Women, Peace, and Security in Professional Military Education

Published by Marine Corps University Press

Women, Peace, and Security in Professional Military Education.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/102414
Chapter Four
Advising Afghan Security Institutions and Afghan National Defense and Security Forces

Advising Gender Analysis
As outlined in NATO’s strategic guidance, a gender analysis requires the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and on social relations between men and women to identify and understand inequities based on gender. Just as this applies to the planning and execution of military combat operations, a gender analysis is also applicable to noncombat advisory functions, specifically the gendered differences between advisors and how they execute advising duties. Understanding advisor gender perspectives provides insights on advising behaviors stemming from different cultural backgrounds, social relations, military experience, professional occupational specialties, and advisory predeployment training. Cumulatively, all these elements directly influence the execution of the RSM advisory mission. Therefore, determining how an advisor’s predeployment training and gendered perspective affect the RSM advising mission provides critical insight into an important aspect of advising the ANDSF.

Of the 30 advisors interviewed, 22 advisors were officially designated as advisors predeployment, with the remaining 8 serving as advisors after they arrived in Afghanistan. Although rank varied across the advisors, it is worth highlighting that 12 officers (majors/captains) served as ministerial advisors responsible for advising senior-ranking Afghan officers, sometimes with ranks two to three ranks above the coalition officer. When asked “what are some limitations to your advising mission,” rank mismatch was a common response. Rank mismatch was problematic for advisors because their Afghan counterparts questioned the advisor’s experience and legitimacy based on rank and perceived age. Supporting field research, a key finding in the 2019 SIGAR report noted staffing field advisors’ challenges due to rank and specialty requirements. Staffing challenges, such as position vacancies, shifting priorities mid-deployment, and lack of advising experience, often resulted in advisors being reassigned advising duties, frequently resulting in rank mismatches.

The cultural diversity of advisors selected to participate in interviews represent the true nature of multinational operations in the RSM headquarters. The United States had the most significant contribution of advisors, totaling 19 and encompassing both military and civilian advisors. The average years of military experience were 21 years. It is worth noting that—excluding U.S. advisors—there was a trend for NATO nation

87 To be officially designated as an NATO RSM advisor, the billet had to be coded on the NATO crisis establishment document, which dictated the required predeployment training.
advisors to have extended military service, which could positively impact institutional knowledge. For example, two NATO Colonels had 34 and 38 years in the military working alongside U.S. colonels, who had 29 years each.

Age-rank distribution demonstrates different gender perspectives stemming from experience. This age was observed in how Afghans perceived advisors and often reflected in the acceptance of advising support or rejection of advice. Several advisors noted their senior and older Afghan counterparts struggled to get things accomplished because “some Afghan Colonels don’t work well . . . because of rank issues.” However, as senior Afghan officials were replaced with younger Afghans, rank issues became less of a problem. This behavior change can be explained through RSM efforts to fill vacant Afghan ministerial positions with educated Afghans, who tended to be younger and eager to work in the ministry. There were no significant gender differences between the advisors and Afghan advisee sex. Female coalition advisors were spread across the RSM headquarters organization, providing a wide array of feedback on individual relationships. Citing the most critical factor was relationship building and the establishment of trust over time, female advisors emphasized that frequent face-to-face contact supported advising efforts. Male Afghans were receptive to their female advisor counterparts and appreciated the assistance. Overwhelmingly, when asked “In your opinion, are there any advisor skills that should be taught to advisors? Please describe?” female advisors cited the need for cultural understanding, understanding different personalities, listening to Afghans, supporting their needs in accomplishing the mission, and for interpersonal skills. Differences in sex between advisors and advisees presented no hindrances to good advisor-advisee relationships if the advisor was culturally aware and sensitive to and respecting of Afghan culture. The fact that many Afghan advisees were receptive to female advisors serves as an indicator of the importance of understanding. Afghans are receptive to assistance regardless of coalition advisors’ sex and support future efforts to implement UNSCR 1325 in the ANDSF, which calls for gender equality.

