Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions

Executive Summary
United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was adopted in October 2000. It recognizes the disproportionate impact that war and conflicts have on women and children, and highlights the fact that women have been historically left out of peace processes and stabilization efforts. UNSCR 1325 calls for full and equal participation of women at all levels in issues ranging from early conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction, peace and security.

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Background

This Review is a result of the commitment by NATO, and by its Operational Partners in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and in the Kosovo Force (KFOR), to support implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. In the declaration of the Lisbon Summit of November 2010, Heads of State and Government expressed their continued support for the implementation of the NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Policy on UNSCR 1325, and related Resolutions, and endorsed a NATO Action Plan for the mainstreaming of UNSCR 1325 in NATO-led operations and missions. Since 2010, the NATO Action Plan has been updated, and a progress report on implementation was delivered at the Chicago Summit, in May 2012. At Chicago, Heads of State and Government tasked the Operations Policy Committee to conduct a review of the practical implications of UNSCR 1325 for the conduct of NATO operations and missions.

The North Atlantic Council invited the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), based in the Swedish Armed Forces International Centre, to compose and lead an international team of experts to conduct the Review. The NCGM accepted the task and invited the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) to execute the Review. The NCGM and FOI were joined by representatives from eight nations. The Review Team made three field study trips to Kosovo/KFOR and Afghanistan/ISAF.

The Aim of the Review

The Terms of Reference, endorsed by the Permanent Representatives to the North Atlantic Council and the non-NATO countries contributing to ISAF and KFOR, identified the following key questions to be answered by the Review:

- What elements of UNSCR 1325, and related Resolutions, are applicable to NATO-led operations and missions?
- How has the practical implementation of the gender perspective and UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions been taken forward in NATO-led operations and missions?
- What are the more significant measurable effects or consequences of activities advancing the gender perspective and the women, peace and security agenda on the broader objectives of NATO-led operations and missions?
- What have the main challenges been to date, both in terms of our own internal work within the missions, but also when it comes to mainstreaming the gender perspective as well as UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions within the local security forces?
- What lessons can be drawn so far from this implementing process which could improve current NATO-led missions or assist futures ones, including Afghanistan post-2014?
The 28 NATO Allies and their 22 partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council have agreed a policy to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and develop a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations. It provides a framework for assisting nations to adapt national policies and programmes. Personnel deployed in NATO-led operations and missions and serving within NATO structures need to be trained appropriately.

Findings

NATO/EAPC Policy on implementing UNSCR 1325 and working mechanism

This Review has revealed that, since the adoption of the NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) policy on implementation of UNSCR 1325 in 2007, NATO has made significant progress in integrating the gender perspective. Policy frameworks have been adopted and working mechanisms developed in order to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325 throughout NATO’s entire structure. A significant and symbolically important step was taken with the appointment of the Special Representative of the NATO Secretary General on Women, Peace and Security in 2012. These achievements constitute a robust platform in support of the advancement of the UNSCR 1325 agenda. The Review has thus not identified any urgent need for additional policy frameworks, or working mechanisms. The current challenge is to proceed with the implementation of the already adopted UNSCR 1325 and existing policies in the entire organization—from the strategic to the tactical level.
NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen appointed Mari Skåre (2nd from right) as his Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security. She engages in high-level advocacy efforts with Allied and partner governments and cooperates with the United Nations (UN) and other relevant organizations, as well as raising awareness of NATO policies. Here, Mari Skåre is joined by UN Secretary General’s Special Representative on Sexual Violence Zainab Bangura (4th from right) and others – all have crossed their hands to take a stand against the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war.

In response to political decisions, NATO’s military component developed practical proposals and guidelines for implementation of UNSCR 1325, in the form of the Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 in 2009, and a revised version in 2012. The Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 is a comprehensive directive, which provides adequate and relevant guidance to all levels in the military structure, including national armed forces. According to the findings of this Review, the immediate challenge with regard to the Directive is to disseminate and reinforce its instructions for implementation. The Review established that few commanders and staff officers in KFOR and ISAF are aware of the guidance it provides. The overwhelming majority were not aware of the Directive’s existence. If it were properly enforced and implemented, however, Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 would provide a solution to many of the dilemmas identified by this Review.

