

***"The qualities that are most important in all military jobs are things like integrity, moral courage, and determination-have nothing to do with gender."***  
*Etched on a glass panel on the upper terrace of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Washington, D.C.*

**War** and peace have always been a conscious or subconscious part of human life and are determined by political factors like doctrines and policy, as well as "apparently apolitical" factors or denominators like, ethos, ethics, chattels, capital, culture, customs and cult.

Conventional wisdom and popular perception attribute war to "men" or see it as a "masculine trait" whereas peace has always been seen as the weapon of the powerless precisely speaking women. Contemporary world still holds these centuries' old notions despite producing specific condition and at times selective positions for women warriors. Women though the lead actors in the war sufferings are treated as extras during the post war phase. Frequently women are silenced or remain invisible during disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) phases .The conveniently forgotten women along with their children and lost family honour (again reserved for women only) during DDR phases give rise to a new plethora of troubles, disputes and clashes that questions the arrival of peace. Those who decide for war and peace and those who are destined to be the sufferers of these "naked" powers remain poles apart while the academic, advocacy and activism players in socio-political structures and systems continue to cultivate theories, concepts, analysis, exposures, slogans, lateral thinking, rethinking, innovative approaches and critiques on the critical questions; What causes war? What are the conditions of peace? What is or is there any role of gender in war and peace?

There is a multitude of definitions of war. For instance, Cicero, who today, is appreciated primarily for his humanism and philosophical and political writings, defines war broadly as "a contention by force"; each definition has its strengths and weaknesses, but often is the culmination of the writer's broader philosophical positions. Perhaps the greatest and most influential work in the philosophy of war is "***On War***" by Carl von Clausewitz. It combines observations on strategy with questions about human nature and the purpose of war. Clausewitz especially examines the teleology of war: whether war is a means to an end outside itself or whether it can be an end in itself. He concludes that the latter cannot be so, and that war is "**politics by different means**"; i.e. that war must not exist only for its own sake. It must serve some purpose for the state.*Clausewitz views war as a rational instrument of national policy. The three words "rational", "instrument" and "national" are the key concepts of his paradigm.*

A setting to explore the relationship between human nature and war is provided by Thomas Hobbes, whose famous book *Leviathan* established the foundation for most of Western political philosophy from the perspective of social contract theory. He presents a state of nature in which the 'true' or 'underlying' nature of man is likely to come to the fore of our attention. Hobbes presents an atomistic conception of humanity, which many disagree with. Professor Emeritus Kenneth Waltz, one of the most prominent scholars of international relations alive today, one of the founders of neorealism, or structural

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realism, in international relations theory)for example argues: "While human nature no doubt plays a role in bringing about war, it cannot by itself explain both war and peace, except by the simple statement that sometimes he fights and sometimes he does not."

Irrespective of the type, source and cause of war, the management of war remains a challenge not only for those who initiate war, decide for wars or support wars but also for an institution that was erected as a testimony of a lesson learnt in 1945- I mean The United Nations. Several reports have confirmed that UN receives almost constant criticism for how it responds to international, regional, religious and ethnic conflicts. Much of this criticism is triggered by a number of controversial and, arguably, unsuccessful initiatives involving multinational UN security forces and international sanctions over the past decade. Even when the Persian Gulf War ended nearly a decade ago, the UN maintained strict economic sanctions against Iraq and controls the amount of oil that nation may export. Many contend that these sanctions were further crippling a shattered country whose population is facing starvation. The number, locations and costs of the many of the peace keeping operations have exposed divisions in the UN ranging from member nations to the Security Council.

At this point, a logical and almost irresistible query is; what are the determinants of peace? The following section attempts to look out for some responses.

Peace like any other beautiful, most desired and desirable thing in the world is difficult to identify with precision, define in calculated words and measured accurately. Peace, defined in a number of ways, is definitely not merely the absence of war and or conflict, nor can be judged as one single entity. There is "good and negative peace."

Western concepts see peace more as a property of social systems functioning to assure prosperity. Ishida suggests an east - west dichotomy of peace concepts where the eastern concepts see peace achieved through individual conformity to customs, norms, etc. as an outcome of individual internal harmony. This dichotomy has been further developed by Prof.Galtung, who is the principal founder of peace and conflict studies.Galtung's theoretical work speaks of four levels at which conflict can emerge: conflicts internal to a person or between persons; conflicts between races, sexes, generations, or classes; conflicts between states; and conflicts between civilizations or multi-state regions, such as the Cold War .

Professor Emeritus Rummel who has spent his career assembling data on collective violence and war with a view toward helping their resolution or elimination and whose one of the claims to fame is the term "democide" too seems to be genuinely baffled when he raises the query that given *the reality of violence and war, what should be done to create a universal and lasting peace?*"According to Rummel peace is a structure of expectations based on a specific balance of powers. It is thus a social contract--an agreement or understanding that enables social cooperation and coexistence. Peace is therefore bound into the social process. Social order, and thus peace, is a phase in the process of social adjustment between individual psychological worlds.

