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Susana Rayagopalam,  
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Kofi Annan's basis for a future Syrian state references the dialogue necessary to make this happen, and it includes the requirement for dialogue on a deal for transition from one-party to multi-party rule. Secretary of State Clinton, Prime Minister Cameron and former President Sarkozy agree. From my perspective, this presents the only route to peace, and it sits at the crux of the UN's mission. But it is entirely inconsistent with the tactics being used by almost every element of the opposition to the regime. Certain Arab states arming and funding the Free Syrian Army is not aiding a peaceful transition. Nor have been the 'Friends of Syria' conferences. Nor Turkey's squaring up to Damascus and Baghdad, itching for war. Nor the international recognition of the SNC as a representative opposition. In fact, despite its fundamentalist core, it left the first Friends of Syria conference as 'a' legitimate opposition, and left the second as 'the' legitimate opposition. Diplomacy may not offer Syria a great chance but it is the only chance of a peaceful transition. It ties in with my own five-point plan to maximise the chances of a peaceful future for Syria.

Firstly, the opposition must act in a way that is inclusive and representative of the Syrian people by creating a platform where all parties can come together and speak with a single voice. Secondly, it must work peacefully with the international community with the aim of non-violent regime change. Thirdly, international funding must be channelled solely toward facilitating peace through humanitarian aid and training into the best ways to form civil groups and political parties. Fourth, non-aligned states (like India) should be encouraged to help facilitate and encourage the journey towards political pluralism. Finally, and only once it can display real unity, can this internationally-backed, democratic opposition take on the regime by campaigning for a genuinely pluralistic election. In my view, that is the only way forward. A route where a culturally heterogeneous country, harbouring a colourful mosaic of ethnicities, cultures and faiths, can counter extremism and live in a cosmopolitan and liberal environment. Like India. The alternative is a military solution, yearned for by jihadists, but a looming disaster for the majority of Syrians whose country will soon be a battleground on which age-old sectarian interests coincide with 21st century global tensions to create a war to overshadow anything we have experienced before. Not just in Syria, but across the Arab world.



## REFLECTIONS ON FEMINISM AND FOREIGN POLICY

SWARNA  
RAJAGOPALAN

One of the essentialist assumptions about women is that they would bring qualities of nurture and care to all spheres of activity, including politics. Ergo, if women led states, states would not go to war. There is plenty of historical evidence to disprove this. Nevertheless, it is also true that for many women, including those working in the policy arenas of 'high politics' (foreign policy, security and diplomacy), those concerns are on par with concerns about better quality of life.

Feminists have participated in the push to expand the meaning and understanding of security to include more actors, more issues and more referents. The result is the admission of issues—from HIV/AIDs and migration to resource use—to the academic field of security studies. More significant even (to my mind) is the recognition of war rape as a crime against humanity and that impunity for gender violence must end. But after all these years, it seems that feminists who are also international relations scholars have wandered a long way away from the traditional core concerns of their home discipline: foreign policy and diplomacy.

At some point, studying international relations and security, I wondered why the everyday concerns of women (and feminists) were missing from that discourse. Today, I want to make a journey back to international relations to ask how the very core would fare when re-drawn from a feminist perspective. This short essay is a reconnaissance visit for that journey: What does it mean to adopt a feminist perspective on foreign policy?

While feminist writing on international relations is more than two decades' old, foreign policy has not been of great interest to



scholars in this field. Indeed, foreign policy only really figures when scholars pose the classic liberal feminist question: where are the women? There are two reasons for this. First, feminist scholarship has been trying to make visible the presence and work of women in international relations that complements the foreign policy process. Second, feminists have, along with other critical scholars, been pushing for an enlargement of the scope of the field, which has somewhat marginalised the study of traditional foreign policy processes and establishments. In the real world too, there are days when formal foreign policy only seems like one of many players and streams in the shrinking world of international relations.

We can sum up four strands of feminist interest in foreign policy, which do not quite add up to an answer to the question posed earlier.

The first strand is that classic question, 'Where are the women?' While one spots a prominent woman at senior levels in foreign policy establishments every now and then—a minister, a senior diplomat or even a female head of state or government who takes an interest in foreign relations—the assumption that they are still in a minority across roles and ranks seems plausible. Numbers are hard to come by. More than two decades after Cynthia Enloe first posed this question, answers are still scarce. As for whether the presence of women makes a difference, there are two possible answers. The first posits the difference as given and the other is sceptical—neither has generated conclusive case studies.

