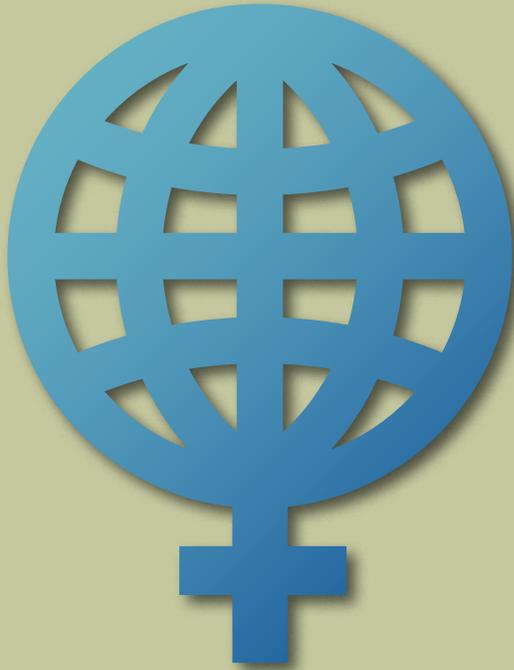PROGRESS REPORT ON

Women in Peace & Security Careers

U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH

BY JOLYNN SHOEMAKER
AND JENNIFER PARK

WIIS Women In International Security

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ABOUT WIIS

Women In International Security (WIIS) is the only global network actively advancing women's leadership, at all stages of their careers, in the international peace and security field. WIIS has 1,500 members—women and men—in 47 countries from academia, think tanks, the diplomatic corps, the intelligence community, the military, government, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, the media, and the private sector. WIIS supports women's leadership opportunities in international peace and security through (1) research on the participation of women in institutions engaged in peace and security work to highlight experiences and challenges, to identify best practices, and to improve women's opportunities, and through (2) professional development programs, such as mentoring, skills-building, and increasing the visibility of women experts.

WIIS defines international security broadly, and bridges the divide between issues (traditional security and human security); generations of women; and sectors (academic, practitioner, policymaker). WIIS encourages the participation of women and men who understand the importance of inclusive and diverse participation in peace and security, and believes its mission is enhanced by building a global network that empowers women in many different countries and at many different stages of their careers.

WIIS is a part of the Center for Peace and Security Studies (CPASS), in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. The School of Foreign Service is the oldest and largest school of international affairs in the United States. CPASS, which encompasses WIIS and the internationally renowned Security Studies Program, is Georgetown's organizational home for teaching, research, events, and publications in international peace and security studies.

For more information on WIIS, visit our website at: http://wiis.georgetown.edu

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

Why Women, Why Now

In every segment of society—from family, to politics, to corporations, to the media—women are taking on visible and influential roles. Many industries and organizations are finally beginning to pay attention to women's representation and realizing the great potential and need for female talent. Although advocates have argued for years that women have a positive effect on human rights promotion, poverty alleviation, democracy and governance, conflict resolution and peace-building, all too often support for women's participation slipped to the sidelines. But in the face of immense national and global challenges, it has become clear that women are a tremendous and under-tapped asset for leadership. There seems to be a greater interest than ever before in supporting women's participation in a variety of fields.

The problem is that the majority of employers know very little about how women are actually faring in their organizations, in terms of the number in senior-level positions and in women's work satisfaction, retention, and promotions. The lack of knowledge about women's participation and perspectives, combined with the problem of few resources devoted to this issue, have made it difficult to implement meaningful initiatives to promote women's leadership.

Recently, studies have focused on women's leadership in some sectors, including academia, the media, and corporations. These studies have highlighted gaps in representation and proposed recommendations for improving women's opportunities. But a missing component of research seems to be on women's presence in a particular area of utmost importance—the national security and foreign policy arena.

This is the first study to examine women in leadership within the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government in international security.

The number of women in leadership roles in national security and foreign policy has certainly improved in the past decade. At the highest levels of government, the U.S. has had three female U.S. Secretaries of State, and women serving at

the helm of the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Agency of International Development, and in Under Secretary policy positions. Women are also increasingly noticeable in the ranks of Assistant Secretaries, Assistant Administrators, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and U.S. ambassadors overseas. As one female former Under Secretary of State observed, "Women are breaking new ground every day in every foreign policy institution."[1]

What is the effect of more women in leadership positions in government—on the institution, on younger women, on decision-making? And why do women continue to remain under-represented in many senior-level positions? Are there hidden blockages to women's advancement? How can women better prepare for and be encouraged to take on these roles in the future? These are some of the questions WIIS set out to explore in interviews with more than 90 mid- and senior-level women from key U.S. Government agencies (including the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security) for this project.

Women who participated in this study expressed the view that we are at a critical juncture—a time of enormous possibilities if leaders and institutions take steps to build the pipeline of female talent in government. These women were hopeful about recent strides in women's leadership, but at the same time voiced frustration with the slow pace of change and the unresponsiveness to women's concerns in these working environments. Although they reflected varying perspectives and life experiences, women in this study agreed that:

➤ The culture for women in government agencies has changed for the better.

➤ More women have moved into leadership roles in government, yet they remain under-represented, and this needs to change.

➤ Women are often not getting the support they need (in terms of training, mentorship, work-life balance) to take on and succeed in leadership positions.

➤ Committed and creative leadership at the top can make a real difference in women's advancement opportunities and work satisfaction.

The Unsteady Climb to 50-50

The opportunities for women in international security government positions have improved enormously in recent decades. Women were often discouraged from applying or entering into government service during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and for the cohort of women who did enter the policy arena in the 1960s and 1970s, overt gender-based discrimination was a common experience within government agencies. The atmosphere is much different today: the majority of women who were interviewed for this study said that they are considered and treated equally to

their male counterparts in government environments, and that young women have a positive view of their career opportunities.

While the percentage of women in the federal workforce increased steadily from 41.3 percent in 1986 to 44.4 percent in 1998 (and has stayed relatively the same since)[2], the percentage of women in particular areas of international security policy positions, especially at more senior-levels, has remained below gender parity. Women still account for less than 30 percent of the Senior Executive Service (SES) throughout government agencies and approximately 13 percent in the Senior Intelligence Service.[3] In key agencies responsible for national security and foreign policy (i.e. State Department, USAID, Department of Defense), the percentage of women in senior positions continues to hover between 21 and 29 percent.

While women interviewed for this study were optimistic about women's growing participation in this sector, they also remained acutely aware of their minority status in many international security working environments. As a result, women experienced pressure to establish their credibility, especially in substantive policy areas that remain male-dominated, such as defense, intelligence, and law enforcement.

Practicing Leadership: Role Models and Bad Examples

Leadership was repeatedly cited as one of the most important, yet least cultivated skills for women's advancement in government. This study's respondents derived many of their lessons about good management from negative experiences with other managers. Although women did not attribute specific leadership qualities to gender, the vast majority described their own approaches as emphasizing consensus, collaboration, inclusiveness, and team-building, and they admired these qualities in other leaders. Building strong relationships—with staff, coworkers, colleagues, and superiors—was viewed as a fundamental element of leadership. While many respondents were hesitant to attribute specific qualities to gender, they felt that women excelled in this area. Women also often looked to male role models for good leadership strategies, in many cases because there have simply been more men in leadership positions.

Women were very aware of perceptions of female leaders as either too "feminine" or "masculine." Women frequently expressed disapproval of other women who were "overly-aggressive" in their approaches to colleagues and staff. At the same time, women pointed to a double standard with male colleagues in this respect. Furthermore, women recognized that a lack of decisiveness could reduce their credibility and authority: they were cognizant of the need to make difficult decisions in a timely manner when serving in leadership positions, and that failure to do so is considered a major weakness.

Learning Leadership: Mentoring and Training

Women in this study experienced a direct correlation between mentorship and professional advancement. The most effective mentoring relationships went beyond general advice and were based on strong professional relationships, reputation, and trust—mentors who also advocated for their mentees. Promotions into higher-level positions in government are typically facilitated by service in challenging program management positions. As a result, women relied on key personal connections and direct recommendations of mentors or sponsors to gain visibility, attain management, and demonstrate their readiness for future promotion.

Women did not seem to have a preference for female mentoring, and successful women pointed to male mentors who played critical roles in helping them achieve professional advancement. At the same time, women who have had long careers in this field recognized the importance of mentoring younger women to help them through similar challenges as they had faced. However, some women pointed to experiences in which other women were perceived as unsupportive.

Despite the positive impact that mentoring has on women's success, many government agencies either do not have formal mentoring programs in place, or do not devote enough resources toward ensuring that existing programs are effective.

Women emphasized the importance of leadership training, but they observed that agencies do not address the need and demand for training. Professional development and leadership training programs remain unevenly dispersed across federal agencies, and many women did not feel that the government places a high value on funding training initiatives or encouraging employees to take time away from the office to participate in them.

The 24/7 Cycle and Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance—what it means, whether it is possible, and how to do it—remains a subject of great concern and varied perspectives among women in international security positions in the government. Those who participated in this study believed that women face unique challenges in this area, and that work-life balance involves trade-offs between professional and personal success. Women varied considerably in their opinions about whether work-life balance could be achieved in the policy arena, especially among the more senior-level respondents. Some expressed skepticism about whether it was possible to fulfill the responsibilities of high-level positions while carving out time for other priorities outside of the office; others believed that it was possible. However, very few believed that they had achieved their definition of work-life balance in their own lives.

While work-life balance options have improved as more federal employees (women and men) have sought improved flexible arrangements or other work-life benefits, institutional weaknesses continue to linger. Many pointed to outdated maternity and paternity leave policies. Key work-life balance arrangements are not yet institutionalized uniformly across the government. Information about how to set up these arrangements is not always readily available and in the policy arena, there are still very few part-time positions available. Often, women have had to persuade their managers to support flexible schedules on an ad hoc basis, meaning that these negotiated positions have not necessarily been designated or protected as part-time or job share. Additionally, individuals who negotiate flexible schedules say that their job responsibilities often remain unchanged. As a result, they are in reality working much more than the formal part-time status.

Furthermore, the work cultures in many government policy offices do not always empower women to utilize benefits. The realities of the job combined with unwritten expectations of policy positions typically pressure individuals to spend lengthy hours in the office. But the attitudes and examples of leaders make a significant difference in setting expectations and improving acceptance about work-life balance. Women in this study were influenced by how senior-level women handled this issue, and many pointed out that women who have recently taken on high-level policy positions in the government agencies are creating cultural changes to better support work-life balance.

Women continue to perceive challenges in the areas of establishing and maintaining credibility, obtaining needed mentoring support and leadership training, and in juggling work-life balance priorities. These are not just "women's issues," and the U.S. Government, as well as other employers can no longer afford to marginalize these concerns. In order for the U.S. Government to retain a competitive advantage as an employer in the future, and ensure that the best talent is focusing on national and international security, much more attention and effort will need to be directed to supporting the entry, retention, and advancement opportunities of women. This study is intended to provide an important step in that process.

KEY FINDINGS

Women's Representation and Credibility

➤ Women did not perceive gender-based discrimination as a significant barrier to their career advancement, as it had been for previous generations. While they regarded government institutions as intolerant of discrimination, women remained acutely aware of their minority status in many international security environments.

➤ The majority of women pointed to a need to establish credibility quickly, especially in the defense, intelligence, and law enforcement areas, and ac-knowledged that this was sometimes difficult in these communities. Women who had military backgrounds credited this experience with helping them "talk the talk" within the defense establishment.

➤ "Ageism" was a commonly cited challenge among mid- to senior-level women. Some interviewees saw "being young and female" as a double set of barriers to overcome in gaining respect and acknowledgement of their rank or posi-tion. Other women saw this as a positive opportunity to overcome biases and change viewpoints.

➤ Women working in the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) expressed a strong perception of the DOD as a meritocracy.

➤ Women in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) were the most positive about the atmosphere and possibilities for women. USAID was described as a less hierarchical culture than the other departments, with a real focus on diversity and gender balance.

➤ Within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), some mid-level wom-en perceived that men were being promoted at a greater rate than women. However, women also pointed to a shifting institutional culture, perceiving that more women in leadership positions would create a more positive environment for women.

Practicing Leadership

➤ Women in DOD highlighted the military as an institution that grooms leaders effectively. Women who had previously served in the military before moving into civilian government positions cited the military training and experience as a major benefit in their own ability to lead others.

➤ The majority of women interviewed did not correlate specific leadership styles with women. However, the vast majority described their own leadership qualities as involving consensus, collaboration, inclusiveness, and team-based approaches.

➤ Many women emphasized the ability to build strong relationships — with staff, coworkers, colleagues, and superiors — as a fundamental element of leadership where women appear to excel.

