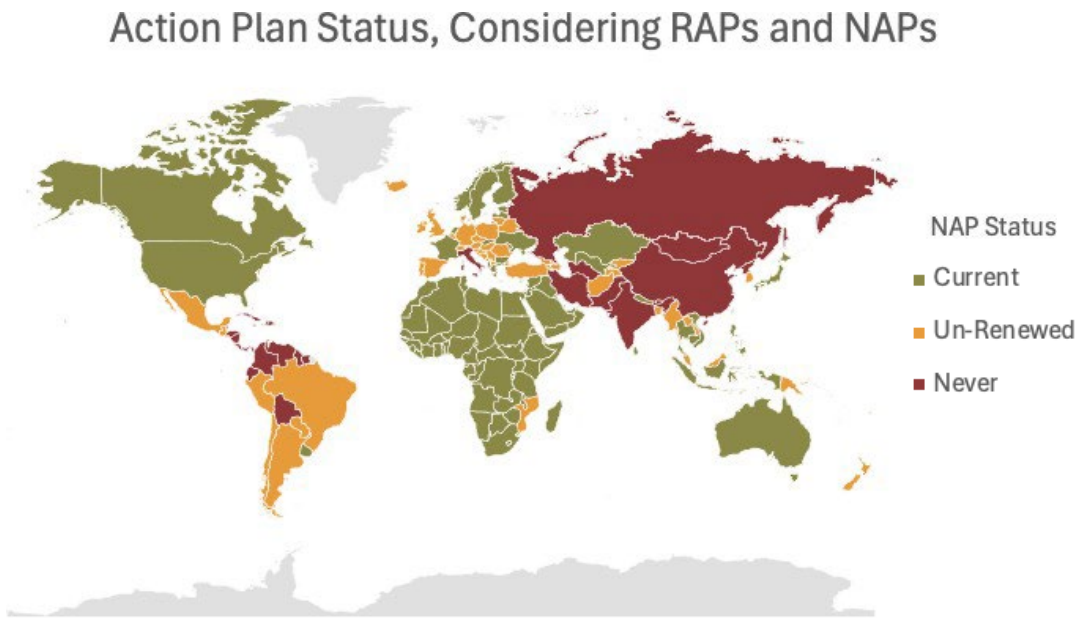

Figure 3: Global Map of NAP and RAP Status

Follow-On Resolutions to UNSCR 1325

While UNSCR 1325 marked a critical step to the creation of a robust WPS framework, gaps in its implementation soon became evident. In response to these gaps, the UNSC passed nine additional resolutions under the WPS framework, each addressing specific challenges (PeaceWomen, n.d.; please see Appendix I for a full annotated list). These resolutions further frame steps to enhance the integration of WPS into a wide range of issues. They ask for the operationalization of WPS, the development of indicators and data collection related to women, the recognition of the weaponization of Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and how to combat it, and the increased access to justice for victims of CRSV.

Analysis

The introduction of UNSCR 1325 and its four basic pillars was unprecedented in the realm of international law. Women had never before in human history been publicly pronounced as relevant to matters of war and peace. As unforeseen obstacles and complexities arose, the document's subsequent sister resolutions were developed to fill in the gaps such a revolutionary document is bound to have, while further developing the WPS framework. This can be seen in the fact that the more recent a resolution is, the more demanding and specific its verbiage tends to be. However, as previously noted, there are still no mandates. Whether the specification revolves around suggestions on the implementation of data collection, the creation of accountability mechanisms, or who falls under the purview of 'parties involved', the strengthening of language demonstrates the growing sense of urgency for action to be taken and for improvements to be made. With that said, the increase in specificity did not produce the desired results, because even the more specific documents contain few required actions for Member States. Even the UN Secretary-General has no mandated actions or even mandated reporting relevant to the WPS series of resolutions.

Even where demands are made, two issues arise: lack of enforcement capabilities and lack of concrete guidelines. While the Member States are, in principle, obligated to comply with UNSC decisions, the UN has little enforcement authority over Member States. This is a consequence of the unwillingness of countries to give up some of their state sovereignty to bolster the UN's enforcement capabilities. Since the requests in UNSCR 1325 are so vague, this places the burden of determining proper action on Member States. This means that implementation gaps easily arise because Member States, navigating their own cultural and social boundaries, may interpret these suggestions differently from one another or from the

original intended meaning. For example, UNSCR 2242's demand that all parties to armed conflict take appropriate measures in enforcing appropriate military disciplinary action to counter sexual violence could be interpreted in a multitude of ways including creating powerful institutions for military CRSV accountability or, alternatively, could involve penning a document without an implementation date that mentions intentions of improving CRSV training for troops: both of these actions could be deemed compliant. This leaves room for uneven action in response to the WPS framework, meaning that nations are free to provide lip service to WPS, but neglect to provide any substantive action.

U.S. Adoption of WPS

While UNSCR 1325 represented the initial blueprint for advancing women's participation in peace and security processes, the responsibility for planning and implementation falls upon the Member States themselves. As the WPS framework gained international recognition and legitimacy, more countries began to adopt NAPs to work towards integrating gender analysis into their domestic and foreign policies. The United States did not pass its first NAP for eleven years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325; in a way, the U.S.'s NAP adoption lagged behind other countries such as Norway, Sweden, Finland, England, Switzerland, Belgium. The United States' first NAP on WPS was announced by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in October of 2010, and it was officially signed into policy by President Barack Obama in December of 2011 (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

US NAPs for WPS picked up momentum from that moment on. Three additional NAPs were passed in 2015, 2019, and 2023, and WPS was codified into law in 2017 under the first Trump administration via the WPS Act. This was the first time in history that any country in the

world signed WPS into law. To ensure accountability for the agencies tasked with the implementation of WPS, each is required to submit their own implementation plan, which outlines the specific actions that will be taken to achieve the NAP's objectives. After 2017, these reports were provided both to Congress and the National Security Council.

To assess the effectiveness of the U.S. NAPs, the following section examines these implementation plans by separate U.S. agencies as well as the National Security Council Reports on agency-specific implementation plans to assess the extent to which goals were achieved.

NAP 1 (2011-2015)

In 2011, the U.S. published its first NAP on WPS, making it the third country of the National Security Council to do so. The NAP aimed to empower women as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace. Recognizing women's powerful role in national and global security, the 2011 NAP required an annual progress report on its implementation to be submitted to Congress and also required a comprehensive review to be conducted by the U.S. government every five years. The 2011 NAP follows the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 and details five key principles: the engagement and protection of women, the integration of gender perspectives, inclusive participation of all stakeholders, coordinated efforts across agencies, and accountability in implementing WPS policies. When drafting the 2011 NAP, contributors thought it imperative that American constituents be involved in the process. When describing the reasoning behind this decision, Tanya Henderson (2025) noted that they could not "draft this NAP without input from US women and what women around the United States think peace and security means to them."[16] Due to this realization, the contributors to the 2011 NAP held meetings across the United States and asked for women to come forward and speak to the vision of security that they personally held. These proceedings emphasized the importance of engaging

[16] Tanya Henderson, Founder and President of Mina's List, International Human Rights Lawyer, Feb. 13, 2025

civil society in WPS and providing a platform for domestic security concerns to be represented and addressed.

The 2011 NAP was significant because it was the U.S.'s first step towards integrating WPS, and it set the foundation for future NAPs to build upon. In 2012, the Department of State (DOS) Implementation Plan sought to ensure interviewees in all participatory conflict assessments included women and girls who were able to represent all affected demographics. The 2013 Department of Defense (DOD) Implementation plan also prioritized increasing women's participation. The DOD planned to increase the involvement of women in partner nations in U.S.-funded training programs for foreign police, judicial, and military personnel, PME, exchange programs, conferences, and seminars. The 2013 United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Implementation Plan also outlined numerous actions aimed at increasing women's participation, with an emphasis on women's economic empowerment. USAID proposed microfinance programs and assistance mechanisms that would build up women's business and agricultural skills, as well as increase their access to productive assets.

NAP 2 (2016-2018)

In 2016, the U.S. Government adopted its second NAP to address the challenges faced in the 2011 NAP with the intention to pave a road towards a more successful implementation of the WPS framework. The 2016 NAP continued to be guided by the same five key principles outlined in its predecessor, and the government reaffirmed its commitment to integrating gender into its diplomatic, security, and development efforts. Significant progress was made by the time of the 2016 NAP, such as opening all combat roles to women, advancing the participation of more than 60,000 women in peacebuilding processes in more than 20 countries through USAID programs, and providing services to more than 4 million survivors of gender-based violence in more than

40 countries. The government continued to build the capacity of grassroots networks and launch initiatives to effectively respond to the vulnerabilities of women and girls, yet concrete details about what was achieved are not included in the NAP. To better understand the long-term impact of NAPs on WPS, the U.S. emphasized continued monitoring and evaluation initiatives. The U.S. Government also planned to increase coordination across agencies, sustain female leadership in implementation of the WPS framework at the highest levels within the government, and enhance programs to respond to rising challenges associated with violent extremism.

Agency implementation plans are not publicly available for NAP 2 as the WPS Act of 2017 was produced one year after NAP 2, therefore overshadowing it. While the implementation plans do exist, the lack of their availability demonstrates that the focus shifted to the WPS Act of 2017 and the new implementation plans it would require agencies to produce within one year of its adoption.

WPS Act (2017)

In 2017, the WPS Act was officially signed into law, making the U.S. the first country to establish a law on WPS (Congress, 2017). This groundbreaking move set the U.S. apart from all others and set a new standard for the consideration of WPS as a core framework for peace. Unique to any other legislative WPS initiative in the world, "it was signed into law by President Trump during his first term. And that was something really good that came out of the first administration, something that enjoyed and hopefully still enjoys in some way wide bipartisan support. It's what spurred the creation of the WPS caucus, which is only the second body of legislators outside of Japan that are dedicated to WPS."[17]

The law required the President to submit a government-wide strategy to Congress no later than one year after the enactment of the Act (Congress, 2017). After the submission of this first

[17] Jennifer Miller, Foreign Policy Advisor, Office of Congresswoman Lois Frankel (FL-22), Apr. 15, 2025

national strategy, an updated strategy was mandated to be submitted within the next four years–as such, a second national strategy was submitted by the president in 2023 (Congress, 2017). Key government agencies were tasked with WPS implementation, including USAID, DOS, DOD, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and any other agency specified by the President (Congress, 2017). These departments and agencies are required to submit a specific implementation plan that reports their anticipated contributions and efforts to carry out the strategy (Congress, 2017). This enhanced accountability by ensuring that all relevant agencies were being held responsible for following the actions outlined in the NAPs. The WPS Act sought to enshrine WPS principles in US law, as the U.S. committed to integrating gender perspectives into U.S. foreign policy, defense, and development.

While the Act heavily depended on civil society consultation to shape it at the beginning, many of "the 'shalls' got turned into 'mays' in the later version" that was signed (Tanya Henderson, 2025).[18] This made the law less enforceable and minimized its power to hold agencies accountable. The adoption of the Act also shows a shift from WPS as an agenda that is no longer "rooted in civil society activism anymore, [instead,] it's rooted in the 2017 Act" (Hannah Proctor).[19] This is especially apparent through the fact that the Act "never mentions anywhere the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security" (Ambassador Chowdhury, 2025).[20] Recognition is not actively offered to civil society and other actors that were central to the creation of the WPS framework. The level of trust between actors is now fragile, leading to a lack of open discussions and a weakened ability to solidify a path for the future of WPS.

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[18] Tanya Henderson, Founder and President of Mina's List, International Human Rights Lawyer, Feb. 13, 2025
[19] Hannah Proctor, Independent WPS Expert, Primary Drafter, Fourth U.S. National Action Plan on WPS, Mar. 6, 2025
[20] Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, Mar. 26, 2025

The language in the Act also "indicates a lack of internal prioritization by the nation" as it expects each agency to change its structure and accommodate change without providing real resources (Paul David Morado, 2025).[21] Each agency is expected to follow through with the propositions of the Act, yet funding to support them was not prioritized. This points to the need for the U.S. to look internally and re-examine how we implement WPS in our own country versus abroad. While the U.S.'s creation of WPS legislation is a powerful step, it lacks teeth without actually equipping actors and agencies with the necessary resources, in addition to the fact that the provision requiring the the President to submit a national strategy will sunset "unless it is reauthorized by Congress" (Our Secure Future, 2024). "The implementation [of the Act] has really…sidelined some of its goals," and it is unclear "what the current administration is going to do about WPS" (Col. Andrew Crabb, 2025).[22]

Despite the challenges of the WPS Act of 2017's lack of strong enforcement power, it is incredibly significant as it makes the U.S. the "first country to actually legislate and mandate [UNSCR] 1325" (PDAS Katrina Fotovat, 2025).[23] The U.S. set "the stage for the entire world on what a legislation that actually implements 1325 looks like," creating a strong example for countries to follow (PDAS Katrina Fotovat, 2025). The 2017 Act also acts as a hook for civil society organizations working to implement WPS to expand upon to "give some kind of direction to the executive branch to do the various things that it [needs] to do" (Sanam Anderlini, 2025). Even though the Act of 2017 ultimately sidelined civil society, it provided WPS with a level of security as the Act enshrined WPS principles into U.S. law.

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[21] Paul David Morado, US Army Civil Affairs Specialist; US Army Reserve and a GS Civilian Foreign Affairs Specialist; Former Gender Advisor for US Combatant Command, Space Command, Mar. 27, 2025
[22] Col Andrew Crabb, Ret. US Marine Corps, Special Operations Command (MARSOC), Mar. 10, 2025
[23] PDAS Katrina Fotovat, Senior Official, Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 21, 2025

NAP 3 (2019-2022)

To fulfill the mandate that a new NAP be published within a year of the WPS Act of 2017, the U.S adopted its third NAP in 2019. The Act led to greater emphasis on gender inclusion, WPS initiatives, training and peacebuilding, but it faced criticism for not allocating dedicated funding or laying out strong enforcement mechanisms (Lynch et al, n.d.). Advocating for change without allocating the means to support that change spurred criticisms that the Act was more tokenistic than the work civil society had been doing prior to legislative involvement. As Jennifer Miller explained, "making statements and saying women experience conflict differently is a good thing–but how are we funding and resourcing programs that address those challenges? The short answer is right now we're not."[24]

The momentum following the passage of the 2017 WPS Act allowed the United States' 2019 NAP to capture the progress from the previous NAPs while incorporating plans for future growth. The objectives from the 2019 NAP include principles present in all NAPs and Implementation Plans since 2011, such as the representation and meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes in relation to conflict and crisis, as well as encouraging partner nations to adjust their policies and programs to do the same. One principle particularly emphasized in the 2019 NAP as a new addition to the U.S. WPS strategy is the protection of women and girls' human rights, their access to humanitarian assistance, and ensuring their safety from violence, abuse, and exploitation domestically and around the world. The 2019 NAP captures the spirit of ending harm to women, preventing harm to women, and elevating women's voices in both of those efforts.

Following the publication of the 2019 NAP in June of 2019, the DOD, DOS, DHS, and USAID each created their own department-specific implementation plans to ensure the principles

[24] Jennifer Miller, Foreign Policy Advisor, Office of Congresswoman Lois Frankel (FL-22), Apr. 15, 2025

outlined in the NAP were incorporated into the policies and practices within the agencies and departments. The 2019 NAP saw increased commitment and dedication to meaningful and measurable action in each of the implementation plans associated with it, particularly focused on policies and training. The DHS Implementation Plan (2020) commits the department to examining all current training programs in order to identify which programs already contain WPS principles as well as creating additional training or stand-alone efforts to promote WPS principles. The USAID Implementation Plan (2020) committed to ensuring that beneficiaries of USAID are never sexually exploited in exchange for goods and services. Should such instances occur, USAID workers would lose their positions and be prosecuted accordingly. This commitment emphasized this NAP's introduction of the pillar of protection of women and girls. The DOD committed to reviewing their own policies, plans, doctrine, training, education, operations, resource planning, and exercises to ensure that WPS principles were incorporated when possible.

Each relevant agency strove to increase WPS training among its ranks. In 2021, the Congressional Report on WPS was published highlighting the outcomes of the strategies proposed in the 2020 implementation plans. Let us take the example of the report submitted by DHS that year. The report shows, for example, that not only did DHS successfully hold and report each training held during fiscal year (FY) 2019 and 2020 containing WPS principles, they also reported the number of women who participated in each one. The table reproduced below, though incorporated as a win for DHS in this congressional report, comes across as largely tokenistic in nature and fails to relay the importance of operationalizing WPS principles. Instead, it comes across as a superficial inclusion of these principles in a series of trainings for which we have no means of measuring impact.