As expressed by all advisors, one of the most significant limiting factors of advising was the volatile security situation, which directly impacted escort security requirements for advisors to conduct off-base face-to-face advising. This burden decreased the advisor’s available time spent at the Afghan advisee’s office and limited access to advising opportunities. As one advisor reported during their interview, not being

---

89 Exceeding 35 years for ranks of lieutenant colonel and colonel, which in the U.S. military is usually seen in senior colonels and general officers respectively.

90 Advisors reported they met face to face at least four to five times per week.

91 The security situation required advisors to have guardian angels provide security during all off-base advising sessions. It required two web-based applications: one for movement request to advising location, which included two vehicles and three guardian angels, and one for approval to conduct the advising mission. This administrative burden limited availability of guardian angel and security support to conduct frequent advising missions. Priority of vehicle and guardian angel support went to general officers and senior ranking colonels serving in tier 1 and 2 advising positions, such as the national security advisor, minister of defense, first deputy minister, and chief of general staff.
colocated with her advisee during the workday hampered their relationship. Furthermore, the Afghan advisee was blacklisted for inappropriate behavior toward the U.S. government, resulting in a lack of advising contact for over a month. Once the U.S. government lifted advising restrictions, the damage was done, as the advisor-advisee relationship was strained. Field research gathered three findings addressing the impact of advisors’ predeployment training and gendered perspective on the RSM advising mission.

**Finding 1: Senior Leadership Advocacy**

RSM is a NATO-led mission with a U.S. Army four-star general serving as its commander and as the U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) commander. In this unique role, the commander has the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of both missions. Under the NATO authority, RSM is mandated by its operational plan to implement UNSCR 1325 as a NATO strategic military objective. The obligation of WPS implementation is codified in U.S. law. Despite these mandates, UNSCR 1325 implementation remains a strategic gap and shortfall. Put bluntly, WPS, gender perspectives, and key leader engagement discussions have not been prioritized. Gender perspectives are excluded mainly from RSM TAA advising activities. Although NATO has embraced gender initiatives and perspectives, U.S. leadership has not, thus impacting critical decisions and advising functions integral to ANDSF TAA operations.

To highlight the importance of senior leadership advocacy, advisors highlighted the influence of the RSM commander’s personal communication guidance as articulated in *The Rules Resolute Support Book* and frequently used buzzwords such as *flat communication, reliable partners, institutional viability, and advise at the point of need*, which were frequently cited in advisors interview answers. These buzzwords were often incorporated into advisors’ discussions with their Afghan partners, emphasizing group thinking and repetition at the behest of senior leadership. Buzzwords were also broadcasted across advisors’ computer screensavers and posted in high-frequency common areas such as the laundry facility, gym, and dining facility. Operationalizing the commander’s buzzwords remained elusive, as many advisors lacked predeployment advisory training and the broad concept of security sector assistance in which these terms applied. As a result, buzzwords were repeated time and again and incorporated into advising vocabulary.

Additionally, UNSCR 1325 provides WPS implementation guidance through the NATO/EAPC Women, Peace and Security Policy and Action Plan 2018, Bi-Strategic Command Directive 040-001 Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspective into the NATO Command Structure (Bi-SCD 040-001), and the Allied Command Oper-

---

92 Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan, 10.
The NATO mandate was critical to the execution of the gender advisor mission. As DOD rolls out its WPS SFIP, it has much catching up to do to be on par with NATO RSM partner nations to implement UNSCR 1325 and gender perspectives. As an example, the Bi-SCD 040-001 translates political direction to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 through the integration of gender perspectives and gender mainstreaming in all activities within the strategic commands. To accomplish this task, a gender analysis must be conducted during all stages of planning and execution. According to the Bi-SCD 040-001, “gender analysis requires the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations” within a given area of operations “to identify and understand inequities based on gender.”