In addition, NATO’s military component, under the leadership of Allied Command Operations has established a structure for ensuring the integration of UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming. This is being achieved through the creation of Gender Advisor positions throughout the organization, which includes NATO’s Joint Force Commands—maritime, land and air components. This measure has been accompanied by the creation of Gender Field Advisors at the tactical level. The main challenge with regard to the Gender Advisor structure is the dilemma posed by vacant positions. If these positions, at the various levels, remain vacant, it creates a situation that will hamper the chain of command, which would in turn be detrimental to the implementation of directives and orders related to UNSCR 1325 and Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1.
The Review’s overall impression of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 is mixed. Although, progress has been made through the establishment of Gender Advisors positions, Gender Focal Points and gender enablers, the integration of a gender perspective and its relevance to military operations leaves ample room for improvement.

The Review found that there was a higher degree of understanding of gender relations and their impact on operations within ISAF than in KFOR. This is explained by the extreme stratification between men and women in Afghanistan, in comparison to Kosovo where women also are subordinated to men but not to the same extent. In Afghanistan efforts at the tactical level would not be possible if gender roles and gender relations are not taken into account. This is especially true when it comes to force protection.

The Review identified the following areas as pivotal to progress on the integration of a gender perspective in NATO’s military operation:

- dissemination and enforcing of UNSCR 1325 and Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1;
- regular monitoring and assessments of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1;
- leadership, at all levels, within NATO’s military structure;
- Gender Advisors, and filling of vacant Gender Advisor positions;
- integration of a gender perspective in tools used for assessments, intelligence work, planning, operations and reporting;
- training of all personnel;
- identification of women.

The support and advocacy of senior leadership is essential for the full implementation of UNSCR 1325. Here, the Commander of ISAF at the time, General John R. Allen, welcomes the highest ranking female in the Afghan National Army, Brigadier General Khatool Mohammadzai, to join representatives of the United Nations, Afghan ministries and non-governmental organizations at a Gender Integration Luncheon at ISAF Headquarters in February 2012. (© US Army - Kap Kim)
The stratified relations between men and women, and women’s subordinated role, in Afghanistan are key factors that contribute to enhanced awareness of the importance of a gender perspective in ISAF’s operations. The counterinsurgency strategy, which guides ISAF’s efforts, is population-centric, although the population has often been defined as men. At all levels, gender is a factor that has to be taken into account in order to fulfil mission objectives. This is particularly true at the tactical level, when, during operations, ISAF troops have to take into account the position and situation of women in Afghan society.

Gender work in ISAF is currently characterized by the individual initiatives of personnel who are working hard to implement a gender perspective in all aspects of the ISAF mission. At ISAF Headquarters level, they enjoy the support of the Commander of ISAF (COMISAF) and the Chief of Staff. COMISAF has pushed gender mainstreaming as a critical element of the counterinsurgency strategy. Several Gender Advisor positions are vacant. There have been achievements, especially regarding the Afghan National Security Forces, but those gains are currently at risk due to ISAF’s withdrawal in 2014. The level of training on gender is generally low. Gender training is needed at all levels of the organization.

ISAF’s main analytical outcomes, the intelligence and planning products, do not factor in gender as part of their core analyses. This means that gender, by definition, is not mainstreamed, which makes it difficult to leverage the accomplishments that actually have been achieved at the tactical level.

This lack of gender analysis and a gender perspective may have affected the Afghan Local Police (ALP) programme. The ALP is implicated in violence against women in Kunduz and Baghlan. Had a more thorough analysis been conducted, it is possible that these problems could have been foreseen.

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Reliance on Gender Advisors is currently ISAF’s main approach for realizing its gender intentions. With the highly limited knowledge on gender that is available outside the Gender Advisor group, the conclusion is that Gender Advisors will have to continue to be deployed for the foreseeable future in order to realize these policy goals.
Afghan Air Force 2nd Lt Niloofar Rhmani, Kabul Air Wing, is the first Afghan female pilot to fly a fixed wing combat mission on 18 July 2013. She is the first Afghan woman to complete undergraduate pilot training and receive her wings.

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to reach out to Afghan women to some extent. Approaches such as the use of Female Engagement Teams, Mixed Engagement Teams, Mixed Civil Military Cooperation Teams and Cultural Support Teams have been tested. The results of the work of these teams are reported to be mixed, but there are other reports on successes in intelligence-gathering and in affecting armed opposition groups. Those teams that have specific training are reported to perform well.