Table 2: Training Integrating WPS Principles (FY 2019 and FY 2020)

Component	Developmental Program	Women Participants
DHS-Wide	Women in Law Enforcement Mentoring Program 2020	61
FEMA	Community Emergency Response Team Training (CERT) in partnership with Mexico National School of Emergency Management	179
ICE	Athena Mentoring Program	9
ICE	ICE Women's Mentoring Program	25
TSA	Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE)	7
CBP	Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE)	3
Total		**284**

Figure 4: DHS report of WPS Principles found in department trainings, (WPS Congressional Report, 2021).

Despite extreme logistical challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DOS was still able to offer 10 freestanding courses that addressed WPS strategy goals, training more than 1,600 personnel on WPS principles, in line with their 2020 goals (WPS Congressional Report, 2021). It was not outlined whether these courses were taught in person or online. Although a far cry from the original commitment of training of all staff at every rank made in 2020, three DOS bureaus developed their own WPS training in FY 2019 and four in 2020. USAID accomplished their objective of creating a new WPS virtual training program for personnel working in conflict environments to be rolled out in the months following the publication of the WPS Congressional Report (2021). While the DOD committed to implementing WPS doctrine across all DOD policies, operations, and exercises in their 2020 implementation plan, their vision and outlines were vague and their most significant progress contained in this report was the designation of the gender advisors as full time WPS implementers across the department; as such the Gender Advisor (GENAD) position was created in the DOD, which represents a significant institutionalization of WPS within DOD. The efforts outlined and ultimately achieved through the 2019 NAP and subsequent implementation plans were significant and impactful. From the creation of the GENAD position, to the commitment to internally prosecute sexual misconduct of agency members, the progress made by NAP 3 is certainly worth noting. While the momentum created by these documents appeared promising, it was ultimately lost in NAP 4, which proved

to be a diminished recommitment to training and the vague concept of spreading WPS to our partners and allies.

NAP 4 (2023-)

In line with the principles of the previous NAPs, the 2023 NAP focuses on the participation of women in formal and informal positions of leadership and decision-making processes as well as helping U.S. partner nations develop WPS policies and practices. Repeated in the 2023 NAP are the objectives introduced in the 2019 NAP, which focused on protecting the basic human rights of women and girls and providing gender-responsive policies to ensure the safety and protection of women in U.S. responses to conflict and crisis. Unlike the 2019 NAP, however, the 2023 NAP failed to note specific plans, goals, or outcomes it hoped to achieve through its Implementation Plans. Hannah Proctor noted that, after months of editing and compromising, "the final document is a very watered down version of what the interagency had hoped to present."[25] Each of the objectives outlined in the 2023 NAP, either new or old, finds its roots in previous NAPs. The 2023 NAP is no exception to this, but due to its diluted nature as previously mentioned, no new programs, policies, or positions were suggested or introduced—the document merely suggested vague plans to conduct more training across all government agencies.

As with previous NAPs, the DOD, DOS, and DHS developed individual implementation plans to address the aforementioned objectives. For the first time since the U.S. submitted its first NAP, however, USAID did not submit an implementation plan in line with other government agencies. Historically, all the government agencies publish their Implementation Plans at similar times, but never on the same date. USAID had not yet published their 2025 Implementation Plan

[25] Hannah Proctor, Independent WPS Expert, Primary Drafter, Fourth U.S. National Action Plan on WPS, Mar. 6, 2025

before the dismantling of the organization under the second Trump administration. Each of the other agencies' most significant plans were focused on training programs and departmental structures. The DOD committed to establishing and maintaining a joint training program for the previously created Gender Advisory (GENAD) Workforce and reported in the 2021 WPS Congressional Report to standardize GENAD practice across the DOD. The DHS committed to providing GBV-specific training to all disaster responders and emergency managers within FEMA, while DOS committed to including senior women negotiators and technical experts on gender equality on all U.S. negotiation teams related to peace and security agreements. The WPS Congressional Report for the 2023 NAP has not been released as of yet, since they are not due for publication until two years have passed since the implementation plans were released, so the efficacy of these measures is yet to be evaluated and publicized.

Hannah Proctor (2025), the lead drafter of NAP 4, noted that the main gap in the NAP "is the lack of civil society consultation."[26] There was a lack of trust between the government and civil society, and the White House did not treat gender as a priority in foreign policy in NAP 4. Hannah Proctor explained that, at the time, the Biden Administration had "created the Gender Policy Council. What that ended up doing is sidelining gender away from everything else…To my knowledge, that council never once had a meeting with Biden. He never invited them to meet with him directly, even though they were White House policy council. And gender was never a priority, but they could pretend that it was." She also noted that while NAP 4 outlined five key lines of effort (LOE), it did not include "the four pillars of the WPS agenda in the strategy." In particular, pillar three, prevention, was excluded despite it being a point particularly important to civil society. The U.S. also fell short in looking inward, and as a result, the final document was

[26] Hannah Proctor, Independent WPS Expert, Primary Drafter, Fourth U.S. National Action Plan on WPS, Mar. 6, 2025

unable to communicate a meaningful vision and strategy. As Chantal de Jonge Oudraat framed it, "one of the problems with the U.S. NAP, is that it's outward looking–and you can't preach something if you don't do it yourself."[27]

Literature Review

It is important to acknowledge that since the creation of UNSCR 1325, the resolution has been met with both sweeping praise and sharp criticism, both of which stem from scholars' and practitioners' recognition of the historical importance of 1325.

Critiques

While UNSCR 1325 was revolutionary in the effort to break down barriers to women in politics, diplomacy, and peacekeeping, it does have shortcomings. The last 25 years of WPS have been marked with systematic progress towards the breakdown of these barriers, but these changes have not been to the complete satisfaction of proponents and activists in WPS. The actual implementation of UNSCR 1325 has been characterized as uneven at best across the international system (Fisher et al., 2016). Cornelia Weiss refers to this as "a failure of will" rather than a failure of WPS as a framework (2025). The literature has no shortage of explanations for the slow pace of reducing barriers to women's empowerment and participation in war and peace.

Miller et al. (2014) note that, even in the first few years of 1325, states were slow on the uptake of enforcement mechanisms. The implementation of 1325 in state-specific contexts was meant to happen through the creation of National Action Plans (NAPs), but the first one of these NAPs—Denmark's 2005 NAP (WILPF, n.d.)—did not come through until five years after the adoption of 1325 (Miller et al., 2014). The lack of prioritization of the NAPs was, therefore, addressed in two consequent SC resolutions (Hamilton et al., 2020).

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[27] Dr. Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, John O. Rankin Professor of Practice & Program Director of the Masters of Arts in International Affairs at the GW Elliott School of International Affairs, Apr. 7, 2025

In the case of the U.S., its first NAP wasn't created until Hillary Clinton urged the nation into action during a Security Council meeting for the 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. In her powerful speech, she expressed that the U.S. was a decade late in implementing UNSCR 1325, and "next year, we'll [the U.S.] come back with the U.S. NAP" (Ambassador Chowdhury, 2025).[28] Melanne Verveer (2025) recounted how Hillary Clinton urged her to call the White House and the DOS to "tell them that the Secretary is about to make an announcement at the United Nations that the United States will have a national action plan on [Women and Peace and Security]."[29] This was a trigger point that led the U.S. to have "a wonderful national plan with regional consultations with civil society" (Ambassador Chowdhury, 2025).

A reason often used to explain this low prioritization of NAPs is UNSCR 1325's use of vague language which left room for Member states to interpret their obligations as they saw fit (Miller et al., 2014; Harrington, 2016). Willett (2010) further notes that UNSCR 1325 is not a treaty document, and that there are "no mechanisms for ratification, compliance or verification" that are attached to the resolution. This means that the resolution essentially "lacks the muscle" to make states comply with its recommendations and guidelines (Willett, 2010). Fritz (2009) goes as far as to point out that UNSCR 1325 uses "consensus language," meaning that it assumes most nations will want to comply with it, but it does not read as a legally binding document. So, while 1325 may have felt like a very consequential document at the time, critics sometimes regard it as "too little, too slow" in terms of how actionable it actually is (Miller et al., 2014).

Additionally, we must recognize the prevalent opinion that WPS, which finds much of its foundational thought rooted in feminist literature, is fundamentally incompatible with structures

[28] Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, Mar. 26, 2025

[29] Ambassador Melanne Verveer, Former United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Executive Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, Mar. 3, 2025

of national security because of its close association with feminism. Cori Fleser (2025), in her interview, claimed that, quite simply "feminist agendas and national security are not compatible."[30] This comes from the basic assumption that national security institutions are inherently over-masculinized and have not historically made room for women to contribute in significant and widely-recognized ways. However, Fleser does note that if there is to be the insertion of WPS thought into such masculinized institutions, "you have to make concessions on what you're doing with that agenda in order to make it accepted by the bureaucracy." And that is exactly what the women in the DOD have done thus far. Through these concessions and adjustments in language, institutions like the DOD have been able to make strides towards better WPS implementation. Fleser herself points to this success when she asserted that "the Department of Defense treats WPS differently than it did 10 years ago. Its understanding of the relevance of WPS to accomplishing US national security objectives [that] has significantly improved, and importantly, the Department understands the primary activities for contributing to [U.S. Government]-wide implementation of the WPS agenda in a way that it never did in 2015 when I first started." Despite the incompatibility, therefore, there can be institutional change through WPS implementation over a significant period of time.

Lack of implementation is another popular criticism of UNSCR 1325. A foreshadowing of this faltering implementation can be found in the years following the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. McWilliams & Kilmurray (2015) posit that over the fifteen years that followed that historic 1998 agreement, women found themselves taking a back seat and becoming "increasingly invisible in decision-making… despite the introduction of UNSCR 1325."

[30] Cori Fleser, Senior Advisor at Forge Group LLC; Technical expert, strategist, and historian for the implementation of the U.S. WPS Act of 2017 at DoD, Mar. 21, 2025

Somehow, despite the initial vigor, 1325 seems to have faded as a priority for the world community.

Another barrier to proper implementation of UNSCR 1325 is the seemingly chronic lack of appropriate funding that WPS initiatives receive at the UN and national levels (Hamilton et al., 2020; Cohn & Duncanson, 2021; Cabrera-Balleza, 2011). Cohn and Duncanson (2021) note that WPS is often relegated to a lower priority in terms of funding, and Cabrera-Balleza (2011) notes that even if there is funding available, it is not often earmarked for specific WPS initiatives, nor is it properly coordinated. Fisher et al. (2016) also point to a lack of accountability and resources allocated towards the inclusion of women in peacekeeping. Chantal de Jonge Oudraat highlights this failure when she said, "There's never any real budget attached to the whole agenda. Show me the money, and I'll tell you if you're serious or not."[31]

Paul David Morado (2025) expressed how a lack of legislative earmarked funding has impacted the DOD's implementation of WPS.[32] Funding cuts leave "the gender advisors that are at the combatant commands by position without any resources or tools to be able to grow or upskill in terms of their capability." Morado (2025) noted that "funding is scheduled to be cut" for WPS in the DOD, and this means that gender advisors no longer have the resources needed to continue their impactful work. A lack of funding leads to a slow death of WPS within agencies, as having access to resources is entirely necessary to properly implement WPS in a way that it is helpful to the agencies and organizations that need to operationalize its tenets.

Even in cases where funding is available, agencies tasked with implementation by their countries' NAP continue to face challenges due to a lack of cooperation. U.S. agencies speak

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[31] Dr. Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, John O. Rankin Professor of Practice & Program Director of the Masters of Arts in International Affairs at the GW Elliott School of International Affairs, Apr. 7, 2025

[32] Paul David Morado, US Army Civil Affairs Specialist; US Army Reserve & GS Civilian Foreign Affairs Specialist; Former Gender Advisor for US Combatant Command, Space Command, Mar. 27, 2025

different languages and have various perceptions of the role they are meant to play in implementing WPS. To maximize the efficiency of available funding, it is crucial "to have mechanisms for enhanced interagency cooperation and collaboration. We must develop a shared vision for policy implementation and to pool resources and expertise for greater efficiency and to identify where goals are in alignment" and how different actors can come together to fill in each other's gaps (Dr. Saira Yamin, 2025).[33]

The lack of appropriated funding speaks to a larger trend in the de-prioritization of WPS initiatives, especially in the post-conflict context where seemingly everything else takes priority over women's role, safety, and needs (Willett, 2010). By not being a central part of the post-conflict recovery process, women's issues become relegated to 'special needs' categories, and women's role in peace-related decision-making becomes diminished, thus minimizing the potential positive impact of a WPS framework.

While it is significant that UNSCR 1325 empowers and provides the foundation upon which grassroots organizations and NGOs can build their WPS platform, Harington (2016) mentions that this could be a consequence of states not treating the resolution as binding and simply passing the burden onto smaller civil society organizations. This leads into a larger argument made by Carol Cohn and Claire Duncanson: that just because the resolution exists does not mean that it properly addresses the structural barriers that prevent states from actively being effective in the pursuit of gender-just peace (Cohn & Duncanson, 2021). As the state pushes the responsibility of implementing WPS onto civil society, the disconnect between government and local actors grows. There is lack of trust that significantly hinders positive movement in the WPS framework. Melanne Verveer (2025) notes that the government must incorporate "women at the

[33] Dr. Saira Yamin, Naval War College's Ambassador Swanee Hunt Chair of Women, Peace and Security, Mar. 24, 2025

local level who already are actually working on facilitating dialogue, on finding solutions to the conflict, on addressing the problems."[34] These women are working in isolation from governments and multilateral organizations that are also trying to address those same issues. Government must empower civil society, yet they must work in tandem to be effective and achieve the most out of their efforts.

Cohn and Duncanson (2021) also posit that policymakers and proponents of the WPS framework created through UNSCR 1325 have not fully recognized that the implementation of 1325 must constantly evolve to fit changing contextual realities. Importantly, Cohn and Duncanson (2021) point to the general societal ignorance of transnational economic factors as well as the worsening climate crisis as two points that 1325 has not been able to properly address through changing times. Cohn and Duncanson (2021) also point to the rise of the far right across the globe as another example of a condition to which the WPS framework has not been able to adapt. As the resolution approaches its 25th anniversary, we cannot ignore the fact that the world in 2025 is vastly different from the world in the year 2000.

Claire Hutchinson, in her interview with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, highlights that the concept of WPS can feel inaccessible because it lacks tangible outputs and actionable tenets. WPS can seem an abstract concept with little practical application and few existing guidelines to be relied upon in terms of setting up mechanisms for proper implementation. This criticism can also be compounded with an observation by Bell and O'Rourke (2010) that measuring the effectiveness of 1325 can be quite difficult because of the broad nature of the document. Attila Masterhazy, in that same interview, notes that UNSCR 1325 and WPS as a

[34] Ambassador Melanne Verveer, Former United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Executive Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, Mar. 3, 2025

whole have not achieved the level of engagement with men that would be necessary for the framework to rank higher in terms of policy priority.

PDAS Katrina Fotovat (2025) noted a similar gap in WPS, expressing that "we never really prepared men for why this is important to them."[35] A large portion of men tend to see the word "women" and don't understand the impact WPS has on their own lives and own security. Paul David Morado (2025) also pointed out that WPS has grown "a culture of girls and women that are empowered and can do anything, [yet] did nothing for boys and men to grow up in a world with them."[36] There has been a rise of a male backlash against feminism as women become increasingly empowered and focus drifts from men, which can certainly be associated with the failure of WPS to make itself relevant and important for men to understand and participate in. Men feel threatened and are forced to adapt to a new position, but there is a lack of attention on educating them on how to do so. We need to move away from the narrative of "women against men or men against women," and understand that it is "all of us together for humanity" (Ambassador Chowdhury, 2025).[37] It is an "element that we need to build in our education system, in our families, [and] in our communities" to strengthen peace and security (Ambassador Chowdhury, 2025). "We can't be as impactful without engaging men and boys as allies. WPS is not a women's issue, it is a national security consideration. Men and women must work together," and society must ensure they are both included in this discussion (Dr. Saira Yamin, 2025).[38] Ambassador Steven Steiner (2025) further reiterated this point when he posed the questions, "how can you empower one half of your population [or] country without trying to

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[35] PDAS Katrina Fotovat, Senior Official, Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 21, 2025
[36] Paul David Morado, US Army Civil Affairs Specialist; US Army Reserve & GS Civilian Foreign Affairs Specialist; Former Gender Advisor for US Combatant Command, Space Command, Mar. 27, 2025
[37] Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, Mar. 26, 2025
[38] Dr. Saira Yamin, Naval War College's Ambassador Swanee Hunt Chair of Women, Peace and Security, Mar. 24, 2025

bring on board the other half of your population, which is male? How can we succeed in this work, with their active opposition?"[39] It is essential for men to understand the tangible positive effects of including women in spaces from which they would typically be left out simply by virtue of being women.