➤ Women described numerous examples of both men and women who were micromanaging, disrespectful, and in some cases, abusive toward those who worked for them. In contrast, women distinguished those who sought out talent; recognized, promoted, and rewarded quality work; listened to staff and communicated decisions and how they were reached; and acted as mentors, as model leaders.

➤ Regardless of age, women who were interviewed frequently said that they look to male role models more often than women for good leadership strategies.

➤ Women expressed a struggle in balancing "feminine" and "masculine" qualities. Although some women admired strong female leaders as role models, women disapproved of those who were "overly-aggressive" in their approaches to colleagues and staff. At the same time, women felt that the negativity associated with aggressive approaches by women continues to reflect a double standard.

➤ Women expressed a constant desire to balance inclusiveness and consensus building with decisiveness. When women failed to make difficult decisions, or were uncomfortable justifying or standing by their decisions, it was viewed widely as a weakness in leadership.

➤ Women perceived that demonstrating emotions in the workplace reflected badly on credibility and professionalism.

➤ Frequently, interviewees brought up the desire to be liked as a major weakness of women.

Leadership Training

➤ Women emphasized the importance of training opportunities. Regardless of agency, however, women felt that the civilian sector fell significantly short of the need and demand for leadership training.

➤ Professional development and leadership training resources remain unevenly dispersed across federal agencies, and women found it difficult to gain access and entry to these opportunities.

➤ Many women believed that training is not seen as a natural part of their career experience, nor highly valued by their government employers. The ability to participate in these programs has largely been dependent on the support of their supervisors and the specific office culture.

➤ The majority of the women emphasized that training for civilians should occur at an earlier stage in the career progression, well before promotions into managerial positions.

Mentoring/Sponsorship

➤ Every woman who was interviewed for this study, regardless of agency or level, emphasized the critical importance of mentoring for career success in the federal sector.

➤ In almost all cases, after women had entered government agencies, they relied on key personal connections and direct recommendations of mentors or sponsors to attain subsequent positions.

➤ Women repeatedly highlighted the role of mentors in exposing them to new responsibilities, directions, and opportunities. The most frequently mentioned assistance that mentors offered women in this sector was an understanding of bureaucratic structure, processes, and players.

➤ Women did not seem to have a preference for female mentoring. In almost all cases, interviewees said that it did not matter whether mentors are male or female.

➤ Women in mid- and senior-level positions said that they mentor both men and women, and although the majority of interviewees reported that they do not focus their mentoring on women exclusively, many have made a special effort to support other women.

➤ Interviewees observed that women are better than they were in the past at mentoring, and that women are mentoring more often.

➤ At the same time, among younger women, there was no particular consensus about whether women are more or less supportive of other women. Some women described negative experiences with women supervisors and peers.

➤ Many agencies still do not have formal mentoring programs in place. Overwhelmingly, women said that the lack of formal mentoring programs is a gap in professional support offered by government agencies, and that the availability of such programs needs to be expanded.

Work-Life Balance

➤ Women believe that there is a trade-off between professional and personal success. Women expressed that they face unique challenges when it comes to work-life balance.

➤ Women at all levels reflected a view that work-life balance is a very personal issue and that there is no one right way to approach it. Retired and senior-level women commonly expressed that they were unable to achieve their definition of work-life balance.

➤ Many women without children believed that they could not have achieved the same career accomplishments or succeeded in certain positions if they had chosen to have children.

➤ Many women made choices at one or more points in their careers that valued family and children's priorities over advancement. Women who had reached senior-levels successfully and had children cited instances when they turned down career opportunities for family considerations.

➤ Some women believed it was possible to advance to the highest levels of government while balancing a family life, even though they themselves were unable to achieve it. In several cases, women who had served in extremely senior-level roles in government agencies expressed the strong belief that balance was possible even in such senior ranks.

➤ Overall, there was a recognition that work-life balance options had improved over the years. There was a sense that the institutional cultures have been shifting, and that balancing arrangements for both men and women have been developing.

➤ Flexible arrangements have not yet been institutionalized across all the departments. Information on how to set up these arrangements has not been readily available. Personnel offices have not always known how to establish these arrangements. Meaningful part-time positions, especially in the policy area, remain scarce. Women who have benefited from part-time positions perceived that the arrangements were precarious and largely dependent on the support of current leadership.

➤ Many women continue to leave government employment at the stage of their careers when child-rearing responsibilities begin to take priority at home. Upon resigning from government employment, women commonly expressed that it was nearly impossible to return to government service if they chose to leave completely (unless by political appointment).

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➤ Women repeatedly cited the outdated maternity and paternity leave policies in government agencies as a problem. The majority of women used their accrued vacation leave and/or unpaid leave period to take time off from work to have their children.

➤ There was a sense that work-life balance is no longer exclusively a "women's issue," as more men have also begun trying to achieve a balance with their personal lives. Yet, women acknowledged that a disproportionate burden continues to fall on women regarding family and child-rearing responsibilities, and that despite institutional changes, real change will not occur until men take the same level of ownership of work-life challenges.

➤ While most women seemed to be aware of the available flexible arrangements, many emphasized that their office cultures and leadership often do not empower them to take full advantage of these resources.

➤ Many women in this study stated that their direct leadership played the most significant role in setting the tone for whether work-life balance was accepted in their offices.

➤ The bias toward "being present" in the office in government and the perception that an employee is not contributing unless physically at the office were frequently cited as disincentives for employees to take advantage of flexible arrangements, even where the nature of the work would make such arrangements possible.

➤ Some women described the Foreign Service as a particular working environment that requires total dedication. However, Foreign Service officers indicated that overseas posts allowed them to have greater resources and opportunities to tend to their personal and family obligations.

➤ The increase in unaccompanied posts[4] in the Foreign Service was highlighted repeatedly as a major problem for women with families.

➤ Of all the agencies surveyed, USAID received the most positive remarks on work-life balance. USAID women cited that the office culture did not put excessive demands on individuals to "pay their dues" by staying lengthy hours in the office.

➤ Interviewees pointed to women who have recently taken on senior-level policy positions in the government agencies as creating cultural change, especially in the DOD, where a number of women in high-level positions have children.

INTRODUCTION

WIIS Goals and Objectives

The primary goal for this study is to improve the professional and leadership opportunities for women in international security in U.S. Government agencies. In pursuing this goal, WIIS established the following objectives for this project:

➤ Improve understanding of trends and patterns over time in terms of women's representation in the federal government in international security positions.

➤ Identify obstacles for women's advancement in key government agencies, particularly in attaining and succeeding in leadership positions. Highlight model practices developed by agencies, offices, and leaders to improve women's participation.

➤ Document the diverse voices, experiences, and wisdom of women who have worked in professional and senior-levels in this career sector.

➤ Examine data on women's representation and career paths and encourage improvements in collection of data and transparency of information.

➤ Recommend policies and practices to improve recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in international security-related positions in the federal sector.

Why the Executive Branch? Capitalizing on Momentum and Identifying the Gaps

WIIS focused this study on women in the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government for a number of reasons, including: the increased visibility of women in high-level leadership positions in government working on international security; increased interest in federal career opportunities by women in the WIIS network; recognition

of the importance of diversity in recruitment and retention efforts in the public and private sectors; and the remaining gaps in available information on women's representation and career paths in this particular sector.

1. Increased Visibility of Women in Leadership

In recent years, women have assumed more visible roles in leadership positions in the U.S. Government. At the Cabinet level, three women—Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and currently Hillary Clinton—have served as U.S. Secretary of State; Janet Napolitano is the first woman to lead the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS); and Henrietta Fore recently served as Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Women have also taken on more visible positions as Undersecretaries in various agencies, including Michèle Flournoy, the first woman appointed to the influential civilian position of Under Secretary of Policy in the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). In the U.S. military, DOD designated the first woman—Ann Dunwoody—as a four-star general in 2008. Additional female four-star generals will surely follow Dunwoody's achievement, and a female Secretary of Defense is no longer outside the realm of possibility. Women are also increasingly populating the ranks of Assistant Secretaries, Assistant Administrators, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and U.S. Ambassadors overseas. As one former female Under Secretary of State observed,

> "Women are breaking new ground every day in every foreign policy institution."
> —*Paula J. Dobriansky, former Under-Secretary of State for Democracy & Global Affairs*[5]

In governments around the world, women are taking positions as heads of state,[6] ministers, and other senior-level positions, including as ministers of defense and other positions that were once the exclusive domain of men. It appears that women are making significant headway into leadership positions in the U.S. Government and in other governments globally. Although gender parity has not been reached in these positions, the numbers of women have increased, and more attention has been focused—among policymakers, within agencies, and within the media—on women's participation in high-levels of government.

How have these women leaders affected the institutions, in which they work? And what impact do these women leaders have on the next generation of women entering and building careers in these institutions? It may be too early to tell. Women's leadership in this sector should be examined more closely, not only at the top levels, but at the important ranks below where women are making the daily decisions that are shaping U.S. diplomacy, security, and international assistance around the world.

2. Increased Interest in Federal Career Opportunities in a Time of Transition

In 2008–09, the change in the Presidential Administration presented an opportunity to bring more women into international security policymaking positions in the U.S. Government. Among the WIIS network, there has been unprecedented enthusiasm and interest in government positions as women in the network seek political appointments, civil service opportunities, and entrance into the Foreign Service.[7] Similarly, this feedback from WIIS members parallels a documented growing interest among young people in the federal service. In 2009, a survey of 200 colleges and universities in the U.S. revealed that 90 percent of student respondents were interested in federal employment opportunities, and almost three-fourths of respondents became more interested in public service after the November 2008 presidential election.[8]

WIIS began this study in 2008 so that its findings and recommendations could be utilized by the new Administration to better recruit, retain, and advance talented women in government ranks.

3. Importance of Diversity and Recruiting/Retaining Talent

While there has been a surge of interest in careers in government, the U.S. Government has also acknowledged a growing need for diversity within the workforce at all levels. The corporate sector, in particular, has devoted increasing attention to diversity, hiring, and the retention needs for the future. Various studies have highlighted a number of problems with female retention and advancement and the linkages to corporate performance. For example, a March 2008 study by Price Waterhouse Coopers pointed to the fact that in the United States and other Western countries women and men are hired at an equal rate for entry level professional positions, but women are leaving the workforce voluntarily at a rate of two or three times more than men once they reach mid-career and management positions. This and other studies have also cited the under-representation of women in leadership roles, such as directors and CEO's. The Price Waterhouse Coopers study made the following case for fixing what it refers to as "the leaking pipeline" of women:

> "Solving this complex business issue is critical to the business case for success and growth ambitions. Organizations need a culture, worldwide, that attracts, retains, and develops top talent. To succeed in creating that culture is to succeed in creating strong business."[9]

The non-profit organization Catalyst has conducted research on women in the corporate sector, including tracking women's numbers in leadership positions, as well as their advancement opportunities and the patterns that underlie women's decisions to "opt-out" of the workforce at various points in their careers. Catalyst provides diversity practices for corporations to benefit from the "rich talent pool" by expanding women's opportunities.[10] As a result of this business case for diversity,

corporations—including those that are heavily involved in the business of national security—have increasingly established diversity offices and programs aimed at strengthening the pipeline of talent, specifically including female talent.

In order for government employers to attract talent and prepare future leaders, much more attention needs to be devoted to improving outreach and recruitment. The U.S. Government must take critical steps to retain high-quality talent, build the necessary skills of personnel, and institute programs that develop leadership capacity, all with a strong focus on increasing and retaining diversity in government ranks at all levels.[11]

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has reported on diversity needs of the federal workforce, especially in the senior-levels of government.[12] Recently, the U.S. Congress has also focused attention on this issue. In June 2009, a bill was introduced in the Senate titled "Senior Executive Service Diversity Assurance Act of 2009." The purpose of the legislation is "to provide greater diversity within, and to improve policy direction and oversight of, the Senior Executive Service."[13] The bill specifically focuses on tracking data, improving recruitment, and instituting professional development programs aimed at women and minorities for senior-level positions in the government. Diversity in recruitment and retention is also closely linked with the urgent need to replace a significant percentage of personnel reaching retirement age.

A 2009 study conducted by the Partnership for Public Service reported, "[n]early one-third of the full-time, permanent federal workforce is projected to leave government in the next five years."[14] In 2007, the Partnership for Public Service reported that this would produce talent shortages and increasing competition among employers. The same report included hiring projections for government agencies in sectors that are relevant to national and international security work. For example, DOD and Treasury planned to fill 3,670 intelligence analyst positions, and the Department of State (DOS) and USAID planned to expand recruitment for Foreign Service and career officers before the end of fiscal year 2009.[15]

In recent months, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has sought to address the well-known problems with the current government recruiting process and the need to better enable government to compete for qualified candidates and retain them in government service. In July 2009, OPM released a draft strategic plan for 2010–2015. The plan references "the President's goal of recruiting, hiring and retaining the best and the brightest for Federal service." Strategic Goal 3 of the plan commits the Government to promote diversity in the federal workforce in the following ways:

➤ Helping agencies create an environment that values workforce diversity and leverages diverse talent to achieve results.

