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Office of Conflict Management and  
Mitigation

2011 Speaker Series

Gender and Conflict

USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) initiated a Gender and Conflict Speaker Series in 2011. Inspired by the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, CMM sought to further examine the role of gender dynamics in conflict by inviting leading researchers and practitioners to share their findings with USAID in a way that is relevant to its work.

The series covered the following topics:

- Gender in Post-conflict Programming: Lessons from Sierra Leone (Megan MacKenzie)
- Exploring the Linkage Between the Security of Women and the Security of States (Valerie Hudson)
- Challenging Gendered Norms: Women and Political Violence (Joyce Kaufman and Kristen Williams)
- Masculinity, Femininity, & Stabilization: The Case for Gender Analysis in Transitional Environments (Cynthia Enloe)
- A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in US Counter-terrorism (Jayne Huckerbee)
- Gender Roles and Cultural Norms: Effects on Law, Politics, and Violence (James Gilligan)
- Bombshell: The Many Faces of Women Terrorists (Mia Bloom)

CMM would like to thank the hundreds of participants who attended the events in person or virtually.

CMM looks forward to facilitating dialogue among experts and practitioners on understanding gender's role in violent conflict so we can design more thoughtful, conflict mitigating programming.



# USAID/CMM Speaker Series

## Gender in Post-conflict Programming: Lessons from Sierra Leone

*Submitted on March 11, 2011*

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**The U.S. Agency for International  
Development Gender and Conflict  
Speaker Series**

**Gender in Post-conflict Programming:  
Lessons from Sierra Leone**

*Featuring*

**Dr. Megan MacKenzie**

*Presenter*

*Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand*

**Tuesday, February 15, 2011**

**DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

## Speaker & Discussants

### **Dr. Megan MacKenzie, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand**

Megan MacKenzie is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, and a former post-doctoral fellow at the Belfer Center for International Security and the Women and Public Policy Program at the Kennedy School, Harvard University.

Her research areas include gender and development, international relations, security studies, and post-conflict transitions. MacKenzie's unique research experience includes extensive work in Sierra Leone where she interviewed over 50 former female soldiers.

Recent publications include "Securitization and De-securitization: Female Soldiers and the Construction of the Family" in *Security Studies* and "De-Securitizing Sex: War Rape and the Radicalization of Development in Sierra Leone" in the *Feminist Journal of International Politics*.

### **Neil Levine, USAID Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation**

Neil Levine is the Director of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) in USAID's in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. CMM leads USAID efforts to develop approaches to the causes and consequences of violent conflict. From 2000-2007, Mr. Levine served as the Chief of the Governance Division in USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance where he worked on issues involving promotion of transparent, accountable and effective democratic institutions. Mr. Levine served as deputy director for the Office of Central American Affairs (LAC/CEN) from 1995-2000. He has a strong interest in countries in transition and worked closely in support of the USAID's Missions in Central America to support implementation of the peace accords in El Salvador and Guatemala.

## **Note from the Director**

In an effort to frame this discussion, let me explain why and how this series came about. Last year, CMM decided to adopt a more technical line of inquiry into conflict in order to be at the cutting edge in areas of research and to better educate on what the current thinking on gender and conflict is. Future topics may include masculinity and violence; gender identity; nation building and gender. In addition, CMM desires to strengthen their efforts in developing evidence-based research.

As we develop the series, we welcome suggestions. In light of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Resolution 1325, a discussion on women in conflict and peace building comes at an opportune time to make a real difference.

Based on the last five years of research based on Sierra Leone, Dr. MacKenzie uses the information gathered from extensive interviews with female soldiers as a sounding board for working through broad but central questions regarding gender and conflict. Those questions include:

1. Why does gender sensitivity matter when it comes to conflict? How can we improve USAID conflict programs by acknowledging gender? Is post-conflict a good time to address gender inequality (and if so, what benefits can it impart)?
2. Why, if women participated as soldiers, were they largely ignored in mainstream accounts of the conflict and overlooked in the DDR process?
3. What gendered stereotypes might influence post-conflict policy-making?
4. Is post-conflict a good time to address gender inequality?
5. Why does gender sensitivity matter when it comes to conflict and post-conflict policy-making?

### **Stereotypes about Female Soldiers**

In war, the child soldier image or images of poverty are often used. In pop culture, you see movies like *Blood Diamond* and books *A Long Way Gone* to depict the roles of women. They perpetuate certain stereotypes of women in war. These stereotypes include:

1. Women are not major actors in war. For example, as seen in *Blood Diamond*, women are absent in movies, except as a love interest.
2. When war is over, women are happy to “return to normal.”

Reintegration discussed as this “return to normal” is seen as a positive process, but the return is often idealized. This begs the question: Are females only victims in war?

Most of the literature focuses on sexual violence to the detriment of other issues, perpetuating previously mentioned stereotypes. Women are also removed from policy-making processes. They do not get heard, so their accounts of the war are missing, but relevant, narratives. Literature and research tends to portray women as naturally peaceful and averse to risk. Because they give birth, they are considered more naturally maternal and less prone to violence. Finally, violent women are typically seen as exceptions or even monsters (Sjoberg 2007). A few years ago, authors Sjoberg and Gentry researched and published a work on the topic called “Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women’s Violence in Global Politics.”

### **The Problem with Female Soldiers**

Female soldiers challenge a particular understanding of social and gender order (i.e., power, marriage, children, ‘legitimate’ relationships). During war, female soldiers have achieved non-traditional positions of power. Many are not married or are married to one of their co-soldiers. They often have children born from more than one man, so the children are seen as illegitimate. Fundamentally, female soldiers disrupt **gendered binaries** associated with war (male warrior/female victim) and dominant **myths** about war (peaceful women/violent men). There is a need for more attention to be paid to violent women in this field, but there is hesitancy to address the issue even as more women join armed forces in the west.

Female soldiers help us to think about broader gender issues. The number of female soldiers was much higher than existing estimations, some at 10-20%, but in Sierra Leone the number was closer to 30-50% in certain cohorts. Female soldiers had multiple and diverse roles—often in support roles (i.e., cooking, domestic work), but not always.

Female soldiers were often perpetrators *and* victims; however, the dichotomy is blurred. Most women experienced sexual violence (sexual violence rates extremely high amongst

female soldiers), displaced, lost parents, but had also committed violent acts. The combatants vs. other soldiers differentiation was almost always made with women rather than with men. There was a distinction between combat and support roles (combatants were considered 'real' soldiers).

### **Duties of Female Soldiers**

The duties carried out by this group of women were incredibly diverse. When asked, "What were your role(s) during the conflict," over 75 percent of the women interviewed declared that they were involved in active combat duties. Respondents listed a variety of activities when asked what their roles were during the war, including: "leading lethal attacks," "screening and killing pro-rebel civilians," "combatant," "poison/inject captured war prisoners with either lethal injection or acid," "I trained with [the AFRC] bush camp how to shoot a gun," "killing and maiming pro-government forces and civilians," "gun trafficking," "killing," "planning and carrying out attacks on public places," "do execution on commanders of my age group," "fighting," "murdered children," and "weapon cleaner."

One child soldier, Tina, "was abducted by the RUF when they attacked Kono, precisely Koidu town." She explained her activities during the two years she was with the RUF rebels: "I was trained to fire weapons, to be a security guard. I looted items and walked long distances on foot." She also reported that she destroyed property and partook in drug abuse as a soldier.

Various titles were given to female soldiers: 'camp followers,' 'abductees,' 'sex slaves,' 'domestic slaves,' or 'girls and women associated with the fighting forces' and 'vulnerable groups associated with armed movements.' Some women were simply followers, abductees, etc., but many were also soldiers.

### **Analysis**

The more salient points to come out of the research for analysis include:

- ◆ Importance is placed on combat duty to gain the soldier title. This is not just relevant in Sierra Leone, but worldwide. Dr. MacKenzie is currently doing research on combat exclusion (a distinction made for women not men) in US, Canada, and New Zealand.
- ◆ Reclassification of female soldiers as some form of victim: abductees, camp followers, bush wives – presumes victimhood rather than agency
- ◆ Ignoring/prioritizing diverse labor required to sustain warfare – even though combat activity most visible; amount of labor required is great
- ◆ Ignoring sexual slavery as a wartime currency and required duty for many women; used as a means of reward, punishment, etc. and not just a side effect of war. It would have been a required duty for most women soldiers.
- ◆ This lack of attention to gender resulted in inefficient DDR policy-making – reclassifying women was not as effective in attracting women.

The manner in which male and female soldiers have been categorized post-armed conflict has had several interrelated impacts. First, stripping women and girls of their titles as soldiers by distinguishing them from "true" or "real" combatants depoliticised their roles during the conflict. Second, as development grows ever more concerned with people and issues identified as security concerns, depoliticising the role of women and girls during the conflict meant that they were not targeted as primary beneficiaries for the post-conflict programs and reintegration initiatives. Third, de-prioritizing and depoliticizing females has meant that the reintegration process for them has largely been seen as a social rather than a political process that would happen naturally, or at least privately. In effect, this categorization removes women and girls from policy discourses, absolves policy-makers from addressing them as a category, and reinforces gendered assumptions about acceptable and normal roles in conflict.

## Problems with DDR

- ◆ One of the first challenges is DDR is grossly under-funded – like many other programs
- ◆ Underestimated number of participants by about 20,000
- ◆ Over 75,000 soldiers participated
- ◆ Of the 75,000 disarmed only 5000 were women
- ◆ For children's DDR, girls accounted for 8% of the disarmed – need separate process

Women are seriously under represented. There tends to be serious focus on the first “D” as more money went into that, however, by time reintegration came, it had to be scaled back as donors had to move onto other areas of the world. Other issues included little local input on training programs.

## Reintegration for Female Soldiers

The programs were gendered and limited for those who did participate. For example, there are only four training programs for women teaching them tailoring, soap making, dyeing, and it was difficult to change the process once it started. Reintegration for females often means returning to the family structure, getting married, returning home, etc. This was especially prevalent among religious organizations. However, returning to normal is not necessarily positive for women.

## Gender Differences for Reintegration

The three gender-specific areas that would need to be addressed in reintegration include:

- ◆ Sexual Violence: 70-90% experienced amongst women; would need to be addressed for reintegration
- ◆ ‘War babies’: another major reality for these women; there are over 20,000 in Sierra Leone. This limits chance of remarriage and being accepted back into family.
- ◆ Stigma: women soldiers are treated very differently; men are more widely accepted as soldiers. More stigma is attached to the women. They have to hide their identity as soldiers, denying their role. Reintegration can be about silence or ignoring what they did in the conflict. Female soldiers are seen as aberrations, not heroes.

Many of the available **statistics about sexual violence** in Sierra Leone offer data on selected groups of women, including abducted women, female soldiers, or refugees. Throughout the 11-year civil conflict in Sierra Leone, research indicates that 50 percent of all female refugees (Refugees International Sierra Leone 2004), 75 percent of all females abducted during the conflict (Physicians for Human Rights 2002), and 75 percent of former girl soldiers, abducted children and ‘unaccompanied children’ were raped. Categorizing women and girls into particular groups makes it difficult to approximate the *total* numbers who were raped in Sierra Leone – particularly when one considers the likelihood of underreporting due to social stigma and pressure. Women who lived in certain areas were automatically stigmatized, because it was assumed that almost everyone of them had experienced sexual violence.

**Rape was used systematically** in Sierra Leone. For example, in order to sever young soldiers' ties with their families, and to demonstrate their loyalty to the armed group, some boys and young men were forced to rape their sisters, mothers, and even grandmothers. Rebels also raped pregnant and breastfeeding mothers (Physicians for Human Rights 2002). In addition, sometimes rape was inflicted in front of children, parents, husbands (Pemagbi 2001, 35).

There are numerous accounts of women and girls being abducted and kept as “bush wives” and “sex slaves” (MacKenzie 2009). Interestingly, these terms have been used

interchangeably by various actors. Women in Sierra Leone often say that a man took her as his “wife” to refer to incidents of rape or gang rape. In some cases, this rendered them “untouchable” or “unmarriageable.” As a result, rape could be seen by perpetrators as a lasting violation of their enemy men’s property.

Due to the vulnerable situation women and girls found themselves in post-conflict, some even married their rape perpetrators as a result of the prospect of shame and stigmatization. Women who marry their perpetrators achieve personal security not by voicing their rape as a security issue; rather they achieve security through remaining silent and reintegrating themselves into established and acceptable social relationships.

### **Broad Conclusions and Policy Recommendations**

The following are some of the conclusions and policy recommendations for scholars and practitioners to consider in light of Dr. MacKenzie’s research:

- ◆ Need more dialogue between scholars and practitioners, between beneficiaries and practitioners – the dialogue between scholars and practitioners, as well as beneficiaries and practitioners is important. Women were not asked what kind of policies would be effective for them, so they were in programs that weren’t working.
- ◆ We need to think about gender **consistently** and **before** the implementation phase – gender mainstreaming has lost some of its meaning.
- ◆ Recognize the gendered impacts of securitizing post-conflict (e.g., DDR, idle men). The tendency is to focus on security issues, which is great, but because men are seen as more of a security priority post conflict and we think of men as more violent actors than women, women tend to be left out of those programs.
- ◆ Recognize sexual violence as a currency of war not just an impact of war. We need to think more strategically about sexual violence, including the long term impact of sexual violence.
- ◆ Need to rethink the meaning of post-conflict.

### **Discussion: Q&A with Dr. MacKenzie**

**How are women recruited? Mobilizing factors? Forced? Grievances? What is their role as perpetrators? Also, for women not involved in DDR program how do you incorporate their specific concerns? What are the ramifications of that, not having them involved at all, not able to reintegrate, or not nuanced to the needs of women who are victims and perpetrators?**

In regard to recruitment, unfortunately, it’s difficult to know accurately why women join. Many of the women are in a program targeted at women soldiers who were specifically abducted (a requirement for involvement with the program). A couple would tell other stories of coerced recruitment processes, which seems to imply that it doesn’t matter in the big scheme of how serious we take them as soldiers. Women in the command started amputee program used in the Sierra Leone army. One of the biggest ramifications of the program is it is for soldiers, not camp followers. Women need to be seen as soldiers in order to get resources, which are valuable for moving forward. It is unclear if these women will take up arms again.

**Can you provide a parallel thinking that Dr. Lynn Lowry has done in DRC; recruiting women exclusively to commit sexual acts that are culturally prohibited for men to do it?**

In my article in the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, I wrote about how sexual violence is used to disrupt social order. It shouldn’t actually be an effective tool since it doesn’t kill anyone. However, it violates so many cultural codes, so it has broad and lasting impacts: it shames and disrupts family and community. Effort to use it strategically was reinforced by Lynn’s work. Sex violence rates stay quite high post war.

**You mention the sexual violence of female soldiers, perpetrating and victims. Please expand.**

Some evidence women perpetrated rape or were part of a system where they knew rape was happening (i.e., commander's wife, subordinates raping) exists. However, evidence of women as perpetrators is very low and can be sensationalized when, in truth, there isn't that much of a trend.

**You referred to broader literature. How broad are these findings?**

There have been studies of Angola female soldiers and women who participated in violence in Kashmir. There are some quantitative and some qualitative data, as well as some data gathered that involved field research. It's difficult to do a comparative analysis and my own research is limited and not as systematic as I would have liked.