This is indicative of an observation made by Dr. Joan Johnson-Freese (2025): "[Women and Peace and Security] has a branding problem."[40] Specifically, the presentation of WPS is typically received by non-WPS personnel as an agenda to do with social justice, which is completely alienated from the security sphere. If WPS fails to make itself marketable to those in the security system that it is trying to reach, then the entire framework becomes an accessory rather than a central feature of peace and security. One of the things that keeps the WPS framework in this state, says Dr. Johnson-Freese (2025), is that "we're still using this outdated view that men and women are the same."[41] This is in reference to the general view that equality is necessary because men and women are all capable of functioning within the world in a way that is not fundamentally different or dichotomous. This premise is, in actuality, antithetical to the WPS framework. Its most basic premise indicates that men and women are not, in fact, the same, and that it is in these differences in biology, experience, mentality, and societal interaction that we can draw strength from. The differences between men and women, and the inclusion of the differing perspectives of both men and women, are at the heart of WPS.

Cohn and Duncanson (2021) further criticize the ways in which 1325 has moved away from its original intentions and allowed itself to become bureaucratized to the point where structures for implementation become redundant and tangential to the larger mission. They posit

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[39] Ambassador Steven Steiner, Former Gender Advisor for Gender and Peacebuilding at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Feb. 24, 2025

[40] Dr. Joan Johnson-Freese, Professor Emeritus And Former Chair, National Security Affairs Department, Naval War College; Professor, Harvard Extension School; Senior Fellow, Women In International Security, Feb. 20, 2025

[41] Dr. Joan Johnson-Freese, Professor Emeritus And Former Chair, National Security Affairs Department, Naval War College; Professor, Harvard Extension School; Senior Fellow, Women In International Security, Feb. 20, 2025

that it is easy to lose sight of the scope of 1325 when implementers become caught up in the bureaucratic churn, as facing bureaucratic opposition can lead to trying to shove anything related to WPS into existing structures in a way that focus is lost on what actually matters, ultimately losing focus on what matters most: achieving an equitable landscape where peace can truly become the norm. Ambassador Steven Steiner (2025) noted that there are "some tendencies to be selling with numbers," equating high levels of participation in a WPS focused meeting or training program as a genuine commitment.[42] To combat this, we must "keep with the basics and not overextend." This involves looking beyond the numbers and ensuring WPS efforts are meaningful and truly empowering women in the name of creating overall stable peace.

Dr. Kyleanne Hunter (2025), speaking specifically about WPS in security institutions, points out that one of the missteps that led to the WPS framework becoming a bureaucratic exercise was its inclusion in military structures as a training rather than an operational requirement.[43] The failure to normalize WPS in security organizations can lead training programs to feel like they are arbitrary, and focused on "whatever the flavor is of the day," which diminishes the impact of the message that the organization is attempting to deliver (Julie Gudgel, 2025).[44] Dr. Hunter posits that a more meaningful and powerful integration of WPS would have to be institutionalized in the warfighting publications.

More generally, Dr. Hunter (2025) points to a failure of "deliberately engaging with the S, in WPS." Dr. Hunter explains that there has been a global lag in creating mechanisms for women to engage in different state-specific national security apparatuses; if women are systemically kept from the opportunity of participating in a position that actually leads to a

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[42] Ambassador Steven Steiner, Former Gender Advisor for Gender and Peacebuilding at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Feb. 24, 2025
[43] Dr. Kyleanne Hunter, Lead, RAND Women, Peace and Security Initiative; Senior Political Scientist; Professor of Policy Analysis, RAND School of Public Policy, Mar. 7, 2025
[44] Julie Gudgel, former Command Chief of the USAF Air Education and Training Command, Feb. 28, 2025

promotion pathway within a state military system, then there will be a chronic lack of women in decision-making positions.[45] Ambassador Steven Steiner (2025) notes that "women are important…and they have to be an important part of all aspects of our society, including our military and defense structures."[46] Dr. Hunter (2025) clarifies that this is not a matter of changing standards so that women are put into positions they would otherwise not be qualified to hold, but rather that militaries need to focus on the creation of "institutional pathways for people who view the world differently." It becomes, then, a matter of access and opportunity—not a matter of qualifications.

Critics also call out the lack of attention the prevention pillar receives, even though its focus on the prevention of conflict and violence against women is vital. Kayla McGill (2025) notes that "the prevention pillar of [Women and Peace and Security] is the most dramatically underutilized, under focused on, and the least understood."[47] The prevention pillar not only involves preventing an emerging conflict, but it requires addressing underlying causes of what causes conflict. There has been a more significant focus on the protection of women and girls, yet if they were to meaningfully participate and be included, the underlying causes of conflict could be better addressed.

Praises

While it can be easy to conclude that UNSCR 1325 is purely normative and not operationalizable, Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini (Hill et al., 2003) argues that the impact of 1325 on women's groups that are actually involved in peace building at the ground level should not be understated, because it sets a foundation for positive growth that simply did not exist beforehand.

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[45] Dr. Kyleanne Hunter, Lead, RAND Women, Peace and Security Initiative; Senior Political Scientist; Professor of Policy Analysis, RAND School of Public Policy, Mar. 7, 2025
[46] Ambassador Steven Steiner, Former Gender Advisor for Gender and Peacebuilding at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Feb. 24, 2025
[47] Kayla McGill, WPS Policy Advisor, U.S. Department of State, Feb. 26, 2025

Before UNSCR 1325 there was no real mandate or document that activists in civil society organizations could point to in order to legitimize their cause to the masses and to their respective governments. This is not to say that UNSCR 1325 was solely symbolic in nature, however, by providing the backbone for WPS action it codified legitimacy into the WPS movement. The creation of UNSCR 1325 "was the first time the international community collectively recognized that women's leadership is critical for addressing the gendered aspects of conflicts and crises" (Dr. Saira Yamin, 2025).[48] The international community widely agreed to the fact that women are not only disproportionately affected by conflict but are also agents that are instrumental to conflict prevention and resolution (Miller et al., 2014; Bell & O'Rourke, 2010).

In addition, UNSCR 1325 is praised as the culmination of efforts by women activists who had been at the forefront of the WPS movement even before its landmark resolution (Willett, 2010). That is, while WPS as a concept existed in early iterations before the adoption of 1325, we cannot overlook the fact that the resolution gave activists and women in security spaces leverage that could be beneficial to their efforts (Cabrera-Belleza, 2011). Further, Willett (2010) points to UNSCR 1820 as another leap forward for WPS because it concretely identifies sexual violence as a war crime, which opens the door for victims of Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) to pursue justice. The creation of UNSCR 1325 changed the discourse around women's experiences of conflict—understanding the risks they faced as victims, the roles they play as fighters and the contributions they make to peacebuilding. However, while knowing this has

[48] Dr. Saira Yamin, Naval War College's Ambassador Swanee Hunt Chair of Women, Peace and Security, Mar. 24, 2025

been necessary, it hasn't been sufficient "because the discourse hasn't translated to practice" (Sanam Anderlini, 2025).[49]

Ulla Schmidt (NATO PA, 2020) further notes that the adoption of UNSCR 1325 has served as a major catalyst for positive change and advancement in the battle for "women's rights in the area of peace and security," a sentiment that is also shared by Fisher et al. (2016) who speaks highly of the strides that have been made in terms of women and the gendered lens in UN Peacekeeping. We would be remiss to forget that without UNSCR 1325 there would be no such thing as a NAP on WPS, and there would not have been a foundation for the United States to pass the first law on WPS in 2017. The women of the Colombian FARC would not have had this document to point to when they formed the first ever Gender Subcommission in 2016, which informed the signing of the peace agreement that ended the bloody civil conflict in Colombia (CFR, 2017).

Bell and O'Rourke (2010) try to gauge the effectiveness of UNSCR 1325 by analyzing 585 peace agreements to measure whether or not they make substantial references to women and women's issues. This study found that, quantitatively, references to women in peace agreements has increased since the adoption of 1325. Bell and O'Rourke (2010) calculate that before 1325 only 11% of peace agreements mentioned women; this figure rose to 16% after 1325, marking an increase of five percentage points. Additionally, Bell and O'Rourke (2010) do note that "quantitatively peace agreement references to women have increased post Resolution 1325, with the rise being more marked among agreements in which the UN had a third party role." They describe this as UNSCR 1325 having a "modest impact" on peace agreements. Though these results do leave much to be desired from peace agreements worldwide, it must be noted that this

[49] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Founder and Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network, Mar. 26, 2025

five percent increase comes only after the first ten years of the existence of WPS. UN Women reports that "by 2011-2020 the share [of peace agreements with gender provisions] grew to 31 percent. However, in 2023, only 26 per cent (8) peace and ceasefire agreements mentioned women, girls, or gender." (Facts and figures, 2024). Though there seems to be a moderately positive movement towards better inclusion of women in peace agreements, further progress must be made if women are to be proportionally represented.

Cohn and Duncanson (2021) argue that the realization of rights as a consequence of WPS initiatives requires "long-term support for transformations in educational and media institutions, as well as for the grassroots women's civil society organizations that are often active in working to transform patriarchal ideologies." This support cannot be normative or rhetorical, it must be tangible and monetary. The literature overwhelmingly points to civil society organizations, NGOs, and women's groups as the most consequential implementers of WPS, and they must be treated as such, starting with strong support from international organizations and individual states. Claire Hutchinson (NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2020) calls for time-bound goals, monitoring, accountability provisions, and enforcement mechanisms to make their way into the WPS sphere of implementation. Consequently, Singh (2017) notes that none of these lofty policy goals are going to get anywhere without the proper localization of the tenets of WPS, as well as the creation of structures and mechanisms for diffusion and normalization of these tenets.

WPS 2.0

As we mark 25 years since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, it is essential to reflect on the lessons of the past and look ahead to a future where WPS is implemented in a more robust, practical, and meaningful way across American institutions. Accounting for the critique that

WPS can feel inaccessible—due to a lack of tangible outputs and actionable tenets—the remainder of this report is dedicated to the exploration of real action and measures that can be taken by different entities of the U.S. Government to operationalize WPS. To that end, the recommendations are organized by institutions: the DOD, the U.S. Congress, the DOS, and DHS. This structure allows us to assess the current state of WPS engagement within each institution and propose specific, actionable strategies for the next two years.

DOD: The Purple Team

One of the most prevalent issues we see in the implementation of WPS is the push back it receives from the agencies required to implement it. It can oftentimes be interpreted as a political initiative or an effort at establishing politically correct policies, rather than being seen for what it truly is—an additional angle of analysis. This is happening even now as the Secretary of Defense announced on April 29th his intention to only execute the bare minimum required of the DOD regarding WPS and, over time, remove funding for those initiatives in the DOD budget (Mitchell, 2025). As such, it is more important now than ever to make sure that the operationalization of WPS is specific to the institutional context so that it is operationalizable at a tactical level. The following section of this report will explore how WPS can better fit DOD norms and operations to increase operational success.

Within the DOD, wargaming is a crucial aspect of planning and providing for defense. Within game theory, blue and red teams are used to represent defensive teams and opposing teams, where the blue team plans how it might defend itself against supposed attacks from the red team while analyzing intelligence gathered regarding the red team's capabilities and willingness to engage with the blue team.

What game theory does not always acknowledge, is the existence and necessary recognition of a purple team. The purple team is not the adversarial strategies of the red team or the defensive capabilities of the blue team, but rather, information outside of traditional enemy-focused intelligence to which the blue team is not paying attention. The purple team exposes blind spots to the blue team that studying the red team's strategies never can provide. As Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini (2025) has stated, "If we're sending delegations to deal with really complex issues, are we sending the dream team…are we drawing on the best knowledge and the best expertise of our pluralistic diverse citizenry experts in this field? Or are we going to the same old guys? And then we wonder, gosh, why is nothing changing?"[50]

There are countless ways the United States Government (USG) seeks to fill positions on their purple team without even realizing they have one; legal counselors, subject matter experts, and even the national security council are all examples of individuals and organizations relied on to supply information to decision makers in times of need. The information provided by the members of the purple team is crucial to mission success. To put it simply, the purple team is tasked with bringing information to the table that the blue team doesn't know they are missing. As Brenda Oppermann (2025) puts it, "You need to know where your enemies are and where your allies are. You always have to know both sides. And women are involved in both sides."[51] One of the most crucial pieces of information a purple team can offer is insight into where the women are.

The assertion this report makes is that the role of WPS in USG is to be an influential component of the purple team. WPS doctrine can expose crucial blindspots in policies and procedures currently practiced by USG. For example, WPS experts within the purple team could

[50] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Founder and Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network, Mar. 26, 2025
[51] Brenda Oppermann, J.D., Founder and Chief, GameChanger, Mar. 26, 2025

raise the situation of human trafficking as a potential target issue for the weakening of cartel power at the Southern Border. The human trafficking dimension could provide an avenue for targeting the revenue stream of cartels, which have been recently designated as foreign terrorist organizations, in order to weaken their financial ability to conduct criminal activity across the U.S.-Mexico border, specifically through the focus of analysis on sex trafficking (White House, 2025). Another example of WPS expertise and its ability to expose aspects of conflict that traditional security analyses fail to take into account can be seen in dialogue regarding a potential conflict with China. Much of the DOD focuses their briefings and research on China's technological advances and geographical posturing in the South China Sea, viewing potential conflict only from a lens of capability. A WPS expert is the member of a purple team who will discuss China's overwhelming male surplus population and how it could affect not only their ability, but also their willingness to fight a war of attrition (den Boer & Hudson, 2005). Having a WPS expert on your side simply increases awareness of all aspects of a conflict theater.

A WPS expert within the purple team could also bring attention to terror organizations with a tendency to use a less conspicuous female suicide bomber, thus enhancing the operational team's ability to assess and monitor threats on the ground that may come from a group of people once thought to be benign actors in conflict. Brenda Oppermann (2025) asserted that, "even if [women] don't have a weapon or haven't strapped on a suicide vest, they're feeding and housing the insurgents. They know where the rat lines are. They know where the caches of weapons are…I think if it were a guy who had all that information, you would be interrogating him in a heartbeat," or, perhaps even more importantly, "it takes one suicide bomber to ruin your day. And if you don't see *her* coming, you have a big problem."[52] Even in the post-conflict setting, a WPS expert will be able to raise the issue of equal representation of men and women in peace

[52] Brenda Oppermann, J.D, Founder and Chief, GameChanger, Mar. 26, 2025

negotiations, to ensure that harm perpetrated against men and women is not excused by the perpetrating group, and to increase the longevity and sustainability of the peace agreement. This is something that often happens due to the absence of those victimized by militant groups in peace talks, but negative effects can be mitigated by conscious inclusion of women in post-conflict recovery efforts.

The Department of Defense, as it stands, suffers from highly masculinized norms and standards, which can cause those associated with it to be skeptical and critical of the institutionalization of WPS. This requires WPS advocates in the DOD to act within certain left and right bounds to bring WPS to the table in a way that is not antagonistic to existing structures. WPS advocates in the DOD thus have the opportunity to help critical decision makers to see past the branding issues of WPS so that well-informed, gender-conscious decisions can bolster the efficacy of the DOD's mission. This sort of advocacy becomes difficult when WPS implementers in the DOD are attached to a name and terminology that can be misinterpreted as being out of place in traditional security institutions, namely having the title of "Gender Advisor," which has been misconstrued as having a political connotation. To mitigate a potential dismissal of WPS principles at the gate, we suggest the adoption of the title "Human Security Advisor" or "HSA" in favor of the currently used "GENAD." This is to emphasize that WPS initiatives are concerned with human security as a whole, and not just women's security, as gendered lenses can often be stereotyped. Gender applies to both men and women, and taking both perspectives into account is necessary for ensuring human security. As Brenda Oppermann puts it, "one sign that we've reached our destination is we don't have to call it women, peace, and security–it's just the natural way that we run our organizations and think about the human domain."[53] Thus WPS, as a framework and a way of thinking about our security and governance institutions, is meant to

[53] Brenda Oppermann, J.D, Founder and Chief, GameChanger, Mar. 26, 2025

eventually become something that everyone in traditional security institutions considers the accepted standard. Taking the step of rebranding some of its operational aspects, in a way that is more understandable to those who are concerned about security, may remove a cognitive block that allows the principles of WPS thought to be more widely accepted in institutions which are not as open to alternative views on security. Despite the belief that this change of name could pose issues to interoperability as NATO countries and other allies and partners still use the term GENAD, it is important to note that while the title may change, the function would not. As long as this position operates as previously designed, the title may shift to align with standard DOD terminology without compromising our ability to work seamlessly alongside our partners and allies in WPS missions.