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Among various theories of peace (plural, democratic, capitalism, pacifism, inner, etc.) the concept that often complements peace studies is development that is presumably not the classical pursuit of wealth but can be a set of many different elements such as good governance, healthcare, education, gender equality, disaster preparedness, infrastructure, economics, rule of law, human rights, environment and other political issues.

In this frame, the problem of peace fully involves the complex matter of human development, what explains the complexity of any peace-building processes.

In recent years, a forceful critique of the so-called liberal peace building consensus has emerged. That critique has focused largely upon the presumption that marketization and democratization are themselves sources of peace, when evidence demonstrates that each is more often destabilizing and may even provoke a return to conflict.

Another popular inclusion in the recent discourse on development issues including peace studies is gender. My nearly 16 years of formal experience as a gender activist compels me to share this very entity has become a fashionable jargon for the new comers and job seekers in the development sector to impress (I don't know whom) and for the UN to gag the social activists as may be evidenced by language and clauses of famous international conventions like CEDAW and blockbuster UN resolution 1325 that **Urges** Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict; **Encourages** the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes and **Urges** the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard calls on Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster.

**Gender** is a social construction whereas sex is a biological incident. The stereotypes created and nurtured by a society taste a 'roller coaster' experience when mirrored and analyzed in security situations with gender lens. Women are always seen as human rights activists, pacifists, non-violent, uncomfortable with power **qua force** and **structures** and seldom seen and even less rarely recognized as the power brokers, peace talk lead negotiators and experts on operational issues. (This obviously does not include veteran war journalists like Christiana Amnapoura or teachers/writers/columnists whose roles are matching to this subject but are different). What is the reality on ground? More and more women are being recruited in the military all over the world. Even in the Islamic republic of Pakistan, now Women are being recruited as combatants both in the army and the airforce. And outside the formal army, there are likes of "**black widows**", "**female suicide bombers**", etc. Then there is another category of women directly facing the impact of war and conflicts; the women and girls from the civilian population for whom the whole UN system and humanitarian aid community seem concerned and remain engaged in coming up with innovative and realistic solutions to address their

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health (including sexual and reproductive health needs) and violence issues (sexual and gender) which they are doomed to face,( they may be reported or most likely remain unnoticed), during war, post war, in the battle field and sad but true sometimes in the shelter homes/refugee camps by the aid workers from UN and INGO system. Interestingly, all three groups of women (with definite disproportionate distribution of power) appear equally marginalized in the discourse and academic research on their role in war and peace.

Feminists` antagonism to women`s` inclusion in the armed forces is supported by the assessment that women`s tasks are to build and maintain peace, not to fight war. Feminists point out the danger of militarization of women and their lives as well as, the danger of being exposed to "violent behaviour from their male colleagues" as observed in an international report titled "women in an Insecure World" by Geneva Centre for the democratic Control of Armed forces in 2005.

Although gender barriers become diluted in special circumstances the presence of women in the conventional or non-conventional armed forces has never fundamentally changed their social position as may be evidenced by the scholarly reflections of many academic experts. According to Sarrah Sewall, who is the program director at the Carr center for Human rights policy, Kennedy school of Government, Harvard University, at the policy-making level, men in the security field are able to "**obtain respect**" even if they do not have personal experience in the military. There is little presence of women in the security field. There are 600, 00 international law experts who are women, but only a handful of women who have worked in security. in the security field there is a premium on the backstage meeting. There is no stage for "**morality**". This setup inhibits especially women. Sewall prescribes that young women should become as expert in war as they can, or '**borrow**' that expertise and women must get away from the power/authority phobia, the aversion to power, that permeates the peace community.

The war, peace and gender are the bands of the same spectrum known as the distribution of power. The concept of power in international relations can be described as the degree of resources, capabilities, and influence in international affairs. It is often divided up into the concepts of hard power and soft power, hard power relating primarily to coercive power, such as the use of force, and soft power commonly covering economics, diplomacy and cultural influence. However, there is no clear dividing line between the two forms of power.

It is difficult almost impossible for a person like myself who has always been in a benign and powerless position (especially in a typical South Asian context) like mother and that too of a daughter, daughter of teachers and a civil society actor to decipher the meaning, sources, language and syntax of war and even peace process and talks in their strict technical frameworks. However, my very first attempt to peep into these issues as humanitarian worker and student of gender has engulfed me with an extreme degree of shock. I was shocked first to notice the width of gulf between the thought patterns and articulation of civil society/gender activists/advocates and those who are actually in the corridors of power, privileges and politics. How can the two communicate without finding a common language? Secondly, in spite of being aware already, once gain I felt

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shocked to note that even wars can be justified and there is a room for ethics within the war discourse. In fact I was shocked by the ability of the human intellect to contrive beautiful translations and play with logic. It is hoped that experts on these issues do have explanations that why is it so that number of women in the armies is increasing (not with the same proportion for influential positions) but the representation and that too authentic and visible representation of women are not increasing with same pace and proportion in peace dialogues, why women are excluded in DDR and why women especially those from low/ middle socio-economic strata have yet to be recognized other than fragile bodies and mothers (they harbour children of their rapists as well) as separate and complete human beings with intact intellectual faculties. Why the power structures in the name of culture, traditions and motherhood have been erected in the discourse and discipline of war and peace?