As the U.S.-Taliban peace deal demonstrated and targeted attacks on Afghan women serving as politicians and lawyers and on women in the security sector increased in frequency, it is evident gender perspectives in NATO military operations largely remain excluded, further demonstrating the lack of adherence to its strategic directives. In a mission such as RSM with 38 nations and numerous partner nations, all with different cultural backgrounds, WPS provides a common framework to direct attention, focus, and efforts for reconstruction, stability, and peace. WPS is advocating for gender equality so all Afghan society members can have a say in peace; protection of women, children, and men from the harmful effects of conflict; and the resolution of conflict to achieving long-lasting peace. Champions of the WPS agenda in Afghanistan need to see beyond the physical number of women in uniform. As of April 2020, 5,257 women served in the ANDSF.

Meaningful participation means women participate and are able to communicate their thoughts to make a decision, which fosters a sense that their contributions matter and are well represented in the ANDSF.

As an example, advisors who advised Afghan women reported an advising limitation stemmed from their advisee being interrupted or ignored by Afghan male leadership. Furthermore, Afghan women would frequently be excluded from important meetings where decisions were made. The lack of Afghan female participation in decision-making meetings serves as an indicator for coalition advisors to advocate on behalf of their Afghan advisee to be included in decision-making discussions. In order for women to be included, senior leaders must engage their Afghan male coun-


\textsuperscript{96} Bi-Strategic Command Directive 040-001 Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspective into the NATO Command Structure, 5.

\textsuperscript{97} Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan, 46.

\textsuperscript{98} Only a few Afghan women served in key positions within the Ministry of Defense headquarters. Their absence from decision-making discussions and meetings was evident. Research did not evaluate if there was a difference in decision-making presence if the advisor was a female and the Afghan a male.
terparts and have these discussions. NATO has reaffirmed their financial commitment and support of the ANDSF until the end of 2024. This commitment underscores the importance of integrating gender perspectives so those gender considerations are seamlessly woven into all future advising practices to ensure a gender-sensitive foundation be provided on which the principles of WPS can flourish.

While there has been much focus on professionalizing the ASI and ANDSF to achieve a political settlement with the Taliban, lack of senior leadership support in implementing WPS undermines future advisory and reconstruction efforts. WPS is not strongly communicated or conveyed in strategic messaging. NATO’s recent UNSCR 1325 video makes no reference to Afghanistan gender advising. This further demonstrates at the political and military level all-too-common lip service advocacy, but on the ground, WPS execution and implementation in Afghanistan present an entirely different reality. The absence of the preservation of Afghan women’s rights in the U.S.-Taliban peace deal and joint declaration demonstrates how NATO/U.S. military operations have neglected their responsibility in ensuring Afghan women are meaningfully participating in peace negotiations in support of the Afghan NAP for implementing UNSCR 1325. The lack of WPS implementation by the United States has also impacted servicemember gender training and predeployment opportunities.

**Finding 2: Advisor WPS Operationalization Training**

From the standpoint of America’s national security, the most important assignment in your military career may not necessarily be commanding U.S. soldiers but advising or mentoring the troops of other nations as they battle the forces of terror and instability within their own borders.

~Robert M. Gates

The advising mission in Afghanistan could not have been better illuminated than during former Defense Secretary Gates’s speech at West Point in 2008. At the time, the United States was conducting simultaneous advising missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Touted by the American people as the forever war or the longest war, the U.S. advisory mission in Afghanistan has been the subject of academic and political discourse since the war began. For most of the conflict in Afghanistan, the United States

---


and NATO have deployed advisors as individual augmentees or as part of pickup training teams and assigned them according to the needs of the Joint Force. A report from SIGAR in 2017 reported individual military augmentees frequently received little notification for their deployment, which had a direct effect on their predeployment training. Poor predeployment advisor training resulted in advisors being grossly unprepared for their advising mission, directly affecting their ability to understand the local and cultural dynamics of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{103}

In 2019, SIGAR published another report addressing multiple times the negative impact the lack of advisory predeployment training had on Afghan security sector assistance.\textsuperscript{104} Field research confirmed predeployment training remained deficient. To inquire about advisory predeployment training, the following question was asked: Did you receive advisory predeployment training prior to deployment? Data revealed 8 advisors received no predeployment training, and 22 received training. To determine the preparation and quality of advisor training, the following questions were asked: On a scale of 1–10 (10 being the best, one being the least), how well did your training prepare you to be an advisor? and On a scale of 1–10 (10 being the best, one being the least), how was the quality of your predeployment advisory training? As depicted in figures 7.4 and 7.5, the average advisor rating of training preparation was 2.72, and the quality of training was an average of 2.