The WPS Act of 2017 mandates that the DOD publish and carry out an implementation plan on WPS in line with each NAP published. This mandate is not an administration-specific initiative that can be removed without navigating the proper channels of legislative action. As such, the DOD must continue to carry out the mandate of the Act, which is best done through the use of WPS experts advising on a purple team. GENADs are currently the best example of WPS principles being used on a purple team to expose commanders to perspectives that they would otherwise be blind to. Because a gendered lens creates added value on the purple team, dedicated WPS experts are still needed to advise commanders on every level where decisions are being made–in the same way a Judge Advocate General (JAG) or a public affairs officer would. This is why the GENAD position was created to begin with. Thus, despite a shifting context, we see the expansion of this career field as absolutely necessary. As of July 2022, there are only 30 official full time GENADs within the entire DOD (DOD, 2022). While the position in and of itself is precisely what the DOD needs to move forward to prioritize the WPS agenda, the resources it

has to implement it are currently too scarce. One way to address this issue would be to expand the career field, under the new HSA terminology suggested earlier in this section, and explore the possibility of inserting them into various purple team initiatives within the DOD.

The creation or expansion of a career field can look like an incredibly daunting task and a logistical nightmare—but in the case of the DOD, it has luckily already been modeled in other career fields. Before the U.S. Air Force stood up the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program as a singular career field in January of 2021, it functioned as a secondary career field to Air Force officers who were formally trained in other capacities (USAF, 2021). Officers would commission into their primary career fields and work within those capacities for at least seven years before they were eligible to apply for a FAO position. If selected, they would spend the rest of their time on active duty alternating assignments between their original career field and their secondary position as a FAO. This was how the FAO position functioned from 2005 until it became a primary career field in 2021, when officers applied into it at seven years of active duty service and spent the rest of their time in service on FAO assignments. This method has already demonstrated success and should, therefore, be used to rebrand this career field as the HSA career field and ultimately facilitate its expansion.

As part of the critical purple team, gender analysis experts are needed at all levels of decision making within the military, not just at the lowest or highest levels of analysis. The HSA career field could be opened to a larger personnel pool by making it a secondary career field that officers and enlisted service members apply into to be selected for. Once selected, they would complete comprehensive career field training similar to what was required of them for their primary career field that would qualify them to serve on HSA assignments as short or long tours and return to their primary career fields following those assignments.

An additional approach to a gender analysis specialization in the DOD, without compromising personnel needs in other career fields, is to create an Additional Skill Identifier (ASI) tab for gender analysis in addition to the HSA career field. ASIs are earned by attending in depth trainings, which last for several months outside of one's assigned career field, that earn the servicemember the privilege of wearing an identification badge that certifies expertise in a given field outside of their job. Examples of such specialized skills include Army Ranger School, the Defense Language Institute, Army Airborne School, the Drill Sergeant Academy, and others (U.S. Army, n.d.). Complementary to a dedicated career field, a WPS Additional Skill Identifier tab will allow WPS expertise to permeate all environments within the DOD, from infantry, to aviation, to public affairs.

Finally, the United States Department of Defense is an organization that thrives under a system of order, structure and discipline. Doctrine governs procedures and practice from the way that multi-million dollar aircraft are flown down to the way that shoes are shined. It is a glaring gap in implementation that there has yet to be any DOD-wide doctrine or instruction published on WPS. Military doctrine is not written and published to declare the value of any given initiative, but rather to outline how tools and principles can be employed to benefit the mission of the DOD. As long as the law mandates the DOD to practice the principles of WPS, it is vital that there be instruction on how that is accomplished. Such instruction could be the keystone to implementing these principles across the Department, in an organization that responds so strongly to what is written and decreed. A DOD doctrine on WPS will make the implementation of WPS principles a requirement that must be adhered to by commanders and understood by subordinates, dictated through a line of communication that is familiar and credible to

servicemembers, rather than documents published across all government agencies, which, to servicemembers, can feel disconnected from the DOD mission.

The Congressional Purple Forum: A Platform for Cross-Sector Policy Exchange

To meaningfully advance the bipartisan goals of the WPS Act of 2017 and better align domestic policy making with U.S. global leadership commitments, we propose the establishment of the *Congressional Purple Forum*—a semi-annual, rotating policy forum hosted by one of five standing congressional committees: Agriculture, Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, and Science, Space, and Technology. These committees were intentionally selected because each intersects with core WPS dimensions, where women in the U.S. play critical, but often unrecognized, roles. Additionally, oversight of the agencies charged by the WPS Act to develop implementation plans —specifically DOS, DOD, USAID, and DHS—is divided among the Foreign Affairs, Armed Services, and Homeland Security Committees in both chambers of Congress (Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, 2023). However, these committees rarely hold joint hearings outside of extraordinary circumstances, limiting opportunities for coordinated oversight. By incorporating these committees into a rotating Congressional Purple Forum, Congress can establish a shared space for cross-jurisdictional dialogue, helping to break down institutional silos and improve holistic oversight of U.S. peace and security policy. The Purple Forum also draws inspiration from successful multi-stakeholder convenings on WPS–including those led by NGOs such as the McCain Institute, ISOA, Concordia, and the Aspen Institute, as well as government-led efforts like the WPS Focal Points Network and the WPS Caucus (McCain Institute, 2024; Concordia, 2024; International Stability Operations Association [ISOA], 2024).

In addition to strengthening cross-sector collaboration, the Forum seeks to challenge the prevailing narrative that frames Women and Peace and Security primarily as a foreign assistance

tool. Since the passage of the WPS Act in 2017, the U.S. has largely applied WPS principles abroad—particularly through the DOD—to expand resources, build partner capacity, and strengthen international security cooperation. As Jennifer Miller (2025) noted, "WPS for the U.S. largely means foreign policy—it's not as domestically focused as WPS is for other countries. It dictates our foreign policy more than it does our domestic policy." However, this narrow interpretation overlooks the full intent of the WPS framework, which is not limited to contexts of active conflict. WPS is designed to be applied across the entire peace and security spectrum—from early warning and conflict prevention to disaster response, democratic governance, and long-term stability. As Rep. Lois Frankel[54] emphasized, "The WPS agenda doesn't stop at our borders. Its core idea—that societies are safer when women have a voice in shaping decisions—applies just as much here at home. Whether it's emergency management, counterterrorism, or economic recovery, women are key to stronger, more effective policies at home and abroad." The Purple Forum helps reposition WPS as a relevant and actionable framework not only for international engagement, but also for addressing domestic policy challenges. It shifts the focus from applying WPS principles primarily abroad to recognizing their value in strengthening U.S. resilience at home—through issues like disaster response, community safety, democratic governance, and equitable access. As Frankel continued, "These aren't ideological efforts, they're smart, bipartisan policies that make America stronger and more secure."

Realizing the domestic potential of WPS requires more than awareness—it demands structural mechanisms within Congress to translate insight into action. To operationalize this vision, each session of the Congressional Purple Forum would reflect the host committee's

[54] Representative Lois Frankel (D-FL-22), co-founder and co-chair of the bipartisan Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Caucus

jurisdictional priorities, while maintaining a consistent institutional format. The Forum would serve as a standing venue for curated, issue-driven dialogue among congressional offices, executive agencies, civil society organizations, and private institutions. This structure enhances Congress's ability to surface emerging risks, integrate diverse stakeholder perspectives, and hold the executive branch accountable for the implementation of cross-cutting strategies like WPS.

Global Examples

Internationally, several countries have taken innovative steps to institutionalize WPS through formal parliamentary engagement and sustained civil society collaboration. In the United Kingdom, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security (APPG-WPS)—formed in 2006 by members of both Houses of Parliament—serves as a leading model of cross-party collaboration (Gender Action for Peace and Security [GAPS], n.d.). Supported by the civil society network Gender Action for Peace and Security, the APPG-WPS produces the British Annual Report to Parliament on WPS and regularly convenes hearings and events on global security issues, including "topics ranging from the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, to CRSV, Iraq, the Philippines, and Yemen" (Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, 2023). Its structure enables legislators to engage with expert stakeholders while maintaining parliamentary influence over WPS policy priorities.

Canada's WPS Network (WPSN-C) also provides an instructive example of sustained government–civil society collaboration. A recent policy brief emphasized the need to fund diverse civil society actors and strengthen institutional mechanisms for dialogue beyond capital-level consultations. Notably, Canadian policymakers have collaborated with civil society to produce shadow reports and co-develop recommendations for NAP implementation—moving beyond one-time consultations toward ongoing, issue-driven engagement. These models

highlight how legislative bodies can create recurring, trusted spaces for expert exchange, improving transparency and implementation (Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada, n.d.). Parliaments in Ukraine and Kosovo have also shown that when WPS is embedded into national priorities, legislatures can serve as drivers of meaningful accountability. Ukraine's legislature has actively championed protections for civilians and parliamentary oversight on arms and security in wartime. In Kosovo, parliament led efforts to establish reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and shape transitional justice mechanisms (McGill, 2025).

Japan provides a timely example of legislative leadership in a region where greater WPS visibility and coordination are urgently needed. In October 2022, Members of Japan's Diet formed the Diet Members' Network for WPS, a caucus-like parliamentary group established to advance UNSCR 1325 and Japan's National Action Plan on WPS. Since then, Japan has taken on a leading role in promoting regional WPS coordination across the Asia-Pacific. In February 2025, Japan co-hosted the 7th Capital-Level Meeting of the WPS Focal Points Network in Tokyo, where leaders from across sectors gathered to share lessons and mobilize action on WPS priorities. Japan has also played a key role in spearheading regional WPS dialogues and action planning efforts (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan [MOFA], 2025). Alongside the United States, it remains one of only two countries with an active parliamentary WPS caucus, demonstrating that legislative bodies can serve as powerful conveners and drivers of national and regional peace and security priorities.

Together, these models highlight the strategic value of embedding WPS within legislative forums where civil society, expert networks, and elected officials can engage consistently, not periodically. They show that legislatures are not merely venues for ratifying policy but can shape

national security agendas through inclusive, gender-informed dialogue. As Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini (2025) cautioned, “if it’s not institutionalized, it gets erased.”

Domestic Examples

As global partners move toward more formalized WPS engagement through parliaments and caucuses, the United States has an opportunity—and responsibility—to lead by example. Domestically, the WPS Caucus represents a significant first step in this direction. Co-founded in 2020 by Representatives Lois Frankel (D-FL) and Mike Waltz (R-FL, now U.S. National Security Advisor), and currently co-chaired by Rep. Frankel and Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-VA), the bipartisan Caucus was created to raise awareness of WPS priorities, educate Members of Congress and the public on related policy initiatives, and help coordinate oversight of the U.S. National WPS Strategy and agency implementation plans. As Rep. Frankel explains, “I co-founded the Women, Peace, and Security Caucus to make sure women’s voices are not just heard but prioritized in conversations about global peace and stability… The WPS agenda isn’t just a set of values—it’s a proven strategy. We know that when women are included in peace negotiations and post-conflict rebuilding, peace is strong and longer lasting.” Since its inception, the Caucus has held Member-level briefings with administration officials, convened discussions on agency implementation plans and WPS Reports to Congress, and contributed to the strengthening of WPS provisions in the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act.

Unlike formal committees, congressional caucuses are voluntary, non-budgetary working groups open to all Members, regardless of party affiliation or committee assignment. This flexibility makes them uniquely positioned to engage with civil society organizations. In the case of the WPS Caucus, civil society plays an essential role—providing research, policy expertise, and public education support. These actors participate in briefings, coordinate consultations with

women peacebuilders and WPS practitioners, prepare background materials, and even shape questions for hearings. This dynamic interface enables Congress to tap into underutilized gender expertise and explore peace and security issues—ranging from natural disasters to global displacement—through a gender-informed lens.

While these efforts have generated meaningful momentum, they remain largely dependent on individual champions and lack the formalized structures needed to embed WPS consistently across congressional processes. The progress of the WPS Caucus thus illustrates both the potential and limitations of current U.S. legislative engagement with WPS—an emerging innovation still in its early stages of evolution. Despite this progress, the broader structure of Congress continues to present significant barriers to institutionalizing WPS. As previously noted, the WPS Act tasks four executive agencies—DOS, USAID, DOD, and DHS—with developing individual implementation plans and congressional committees, Foreign Affairs, Armed Services, and Homeland Security Committees to oversee them. However, Congress has never conducted formal hearings on the National WPS Strategy, the agency-specific implementation plans, or the required biennial reports to Congress (Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, 2023).

Although some Members, particularly within the WPS Caucus, have championed WPS priorities through defense authorization and appropriations bills, including securing gender advisor roles within the Department of Defense, these efforts remain inconsistent. Notably, key players like the Appropriations Committees, which ultimately control funding, are often excluded from WPS policy discussions altogether. Operationally, congressional engagement with civil society remains inconsistent and fragmented. As Jennifer Miller (2025) explained, civil society experts are essential for helping overextended congressional staff translate complex WPS

frameworks into actionable insights: “people that have been doing this for decades... help someone like me, who handles foreign affairs, WPS, immigration, defense, veterans, and homeland security, distill a lot of wonky policy information into something digestible. I lean on them a lot.” While these relationships are invaluable, they are informal and vulnerable to disruption. High staff turnover, siloed workflows, and limited institutional bandwidth erode continuity and weaken long-term collaboration. As Kayla McGill (2025) warned: “if WPS is only a policy, there’s never going to be any implementation. If it’s only grassroots activism, there’s never going to be any policy or funding.” Overreliance on event-based models and overextended advisors further limits the reach of WPS engagement. A gendered lens—when properly integrated—reveals the intersections of power, identity, and conflict (Lepillez, 2025), yet Congress lacks a permanent structure to access or apply these insights consistently. This is the critical institutional gap the Congressional Purple Forum is designed to fill.

Momentum to Mechanism

While congressional champions and civil society experts have made meaningful progress in elevating Women and Peace and Security in the United States, efforts remain fragmented, episodic, and overly dependent on individual leadership. What’s missing is a consistent, institutional mechanism within Congress to carry forward interagency insights, stakeholder expertise, and strategic dialogue. Recent convenings—particularly the 2023 U.S.-hosted Capital-Level Meeting of the WPS Focal Points Network (FPN), illustrates both the transformative potential of cross-sector engagement and the persistent gap in formal follow-through.

Co-organized by Our Secure Future, the WPS Caucus, and DOS, the 2023 FPN meeting marked the first time such a diverse set of stakeholders, including 80 to 100 Focal Points, civil

society leaders, academics, and executive branch representatives, a total of over 300 participants gathered in Washington, D.C. to advance WPS priorities.

The event catalyzed new partnerships and inspired the creation of WPS Centers of Excellence in Colombia, Indonesia, Kosovo, and the Philippines. These centers, embedded in national institutions, now serve as hubs for sustainable WPS implementation. Kosovo's WPS Center of Excellence, for example, is housed in the Office of the President and leads efforts on transitional justice, while the Philippines aligned its center with a new 10-year National Action Plan and ASEAN regional collaboration. The FPN also revitalized U.S. interagency coordination and prompted deeper engagement with multilateral and bilateral partners. As McGill noted, "the legacy of the work we did on WPS through [the FPN] further strengthened interagency connections."[55] The FPN, like many networks and initiatives, remains a voluntary, diplomacy-focused network without enforcement power or continuity in the legislative process. Like many high-profile convenings, its outcomes risk dissipating without institutional mechanisms to embed lessons learned into long-term policymaking. There is strength in community, but that community demands avenues for action, which is where the diversification of experts and sectors, or the Congressional Purple Forum comes in.

The Purple Forum offers a practical, institutional response to this gap. It transforms the energy of events like the 2023 FPN meeting into lasting congressional engagement by linking WPS-informed, cross-sectoral dialogue directly with Congress's core functions—agenda-setting, hearings, oversight, and accountability. It ensures that collaboration with civil society, agencies, and practitioners doesn't stop when the event ends but becomes a regular part of how Congress operates. As Sanam Anderlini emphasized, "we're not adversaries—we're allies, trying to help governments do their jobs better—and hold them accountable when they fall short." Rather than

[55] Kayla McGill, WPS Policy Advisor, U.S. Department of State, Apr.16, 2025

requiring new legislation or creating additional bureaucracy, the Forum strengthens what Congress already does: listen, deliberate, and legislate—only more strategically, efficiently, and with sustainability in mind. It signals that civil society is not just an implementer but a strategic partner in shaping peace and security policy in the United States and abroad. This model created by the Purple Forum could be replicated at the state level, tailored to each state's needs and capabilities, offering a scalable approach to embedding WPS principles across all levels of governance. Doing so would not only localize the benefits of national progress, but also create a stronger, more resilient network of WPS-informed policymaking across the country.