**Follow up: Have there been efforts to include women more?**

Women pushed major players to the table in places like Liberia. There is definitely a role for women in the peace process, but unfortunately they're seldom in the room, even if they're pushing for it. It is difficult for them to have a stake in negotiation and peace processes if they're not included.

**Peace negotiations: If an important actor is excluded, could they become a spoiler in the process? Are there examples of women as soldiers/commanders included in agreements or at risk of becoming spoilers and might recruit others to perpetuate the war?**

I found no evidence of women who participated in the army being included in the peace process. They were not able to leverage their power post-conflict because stigma was too high and only a minority was involved in reintegration. There are some examples of women recruited back into Sierra Leone army. If they had been more formally a part of the process, they might have been able to leverage their previous power. It is a difficult question to answer without more knowledge about female soldiers post conflict; it's a set of questions that are important but we don't know. It would be useful to follow up 10 years after the conflict to see where they are, where their sons are, etc.

**Classification of women soldiers: did you do research on the women soldiers themselves and on how did they want to be classified? Did they have an opinion? How did that feed into stigma issues? Did they switch post-conflict? Did you do any research about the role and impact women have influencing and encouraging their sons to become soldiers? Women may not do the violence themselves but may provoke their sons or husbands to do it for status reasons.**

When asked: "Would you say you were soldiers," over 80% said yes, even after they knew I was not associated with the program and had no power. Women were strategic post-conflict, as everyone was. Women wanted to qualify for reintegration, but certainly not all the women in the program were abducted. What the women tell us is strategic. The stories they tell are based on what's safest for them and their survival. There is a knowledge gap. It is important to know if women can be spoilers or if they're more likely to encourage sons to join the army, but we don't really know.

**Women as perpetrators: Our comfort zone and our own gender stereotypes influence policy. In that context, would having conversations about this push us out of our comfort zone? Uncomfortable with the image of a woman committing an act of sexual violence, so we can have these conversations without all the discomfort.**

Important point. Looking at documentation for in-taking child soldiers; one question on it was to check off if you were raped and did you rape. Almost all the girls checked they'd been raped and some of them were marked they had raped. The forms were filled out correctly; it wasn't an error. It disrupts the idea that women are not only victims of sexual violence; it

complicates how sexual violence is used. Only hesitancy is the research is a quite vacant and a “flashy” topic and often used to sensationalize.

**A lot of people depend on donor funding, so pictures of women and children are often used to move funding: How do you approach the issue in a new way when the funding and the earmarks come through in a more concerted way?**

Having these kinds of conversations is a starting point. Also, demystifying the issues and getting more informed rather than focusing on the things that just trigger more attention is important, as well as using mass media appropriately.

**Programs specific to soldiers that don't include women: Are there any countries broaden them or did a better job? Sudan, as an example, has a large army that will have to be demobilized.**

I am disappointed that Sierra Leone is perceived as a success, even though it failed women. DDR measure of its success is sometimes just whether or not it rolled out and was implemented, even if there's no follow up or measurement. I suspect that the model that was used in Sierra Leone will be replicated, when really it's a prime example of why gender issues need to be thought through well before implementation phase. I found the exact same issues came up from Angola and Liberia regarding women and girls' needs. Some of these programs are seen as a success because they take guns away from individuals. The two other aspects of DDR are often left out of it.

**Most programs are so eager to reinstitute democratic process and less focus on the economic side of things instead of working both in parallel. Without the economics, conflict could restart. What did these women do before the conflict and what do they do after?**

I did ask that question. It's interesting, because it's difficult to get your head around an 11-year conflict. Most of the women were in school prior to the conflict, not in the work force. When I asked, “What did you hope you'd be able to do,” the women laugh; they're just trying to make it work and thought the question was ridiculous. It's difficult for the women to think of an ideal option when most of them have none to limited options. Some did say they were hoping to be nurse, lawyers, etc., but most said it didn't matter and they were just trying to move forward. Most wished reintegration involved education, however, they've been out of school for so long that to make up for that gap would not be as effective as just giving them skills training.

**A good DDR program is critical to rebuilding a society and a community and the quality of the program drops when women are left out. How do you think the peace process has been harmed by leaving women out of DDR and how can good DDR improve it?**

For the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) premise to move forward and be effective we need to know what happened. Sierra Leone is troubling, because women were left out of reintegration and policy making, so there is a very narrow idea about what happened (e.g., we don't know how many participated or what they're doing post-conflict). Women are exclusively mentioned as victims, not as soldiers in the TRC document. In 10 years, the conflict will be perceived in a particular way because of that. We need to know more about what motivates them to participate and what they do afterward or if they can be spoilers.

If there had been more of a public role of women being treated in the DDR process, it may have been easier for women; they would have had more access to support and funding. If the process had thought more about the sex violence tool, it could have used it as an education opportunity to change views/perceptions; it could have been a safe space for women to regroup post conflict rather than feeling like they had to quickly reintegrate into their communities and get married.

**Do you think that approach would take care of the stigma issue? To have it more public?**

One person in National Commission for Disarmament had a campaign for desensitivation. Women were involved with community mediation, however, it was time consuming and took a lot of resources, so funds dwindled down to almost nothing, and it wasn't possible for all women to participate. Education and awareness positively affected stigmatization. Sierra Leone population were all about forgiving and forgetting. Everyone has experienced so much violence; everyone accepted there would be compromises to move forward. Unfortunately, not enough attention was given to it, so it was difficult to know the potential.

**Anyone else researching the things we don't know?**

On the long-term impacts on women, there are some gaps. There is a need to follow up 5, 10 years later, but right now, there is nothing. It's difficult to get research funding, especially on a conflict that happened so long ago. It's easier to get funding on something that just happened or is happening.

**Any changes being made to process based on new research?**

Most of the people I talked to weren't surprised women participated. I spoke to directors and local organizations who expressed their frustration that in order to get funding for reintegration they had to fall under a certain funding structure. For example, one director knew most of the people being trained as tailors wouldn't be tailors because of job market saturation, but he had other ideas that he couldn't get funding for. They had to redefine and base programs on what they knew they could get funding for. They've also been encouraged to shift away from post-conflict language, for example "child soldier" to "street child". People have ideas about what would work, but they are so low on the chains of power.

**Any differences in the types of activities female soldiers were a part of post conflict?**

Not sure if there are any distinct trends. Most women who were violent were silent about their activities post conflict. The most visible evidence is having a child, so it depended on how the family reacted. The family reaction was more of an obstacle to reintegration. There were examples of grandmothers raising children, so women could get married and their husbands didn't have to accept a child that came about because of rape.



# USAID/CMM Speaker Series: Exploring the Linkage between the Security of Women and the Security of States— The WomanSTATS Project and Database Report

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**The U.S. Agency for International  
Development Gender and Conflict  
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**Exploring the Linkage between the Security  
of Women and the Security of States—The  
WomanSTATS Project and Database Report**

*Featuring*

**Dr. Valerie Hudson**

*Presenter*

*Brigham Young University, Salt Lake City, Utah*

**Tuesday, March 28, 2011**

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## Presenter & Discussants

### **Dr. Valerie Hudson, Brigham Young University**

Valerie M. Hudson is professor of political science at Brigham Young University, having previously taught at Northwestern and Rutgers universities. Her research foci include foreign policy analysis, security studies, gender and international relations and methodology. Hudson's articles have appeared in such journals as *International Security*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Political Psychology*, and *Foreign Policy Analysis*. She is the author or editor of several books, including (with Andrea Den Boer) *Bare Branches: The Security Implications of Asia's Surplus Male Population* (MIT Press, 2004), which won the American Association of Publishers Award for the Best Book in Political Science, and the Otis Dudley Duncan Award for Best Book in Social Demography, resulting in feature stories in the *New York Times*, *The Economist*, *60 Minutes*, and other news publications. Hudson was recently named to the list of *Foreign Policy* magazine's Top 100 Global Thinkers for 2009. Winner of numerous teaching awards and recipient of a National Science Foundation research grant, she served as the director of graduate studies for the David M. Kennedy Center for International and Area Studies for eight years, and served as Vice President of the International Studies Association for 2011-2012. Hudson is one of the Principal Investigators of the WomanSTATS Project, which includes the largest compilation of data on the status of women in the world today. She is also a founding editorial board member of *Foreign Policy Analysis*, and an editorial board member of *Politics and Gender* and the *International Studies Review*.

### **Ruth Buckley, USAID Management Bureau**

Ruth Buckley recently joined the USAID/Bureau for Management, Office of Management, Policy Budget and Performance, Performance Division as the Team Leader for Program Performance. She has thirty years of international development strategic planning and performance management experience in over twenty-five countries, mostly fragile/post conflict states. She is a subject matter expert in shaping results-oriented development and recovery strategies, identifying opportunities and building consensus with senior, international and US Government officials, development partners and host country stakeholders, and gender integration. Ms. Buckley has been recognized for her outstanding intellectual leadership in the advancement of strategic planning in fragile states in Africa as well as for her leadership and team work in performance management. She's a facilitator, trainer, and mentor who motivates others through her dedication and enthusiasm.

Ms. Buckley has a BA in anthropology, an MBA and became a proud grandmother this year.

### **Neil Levine, USAID/CMM**

Neil Levine is the Director of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation in USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. CMM leads USAID efforts to develop approaches to the causes and consequences of violent conflict. From 2000-2007, Mr. Levine served as the Chief of the Governance Division in USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance where he worked on issues involving promotion of transparent, accountable and effective democratic institutions. Mr. Levine served as deputy director for the Office of Central American Affairs (LAC/CEN) from 1995-2000. He has a strong interest in countries in transition and worked closely in support of USAID's Missions in Central America to support implementation of the peace accords in El Salvador and Guatemala.

In *The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States*, Hudson et al (2008) did the first large statistical test to show that the security of women directly correlated with national security in more conflict-prone nations. Using the WomanSTATS database and three conflict indicators—Global Peace Index (GPI), States of concern to the international security community, and relations with neighbors—the researchers found preliminary results that make it possible to conclude that the security of women must not be overlooked in the study of state security, especially considering that the research questions raised and the policy initiatives to be considered in the promotion of security will differ markedly if the security of women is seriously considered as a significant influence on state security.

### **The WomanSTATS Project**

There is an urgent need for resources like the WomanSTATS Project. While we know a lot about the status and situation of women in the world, information is scattered in disparate and sometimes obscure reports. Many valuable pieces of information are not recorded in publications, but are well known to country experts. And what data are collected often sits unused, due in part because the scope of existing databases may be limited geographically, by theme, or by type of data, as well as reports in different languages. Despite these steep challenges, a working, gender-sensitive definition of security requires a more holistic view of the situation of women in their societies; this is the prerequisite for effective policymaking and implementation to improve women's lives.

### **Examples of Difficulties in Data Gathering and Usability**

There are many difficulties in collecting and using the data. Some variables were not collected due to a lack of resources. The under or non-reporting of marital rapes is one example of countries not reporting and addressing the same issues the same way. Other difficulties with data gathering and usage include the following:

#### 1. Missing and Obscure Data

- Some variables are not disaggregated by gender (e.g., caloric intake)
- Some variables are not collected because of lack of resources, lack of emphasis, and/or lack of central knowledge base to record data (e.g., marital rape)
- Some information is missing (e.g., Somalia)
- Issues concerning standardization and comparability
- Not all country reports address the same issues
- Because the emphasis is different, comparative analysis is more difficult

#### 2. GEM/GDI/GenderStats/GEI/GGI-WEF/CIRI/SIGI Databases<sup>1</sup>

Despite the progress in recent years, however, there is still an urgent need to strengthen the knowledge base on all forms of violence against women to inform policy and strategy.

Both policymakers and activists have called for the development of a comprehensive set of international indicators on violence against women.

More and better quality data are needed to guide national policies and programmes and to monitor States' progress addressing violence.

—UN Secretary General's Report on Violence Against Women, October 2006

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<sup>1</sup> GEM-Gender Evaluation Methodology; GDI-Gender Disparity Index; GEI-Global Equality Index; GGI-WEF-World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index; CIRI-Cingranelli-Richards Human Rights Database; SIGI-Social Institutions Gender Index

- All very helpful
- Some incorporated only quantitative data
- Some measures rely on 6-10 variables total
- Some do not examine practice on the ground or violence against women (VAW)

### 3. Language barriers

- Many of the reports are written in different languages and in need of translation.

#### How WomanSTATS Addresses the Problems

WomanSTATS has coded 14,000+ sources (qualitative and quantitative data) with more coded every day. Identification of data collection priorities for statistical bureaus allow for data gaps to be identified. There are over 310 variables, including Practice, Law, Data, and Scales that are continually updated allowing for longitudinal data to emerge over time. Currently, there are more than 111,000 data points, covering 174 countries. The database includes innovative scales, such as multivariate, univariate, interval and ordinal, examples and mapping.

The world is **starting to grasp** that there is no policy more effective in promoting **development, health, and education** than the empowerment of women and girls. And I would venture that no policy is more important in **preventing conflict**, or in achieving **reconciliation** after a conflict has ended.

– Kofi Annan, March 2006

The database is accessible with free online access. Country experts can obtain permission to contribute data online in real time. The database moves toward a more standardized template for data reporting; triangulated between several sources, including reports by governments, NGOs, and country experts. The database is in multiple languages, including French, English, Spanish, Albanian, Arabic, Portuguese, Indonesian, Russian, and Chinese.

#### Who is WomanSTATS?

WomanSTATS is facilitating the development of a more standardized and multi-faceted definition of women's security. Preliminary research began in 2001, starting with only 27 variables. Principal investigators are inherently multidisciplinary and come from several social science disciplines and universities. The staff includes trained, experienced coders. Prospective coders must reach 95 percent intercoder reliability to be hired.

Major findings indicate that the level of violence against women in society is a better predictor of state peacefulness, both internally and internationally, than level of democracy, level of wealth, or presence of Islamic religion, for example (Hudson et al, 2008).

This database has far-reaching usability. It can be used by policymakers, researchers, journalists, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, teachers, and students.

The main question WomanSTATS explores is this: Does the status of women in society bear any relationship to:

- The security of the state?
- The stability of the state?
- The welfare of the state?

The foreign policy of the state?

### **Database Example: Non-Marital Rape**

In gathering data of non-marital rapes in a country, it is important to look at four primary areas: practice, law, data, and scales.

#### *Practice*

- Are the laws on rape enforced? Can the police prosecute without the victim's testimony?
- Are there taboos, barriers, or sanctions against reporting rape? Is rape grounds for a husband to divorce his wife? Is rape grounds for assault or murder of the victim?
- Are there societal sources of support for victims (hotlines, shelters, etc.)?

#### *Law*

- Are there laws against rape? How is rape defined?
- What are the punishments?
- How is rape proven? Who can be a legal witness?

#### *Data*

- Incidence of non-marital rape
- Incidence of conviction/incarceration
- Estimate of what percentage of rapes are reported, how many reports result in conviction, etc.