These low ratings are problematic because the NATO RSM mission is centered on the advisory mission, which is reliant on educated and trained advisors. At the ministerial level, it is problematic when advisors are untrained and expected to carry out strategy when unprepared. An analysis of the gender impacts of untrained advisors results in advisors relying on their personal experience and cultural background to conduct their advising functions. This detracts from command unity of effort and synchronization across the advisory mission. Inadequate predeployment training, advisors’ unfamiliarity with the current mission efforts, and limit the advisors’ ability to be fully immersed with the commander’s priority and mission objectives.

\textsuperscript{103} Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense Security Forces: Lessons From the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan (Washington, DC: Special Instructor General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 2017), 44.
\textsuperscript{104} Divided Responsibility, x–xv, 8, 12–16, 21–23, 36–38, 46–55, 58, 62, 143, 151.
Figure 7.4. Training Preparation

Source: adapted by MCU Press

Figure 7.5. Quality of Training

Source: adapted by MCU Press
As a tool to advance the interests of the United States in Afghanistan, the United States employed advisors at the tactical to strategic levels. A SIGAR report in June 2019 discusses field advising and ministerial advising, and the report highlighted that theater-specific training remained a gap.\textsuperscript{105} The military advisor is the action arm of the military instrument of national power and the tip of the spear when it comes to executing advising. Advisors must be educated and trained in gender and cultural perspectives with the knowledge, skills, and attributes (KSA) required to support the professional development of the ANDSF. Gendered perspectives will facilitate overcoming existing structural barriers, such as cultural, language, and gender barriers, which are often present in military advising and situations, to foster a sense of neutrality and partnership within the advising context. Gendered perspectives will also facilitate the balancing from that of a strict combat advising mindset to that of a strategic advising mindset. Each has a unique set of skills for execution. This is not to say that an advisor should not have a combat mindset. Rather it is recognition of advising that supports their ANDSF advisee to develop their own KSA that is gender-sensitive to their operations. Advisors are not certified teachers. But they should have access to policies, doctrine, existing academic research, and published articles to know how to train and educate others.

In 2017, during an end-of-deployment interview, Major General Richard Kaiser, then the commanding general of Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan (CSTC-A), noted how advisor training was lacking, which had a direct impact on the advising mission.\textsuperscript{106} Additionally, Major General Willard M. Burleson, the Minister of Defense’s deputy advisor, also noted the same observation and the impact the lack of advisor training has on the conduct of the advising mission.\textsuperscript{107} It is worth noting that Major General Burleson coauthored the Army’s Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Advising Foreign Security Forces, which was not a predeployment requirement for advisors to read before assuming duties as an advisor.\textsuperscript{108} Despite these in-depth interviews identifying gaps in advisor training and acknowledging educational and training advisor gaps, the Army decided on a new advising concept through the employment of security force assistance brigades. In an attempt to “prepare Afghan foreign security forces to secure their nations,” this new Army toolkit resorted to solving a problem of its previous attempts to professionalize the ANDSF through untrained advisors.\textsuperscript{109} The employment of SFABs in Afghanistan

\textsuperscript{105} Divided Responsibility, 7, 41.
\textsuperscript{106} News from the Front: Ministerial Advisors—Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan (CSTC-A) (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2017), 2.
\textsuperscript{107} News from the Front: Advising at the Ministerial Level in Afghanistan—Insights from Major General Willard M. Burleson III (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2018), 3.
\textsuperscript{108} Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (MTTP) for Advising Foreign Security Forces.
\textsuperscript{109} Wesley Morgan, “The Army’s Latest Weapon to Turn Around the War in Afghanistan,” Politico, 26 January 2018.
did not address nor resolve the lack of predeployment advisor training. Instead, it was a futile attempt to provide additional staffing to an advising problem set that was initially designed in an ad-hoc fashion. Advisors deployed to keep up with the constant rotation of forces, often at the expense of receiving adequate advisor training, which after 19 years were tired, exhausted, and worn out.