To strengthen this network further, the Forum should also recommend the declassification of WPS-related congressional reports submitted by agencies such as DOS, DOD, USAID, and DHS. As required under the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (Congress, 2017), these agencies must submit implementation reports to Congress; however, limited access to these reports currently restricts the ability of civil society and subnational actors to align with federal strategies or hold agencies accountable. Declassifying them would improve transparency, enable meaningful oversight, and ensure that the insights from interagency implementation efforts inform action beyond Washington.

Structure and Function

Borrowed from defense planning, the concept of a “purple team” refers to a unit that brings together perspectives that don’t fit neatly into offensive (red team) or defensive (blue team) strategies. These teams are valued precisely because they surface blind spots and identify opportunities that conventional approaches often miss. The Congressional Purple Forum applies this logic to policy making: it creates space for underrepresented perspectives: civil society,

academia, and cross-cutting agencies, to help congressional committees think more holistically about peace and security challenges.

In the context of Congress, a " purple" mindset means intentionally drawing in new forms of data, unconventional partners, and lived experience, from gender advisors to local practitioners, who offer insights not typically included in traditional policy debates. WPS-informed voices, especially those from frontline peacebuilders, must be embedded in decision-making, not siloed on the sidelines. As Senior Military Liaison with S/GWI Jordan Penland (2025) underscored: "both sides have to be comfortable talking in each other's realms, because it all fits together and it's all complementary."[56] The Congressional Purple Forum operationalizes this approach through a practical, committee-based model. Each session would:

- Be invitation-based and co-curated by the host committee in collaboration with a rotating advisory group that includes representatives from the WPS Caucus, Office of Global Women's Issues, Appropriations Committee staff, the U.S. CSWG, and academic/practitioner networks;
- Feature working groups, panels, and roundtables tailored to specific peace and security challenges within the committee's jurisdiction; like military recruitment and trauma-informed care, community disaster resilience, or disinformation and digital governance;
- Conclude with a policy brief shared with Congress and relevant federal agencies, summarizing key takeaways, data or implementation gaps, and actionable recommendations;

[56] Jordan Penland, Senior Military Liaison, Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 21, 2025

- Inform, not replace, existing tools like legislative hearings, oversight functions, and appropriations processes.

To build early buy-in and address capacity gaps, each Forum cycle would begin with a "Purple Forum Night"—a short, informal event hosted in partnership with the WPS Caucus. These gatherings would serve as entry points for congressional members and staff, using concrete data and real-world examples to show why WPS is relevant to their policy portfolios. As Jennifer Miller (2025) advised: "start with people you know who can champion this." Moreover, the Bipartisan Women's Caucus, which already plays a key role in promoting gender-focused policy, could serve as a valuable partner in broadening the Forum's reach and institutional buy-in. By embedding this structure into the congressional system, the Purple Forum strengthens what Congress already does—listen, deliberate, and legislate—but does so more strategically, more inclusively, and with the future in mind (Women's Congressional Policy Institute, n.d.).

In Practice Examples of committee-specific rotations:

- Agriculture Committee: Host a session on disaster resilience in rural America, inviting USDA, land grant researchers, and civil society groups like American Farmland Trust's Women for the Land program. With 58% of U.S. farms involving a woman decision-maker (USDA, 2024), women farmers offer valuable insights for recovery and sustainability.
- Armed Services Committee: Host a session on inclusive recruitment, personnel policy reform, and long-term demographic readiness. As military recruitment shortfalls grow, understanding the role of gender in force cohesion, retention, and trauma-informed leadership becomes critical to sustaining national defense.

WPS-informed practices can support reforms that address sexual assault, promote mental health, and build a more resilient force.

- Homeland Security Committee: A Purple Forum session could examine how border enforcement, trafficking, and emergency response efforts impact women and girls in U.S. border communities—particularly in rural, Indigenous, and underserved areas. The 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report highlights how organized crime exploits women and children in forced sex work, drug transport, and violence, while weak interagency coordination and lack of trauma-informed services leave survivors at risk of re-trafficking. WPS-informed approaches can help close protection gaps and improve cross-agency response (U.S. Department of State, 2024, pg. 40.
- Science, Space, and Technology Committee: A Purple Forum session could explore how algorithmic bias in AI, surveillance, and cybersecurity threatens civil liberties and national security. Gender-informed analysis can help uncover risks to women and marginalized groups while guiding more equitable, accountable tech governance. Experts from academia and industry would offer strategies to embed oversight early in development.
- Foreign Affairs Committee: Address Indo-Pacific strategy, China's rise, and alliance-building. WPS experts can demonstrate how gender perspectives enhance diplomatic credibility and trust-building. The U.S.-Japan alliance is a key case: Japan's WPS parliamentary leadership offers a unique opportunity for legislative diplomacy and regional cooperation. A Forum session could highlight how

interagency efforts, like those led by S/GWI and DOD counterparts, use WPS to strengthen partnerships and counter authoritarian influence.

Each session would model how multi-stakeholder collaboration improves policy relevance, anticipates risk, and integrates underrepresented expertise into national security planning.

DOS: Contingency Steps to Ensure the Resilience of WPS

As the American political context changes, through the reorganization and cutting of government agencies and resources, a set of contingency plans must be carefully considered and prepared in order to remain proactive in the preservation of WPS.

Effective June 2nd, 2025, pending congressional approval, the State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) will be dissolved in Executive action in the near future could reduce or dissolve the State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI), in which case a series of measures must be taken to ensure the continuance of the efforts and the preservation of materials created by this federal office. While this represents a setback in the operationalization of WPS within the DOS, there are still measures that can be taken to preserve the longevity and bolster the resilience of WPS-related initiates in the DOS.

Archiving of Critical Documents and Information

S/GWI should focus initial efforts on archiving the information on the S/GWI site as well as the resources, reports, and publications generated by this office. This will ensure that valuable information—which has been created and published under a WPS lens—is not lost and is able to continue to function as a resource for civil society and other interest groups seeking to engage more substantially with WPS. The archiving of this information could be completed through the use of archive sites. Alternatively, S/GWI could migrate some of this material to sites managed by Civil Society Working Groups (CSWGs) or other NGOs, privately funded foundations, and

think tanks such as the International Peace Institute, the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace & Security (GIWPS), Women in International Security (WIIS), or Our Secure Future (OSF). This not only protects access to information regarding WPS, but also potentially opens the door for further engagement with non-governmental groups and organizations with a vested interest in the resilience of WPS.

Reaching out to Potential Partners

WPS as a framework has had incredible champions across its 25 years of history, and that is something that must continue to be capitalized upon as a new era of gender in government commences. Secretary Clinton, Melanne Verveer, Ambassador Chowdhury, Marco Rubio, and everyone in S/GWI, WPS has no shortage of allies. However, it is imperative that implementers of WPS continue to cultivate relationships with champions, specifically in the private sector, to bolster the resources and resilience of its tenets. Melinda Gates, for example, announced in 2024 that she would commit to the donation of $1 billion to the advancement of women across the globe through 2026 (Pivotal, 2024). Gates has made herself an ideal partner for the future of WPS, and thus the short-term endurance of federal WPS efforts conducted by S/GWI, through her creation of Pivotal—an organization, founded in 2015, that is focused on the advancement of a wide array of social initiatives—and her exhibited interest in investing in the political power of women worldwide (Blank Foundation, 2025). MacKenzie Scott, another prominent philanthropist, has committed to using her fortune to donate to organizations that attack issues ranging from public health to gender equality, making her another potential champion for WPS in the near future (Blank Foundation, 2025).

With assistance from NGOs and individuals with an interest in women's advancement and WPS, the opportunity of consolidating federal WPS efforts outside of the DOS becomes a

real possibility. Members of S/GWI, and other federal agencies with ties to WPS, could have the opportunity to organize and meet outside of the scope of their professional careers so as to continue generating momentum for WPS initiatives that might be put on hold via executive order in the near future.

Reach Out to Other DOS Offices

S/GWI has devoted a considerable amount of resources and time to the cultivation of strong working relationships between S/GWI and other offices within the DOS to push forward the integration of WPS principles across the diplomatic front. As Kayla McGill reflected on her time with S/GWI, "I started out with the intention of bringing diverse groups of people in… and my leadership was whole-heartedly supportive of that." This kind of individual effort is representative of the ability of WPS champions at the organizational level to continue to advocate for WPS integration despite a lack of buy-in from higher offices. Now that there is a real sense of urgency in terms of scrambling for endurance, it is a good time to reach out across the DOS to capitalize on the existing bureaucratic champions of WPS who may be willing to lend a helping hand in S/GWI's efforts to remain within the DOS, to migrate and save important WPS documents to archives, or even to help make connections with non-government entities with an interest in the preservation of WPS.

Finally, it is imperative that programs remain in place to ensure the continuance of education on WPS for future generations. The momentum of the Women and Peace and Security agenda must continue and shape the way individual and national security are approached, and a constant educational foundation can be a source of generational resilience. To this end, we at the WPS program at the Bush School of Government and Public Service are prepared and willing to continue to provide WPS education to future public servants, and we will continue to do so for as

long as is necessary while we wait for public and private institutions to realize once more the importance of the WPS framework.

Rehousing WPS

With the expected dissolution of S/GWI taking effect in June pending congressional approval, WPS should look to be rehomed within other DOS offices or bureaus to ensure the continuity of WPS initiatives. One such bureau family that should take on the task of WPS are the T bureaus, comprising the Bureau of Arms Control Verification and Compliance, the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, and the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (Gottemoeller, 2012 March 15). The T bureaus take on hard security issues, such as arms control, nonproliferation, and defense strategy—exemplifying the idea of "smart power" (Gottemoeller, 2013 March 5). These bureaus work diligently to blend development and diplomacy with defense capabilities to ensure the security of our nation. WPS fits seamlessly into the T bureaus functions as WPS exists as a framework meant to strengthen national security by equipping government officials with a fuller picture of a situation or issue by considering and including women. Not only will the inclusion of WPS within these bureaus ensure the continuity of WPS efforts, but it will also increase the effectiveness of these bureaus and help associate WPS more closely with matters of hard security, creating an opportunity for meaningful operationalization.

DOS: Recommendations Should S/GWI Continue Operations

The following section includes recommendations which were crafted prior to the DOS's announcement of intent to close S/GWI. They delineate two lines of action for the State Department to bolster its current WPS activities in the coming years. We have included them in this report in the case that S/GWI is not dissolved as a consequence of the reorganization, and

because there are still things that the DOS can do outside of S/GWI as general practices of the diplomatic corps that would engage with WPS principles.

Employment Quotas for S/GWI

To ensure the influence of WPS remains stable and impactful in the face of the ever-changing political climate, the DOS should implement quotas for 75% of S/GWI to be full employees. within the Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI). A majority of individuals working in gender issues are contractors, and, currently, S/GWI is "about 50% contractors" (Hannah Proctor, 2025).[57] The substantial number of contractors in S/GWI was originally supposed to be a short-term fix to support S/GWI's growing work, yet it continues to be a band-aid solution for a long-term problem.

Contractors do not have the same rights or protections as civil servants, and this impacts their ability to speak out honestly in the government. Contractors "can't legally require the government to do anything," they have to "get sign off from somebody else" (Hannah Proctor, 2025). The position of contractors can thus weaken when their opinions aren't viewed with the same amount of weight as they would have if the opinions came from full employees with legal protections.

The fragility of contract positions is detrimental to implementing and elevating the WPS framework. The DOS must start hiring WPS specialists and gender analysts as protected employees that have the power to fully commit to integrating WPS. Current contractors are invaluable to the DOS, yet they need to feel secure in their positions to truly advance WPS in the way UNSCR 1325 intended.

Creating an Individual Sense of Accountability in Diplomacy

[57] Hannah Proctor, Independent WPS Expert, Primary Drafter, Fourth U.S. National Action Plan on WPS, Mar. 6, 2025

In her interview with the Capstone Team, Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini (2025)[58] asserted that there is a fundamental structural issue that prevents the WPS framework from properly permeating institutional operations; namely, that internal siloing within the different departments of the DOS makes it difficult for a top-down implementation of WPS principles. This bleeds into an issue of accountability that Naraghi-Anderlini (2025) also noted. She posits that there is a marked lack of individual accountability demanded from DOS employees when it comes to operationalizing WPS in foreign negotiations, missions, and other assignments. This can be attributed to not only the isolation and siloing between different departments within the larger organization, but to a WPS failure of proper integration. She points out that

> "if [WPS] is not woven into the entire infrastructure of the system […] it ends up sitting, say, in S/GWI in this case, right? It took us a long time even to try and get it into the conflict and stabilization unit when they first started many years ago. So the information isn't being transferred, and the oversight doesn't exist. You can't hold people accountable. Who's going to hold whom accountable for this agenda?"

This criticism points to an issue that has been suggested in this report already: that WPS is treated as a separate discipline to be imposed upon operations rather than threaded through the way that we define success at any given point. If individuals within our organizations do not feel personally responsible and accountable for the meaningful integration of WPS principles into their operations, it becomes a framework that is set aside and regarded as fundamentally alien to the conduction of diplomatic and foreign relations, as well as peacebuilding.

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[58] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Founder and Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network, Mar. 26, 2025

In order to increase this sense of individual responsibility and commitment to sustainable WPS operationalization, the DOS can take two courses of action as recommended by this section of the report: 1) to commit to the presence of at least one qualified female member of the DOS Diplomatic Corps in every diplomatic mission, and 2) to commit to including in DOS Performance Evaluations a request for information on the meaningful engagement that DOS pursued with local women's special interest and peacebuilding organizations.

In 2024, ShareAmerica reported that one third of all U.S. ambassadors are women. The American Foreign Service Association reports that "Women still comprise only 41.9 percent of Foreign Service generalists, 28.9 percent of Foreign Service specialists and 32.4 percent of the Senior Foreign Service (combined generalists and specialists)." As such, there is already a significant availability of women in the DOS with valuable expertise, skills, and experience who should be pulled into different diplomatic and negotiations teams across the department. Currently, there are no official figures on the number of diplomatic teams or diplomatic missions which have even one female participant. Committing to this would be a massive step forward in accomplishing the second recommendation, which aims to encourage meaningful engagement with local women in different local contexts.

To this end, Naraghi-Anderlini (2025) asks a very fundamental question, which really gets to the core of WPS in the diplomatic context: "Have you identified the problem solvers? Or are you so focused on the problem makers that you're completely oblivious to who actually is dealing with this?"[59]

Naraghi-Anderlini (2025) explains that countries are used to engaging with armed non-state actors who are the agents of destabilization, but that there is no specific mandate to

[59] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Founder and Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network, Mar. 26, 2025

engage with, what she calls, “the problem solvers.” In order to secure meaningful engagement with problem-solvers, diplomatic missions conducted by the DOS should be carried out by a female diplomat and her male counterpart. This is not a measure that would be taken as a sort of tokenistic inclusion of women, but rather as a consequence of the reality of local contexts which absolutely prohibit public interactions between men and women.

> “Because in the Middle East, if I take that part of the world […] a female diplomat from the United States is perceived as the representative of the United States. [She] can meet with men because [she represents] the United States, but she can also go sit with the women because she’s a woman. Whereas if you send a guy […] he will never get a look into the other half of society and how people live and what they're doing.”

It becomes thus a matter of access and operational success. If women have access, due to cultural constraints, to the people who are quite often the problem solvers of their societies, then it follows that women should naturally be included in diplomatic and peacemaking missions.

DHS: Shifting Perceptions of WPS Tackling the Prevention Pillar

While decisive government action can immediately impact the dissemination and operationalization of WPS in a positive way, we must understand that the general public must be knowledgeable about WPS in order for it to succeed and be a force for positive change going forward. One of the biggest failures of WPS is that “we haven’t done a very good job pitching it to explain why it’s important. The less secure women are within a country, the less secure that country is,” yet WPS has not emphasized this in a way that is graspable by the average American

constituent (Ellen Haring, 2025).[60] To address this, we seek to educate the American public on why both men and women must be involved in domestic security matters.