#### *Scales*

- Ordinal scaling
- Interval Scaling

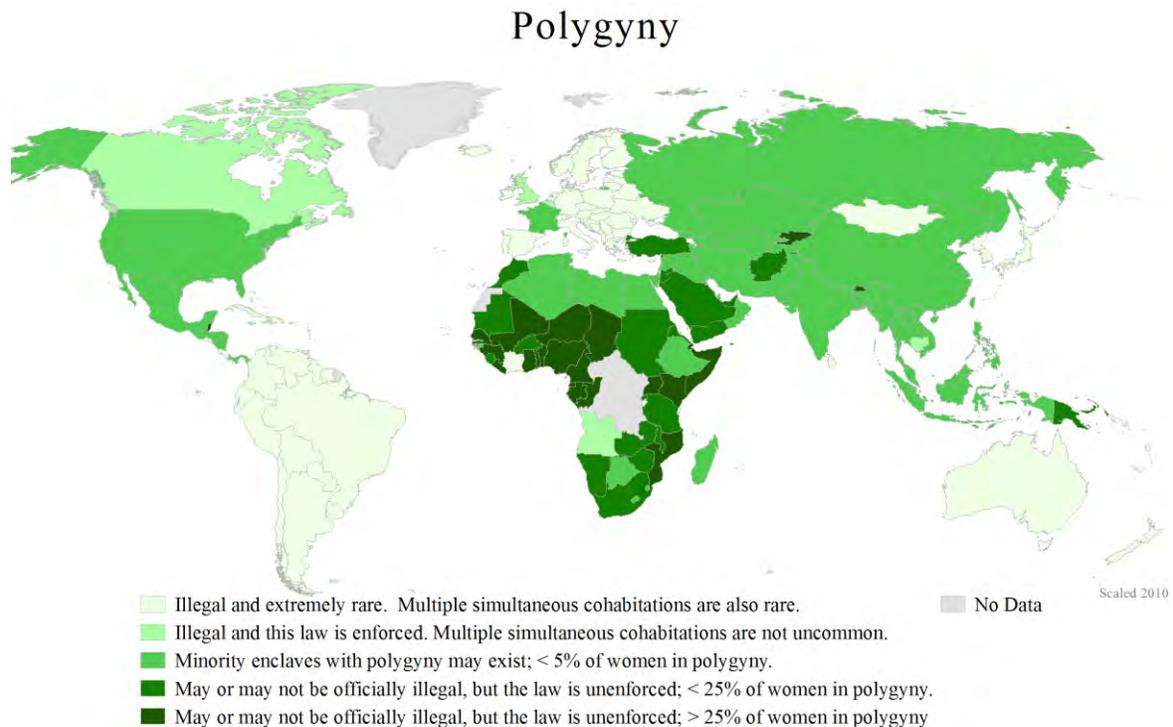
The degree of inequity in family law is a big marker for countries with poor security. The following are examples of scales used to evaluate this area.

#### Examples of Scales

- Physical security of women
  - Multivariate; ordinal; two time points
- Degree of discrepancy between national law and practice concerning women
  - Multivariate; ordinal
- Inequity in family law/practice
  - Multivariate; ordinal
- Regional scales
  - Intermingling in public (Islamic countries) (ordinal)
  - Dress codes (Islamic countries) (ordinal)
- Univariate scales
  - Life expectancy (interval)
  - Female genital cutting (interval and ordinal)
  - Incidence of rape (new; ordinal)
  - Suicide (new; interval and ordinal)
  - Murder (new; interval and ordinal)
  - Trafficking (ordinal)
  - Domestic violence (interval)

- Son preference/sex ratio (ordinal)
- Polygyny (ordinal)
- Maternal mortality (interval and ordinal)
- Birth rate (interval)
- Government positions (ordinal)
- Educational discrepancy (Secondary) (ordinal)
- Women's property rights in law and practice (ordinal)

### Example of a Scale Mapping



### **Identifying Knowledge Gaps**

To measure women's security, multiple factors must be considered, including physical security, economic security, legal security, security in the community, security in the family, security in maternity, security through voice, security through societal investment in women, and security in the state. Each area must also be evaluated for gaps in knowledge.

A key benefit of the WomanSTATS database is the ability to easily identify areas where additional data collection by national and inter-governmental sources would be desirable.

Examples include:

- Caloric intake disaggregated by gender
- Divorce laws and customary practices
- Citizenship laws for women and their children
- Laws concerning child custody and child support
- Relative valuation of sons and daughters

- Mental illness and substance abuse disaggregated by sex
- Societal engagement with gender issues
- Situation of women in war zones
- Married women and STD transmission
- Pornography: definitions, laws, and practice
- Single mother economic status
- The situation of disabled women
- Daily labor breakout
- Recruitment of women into police and military forces

### **Database Example: Polygyny & Inequitable Family Law**

In this example, Dr. Hudson looked to see if the association found between violence against women and political stability holds for other indicators of state stability. For example, polygyny and inequity in family law were examined, which included what kinds of rights women have in marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Using cross-tabulations to compare different variables, the research showed a linear tendency that a nation that allows polygyny tends to be more unstable than nations without polygyny. Polygyny is also a strong indicator of fragility in nations. A simple bivariate of polygyny and family law was not as highly correlated, but it still tended toward fragility. Rose McDermott of Brown University has developed the Inequity in Family Law Scale Cross-tabulation, which shows a strong linear relationship between state fragility and family law, which can be used as a marker for levels of violence against women. WomanSTATS is working on a scale of women's property and equity laws, because how women are treated says something about the country's potential to commit violence.

Additionally, the research indicated that democracy was not necessarily predictive of violence against women. Peaceful states that are democratic and have low levels of violence against women looked nothing like states that are democratic and have high levels of violence against women; they don't look like a democracy at all. India is a good example of a country that is democratic, but still scores quite high on violence against women.

These findings lead us to ask whether it is possible to suggest that there is theoretical reason to believe that the situation of women is a key factor. That is, does an amelioration of the situation of women make economic prosperity and real (rather than not-very-real) democracy more likely? Indeed, can we distinguish real and not-very-real democracy by the situation of women? In their *Heart of the Matter* paper, Dr. Hudson et al found that democracies where levels of violence against women were high had similar GPI scores to nations that were not democracies.

### **Violence against Women and the Household**

This brings us to the larger issue: what do we believe to be the relationship between these variables? Critical theorists tell us that phenomena can be co-constituted, making causal analysis rather an artificial enterprise. However, longitudinal work by Elizabeth King at the World Bank, as well as other researchers, has shown that if we invest in women, we will see higher national economic growth rates. Others have shown us that education of women leads to lower infant and child mortality rates, again in longitudinal studies.

There is something about how women are treated in society that helps create a society's potential for development, democratization and peace/stability. Why should the situation of women matter in this context?

Dr. Hudson et al have written a book on this question, which is forthcoming this Fall from Columbia University Press, and is entitled *Sex and World Peace*. It contains two entire chapters on developing the theoretical argument.

In cultures where violence against women is allowed to persist as a legacy of human evolution, individuals, and particularly male individuals, are committing continual, *possibly daily*, acts of aggression and violence. Extrapolating from Patterson's (2008) model, the relatively high rate of reinforcement results in over-learned violent acts that become automatic, lead to a significantly greater risk of committing violent acts within their communities. This strongly suggests that violence at different levels of analysis are connected, in that states that allow violence against women to persist are allowing men—that half of society that holds both physical and political power—to engage in frequent antisocial acts, perhaps even on a daily basis. This increases the likelihood that men will experience very low barriers to engaging in violence on an even larger scale, up to and including collective conflict. Societal expectations of benefits from violence at every level of analysis will almost certainly be higher if men—who are dominant in political power in virtually every human society—have received many rewards from committing high frequencies of aggressive acts towards women.

Thus, researchers would expect that states where the evolutionary legacy is allowed to persist will exhibit higher levels of violence against women, higher levels of authoritarianism, higher levels of violence within society, and enjoy lower levels of state peacefulness both at home and abroad.

Is there any evidence that the mitigation of evolutionary forces by states affects state attributes and behavior? The answer is yes. Human collectives that have undermined the evolutionary legacy of male dominance—defined here as minimally the prohibition of polygyny, and the elimination of early marriage for girls with its attendant patrilocality—are simply different entities than collectives that embrace the evolutionary heritage.

A demographer, John Hajnal, and a historian, Mary Hartman, used their research to argue for the elimination of early marriage of girls and banning of polygyny.

*The work of Hajnal and Hartman identifies a remarkable “global anomaly” that has heretofore gone overlooked by scholars in their quest for understanding the immense changes that originated in northwestern Europe from the 1500s to the 1800s (Hartman, 2004:8). The anomaly was that, starting around the 1200s, families in northwestern Europe began to marry their daughters “late,” meaning on average around age 24, to grooms that were on average age 27.*

*Lest the reader not understand the magnitude of that change, since such marriage is fairly common now, Hajnal notes that this late marriage system “presumably arose only once in human history” (Hajnal, 1982:476; italics added). What Hajnal means is that never before in human history prior to the 1200s in one corner of Europe were women*

*married in their mid-twenties to men of approximately the same age. This realization, upon reflection, is truly staggering in its import.*

*Late marriage for women created a completely new form of marriage from “evolutionary” marriage. And it is important to note that this late marriage system began first among the masses, and not among the elite. Let us consider the many differences involved. First, men and women chose their own spouses, for by their mid-twenties, young people of both sexes were usually employed in households or occupations that necessitated their removal from their natal household. Not only were the young men economic actors, but the young women also had experience in negotiating their employment and maintaining control over their wages, and thus were on much more equal footing as they approached marriage.*

Entering marriage on more equal footing has an impact on the personality of children born into these families. The method of marriage is different in societies where 13 year-olds get married versus societies where women are 24 years old when they get married. In a society where women are older when they get married, men came to depend on their wives and not their families of origin. Consequently, women emerged as more active in decision-making and in their community. Women’s agency led men to abandon the perception of “irrational women” and see women as partners and decision-makers. Non-patrilocal, companionate marriages were more economically vulnerable, so couples developed more of an entrepreneurial spirit. This sense of responsibility gave form to more equal marriages that in turn fostered an environment where capitalism could thrive.

Individual self-reliance became important to economic survival and arose as an ideal long before individualism. Marriage was the implicit model of a miniature social contract where democratic decision-making played out in the home. Expectations of participation influenced the way people were coming to view the world. This is contrary to the notion that individualism and egalitarianism were imported items; they, along with charity, began at home. More companionate marriages were training grounds for a participatory democracy.

Is it a spurious correlation? No, it is a causal relationship; men and women on more equal footing in the home transferred economically and politically outside the home. People grew to appreciate the virtues of democracy.

### **Policy Implications**

Good quality data is important as USAID is focusing on evidence-based programming. If there is in fact a correlation between violence against women and state security, USAID needs to look at fragile state programming and post-conflict restoration/reconciliation differently and underscore that gender equality improves outcomes. Historically, USAID has considered early marriage an issue of health rather than security. Effective gender analysis will make it possible to do more effective post-conflict programs.

## Questions and Answers with Dr. Hudson

**I read an article that claimed that women in patrilocal homes were more of afraid of their mothers-in-law than their husbands. We see more and more combatants who commit sexual violence and are just as likely to be women as men. Many men have been sexually violated, so it's not as simple as "men do this"/ "women do this."**

I agree. It's not a man versus woman thing; it's a man and woman thing. Why are mothers-in-law throwing acid on daughters-in-law? We're looking at inequality as a society. If a woman is treated poorly in her own family and in her married family, she doesn't truly have a family until she has a son. She then loses her family when her son marries, which may lead to abuse of the daughter-in-law. It may also go back to structural inequality. Even if women do the violence, violence against women is part of a larger scenario of sexual violence against the vulnerable, including young boys.

**In terms of the changing nature of marriage, the traditional explanation is economic (pressures and changes to the economic model), but the causes were a little vague. You also talked about knowledge gaps. Could you elaborate on that? Where are the main knowledge gaps?**

First, as for policy implications, there is a disconnect between what people say and what actually happens. The Hillary Doctrine is a good place to start. She said, "The subjugation of women is a direct threat to the security of the United States. The status of the world's women is not only a matter of justice. It is also a political, economic, and social imperative" (3/12/10, United Nations conference).

Second, statistics means never having to say you're certain. Statistics are not going to show causes. We need the evidence that there is a strong association and the theory that lets you fill in the causal chain.

Third, in regard to knowledge gaps, there are basic things that you would not expect we would need more information on. For example, simple things are not easy to find, like the different feeding practices between boys and girls and divorce law. In regard to divorce, we could find the laws that are on the books, but we could not find much in practice (i.e., custody, child support, etc.). Other areas in need of follow up include disaggregated data on police, military, and peacekeeping forces (e.g., women's participation and age range).

**The US is drafting a national action plan for implementing UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security. Advocating for women's participation in political processes is hard to justify since there is no quantitative data; only qualitative data regarding women's participation in state roles seem to exist.**

WomanSTATS has excellent data on women's participation and their roles in state. It hasn't been used for anything yet.

**Can you provide more of an explanation of the historic anomaly of the common age of marriage in Europe? There are many in the development community who have tried to**

**suggest postponing marriage in other societies and this effort has failed. Cultural change must come from within rather than having it imposed.**

Read Hartman's book, *The Household and the Making of History: A Subversive View of the Western Past*. If you want greater state stability, factors like age, polygyny, consent, and patrilocality, whether or not women are in subordinate roles in society, etc. must be changed. Yes, change must be indigenous, but there is also a need for universal standards. Human rights for women have to come from a universalist perspective.

**For seven years CMM has issued the state fragility index. What is the take away from this presentation of employing predictors about women? Which would you want us to adopt?**

Adopt physical security of women or inequity in family law as the primary take-away.

**What do you think of Canada's proposed polygamy legislation?**

Nation states that have tolerated legal enclaves of inequitable family law are typically more violent and fragile. It's like embracing a viper to the bosom and is de-stabilizing. If you introduce inequitable family law, you will reap the consequences, even if it's done in the name of religious freedom.

## RESOURCES

Hudson, Valerie M., Mary Caprioli, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Rose McDermott, and Chad F. Emmett. "The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States." *International Security*, 33, no. 3 (Winter 2008/09): 7-45.

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# USAID/CMM Speaker Series— Challenging Gendered Norms: Women and Political Violence

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**The U.S. Agency for International  
Development Gender and Conflict  
Speaker Series**

**Challenging Gendered Norms:  
Women and Political Violence**

*Featuring*

**Dr. Joyce P. Kaufman**

*Whittier College, Whittier, CA*

&

**Dr. Kristen P. Williams**

*Clark University, Worcester, MA*

**Monday, June 20, 2011**

**DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

## Speakers & Discussants

**Dr. Joyce P. Kaufman** is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Engagement with Communities at Whittier College. She is the author of *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2010), and *NATO and the Former Yugoslavia: Crisis, Conflict and the Atlantic Alliance* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), and, with Andrew Dorman, is co-editor of *The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Perceptions, Policy and Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2011), as well as numerous articles and papers on U.S. foreign and security policy, and on international negotiations. With Kristen P. Williams, she is co-author of *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Crisis* (Kumarian Press, 2010), *Women, the State and War: A Comparative Perspective on Citizenship and Nationalism* (Lexington Books, 2007) and *Challenging Gendered Norms: Women and Political Violence versus Women Working for Peace* (under contract to Kumarian Press), as well as a number of other articles on women and conflict.