The second strand, discovered during repeated keyword searches for 'feminism' and 'foreign policy', is scholarship around very specific and very local topics related to foreign policy. I found research on gender gaps in voting on foreign policy issues (for instance, Togeby, 1994: 375–92). Broadly, research shows there is a growing gender gap with women tending to vote against militaristic options but the gap is new and so is scholarship around it. There was also some research that sought to relate and compare the domestic policies of a state with its policies on international development and relations. This has been of special interest in states whose domestic policies reflect feminist concerns and advocacy on social issues. The case of Denmark is described later.

The third strand is critical analysis of both foreign policy and other official international engagement through a feminist

framework. Even this is surprisingly rare. The one and only book I could locate that purports to examine feminist perspectives on foreign policy is a compilation of critical essays that looks at Canada's engagement with the world (Sjolander, et al. 2003). The topics range from feminist pedagogy on foreign policy to globalisation and trade to human security to human rights and finally, to transnational feminism.

Political economy issues have most concerned feminist international relations scholars—labour, globalisation, migration and even changing sex ratios. These might be pinned to security, but they are never about foreign policy. In that sense, the second strand of feminist interest in foreign policy is really a function of disinterest. The questions they choose to study do not generate studies of the foreign policy process or its politics. Rather, they make the case for other issues to be regarded as equally important. The final strand, in effect, relegates foreign policy to one dimension of international relations rather than being central to it.

Thinking about feminist concerns and their intersection with foreign policy programmes and protocols makes for a challenging puzzle. Here are three small examples that raise more questions than answers.

Lisa Ann Richey describes Denmark as a feminist state in its domestic policies. She uses the word 'feminist' to connote a policy orientation or practice that 'recognizes the power and value imbalances that exist between men and women, and that it promotes more active women in an attempt to foster more balance' (Richey, 2001: 178). Prioritising gender equality is a distinctive attribute of Danish state identity, and as the quality that sets Denmark apart, it is something that is sought to be projected in that state's development assistance policies. Richey identifies 'gender mainstreaming' and 'agenda-setting' as being the two components of the Danish approach. While Danish experts have been influential in the global discourse of development assistance, Richey finds that gendered hierarchies and power imbalances persist in the very offices that promote these ideas. More interesting to us are two other points in Richey's article. First, feminism in domestic Danish policy is seen to be expressed in 'its long-standing commitment to policies which enable the individual, irrespective of gender, to combine family and "work responsibilities"' (ibid.: 184). Second, development assistance is the focus of this



article, but apart from membership of the European Union, that is the only aspect of foreign relations that is discussed. Nothing wrong with either, but the question it raises for us is: Can feminism only find expression in development and development assistance policy and discourse—one dimension of a state's foreign relations?

It is tempting to characterise some of the changes introduced in US foreign policy by the Obama administration as the makings of a feminist foreign policy (Rajagopalan, 2010). After all, concern about women's rights and campaigning against gender-based violence are central to the feminist agenda, no matter which feminist perspective one adopts. Some of the evidence: One of the first things that President Obama did was to lift the ban on US funding for family planning programmes. There is now an Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, and Melanie Verveer comes to this post from a long career in women's rights work. The problem of pervasive sexual violence has received attention in both State Department rhetoric and programming. The US Secretary of State has spoken out often and forcefully on this at platforms as diverse as UN Security Council debates and civil society programmes that are organised during her visit. There is a qualitative difference between this and the use by the earlier administration of Afghan women's rights as an excuse to attack the Taliban. Official concern about Afghan women came long after petitions and email 'forwards' had circulated about what they were experiencing, and right around the US intervention in Afghanistan. With this administration, however, concern about women's rights may still serve a strategic end, but it is consistent and built into the agenda and programmes of the US foreign policy establishment. In a recent article, Verveer writes that President Obama has 'endeavored to put women at the heart of its foreign policy' (Verveer, 2012). But what about the rest of US foreign policy? Is feminist thinking confined to thinking about women and women's rights?

On the other hand, there is the recent case of the Indian diplomat who was accused of domestic violence. (Rajagopalan, 2011). The case juxtaposed the feminist ideal of zero-tolerance towards gender violence on the one hand and diplomatic immunity on the other. Rather than waive immunity as the local authorities had requested, India recalled the diplomat. That deals with national embarrassment but not with the question of violence.

The case has since slipped out of the headlines. However, the track record is that justice is not always done in domestic violence cases, and even those responsible for investigation are prone to advise adjustment or reconciliation rather than to see violence as violence. Therefore, the decision to privilege protocol over the due process of investigation and justice is problematic from a feminist, indeed a human rights, point of view. The question arises: was a reconciliation of perspectives possible, a middle path which took into account concern about gender justice and also minimised embarrassment to the Indian state?