The rebuilding of the ANDSF is reliant on advisors capable of transferring knowledge to their foreign security force partner. This can only come through advising education sensitive to gender roles and perspectives in Afghan society and how these gender perspectives affect advising at all levels: strategic, operational, and tactical, as highlighted by SIGAR in numerous reports. Advisors who lack sufficient education and training often ask themselves: what is the advisor’s mission to train, advise, and assist? Advisors deficient on Afghan cultural education and training lack the knowledge of Afghan social politics, such as the Taliban’s draconian rule and trauma inflicted on Afghans, especially Afghan women. The lived experience of an Afghan serving in the ANDSF was shaped by the Taliban’s governance and it influences their behavior. After 20 years of coalition intervention and fighting against the Taliban, the inclusion of Afghan gender roles and perspectives into military operations must be considered to continue to professionalize the ANDSF and prevent the ANDSF from reverting to ethnic rivalry and fighting within the security sector. Engagement with the assistant minister of defense for personnel and education (AMOD P&E), the senior-most woman in the Ministry of Defense, provides an example of the necessity of gendered advising perspectives. Serving as a strong source of gender advocacy in the Ministry of Defense, she was seen as the lead advocate of any issue dealing with Afghan women’s gender initiatives in the Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army. RSM general officers and representatives from the international community and Embassy staffs supporting Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army gender initiatives would meet with AMOD P&E to discuss gender initiative programs. However, engagement with AMOD P&E on gender initiatives was problematic. The lead for gender initiatives in the Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army is the director for human rights and gender integration (HRGI). Since this was a civilian position rather than a ministerial position, interdepartment tension developed because AMOD P&E took the lead on gender initiatives without including the HRGI director. The tension between both departments grew because advisors lacked gender perspectives and cultural understanding of the role authority influences Afghan engagements. A June 2020 biannual report to Congress noted that “implementation of UNSCR 1325 and NAP 1325 requires senior-level representation and authority requiring promotion of Gender Directorate positions to levels of AMOD.” Elevating the HRGI position would resolve authority conflict and account for cultural interaction gendered perspectives.

110 Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan, 41.
111 Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan, 41.
It is worth noting that an article published in 2019 highlighted the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) and assignment of teams across Afghanistan to conduct the Army’s re-energized TAA mission. These new SFAB teams, which are permanent, replace previous advising teams, which were ad hoc formations. These 12-person formations are supposed to be jack-of-all-trades not with the goal of teaching the Afghans how to fight, but “to teach them how to sustain the fight.” Sustaining the fight requires Afghan soldiers to be literate and capable of synthesizing information and making decisions. As part of the organizational construct, SFABs were educated and trained to perform advisory missions. Afghan gender perspectives remained excluded from predeployment training, incorporating valuable classes on SIGAR lessons learned. In 2017, SIGAR reported the impact of high rates of Afghan illiteracy, an uneducated force, and its advisory mission. The gendered implications of sustained armed conflict in Afghanistan devastated the Afghan educational system, with an estimated 3.7 million children absent from school, with 60 percent of those absentees girls. In an interview discussed in the Afghanistan Papers, as reported in 2016, only about 2 in 10 Afghan military recruits could read and write. Low soldier literacy rates continues to impede security force development as illiteracy is a continued reportable item in semiannual congressional reports. To address the literacy gap, the Ministry of Defense inaugurated the beginning of literacy classes at the Afghan National Army recruitment command. Had gender-sensitive training been conducted to address Afghan soldier illiteracy, SFAB teams would have known that most Afghan soldiers lack basic literacy to read manuals common to vehicles, weapons, and gear. This example is one of hundreds that further highlight the challenges advisors experience by being unfamiliar with the gender perspectives of the Afghan environment.