She received her B.A. and M.A. from New York University and her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. Prior to joining the faculty at Whittier College in 1985, she served as a Foreign Affairs Specialist in the Office of Nuclear Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) from 1978-1979, and as a National Security Analyst with Pacific Sierra Research Corporation (1979-1982). She then served as a Research Fellow at the Logistics Management Institute in Washington, D.C. She is actively involved with a number of professional organizations including the International Studies Association, American Political Science Association and Women in International Security.

**Dr. Kristen P. Williams** is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Women's and Gender Studies Program at Clark University. She is the author of several books and articles on ethnic and nationalist conflict including: *Despite Nationalist Conflicts: Theory and Practice of Maintaining World Peace* (Praeger Publishers 2001), *Identity and Institutions: Conflict Reduction in Divided Societies* (SUNY Press, 2005) co-authored with Neal G. Jesse, and *Ethnic Conflict: A Systematic Approach to Cases of Conflict* (CQ Press, 2011), also with Neal G. Jesse. With Joyce P. Kaufman, she is co-author of *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Crisis* (Kumarian Press, 2010), *Women, the State and War: A Comparative Perspective on Citizenship and Nationalism* (Lexington Books, 2007) and *Challenging Gendered Norms: Women and Political Violence versus Women Working for Peace* (under contract with Kumarian Press). She is co-editor of a forthcoming volume, *Beyond Great Powers and Hegemons: Why Secondary States Support, Follow or Challenge* (with Neal G. Jesse and Steven Lobell), with Stanford University Press.

She received her B.A. from UCLA; M.A. from California State University, Long Beach; and M.A. and Ph.D. from UCLA. She is a member of several professional organizations, including the American Political Science Association, Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism, and International Studies Association (where she serves as chair-elect of the Women's Caucus in International Studies).

**Dr. Kai Spratt**, MPH, PhD, an IRG employee, joined the A/ME Bureaus in March 2011 as the full-time Gender and Youth Senior Specialist. Dr. Spratt brings 15 years of experience working in the areas of international public health, HIV and gender with extensive experience in the AME regions. Kai's prior experience with USAID was as the HIV/AIDS Advisor for the ANE Bureau from 1999-2001 as a Johns Hopkins Health and Child Survival Fellow. Prior to joining IRG she was the Gender Advisor for the USAID AIDSTAR-One project at John Snow, Inc. (JSI), supporting the capacity of all technical staff to integrate gender into their HIV activities. She also lead the development of a portfolio of gender-specific technical resources funded by

the PEPFAR Gender Technical Working Group ranging from a technical brief on HIV, gender, and microfinance to a portfolio of case studies examining the extent to which programs working with most at risk populations are integrating gender into their program activities.

**Mark Hannafin** is the Deputy Director and Senior Conflict Advisor in the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation at the United States Agency for International Development. He is currently co-chairing the development of the new policy on youth in development for USAID. He covers countries in crisis in the Middle East, North Africa, Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia. He is currently researching how development activities can assist diaspora groups towards promoting peace in their homelands and how cities cope with insecurity. Prior to joining the USAID office in Washington, Mark was the Conflict Prevention Program Manager for the USAID mission in Central Asia in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He has worked over ten years overseas on youth development, conflict, economic development, local governance, trafficking in persons and political processes with USAID, the International Finance Corporation/World Bank and the International City Management Association. He was in the first group of Peace Corps volunteers in Kyrgyzstan from 1993-1995. He is an adjunct professor at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Relations teaching a course on Conflict Programming and Analysis. He holds a Masters in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University. He lives in Washington with his wife and two children.

With a specific focus on women who choose to engage as combatants, often in defiance of cultural norms and stereotypes, Dr. Kaufman and Dr. Williams, share some examples and thoughts on how we can get a more complete understanding of women's actions and decisions leading them to either engage in combat or peace-building. They are not looking at women coerced into supporting conflict or women who are joining established militaries (i.e., U.S. military), but rather women who choose to engage in conflict of their own accord.

*"Rather, in cultures where gender roles are traditional, it is that much more incumbent on women and girls to improvise techniques by which they can carry out their missions while still adhering to the gender dictates of the dominant social structure....Indeed, it is a well-established truth of political violence that, in the name of the cause, common mores can be overridden without ultimately changing a society's fundamental values regarding gender relations."*

**--Cindy Ness ("In the Name of the Cause, 15)**

Over time, women have gained in prominence and importance in resistance movements and intra-state conflicts. Surprisingly little attention has been given to the role of women who engage in political violence in general. Dr. Kaufman and Dr. Williams argue that using violence as a means of political action or activism is not a new option for women, but is only one way in which women who live in circumstances of political violence can gain agency.

The main points to consider and understand regarding women during conflict include:

- Women engage in both peace activism and political violence
- A need to understand women's motivations for both kinds of actions/behavior
- How gendered norms are challenged during conflict and post-conflict. Combatants challenge the norms. When women engage in violence, they are bending traditional roles.
- Expanding the definition of security is linked directly to development and disarmament policies.
- For long term peace and stability in society, we need to change the roles of women and men when discussing sustainable peace. So little attention is given to the role of women who engage in political violence. For example, suicide bombing isn't new, but the research around women who become suicide bombers is still not extensive.

Additionally, Dr. Kaufman and Dr. Williams' research questions are:

- What factors lead some women to choose violence as opposed to working for peace?
- Are women's motivations different from men's?
- Can we determine any patterns based on country, type of conflict, age or socio-economic background?
- In what ways, if at all, do women engaging in violence affect or change the nature of the conflict? How would you know? How would you measure it?
- How do these actions fit within the traditional stereotypes of women (gendered norms) and women's choices regarding political violence?

## **Women in Security**

In traditional International Relations (IR) literature on the struggle for power between states, security is understood in masculine terms (e.g., power and sovereignty). Decisions of war and peace are made by men. There is a need to expand the definition of security in order for a state that has been consumed with internal, civil conflict to have a durable peace, which also includes redefining what security means when looking at gender and women, as well as assumptions about women's and men's roles in peace negotiations and peace building.



Ali Mohammed / European PressPhoto Agency / New York Times 5 July 2008; Iraqis inspecting bodies after a suicide attack by a woman wearing an explosive vest.

The parameters of the battlefield have changed in conflict. Increased incidents of rape and other security issues for women, including the threat of violence at home (i.e., domestic violence is linked to inter- and intra- state violence), propel women in the conflict. Conflict endangers their economic security. If husbands are fighting or killed, women are economically vulnerable. If violence is built into the structure, resources are unevenly distributed. Women end up with the least access to resources and to the decision-makers regarding distribution of resources.

Patriarchal structures of most societies create barriers to women’s involvement in formal political processes. This means women, though affected by conflict but removed from decision-making, are left with the following options during conflict:

- Do nothing.
- Flee and become political refugees or displaced persons
- Become peace activists, which is consistent with the most stereotypical view of women as peacemakers.
- Become combatants—supporters and fighters—which flies in the face of traditional gendered assumptions. This is especially true when carried to the extreme of women taking their lives or becoming suicide bombers.

On the Continuum of Violence women may take some action, such as serving as medics or cooks to support soldiers or militias. They might also carry bombs in baby carriages since they tend not to be stopped or they might become much more overt by picking up arms and fighting for their cause. Often the roles slip along the continuum without a clear break. The prominence of women as combatants increased in engagement due to the larger number of ethnic conflicts and changing definition of gender identity.

**Continuum of Violence**



***Supporting  
conflict***

***Armed  
combatants***

***Suicide  
bombers***

There are similarities in the way women make decisions regarding the choice between peace or violence. However, what makes them choose one over the other? Are women’s motivations driven by feminist ideals or are there other factors at work and, if the latter, what are they? We know that women choose to become combatants for any number of reasons, both personal and political (revenge, anger, patriotism/nationalism, belief in the cause, wanting to make the nation

better, etc.). When women challenge the gender norms, the shaken assumptions then affect perceptions of women as political actors, raising the question whether they are to remain in the private sphere (home) or in the public sphere? In the private versus public sphere, in both cases, either as peace activists or as combatants, women move from the private to the public sphere, which by definition challenges gendered norms.

Fundamentally, there are many reasons why women are motivated to engage in political violence. Reasons include:

- Survival: It ensures protection from the enemy and protection for their children.
- Actively Recruited: Often by other women. Women's organizations are sometimes used to enlist other women.
- Fight for "the cause": Since peace is often not seen as an option, some women feel they cannot work for peace, but still want to help liberate the country from the enemy or the oppressors. During mass mobilization, gender becomes less important than willing bodies who will fight. Achieving the ends becomes more important than the norms; such was the case in countries like Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland. Women are also motivated by nationalistic fervor. When the men are killed or in prison, women step in, because they see their future tied to the success of the fight.
- Personal factors: Revenge: (both men and women cite this). It's often the result of personal experience and desire to avenge the death of a loved one.
- As a feminist statement: Overtly feminist reasons are only one option. It makes them [women] equal, but it's rarely ever the only reason. It's often more mixed, if not more complicated by other factors.

### **Women as Suicide Bombers**

The first documented suicide bomb attacked was in Lebanon in 1985. Though it was not socially or culturally accepted initially, there has been an increase in the number of women suicide bombers, which resulted, in part, in a change of the social and political order. About 30% of suicide attackers are women. Why do women become suicide bombers? Willing to sacrifice her life to bring death to an enemy and raise visibility of the cause through martyrdom? It raises the profile of women engaging in this option. The change in social, political and cultural order allows for that to happen, which changes the role of women in a broader context. The reasons for their participation are not very different than any previously mentioned reasons given for why women participate in violence. Female suicide bombers make a statement in an otherwise patriarchal society. However, women tend not to be the leader and act out missions set up by men, thus continuing to act in the context of a patriarchal structure. While men are motivated by religious or national fanaticisms, women sometimes consider combat as a way to escape the predestined life. They make a statement in the name of gender, as well as religious and national fervor.



*Tom McGirk / TIME 3 May 2007; Palestinian moms becoming combatants and martyrs.*

Women as suicide bombers vary case by case. For example, in the Sri Lankan LTTE, women were young, personally selected, and not married or mothers. They were seen as having the gendered advantage and could get places men could not. By contrast, in Chechnya, women tended to be older and had already had children. In that case, it was considered that they had

already fulfilled their mission and were ready to move on. Resorting to this act was a means of political expression.

### **Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Disarmament, Demobilization & Reintegration**

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted to encourage women's participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict society. DDR programs tend to favor those who picked up arms. Planta (2010) wrote, "At the root of the specific problems female combatants experience in the post-conflict situation lies the dichotomous belief in 'violent men' and 'peaceful women.'" Reintegration for all requires DDR programs that integrate the needs of both men and women in whatever capacity they participated in the conflict, whether it was as a combatant or support role or victim. It's important to consider the role women take on after the conflict ends. A lot of women choose not to enter the formal political structure post-conflict, because in many cases, the structure that led to the conflict in the first place has not changed.

In the case of Northern Ireland, the Women's Coalition was created to give women a seat at the table for the Good Friday Agreement in '98. It was disbanded in 2003. One reason cited for the disbandment was that they could no longer get women elected. The implicit understanding was that their role was over after the agreement was signed. Women ended up not going into government but staying on the outside working for NGOs or in other capacities, where they felt they could make more of a difference.

### **What Should We Conclude?**

While USAID already addressed DDR and gender through toolkits and recognizing UN Resolution 1325, there remains a need for continued research and better programming. Women engage in both peace activism and political violence, but it is not fully understood what motivates them to participate in both kinds of actions/behavior. Gendered norms are challenged during conflict and post-conflict, so it is important to get beyond the stereotypes of violent men and peaceful women and strive to understand the decisions they make and why they make them and if they do (or do not) differ from men in choosing one course of action or the other.

Additionally, there is a need to expand the definition of security to look at gender and women, as well as a need to alter assumptions about women's and men's roles in peace negotiations, peace-building, and political violence. The greatest threats to the future of long-term peace and stability within countries are when women do not have a seat at the negotiating table, when they do not have a voice about how the post-conflict society should be structured, and when they do not have a role in the government. It is critical that there is a change in expectations about women's and men's behaviors and roles in society.

We can't assume that violence runs against the nature of women. Men and women may participate in violence/conflict for similar reasons. Women participate in a way they feel they can survive and make a difference. In some cases, they are trying to make a statement against patriarchy. Regardless, this means we must move beyond assumptions that women's motivations are different than men's.

### **Questions and Answers**

**In talking about women as combatants, did you look at why women will participate in human rights violations and torture?**

We would like to research it more. It offends the gender norms, however, scholarship doesn't spend a lot of time on it. More research could garner understanding of the sometimes ambivalent role women play and how it's possible women might institute violence against other women. For example, in the case of Yugoslavia and ethnically mixed marriages: Women were

ostracized by their families and never accepted by their husband's family, but perceived as an outsider. Additionally, the child takes on the ethnicity of the father, so the mother is completely excluded from the family. The frustration and isolation could lead to the possibility of violence against women by women.

**Making the distinction between broad numbers and key actors who mobilize others, how are the key actors gendered? Examples draw from foot soldiers, however, what about elites who are calling for that? Are there women elite who would seek to engender violence?**

Elites tend to be male. We are dealing with a very small subset of women leaders in a small number of cases. Preliminary research tends to draw on more traditional ways of engaging women and drawing on more traditional roles. In Bosnia, there were female in the militia, but men were still in leadership. Women did have some leadership roles, but after the conflict, they did not maintain that role and reverted back to traditional roles. As another example, the paramilitaries in Northern Ireland that were female were allowed to operate if the men in leadership let them. Women did not make it in the higher echelons of the IRA.

**When you're talking about patriarchy, a lot of other things come up. How does their ethnic identity impact their interest in participating in violence? Do you think if women are part of the more normative group they would be more likely to participate in peace building?**

Northern Ireland is an interesting case, because it's an example of peace-making at community level and amongst the working class. It was the not very well-educated women (both Protestant and Catholic) who took the lead; not the ones at the NIWC (Northern Ireland Women's Coalition) or the ones involved at higher levels. One reason for this was they had fewer options. Essentially, they couldn't leave, so the thought was if they were going to stay and make their world better, they had to do it themselves. This is different than the Israeli/Palestinian situation. In this case, it tended to be the middle class and more educated women initiating community-level peace-building. It will vary a lot depending on a lot of circumstance. Community-level initiatives are a way for women to take action and to do something when a lot of what was happening around them was not of their making.

**In regard to Sierra Leone: what percentage of drug use was involved in this? For example, how often were drugs used to control child soldiers? Also, it is said the Taliban came into existence in some countries by having little girls present themselves as little boys and go through boot camp, because so many men were being killed. Your thoughts?**

On Sierra Leone and drugs, we don't know. There are not many female suicide bombers and there are even fewer failed female suicide bombers. Since the number of cases is quite small, it's difficult to confirm concretely that the Taliban had girls presenting as boys because their men were dying off. Islamic fundamentalism are rethinking jihad. Al Qaeda said no to female suicide bombers for a long time, but by 2003 that started to change. The jihadist literature has been changed enough to allow women to participate, but they're not changing enough to have women in leadership. There are notes about women and the reasons they can participate is prescribed.