Afghan women respondents reported that women are rarely approached by ISAF. The respondents consider that ISAF has failed to identify women as important actors and, having done so, consult with them on that basis. This is also applicable when considered in several other respects—including from a security perspective, especially during the transition in responsibility for security—from their roles as mediators in local disputes and conflict, and from the complexities of the transformation process.

ISAF’s capacity-building is focused on the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI). When it comes to gender work, the Government of Afghanistan has built up gender units at both the MoD and the MoI. Both the Afghan National Police (ANP) and the Afghan National Army (ANA) have recruited women into their forces. Women personnel in the ANSF report that they have received threats and are being harassed. The Review Team learned that the recruitment of women to ANA and ANP had come to a standstill. Representatives of ANSF, the MoI and MoD explained that this is due to the high rate of illiteracy among Afghan women, the reluctance of families to allow their women to join the security forces, and a desire to retain the ethnic balance in the ANSF. There have been pronounced gains in working from a gender perspective in the ANSF. ISAF has a hand over process in place, but it is not certain how effective it will be. All of these gains face interdependent risks of being rolled back, however, unless the international community can muster the resources for further military and police reform, and for an improvement of the overall situation for women in Afghanistan.
The position of the Gender Advisor is essential for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in KFOR. The position is located directly under the Chief of Staff, which is a prerequisite for enabling a gender perspective at all levels in KFOR. The fact that the Gender Advisor is a one-person staff cell reduces the likelihood that UNSCR 1325 is being sufficiently implemented throughout KFOR’s operations. The common misunderstanding that it is the Gender Advisor’s role to be the sole guarantor of “the gender perspective” in all aspects of KFOR’s operations poses a significant limitation on the prospects for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all of the Force’s operations. Apart from the Gender Advisor’s efforts, this misunderstanding results in only random consideration of a gender perspective and little gender mainstreaming in KFOR.

Gender Focal Points have been established in the Liaison Monitoring Teams (LMT), which provides KFOR with an important opportunity for developing far-reaching gender oriented practices. The LMTs, even if not originally created with a gender perspective in mind, allow the possibility of close liaison with the local community, and identification of security risks and protection needs among women, men, girls and boys. This demands, however, that KFOR takes concrete actions to integrate a gender perspective in LMT reports and analyses, in combination with gender trained LMT personnel.

The Review identified the general absence of pre-deployment gender training as being a major detriment to gender mainstreaming. The Gender Advisor does give briefings on gender mainstreaming and UNSCR 1325, but this cannot compensate for the lack of pre-deployment or proper in-theatre training. Few KFOR officers among the respondents were able to describe how a gender perspective relates to their specific task in KFOR. This indicates the need for more training opportunities, wherein methods for operationalizing a theoretical understanding of the importance of a gender perspective can be taught and learned.

Within KFOR, the notions of gender and of a gender perspective are generally understood as being brought into military operations through and by female military staff. The absence of women in the staff, conversely, is held to be a reason for the lack of a gender perspective in operations. Moreover, this is ramified by the impression that the implementation of a gender perspective is held to be the task of the Gender Advisor alone. The Review found that...
there is often incomprehension of how a gender perspective is relevant for the operations and tasks at hand.

The intelligence-gathering, reporting and planning process does not incorporate a systematic and structured consideration of a gender perspective, which undermines the prospects for gender mainstreaming in operations. This means that any aspect of a gender perspective that does occur in the operations is reliant on the capacity and initiative of specific individuals, which in turn makes its presence sporadic and serendipitous. This is specifically troublesome since the vulnerabilities, security risks and protection needs of men and women, and boys and girls, are not being properly identified or assessed. This is a serious detriment to the provision on protection in UNSCR 1325 and Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1.