NATO’s support for UNSCR 1325 implementation calls for gender perspectives in military operations. NATO has developed comprehensive gendered training toolkits to be used for deploying servicemembers. Partner nations, such as Canada, have developed a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) toolkit, which is used to facilitate a gender-sensitive operational analysis of the mission by identifying how men and women, girls and boys experience the effects of military operations differently. Advisors receiving gender perspectives in their predeployment training would be introduced to these tools to aid them in their advising duties. Despite having gender

---

114 “The Afghanistan Papers.”
advisors in the RSM, lack of advisor education, training, and knowledge relating to women or gender is deemed a women’s issue. One advisor’s gendered actions can be used as an example.

A U.S. advisor was assigned to the Afghan National Army sergeant major. A sexual harassment case at one of the corps had involved an incident with three Afghan female soldiers and an unstated number of Afghan males. The Afghan corps commander reached out to the Afghan sergeant major to address the sexual harassment cases, particularly in handling the Afghan women. The Afghan sergeant major asked his advisor for assistance, who reached out to this author as the Ministry of Defense gender advisor. Upon coordination, the HRGI director reached out to the corps commander to help support the command for investigation and the victims for relief and recovery support. In this particular case, Afghan social roles between men and women influenced Afghan male behavior above his leadership responsibilities and determined that any matter affecting a woman was perceived as a women’s issue and automatically referred to by the gender advisors. This gender blindness has resulted in advising problems, as outlined previously and detailed in multiple SIGAR reports. In a recent publication by the Joint Chiefs of Staff discussing the development of today’s Joint officers, the publication discusses the need for strategic thinkers and Joint officers who are better educated with foresight in mind. A glance over the document makes no mention of gender perspectives called out in the Women, Peace, and Security Act and the U.S. WPS strategy. This is problematic because senior Service leadership must be the strongest advocates for WPS gender initiatives, which must be articulated in documents emanating from the Joint Chiefs.

Gender perspective training would also provide answers to clarify WPS tenets and to counter negative perceptions of the agenda. WPS is not a women’s issue in Afghanistan. It is not a competition between men and women. Instead, it is grounded in collaboration, unity, and interdependence to work toward a common outcome: meaningful participation of Afghan women whose contributions can achieve a long-lasting peace in Afghanistan and end the decades-long armed conflict that has ravaged generations. It is also about inclusion of women as equal participants in conflict resolution and peace building. WPS sheds a new light and way to understand the complex operational environment and seeks to find less-militarized solutions to peace in Afghanistan and to serve vital U.S. interests. Military advisors untrained in gender perspectives is not a sustainable status quo.

When the advising mission comprises well-educated and -trained advisors, the advising mission may see improvements in the outcome of Afghan policies and procedures. Lack of leadership support results in inadequate gender perspective training.

---


affecting advisors’ knowledge of gender perspectives and the crucial role it plays in the professionalization and development of the ANDSF. Lack of leadership support and gender training leads us to the last critical component of WPS institutionalization.

Finding 3: WPS Institutionalization

Finally, gender mainstreaming in daily plans, policies, and operations is the end state of WPS institutionalization in the RSM and ANDSF operations. States that foster gender perspectives highlight the importance of gender equality to facilitate state security. The reconstruction of Afghanistan has been predicated on a political peace settlement with the Taliban and reduced military operations. For the peace settlement to be effective and sustainable, Afghan women and the preservation of their rights must be centered. Research conducted by the United Nations Women has shown a connection between women’s participation and the peace agreement quality. Another study shows that women’s contributions to peace processes make peace 35 percent more likely to last for 15 years. Women’s participation provides greater diversity and thought into peace building and peacemaking as women have different security needs and promote priorities that challenge dominant state security narratives. With the current RSM efforts of securing a peace deal, gender institutionalization could not come at a more crucial time. The only pathway forward is an Afghan solution that involves Afghan women.