**Conflict disrupts society's norms and a lot of time is spent trying to get back to pre-conflict norms. Why does gender revert back to "normal roles" so quickly? Is there anything about gender identity that is difficult to change?**

Even when women are allowed to have these prescribed roles; even if they're allowed to participate, they'll revert back to "normal" roles. We contacted George Mitchell and asked about the role of women in peace negotiations and if there was a deliberate attempt to include them,

but we received a general response. It remains a patriarchal structure. The expectation is that men are the ones who need a job and women are to go home. Even during war, the norms don't necessarily change. Also, there is often an increase in domestic violence after a conflict. Men have been out fighting and use the same militaristic approaches they've used on an enemy at home.

**In regard to economic growth work, how do we open up more opportunities for women?**

Starting at community-level to build change is the most constructive. It tends to be more enduring, as leadership is more resistant, and builds the kind of trust that has the most enduring impact. I also think there is something to be said for pushing for ideal gender equality. Do we really want to go back to the status quo after a conflict or do we want a different status quo? Women end up losing more. Sometimes it's okay to want to change the culture, and there is no one avenue or path that will make a single difference. It's about exploring multiple avenues that will ultimately impact from the top down and the bottom up. Encouraging women and men to change expectations and norms will lead to sustainable change and peace.

**A previous speaker discussed interviews with Liberian women. She said they were lying about their roles in the conflict to non-profits who were doing DDR programs, which reinforced gender roles by forcing women to participate in more normative roles.**

The women we don't look at are women coerced into supporting conflict and women joining established militaries, such as the U.S. military. That said, how much is coercion and how much is real choice (i.e., constrained agency versus coercion versus real choice)? We don't have a good answer. If your family is telling you to avenge the death of a loved one, is that choice or coercion? In the DDR programs, there tends to be more benefits accrued for people who carried weapons. Programs should be opened up, so that they have space for supporter roles (which would include a large number of women) and not just people who picked up arms.

# USAID/CMM Speaker Series— Masculinity, Femininity, & Stabilization: The Case for Gender Analysis in Transitional Environments

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**The U.S. Agency for International  
Development Gender and Conflict  
Speaker Series**

**Masculinity, Femininity, and Stabilization:  
The Case for Gender Analysis in  
Transitional Environments**

*Featuring*

**Dr. Cynthia Enloe**

*Clark University, Worcester, MA*

**Monday, July 11, 2011**

**DISCLAIMER**

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## Speakers & Discussants

**Dr. Cynthia Enloe** is a research professor in the Department of International Development, Community, and Environment and the Department of Women's Studies. Her current research focuses on the interactions of feminism, women, militarized culture, war, politics and globalized economics in countries such as Japan, Iraq, the US, Britain, the Philippines, Canada, Chile, and Turkey.

In years past, Enloe's research has focused on the interplay of women's politics in the national and international arenas, with special attention to how women's labor is made cheap in globalized factories (especially sneaker factories) and how women's emotional and physical labor has been used to support governments' war-waging policies – and how many women have tried to resist both of those efforts. Racial, class, ethnic, and national identities and pressures shaping ideas about femininities and masculinities have been common threads throughout her studies.

Enloe has written for *Ms. Magazine* and has appeared on National Public Radio and the BBC. In 2009, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of London's School of Oriental and Asian Studies. Her twelve books include *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (2000), *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (2004), and *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link* (2007). Her newest book is *Nimo's War, Emma's War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War* (2010).

**Nealin Parker, USAID Office of Transition Initiatives**, is currently the Deputy Director of the Office of Transition Initiatives. Prior to her current position, she spent seven years working on development, conflict prevention, and post-conflict transitions in Africa, Latin America and South East Asia. She has worked with governments and non-governmental entities on post-conflict issues, including with Interpeace, the Bobst Center on Peace and Justice, Aceh's Peace and Reintegration Center, IFES, and The Carter Center.

Most recently, she served as the Chief of Staff for the Center on International Cooperation, an New York-based think-tank that focuses on policy research for the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. There her portfolio included programs in peacekeeping, state-building, rule of law, and democracy.

**Neil Levine, USAID/CMM**, is the Director of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation in USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance. CMM leads USAID efforts to develop approaches to the causes and consequences of violent conflict. From 2000-2007, Mr. Levine served as the Chief of Governance Division in USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance where he worked on issues involving promotion of transparent, accountable and effective democratic institutions. Mr. Levine served as deputy director for the Office of Central American Affairs (LAC/CEN) from 1995-2000. He has a strong interest in countries in transition and worked closely in support of USAID's Missions in Central America to support implementation of the peace accords in El Salvador and Guatemala.

## INTRODUCTION

Pursuant a decision made by USAID/CMM to delve further into the connection between gender and conflict, this fourth event of six in the Gender and Conflict Speaker Series brought Dr. Cynthia Enloe to share her remarks on the importance of gender analysis in transitional environments. Traditionally, the role of gender has been dismissed as irrelevant or burdensome, if it is thought of at all. Dr. Enloe shared from her current research on the intersections of women's studies, militarized culture, war and politics, and what that means for gender analysis. She posits that it is impossible to make sense of militaries, police, and even international development without examining masculinity and femininity.

*“Remember what it was like to think you didn’t have to ask the question. The only way to be humble is to remember how normal it seemed.” – Dr. Enloe on gender analysis*

Gender analysis is a tool that plays a critical role in programming. By way of an analogy, it is like asking a carpenter to add a leveler to his or her belt. The carpenter might respond, “Why do I need that if I already have a screwdriver and a hammer?” However, the leveler makes all the other tools more effective; a leveler helps a carpenter ensure that projects are balanced. Similarly, gender analysis enables practitioners and researchers to collect information for balanced analysis and programs.

## THE ROLE OF GENDER AND GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender analysis requires asking a set of cultural as well as mapping questions. To get people thinking about the roles of masculinity and femininity, it’s important to ask the following:

1. Where are the women? In the organization, society, military, police, judicial system, etc.?
2. Where are the men?
3. Who benefits from each being where they are?
4. What do the women in those places think they’re doing?
5. What do the men in those places think they’re doing?

These questions uncover the politics of masculinity, femininity, fear, and opportunity.

Scholars in certain disciplines, such as Political Science, believe they are the most realistic and tough-minded; they perceive little need for “soft skills” like gender analysis. However, *not* employing gender analysis means not generating a reliable analysis. It means missing at least half of the picture. How could any program be built without it? Gender analysis lowers the risk of implementing programs that fail to reach their target population or that even do harm.

Foreign assistance in transitional environments often focuses on stabilization. This term carries a lot of weight; what exactly are we stabilizing? It is possible to stabilize a system where corruption is more deeply imbedded or waste is more deeply entrenched. In other words, it is possible to stabilize dysfunctional institutions. We can stabilize security forces that ignore sexual assault, justice systems that jail women for fleeing abusive spouses, and militaries that brutalize civilians. Our goal should be to reduce those processes that engender fear, alienation, fragmentation, and parochialism. Gender analysis can show us who the winners and losers are

in any changing environment. And we are in the business of effecting change. So we must find opportunities to strengthen the good institutions in order to stabilize a society.

As we seek to affect change, we must remember that change begins with us. Traditional Western culture is patriarchal, not matriarchal. Our cultural DNA has entrenched gender norms. When we encounter people and institutions that changed their attitude towards gender, it is critical ask how that happened. We should never assume a person's aptitude or potential based on who they are. Women are not inherently in favor of gender analysis any more than men are inherently against it. Our analysis should constantly probe at how changes occur so we can learn from them.

It's important to keep in mind that gender isn't about women; it is about how a culture defines men and women and how they relate to one another. Gender is about power. Women tend to be more informed about gender because their lives depend on it – they are the ones with less power because they are in fewer decision-making positions, they control fewer funds, and they are on the receiving end of more violence. They tend to be marginalized. People on the margins, as inherently vulnerable populations, are often the most insightful about how systems work. People in the center are often the least informed. They don't need to manipulate the system in order to benefit from it. They are the winners of the power dynamic.

For example, a domestic worker has to know the nuances of affluent culture. Though she comes from a humble background, she has to know the dynamics of the upper class better than her own because her income depends on it. The family employing her, on the other hand, may have some insight into their own relationships, but the domestic worker will be the most skilled at knowing each family member's needs and vulnerabilities – at least the ones with influence. The family probably knows nothing about the woman they've hired. The margins are the place to become smarter about power, masculinity, and femininity.

## **EXAMPLES OF GENDER ANALYSIS**

### ***Radio Usage in Afghanistan***

There is power in radio when literacy is hard to come by. Radios are intended to reach places that do not have electricity and have higher than average rates of illiteracy.

A German NGO conducted an evaluation of a radio program on women's health it had sponsored in Afghanistan. It sent a team of experts to look at radio usage in remote areas. The team observed long periods of non-radio use, as well as when people listened to it. They found that the radio was available in a number of houses and served as a significant source of information for those who had access.

The team found that women did not turn the radio on. Certainly, it was not for lack of technical ability. Men denied women access because the radio was an opening to the wider world and gave the listener information. The men who controlled it did not think the women's health programs were important. Therefore, the program never reached its target audience.

The NGO had been careful enough in its program design to employ several local languages but had never considered who would be allowed to listen to it. When the researchers, who were self-critical, asked what they had *not* done prior to implementing the programs, they realized

they had not done a proper gender analysis. As a result, the program failed to accomplish its objectives.

### ***World Water Forum***

Global water policy, the privatization of water, and the fairness of water distribution are all debated at the World Water Forum. Water is power, but until recently there has been almost no discussion on water and gender. An informal group of gender analysts from eight countries wondered how the forum's policies were affecting women since women everywhere consume significant amounts of water in food preparation, cleaning, and child care.

The gender analysts assembled an assortment of gender and water specialists. They learned that lack of water negatively affects girls' education. In many societies, women are the water gatherers. As water sources move further and further away, the adult women in the house need more and more help carrying buckets. They call upon the young girls to help at home while boys are free to continue their education. As a result more girls drop out of school compared to boys. Additionally, research has documented that mothers are reluctant to let their menstruating-age daughters go to school if there is no water for washing nearby.

The gender analysts emphasized the importance of considering what the lack of water has to do with the relationship between girls and mothers, girls and boys, and girls and education in remote regions with limited access to water. They argued that if we don't take seriously the maldistribution of water, especially in the places dealing with greater swings in climate due to climate change, we do not understand the real impact on girls, boys, women, and men.

Thanks to the efforts of this group, the World Water Forum expanded its definition of water expertise to include gender analysis. The forum recently held the first-ever plenary session on gender and water.

### ***HIV/AIDS Education in Nigeria***

In Nigeria, educating the military about HIV/AIDS was particularly challenging because of men's views of condom usage. Many Nigerian men believed that having multiple wives and sex partners and *not* using a condom was masculine behavior. In a training program, U.S. military men were able to encourage male Nigerian soldiers that condom usage was model male behavior. By examining and being sensitive to gender roles, the program increased condom usage in Nigeria's military.

We cannot presume that these American trainers understood gender automatically before they taught others. If we do, we miss the opportunity to learn. We need to ask how they got there in the first place and what that says about how we approach gender education, as well as how it informs future programs and awareness campaigns.

HIV/AIDS prevention workers tend to know more than anyone about masculinity and how it impacts culture. Their work entails understanding gender roles first so that they can change sexual behavior which is profoundly shaped by gender norms. They have found the process of educating men on using condoms, as well as teaching women to encourage men to use condoms, to be a sensitive issue that takes a great deal of time and care before real change can occur.

## ***Masculinized Language***

For most people, one of the cruelest experiences is to be deprived of being taken seriously. Consequently, women in traditionally male-dominated fields often wield masculinized language in order to earn respect from their male colleagues. Recently, an Indian professor was teaching an Introduction to National Security Politics course for an all-male class at a prestigious university. When she walked in the classroom the first day wearing a sari, the students communicated through side comments and body language that she had nothing to teach them about security. In the hopes of being taken seriously, she spent the first five sessions teaching weaponry, military tactics, and anything else that qualified as “masculine” in its narrowest definition. Her strategy was successful—her students came to respect her expertise—but it came at a cost. She compromised her curriculum in order to be taken seriously by male students, since hyper-masculinized subjects like armaments are not the most relevant elements of national security.

This story raises questions for development practitioners working in conflict-prone environments. How do we get taken seriously when our partners are institutions like the military that are not accustomed to thinking about gender? How do we masculinize our discourse in order to be heard? What compromises do we make and how does that affect our policy advocacy? What issues do we give up on first?

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Gender analysis is fundamental to designing effective programs—and no less so in conflict-prone environments. Taking gender into account helps us understand who we are trying to help, how they will access our programs, and what harm or benefits may result. For those who are not accustomed to being curious about gender, these questions can seem like a burden. After all, understanding gender and promoting gender equality are not necessarily in the mandate of all USAID offices. But those intending to stabilize fragile environments seek out symbolic and catalytic issues that can move a country toward peace.

*“We need to think of masculinity and femininity as dancers, not boxers.”*  
—Dr. Enloe

Gender analysis is an analytic tool. In one sense, it’s great to add to our staff’s tool belts. But there is also the sense that a level is being forced on staff when they just want to hammer a nail. Goal versus mandate can come into conflict and there can be pushback, even from self-described feminists. It isn’t always obvious where gender analysis provides the most insight and unless donors see the benefits they won’t employ it.

What do we learn when we’re curious about gender? We discover that gender is a smaller piece of a much larger power dynamic. We uncover who and what has the capacity to stabilize a society and what tools they use to do so. We learn how our resources fit into these structures. And we learn new ways to fortify these fragile societies based on positive, healthy systems.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**There are challenges in reaching the margins of society, as well as logistical problems and risks. For example, you have problems accessing local women staff, or it may be**

**difficult for those women to access the marginalized people. How do you get those voices when it's dangerous or impractical?**

It has to begin at USAID. Until it's truly institutionalized at here, until we hold others to it, we cannot make a long-term impact. Because it's gender, it's considered a box to check; it's an "add-on" to other projects/programs. We tend to assume that gender means women's issues, and they fit it in a nice neat box. However, a female CEO may not be gender aware just because she's a woman. Checking a box is not enough. We need more candid discussions amongst ourselves.

In regard to accessing marginal populations, it should be noted that in a lot of cases, they may self-select out. Sometimes you have to meet with a man to get to the women. However, are we taking the time to find a way to get at this and finding the way they would be willing to articulate their thoughts and opinions? In West Africa, for example, a lot of women did not think they even had a role or place to voice an opinion. We have to help redefine our notion of voice.

**During a recent experience in a sub-region working with women and girls, we had to set quotas for young men in the programs. Without the quotas, girls were not able to take advantage of opportunities. Any practical advice on how to talk to people about gender being inclusive, especially with people who believe gender equals women?**

"Gender equals women" is relatively new. It was a strategic device. People who had worked for years in the UN were strategically using "gender," because it sounded safer, less threatening, and more remote than "women." It was something easier to sell in UNDP, UNESCO, the Security Council, etc. Over time, people simply used "gender" but did not change their mindset on what it means. What it means to be a man, a woman, and the relationship between them—that is the broader meaning of gender.