The following sections will outline three domestic issues relevant to the United States which can, and should, be addressed by using the WPS framework and lens. These will be the principal flashpoints of a proposed media campaign, to be led by DHS in partnership with civil society organizations, whose aim is to inform the American public of how WPS can contribute to their own individual sense of security, as well as national security as a whole. Creating a positive image of incorporating both men and women in the security of the nation among American constituents will work to bolster public support and legitimacy for the U.S. Government to enact the policies necessary to address the long-term security concerns in the domestic context. This approach allows us to tackle the underused prevention pillar of UNSCR 1325, as the media campaign will be focused on how domestic issues such as violence against women can be understood as issues of national security. Since these recommendations are largely focused on the domestic domain in WPS operationalization, they are most pertinent to DHS and the shifting of risk assessments conducted by DOS to include violence against women, domestic violence, and hate speech directed towards women as early warning signs for societal violence and insecurity.

It must be acknowledged that the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties—the DHS office charged with implementing WPS—is in the process of being reduced (NPR, 2025), but this could be a new opportunity to further utilize DHS's Office of Homeland Security Situational Awareness (OSA). The OSA houses the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3), whose mission is to "strengthen our country's ability to prevent targeted violence and terrorism

[60] Dr. Ellen Haring, Senior Research Fellow at Women in International Security, Retired US Army Colonel, Mar. 10, 2025

nationwide through funding, education, training, evidence-based resources, increased public awareness, and strategic partnerships across every level of government, the private sector, and in local communities" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.b). The CP3 maps out multiple levels of prevention escalation in order to demonstrate the different ways in which it can engage with its strategic partnerships—such as engaging with school administrators in order to create social cohesion programming as a means of fostering resilient communities (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.b.)[61] Additionally, CP3 is composed of a diverse staff—from fields including academia, communication, community engagement, military service, public health, and violence prevention—who can create a comprehensive perspective for the public awareness campaign (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.b). Therefore, we believe that DHS is the most equipped agency to make the case for women's security in U.S. national security.

In keeping with the lack of attention to the prevention pillar identified by McGill in her interview, this section will outline actionable avenues for DHS to bridge the gap in WPS understanding in American society, which can more effectively be used to hone in on the bolstering of the WPS prevention pillar in the domestic context by generating country-wide buy-in on the importance of employing a WPS lens when looking at U.S. security issues. The following are identified as issues that are both relevant to the average American and as having a significant WPS component: the connection between online incel communities, misogynistic language, and the occurrence of violent extremism; American mass shooting events and their connection to reports of domestic violence; and the U.S. maternal mortality rate (MMR) and its negative consequences on American demographics..

[61] See Appendix Table 5. CP3's Approach to Prevention

Incels and Violent Extremism

With increased internet access and usage, we have seen a surge of online forums which focus on discussing a wide array of topics; this could be as simple and harmless as sharing recipes on baking sites, but it could also mean the proliferation of violent ideologies on sites such as 4chan, Reddit, and incel.co.

This section is particularly concerned with the growth of violent rhetoric online, much of which has the potential to underpin and contextualize acts of societal violence perpetrated by members of the incel community. The term "incel" is shorthand for "involuntary celibate," which is a term that is used to describe a "primarily online sub-culture community of men who forge a sense of identity around their perceived inability to form sexual or romantic relationships… providing an outlet to express misogynistic-hostility, frustration and blame toward society for a perceived failure to include them" (Costello et. al, 2024). More specifically, these are men who, despite their efforts to attract a sexual partner, have found themselves unsuccessful and feel they are forced to remain celibate against their wishes (Aiolfi et. al, 2024).

There has been increased literature dedicated to exploring the links between incel ideologies and violence, but there has been very limited quantitative research on the topic. It is our assertion that cultivating a better understanding of inceldom and violence, and monitoring online forums and overt calls for violence from the incel community, can act as preventative measures to identify potential acts of violent extremism before they occur. This is an example of the application of a WPS lens to an issue that would be typically dismissed as "boys being boys" or fear of rejection.

Not only is it important for the U.S. government to understand the red flags that can point to social violence motivated by incel ideologies, but it is also crucial for American constituents

to be aware of these patterns because it directly affects the American way of life. Nikolas Cruz, the Parkland school shooter, "outwardly expressed a fascination with incel ideology and an admiration for Elliot Rodger" (Hoffman, 2020). Notably, Elliot Rodger is the first identified perpetrator of incel violence. In 2014, after failing to break into a sorority house, he randomly opened fire on pedestrians walking the streets of Isla Costa California and proceeded to end his own life. Rodger became celebrated among the more extremist fringes of the incel community due to his 133-page manifesto, *My Twisted World,* in which he professed that women

> "are incapable of reason or thinking rationally. They are like animals, completely controlled by their primal, depraved emotions and impulses. That is why they are attracted to barbaric, wild, beast-like men. They are beasts themselves. Beasts should not be able to have any rights in a civilized society. If their wickedness is not contained, the whole of humanity will be held back from advancement to a more civilized state. Women should not have the right to choose who to mate with. That choice should be made for them by civilized men of intelligence."

Failing to take overt declarations of violent and hate speech towards women leads to the overlooking of clear indicators of possible societal violence such as that perpetrated by Nikolas Cruz and Elliot Rodger. Broyd (2023) also notes that "the combination of hopelessness with the 'triad of risk' consisting of (a) fixation on a lack of sexual experience, (b) cognitive distortions and (c) blaming women for their frustrations appears to be central in exacerbating the difficulties associated with inceldom. Incels may escalate to violence if they feel misunderstood by society and view harming themselves and/or others as their only option."

In 2022, the United States Secret Service (USSS) National Threat Assessment Center released a report titled *Hot Yoga Tallahassee: A Case Study of Misogynistic Extremism* in which

they break down the case study of a 2018 shooting perpetrated by Scott Paul Beierle. Throughout the report, the USSS points to instances in Beierle's life when he exhibited inappropriate, misogynistic, and violent behaviors and rhetoric towards women. While Beierle never explicitly aligned himself with incel ideology, a historical record of violent behaviors towards women and a digital footprint marred by videos and stories of rejection by women and hatred towards women do place Beierle in company of other infamous incels. The USSS makes it a point to highlight that "regardless of whether an individual self-affixes a label to their extremist beliefs, such as 'incel' or 'anti-feminist,' the individual's behavior should remain the primary focus." Violent speech and hate speech towards women at any given point should be regarded as a significant indicator for the potential occurrence of a violent event, even if the individual is not technically a part of online forums dedicated to inceldom. Ultimately, "although every act of targeted violence may not be prevented, the risk of future tragedies can be reduced if the appropriate systems are in place to identify the warning signs, gather information to assess the risk of violence, and apply the appropriate community resources" (USSS, 2022).

Green, Fowler, and Palombi (2023) identify the pathway to radicalization that is available to these members in the incel community. The pathway is characterized by the usage of "pill" terminology, which is already a widely-used concept in the incel community. It stemmed from the movie *The Matrix,* where taking the red pill symbolized a willingness to see the world as it truly is, rather than what we wish it looked like (Aiolfi et. al, 2024). Those who take the blue pill remain trapped in the illusion, but those who take the red pill can see the world more realistically. Thus the first step in this "blackpill pipeline" is taking the Redpill, whereby incels recognize that there is a societal hierarchy defined by "lookism;" those who win a genetic lottery are placed at the top and those who are less handsome face a scarcity in romantic prospects.

These are the incels. The next step is taking the Racepill, where incels realize that racial hierarchies are 'normal.' After that comes the Blackpill, where the nihilism sets in and members of the incel community realize that there is no way to change their place in the sexual/social hierarchy because its structure is already predetermined. Finally, the last step in this pipeline is Radicalization, when violence becomes advocated and approved as a valid mechanism for protesting against these perceived social hierarchies.

The connection between inceldom and violent extremism is one that might only grow in intensity in the coming years, as Hoffman (2020) asserts that the proportion of militant incels who are making violent proclamations online has grown, and that their rhetoric increasingly displays a "demonstrably harder edge" than before. Private companies have already recognized this danger. Hoffman (2020) points out that "Reddit became a magnet for militant incels, especially the subreddit r/incels. By 2016, the Reddit incel community had 40,000 users. Then, in 2017, Reddit banned the subreddit for repeatedly violating the website's prohibitions on violent incitement. A tamer, more heavily-moderated version of r/incels, called r/braincels, subsequently surfaced, but it too was banned in September 2019." If these private companies are already aware of the threat, it follows that the government should focus resources on monitoring incel-related online chatter, specifically the use of misogynistic, violent language towards women, to inform preventative measures that counter violent extremism. After all, these are the sort of media avenues through which people progress on the Blackpill Pipeline.

We must also recognize that pipelines like this one are triggered by the seemingly insignificant and harmless media interactions with different influencers or forms of content. From this, though, the pipeline begins to create echo chambers of information and increasingly violent rhetoric. Once these echo chambers are in place, it takes constant concentrated effort to

find content that does not conform with the rhetoric that constantly tells men that violence is justified as a rational reaction to the injustice of social hierarchies. As such, media campaigns such as the one we are proposing have the opportunity to reach out to men before they progress all the way through the pipeline and find themselves in an inescapable media chamber. DHS has the chance to run a counter information campaign that dispels this idea that we must live and die by the rules set through superficial value judgements. Civil society partnerships will function to inform on the content of these initiatives by providing research and methods for countering incel rhetoric.

It's important to note that preventing all forms of violence and all forms of extremism from taking root within the populace is and always will be an incredibly difficult endeavor. Some individuals will slip through the cracks, or will choose to ignore the sort of counter information methods employed by DHS through this media campaign. It is at that point, however, that being informed about risk indicators will enable U.S. law enforcement agencies to prevent violent action by identifying and flagging individuals who are at high risk for committing such acts of violence. Green, Fowler, and Palombi (2023) make sure to note that "not every member of the Incel community will or would become violent, but it is important to acknowledge that the pipeline exists as a valid and reliable path to affirming violence as a logical and appropriate response to the perceived slights of members." To be sure, it would be unfair and an overgeneralization to claim that all individuals in the incel community are doomed to become violent individuals who will perpetuate overt acts of societal violence. However, failing to recognize and thoroughly study the connection between incel vernacular, rhetoric, and ideologies and violence that undermines the security of a country and its people could prove to be

increasingly harmful. As Broyd et. al (2023) argues, “there is a need to determine the risk factors among incels that lead to individuals supporting and engaging in violence.”

Mass Shooting Events

Mass shooting events have become part of the social consciousness of the average American in our current era of widespread media coverage. The issue of mass shootings has become increasingly politicized in partisan arguments about gun reform and gun control; however, widening the scope of law enforcement’s knowledge of the relationship between domestic violence (DV) and the incidence of mass shootings by using a WPS lens can be an important analytical component to the future prevention of mass shooting events.

The following section will present relevant data and literature on the connection between domestic violence and mass shooting events. It is important to note that the United States does not currently publish complete data on domestic violence rates, which leaves a significant information gap that should and must be addressed by appropriate U.S. institutions in the future. It is imperative for governmental organizations to research topics such as domestic violence and publish such data to fill in blindspots to our current analysis of mass shooting events. Despite this, the government has backtracked in its existing efforts. As of April 2025, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) fired most of its Division of Violence Prevention staff to adhere to the Department of Government Efficincy’s (DOGE) efforts to optimize the government workforce (Simmons-Duffin, 2025). Additionally, the leader of another “HHS agency that works on domestic violence, the Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services, was placed on administrative leave” (Simmons-Duffin, 2025). These agencies were specifically created to fulfill the congressional mandate to combat sexual assault around the country, through laws that have had bipartisan support like the Violence Against Women Act,

including providing support for state and local programs (Simmons-Duffin, 2025). Therefore, the dismantling of these agencies not only means that DV mitigation efforts become obsolete on the federal level, but these efforts are also deteriorating on the state and local levels, because these lower programs now face difficulty accessing the federal funding they've been allocated—such as the "$210 million for local grants over five years for the Rape Prevention and Education Program at CDC" that Congress recently appropriated—without federal staff to distribute funds and advise on projects (Simmons-Duffin, 2025). When the nation loses track of the violence occurring within its own borders, how can it ever claim to be truly secure?

The data used in this section comes specifically from three National Criminal Victimization Survey (NCVS) reports conducted by the Department of Justice (DOJ) in 2015, 2020, and 2023. It is also important to note that there is a dip in the 2020-2021 data which is a consequence of difficulty with data collection and research at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the pandemic likely made it more difficult for people to leave abusive situations at home due to different quarantine complaints, which potentially affected victims' willingness to report their partners to the authorities at that time.

It is important to note the gaps in the federal data due to methodology. The data gathered and published by the DOJ also excludes domestic violence perpetrated on victims below the age of 12. While these documents ask audiences to use the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program as a complementary document to fill in gaps, such as offenses committed on persons below the age of 12, the UCR doesn't collect data on domestic violence. Additionally, it must be pointed out that the Criminal Victimization reports do not include data on fatal crimes (BJS, n.d.), despite the reality that such crimes can cross-sectionally include murder and DV, due to fatal crimes falling under the responsibility of FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System

(NIBRS)—but NIBRS also fails to collect data on domestic violence (BJS, n.d.). To make matters worse, NIBRS data, which relies on law enforcement agency reporting, only covers "82% of the U.S. population" (BJS, n.d.) due to state and local police agencies—such as LAPD and NYPD—being slow to adopt the new, fully modernized reporting system (The Marshall Project, 2023). Overall, this highlights a significant gap in data collection that should be considered unacceptable for a country like the United States, which possesses the resources, systems, and capital necessary to maintain comprehensive data on domestic violence within its borders.

The following bar graphs depict trends of annual rates of mass shootings and the progression of DV-related mass shootings.

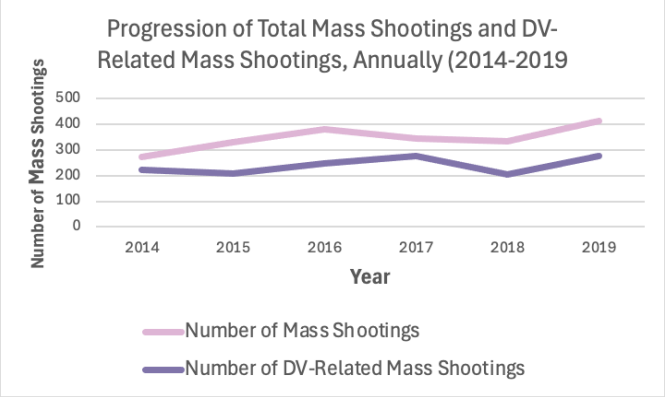

Figure 5: Trendlines of Total Mass Shootings and of Domestic Violence-Related Mass Shootings, Annually (2014-2019)

The data outlined in the second graph clearly showcases an increase in the number of DV-related mass shootings. The term "DV-related mass shooting" refers to events where "at least one victim of a mass shooting was a dating partner or family member of the perpetrator" of the shooting (Geller, Booty & Crifasi, 2021).

Even though there is “no legal definition of a ‘mass shooting’ in the United States”, the Gun Violence Archive (GVA)—an online archive that updates data on gun violence incidents, daily—defines a mass shooting as an event that results in four or more shot and/or murdered in a single event, at the same general time and location, excluding the perpetrator (Geller, Booty & Crifasi, 2021). According to GVA, as of March 28, 2025, there have been “at least 58 mass shootings in the United States…leaving at least 50 people dead and 250 injured” in just this year (CNN, 2025). This increasing number is the continuation of a national trend.

Additionally, there is a lack of coordination between federal and state-level definitions of domestic violence (Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021). At the federal level, domestic violence “includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction…or by any other person against and adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction” (Violence Against Women Act, 1993). While this definition does acknowledge the issue of domestic violence as a crime, it only restricts these violations to only acts of physical abuse, and it neglects to count transgressions taken in other relevant relationships—“such as dating partners or the elderly whom may have never lived in the household”—under the category of domestic violence. In other words, there are loopholes in which women in relationships “who are not married to do not live with, or have children with their abusers receive no protection” under federal domestic violence law (Bosman, Taylor & Arango, 2019). Consequently, this has led to some states adopting broader definitions of DV that include “emotional, psychological,

and economic abuse laden with tactics that abusers use such as intimidation, isolation, threats, blaming her for anything he finds displeasing, and using their children against her" (Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021).