Advisors were asked if they had read the Resolute Support Operational Plan (RS OPLAN). Knowledge of the RS OPLAN would have exposed advisors to the RSM mission, two NATO military strategic objectives, including implementation of UNSCR 1325. Other keywords such as functional-based security force assistance, security force assistance, and defense institution building are also included in the RS OPLAN. Nineteen advisors did not read the OPLAN. This is problematic because 12 of the respondents had never been to Afghanistan. Furthermore, only 20 advisors received a turnover, and many felt their turnovers were limited in scope and needed more turnover to adequately learn their job. These statistics demonstrate the criticality of WPS institutionalization as it provides a framework that develops a common advising culture and understanding the RSM objectives to support advisors’ engagements. The WPS agenda transcends political objectives and is critical for achieving U.S. national objectives, vital interests, and the alliance’s common defense. There is an inherent tension between the political nature of the WPS agenda and security sector reform and principled military action rooted in gender equality, gender inclusivity, and gender diversity. Military leaders need to understand these lines of effort are complementary and must not be coopted by political and social change merely to satisfy objectives.

121 “Roots of National and International Relations,” 3.
that are not aligned with maintaining military readiness and effectiveness. WPS in Afghanistan must be implemented by senior leadership, advisors, and civilian leadership. WPS must be institutionalized and framed within a security lens to achieve long-lasting effects. Extensive guidance on NATO and partner nations on the military contribution to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 largely remains excluded from senior leadership advocacy and WPS institutionalization. This lack of RSM institutionalization affects Afghanistan. As an example, First Vice President Amarullah Saleh stated on 3 November 2020 that the Kabul University attack was a failure of intelligence—the same intelligence that RSM coalition advisors are supporting. As another example, it could be reasonably assumed the Kabul Maternity clinic attack in May 2020 could have been prevented through better gendered intel analysis. The attack on Fawiza Koofi in August 2020 followed by a September 2020 U.S. embassy in Afghanistan warning about an increased security threat and targeted attacks against women. Gendered intelligence analysis identifies vulnerable Afghans and facilities needing extra precaution during a sensitive transitional phase in Afghan politics and the peace-making process.

WPS reframes the concept of warfighting and military objectives, offering a gendered mission analysis observation: the Afghan center of gravity is women and children. The Taliban’s worldview on the role of Afghan women and seclusion from society offers the coalition an opportunity to influence future action. Engaging women, who represent 50 percent of the population, is essential to countering the Taliban and its radical narrative of Islam. WPS institutionalization is central to supporting Afghan women and girls to achieve future security and stability through their meaningful participation in all aspects of Afghan society. The ongoing political process negotiations and participation of Afghan women within the peace process remains crucial. As has been repeatedly stated, there is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. Therefore, the only solution is a civil solution reliant on the meaningful inclusion of Afghan women.

Gender institutionalization is a critical component of Afghan counterterrorism operations. The utilization of female engagement teams (FETs) and present-day cultural support teams (CSTs) demonstrate the active implementation of gender in the terrorist fight. Female-only teams allow access to an otherwise excluded population while addressing the gendered root causes of conflict. WPS institutionalization approach to professionalizing the ANSF supports not only Afghan women’s specific initiatives, but it will also support challenges such as pay issues, facility issues, and food issues that plague the ANSF. Though military leadership recognizes the benefit of institutionalization as it applies to the ANSF at all levels, increased professionalization, effective and sustainable defense, and security institutions will be realized. The coali-

126 Egnell, “Gender Perspectives and Military Effectiveness.”
tion welcomes the benefits that derive from WPS leadership support, gender training, and WPS institutionalization, and we are compelled, on the other hand, to think about their implications on peace, security, and stability.

Advising the ANDSF requires senior leadership advocacy, advisor training, and institutionalization to effectively implement UNSCR 1325 and gender perspectives. Support of reconstruction and peace operations requires knowledge on Afghan cultural and social norms in order to effectively engage Afghans in the professionalization of the ANDSF. As advocates, senior leaders are responsible for implementing UNSCR 1325 in support of the Afghan NAP. Advisors lacking Afghan cultural education and training inhibit the effectiveness of professionalization of the ANDSF by not factoring in cultural sensitivities, which could inhibit progress. Lastly, institutionalization of UNSCR 1325 and gender perspectives is imperative for the future stability and negotiated peace settlement with the Taliban.