While a lot of progress has been made in using gendered language, something has to be reintroduced. This is not to say masculinity is not something that is unimportant, but it does effects men's willingness to consider alternatives. Additionally, women have deep notions about masculinity while raising sons and daughters. Researcher Leslie Gill did a study in La Paz, Bolivia with local women, and she found that mothers were reluctant to have their daughters consider marrying a man if he had not gone through military training. The implication was that only a man who survived that would be tough enough to marry her daughter.

The idea that femininity is only held by women and masculinity is only held by men is incorrect—it is much more complex than that. Unfortunately, once gender is reduced to a box to check, it is only a burden to be ritualized. If one thinks of gender of a strategic tool, we will be more realistic and programs will be more sustainable.

**Are masculinity and femininity necessarily oppositional?**

No. We need to think of masculinity and femininity as dancers, not boxers.



# USAID/CMM Gender and Conflict Speaker Series— A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter- Terrorism

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**The U.S. Agency for International  
Development Gender and Conflict  
Speaker Series**

**A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S.  
Counter-Terrorism**

*Featuring*

**Jayne C. Huckerby and Lama Fakhri**

*The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice*

*New York University Law School*

**Dr. Chloe Schwenke**

*USAID Africa Bureau*

**Thursday, October 27, 2011**

**DISCLAIMER**

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## Speaker & Discussants

**Jayne C. Huckerby , Research Director, The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Clinical Law, New York University School of Law**

Jayne Huckerby is Adjunct Assistant Professor of Law of the Global Justice Clinic and Research Director at the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, where she directs the Center's project on Gender, National Security and Counter-Terrorism. She co-taught the International Human Rights Clinic from Spring 2009 to Spring 2010. She has worked with various inter-governmental and non-governmental entities, including with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), the U.N. Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the U.N. Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in the areas of gender and counter-terrorism, gender and anti-trafficking initiatives, gender and transitional justice programming, gender budget initiatives, and gender and the political economy.

**Lama Fakhri, Gender, Human Rights, and Counter-Terrorism Fellow, CHRGJ**

Lama Fakhri manages the Center's project on Gender, National Security and Counter-Terrorism and is co-author of *A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism*. Prior to rejoining the Center in 2010, Lama consulted for the Iraqi Refugee Assistant Project in Damascus, Syria where she provided legal assistance to Iraqi refugees seeking resettlement to the United States. In 2008-2009 as CHRGJ Center Fellow, Lama provided research, litigation, and advocacy support to several of the Center's thematic areas of work. Her prior experiences include working at the Women's Rights Division at Human Rights Watch and the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union. Lama was also awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in 2004 to conduct research on the implementation of Islamic law in the Egyptian National Courts.

**Dr. Chloe Schwenke, Senior Advisor on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance at USAID.**

Schwenke is a practitioner and academic with three decades of experience, focused primarily on sub-Saharan Africa. Her career has included 14 years of work based in Africa (Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda). Prior to joining USAID, she worked in a senior capacity with some of the leading American development consulting firms, and as an independent consultant, on projects of USAID, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Department for International Development (UK). She was also a Fulbright professor in Uganda. Her scholarly interests include international development ethics, gender & development, and leadership ethics. As a practitioner, her experience has centered on the design, management, implementation, and evaluation of a wide range of gender, local governance & decentralization, civil society capacity building, conflict, and leadership programming. Dr. Schwenke is also an adjunct professor at the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland at College Park, the Liberal Studies Program at Georgetown University, and The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

**Neil Levine, Director, Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation at USAID.** Neil Levine is the Director of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation in USAID's in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. CMM leads USAID efforts to develop approaches to the causes and consequences of violent conflict. From 2000-2007, Mr. Levine served as the Chief of the Governance Division in USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance where he worked on issues involving promotion of transparent, accountable and effective democratic institutions. Mr. Levine served as deputy director for the Office of Central American Affairs (LAC/CEN) from 1995-2000. He has a strong interest in countries in transition and worked closely in support of the USAID's Missions in Central America to support implementation of the peace accords in El Salvador and Guatemala.

## INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to a decision made by USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation to further explore the connection between gender and conflict, this event brought together Jayne Huckerby and Lama Fakih of The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at The New York University School of Law and Dr. Chloe Schwenke, Senior Advisor on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance of the Africa Bureau at USAID, to share their research and analysis on the gender dimensions of the U.S. Government's (USG) counter-terrorism (CT) policies and countering violent extremism (CVE) programs.

The speakers discussed CHRGJ findings in *A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism* (2011), the first global study to address the impact of USG CT efforts on women and sexual minorities. The study found that while USAID, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense implement myriad CT and CVE programs, they rarely apply gender analysis or monitor for gender sensitivity. This failure to address gender in research and programming may undermine progress in furthering gender equality, human rights and long-term CVE objectives, as well as leave an information gap in USG development responses to violent extremism and insurgency.

## GENDER, DEVELOPMENT AND CVE: SHIFTING LANDSCAPES

### ***Project Funding***

In 2006, Section 1207 of the National Defense Authorization Act authorized the Defense Department to transfer as much as \$100 million annually to the State Department for "reconstruction, security, or stabilization assistance to a foreign country." The 1207 authority expired in 2010 and was replaced with the Complex Crisis Fund (CCF), appropriating funds directly to the State Department to support State and USAID programming. The receipt of CCF or 1207 funding (as it is still commonly called) by civilian agencies shifts the focus of programming from traditional development assistance to CVE.

The mandate for 1207 funding defines project parameters and beneficiaries in terms of calculated risk rather than need. Consequently, project funding is mostly directed towards CVE activities with urban male youths who are perceived to be the most at-risk for involvement in violent extremism. Furthermore, USAID's internal policies may limit the ability of USAID to fund women's and sexual minorities' organizations, which often do not have the capacity to meet the extensive reporting requirements of USAID grants.

***"Those subject to gender-based abuses are often caught between targeting by terrorist groups and the State's counter-terrorism measures that may fail to prevent, investigate, prosecute or punish these acts and may also perpetrate new human rights violations with impunity." –U.N. Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism***

### ***Project Beneficiaries***

Most programs state that men are at greater risk for engaging in violent extremism, and thus target these "at-risk" male youth, even when young women need assistance as much as or more than their male counterparts. The G-Youth project in Kenya, for example, implemented by the Education Development Centre (EDC) with 1207 funding, provides youth in the Garissa District with career development information and support and training opportunities to "make

sound career and life decisions as they transition from high school to the next phase of their lives” (USAID/Kenya). Despite the fact that illiteracy, unemployment, and school dropout rates are higher for women than for men in this community, EDC recommended that the project beneficiaries be composed of sixty-five percent male youths and thirty-five percent female because “males are understood to be at higher risk of being pushed or pulled into extremist activities.” As the CHRGI study points out, this example illustrates how the focus on male youth in programming may fail to meet the general development needs of the community. As a result, the program design was far from participatory and reinforced the perception that Americans do development to meet their own objectives instead of addressing the needs of the community.

Implementing partners are often responsible for women’s activities, but these activities are typically fraught with flaws and limitations. For instance, the G-Youth project’s “gender-inclusive” job training focused on male-dominated industries where cultural restrictions would prevent young women from working, and work programs were designed around full-time schedules, thereby excluding young women with household responsibilities from participating. In cases where females are the primary beneficiaries, program design considers their role only inasmuch as it relates to men, such as working with mothers to turn their sons away from extremism. The assumption remains that women are not independent actors, but serve as push or pull factors towards at-risk males—an assumption that does not appear to be based on factual evidence.

### ***CVE Project Design, Stakeholders and Implementation***

Two documents currently underpin USAID’s CVE programming: the *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism* (2009) and *Development Assistance and Counter-Terrorism: A Guide to Programming* (2009). Together, the Guides, as they are collectively known, briefly address gender analysis as it relates to 1) understanding the drivers of CVE; 2) challenges of avoiding extremist backlash in gender programming; and 3) forming partnerships to combat terrorism. However, the Guides provide little direction as to how to incorporate gender analysis and programming in CVE activities, and their discussion of gender is perceived among the USAID community as relating only to men.

CVE activities pose significant barriers to women’s participation. While traditional development programs also face cultural barriers to women’s participation, their participation in CVE programming is further limited by USG anti-terrorism regulations, which heighten requirements for USAID’s implementing partners. Ensuring the participation of women faces other challenges, as well. In the case of Pakistan, for example, expansive community outreach is not permitted due to security constraints, and implementers are unable to move beyond working with traditional gatekeepers of the community. Outcome indicators for gauging the impact of livelihood development programs in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan require no consideration of gender, and USAID continuously faces difficulties reaching Pakistani women due to local suspicions of Western feminism. Finally, the USG’s shift toward working with more local Pakistani organizations, if implemented without a gender analysis, could negatively impact women, as women’s groups could face retaliation if non-women’s groups are not gender-sensitive and it is perceived that women’s groups are receiving too much funding.

### ***Gender in Military Development Activities***

The military’s development programs gauged toward CVE similarly suffer from an information gap due to the failure to incorporate gender analysis into activities. CHRGI uncovered the following drawbacks regarding gender in military programming: failure to consult with all stakeholders (including USAID), prioritizing projects with quick impact over long-term gains, lack

of familiarity with gender concerns, lack of transparency and accountability in fund disbursement, lack of staff longevity to understand local gender dynamics and gain trust, undermining the reputation of USG agencies by military programming, and the military's inherent concern of security over humanitarianism.

## **GENDER, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CVE PROGRAMS**

There are many challenges to measuring the general effectiveness of CVE programming. There is no baseline data for measuring CVE progress, and there is both an absence of and confusion over core CVE goals. The glaring absence of gender indicators in CVE programming owes to the fact that USAID requires them in theory, but not consistently in practice. As no mandate requires gender analysis in CVE programming, implementers do not carry it out until such a requirement surfaces. In many cases, implementers collect gender-disaggregated data in the field, but do not report it to USAID as they are not required to do so; consequently, the data is lost to any potential use or analysis. In addition, while CVE development programs measure inputs and outputs, they do not measure outcomes, rendering it difficult to measure the programs' overall effectiveness.

***“It’s difficult to measure CVE, let alone CVE and gender.”***  
–USAID Official

## **MOVING FORWARD: PUTTING GENDER IN USAID POLICY**

In September 2011, USAID released its new CVE policy, *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency Policy, Putting Principles into Practice*, which outlines key drivers of and development responses to CVE, as well as specific CVE engagement criteria and programming principles. The policy has many strengths, such as specifying methods for effective development, identifying institutional enhancements to improve the role of USAID in international development, and maintaining an emphasis on democracy and human rights. However, it fails to adequately address the importance of gender analysis in CVE programming.

For example, the policy states, “Local, customary authorities are key partners. Given the instability in insurgency environments in particular, working with existing local authorities that play governance roles is important.” As local authorities are generally male, this statement effectively excludes women from the development dialogue and closes potential avenues for incorporating a gender dimension.

Another hindrance to effective CVE programming is a lack of institutional capacity, as most CVE experts do not know where gender should feature in analysis and program design. The traditional CVE approach is male dominated, viewing “angry young men” as a threat to the exclusion of all other actors and stakeholders. This research bias has prevented the consideration of the roles that women play in their communities. Advocates for gender analysis must confront these notions and problematize the CVE dialogue to examine a broader set of constituents. The USG needs to invite gender experts to address this knowledge gap and fold gender analysis into CVE activities.

## **KNOWLEDGE BASE: UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND INSURGENCY**

### ***Push and Pull Factors***

Sound CVE programming should examine the push and pull factors of violent extremism through a gender lens. Investigating gender in terms of these push and pull factors could illuminate CVE research, making future programming more effective.

Push factors often become apparent in poorly governed or ungoverned spaces where the status of women and human rights is already particularly dire. Women often rely heavily upon USG-provided humanitarian aid to feed themselves and their families. When this aid is cut or made inaccessible, women are disproportionately affected by the loss and may in turn be “pushed” to seek assistance from extremist organizations. Other push factors are government repression and human rights violations, as government-sanctioned gender-specific violations may result in further extremism and violence against women. Finally, CVE programming and foreign aid may lead to violent backlash against participants due to a perceived external threat to local customs and values, including gender role and education, and fear of external domination.

Diametric to push factors are pull factors that attract people toward violent extremism, which the September 2011 policy describes as “the personal rewards which membership in a group or movement, and participation in its activities, may confer” (p. 4). The role of gender in the domestic and local environment is critical to understanding these dynamics. For example, the CVE policy notes that while in some contexts the woman’s role in the family could create barriers for male relatives to join violent extremist groups, in other contexts women may also serve as instigators toward violent extremism. Cultural drivers can also serve as pull factors, such as in areas where the division between religious institutions and the state is less clear and religious custom may contribute to government-sanctioned oppression of female populations. Investigating gender in terms of these push and pull factors could illuminate CVE research, making future programming more effective.

### ***Policy Guidance***

USAID plays a distinct and critical role in bringing gender analysis to bear in CVE programming. While the incorporation of a gender lens in the CVE context is currently marginal at best, USAID is the only organization that touches on gender within a CVE context, while other agencies do not address gender at all.

In the past, USAID has found that conducting research among youth can illuminate development agendas and fill critical information gaps, yet women are still excluded from such research. USAID should consider female youths and women among the key stakeholders in their communities and, as such, consult them on CVE research and programming. Finally, USAID also needs to ask the fundamental question of how women may drive extremism.

among youth can illuminate

***“We suffered under the Saddam Hussein regime; we don’t want to suffer more under the U.S. and U.K.” –Iraqi Women’s Rights Advocate, MENA Stakeholder Workshop***

Measuring outcome is admittedly difficult, owing largely to intangibles, but the failure to take gender dynamics into account is simply bad practice and results in a critical loss of data. As women’s and sexual minority groups do not currently meet USAID funding requirements, procurement policies needs to be flexible enough to invite traditionally marginalized groups to receive the assistance they sorely need. USAID should appoint a gender advisor to the Agency Steering Committee (ASC) to establish and empower the practice of gender analysis, and should subject CVE programs to gender analysis mandates under USAID policy.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The gender framework as it stands effectively applies solely to “angry young men,” and there is little space for the integration of gender into the current agenda. A CVE agenda that seeks to foster comprehensive development among entire populations must incorporate gender. There can be no development in an environment of violence, and thus there is a difference between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The military’s focus is necessarily short-term; its goal is to keep peace and to promote safety. CVE programming must respect this short-term focus while being more assertive about long-term goals, or peacebuilding, as the subjugation of development to immediate military concerns undermines sustainable peace. USG intervention relies on the partnership of both sectors. Military and civilian forces must work in concert to distinguish where respective values and priorities differ and overlap. It is the responsibility of civilian institutions to advocate a development agenda, rather than playing second fiddle to military peacekeeping. The short-term approach must balance the long-term approach to produce lasting results, but this conversation between military and civilian institutions has yet to occur with enough frequency to effect change.