What does this mean for feminist engagement with the foreign policy establishment? The Danish example seems to point to development and welfare issues as natural points of entry for feminism. The US example points to human rights, especially gender-based violence, as a natural feminist addition to the foreign policy agenda. And the Indian example sets up a barricade that seems to carry a sign which says that national sovereignty, read through diplomatic immunity, is more important than violence against women.

The interesting thing is that feminists have always engaged with the international.<sup>1</sup> Transnational feminism pre-dates most national women's movements. Women lobbied for the vote in their countries, for nationality rights for women who married abroad, for workers' rights and later, human rights. They were pro-active participants in transnational labour movements. Women's groups and coalitions participated in the drafting of the League of Nations Covenant, and women were delegates at the San Francisco conference which drafted the Charter of the United Nations. The intervention of women ensured that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognised the shared humanity of men and women, instead of just being another charter of 'rights of man'. In the six decades and more since the end of the Second World War, the activism of women's groups has contributed to the transformation (and twinning) of the UN discourses on development and security.

Indian feminists too are active internationally. They have established transnational networks like Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era. They have been a strong presence at global forums from Mexico City to Beijing to the World Social Forum. Indian feminist professionals and activists debate and



discuss aspects of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (which India has not ratified) and other global regimes relating to women's rights. Activists from the Indian women's movement consult with international organisations and networks.

Women, some of them feminists, have participated in non-official peace initiatives between India and Pakistan. Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia (WIPSA) is an early example. WIPSA organises cross-border interactions to facilitate people-to-people contact. Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) (<http://www.wiscomp.org>) has done a great deal of creative work—perhaps the most by a single organisation focused on women's issues—in a programmatic fashion, both academically and on the ground. WISCOMP's Athwaas project facilitated sustained interactions and dialogue for Kashmiri women of all communities. Their Conflict Transformation workshops have built capacity and offered young people in the region a chance to learn from each other and build networks. The Scholar of Peace fellowships have enabled fresh voices and perspectives from around the region to speak out on peace and conflict issues.

Last year, peace activists from around the region met at the UN Women office in New Delhi, and drafted a set of recommendations on conflict and peace building (Ramo, 2011). The recommendations include research into women's experiences of conflict and women's peace work; taking cognisance of the impact of militarisation in societies; an end to impunity for sexual and gender-based violence; and inclusion of women in peace processes—essentially mirroring UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (ibid.: 26–28). What is interesting is their emphasis on institutions: 'all activity around UNSCR 1325 activity [should] be institutionalized and linked to treaty mechanisms that states parties can be held accountable to.' Endorsing the idea of National (and People's) Action Plans, the activists caution that, 'The regional NAP must be implementable, specific, realistic and resourced'. The emphasis on institutions and institutional mechanisms is unusual, perhaps a function of UN facilitation.

Women activists' interest in foreign policy is negligible outside the capital city's seminar circuit. Take the case of Tamil Nadu's women's organisations: like the rest of Tamil Nadu civil society, they

too felt moved to react to events in Sri Lanka towards the end of the war. Their members may have been involved in rallying support or trying to get help to refugees and IDPs, but they did not take the lead in forcing open the public debate, and therefore, they lost the leverage to set the terms of the debate. Political parties did not miss this opportunity, and the focus of the outrage became nationalist solidarity rather than seeking practical and genuine solutions to the humanitarian crisis. The women's movement seems to lack initiative when it comes to foreign policy issues.

The diversity of feminist thinking may be proffered as explanation. However, diversity merely precludes speaking in one voice. It neither explains why individual feminists have not spoken up on traditional foreign policy issues from a feminist perspective, nor does it explain why this plurality of perspectives isn't reflected in a plurality of approaches to foreign policy. It's hard to escape the conclusion that feminists don't really seem to care a whole lot about traditional foreign policy.

So, is the question itself wrong? After all, many elements of feminist writing on international relations would seem to deny the centrality of the high table and the impenetrable nature of inter-state borders. Feminist scholars have invited us to look beyond the heads of state to the countless others engaged in the business of inter-state relations, from career diplomats to clerical staff to janitorial staff who may be local. All of them contribute to international relations in their own way but many remain nameless and faceless—what is the gender demographic among the influential and among the faceless, we are urged to consider. In this process, we notice daily journeys made by the staff across different terrains—the foreign diplomats living abroad but commuting to a piece of property where their laws apply, and local employees working in their own country for another one, walking in and out of their home-state's jurisdiction. Again, when a case of sexual harassment is filed, it is important from this perspective to know what difference jurisdiction will make to the due process—not out of an arcane interest in these matters, but out of a concern for justice.

