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## The Post-Colonial Issue

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# A Note from the Editor-in-Chief

**T**he aim of this journal is to disrupt the ‘single-story’ of mainstream foreign policy. Through highlighting both experienced and emerging voices from across the globe, we seek to understand, challenge, and critique foreign policy.

**T**his issue focuses on the theme of post-colonialism and foreign policy, which was chosen by our members and supporters. Through a post-colonial analytical lens, our contributors challenge the unquestioned objectivity of elitist, Western-centric foreign policy, and unpack the complex connections between gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality that are embedded in the everyday actions and politics of people from across the world. Alongside our written contributions, you will find artwork and poetry engaging with this theme. A feminist foreign policy brings all voices to the table, through whichever medium they choose to express themselves, challenging the academic and un-inclusive paradigm it is embedded in.

**T**hank you for supporting this publication. CFFP is a non-profit volunteer-run organisation and we are proud to lead the way in making foreign policy more feminist, more transparent, and more intersectional. With your support, we’re amplifying a different and more nuanced conversation that can better inform policy decisions and begin to alleviate global inequality.

**W**e hope you enjoy and learn from this journal, but we also encourage you to consider contributing to our next issue. From articles to artwork, we are always looking for new contributors and we are eager to hear (and see) new voices and fresh perspectives.

Katie Washington

Editor-in-Chief



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*"Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanise. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.... When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise."*

*-Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2014*

This emphasis on female vulnerability and the resulting victimisation of women can have serious implications on post-conflict reconstruction, hindering - rather than enabling - the principal objective of human rights.

-Anwar Mhajne

# THE FUTURE OF FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN'S (AND MEN'S) SECURITY

*Anwar Mhajne*

Feminist foreign policies are strongly informed by the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) agenda on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). This agenda provides a normative framework for foreign and security policies. The influence of WPS is evident in various countries' foreign policy orientations. For instance, Julie Bishop, Australia's foreign minister, and the first woman in the role, is a strong supporter of WPS issues (Aggestam, 2016). Moreover, during Hillary Clinton's tenure as U.S. Secretary of State, she framed the status of women as a matter of national security and played a crucial role in garnering unanimous endorsement of UNSCR 1888 (2009) on sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict (Mason, 2013). The WPS agenda connects women's issues to national and international security.

A consequence of this agenda is that ending global violence against women could be used to justify militarised interventions, thus "genderwashing" imperialist interventions, and supporting investments in police, military, and peacekeeping to prevent and respond to gendered violence abroad (Mason, 2013). An historical example of such "genderwashing" is U.S. First Lady Laura Bush's September 2001 announcement in which she justified the invasion of Afghanistan in terms of security and freedom, to liberate Afghan women and facilitate their return to school (Stout, 2001).

Moreover, feminist foreign policy is defined narrowly by the WPS agenda. It merely asks for

adding women to the peace process without adequately analysing local, national and international patriarchal power structures or the connection between militarisation, arms trade, and women's oppression. For instance, the Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy focuses on improving the situation of women and girls. In 2017, the plan aimed to promote the role of women and girls through conflict prevention (Bjarnegård & Melander, 2017). In 2016, the action plan's main goal was to promote the participation of women as actors in peace processes and peace support operations (ibid, 2017).

**The goals of these action plans are blindly focused on including women, without addressing other patriarchal structures enhanced by militarism and fuelled by access to weapons, which play a strong role in perpetuating the insecurities women face around the world.**

Despite advocating a feminist foreign policy, Sweden is one of the world's top ten arms exporters, allowing exports to repressive authoritarian regimes that oppress their civilians and strip women of their basic rights (Aggestam, 2016). To address this contradiction, the Swedish Parliament passed a new and stricter set of export control criteria in February 2018 that takes into consideration the receiving state's democratic status as a major element in evaluating potential arms sales (Perlo-Freeman, 2018). However, this policy would

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not involve a complete ban on arms exports to non-democracies. For instance, Sweden can continue selling weapons to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a country fuelling the conflict in Yemen by backing southern separatists (Perlo-Freeman, 2018). Indeed, the Swedish aerospace and defence company, Saab, opened a development and production centre in the UAE in December 2017 (Perlo-Freeman, 2018).

Similarly, despite Canada's feminist foreign policy, the country continues selling weapons to Saudi Arabia, thus indirectly exacerbating the conflict in Yemen and its devastating effects on women (Zakaria, 2017). In September 2017, a few months after Canada announced its new global feminist agenda, the U.S. government signed a \$593 million arms deal with the Nigerian military (ibid, 2017). The deal includes weapons with Canadian ties such as the A-29 Super Tucano warplanes whose engines are manufactured by Pratt and Whitney Canada (York, 2017). These weapons will be used by a government that has in the past bombed refugee camps and killed dozens of civilians (Al Jazeera, 2017). Another deal made last year with the Canadian-led Streit Group also sold 177 armoured vehicles to the Nigerian military (York, 2017).

As opposed to the aforementioned foreign policies, an effective feminist foreign policy needs to acknowledge existing power structures and analyse the causes and consequences of patriarchy, militarisation, and neoliberalism as the dominant order. Profiting from arms production creates a vested interest in sustaining the systems of war. The manufacture, trade, proliferation, possession, and use of weapons facilitate sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, and armed conflicts, which are integrally tied up with violent masculinities. Governments need to reallocate resources spent on the military towards activities that benefit women and humanity in general, such as implementing

the Sustainable Development Goals.

As Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) have always argued, bloated military spending raids funds set aside for human security and sustainable development: "If the [1.6 trillion USD] spent on military security in 2015 was directed towards human security, this would provide a substantial portion of the total needed to realise the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals" (WILPF, 2017: 20). Militarism and arms trades are tightly connected. An emphasis on militarism might serve the interests of those profiting from arms production, thus sustaining the systems of war. As various studies produced by WILPF and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) demonstrate (see: Gaynor, 2015 & WILPF, 2016), women and girls often disproportionately suffer from the use of weapons in conflict due to "forced displacement, sexual violence, trafficking, lack of access to health care (including sexual and reproductive health), and lack of access to victim and survivor assistance" (WILPF, 2016: 6).

Therefore, a more impactful approach to feminist foreign policy should be based on challenging militarism and preventing arms from reaching entities that will utilise them to violate the rights of men and women. A feminist foreign policy should not only focus on addressing women's needs during conflict, but also focus on preventing conflict itself and reducing its intensity through controlling the influx of weapons and limiting arms trade. It is important to ensure that peace processes are inclusive and gender-sensitive, but this alone is insufficient. Rather, to ensure peace, policymakers need to focus on how militarism and arms trade fuel conflicts and increase civilian casualties for men and women alike. A feminist foreign policy should enable effective conflict prevention through disarmament, women's meaningful participation, and providing effective

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conditions for women's empowerment.

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ISSUE NO. 2 | JULY 2018

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