➤ Promoting policies and practices to ensure all segments of society have an opportunity for employment and advancement.

➤ Providing Federal employees and managers with educational and training opportunities aimed at creating and maintaining a culture where diversity is valued and promoted.

➤ Pursuing recruitment and retention efforts focused on attracting diverse talent.[16]

This WIIS report is intended to provide information, benchmarking, and recommendations to assist the U.S. Government in its efforts to improve policies and programs that affect women's advancement opportunities.

4. Information on Women in Government: A General Information Gap

A number of studies have been conducted in a variety of sectors that track women's participation in leadership positions, including information on the number of women in corporate management, women in academia, women in the military, and women in U.S. politics and the media.[17] But there remains an information gap on women's participation in leadership positions in the U.S. Government, particularly in policy positions—both an absence of research by outside organizations and a lack of available data or analysis collection inside the government to support diversity efforts. This report complements efforts by other organizations to benchmark women's progress in a variety of fields. The WIIS research highlights data on participation and reveals insights on women's leadership experiences in the international security arena.

While women have become more visible in the highest leadership positions in government, it is difficult to get an accurate picture of how women are represented in the upper professional levels of international security-related positions. Outside of the military ranks, the statistics on civilian women in specific government positions are not easily accessible. While government agencies track general statistics on recruitment, retention, and attrition, the numbers often do not capture enough information on how women are experiencing barriers to advancement and when they are choosing to leave government service. The available data is useful to gain a bird's eye view of the demographics of federal employees, but the numbers that are available are generally presented by salary level and are usually not distinguished by type of professional position. This makes it impossible to determine how many women are in policymaking or related positions at any given level in any one of the relevant federal agencies. Furthermore, throughout this study, WIIS observed that the offices dedicated to tracking and analyzing employment statistics remain under-resourced.

WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? EXAMPLES OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The following snapshot indicates that, although there has been progress in the past decade in women's participation in this sector, women remain underrepresented in key agencies and positions.

2008 U.S. Department of State Statistics at the Senior Foreign Service (SFS)[18]

➤ Career Ambassador (Generalist and Specialist): 6 Total, 2 Women (33.3%)
➤ Career Minister (Generalist and Specialist): 23 Total, 5 Women (21.7%)
   • 2008 Promotions: 4 Total, 0 Women (0%)
➤ Minister-Counselor (Generalist and Specialist): 399 Total, 114 Women (28.6%)
   • 2008 Promotions: 51 Total, 17 Women (33.3%)
➤ Counselor (Generalist and Specialist): 520 Total, 130 Women (25%)
   • 2008 Promotions: 98 Total, 29 Women (29.6%)
➤ FS-01 Promotion Pool in September 2008: 36.7% Women

U.S. Department of State Statistics in the Senior Civil Service (SES)[19]

➤ 133 Total, 45 Women (33.8%):
   • GS-15 Promotion Pool in September 2007: 41.3% Women

2008 U.S. Agency for International Development[20]

➤ Career Minister: 2 promoted, 1 woman (50%)
➤ Minister-Counselor: 7 promoted, 4 women (57.1%)
➤ Counselor: 15 promoted, 5 women (33.3 %)

   In 2007, women made up 43% of the Foreign Service at USAID and 59% of the total USAID Civil Service. However, women only held 29% of the Senior Foreign Service positions.

U.S. Department of Defense

➤ In 2007, women held 21.7% of SES positions in DOD Civil Workforce. This percentage has not dramatically changed over the past 10 years, though it may have increased slightly. Senior-level DOD Demographics for June 2009 cite 23.09% women.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

➤ In 2007, women made up 26.2% of SES positions out of 325. This was an increase from 2003, when women made up 21.2% of 208 SES positions.
➤ In the GS-14 and 15 SES promotion pool, women made up 32.5% of 10,107 positions.

MAY 21, 2008 GAO REPORT · HUMAN CAPITAL: WORKFORCE DIVERSITY GOVERNMENTWIDE AND AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Percent Governmentwide	SEPTEMBER 2003			SEPTEMBER 2007		
		Percent			Percent	
	Number	Women	Minorities	Number	Women	Minorities
SES	6,221	26.4	15.2	6,555	29.1	15.8
SES potential developmental pool (GS-15s and G8-14s)	152,123	30.4	18.8	149,149	34.3	22.5

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Systematic tracking and analysis of the statistics is needed to determine where the gaps in women's participation really are and what policies can be designed and implemented to address them. As a starting point to measure progress of women in this sector, WIIS has gathered available statistics and developed initial insights about the current participation of women.

In addition to the gaps in quantitative data, very little information has been gathered from women themselves in these agencies about their own perspectives, experiences, and challenges in advancement. Despite numerous government statements and policies on diversity and the importance of women's leadership, there is little public data on how women in this sector are viewing leadership opportunities, and how they are developing and applying leadership skills in their government positions. This gap in knowledge hampers government efforts to improve recruitment and retention of women. This study aims to provide important data for policymakers and organizations that are invested in promoting women's leadership. As mentioned above, individual women who are seeking government opportunities or charting careers in the government in international security often have little access to comprehensive information about how other women have approached their career decisions. This study is also intended to provide talented women in the U.S. who are pursuing international security careers with some lessons learned from other women.

Framework, Focus, and Methodology for this Study

The national and international security arena has expanded rapidly in the past two decades. WIIS, with its diverse network of experts working on both "hard" and "soft" security issues, reflects the changing international security paradigm. Where once international security careers were defined as those in the defense, intelligence, or related fields, now the term includes professionals working on myriad issues affecting global, regional, state, and human security. The U.S. Government has

increasingly recognized that its national and global security interests are related to every facet of the federal government apparatus. While DOD and DOS continue to be the powerful and prominent governmental agencies engaged in this area, almost every agency and department now has an international affairs component and defined foreign affairs or national security professionals working within its ranks. The scope of potential work and career paths in government has broadened enormously.

Although almost every U.S. Government agency includes portfolios that relate to national security and international affairs, WIIS limited the scope of this study to an analysis of women in a select group of agencies and departments. However, this limited scope is in no way a reflection of a limited definition of international security by WIIS. It is also important to note that men were not included as interviewees in this study. While future research may incorporate men's experiences and perspectives as a point of reference for women's experiences, this study was designed to highlight the unique experiences and challenges faced by women in these professions.

WIIS conducted individual interviews and focus groups with more than 90 women who currently serve in government or have retired from government service in national security, foreign policy, and international assistance. All of the interviews and discussion groups were conducted on a non-attribution basis. The majority of women can be classified as mid- and senior-level professionals. For purposes of this study, WIIS defined mid-level professionals as GS 12–14 or equivalent and senior-level professionals as GS 15 and Senior Executive Service. Women were interviewed who serve or have served as civil servants, Foreign Service Officers (DOS and USAID), and political appointees. In addition to those currently serving in government positions, women who had previously served in government but transitioned to the corporate, non-profit, or academic arenas were included in the interviews.

Women who participated in the study represented government experience in the following agencies and departments:

➤ U.S. Department of State

➤ U.S. Department of Defense (primarily Office of the Secretary of Defense)

➤ U.S. Agency for International Development

➤ National Security Council

➤ U.S. Department of Homeland Security

➤ U.S. Department of Energy

➤ Defense Intelligence Agency

➤ Central Intelligence Agency

➤ Directorate of National Intelligence

➤ Government Accountability Office

WIIS focused on civilian women in government. Although some women were interviewed who had previous military experience, WIIS did not examine women's participation in the U.S. military as a component of this study.[21]

As explained above, the statistical data that is available on women in government agencies and departments is not readily accessible to outside organizations. Often, the data provides a general picture of the federal workforce, or agency workforce, based on gender or other diversity factors. Yet, the data is rarely available in more specific areas, such as women in specific components of these agencies or in particular types of job classifications (e.g. Foreign Affairs Officer, etc.). Some agencies and departments appear to track statistics over time, but others either did not have this historical data available or chose not to provide it. Thus, the statistics that are presented in this study are a reflection of what was provided by individual agencies upon request. There are no consistent methods or presentations of statistical data on women in government among agencies. Therefore, direct comparisons across agencies are not always possible.

WIIS intended to gather as much data and input as possible from the intelligence sector, but encountered difficulties receiving responses from this sector. WIIS was able to interview some of its members and others who had retired from intelligence positions about their experiences. But the quantitative data WIIS was able to collect on women in the intelligence agencies in this study is limited to what has been reported in other studies.

WIIS focused on the following themes in discussing career experiences with participants in this study:

➤ How women are entering the sector and what factors motivated them to pursue careers in this field.

➤ The essential skills and approaches that women perceive to be essential for career success in government agencies.

➤ Specific challenges that women feel they have faced in career advancement, including overt or implicit gender discrimination, and how women have navigated particular institutional cultures and environments within government.

➤ The importance of mentoring and how mentoring relationships are developed in these agencies.

➤ How women define model leadership, and how they have developed their own approaches to leadership throughout their careers.

➤ How women view work-life balance and its relationship to advancement in government.

Although this report includes important quantitative data, and offers policy relevant findings and recommendations, ultimately it is a report about historical

change, cultural and institutional shifts, individual perceptions and life choices. As such, it provides an unprecedented look into the diverse opinions, experiences, and insights of women in this sector.

NAVIGATING INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS
Challenges and Opportunities for Women

The Historical Evolution of Women's Participation in Diplomacy and Defense

In 1933, Ambassador Ruth Bryan Owen was the first woman to be appointed as a U.S. ambassador (to Denmark). It was another 20 years (in 1953) until the next female Ambassador was appointed — Ambassador Francis Willis to Switzerland. Ambassadors Ruth Bryan Owen and Francis Willis pioneered the way for women to join the ranks of senior-level federal employees. These women, however, were rare among an exclusively white male diplomatic service. In the post-World War II period, women in the U.S. Government were generally hired into secretarial and other clerical positions. Hiring and promotion practices for policy and executive level positions were not "women-friendly." Between 1961 and 1971, the recruitment of women into the Foreign Service remained at 7 percent with a slow promotion rate.[22]

Interviews with retired and senior-level women for this study indicated that women were often discouraged from applying or entering into government service in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. These experiences were highlighted by women who entered DOS during these decades. For example, one former female ambassador recalled that a recruiter on her college campus specifically discouraged women from applying to the Foreign Service. Subsequently, this particular woman not only took the exam and entered the Foreign Service, but ultimately, rose to the highest ranks of the diplomatic service.[23]

Barriers to entry were only the first set of challenges for women during these decades. Women who did enter the State Department or Defense Department during the 1960s and 1970s in policy related positions were usually the only women within their offices or units. With few, if any, female counterparts, these women had to operate in a male-dominated culture where it remained the norm for women to serve in clerical and support staff roles.

Women who served in policy positions during the 1960s and 1970s recalled that overt gender discrimination was pervasive and an accepted part of the mainstream institutional culture in these agencies. There were no significant safeguards in place during this time to protect women from sexual harassment and gender discrimination. Women in this study reported many instances of discrimination in their early careers. In many cases, discrimination took the form of being passed up for promotions, and in other cases, women felt that they were segregated into certain jobs and tasks based on gender bias. For example, some women in the Foreign Service said that they were limited to specific "cones," such as personnel, and not allowed to rotate into more prestigious areas, such as political affairs, while their male counterparts were given these opportunities.[24] In several cases, it was very clear to women that senior-level supervisors did not want women to serve in these types of positions.

> In 1975, only 9 percent of 3,461 active FSOs, or 312 people, were women, even though females made up 44 percent of all college graduates that year. In 1974, 65 percent of the women who joined the Foreign Service were assigned to one of four cones: the consular cone, considered the least interesting of the four specialties, which also include political, economic and administrative work. Since only 10 percent of this cone was routinely promoted to FS-1s—the equivalent of the Senior Foreign Service today—it was seen as a dead-end specialization by many FSOs. Women […] claimed this practice had unfairly delayed their career paths. In 1974, male FSOs made up 90 percent of the FS-1s and 83 percent of FS-2s, the next highest grade, while women were concentrated at the three lowest grade levels.[25]

Several retired women stated that the institutional culture reflected the attitude of American culture and society during the time period. One interviewee who had served in DOD in a civilian policy position highlighted that managers and leaders did not even think about women's career advancement. When a position at a higher level opened in her office, she asked to be considered for the position. The General who was making the decision was considering her male counterpart for the promotion. He expressed surprise at her suggestion and admitted that it had not occurred to him to consider her. She emphasized in her interview with WIIS that he was not opposed to the idea, and she was ultimately offered the promotion. But she saw this experience as an illustration of a key shift that had to occur in the perception of women's advancement by the institutional leadership.[26]

Women in the federal workforce were expected to quit earlier in their careers because of marriage and children in these decades. In the State Department, women were required to quit the Foreign Service if they decided to marry, and it was common for women entering the Foreign Service to be questioned about their plans to get married.