With that said, the DOJ defines domestic violence as "...a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner…" which includes intimate partners, cohabitants, and those sharing a child and/or family members (Geller, Booty & Crifasi, 2021). Globally, of the 87,000 women murdered in 2017, 50,000 of the cases were perpetrated either by an intimate partner or other family members (Hill, 2019, as cited in Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021). Female partners are five times more likely to be murdered when a male abuser has access to a firearm, and these violent relationships are most likely to turn fatal when women are in the process of separating from an abusive partner, showing a "six fold increase in the risk" of a woman being murdered during this time period (Breen, 2023). Federally, domestic violence is "the only type of crime specifically referenced in federal firearm restrictions", which mandates the prohibition of purchase or possession of firearms for "people under a current domestic violence restraining order and those convicted of a misdemeanor domestic violence charge" (Breen, 2023). Domestic violence is tackled via red flag laws on the state level, which "can temporarily prohibit a person from owning or possessing firearms" based on if they have a "domestic violence protection order against them", and these laws have resulted in the reduction of the number of murders of partners (Breen, 2023). Considering that misdemeanors change by definition state by state, and states have different levels of enforcement implemented against these offenders, tackling the issue of domestic violence has seen uneven application.

Significantly, the law is not equally enforced in cases of domestic violence: they are not treated as similar cases of assault and battery that involve non-family members (Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021). Only "between 17% and 34%" of people experiencing domestic abuse obtain a restraining order (Fan, 2014). This small proportion can be attributed to the fact that restraining orders simply do not prevent abuse and murder, as they can be violated by perpetrators at any point. Additionally, survivors frequently face numerous barriers when considering a domestic violence restraining order (DVRO). These obstacles include "substantial socioeconomic barriers, complex partner dynamics, a risk of an increase in their partner's violence, and differences in judicial decision-making" (Logan et al., 2005; Messing et al., 2021, as cited in Shah et al., 2022).

One of the most significant barriers is the fear of retaliatory violence. Survivors often cite the risk of escalating abuse, to even fatal levels, as their abuser's response to separation and the DVRO (Shah et al., 2022). When abusers adopt stalking behaviors, abuse tends to increase in frequency and intensity (Logan, Shannon & Cole, 2007, as cited in Benitez, McNeil & Binder, 2010), with 68% of (female and male) victims reporting that their protection order was violated (Tjaden, 1998). Financial instability also plays a critical role in a survivor's decision to pursue the DVRO process. Survivors who are economically dependent on their abuser may fear losing their housing or income. Victims also weigh the financial toll of supporting themselves through the DVRO process such as having "'to make their own money, to hire an attorney, to hire their own babysitter'..." (Shah et al., 2022). Another factor is the weaponization of children. Survivors with biological children with their perpetrator often face increased pressure and fear, as abusers "may use children as leverage to manipulate or threaten the survivor before or after obtaining a restraining order", and they often feat that "using the legal system to get a restraining order may lead to them losing the custody of their children" (Shah et al., 2022). It has been found that the

presence of children “increases the odds of reporting re-abuse by a factor of 4.5 in relationships lasting less than five years…” (Carlson et al., 2001, as cited in Benitez, McNeil & Binder, 2010). In many cases, survivors simply lack sufficient information about the DVRO process. Shah et al. (2022) notes that there is often a gap between what survivors think of DVROs and the reality of “what restraining orders are, what protections are provided or not provided with a restraining order, what evidence is needed, how to build a convincing case, knowing how to fill out the application, and knowing how to navigate the legal system.”

Even when a DVRO is granted, inconsistent enforcement can render it meaningless. If survivors can’t serve the order to their perpetrator—such as when the victim doesn’t know the location of their perpetrator due to the defendant being homeless or evading service—it becomes unenforceable and the DVRO is unable to protect the survivor (Shah et al., 2022). It was found that 17% of protection orders “go unserved and so are not technically enforceable” (Benitiez, McNeil & Binder, 2010). Additionally, law enforcement responses can vary significantly. Shah et al. (2022) points out that police may not take the call seriously, take a report, provide insufficient information about DVROs, or may even engage in victim blaming behaviors, all of which further discourage survivors. Finally, survivors may be deterred from pursuing DVROs due to the current set up of the legal system. While victims often pursue criminal restraining orders, these orders are nonrenewable, thus victims are pushed to pursue further action through civil restraining orders for long-term protection (Shah et al., 2022). The legal system can also be manipulated against victims. Some judges may choose not to intervene further when a perpetrator is already in jail, reasoning that the defendant has “done nothing” while incarcerated, but this overlooks the long-term risks survivors face and may result in future inadequate protection (Shah et al., 2022). In other cases, the perpetrator may actively use the justice system

to make the victim suffer further through means of extending legal proceedings and letting the survivor's temporary civil restraining order expire (Shah et al., 2022).

When looking at cases of US homicide-suicide perpetrators from 2005 to 2011, between 71% and 82% had a history of domestic violence (NVDRS, 2011, as cited in Fan, 2014)[62]. While 58% to 85% of homicide-suicide perpetrators had "perpetrated interpersonal violence in the past month before escalating" to murder, only between 13% and 23% of these cases had contact with the criminal legal system (Fan, 2014). Even when perpetrators are caught, they can still slip through the cracks. In the case of Devin P. Kelly, who opened fire on a church resulting in the murder of 26 and injury of 22 (Grinberg & McLaughlin, 2017), he should not have been allowed to purchase or own guns as a result of a prior Air Force general court-martial conviction for repeatedly beating his wife and breaking the skull of his infant stepson (Bosman, Taylor & Arango 2019). This prior conviction failed to protect the public because the "Air Force failed to enter the court-martial into the federal database" (Bosman, Taylor & Arango 2019).

Taking into account characteristics of domestic violence abusers, connections to public mass shooters begin to be revealed. Domestic violence abusers and public mass shooters both tend to exhibit a sense of entitlement, use violence as a solution, view violence as masculine, have mental health and/or personality disorders, lean towards suicidal tendencies, and be triggered the sense of failure to maintain control or meet societal expectations (Madfis, 2014; Silver et al., 2018; Peterson & Densely, 2019, as cited in Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021). Externalizing the blame for a sense of loss, in addition to facing multiple stressors, raise the likelihood of these individuals moving towards homicide, "including mass family or public shootings" (Madfis, 2014; Silver et al., 2018, as cited in Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021). When

[62] See Appendix Table 4. History of Problems by Type and Percentage among Homicide-Suicide Perpetrators, NVDRS States, 2005-2011

considering that domestic violence perpetrators “often use firearms to emotionally abuse and coercively control victims”, and that “firearm ownership is associated with higher levels of domestic but not nondomestic firearms homicide,” we can see how these abusers can morph into mass shooters (Gold, 2020).

The uneven fight against domestic violence becomes even more poignant when we consider that when people threaten to commit a mass shooting, and they name a potential victim, that victim is very often a partner or family member (Breen, 2023). For example, prior to the mass shooting at Club Q—a popular LGBT+ nightclub which saw the death of five and injury of dozens—the perpetrator had made a bomb threat, threatened to stockpile guns, expressed a “desire to be the ‘next mass shooter,’” and threatened to kill his grandparents if they interfered with these plans (Breen, 2023). Colorado Springs law enforcement had previously announced opposition to the state’s red flag laws, and thus faced backlash from the public, with community members citing that the violence may have been avoided if the state’s red flag laws had been enforced (Breen, 2023). This is precisely the sort of blindspot that WPS attempts to address, but without national buy-in or direct federal action, indicators of potential mass shootings such as domestic violence threats and convictions are overlooked. There are a plethora of other real-world situations that show the connection between domestic violence and mass shootings. The gunmen involved in the Sandy Hook, Robb Elementary, and Pulse nightclub shootings all had an alleged history of domestic violence (Breen, 2023). Even when drawing back to the University of Texas tower massacre in 1966, considered to be the “beginning of the era of modern mass shootings in America,” the event began with the gunman murdering “his mother and wife the night before” (Bosman, Taylor & Arango, 2019).

Recalling widely publicized cases helps underscore the link between domestic violence and mass shootings. However, even greater clarity emerges when we move beyond the common perception that mass shootings only involve public spaces and high death tolls (Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021). Of mass shootings between 2009 and 2018, only 29 percent were entirely public—while 61 percent of mass shooting cases occurred entirely in a home and 10 percent occurred partially in a home (Gun Safety, 2020, as cited in Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021). According to Richardson and Hemenway, compared to women in other high-income countries, US women are 11.4 times more likely to be murdered with guns (2003). Of the 23 high income countries observed, US women accounted for 86% of adult female casualties, and 87% of all children murdered by firearms were US children (Richardson & Hemenway, 2003). According to Geller, Booty, & Crifasi (2021), for the years 2014 to 2019, 59.1% of mass shootings were DV-related, and the perpetrator murdered at least one partner or family member or had a history of domestic violence in 68.2% of mass shootings (2021). On top of this, DV-related shootings had a higher average fatality rate (83.7%) than non-DV-related (63.1%) or history of domestic violence (53.8%) mass shootings (Geller, Booty & Crifasi, 2021). When these findings are applied to GVA's quantification of mass shootings—considering the study's scope was limited by only considering 4 or more fatalities equating to a mass shooting—the connection between domestic violence and mass shootings becomes much clearer.

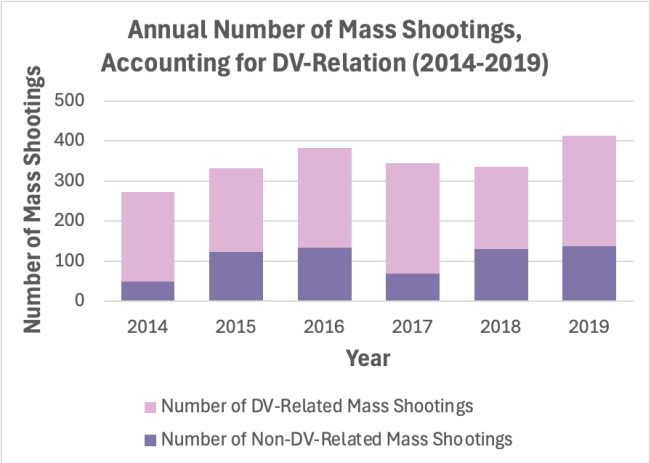

Figure 6: Annual Number of Mass Shootings, Accounting for Domestic Violence Related Events (2014-2019)

While it isn't possible to predict if someone with a history of domestic violence will become a mass shooter—because there are vastly more domestic abusers than there are mass shooters—DV is still a major risk factor for future violence, including escalation to homicide and mass shootings (Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021). As stated by Huff-Cozine & Marvell, "abusive behavior needs to be viewed as an equal-opportunity offense, one for which the strength of the response is the same as for assault and battery on a non-family member" (2021). Measuring these sorts of indicators can allow the U.S. Government to more effectively fight against the occurrence of mass shooting events in a way that is not only more sustainable, but also more informed and effective in the long run. Additionally, civil society must focus on educating constituents about this relationship in order to not only educate the American public on things that affect their own individual sense of security, but to frame the conversation about reporting cases of domestic violence as a national security imperative.

Maternal Mortality Rates

Based on the success of the first two topics of this media campaign, we propose an expansion that would encompass the WPS lens even further. Our third topic—maternal mortality

rate—delineates from the first two in that it is not blatantly violent or targeted, and yet we still believe that this issue belongs under the DHS media campaign, as CP3's mission to partner with other DHS offices. In this instance, the appropriate partner would be the Office of Health Security (OHS)—"the principal medical, workforce health and safety, and public health authority for DHS" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.a). OHS could collaborate with CP3 in order to achieve its goals of overseeing the provision of standard quality healthcare delivery to "avoid preventable harm, enable humane care", and "manage DHS medical and public health data" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.a).

As established early in this report, WPS, while largely concerned with the ways in which women contribute to national and international peace and security, also encompasses the basic premise that the status of women in a given country has an effect on that country's overall wellbeing. Fundamentally, the ways in which countries treat their women often presents itself as a relevant indicator of prosperity, security, development, and wealth. It should come as no secret, then, that the five highest-ranked countries in the 2024 Global Peace Index (Iceland, Ireland, Austria, New Zealand, and Singapore) all fall within the top 15 countries ranked by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security's 2023/24 Women, Peace and Security Index. Importantly, the United States #37 in the 2023/24 Women, Peace and Security Index.

One of the indicators that is often cited as a measure for women's wellbeing within a country is that country's Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR). The MMR is calculated as the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. The Georgetown Institute for WPS uses MMR as one of the two indicators which determine their justice dimension, further highlighting the relevance of MMR when looking at how women are generally treated within a country.

Data for 2020 released by UNICEF puts the United States at 21 deaths per 100,000 live births. This same dataset shows that all other developed countries have lower maternal mortality rates than the US. The U.S. currently sits at 66/185 countries which make up this dataset, with #1 being the country with the lowest MMR, and #185 being the highest. In 2020, countries with better MMRs according to UNICEF include Turkmenistan (5 deaths per 100,000 live births), Kazakhstan (13 deaths per 100,000 live births), Ukraine (17 deaths per 100,000 births), and Uruguay (19 deaths per 100,000 births). MMR is an indicator in nearly every development assessment across the globe, but we must also recognize it as an issue that affects overall security, both personal and national.

On a personal security level, it is apparent through these metrics that something is fundamentally wrong with the ways in which women are being treated in the United States. Women are actively dying from preventable childbirth-related causes, and the issue is only getting worse. A National Institute of Health (NIH) report recently calculated that, in 2022, the U.S. MMR was 32.6 deaths per 100,000 live births. This not only represents a rise from the 2020 MMR previously mentioned, but a deterioration in the systems that are meant to keep women alive and safe in our own country.

If we continue to fail to recognize the danger that women face in the delivery room here in the U.S., women's safety will continue to be threatened. Data compiled and calculated by Dr. Valerie Hudson for the WomanStata Project shows that between 1900 and 2019, an estimated 854,824 women died from childbirth-related causes. In that same period of time, the total number of combat-related deaths of U.S. servicemen was 432,895 (Valerie Hudson, 2021). The number of women who die in the United States from childbirth-related causes is nearly twice as large as U.S. combat-related deaths, and yet little attention is paid to this fact. How can we claim

that women in the United States are safe if they continue to die from childbirth-related deaths in such an unprecedented way for a developed country?

Failing to prioritize women's healthcare can have several adverse effects that have the potential to detrimentally affect a nation's security. On one hand, when women lose faith in their country's ability to protect them in the delivery room, they may make the conscious decision to have fewer or no children at all. Women's choice of whether or not to have children is multifaceted—it is influenced by their career aspirations, the presence of a supportive partner, financial resources, and yes, the likelihood that they will be well taken care of by the healthcare system. Fear of death can present itself, thus, as a great deterrent for women who are deciding whether or not they want to have children. A rising MMR can mean that women will increasingly choose to abstain from childbearing, which can have negative impacts on national demographics and contribute to a declining birth rate. Countries with declining birth rates are more vulnerable to economic decline and decreased military might, both of which affect the overall security of the nation (RANE, 2024). A declining birth rate leads to an aging population, and "an increasing age-dependency ratio predicts a slowing of economic growth due to declines in the total labor force and decreased tax revenue from a shrinking workforce, in addition to increased social expenditures for the dependent population" (RANE, 2024).

It is nearly inconceivable that the MMR of a developed nation like the United States could be that high. Failing to course-correct on women's healthcare will only lead to further preventable deaths of women who contribute to the health of our society in tangible and intangible ways. A high MMR does not only represent a country's failure in the realm of healthcare; it is indicative of a larger system failure with regards to women's security. As a global leader, and a representative of democratic prosperity, the United States should strive to

bring women's issues, such as MMR, to the forefront of public consciousness to begin to address the ways in which women are, still, not secure within our own borders.

Conclusion

Throughout this report, we have laid out the case for Women and Peace and Security. Starting with its history, we tracked the growth of the movement that underpinned the landmark adoption of UNSCR 1325, honed in on the U.S. context, and proposed a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening future efforts while plugging the holes that legal frameworks have left in their wake. Fundamentally, this document sought to answer the question: is WPS still a worthy investment going forward into these next 25 years?

It is the assertion of this report that WPS still has a place, not only in the global peace context, but in the American way of life. 25 years is not an extensive amount of time. WPS is still growing, shifting, evolving, and finding ways to fit itself into the governance systems and the lives of all who are affected by the marked lack of gendered lenses applied to everything–from healthcare, to instances of mass violence, to how we conduct war. In a constantly changing domestic and global context, WPS must find ways to evolve. It is up to policymakers and implementers of this framework to normalize Women and Peace and Security principles at every level of governance. This also means that WPS must be specific enough to institutional contexts, otherwise the framework is doomed to fail. Every institution, entity, and organization is receptive and antagonistic to different ways in which WPS could be framed. Without institutionalized mechanisms and sufficient resources, WPS risks being siloed, symbolic, or sidelined, rather than serving as the security asset it was designed to be. Implementers and policymakers must take it upon themselves to package WPS in the ways that are most agreeable to different institutional contexts, needs, and restraints.