Moreover, when you start paying attention to these otherwise invisible players, you notice mobility, communication, exchange and interaction that make nation-states look more like sieves than airtight containers. This is the context for any relationship charted



by foreign policy establishments. Just as the traditional focus on formal diplomatic and military interactions effaced these other relationships and their impact, the feminist focus on the margins in turn marginalises formal foreign policy studies and turns the foreign service into one of many players in the international arena. So, why does it matter that feminists should engage with foreign policy? After all, if feminist ideas downgrade the importance of the state and its foreign policy establishment, that is reason enough for them to disengage with it. Theoretical and polemical critiques notwithstanding, states are real and foreign policy is an important sphere of policy-making. Therefore, everyone—especially anyone with a stake in social change—should show some interest in it. As women and feminists work their way further away from this policy centre, their access to the decision-making process is diminished, as is their voice. Those who engage with a debate get to shape its progress, and those who start a debate get to frame the terms on which it unfolds. Moreover, it also matters because autonomy in thought and action is another right that feminists across the board would endorse, and not thinking about foreign policy means that when something comes up, the women's movement and feminists are left with no view of their own. They simply follow along with whichever other civil society actor seems most 'sympathique' and cede to them the status of 'knowing better'. A final argument for greater feminist interest in foreign policy is that engagement facilitates specialised technical knowledge. Feminists make a case for including more women at every level in every policy-political area, and must also think of the tools that will give them confidence to do all sorts of policy work.

That brings us back to the question with which we began which remains unanswered: What does it mean to adopt a feminist perspective on foreign policy? Purely for the pleasure of speculation, here are two broad suggestions.

First, given that women's participation in policy-making is one of the goals all feminists can agree upon, tracking their presence and lobbying for women to be included in every part of the foreign policy—indeed, security—establishment, has to be the point of departure for feminist engagement with foreign policy. Moreover, for feminist international scholars, it should be a priority to make training and briefing modules available to women who enter this

field. Men lack training, too, but that lack is a disqualification that women embrace and internalise far too easily.

Second, feminist engagement with foreign policy can take the form of advocacy towards at least three identifiably feminist goals. The first would be to make visible the importance and impact of non-official, non-traditional concerns. Emigration in search of work abroad, for instance, is as much an inter-state issue as a labour issue. The second would be a push to efface or at least minimise the barriers between states, communities and individuals. Feminists could debate visa regimes and other constraints (or opportunities) for the movement of people, goods and ideas. The third is to popularise a non-relativist view of human rights, along with the elimination of impunity for gender violence and torture.

The questions remain in my mind, and I know that I have not answered them satisfactorily. Sometimes, the challenge is finding the right way to pose the questions. Sometimes, it is in exposing the questions themselves to critical thought. This journey is not quite half done; indeed, it may not even have quite begun.

#### NOTE

1. Hilkka Pietila (2007) and Elise Boulding (2000) offer interesting accounts of the contributions made by women to shaping global thinking on important matters like ecological conservation, development, peace and security.

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BORIA MAJUMDAR

# THE BUSINESS OF SPORT

India's Untapped Potential

**W**riting on the sports industry in India isn't easy. Firstly, 'sport' in India isn't considered an 'industry' in the conventional sense of the term. Business, yes, but not an organised, structured industry with big and small players operating on the basis of established and codified market rules. Rather, the sports business, valued at ₹ 2,400 crore, continues to be unstructured and disorganised. Despite this, however, India is now a favoured destination for sports events such as the Formula One; is surely world cricket's financial nerve centre; stages the world's leading T-20 league in the form of the Indian Premier League (IPL); is considered a major market for European football leagues such as the EPL, Serie A and La Liga; and, finally, has a sizeable middle class that is far more tuned to consuming global sporting spectacles than many other Western democracies.

Moreover, despite being disorganised, the size of the Indian sports market isn't negligible and this was borne out in the way leading global businesses now operating in India appropriated Sachin Tendulkar's 100th international hundred, which witnessed multiple celebrations across the country. Second, IPL Season Five, though not as big as the first four seasons, was large enough to attract substantial investments. Finally, the London Olympics, which promise to be a watershed for India's Olympic sport, have seen many a campaign by the Olympic sponsors to reach out to the Indian youth. This is not to forget that India, rather urban India, will also brace itself to watch Euro 2012 in June–July 2012. All of these render a look into the sports industry in India a timely subject of analysis.