> "Women in the Foreign Service knew that if they married they would have to resign and we accepted that discrimination without batting an eyelash." —*Phyllis Oakley, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research*[27]

"It was the oral exam that brought the subject of married women and the FS to my attention. I told the panel that I understood the ground rule. I must say that I was greatly irritated by the question, not because I was surprised by it—I had anticipated some questions regarding my gender—but because each of the other two examiners found it necessary to ask the same question separately—in turn—even though I had given the textbook answer."—*Teresita Schaffer, former U.S. Ambassador and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia[28]*

This ban on married female Foreign Service officers existed until 1972, when internal protests against sexual discrimination began to change the institutional environment.

Challenging Discrimination: Legal Action and Institutional Change

While there were gradual changes within these institutions in the post-World War II era, the 1970s ushered in a pivotal period of institutional change for women's recruitment and visibility. Women who served in government positions during this time recalled that there was a gradual evolution in thinking in these workplaces that reflected the events surrounding the U.S. civil rights and women's rights movements. Some women who were recruited during the 1970s recognized that they entered government service during a significant time for women's opportunities. During this period, a number of organizations began to press for equality in these agencies, and female federal employees filed lawsuits and formal complaints. These actions created controversy, as well as opportunity, for women to voice their experiences. The advocacy and legal actions ultimately resulted in dramatic policy shifts within departments, particularly in DOS.

The Women's Action Organization (WAO)[29] was founded in 1970 in reaction to the inequitable treatment and incredibly slow rate of promotion of women in the State Department. Among its goals, the WAO, along with the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), worked to abolish the regulation that prevented women who married from entering or remaining in the Foreign Service. As a result, the State Department overturned its ban on the marriage of female diplomats in 1972, and took steps to improve inequities in housing allowances and in the recruitment process.[30]

In addition to internal advocacy, legal action against the State Department played a significant role in publicizing and bringing about institutional change and corrective action in improving women's treatment in the Foreign Service. Women in this study frequently referenced one particularly well-known case. Alison Palmer, a female Foreign Service officer with the State Department, filed a sex discrimination lawsuit against the State Department in the late 1960s, and was the first to successfully win such a case after a 20-year battle in the courts. The Palmer case, which eventually evolved into a class action lawsuit, had a ripple effect on

women's advancement opportunities in the decades to follow. In some cases, the State Department issued corrective action in the form of reassigning women to positions. In the 1980s, women who were not promoted during this period were eligible for redress, which generally meant they could be assigned to senior positions.[A]

Women reported in WIIS interviews that this remedy caused significant discord among some women and men in the Department who felt that women who accepted redress were wrongly "leap-frogging" over others into more senior positions. While many women supported the Palmer lawsuit as a milestone for women's career advancement at the State Department, others felt tainted by the case, in particular expressing that they feared being perceived as "token" women in senior-level positions.

Similar formal complaints and lawsuits followed in the late 1970s and 1980s in other agencies, adding to the momentum for more equitable treatment of women in the government workforce.[32] In 1977, Harritte Thompson, a female intelligence officer, filed a formal complaint against the Directorate of Operations at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). It was the first to result in a discrimination lawsuit against the CIA. The Agency's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity investigation report found practices in the Directorate of Operations that had constituted discrimination against women in the promotion process. And in the specific case of Harritte Thompson, the investigation report also stated that discrimination was a clear factor in preventing her promotion. A lawsuit was formally filed in 1979, which resulted in an out of court settlement that required the Directorate of Operations to revise its promotion criteria.[33]

Some women were critical of formal complaints and legal action. In interviews for this study, there was no consensus among women within agencies that formal lawsuits were the best mechanisms for effecting change, and some women reported that they purposefully stayed away from advocacy groups that were vocally arguing for equality. These women felt that they could overcome instances of discrimination through their own merit.

The battles over gender equality during this period did play an important role in raising women's consciousness levels about gender discrimination. Nevertheless, many women felt that this was not an issue that could be solved by rules and regulations, but rather through societal and cultural change.

> "The debate about the new regulations did raise my consciousness about gender discrimination. Some of the attitudes that I had shrugged off earlier in my career seemed more significant. I basically felt—and still do to some extent—that the key problem that women faced in the Foreign Service was not the system or the rules, but the institutional culture which had prevailed for most of the careers of our older colleagues. They had a hard time adjusting to the 'new' woman." —*Teresita Schaffer, former U.S. Ambassador and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia*[34]

Women's perceptions and experiences during the 1970s varied widely, and equal opportunity in the federal workforce had not yet been institutionalized. Still,

significant changes in legal protection and personnel and management policies be-
gan during this period, and women themselves made an unprecedented impact on
improving their opportunities to succeed in government service.

Women cited both formal and informal departmental policies that they felt had
an impact on their personal career advancement opportunities, as well as on the
greater community of female federal employees. In addition to the formal legal and
legislative protection, informal policies included rhetorical commitments by presi-
dential administrations to increase the number of women in leadership positions.
Key examples of these milestones are included below:

➤ **1964:** Title VII of the Civil Rights Act protects women against employment
discrimination on the basis of gender.

➤ **1972:** The Equal Employment Opportunity Act prohibits "discrimination in
hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification,
referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of …sex."

➤ **1972:** The State Department overturned ban on female married Foreign Service
officers.

➤ **1978:** With the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act, the U.S. Equal Employ-
ment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) assumed responsibility for enforcing
anti-discrimination laws applicable to the civilian federal workforce as well as
coordinating all federal equal employment opportunity programs.

➤ **1978:** In addition to creating a position for a women's rights officer within the
White House, President Carter issued Executive Order (E.O.) 12050 in 1978, es-
tablishing an Interdepartmental Task Force on Women's Rights and a National
Advisory Committee on Women to promote and monitor policies in these areas.

➤ **1979:** President Jimmy Carter issued E.O. 12138, creating a National Women's
Business Enterprise Policy and requiring each agency to take affirmative action
to support women's business enterprises.[35]

➤ **1994:** President Clinton issued a memorandum entitled "Expanding Family-
Friendly Work Arrangements in the Executive Branch," and directed agencies
to review their practices and provide workers with flexible hours to help them
manage both work and family obligations.

➤ **1995:** President Clinton established a White House office for Women's Initia-
tives to serve as a liaison between the Administration, federal agencies, and
civil society organizations to facilitate the development of policies that benefit
women. In the same year, the President's Interagency Council on Women was
formed to coordinate implementation of the Platform for Action outlined at the
4th United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, and to develop initiatives
to further women's progress through outreach and public education.

➤ **2000:** Near the end of President Clinton's 2nd term in office, the U.S. Department of Labor introduced new affirmative action regulations, which marked an unprecedented effort by the agency to promote equal pay. The new policies included an Equal Opportunity Survey requiring federal contractors to report data on compensation, hiring, termination, and promotions by minority status and gender.

➤ **2009:** President Obama issued E.O. 13506, establishing the White House Council on Women and Girls to help ensure that federal programs and policies take into account the unique needs and interests of women and girls.

➤ **2009:** The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was the first bill signed into law by President Obama. Under the new law, victims of pay-based discrimination have the right to file a complaint to government within 180 days of their most recent paycheck as opposed to within 180 days of their first unfair paycheck. The latter policy which was overturned facilitated wage discrimination, as employers only had to hide discriminatory practices for a short amount of time in order to be safe from legal action.

The Current Picture: Perceptions, Credibility and Biases within Agencies

Junior and mid-level women who were interviewed for this study did not perceive sexual and gender-based discrimination as the singularly significant barrier to their career advancement, as it had been for previous generations. While they regarded government institutions as intolerant of discrimination, women have remained acutely aware of their minority status in many international security environments. In a few cases, women mentioned experiences working with colleagues or individuals who exhibited outdated gender biases.

Regardless of agency, the majority of women emphasized the importance of overcoming perceived biases about women's expertise and the challenges of establishing and maintaining credibility. They pointed to a need to establish credibility quickly, especially in the defense, intelligence, and law enforcement areas, and acknowledged that this was sometimes difficult in these communities. One senior-level defense official explained,

> "When I walk into a room, there's an unspoken expectation that I won't know what I'm talking about. As a woman, I feel that I have to hold myself to a higher standard to be taken seriously" — *Senior-level woman, Office of the Secretary of Defense*[36]

Some women stated that it was more difficult to do this in defense agencies without a military background, while those with military backgrounds credited their experience with helping them "talk the talk" within the defense establishment.

"Ageism" was a commonly cited challenge among mid- to senior-level women. In some cases, women who were interviewed believed that ageism was a greater barrier than gender-based discrimination. Women who had been promoted at a relatively young age believed that they had to overcome certain misperceptions about their expertise because of their relative youth. Some interviewees saw "being young and female" as a double set of barriers to overcome in gaining respect and acknowledgement of their rank or position. Women who were able to advance to the more senior ranks quickly often found themselves in situations where they were 10–15 years younger than their predominately white, male counterparts.

Separately, many women at the junior and mid-levels believed that being a woman could be an asset, as their minority status made them more visible among their peers. This visibility could be used, in turn, to help them establish credibility. In addition, some women stated that since women tend to be underestimated, they view being a woman as an opportunity to overcome biases and change viewpoints. But women acknowledged that they also experience pressure to demonstrate skills and knowledge from the outset.

> "Sometimes being young and female is good, because you can catch them off guard and prove yourself. But women fall a lot harder than our male counterparts if we don't demonstrate our expertise." —*Mid-level woman, DHS*[37]

Women working in DOD described the agency as a meritocracy, especially those in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Women felt that they were able to gain credibility and opportunities for advancement once they demonstrated their expertise of the subject matter. However, a number of career civil service women pointed out that many senior-level positions in OSD are political appointments, and that women in the career civil service have to manage their expectations of how far they can advance in their careers due to the structural limitations for civil servants.

Among the women interviewed, those who have worked in USAID were the most positive about the atmosphere and possibilities for women. USAID was described as a less hierarchical culture compared to the other government agencies with a real focus on diversity and gender balance. Women at all levels generally viewed USAID's leadership as committed to diversity, and that this commitment has been reflected in the significant number of women in senior-level positions. One former senior-level woman who worked at USAID recalled her time there:

> "There were unbelievably competent women in USAID in positions of authority, and there was no resistance to the idea of women in these positions."—*Former U.S. Ambassador and senior-level woman at USAID)*[38]

Some pointed to the nature of USAID's work and culture in facilitating more opportunities for women:

> "The nature of AID's work is very inclusive of women. Balance is more equitable." —*Senior-level career Foreign Service officer at USAID*[39]

Within DHS, some mid-level women perceived that men were promoted at a greater rate than women. As one woman observed, "There was a period when I saw women coming in as support staff while men were being recruited as special assistants."[40] Some women attributed this to the law enforcement culture. However, women also pointed to a shifting institutional culture in DHS, perceiving that the increased number of women in leadership positions could create a more positive environment for women. As one senior-level woman who had recently joined DHS commented,

> "[It] makes a difference having more women at DHS. It's a very encouraging environment. There's openness in decision making with more women. Your voice is expected to be heard." —*Senior-level political appointee, DHS*[41]

It is clear that the equal treatment of women and opportunities for advancement have improved enormously during the past 30 years. It took a combination of directed legal and advocacy action, consciousness-raising, and societal changes to overcome the gender-based discrimination that had been so pervasive in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. As a result of those changes, and the policies and initiatives that followed, women no longer regard gender-based discrimination as an obstacle to success in this sector today. Yet, they point to unique challenges based on gender and often on age, in establishing credibility as experts in these environments. As women continue to face these more nuanced dynamics, the increase in visible female leaders is seen as an opportunity to change perceptions and cultures for the emerging generations.

Motivating Factors for Pursuing Government Careers in International Security

Women who were interviewed for this study initially entered into federal service between the 1960s and 2000s. Across the span of entry experiences, these women shared some common factors that influenced them to pursue this career path. Almost all the women had early international or multi-cultural experiences through their personal family histories and experiences living or traveling outside of the U.S. as children. Some also had educational opportunities in language studies, foreign affairs, and study abroad programs. The women were also able to attain a high-level of education, many of them having completed a post-graduate degree before entering into federal service.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Cold War and the Vietnam War were key events in influencing their decisions to pursue international careers. They also pointed to the influence of strong female role models in their formative years who gave them a heightened sense of responsibility and confidence to pursue their goals. Some women who entered into DOD were also influenced by their experiences serving in the military.