These next 25 years could bring about the normalization of WPS in the American concept. As Karine Lepillez reminds us, "gender should not be something that causes human suffering."[63] As a legacy piece of the first Trump administration, WPS enjoys the benefits of bipartisan support, and has a real possibility to be a transformative framework through which the entire American populace can benefit. The foundation already exists. The mechanisms through which WPS can succeed are in place. It is a matter of will and commitment to the principles of meaningful participation at every level of governance. Moving from symbolic commitment to strategic integration will be essential to building a more peaceful, equitable, and secure world.

[63] Karine Lepillez, Founder, Society of Gender Professionals; Adjunct Faculty, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security; Senior Associate, Iris Group International, Mar. 14, 2025

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APPENDIX

Methodology

Purpose

As we approach the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda stands at a crossroads. This project seeks to evaluate the progress, shortcomings, and enduring potential of WPS by analyzing its implementation across national and international levels. Our aim is to assess whether the WPS agenda has meaningfully addressed the most pressing security issues over the past quarter-century—and to offer a vision for "WPS 2.0" based on both achievements and gaps. Through a dual approach of literature review and stakeholder interviews, we explore not only what has been done, but also how the agenda might evolve to meet future challenges, including atrocity prevention, institutional innovation, and inclusive security frameworks.

Research Design

We employed a primarily qualitative research design centered on historical process tracing and in-depth interviews. While the bulk of our findings are rooted in qualitative insights, we supplemented our work with light quantitative data analysis on National Action Plans (NAPs), regional action plans, and government implementation data. We selected this design to capture the perspectives of those who have shaped and implemented WPS policy, believing that insights from scholars, civil society leaders, and government officials are essential to understanding both the intent and the lived reality of WPS implementation.

Data Collection Methods

We conducted a total of 28 semi-structured interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders between February and early April 2025. Interview scheduling was handled collaboratively, with two team members present per interview: one lead interviewer and one notetaker. Interviews were conducted over Zoom, recorded with participant consent, and subsequently transcribed.

To analyze the qualitative data, we created a master spreadsheet where quotes were tagged and categorized according to themes such as: "Successes of WPS," "Failures of WPS," "Future of WPS (WPS 2.0)," "Specific Regional Cases," "History of WPS," "What is WPS?," and "So Quotable." These thematic categories helped us integrate stakeholder perspectives into the appropriate sections of our report.

Tools used included Google Docs, Sheets, and Drive for collaborative writing and data organization, Mural for whiteboarding and brainstorming, Zoom for virtual interviews, and WhatsApp for team communication.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sample Description

We interviewed individuals working across government (U.S. and international), civil society, academia, the defense sector, and multilateral organizations. Participants were selected based on expertise, experience, role diversity, and relevance to the WPS agenda. Our list was developed collaboratively with the Office of Global Women's Issues at the U.S. Department of State and expanded through our own network and outreach. We organized our outreach into tiers

of priority and feasibility, ultimately contacting 56 individuals through direct email and WPS-focused listservs, including the help of Dr. Valerie M. Hudson.

Interviewees included notable WPS figures such as Amb. Anwarul Chowdhury, Amb. Steven Steiner, Amb. Melanne Verveer, Sanam Anderlini, PDAS Kat Fotovat, Dr. Ellen Haring, Kayla McGill, and others. Their areas of contribution included UNSCR 1325's history, U.S. implementation of the WPS Act, critiques of institutional structures like gender advisors and WPS points of contact, and visions for the future of the WPS agenda.

Source Review and Desk Research

To complement our interviews, we conducted a thorough review of over 100 sources including:

- Academic literature (e.g., journal articles, books, theses)
- Government and intergovernmental documents (e.g., NAPs, WPS strategies, implementation plans)
- Civil society and NGO reports
- UN resolutions and international legal frameworks
- Multimedia resources (e.g., webinars, recorded talks)
- Historical case studies on sexual violence, peacebuilding, and gender security

Key documents analyzed include the U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2019, 2023), NATO's WPS Policy (2024), ASEAN and ECOWAS Regional Action Plans, and foundational academic work by scholars such as Cohn, Bell, O'Rourke, and Hudson. All sources were publicly accessible and reviewed collaboratively by the research team using shared folders and spreadsheets.

Limitations

Time constraints and access limitations shaped the scope of our research. While we engaged with a wide range of high-level stakeholders, certain individuals were unavailable due to scheduling, ongoing political sensitivities, or security concerns. Additionally, not all documents or datasets were available due to classification, organizational restructuring, or removal from public repositories. The compressed project timeline—from first client contact in November 2024 to report completion in April 2025—necessitated prioritization in our interviews and document selection. These limitations were mitigated through triangulation and consistent collaboration within our research team.

Furthermore, although our team conducted interviews with rigor, our interpretation of findings may carry implicit biases linked to our positionality as researchers based in the U.S. An additional source of potential bias stems from our positionality as graduate students concentrating in WPS as part of our Masters degree. This topic is not only central to our education, but also personal to our career aspirations as future academics, policy practitioners, and public servants. Our passion for and investment in the WPS agenda may influence how we frame its successes and shortcomings. However, we view this insider perspective as a strength that enriches our ability to critically and constructively engage with the agenda's trajectory.

Ethical Considerations

We ensured ethical research practices throughout the project. Interview invitations and follow-up correspondence included clear explanations of our purpose and the option to withdraw at any time. Interviewees were asked for consent to record and quote them, and all quoted material was submitted to participants for final approval before inclusion in the report. Anonymity was offered when requested. Our team was mindful of the sensitive nature of WPS-related work and treated all perspectives with respect and confidentiality.

UNSCR Resolutions Post-1325 Topic 1: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

S/RES/1820 (2008)

UNSCR 1820 focuses on the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. It is the first resolution that makes demands of parties involved, albeit it isn't specified who falls under the term party, to take action to prevent and enforce accountability for CRSV violations. When specific entities are called upon to take action, such as the Member States or other UN entities, these measures are only suggestions or requests.

S/RES/1888 (2009)

UNSCR 1888 focuses on the prevention of CRSV and the protection of CRSV victims. This manifests in suggestions that states provide services to victims for societal reintegration, collaboration with local women and women's organizations, sensitizing populations to sexual violence, and increasing the number of women among the ranks of UN forces. The singular demand that this resolution makes is that "all parties to armed conflict immediately take appropriate measures to protect civilians, including women and children, from all forms of sexual violence…" Examples of measures to achieve this goal are made but they are vague and lack enforcement capabilities.

S/RES/1960 (2010)

UNSCR 1960 focuses on ending the impunity for perpetrators of CRSV. This is expressed through the UNSC's suggestion to punish violators with sanctions and the addition of a list of alleged abusers, proposed sanctions, and the establishment of reporting arrangements for such violations in the UN Secretary-General's reports.

S/RES/2106 (2013)

UNSCR 2106 focuses on data collection, documentation, and investigation into CRSV. The document encourages such action but doesn't mandate it.

S/RES/2467 (2019)

UNSCR 2467 focuses on the prevention of CRSV and the protection of CRSV victims, similar to UNSCR 1888, but in a more detailed manner. The document points out that the disproportionate impact of CRSV on women and girls is exacerbated by their discrimination and under-representation in decision-making and leadership roles, using this notion to build on its requests for Member States to strengthen their legislation to properly prosecute CRSV

perpetrators and the need to address CRSV with a victim-centered approach. While the resolution's suggestions have more specificity, the document itself acknowledges possible issues with implementation due to the reality that post-conflict societies lack the judicial apparatus necessary to effectively prosecute or even file women's reporting of CRSV in a state-wide capacity.

Topic 2: Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

S/RES/1889 (2009)

UNSCR 1889 focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding. The document recommends things like supporting women's physical security and socioeconomic conditions through income generating activities, which contrasts similar asks in previous documents, like UNSCR 1888's call for states to "take appropriate measures to protect civilians." While the requests of this resolution are still vague, these suggestions provide more specific guides to actors as to how to tackle the issue of post-conflict peacebuilding, thus showing the UN taking on a stronger directive role.

Topic 3: Counter-Terrorism

S/RES/2242 (2015)

UNSCR 2242 focuses on the integration of gender as a factor of interest in counterterrorism and, therefore, national security. This call to action departs from the norm in terms of language, as it calls for specific committees --- such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) --- to integrate gender as a part of their operative imperative. However, this resolution also uses a lot of "if appropriate" language, meaning that it makes suggestions and asks for these suggestions to be implemented when actors deem it appropriate.

Topic 4: Reinforcement of the Existing WPS Framework

S/RES/2122 (2013)

UNSCR 2122 focuses on reaffirming a commitment to the principles espoused by UNSCR 1325. It also sheds light on women's humanitarian issues and asks states to pay closer attention to the humanitarian crises that are currently affecting women within their sovereign borders. It *urges* member states to follow through on the previous resolutions and focus on the inclusion of women in different spaces relevant to the electorate and also national security in terms of anti-trafficking efforts.

S/RES/2493 (2019)

UNSCR focuses on the lack of implementation of WPS. The verbiage used in this resolution is much like, if not exactly like, previous resolutions. This resolution does *urge* member states to a better job integrating Women, Peace, and Security principles throughout the peacemaking process.

Table 1: NAP Status Data (WILPF, n.d.)

	NAP STATUS			
REGION	CURRENT	UN-RENEWED	NEVER	**REGIONAL TOTAL**
East Asia and the Pacific	5	3	24	32
East Asia and the Pacific (%)	*15.63%*	*9.38%*	*75.00%*	
Europe and Eurasia	14	27	9	50
Europe and Eurasia (%)	*28.00%*	*54.00%*	*18.00%*	
Near East	1	6	11	18
Near East (%)	*5.56%*	*33.33%*	*61.11%*	
South and Central Asia	4	4	5	13
South and Central Asia (%)	*30.77%*	*30.77%*	*38.46%*	
Africa	9	21	19	49
Africa (%)	*18.37%*	*42.86%*	*38.78%*	
Western Hemisphere	2	9	24	35
Western Hemisphere (%)	*5.71%*	*25.71%*	*68.57%*	
GLOBAL	**35**	**70**	**92**	**197**

* The Republic of Korea and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire have current NAPs according to WPS Focal Points Network's dataset (n.d.).

Table 2: NAP Status Data (WPS Focal Points Network)

Regional Action Plans (RAPs)			
Regions		Member States	Timeframe of Current Plan
1	The League of Arab States (LAS)	Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen	2015-2030
2	InterGovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda	2023-2030
3	African Union	Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Republic of the, Congo, Democratic Republic of the, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.	2018-2028
4	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.	2021-2025
5	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom, United States, Greece, Turkey, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Finland, Sweden	2024

Regional Action Plans (RAPs)			
6	Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and São Tomé and Príncipe	2020-2024
7	European Union (EU)	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden	2019-2024
8	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)	Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia	2018-2023
9	Southern African Development Community (SADC)	Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe	2018-2022
10	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)	Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Uzbekistan	2020
11	Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo	2020

Regional Action Plans (RAPs)			
12	The East African Community (EAC)	Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania	2015-2019
13	Pacific Islands Forum	Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu	2012-2015

Table 3. Common characteristics comparing domestic violence abusers and public mass shooters (Madfis, 2014; Silver et al., 2018; Peterson & Densely, 2019, as cited in Huff-Corzine & Marvell, 2021)

Common Characteristics Comparing Domestic Violence Abusers and Public Mass Shooters	
Domestic Violence Abuser Characteristics	**Public Mass Shooter Characteristics**
A sense of entitlement of power and control in the relationship because of male privilege	A sense of entitlement because of White male heterosexual privilege
Use violence to control, thus as a solution	See violence as a solution
View using violence as masculine	View violence as a characteristic of masculinity
Have a personality/mental health disorder, e.g., narcissistic personality	Heave mental health issues and stressors
Approximately half that kill 3 or more family members then either commit suicide or suicide by cop	Most public shooters are suicidal
A sense of loss usually when the intimate partner leaves the relationship often is the trigger leading to homicide	A sense of loss when they fail to achieve financial success; middle-class instability
Characteristics from Madfis (2014), Silver et al. (2018), and Peterson & Densely (2019).	

Table 4. History of Problems by Type and Percentage among Homicide-Suicide Perpetrators, NVDRS States, 2005-2011 (Fan, 2014)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011**
Total with Known Circumstances	183	163	169	164	173	184	206
Intimate Partner Problem	147 (80%)	119 (73%)	137 (81%	118 (72%)	129 (75%)	134 (73%)	158 (77%)
Crisis in Past Two Weeks before Killing	161 (88%)	143 (88%)	154 (91%)	136 (83%)	134 (77%)	136 (74%)	142 (69%)
Other Relationship Problem	19 (10%)	18 (11%)	23 (14%)	27 (16%)	23 (13%)	33 (18%)	28 (14%)
Job Problem	10 (5%)	8 (5%)	–*	13 (8%)	8 (5%)	12 (7%)	19 (9%)
Financial Problem	17 (9%)	15 (9%)	7 (4%)	14 (9%)	19 (11%)	17 (9%)	16 (8%)
School Problem	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	–*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Physical Health Problem	19 (10%)	8 (5%)	11 (7%)	–*	16 (9%)	12 (7%)	16 (8%)

_ Because the number of deaths was five or fewer, the number was suppressed to retain confidentiality*

*** In 2011, the number of states for which data was publicly available changed from 16 to 17, resulting in higher counts. The proportions of the total are still informative.*

Table 5. CP3's Approach to Prevention (Department of Homeland Security, n.d.b)

Prevention Targeted Violence: Everyone Has a Role to Play				
Levels of Prevention	**Partner Examples**			**Programs**
Primordial Advocating to prevent the development of risk factors	Policy Makers		State & City Government	Civic Engagement, Youth Resilience, Law Enforcement, Community Engagement
Primary Fostering resilient communities	Public Health Workers		School Admins & Social Workers	Training and Awareness, Bystander Training, Social Cohesion Programming
Secondary Providing Services to people at risk	School Counselors	Mental Health Providers	BTAM Temas	Referral Services, BTAM, Intervention Services
Tertiary Supporting offenders to facilitate positive community re-entry	Judges, Prosecutors, Defense Attorneys		Re-Entry, Parole & Probation Officers	Rehabilitation and Reintegration Services, Post-Attack Recovery

United States National Action Plans on WPS Archive Links

NAP 1:
https://web.archive.org/web/20210603234551/https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/us_nationalactionplan_2011.pdf (cited)
DOS Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20170121044206/https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/196726.pdf
DOD Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20220303112429/https://ndu.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=21979410
USAID Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20240608110908/https://srhrindex.srhrforall.org/uploads/2018/11/2012_USAID-Implementation-of-the-United-States-National-Action-Plan-on-Women-Peace-and-Security.pdf

NAP 2:
https://web.archive.org/web/20210713082042/https://www.wpsnaps.org/app/uploads/2019/09/United-States-NAP-2-2016.pdf (cited)

WPS ACT 2017
https://web.archive.org/web/20180222155517/https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ68/PLAW-115publ68.pdf

NAP 3:
https://web.archive.org/web/20191201100242/https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/WPS-Strategy-FINAL-PDF-6.11.19.pdf (cited)
DHS Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20200611201140/https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/wps-dhs-implementation-plan.pdf
DOS Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20200611205035/https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/20-01943-SGWI_v11_forWeb_Bookmarks508.pdf
DOD Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20200611203718/https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jun/11/2002314428/-1/-1/1/WOMEN_PEACE_SECURITY_STRATEGIC_FRAMEWORK_IMPLEMENTATION_PLAN.PDF
USAID Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20201008041342/https://www.capito.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/06-11-2020%20WPS%20IP_USAID.pdf

2021 US Congressional Report on WPS
https://web.archive.org/web/20250122032418/https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/USG_Women_Peace_Security_WPS_Congressional_Report_FINAL6.30.2021-Updated-July-16.pdf
2022 US Congressional Report on WPS
https://web.archive.org/web/20220718190859/https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/US-Women-Peace-Security-Report-2022.pdf

NAP 4:
https://web.archive.org/web/20240812061732/https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/U.S.-Strategy-and-National-Action-Plan-on-Women-Peace-and-Security.pdf
DOS Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20250425010211/https://www.state.gov/reports/department-of-state-implementation-plan-for-the-u-s-strategy-and-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security/
DOD Implementation Plan
https://web.archive.org/web/20250101004300/https://media.defense.gov/2024/Dec/31/2003619968/-1/-1/1/2024-DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-WOMEN-PEACE-AND-SECURITY-IMPLEMENTATION-PLAN.PDF
DHS Implementation Plan
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