

The 1325 Scorecard - USA Summary (April 15, 2015)

General Assessment:

President Barack Obama signed the US National Action Plan (NAP) in support of UNSCR 1325 in December of 2011, and in 2013, the Department of Defense (DoD) issued its Implementation Guide. Since then significant progress has been made, especially at the political level and within the Combatant Commands (COCOM) in the implementation of UNSCR 1325. However, in order to achieve full implementation of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) principles, a more systematic approach is needed to integrate a gender perspective into operations, exercises and other military activities for enhanced operational effectiveness. Also, although women and girls disproportionately suffer from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during conflict and lack of inclusion in post-conflict resolution, men and boys can also be victims. Therefore, implementation of WPS principles must also include men and boys.

National Importance/Political Will:

At the political level, support for UNSCR 1325 is evidenced by the recent inclusion of related language in the US National Strategy for 2015. The strategy asserts “we will continue to lead the effort to ensure women serve as mediators of conflict and in peacebuilding efforts and they are protected from gender-based violence”.¹ The placement of WPS wording here is significant in that the US Strategy is a guiding document for US foreign policy. It is important to monitor how this language now filters down to other key US foreign policy and military engagement documents.

Institutional Policy and Practice:

COCOMs have made efforts to incorporate WPS principles into policy. Of significance, the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) has incorporated UNSCR 1325 into its concept of operations in two of its six lines of effort (“Strengthen Defense Institutions” and “Prepare and Respond to Crisis”).

A gender advisor (GENAD) has not yet been appointed in accordance with NATO Bi SC Directive 40-1. Some personnel have been trained at the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations. It has also been reported that there are gender focal points (GFP) throughout the military. While there has been some inclusion of WPS principles into courses at the mid and senior levels, there are no systematic efforts to instill these principles across various levels of training throughout the services. For example, at the senior level, the US Air Force Academy provides a lesson entitled “Gender Dynamics and Culture Shock.”

Regarding pre-deployments, some WPS related training has taken place. For example, the US Navy has included training on cultural norms and women’s rights in training for specific countries. In looking at gender in the ranks, there is good news. Women account for a total of 14.5% of active duty forces, while 10.5% have deployed. Moreover, 7.1% of women are flag officers. The first four-star female was promoted in 2008 in the Army. The Air Force and the Navy also now have four-star females. In January 2013, then Secretary of Defense Panetta announced the rescinding of the 1994 directive excluding women from combat. Progress is ongoing, with positions to be open no later than January 2016.

¹ The White House, *US National Security Strategy 2015*, p. 11, February 2015, accessed on August 22, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf

To create a positive work environment conducive to the recruitment of women, DoD has enhanced its maternity-paternity leave policies over the years. It has also made significant changes to its sexual assault and prevention response (SAPR) strategic plan.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation:

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms to track WPS implementation are in place. In this regard, it is key that DoD collects and analyzes sex-disaggregated data and makes all information public as much as possible.

Recommendations:

Senior Leadership is important for successful implementation of the WPS agenda. DoD should continue the current progress at the national level and COCOMs. It should also establish systematic processes throughout DoD to instill a gender perspective, especially training at the entry, middle and senior levels. GENADs should be appointed at the Commander level to guide the process.