Getting the Foot in the Door: How Women in Government are Entering the Sector

Women who were interviewed for this study utilized a variety of entry points to start careers in government. The most common entry points cited were structured programs, such as the competitive Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) program for the Civil Service and the examination process for the Foreign Service. Other agency-specific programs and internship opportunities also facilitated entry at the junior professional levels. Participants expressed that such structured entry programs gave them certain advantages by providing them with an existing group of peers and mentors, training, and career planning resources. Individuals were better able to learn how to navigate bureaucratic processes and dynamics, as well as find opportunities for advancement. The programs did, however, vary in the degree of organization. The PMF program received the most positive feedback in this regard.

Contract employment through private contracting companies was another common entry mechanism, particularly for DOD, DHS, and USAID. While some interviewees expressed advantages to contract employment, including job flexibility and higher pay, many felt that they were disadvantaged by not being directly hired by the government.

Very few interviewees seemed to have entered by applying for open vacancies on USA Jobs, the formal online mechanism for applying for federal government positions. The few individuals who were placed through USA Jobs did not feel that they had the same support mechanisms or networking opportunities as those who entered through structured programs. In a few cases, women entered into administrative jobs and later transitioned into policy related positions. But this transition from the administrative track to the policy track was somewhat difficult. In one particular case, a woman was promised that she would be able to transition after a limited period of time serving in an administrative function. However, her supervisor was not supportive of her move and she had to fight hard internally to make the transition.

In some cases, women entered as political appointees. Key senior-level contacts with strong political connections played a crucial role in bringing these women into political positions. Influential mentors and sponsors were necessary for these types of opportunities. One female former senior-level political appointee in DOD emphasized the importance of "being in the right networks" and "receiving the right phone call" during a presidential transition.[42] Another senior-level woman who served in political positions in DOS and USAID leveraged her relationships with key individuals in the White House to highlight specific positions she was interested in and qualified for in the new administration. She was subsequently appointed into a political position.

While entry experiences have varied across the agencies and generations, participants agreed on the difficulties and limitations of the existing entry mechanisms into the U.S. Government. Although a number of WIIS members have had successful government careers, many others share the frustration in their quest to pursue government careers.

The most frequently cited programs and entry points included:

➤ Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) (formerly the Presidential Management Intern program): https://www.pmf.opm.gov/
➤ Other Fellowships
  • White House Fellows: http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/fellows/
  • Boren Fellowship: http://www.borenawards.org/boren_fellowship
  • Pickering Fellowship: http://careers.state.gov/students/programs.html#TRP
  • AAAS Fellowship: http://www.aaas.org/aboutaaas/fellows/
➤ Foreign Service (State Department and USAID)
➤ State Department Career Entry Program: http://careers.state.gov/civil-service/employment.html#CEP
➤ Internships
➤ Private Contracting Firms
➤ Political Appointments
➤ USA Jobs
➤ Department of DHS STEP Program: http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/gc_1220993249167.shtm
➤ DHS Fellows Program: http://www.orau.gov/dhsed/
➤ Lateral moves between government agencies

THE ROLE MODELS
Women and Leadership in Government

In 2008, Pew Research Center polled American men and women on gender and leadership. The study found that 69 percent of men and 68 percent of women viewed both men and women equally as leaders.[43] Other research has confirmed that men and women are increasingly comfortable with women in leadership positions.[44] Yet, challenges remain in how women view available leadership opportunities and paths in government, as well as how women define their own leadership styles. Although the interviews in this study reflected a diverse set of viewpoints, some key lessons emerged from the discussions on how women could better develop their leadership abilities, remain cognizant of common problems in leadership, and become exceptional examples of leadership in this sector.

Experts and trainers who specialize in leadership emphasize that leadership is not based on position or rank, but rather on behavior and approaches, and that any individual can demonstrate leadership in daily life and work. However, the terms "leadership" and "management" are often conflated. This has especially been true within hierarchical institutions, such as the U.S. Government. Women who were interviewed for this study generally considered leaders as those with decision-making authority in the bureaucracies in which they worked. They did not refer to their colleagues, at comparable levels or more junior level professionals, as leaders. Instead, women focused on their experiences with managers and supervisors, as well as their own reflections about their personal leadership approaches when managing others.

Women in DOD highlighted the military as an institution that grooms leaders effectively. Women who had previously served in the military before moving into civilian government positions cited the military training and experience as a major benefit in their own ability to lead others. As one such interviewee explained, "In the military, you are responsible for people in physical time and space. You learn physical problem-solving—it is really hands-on."[45] In addition to building leadership potential, women with previous military training also emphasized that their

experience gave them an added advantage in working within military and defense culture when they moved to civilian positions. Women with military backgrounds pointed to the lack of attention that U.S. civilian departments and agencies have given to leadership development. Even in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where there would be some expectation of carry-over from the military model, women reported very little focus on building and improving leadership capabilities. Women from both military and non-military backgrounds also highlighted leaders who had come from the military community for their model leadership qualities. For example, women who had served under the leadership of Colin Powell in DOS frequently cited him as an effective leader. Interviewees positively attributed Colin Powell's military leadership experience as a benefit to his tenure at the State Department.

> "Good leaders are accountable if they fail—this is a leadership responsibility because the people under you are acting under your guidance."—*Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense*[46]

"Good leaders are accountable if they fail—this is a leadership responsibility because the people under you are acting under your guidance."

— Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Crucial Approaches for Leadership Success in Government

Mid- and senior professional level women in this study identified common factors and approaches[47] that they considered essential for effectively advancing into and demonstrating in leadership positions in the government. These include:

➤ A positive reputation in the office, department, interagency structure, and wider community of experts, and a high level of substantive knowledge in the area of work.

➤ A broad professional network built on personal relationships.

➤ Demonstrated hard work, reliability, and trustworthiness.

➤ Ability to work within particular institutional cultures and to "talk the talk," and willingness to share information among colleagues and agencies.

➤ Mentors or sponsors in positions to assist with advancement, and the ability to leverage these contacts when needed.

➤ Recognition of the importance of timing and willingness to seize career opportunities when they arise, even if not planned.

➤ An ability to calmly and effectively deal with national security/foreign policy crisis situations.

➤ Knowing the limits of your knowledge and not being afraid to ask for help when needed.

➤ Willingness to develop teams, deputize staff, and delegate authority, allowing subordinates to make mistakes and learn from them.

➤ Protecting staff members and demonstrating a willingness to "take the spear if you have to."

➤ Willingness to admit mistakes and not place the blame on others.

➤ Confidence to claim credit for accomplishments (which many considered a common failure of women).

Elements of Success in Government Contexts

In addition to the major themes mentioned in the previous section, women interviewed for the study frequently mentioned the following personal characteristics as fundamental to good leadership:

➤ Principled
➤ Integrity
➤ Openness and Transparency
➤ Helpfulness and Candidness
➤ Personal Commitment
➤ Sense of Humor

➤ Attentiveness
➤ Loyalty
➤ Creativity
➤ Communication
➤ Multi-tasking ability
➤ Willingness to take risks
➤ Decisiveness
➤ Collaboration

How Women Lead: Differences Based on Gender?

In general, women in this study did not attribute specific leadership styles to women. Many stated that they had experienced good and bad leadership by both men and women, and that leadership approaches depended on individual personality more than gender. That said, women commonly described their own leadership qualities as involving consensus, collaboration, inclusiveness, and team-based approaches. Women also used the same terms to describe model leadership by others. Those who believed that differences exist between men's and women's leadership styles pointed to these same approaches as ways in which women distinguished themselves in leadership roles. Women from all agencies expressed the common view that collaboration and teamwork improve an organization and lead to better decision-making processes.

> [Women in leadership] make the organization more holistic. Women are more likely to look at the human side of things, to draw goals more broadly, to look at diversity, to be good at inclusivity, and to have real consideration for people's lives." — *Retired senior-level woman who served in the NSC and DOD*[48]

"[Women in leadership] make the organization more holistic. Women are more likely to look at the human side of things, to draw goals more broadly, to look at diversity, to be good at inclusivity, and to have real consideration for people's lives."

—Retired senior-level woman who served in the NSC and DOD

Some women in their 30s and 40s who had more recently achieved senior-level positions in government described their leadership approaches, not only as focused on teambuilding, but also as "non-hierarchical." Several women at USAID highlighted the non-hierarchical leadership approach, and described USAID's culture as supporting this type of leadership practice.

Women who had more recently moved into senior-level positions in other agencies, such as DOD, also viewed the non-hierarchical leadership style positively. Although women acknowledged that this style was somewhat unconventional to the military culture, they expressed that they had not needed to change their approach to better fit into the traditional culture, as long as they led with direct and clear instructions. This may indicate a broader shift in terms of how the incoming and advancing generations of women are viewing and practicing leadership, even within highly hierarchical government environments.

Many women emphasized the ability to build strong relationships—with staff, coworkers, colleagues, and superiors—as a fundamental element of leadership where women appear to excell. Interviewees often gave examples of taking specific steps to encourage and support staff, especially through difficult personal challenges. For example, one former diplomat described her role in helping two women who were experiencing difficulties job sharing and balancing work and family in an overseas post. Another senior-level woman in DOD spoke about a staff member who was experiencing a terminal illness in his immediate family and the steps she took as a manager to ensure that he was prioritizing his family needs at that time.

Bad Behavior: The Common Pitfalls of Poor Managers and Leaders

Every industry experiences a share of poor leadership examples. As such, women in this study frequently cited experiences with poor management and leadership in government. This finding mirrors other studies that have focused on perceptions of senior-level leaders in government. The 2008 Human Capital Survey reported that less than 51 percent of respondents throughout the U.S. Government had a high-level of respect for senior-level leaders in their agencies. GS 14's and 15's viewed the major purpose of the Senior Executive Service (SES) as providing leadership, but many complained that SES personnel have often been technical experts who have not cultivated their own leadership skills.[49]

Some women expressed a frustration with the government's promotion structure, which has been designed in a way that requires individuals to eventually advance into management roles. No alternative promotion track exists for those who want to continue to focus on substantive portfolios without management responsibility. Women acknowledged that the skills and approaches required for portfolio expertise differed from those needed in leadership positions. In that regard, some

"Good leaders inspire more than manage."

—former female ambassador who served in DOS and USAID

women expressed that the promotion structure could be a factor contributing to poor management behavior.

In some cases, negative experiences with poor managers have yielded positive leadership behaviors in emerging managers. Women in this study derived many lessons learned from their own experiences with poor managers, and made commitments not to repeat bad behavior as they reached positions of authority. In particular, women described numerous examples of both men and women who exhibited micromanaging, disrespectful, and in some cases, abusive practices toward their staff. In contrast, women distinguished the best examples of managers as those who sought out talent; recognized, promoted, and rewarded quality work; listened to staff and communicated decision-making processes; and mentored staff members through professional and personal challenges.

> "Good leaders inspire more than manage." —*Female former Ambassador who served in DOS and USAID*[50]

Male role models also made an important impact on how women developed good leadership practices. Women generally looked to male role models more often than women when emulating good leadership strategies. Some women, particularly at the senior-levels, claimed that they were unable to find good female leadership examples. Women testified to a range of examples of female leadership from excellent to extremely negative.

Interviewees also described a generational shift in how women approach leadership and management. In their previous experiences, interviewees observed that women managers often neglected to reach down to help women in the pipeline. Younger women leaders, however, have been more collaborative in their leadership styles and have made efforts to raise new leaders. (See also discussion of mentoring above.)

> "I had an ambassador who was my boss. He always explained to me his strategies and important decisions—how he arrived at them, what factors he considered. He shared a lot of information. It was a great learning experience."—*Senior female Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State*[51]

The Great Balancing Act: Dealing with Persistent Gender Stereotypes

One of the strongest themes to emerge was the difficulty that women perceived in balancing "feminine" and "masculine" qualities. Although some women expressed admiration for strong female leaders as role models, women disapproved of those who were overly-aggressive in their approaches to colleagues and staff. Women in this study commented that the negativity associated with aggressive approaches by women reflected a double standard, as male counterparts were not necessarily judged in the same regard. Some senior-level women acknowledged that they had

"I had an ambassador who was my boss. He always explained to me his strategies and important decisions—how he arrived at them, what factors he considered. He shared a lot of information. It was a great learning experience."

—Senior female Foreign Service Officer, DOS

used aggressive approaches, and expressed frustration that men had not been sub-ject to the same negative criticisms. One former senior-level woman who had served in DOD gave an example of a boss who criticized her for being too aggressive. The interviewee remarked that if she had been a man, she would have received a different reaction. Another senior-level woman in DOD explained that women find it difficult to be balanced in such a male-dominated environment due to the strong inclination to be "one of the guys." In retrospect, she reflected that she had been too demanding and tough in her own leadership approach.