The Kosovo Security Force (KSF) has made significant progress in advancing the UNSCR 1325 agenda; there is a clear and established gender focus in its policies and recruitment processes. The policies that have been adopted by the KSF enable and encourage women to join and seek careers among its ranks, which indicates a significant potential for sustained gender equality in KSF operations. Women regard the KSF as an attractive employer, since it is seen to provide a source of livelihood and training that improves quality of life for women. The measures being implemented by the KSF suggest that a good foundation for a relevant, effective and sustainable gender balanced force is being built. The existence of a Gender Advisor position at the Land Force Command level of the KSF organization is another measure that has the potential to develop a gender perspective in an effective, systematized and routine way that can reach into all of the KSF’s operations. There appears to be significant capacity for effective and sustained gender mainstreaming in the KSF’s operations, if it can be fully utilized. In addition, provided that the guidance instrument on gender and community is sufficiently promoted and implemented throughout the KSF, its implementation may lead to effective incorporation of a gender perspective at all levels of the organization.
Recommendations

The Review has advanced the following recommendations:

Recommendations to NATO

• seize the opportunity and devote itself to the implementation of existing instruments;
• focus on the dissemination and enforcement of Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1(2012) throughout the entire military structure;
• ensure that the implementation of Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 is executed and monitored and that its progress is regularly assessed;
• make gender training a requirement for the advancement to, and holding of, high-ranking commands; and
• hold Senior Military Leadership accountable for the implementation of Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 (2012), through regular reporting on Directive-specific indicators.

Recommendations to NATO/Allied Command Operations

• ensure that in-theatre training on UNSCR 1325, specifically the 3Ps* is held regularly throughout the existence of a mission (such as KFOR and ISAF);
• establish the Gender Advisor positions to support the Commander, and ensure that the placement of the position in the organization is a reflection of this;
• standardize job descriptions for Gender Advisors in order to guarantee that the roles and responsibilities of the Gender Advisor are coherent throughout the chain of command, are not subject to the interpretations of individual Commanders, nor of the individual Gender Advisors;
• revise relevant intelligence, planning, report and assessment tools so that they include a gender perspective, with the objective of facilitating gender mainstreaming through all phases of military operations;
• make the inclusion of a gender perspective and the principles of UNSCR 1325 a basic requirement for military orders, guidance and operational plans.

Experience in Afghanistan and Kosovo has shown that operations can be more effective with enhanced female participation. Women can be an asset and an enabler, for instance, when it comes to engagement with the local population. They have also helped to inspire and mentor local female soldiers. Moreover, they set an example in societies that are not used to seeing women in roles that are traditionally assigned to men.

* Women’s Participation in conflict prevention, peace building and reconstruction; Protection of women and girls’ human rights during conflict; and the Prevention of gender-based violence.

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Recommendations to NATO and all current and future Operational Partner nations

- ensure that there is a roster of trained Gender Advisors, deployable to NATO’s missions;
- ensure that Gender Advisor positions throughout the military system are filled and not left vacant;
- make UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming a mandatory requirement in all education, training and exercises for military staff, at all levels, regardless of whether they are, or about to be, deployed in a theatre of conflict. The minimum level for Commanders should include doctrines, policy context and content, and facilitate the ability to provide leadership. Staff should learn what tools can be used to implement the principles of UNSCR 1325 and Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 (2012);
- train trainers on UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming, with the objective of supporting on-the-job training;
- make UNSCR 1325, and specifically the 3Ps, a mandatory requirement in pre-deployment.

Recommendations to NATO and KFOR and ISAF Operational Partner nations

- continue the support of the Afghan National Security Forces, with a distinct focus on training women in the police and military personnel post-2014;
- continue the support of the Kosovo Security Force, with the objective of facilitating the implementation of its gender policy framework.
Acknowledgements

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Ms Helené Lackenbauer, Research Team Leader, Sweden*
Ms Susanne Avmacher, Sweden*
Lt Col Thierry Dussutour, France, NATO/Allied Command Operations
Dr Liisa Eränen, Finland
Mr Jan Frelin, Sweden*
Ms Karolina Gasinska, Sweden*
Lt Col Ella van den Heuvel, the Netherlands
Ms Maria Lagerström, Sweden*
Ms Carina Lamont, Sweden*
Dr Richard Langlais, Sweden*
Dr Nadja Milanova, Bulgaria*
Lt Col Nevyana M. Miteva, Bulgaria

Lt Col Jesus Gil Ruiz, Spain, NATO/ International Military Staff*
Capt Christina Schiller, Germany*
Maj Greg Stevens, USA
Mr Johan Tejpar, Sweden*

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(*Authors)
Visit NATO’s web portal for access to the full report of the Review as well as background information, web stories and videos related to Women, Peace and Security
www.nato.int/nato1325/