Within developmental partnerships, an honest conversation pertaining to USG self-interest must also enter into the present dialogue. The U.S. presence isn’t purely altruistic; it is meant to protect U.S. interests, as well as those of developing countries. We need to be honest about our goals and the reasons we are pursuing CVE agendas, as the failure to address these matters makes our goals unclear to ourselves, our partners, and the communities we are supporting. There is a balance between our welfare and theirs, and we must seek this balance rather than viewing developing countries and partners as solely instrumental to our welfare. It is not an easy conversation, but not having it has made development principles woefully unclear.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**How do you protect potential beneficiaries in these environments where women are marginalized and would be made easy targets by progressive USG programs? Practicality being a foremost concern, how do you address that?**

You need to have consultations, to gauge the community as well as the military, and not simply make assumptions. I emphasize consultation because if you define CVE by saying you can’t talk to women, you’ll never get to the point where you can. You have to find where the tradeoff is in making a decision, the tradeoff point where the risk becomes too high for the women as potential beneficiaries and the point where it will simply undermine the CVE objective. The key is to create a baseline where that tradeoff lies in order to understand where those priorities are.

**Did you specifically look at female engagement teams (FETs) in your study?**

FETs have gone into Afghanistan and Iraq, and have conducted work gathering information from women and the community, as well as building a rapport with the women. However, what often happens is that FETs—and USG teams more generally—will build this understanding and relationship with the community, and then a new team will be cycled through that fails to maintain that relationship. Military deployments particularly have a lot of turnover, so when you build relationships with the community and then the next team doesn’t do the same thing, there is no real information gathering or lasting engagement with women, which fosters resentment in communities.

### **How does avoiding gender hinder CVE and development agendas?**

I'll give you an example: USAID constructed a well in an Iraqi village because the local women had to walk an incredibly long way to get water. Yet, as was later found out, the long walk to the well was a welcome reprieve for the women from their homes and domestic responsibilities, so the women eventually destroyed the well. This demonstrates bad development and bad CVE practice because it conveyed to the village that we didn't understand the needs of their community, specifically from a gender perspective. And, as we've discussed, this gender oversight is the rule and not the exception.

### **Do you have examples of ways to conduct gender studies effectively?**

There have been activities that created radio programs specifically to engage women, and those programs became very much a way that women were communicating with each other, specifically about gender issues. A lot of the time implementing partners will fund only programs oriented towards engaging men, but will attempt also to evolve in response to community reactions. Still, when implementing partners do alter and develop programs to include women, it is typically only because it would benefit the implementing partner and not the community. Institutions need to be addressed and these tradeoffs need to be addressed in order to determine lessons learned and best practices. Better outcomes will only result where there is better consultation to usefully insert into various programs.



# USAID/CMM Gender and Conflict Speaker Series—Gender Roles and Cultural Norms: Effects on Law, Politics, and Violence

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**The U.S. Agency for International  
Development Gender and Conflict  
Speaker Series**

**Gender Roles and Cultural Norms:  
Effects on Law, Politics, and Violence**

*Featuring*

**Dr. James Gilligan**

*School of Medicine, School of Law, and School of Arts and Sciences  
at New York University*

**Keith Crawford**

*USAID Office of Democracy and Governance*

**November 28, 2011**

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## Speaker & Discussants

**Dr. James Gilligan, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, School of Medicine; Adjunct Professor, School of Law; and Collegiate Professor, School of Arts and Sciences at New York University**

Dr. Gilligan is a psychiatrist who has been on the faculty of New York University since 2002. From 1966 to 2000 he was on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School, where was Director of the Institute of Law and Psychiatry. Dr. Gilligan has written extensively on the causes and prevention of violent behavior and published a series of books called Violence, based upon twenty-five years of work and research in the American prison system. In 2000, Dr. Gilligan was appointed by President Clinton to serve on the Academic Advisory Council of the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, where he was Chair of the Committee on Violence Prevention. He has also served as a consultant on violent crime and punishment to many groups and individuals, including Prime Minister Tony Blair, film director Martin Scorsese, The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, The World Health Organization, The World Economic Forum, and The American Civil Liberties Union, among others. Dr. Gilligan has appeared in numerous documentary films and national broadcasts, and has participated in discussions of his work on myriad radio and television programs in the US and internationally.

**Neil Levine, Office Director, USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation**

Neil Levine is the Director of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation in USAID's in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. CMM leads USAID efforts to develop approaches to the causes and consequences of violent conflict. From 2000-2007, Mr. Levine served as the Chief of the Governance Division in USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance, where he worked on issues involving promotion of transparent, accountable, and effective democratic institutions. Mr. Levine served as deputy director for the Office of Central American Affairs (LAC/CEN) from 1995-2000. He has a strong interest in countries in transition and worked closely in support of the USAID's Missions in Central America to support implementation of the peace accords in El Salvador and Guatemala. Neil holds a M.I.A. from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and a B.A. from Earlham College, and is currently an Adjunct Professor at the American University School of International Service.

**Keith Crawford, Technical Officer, USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance**

Keith Crawford joined USAID in 1989 as a food aid advisor in the Africa Bureau, where he was first responsible for coordinating emergency and development of food aid programs implemented by NGOs and UNDP. Later he became a democracy and governance specialist in the USAID Bureau for Europe and Eurasia. Prior to joining USAID, Keith served as an assistant district attorney in the Office of the District Attorney, Brooklyn, N.Y. In the DG Office, Keith serves on the rule of law division as cognizant technical officer of the Human Rights and Rule of Law cooperative agreements. He holds a B.A. from Old Dominion University and a J.D. from Howard University School of Law.

## INTRODUCTION

Dr. James Gilligan, a world-renowned scholar on the causes and prevention of violent behavior, spoke at the U.S. Agency for International Development on November 28, 2011 on the links between violence, cultural norms, and gender roles. Dr. Gilligan drew on his own extensive research to explain the motivations for violence across cultures. The aim of the presentation—sponsored by USAID’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation—was to help USAID employees consider ways to apply this knowledge to their own work.

### ***Understanding the Psychology of Violence***

Gilligan began his remarks by discussing his work in prison psychiatry while studying at Harvard Medical School. It was here, he explained, where he developed a passion for understanding the psychology of violence—a topic he felt had been neglected as an academic discipline, as the emphasis at the time was on the statistics of violence, rather than individual criminal offenders. In an eminent career that has spanned over 40 years, Gilligan has devoted his time to understanding the underlying psychological factors that can increase or decrease the severity of violence.

Every branch of modern human sciences—including criminal psychoanalysis, social psychology, criminology, and law enforcement—“has come up with evidence from every perspective that what motivates people to engage in violence against others is the feeling that they have been slighted or ridiculed.”

*“Not everyone who has been shamed chooses to respond violently, but everyone who is violent has been shamed in some way.”*

For simplicity, Gilligan defined this feeling as “shame,” while the urge to wipe out the shame that one has suffered by engaging in violence toward others is referred to as narcissistic rage. “The motivation for individual violence is the fear of being shamed and the wish to ward this off or undo it by means of violence toward others to prove that one is more powerful,” he explained. Gilligan later emphasized that not everyone who has been shamed chooses to respond violently, but that everyone who is violent has been shamed in some way. He also pointed to references in the Bible and to the work of noted philosophers like Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas to emphasize the everyday experiences and consequences of treating people as insignificant.

In response to a question on the nature vs. nurture debate, Gilligan stated that “violence is multi-determined and the result of interaction between biological, psychological, and social determinants.” The latter may be more important in determining violent behavior, he added, although biology—like male sex hormones—does play a role. Gilligan referenced research in New Zealand that studied several thousand people from birth to their early twenties. The research found that groups with a certain genetic mutation were more likely to exhibit violent behavior if they had been abused as children; if they were not abused, they were less likely to commit violence. What was clear, said Gilligan, “was that it wasn’t just the gene or child abuse causing this violent behavior, but the interaction between the genetic predisposition and the environment.”

## ***The Role of Violence in Guilt/Shame Cultures***

Gilligan went on to describe the differences between guilt and shame cultures and the importance of both in understanding people's motives and values. In a guilt culture, guilt is seen as the greatest evil; that is, you are guilty if you hurt other people (i.e., "thou shalt not kill"). In a shame culture, in contrast, the worst thing is to be shamed and to be considered a coward for not killing in defense of one's honor (i.e., "thou shalt kill"). The tension between shame ethics and guilt ethics is a big conflict in American society, suggested Gilligan, as there are positive values associated both with killing and not killing. Although a guilt culture, the U.S. supports the death penalty, gives medals of honor to those who have killed the most, and legalizes killing in self-defense (i.e., "a real man will defend himself").

An expert in the U.S. prison system, Gilligan observed that shame comes from a sense that one is lower in the socio-economic system than others and that this experience of being regarded as inferior is a powerful stimulus to violence. "Demographic groups in America that are subjected to systematic shaming have higher rates of homicidal behavior than those treated with more respect and esteem by society," said Gilligan. In a paper shared with the audience prior to his remarks, Gilligan noted that "People are especially likely to resort to violence as the means of defending themselves from the experience of being shamed when they do not perceive themselves as possessing adequate *non-violent* means—such as wealth, social status, or socially valued and honored skills or achievements—to maintain or restore their self-esteem and self-respect, or their pride in themselves."

In addressing a question on individual psychology vs. group behavior, Gilligan stressed that the relationship between individual psychology and cultural anthropology is intertwined. "The culture forms the value system," he said. "This is the way that people look at the world and much of it is unconscious." A shame culture, for example, is acquired by osmosis. Trying to change these patterns can be very difficult, Gilligan admitted; this often takes great leaders who are killed for their viewpoints. Pointing to leaders like Socrates, Jesus, and Gandhi, Gilligan said that peacemakers face the "occupational hazard" of being the first targets of those who want to continue to perpetuate violence.

## ***Gender, Violence and Culture Links***

Gilligan explained that men commit the majority of violent acts around the world (i.e., homicide, suicide, capital punishment, etc.), and that most victims of lethal violence are also men. He did note, however, that this not true in all countries and pointed to the research of Amartya Sen on the "missing women" in India and China, a result of female infanticide often carried out by women. In terms of wars and interpersonal and criminal violence, however, "the majority of perpetrators and victims of violence are predominately men."

Gilligan further explored the links between gender, violence, and culture by pointing to patriarchal societies, which are most often rooted in shame cultures. He claimed that the most important value for a man in such a society is to be seen as having courage.

The most important value for a woman, in contrast, is to preserve her chastity. In these societies, women cannot be a source of honor for men. Rather, “a man can only get honor through his own ambition and aggressiveness, if he is more powerful or wealthy than other men. However, a woman can destroy a man’s honor if she has sex outside of marriage, whether consensual or non-consensual.” Gilligan explained that the latter occurrence is the basis of the practice of honor killings, in which—in an arbitrary and irrational set of patriarchal rules—a man has both the right and the obligation to kill a woman who has dishonored him. This practice, he explained, also happened in the American South up until a few decades ago.

Gilligan reiterated that, when talking about gender roles, it is not just a case of men versus women, but also of sexual orientation, as homophobia can be a motivator of violence. A man may prove his heterosexuality by saying that he hates men or by raping women, noted Gilligan. “There was some sense in prisons that if one didn’t do an act of violence, he wouldn’t be seen as a man. Being a man was, by definition, seen as being heterosexual.”

Gilligan also addressed the topic of rape and noted his service as an expert witness to the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, where he played an instrumental role in ensuring that systematic rape could be prosecuted as a war crime. In a paper he presented to the International Court of Justice in The Hague in April 1997 (which was shared with participants before the panel), Gilligan explained “that the intended ‘victim’ of any rape is never merely the person who is raped. It is also, and sometimes especially, the family and even the entire community, nation or ethnic group of the person who is raped.” Men were dishonored and shamed because they could not protect the women in their community.

*“The intended ‘victim’ of any rape is never merely the person who is raped. It is also, and sometimes especially, the family and even the entire community, nation or ethnic group of the person who is raped.”*

Gilligan's paper presented at The Hague also explained that atrocities like mass rape are the “the predictable and inevitable consequences of the gender-roles into which we socialize men and women in our culture and all other patriarchal cultures.” In reference to the tendency across all cultures to treat men as “violence objects” and women as “sex objects,” Gilligan emphasized that “we cannot talk about preventing violence without a radical change in those gender-roles that generate violence.” The way to prevent violence in society, suggested Gilligan, is to not only have more gender equality, but also to “undermine the social patterns that reinforce homophobia or sexual discrimination.”

### ***Best Practices in Violence Prevention***

Gilligan addressed several best practices in both his remarks and the subsequent question/answer session. He gave the example of a successful violence prevention initiative conducted over a period of 10 years at a jail in San Francisco. The goal of the program was to replace retributive justice with restorative justice, and to teach the men

how they could restore to society what they had taken from it. Gilligan noted that about half of the men were in jail for domestic violence.

“We found that men were operating on the assumption that the world was divided between superior and inferior groups,” he explained. “In this division, men were supposed to be superior and women inferior. If women challenged this assumption and stood up to the man, then he wasn’t a „real man’ unless he „knocked her around.”

Upon closer examination, said Gilligan, the men realized that they had been brainwashed to value these assumptions. When they began to question these values, they realized that they had destroyed their home lives and relationships with their loved ones. The program was so successful that the prisoners have since begun facilitating their own training programs, the level of violence within the jail has decreased, and the rate of recidivism has been reduced by 83 percent, compared to a control group. “It taught me the power of gender role assumptions on men’s violence toward both other women and other men,” added Gilligan

In another example, Gilligan referred to a program in Massachusetts that helped prisoners get a college degree while in prison. The program was almost 100% effective with less than 1 percent recidivism over 30 years, but was eventually cut because politicians wanted to convey “tough on crime” messages, which “dismantled the best program for reducing levels of criminal violence.” In this context, Gilligan referenced the importance of education. He noted that there are social and economic inequalities in the system and that although education is not a panacea, success is measured “by lowering the frequency of a problem” and, therefore, education plays a critical role. Gilligan pointed to the value of giving job and educational opportunities to youth gangs, mentioning work he had done with Tom Hayden in Los Angeles, who was working with the Crips and Bloods street gangs. The program provided alternatives to gang members “who were mature enough to be tired of witnessing violence” and to show how they could become respected, successful men by getting a job and an education.

In terms of other successful programs for reducing recidivism, Gilligan commented that there has been more success replicating these models in other countries (e.g., Poland, New Zealand, and Singapore) than in the United States.

### ***Applications to Development***

Responding to a question on how violence prevention efforts could become more operational in USAID programs, Gilligan emphasized the importance of setting an example of what could work, which is how change happens. “This is a way to be true to oneself, but not violate the autonomy and self-esteem of others,” he said. “I can’t overestimate how important it is not to humiliate people and strip them of their dignity.” Gilligan also stressed that Americans tend to think that the problem of violence exists solely in other countries, but this is not the case; the U.S., he pointed out, has the most punitive criminal justice system in the developing world and the highest prison rate worldwide. “We need to start by educating ourselves. Unless we can set an example to the rest of the world, we won’t succeed.”

Gilligan also cautioned the audience to be very sensitive to understanding the values of shame in a given culture. “If one challenges the basic assumptions of a shame culture,” he said, “then one needs to be very sensitive to other people’s feelings about it.” He cited the example of American soldiers who have shamed people in other countries by not respecting the needs of those who live there to have their women’s privacy respected and not exposed to the gazes of men. Gilligan emphasized how important it is to understand the moral codes of the society in which one is working.