> "Throwing elbows makes you a bitch. If a man does it, it's just considered playing hard." — *Former Ambassador who served in the NSC and DOS*[52]

The younger cohort of women in this study viewed aggressive approaches as ineffective in their own leadership roles. Several women who had recently been appointed into senior-level positions in DOD described previous experiences with senior-level women who had "sharp elbows" — and used aggressive and abrasive tactics to demonstrate competence in male-dominated working environments. They also observed that when women lack self-confidence, they exert excessive control over staff. As one former ambassador stated, "Some women have felt that they have to be tougher than men, and they become severe bosses."[53]

Women currently serving in leadership positions clearly distinguished their own leadership approaches from the negative examples. One woman described her own style as "empowerment with accountability," explaining that her staff were more productive with a positive working environment. She also stressed the importance of creating a dynamic of accountability and willingness to receive constructive feedback. As a leader, she felt that it was more important to discuss problems with her staff, rather than berating them for mistakes. Her leadership style reflected a focus on empowerment.[54] These above perspectives parallel findings from other industries, including the corporate and the academic arenas.[55]

> "Good leaders empower their subordinates, give them sufficient guidance, and trust their decisions." — *Senior Foreign Service Officer, DOS*[56]

Women in this study were equally wary of being considered too passive or lacking decisiveness in their leadership styles. They recognized that these traits could damage their credibility and authority in government contexts. While interviewees clearly pointed to inclusiveness and consensus-building as important attributes of good leadership, they also reflected a constant desire to balance these approaches with decisiveness. When women failed to make difficult decisions, or were uncomfortable justifying or standing by their decisions, they regarded this as a weakness in leadership.

One frequently mentioned problem was women's tendency to want to "be liked" in the workplace, a trait not commonly associated with men. Some women admitted that they struggled with this as they learned to make corrections and di-

"Throwing elbows makes you a bitch. If a man does it, it's just considered playing hard."

— Former Ambassador who served in the NSC and DOS

rect people as leaders. As one former ambassador observed: "Women need to get over the embarrassment of being bossy. Make a decision and stand by it. Do not be embarrassed to do it. Guys don't care if people don't like them. Women want to be liked and need to get over that."[57] Many highlighted this as a major problem for women that could impede their ability to move from consensus-building to decision-making, especially in cases where the decisions might be controversial.

> "Good management means taking input from your team, but then you still need to make a decision." — *Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense*[58]

Women also pointed to a double standard with regard to displaying emotion in the workplace. Again, women perceived this trait as a characteristic that reflected badly on credibility and professionalism. Many women pointed to model examples of women leaders who exhibited non-emotional, calm, and professional behavior. In contrast, women in this study cited women leaders who were "overly emotional" as weak and ineffective in their leadership.

The struggle to balance between these gender stereotypes is not necessarily specific to international security or to the government sector. Significant research has been done on this issue, especially in the corporate sector. In one study completed by Catalyst, over 1,000 senior executives were interviewed about leadership styles. The Catalyst study found that women who acted in ways that appeared "feminine" were considered less competent, but those who acted with more "male" qualities were viewed as too tough.[59] Many women interviewed by WIIS categorized women in leadership according to whether they were more "male" or more "female" in approach, some observing that one or the other dominant approach emerges among women in senior ranks of government. Clearly, in the government sector, the struggle for this balance continues to be a major consideration for women who are advancing through the ranks.

Overall, women have experienced both good and bad leadership examples by both men and women throughout their careers. Women, however, seemed to be particularly reflective and perhaps in some cases judgmental about how other women have behaved in decision-making positions. Women were also more sensitive to what they perceived as unsupportive behavior by women who had supervised them. Women cited common approaches of both good and bad leaders. Women learned important lessons through their negative experiences, especially with those in positions of authority who failed to develop and support their staff members' career advancements. In all cases, women highlighted the importance of being valued in the institution and supported in their professional growth and development as leaders.

"Good management means taking input from your team, but then you still need to make a decision."

—Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Promote Leadership Development for Women

➤ Demonstrate a strong commitment at the Cabinet level to creating workplaces that allow talented women to rise in level and responsibility.

➤ Highlight as role models successful female leaders and offices that support women.

➤ Reward women who exhibit excellence in leadership at all levels through promotion and other workplace opportunities.

➤ Identify and promote women to the director level or equivalent in government offices so that they gain important management experience for higher levels. Give mid-level women increasing management responsibilities.

➤ Ensure that each department/agency has a formal policy commitment to gender diversity, that these policies are accompanied by specific objectives and strategies, and that leaders prioritize their full and timely implementation.

➤ Ensure diverse representation, including gender balance, on committees that select candidates for senior-level ranks, such as the Senior Executive Service and the Senior Foreign Service, and positions such as ambassadorships and mid-to-senior level management positions.

➤ Set target numbers of female candidates for senior leadership appointments, and regularly evaluate progress towards those targets.

➤ Encourage women in government to take on active roles in agency affinity groups and outside organizations to gain leadership experience, and consider this experience as a relevant factor when selecting candidates for positions and promotions.

➤ Establish programs that identify and recruit women with demonstrated leadership skills from the private, non-profit, and multilateral sectors into government.

LEARNING LEADERSHIP
Mentoring and Training the Pipeline of Women

Mentoring: The Power of Personal Relationships in Career Advancement

Every woman interviewed for this study, regardless of agency or level, emphasized the importance of mentoring for career success in the federal sector. Successful women pointed to mentors within the system who had supported and advocated for their career progression. Most often these relationships were built on trust and confidence in the mentees' work ethic and capability. Not surprisingly, in the majority of cases, mentors were current or former supervisors or others in senior-level positions who worked with the mentees directly. In almost all cases, women in government considered mentors as those in more senior-level positions. However, in some interviews, women acknowledged that mentoring does not necessarily have to be based on hierarchy. A former Under Secretary of State defined her mentors as peers, bosses, people she trusted, and family members. Women expressed that they could benefit from mentor and mentee relationships at every career stage.

Mentorships and Sponsorship

Women in this study who had experience in the corporate sector[60] made a distinction between the terms "mentors" and "sponsors." Sponsors were defined as influential mentors who not only offer advice, but also advocate on behalf of their mentees, opening the doors to advancement opportunities. Women in the government sector did not necessarily use the same terminology, but did indicate a difference between a mentor who provides some general advice and a mentor who is willing to groom talent, identify opportunities, and advocate strongly with peers and colleagues to open doors for the mentee.

In almost all cases, after women had entered government agencies, they relied on key personal connections and direct recommendations of their mentors or

sponsors to land subsequent positions. Although younger women in this study repeatedly cited the importance of learning from other women's experiences, the more proactive form of sponsoring-mentoring was a vital key to identifying, competing for, and obtaining positions at higher levels in government agencies. One senior-level woman reflected on this, saying that she has utilized her connections to help her staff members find their next positions, stressing the importance of the personal networks of mentors.[61]

This finding also appears to parallel women's experiences in the intelligence sector. In a 2008 study of women in the Senior Intelligence Service, women identified the primary factor for success in the intelligence community as "having an advocate who served as a mentor/sponsor, breaking down barriers and obstacles and providing opportunities for career progression."[62]

> "As a woman, a mentor can help get opportunities for you that you may not be able to get on your own. It gives you the chance to show what you can do." —*Former Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense*[63]

Male and Female Mentoring

Women in this study did not show a preference for female mentoring. In almost all cases, interviewees said that it did not matter whether mentors are male or female. Women at all levels cited men who had been essential supporters throughout their careers. In fact, the majority of women who reached senior-level government leadership positions during the 1980's and 1990's pointed out that their mentors had been men. These women cited the absence of other women in leadership positions as the main reason for this trend, as women were few among the cohort of managers, supervisors, and peers in these agencies. But the same has been true for a younger group of women who have more recently achieved senior-level positions in male-dominated agencies and substantive areas, including the defense, intelligence, and law enforcement sectors. Women in these sectors often found that they were the only women at the table, and that few women were available for support throughout their careers. In other cases, some mid-level women reported that they have specifically sought out male mentors, because they perceive that men more often serve at the senior-levels and are better positioned to assist with career advancement. This finding was particularly highlighted at DHS, which female employees viewed as a male-dominated environment.

Senior-level women in this study have been mentoring both men and women. Although the majority of interviewees reported that they have not focused their mentoring on women exclusively, many expressed that they make a special effort to support other women. In many cases, women described their particular efforts to mentor other women, citing common experiences and challenges that women encounter in the workplace. One woman who served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary

"As a woman, a mentor can help get opportunities for you that you may not be able to get on your own. It gives you the chance to show what you can do."

—Former Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense

at DOS said, "It is important to support the cultivation of women as they move up in jobs."[64] Another senior-level woman from the intelligence sector pointed to the desire to help the next generation of women coming up: "[w]e want to help them miss the potholes we stumbled in."[65] In some cases, women with children cited their experiences in helping other women navigate career paths and decisions in consideration of family demands.

Among younger women, there was no particular consensus across agencies on whether women are more or less supportive of other women. For example, interviewees pointed out that some women in senior ranks are less supportive of women than men on their staffs. Interviewees often attributed this to these women feeling insecure, threatened, and competitive with other women. Junior and mid-level women, as well as incoming senior-level women, expressed that the constant pressures that the previous generations of women leaders experienced may have negatively affected their willingness to mentor their female subordinates. Both retired and current senior-level women acknowledged these problems. Some women who entered government in the 1970s and 1980s described a "tough," "rough," or "pushing hard" approach by those women who did mentor others.[66] Interviewees observed that women overall have improved at mentoring from the previous generations. Some expressed the view that younger generations of women, including those now in senior positions, are more inclined to mentor other women.

In a few cases, however, mid-level women cited a "kiss up, kick down" approach to advancement by female peers. Mid-level women who had been working on high profile portfolios, especially among some in the DOS, highlighted this experience. Interviewees expressed that the approach has often been more noticeable and disappointing when done by women, especially in cases where the "kick down" behavior is directed at other women. As one mid-level woman observed, "Reputation depends on your peers too. A big part of mentoring is knowing that and becoming a mentor to those below you."[67]

In contrast to these negative experiences, women in this study generally emphasized the supportive dynamic among women peers. Women in the Office of the Secretary of Defense described the collegial and supportive atmosphere among women working in the policy area. Interviewees in USAID also spoke of an environment focused on teambuilding where "women try to help other women."[68]

Mentoring Approaches and Lessons for Women's Leadership

Women in this study repeatedly highlighted the role of mentors in exposing them to new responsibilities, directions, and opportunities. The most frequently mentioned assistance that mentors offered women in this sector was an understanding of bureaucratic structures, processes, and players. The ability to navigate the inner workings of government agencies is vital for success in this profession.

"Mentors see something new in you that you don't see in yourself."

— Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense

Mentors recognized the strengths and skills of their employees, and female mentees were given responsibilities that allowed them to build their expertise and reputation. One former ambassador recalled the first paper she wrote as a young Foreign Service officer. Her supervisor/mentor gave her constructive, candid guidance on how to improve and tailor her writing for a government audience, which then enabled her to succeed in this fundamental skill. Another former ambassador gave the example of mentors in the Foreign Service who explained how the system worked, how to operate, and who to know in order to do the job effectively and advance. One former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense observed, "Mentors show you how to get things done and how to deal with adversity."[69] Mentors played an essential role in helping women survive and excel in difficult bureaucratic environments and eventually reach leadership positions themselves.

> "Mentors see something new in you that you don't see in yourself." *—Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense*[70]

Often, mentors took the extra time and effort to encourage their female mentees to take on challenges that they may not otherwise have pursued, and interviewees pointed to the important role of mentoring in building self-confidence. In one particular case, an interviewee described how her mentor encouraged her toward a career opportunity after she had decided to decline. She recalled that this position was helpful for her subsequent career growth, but she would have self-selected out of it without the mentor. Interviewees frequently talked about mentors leading by example and how much they learned from observing effective mentors. In particular, women paid close attention to the examples of women in more senior positions. One woman recalled female ambassadors who she considered as strong role models, highlighting that they were "generous with career opportunities" as mentors.[71]

Formal Mentoring Programs: Unmet Needs

Given the value of mentoring in cultivating women's careers, it is surprising to note that many government agencies have not formally established mentoring programs. The DOS has a formal mentoring program for both Foreign Service and Civil Service employees. Although some women found the matching process for the civil service program to be cumbersome and time consuming, women in this study had a positive view about both the programs and the support offered by the mentors. The Presidential Management Fellowship Program (PMF),[72] one of the most common ways that women in this study entered the federal government, has a formal mentoring program in the agencies where PMF's are placed. Women who participated in the PMF program pointed to the mentoring program as a valuable resource.

Despite the success of the PMF program, this study found that in many of these agencies, there are no structured programs available for those who enter the system through alternative routes. For example, in OSD, non-PMF recruits have no available mentoring program, although there are mentoring programs in other components of DOD, such as in the Defense Intelligence Agency. One woman who had entered OSD by working for a defense contracting company observed, "[t]he PMF world is great, but if you're not in there, you're on your own."[73] USAID has established a mentoring program. Some agencies, such as Department of Energy, have recently launched pilot mentoring programs.

Overwhelmingly, women in this study identified the lack of formal mentoring programs as a major gap in the professional support offered by government agencies. Organizations need to ensure that people are set up for success as they move into more complex positions, and women expressed that the expansion and availability of such mentoring programs would improve the cultivation of emerging women leaders in the government. Without such resources in place, the majority of interviewees have creatively sought out ways to informally build those key mentoring relationships.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Build a Culture of Mentorship Among Women

➤ Ensure that formal mentoring programs are established in all departments and agencies to target the different needs of entry, mid and senior level women. Ensure that every new hire is matched with a mentor, and that there are ongoing mentoring opportunities at each stage of career progression. Encourage both vertical and lateral mentoring at all levels.

➤ Create mentoring opportunities that support the needs of mid-level women by matching them with senior-level women and men who can guide them into leadership roles.

➤ Establish creative mentoring models. For example, coordinate regular fora that allow mid and senior-level women to share wisdom with younger women. Consider a short-term mentoring model which allows a mentee to call upon a mentor for advice on a particular, time-bound problem.

➤ Recognize the vital importance of informal mentoring for women, and support the development of these relationships, especially for mid-level women.

The Emergence of U.S. Government Agency Affinity Groups

A number of affinity groups have emerged within government agencies to support networking, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. Often, employees themselves have established these groups, perhaps in many cases to meet specific needs, such as mentoring, that are not fully provided for institutionally. Not all of these groups focus on women, but mid- to senior-level women in this study highlighted involvement in these groups as a mechanism to gain important leadership skills, increase their visibility within the departments, and advocate for more support for advancement opportunities.

Department of State

EXECUTIVE WOMEN AT STATE (EW@S)

In 2008, this group began as an informal organization at the Department of State that brings senior executive women together to promote, support, and mentor women for senior leadership positions in the State Department. The EW@S steering committee meets regularly with the Office of Civil Rights to review the status of career women executives in the Department of State and to seek fair and equal opportunity. The group sponsors programs in the State Department with guest speakers who discuss topics of an educational nature or which highlight contributions of outstanding women. Women who are at the following levels can join the group:

➤ Foreign Service women with a grade of FS-01 and above

➤ Civil Service women with a grade of GS-15 and above

➤ When Actually Employed (WAEs)[74] or contractors who previously held equivalent rank

➤ Political appointees (equivalent to GS-15 and above)

➤ Guests of any of the above.

Women in this study also mentioned their involvement in the following groups that do not focus exclusively on women but provide opportunities for building the pipeline of young leaders.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SOCIETY (Y-PRO)

The State Department Young Professionals Society (Y-Pro) is an innovative professional and social organization for entry and mid-level employees new to the U.S.

Department of State or USAID. Established in 2003, Y-Pro aims to form a sense of continuity in a dynamic workforce by establishing a long-term network of tomorrow's foreign affairs leaders. The objectives of the group are to facilitate the sharing of information about the work and activities of the Department of State, provide a cohesive and representative voice to the Department's administration on issues that concern members, and link members with other organizations both inside and outside the Department.

Y-Pro has been working with Executive Women at State to establish a subgroup for mid-level career women aspiring to reach the executive level and a second group for entry-level women just starting at the department. Preparations were being made to launch these two new groups in Fall 2009.

Department of Defense

WOMEN IN POLICY GROUP:

Mid-senior level women working in the Office of the Secretary of Defense took the initiative to establish an informal group as a discussion forum, leadership, and networking opportunity for women working in DOD. This group organizes brown bag meetings and speakers, and is planning future mentoring and professional development activities. Although the group is not an official entity of DOD, senior level women have participated in its meetings and have indicated their support for the initiative.

Preparing Emerging Leaders: The Training Gap in Government

Training and leadership opportunities play a crucial role in preparing the next generation of leaders in government. Many other professional sectors have identified investment in professional development and leadership training as a best practice. Individuals interviewed for this study overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of such resources and training opportunities for improvements in the quality of work, behavior, and communication with peers, staff, and superiors. Regardless of agency, however, women felt that the civilian sector fell significantly short of the need and demand for investing into leadership training.

Resources on professional development and leadership training remain unevenly dispersed across federal agencies, and individual employees have found it difficult to gain access and entry to these opportunities. For the most part, employees must take the initiative to research available opportunities and eligibility. Many women in this study, particularly at the State Department, stated that training was not treated as a natural part of their career experience or highly valued.

The funding realities in these agencies have had a direct impact on the availability and development of training programs. When resources become limited, training appears to be one of the first areas to be reduced or eliminated. For example, under Secretary of State Colin Powell's leadership, the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative (DRI) created over 1,000 new Foreign Service hires in the 2001–2004 period with opportunities for training. These positions and resources, however, were absorbed by the surges in Iraq and Afghanistan and surrounding nations. In addition, with staffing shortfalls and funding cuts, employees have been unable to take full advantage of existing training opportunities, as each training assignment would leave that position unstaffed.[75]

Many women in this study pointed out that they have experienced significant pressure not to take time away from the office to pursue training opportunities. For younger women in the civil service, in particular, the ability to participate in these programs has largely been dependent on the support of their supervisors and the specific office culture. The majority of the women included in this study emphasized that training for civilians should occur at an earlier stage in the career progression, as most only receive leadership training once they have already been promoted to a managerial position.[76]

U.S. Government Leadership and Professional Development Training Programs

Participants in this study cited a number of professional development training programs in the federal government. The following is a list of those programs that were mentioned in interviews and discussions for the study, but may not include all available programs.

➤ THE FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE (FSI)

FSI is the Federal Government's primary training institution for officers and support personnel of the U.S. foreign affairs community, preparing American diplomats and other professionals to advance U.S. foreign affairs interests overseas and in Washington. At the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center, the FSI provides more than 450 courses—including some 70 foreign languages—to more than 50,000 enrollees a year from the State Department and more than 40 other government agencies and the military service branches. Webpage: http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/

As the federal government reorganized and revised existing programs and policies in response the Clinton administration's "Reinventing Government" initiative, the Foreign Service Institute introduced distance learning and computer-based training with a new School of Applied Information Technology to meet the growing need for staff trained in this area. It also added new ca-

reer resources and support for federal employees, such as Career Transition Center and a Leadership and Management School to train future policymakers and managers.

➤ SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE (SES) EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

The Senior Executive Service (SES) includes most managerial, supervisory, and policy positions classified above General Schedule (GS) grade 15 or equivalent positions in the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. Federal agencies are required by law (Title 5, U.S. Code, Section 3396) to establish programs for the continuing development of senior executives. The Senior Executive Service is committed to developing leaders in the 21st century. One way to become an SES is to participate in a SES Candidate Development Program (SESCDP). These programs are designed to create pools of qualified candidates for SES positions. All SESCDPs address the five ECQs that embody the leadership skills needed to succeed in the SES.[77] Website: http://www.opm.gov/ses/executive_development/index.asp

➤ DOD CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES[78]

The DOD Civilian Leader Development webpage provides information on the DoD Civilian Leader Development Framework and Continuum, which are the blueprint for the deliberate development of the next generation of civilian leaders throughout the Department. Website: http://www.cpms.osd.mil/lpdd/cldf/Framework_and_Continuum.aspx

➤ NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY (NDU)

The National Defense University is the premier center for Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) and is under the direction of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The University's main campus is on Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, D.C. The Joint Forces Staff College is located in Norfolk, VA. Website: http://www.ndu.edu/index1.cfm

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop the Next Generation of Women Leaders

➤ Develop government wide lessons learned, models, and innovative programs to support women's advancement opportunities. Call upon the private and non-profit sectors to share insights and identify best practices. Compile and circulate best practices among agencies and ensure that they are incorporated into personnel and management policies.

➤ Capitalize on current interest in government service. Expand programs that encourage women and minorities to pursue foreign policy and national security careers and to gain experience in the government. Increase the number of interns and fellows to enable more young women to gain government work experience.

➤ Expand rotation programs within departments, among agencies, and with outside organizations to enable women to build expertise and key relationships. These programs will benefit all government employees.

➤ Encourage participation in activities and groups inside and outside agencies that provide leadership, mentoring, and networking opportunities.

➤ Invest more resources in designing and providing training programs for women at all stages of their careers. Offer leadership and management training for junior women in government, well before they reach SES or take on management/supervisory roles.

➤ Call upon experienced women who have worked in foreign policy/national security positions in government to train other women. Encourage women with military experience to help develop and run leadership training for civilians.

➤ Offer training topics that incorporate issues that women have identified as important, such as building credibility and visibility, developing a leadership style and approach, overcoming gender stereotypes, balancing inclusiveness and decisiveness, building mentoring relationships and strengthening communications skills.

➤ Ensure that managers support their employees taking time away from the office to participate in training programs and that senior leadership understands the value of professional development for women's advancement.

➤ Improve information gathering on women in the government workforce to identify gaps in representation and develop strategies to improve opportunities for women. For example:

- Track recruitment, retention, and promotions of women in government agencies by both professional grade and type of position.
- Document reasons that women leave foreign policy/national security positions and incorporate what is learned into retention efforts.
- Develop evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to analyze progress in increasing women's participation in government positions.

THE LINGERING QUESTION
Is Work-Life Balance Possible for Women Leaders?

The expectations and definitions of work-life balance in national security government positions varied widely among the women who were interviewed for this study. Some women generally defined balance in terms of being able to successfully manage career and family responsibilities, emphasizing their own time management and available alternative work options. Other women defined balance in broader terms, pointing to office culture and acceptance of diversity in backgrounds and lifestyle choices.

Overall, women believed that a trade-off occurs between professional and personal success, and that most individuals have to make choices between the two. Women at all levels reflected a view that work-life balance remains a very personal issue and that there is no one right way to approach it. Many senior-level women said that they had made personal choices to focus on their careers. Among this group, some expressed regret at not having spent more time on family life. Women believed that they face unique challenges when it comes to work-life balance, and that women have additional responsibilities in their personal lives compared with male counterparts. As one former ambassador observed, "Women need to recognize early that it will never be a 50-50 balance with your spouse. It's worth the effort, but it's up to you to figure out how to do it."[79]

Work-Life Challenges and Choices in Leadership Positions

The majority of retired and senior-level women interviewed for this study commonly expressed that they were unable to achieve their definition of work-life balance. Interviewees emphasized that the national security field poses particular challenges for women, in part because of the often-pressing nature of the work. Women who attained senior-level positions in the 1980's and 1990's generally

expressed skepticism that demanding policy jobs could be done while balancing family responsibilities. Some felt that it would have been impossible to be considered for senior-level positions at the Deputy Assistant Secretary level or higher without demonstrating a 24/7 commitment to the job, and remarked that certain policy jobs just cannot be done on a part-time basis. Women cited the incredible hours that are required for some of these positions, particularly at the senior levels.

Other women believed it could be possible to advance to the highest levels of government while balancing a family life, even though they themselves were unable to achieve it. One woman who served at the Under Secretary level believed that her own focus on work-life balance contributed to her ability to do her jobs well. She explained that even when she had served at the Under Secretary level, she was able to manage her schedule to prioritize family responsibilities at designated times. She acknowledged that such positions require a lot of invitations, travel, and meetings, but emphasized the importance of "preserving time for oneself."[80]

Another senior-level woman at DOS commented, "[i]t is hard, but it can be done. A lot depends on the specific demands. Work can be done at home on evenings and weekends."[81] Another woman who served in a top USAID position commented, "[y]ou can have work-life balance. Absolutely." She recognized that "in times of crisis, you definitely have to be on deck," but that others on the team would also step in during those times in the Foreign Service environment. She asserted that a particular individual is not always needed in the office to handle every crisis.[82] In addition, some women emphasized that high-level government positions, particularly political assignments, are for a designated period of time, and that when not serving in those types of positions, women may be able to achieve more balance.[83]

During interviews, women noted that senior-level women leaders were often single, unmarried, divorced, or did not have children. Many women without children who reached senior-level government positions believed that they could not have achieved the same career accomplishments if they had had children. There was a strong perception among some interviewees that women had to choose between career and family in many cases, and prioritizing family had real costs in terms of career progression.