*“Every time you pass a law about education or public health, you are passing a law about violence.”*

In discussing the recent press coverage in the *New York Times* on widows in Iraq, Dr. Gilligan reiterated that economic development can double if women are in the workforce. If women working outside the home will shame men, however, the country ends up “shooting itself in the foot,” he said. “This is not just relevant to violence, but development in all its forms.” Gilligan emphasized the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in which economic, political, and social systems interact with each other, and the understanding that violence is a byproduct, or symptom, of other problems.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# USAID/CMM Gender and Conflict Speaker Series—*Bombshell: The Many Faces of Women Terrorists*

*Submitted on December 15, 2011*

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**The U.S. Agency for International  
Development Gender and Conflict  
Speaker Series**

***Bombshell:  
The Many Faces of Women Terrorists***

*Featuring*

**Dr. Mia Bloom**

*International Center for the Study of Terrorism, Penn State University*

**David Hunsicker**

*USAID Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation*

**December 8, 2011**

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## Speaker & Discussants

**Dr. Mia Bloom, Associate Professor of International Studies and Women's Studies and fellow at the International Center for the Study of Terrorism, Penn State University**

Dr. Bloom is Associate Professor of International Studies and Women's Studies at Penn State. She is a leading expert on suicide terrorism and is the author of *Bombshell: The Many Faces of Women Terrorists* (2011) and *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (2005). Previously she was an assistant professor in the School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia. In addition to her research on terrorism, Dr. Bloom conducts research on ethnic conflict, the strategic use of rape in war, and child soldiers. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University, an M.A. in Arab Studies from Georgetown University, and a B.A. in Russian and Middle East Studies from McGill University. She has held research or teaching appointments at Rutgers, Princeton, Cornell, Harvard, and McGill Universities and speaks eight languages. She regularly appears on Fox News, CNN, CSPAN, CBC and CTV and has been interviewed by Jim Lehrer for PBS, Ted Koppel for Nightline, and Jesse Pearson for MTV.

**Neil Levine, Office Director, USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation**

Neil Levine is the Director of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation in USAID's in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. CMM leads USAID efforts to develop approaches to the causes and consequences of violent conflict. From 2000-2007, Mr. Levine served as the Chief of the Governance Division in USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance where he worked on issues involving promotion of transparent, accountable and effective democratic institutions. Mr. Levine served as deputy director for the Office of Central American Affairs (LAC/CEN) from 1995-2000. He has a strong interest in countries in transition and worked closely in support of the USAID's Missions in Central America to support implementation of the peace accords in El Salvador and Guatemala. Neil holds a M.I.A. from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and a B.A. from Earlham College and is an Adjunct Professor at the American University School of International Service.

**David Hunsicker, Conflict Specialist, USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation**

David Hunsicker is a Conflict Specialist with DCHA/CMM's Technical Team. His regional and technical portfolio includes South and Central Asia, the Middle East and issues of religion, identity and conflict, including counter-extremism and counter-radicalization. Prior to joining CMM he spent eight years living, studying and working in the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union. Most recently, he served as Religion, State and Society Specialist in USAID's Central Asian regional mission. In this capacity, he was responsible for advising USAID and U.S. Embassies in the five Central Asian republics on how to better integrate religious communities into U.S. Government-funded development programming to counter the spread of extremism in the region. Prior to this he served as the Democracy Commission Small Grants Coordinator for the U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan. He has a BA in Islamic Studies from the University of Michigan and an MA in Near Eastern Languages and Civilization from the University of Washington.

## INTRODUCTION

Dr. Mia Bloom, a leading expert on suicide terrorism, spoke to an audience at the U.S. Agency for International Development on December 8, 2011 about her recently-released book *Bombshell: The Many Faces of Women Terrorists* (2011). Her remarks focused on the changing nature of women's involvement in terrorism and the intersection between terrorism and sexual violence. Attendees of the presentation—sponsored by USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation—also questioned Dr. Bloom on ways to address the factors that draw individuals into participating in terrorist activities.

### ***The Changing Nature of Women's Involvement in Terrorism***

Dr. Bloom began her remarks by giving an historical context for women's involvement in terrorism, which, she noted, is not a recent development. For example, the first woman tried for terrorism was a Russian anarchist, Vera Zasulich, in 1877. Many ideological leaders and active participants in left-wing terrorist organizations in the 1960s and 1970s were women, including Ulrike Meinhoff in Germany, Mairead Farrel in Northern Ireland, and Leila Khaled in Palestine. Women have been involved at all levels in terrorist organizations as recruiters, fundraisers, logisticians, frontline activists, or suicide bombers. What is new, however, is that the "nature of women's involvement has changed from behind-the-scenes, support roles to activist and frontline roles."

*"Khaled, who was involved in a series of hijackings, was the poster child for the popular front for the liberation of Palestine. She was a mobilizing force and a source of inspiration for a young generation of Palestinian women. "*

With an expertise in suicide bombers, Bloom said that the percentage of women suicide bombers is on the rise. "In all likelihood, women don't comprise more than 30 percent of the total, but in specific conflicts, they play increasingly important roles." She pointed to the Black Widows—a group of Islamist female suicide bombers in Chechnya—as one example. Bloom also referenced Wafa Idris, who in January 2002 was the first woman Palestinian suicide bomber. Although it was unclear whether Idris was simply delivering the bomb or she had intended to detonate it, her act put women on the frontlines of terrorism in a way that they had not been before. Subsequently likened to "Joan of Arc" in the Islamic world, Idris's death inspired a series of novellas and a training camp for women.

Other terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda have historically had a "masculine face," but this has also been changing in recent years. In 2003, Al-Qaeda began discussion of

establishing women's suicide units, and in 2004, the Saudi branch of Al-Qaeda launched an online women's magazine (*Al Khansa'a*) that encouraged women to support *jihad* in accordance with the terrorist movement's interpretation of it: employing violence to achieve so-called religious aims. A prominent religious leader, Sheikh Qaradawi, subsequently reinterpreted the Qu'ran to imply that women and men have an equal obligation to perform *jihad*. In 2010, the wife of Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri published an open letter to "her sisters in Islam" in another Al-Qaeda-sponsored women's magazine, *Al Shamikha*, which called women to be involved as suicide bombers. The point of this latter effort, explained Bloom, was to show that the Al-Qaeda core had a growing interest in engaging women. Citing statistics in Iraq, Bloom noted that there had been two women suicide bombers in 2003, four in 2005, and 32 in 2007, demonstrating the significant increase in women's participation.

Female suicide bombers have become the "weapon of choice," said Bloom, because they are less likely to be searched at checkpoints, wear clothing that can more easily conceal bombs, and come from all geographic and religious backgrounds. Bloom observed that terror groups often select attractive women, not only because of the heightened media interest, but because they know it is "counterintuitive for a beautiful woman to engage in violence."

Bloom also noted that women are becoming more active over the Internet. "Jihad Jane" (Colleen La Rose) and "Jihad Jamie" (Jamie Paulin-Ramirez) are both U.S. citizens who conspired online to kill a Swedish cartoonist who had insulted the Prophet Muhammad. A woman named Malika el Aroud also ran a website out of Belgium that recruited dozens of men to join the Jihadi movement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### ***Links to Sexual Violence***

Bloom devoted considerable time in her presentation to the links between sexual abuse and terrorism—namely, that accusing one's enemies of sexual abuse or harassment of women has "become part of the rhetoric for violent radicalization." Al-Qaeda has used the "defense of women's honor" as a lynchpin of their strategy. A 2001 Al-Qaeda training manual claims that the "humiliation of Muslim women is a cornerstone of western imperialist policy;" such rhetoric has played an increasing role in mobilizing men to engage in *jihad* in Iraq and Afghanistan. As one example, Bloom showed disturbing images taken at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq that showed American soldiers forcing women to perform sexual acts with them, which were used by Jihadi internet sites as a recruitment tool.

Bloom also drew attention to the Mahmudiyah killings in Iraq in March 2006, in which several American soldiers were involved in the gang rape and murder of a 14 year old girl (Abeer al-Janabi), the murder of her family, and the burning of the home. Although the soldiers were later prosecuted, the incident was used as a propaganda tool, and details about the incident garnered significant exposure on Jihadi websites and were circulated to Muslim communities in the West; Al-Qaeda also posted a revenge video of mutilated U.S. soldiers after this incident. Bloom pointed out that when women are harassed, jailed, raped or threatened in other ways by foreign military occupiers, “This has the double effect of radicalizing the female population and the men in their society.”

*“What [U.S.] soldiers and contractors do is important because [terrorist organizations] only need one or two examples of misbehavior to use as propaganda for mobilization.”*

Bloom also referenced several examples of how terrorist groups themselves have used sexual violence to bring women into their ranks. In Iraq, Samira Ahmed Jassim was responsible for arranging the rape of 80 women and girls. Jassim would then comfort the victims and encourage them to redeem their “shame” by becoming suicide bombers for Ansar al-Sunna, an Al-Qaeda affiliate. In a society with strict culture mores about women and sexuality, these women felt they had few other options after they had been raped. Bloom attributed the large increase in suicide attacks in Diyala Province to Jassim’s involvement. Elsewhere, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka developed recruitment posters illustrating how women who had been victims of sexual violence by the opposition could seek revenge on their attackers by becoming fighters.

### ***Understanding Women’s Rationales for Suicide Attacks***

Bloom explored several reasons why women may become involved in suicide attacks:

- Redemption, or giving women a chance to reinvent themselves, to atone for past sins, or to bring honor to their family;
- Revenge for family members—such as brothers, sons, husbands or fathers—who were killed by the other side;
- Respect from the community for showing dedication to the cause;
- Relationship to a male member of a terrorist organization, a good “vetting mechanism” for the terrorist organization to ensure that the woman is not an informer and also the best predictor of a woman’s involvement; and
- Rape, which (as noted above) is not always just committed by the opposing side, but by the terrorist organizations themselves

*“Al-Qaeda marries sisters and daughters off to other leaders of other cells, which keeps the men radicalized.”*

Bloom described recent trends, such as how women employ gender stereotypes to shame men into participation in terrorism (i.e., “If you are manly, you will perform *jihad*”). Female terrorists have also changed their messaging. In the 1960s and 1970s, women involved in violent movements made women’s inequality a part of their agenda to gain the influence of women in political positions; with contemporary women suicide bombers, however, there is no similar “payout” for society.

Bloom posed the question, “How does one understand how cultures of martyrdom are constructed?” She noted that this is not an Islamic phenomenon, but that “the same culture of martyrdom exists in other conflicts and with other religions,” and is premised on the idea “that one’s death is better than one’s life.” When trying to understand how to counter these activities, “we need to understand the role of that culture and environment.”

### ***Future Trends***

The face of terrorism is becoming much younger. In 2008, the Taliban in Afghanistan attempted to trick a seven-year-old boy into becoming a suicide bomber. Taliban militants had put a vest on the boy with explosives, but the child became suspicious and reported it to the Afghan National Army. His village was so outraged that they began to cooperate more with NATO troops. Bloom explained how children are being targeted through the media, in school settings, and in athletics. Mothers also play a role in radicalizing their children, and at times, there is significant pressure from their communities to do so.

Bloom also noted that “shocking forms of child exploitation” have occurred in Afghanistan, where boys are sometimes raped and then funneled into the Taliban. A report from a former militant in Algeria described sex acts performed on male recruits (aged 16-19) in that country, who are then urged to become suicide bombers. Like Jassim in Iraq, terrorists employ shame-based gender mores to convince victims that becoming a suicide bomber is the only way to regain their honor.

Terrorism experts were caught off guard by women’s involvement, but should be prepared to deal with children. “We need to find mechanisms to intervene before it’s too late,” said Bloom, “Once the children are growing up in this environment and genuinely believe that their death is worth more than their life, it’s very hard, like with child soldiers in Africa, to deprogram them.”

## ***Considering Development Strategies***

During the question and answer segment of the discussion, David Hunsicker from USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation asked how USAID employees could move beyond "symptoms of terrorism and sexual exploitation, and the culture of violence that is being perpetuated on societal and community levels." Acknowledging that USAID was "not in the business of counterterrorism," he reiterated that the agency was interested in the social and economic factors that may be drivers of extremism and exploited by terrorists groups.

Bloom suggested a closer look at the relationship between poverty and terrorism, pointing to a World Bank-sponsored study by Alan Krueger that indicated these links were not strong. The problem with this argument, Bloom proposed, "is that you are only looking at one part, the tip of the iceberg. It doesn't tell you about the whole group of people involved in terrorism." She pointed out the need to look at whole environments and mitigating factors, rather than just the individual. Barring the 9/11 bombers, "terrorism mostly proliferates in places where there aren't a lot of opportunities."

Bloom recommended that USAID address the structural conditions behind terrorism, like poverty or job opportunities, and should also work to address "why people think that being involved in terrorism is such a great idea," referencing the work of John Horgan at Penn State. Terrorists recruit others "by selling a fiction and an idealized form of involvement that isn't reality." Counter narratives are important. For example, the rape and abuse committed against women and children by terrorist groups needs to be publicized. For example, counter-terrorism experts should not only call attention to the aforementioned case of Samira Jassim and the arranged rape of eighty Iraqi women, but organizations like USAID should help rehabilitate the women involved.

Bloom suggested that U.S. agencies like USAID carry out their work in a way that has a "small footprint" and therefore not seen as advancing a political agenda. U.S. contributions to post-tsunami reconstruction in Indonesia are an example. "There were no linkage politics or a price for the aid," said Bloom. "As a result, the support for the U.S. went up." She also emphasized the importance of being a "silent partner" and supporting small initiatives and local organizations—such as wells in Afghanistan—rather than big infrastructure projects like electricity plants. "Focus on smaller things that are culturally appropriate," said Bloom. "Americans like to put their name on big things and these create big targets, but little things that can take root and stick are more important."

Bloom also focused on the importance of being involved in the long-term to gain trust with local communities and to give local people a vested interest in development projects. She referred to the book *The Accidental Guerilla* by David Kilcullen, who argues that locals need to be partners in all endeavors. “When foreign entities come in and leave, it opens up the possibility for retribution. Local ‚baddies’ are punitive to those who have been openly friendly to the other side,” said Bloom. Alternatively, creating local networks that have a vested interest in outcomes creates “some space for moderation.” Bloom referenced the example of an American defense contractor, the Raytheon Company, which hired many U.S. contractors for large projects in Iraq, despite the fact that “there were more engineers in Iraq than anywhere else in the world prior to the war...You could find local talent.”

*“When foreign entities come in and leave, it opens up the possibility for retribution. Local ‚baddies’ are punitive to those who have been openly friendly to the other side.”*

In response to a question about the Arab Spring giving a counter-narrative to Al-Qaeda, Bloom suggested caution in the U.S. approach. “We are at an important crossroads. Being enthusiastic in the wrong way could have big ramifications.” She noted that votes in many places may go to Islamic parties, and while this was not a “bad thing,” as “the idea of consultation is engrained in the Qu’ran and it is not antithetical to Islam;” it may still mean the election of those who do not like the U.S. Although the concept of a Shura Council predates European democracy by 600 years, the “Arab experience of democracy was soured during the colonial period.” Bloom cautioned against looking for democracy that “upholds American priorities,” but noted that the U.S. could be involved in more constructive ways, such as addressing the need for civics lessons and the involvement of civil society, which serve as “an inoculation against hate messages.”