A striking number of senior-level women made choices at one or more points in their careers that valued family and children's priorities over advancement. One woman who served in the National Security Council and other agencies commented that having a child had been a turning point for her, as she could not take promotions that had been offered at that time.[84] Others noted decisions made in favor of rejoining a spouse if overseas, or caring for an elderly parent. In one case, a former ambassador commented that she had been separated from her husband for eight years while overseas, and that she needed to return to Washington to be with her spouse. In another instance, a former ambassador was offered an important position in Africa, but her husband was unable to get his medical clearance, so she turned

it down. Women in this study reflected a sense that these personal considerations often cause women to miss opportunities to develop their careers, or prompt them to leave government service altogether.[85]

Generational Change, New Perspectives, and Institutional Improvements

Women perceived that work-life balance options have improved over the past two decades and that institutional cultures are shifting for the better. In addition, arrangements have become available to gain flexibility in work hours. Equal employment opportunity and family-friendly initiatives seemed to have played a large role in decreasing the stress on managing family time. Specifically, women pointed to part-time, flexible time, telecommuting, and on-site child-care options as crucial benefits. In addition, women referenced the importance of legal changes, such as the Family Medical Leave Act, which enables individuals to leave work without taking sick days to take care of children or dependents who are ill.[86] At all departments in this study, interviewees cited examples of colleagues who benefited from these available arrangements.

Retired women pointed out that part-time options were not available to them when they were employed in these agencies. Women who worked in policy positions during the 1970s and 1980s emphasized that women who had children quickly returned to full time schedules. One interviewee gave the example of a woman who served in the NSC during the 1970s who gave birth on a Friday and returned to work on the following Monday.[87] Some women stated that women feared professional repercussions for taking time off for maternity leave. Others left these positions and in many cases, government service, when they had children, due to the lack of available arrangements. For example, OSD did not allow part-time employment until the late 1980s. Similarly, some women who were appointed to senior levels more recently commented that because the senior-level women ahead of them often left policy jobs when they had children, there exists "no clear path" for charting out arrangements that accommodate family responsibilities.[88]

In contrast to the experiences of previous generations, senior-level women observed that today cutting back on hours or stepping out of highly demanding job environments for a period of time does not necessarily have a negative effect on career advancement. One former senior-level official in OSD spoke of the first woman to take a part-time option in policy and reflected that her choice had not hurt that woman's career at all. In this case, she described the woman having been "three times better than everyone else," which added to her success in that alternative arrangement.[89]

Women who work at the NSC and other agencies pointed out contemporary examples of women taking weeks or months for maternity leave in these highly demanding positions. One interviewee in DOD spoke of a female staff member

who continues to receive offers for promotions, but passes on these offers due to her current family considerations. In spite of these missed opportunities, the interviewee felt certain that the leadership in DOD would promote this woman when she was ready to accept the promotion. She observed that for the younger generation of women, these personal decisions might delay advancement but "probably do not hurt good female employees."[90]

Even with institutional and cultural changes, women with children in particular continue to face huge challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities in both work environments and at home. Many struggle to juggle these responsibilities. Women who recently accepted senior-level positions in agencies, especially those with school-age children, expressed continuing anxiety over work-life balance. The women felt torn between the needs of their children and jobs that require a certain amount of time on-site, in the office. Women in these positions stated that the ongoing challenges of achieving satisfaction both at work and in the home have yet to be solved.

Parental Leave Policy for U.S. Government Employees

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) entitles most Federal employees to take up to a total of 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to care for the following:

➤ the birth of a son or daughter of the employee and the care of such son or daughter;

➤ the placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care;

➤ the care of spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition; or a serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her positions.

The FMLA also allows employees to substitute annual and/or sick leave for any unpaid leave. FMLA leave is in addition to other paid time off available to an employee.[91]

The **Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (H.R. 626)** would entitle federal employees to substitute any available paid leave for any leave without pay available for either the:

➤ birth of a child; or

➤ placement of a child with the employee for either adoption or foster care.

Specifically, it would allow employees to take four weeks of paid leave for the above purposes *and* any accumulated annual or sick leave. The bill was passed in the House of Representatives in June 2009.[92]

The Realities of Striking a Balance: Remaining Institutional and Cultural Challenges

While the government has made progress toward promoting respect for work-life balance, these arrangements have yet to be institutionalized across all the departments. Generally, women must establish a track record of performance within their agencies and leverage their accomplishments and knowledge to "make the case" to supervisors in order to take advantage of available flexible arrangements. One woman in a job share situation[93] observed that the leadership supported her part-time arrangement because they recognized that she was worth keeping on staff. This study found that in several cases, the information and procedures on how to utilize available arrangements were not readily available to women. In addition, women were unable to access information on other employees who were successfully benefiting from these arrangements. Many noted that the creation of such a network would allow information sharing on how to successfully benefit from work-life balance options.

Women in this study also revealed that personnel offices did not always know how to establish the available work-life arrangements. One woman who negotiated a job share in OSD pioneered the arrangement because the personnel office had never done the paperwork before. And while women have creatively sought out ad hoc arrangements, interviewees also highlighted that the lack of a centralized place to find job sharing positions hindered their ability to use the option. Women who are benefiting from job share, part-time, or flexible schedules perceived that the arrangements are precarious and largely dependent on the support of current leadership. Some women expressed concern that individual incoming political appointees often have the option of discontinuing particular arrangements for specific positions.

Some women also pointed out that even with part-time status, in many cases "the expectations remain the same." Therefore, women have worked well beyond their "official" part-time employment to fulfill expectations for the work. According to an SES woman in DOD with part-time experience, "[o]ne of the problems with part-time at the SES level is that you take a pay cut but end up working a lot more than you get paid. But it does give you the ability to say you need to leave at a certain time and not feel as if you are not carrying your own weight."[94]

Part-time positions are critical to retaining women in government service who want to raise children. Yet there are still few meaningful part-time positions, especially in the policy area. Many senior-level women cited this as the primary challenge for retaining female mid-level career officers. With so few attractive part-time positions, many women have been forced to choose between raising their children and continuing with their careers in government. Women look to other related sectors for more flexibility, and many leave for employment in the non-governmental arena, non-profit sector, or in private industry.

As one interviewee observed, "Many women dropped out from the time I was in PMI[95] for family reasons. Women fall out under the pressures."[96] Some women who had moved from government to the corporate or non-profit sectors experienced a stark difference in terms of the flexibility that is available in those sectors. As one woman who is now a vice president in a major consulting firm but previously served in the intelligence community said, "In the U.S. Government, you don't have the flexibility. If you are not in the office and visible, people don't think you are doing your job. The corporate sector is better than government in this regard. You have more flexibility in terms of telecommuting."[97] The drain of these qualified women out of government carries lasting repercussions, as women find it nearly impossible to return to government service later in their careers (unless by political appointment).

One woman emphasized that it is necessary to "create a culture where people feel they have access to federal services and making it clear that those things are not just there on paper."[98]

> "Women are being handed this idea that you could get there early and work through lunch and you'll be able to advance. But in the State Department culture staying late is what matters most. And frankly your children should be in bed by 8 or 9. So it is really difficult." —*Former female ambassador*[99]

Mid- and senior-level women in this study repeatedly cited another major structural problem for work-life balance: the outdated maternity and paternity leave policy. Interviewees revealed that the majority of women in government used their accrued vacation leave and/or unpaid leave period to take time off from work to have their children. This finding was echoed across all the agencies within the scope of this study, and the need for an improved maternity and paternity policy was a key recommendation that emerged repeatedly from the interviews.[100]

There was a sense that work-life balance is no longer exclusively a "women's issue," as more men have also begun trying to achieve a balance with their personal lives. In several government agencies, interviewees pointed out that men were also seeking job shares and part-time arrangements. In their personal lives, senior-level women in this study attributed the contributions of a supportive husband or family structure in helping them achieve success in balancing family needs with work requirements. "Having a supportive spouse was very important," according to one senior-level defense official.[101] "Carving out time to attend to children was difficult but we managed to do it. My husband was also a FSO and was very supportive," said one senior-level DOS Foreign Service Officer.[102]

Yet, women acknowledged that a disproportionate burden continues to fall on women regarding family and child-rearing responsibilities. Many women expressed that despite institutional and societal changes, real change would not occur until men as a whole took the same level of ownership regarding the challenges of work-life balance. As one senior-level career officer in DOD stated,

"The work-life balance issues are not necessarily something that men have to deal with as much as women—some of that is changing as I see with men in my office—but there is still less pressure on men. If the crunch happens, men are still more likely to blow off the family obligations."[103]

Some women described the Foreign Service as a particular working environment that requires total dedication. Women in this study reported that the Foreign Service was structured for men who have stay-at-home wives. Many interviewees highlighted that many women in the Foreign Service (both State and USAID) never married or are divorced. For those who did marry, women stated that they often found it challenging to bring their spouses overseas.

Susan Crais Hovanec, a retired Foreign Service officer, wrote, "[I] am convinced that the need for spouses of Foreign Service personnel to have careers and incomes of their own…is a major factor contributing to the higher resignation rates and early retirements of female officers."[104] Ms. Hovanec, along with many women interviewed by WIIS, observed that this tension disproportionately affected female Foreign Service Officers, as male spouses seemed less willing to follow the career progression of their wives. According to one interviewee at State Department, "Accompany husbands are few and far between."[105]

Another retired former ambassador observed the difficulties with dual career couples, "[i]f you have tandem careers, one person's career always gets sacrificed. Some stayed, others left under the pressure of maintaining everything."[106] Another retired former ambassador who was married to a fellow Foreign Service Officer reflected that State Department did help to arrange tandem arrangements, but most of the work-life balance maneuvering was left to the individuals to figure out.[107] Overall, women who had served in the Foreign Service emphasized that keeping couples together remains an important priority for women's retention.

In some cases, however, Foreign Service officers indicated that overseas posts allowed them to have greater resources and opportunities to tend to their personal and family obligations. Some women with Foreign Service careers felt that it was easier to balance work and family overseas than in Washington due to the built-in expatriate community of support and household and child care help in overseas posts.

Many Foreign Service officers at various levels cited the increase in unaccompanied posts[108] as a major problem for women. Interviewees felt that the prevalence of unaccompanied posts would make it very difficult for the State Department to retain women who have or plan to have families. One former ambassador who had served in the Foreign Service her entire career said that she brought her family to all of her posts, even hardship posts and "it would have been a deal breaker" if she hadn't been allowed to do this.[109]

Of all the agencies surveyed, USAID received the most positive remarks on work-life balance. USAID women cited that the office culture did not emphasize hierarchy nor put excessive demands on individuals to "pay their dues" by staying

lengthy hours in the office. USAID administrators have also supported female staff by increasing the quality of nursing stations, establishing on-site childcare services, and providing flexible arrangements. One senior-level USAID woman stated, "as long as the demands of the work were met, there was no need to spend additional hours in the office."[110] This contrasted with the experiences of women in the other agencies.

Government Work-Life Program Highlights[111]

Workplace Flexibility

➤ Alternative Work Schedules
- Part-Time Work and Job Sharing
- Telework

➤ Leave Programs
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Family

➤ Child Care and Child Care Subsidy Program

➤ Federal Child Care Centers[112]

➤ Elder/Adult Dependent Care

➤ Leave for Family Purposes

Source: http://opm.gov/Employment_and_Benefits/worklife/

For the Civil Service, work-life balance programs are enforced by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, and usually entail such arrangements as telecommuting, flexible time, maternity and paternity leave, and on-site childcare facilities, among other options and resources. Since President Obama has taken office, he has called on employers to provide better options for establishing work-life balance programs.[113]

As referenced earlier in this report, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management has drafted a government-wide strategic plan with four strategic goals to be implemented in 2010-2015. The draft Strategic Plan specifically commits the U.S. Government to "[p]rovide the training, benefits, and work-life balance necessary for Federal employees to succeed, prosper, and advance in their careers."[114]

In addition, a 2008 survey of chief capital offers across federal agencies reported that "ninety percent agree that alternative work schedules are a useful tool to a 'great or very great extent' for attracting and retaining talent, and over half would add telework to that list of especially useful tools."[115]

Balancing From the Top: The Powerful Example of Government Leaders

Many women in this study stated that their direct leadership played the most significant role in setting the tone for whether work-life balance was accepted in their offices. Both male and female leaders who themselves prioritized work-life balance encouraged their staff to do the same. For example, one woman reflected on her time working in the NSC for a supervisor who encouraged her to leave at a reasonable hour whenever possible.[116] On the other hand, interviewees struggled to make these personal choices when office leaders did not prioritize balance in their own lives and expected the staff to work unreasonable hours.

Interviewees looked to women who have recently taken on senior-level policy positions in the government as contributing to a cultural shift toward respect for work-life balance. Many of these new leaders have had previous government experience, and have returned to influential positions after having stepped out for a time to work in think tanks or academia (with more flexibility to be with their families). For example, a woman who previously had a part-time job share arrangement at the SES level was recently appointed to a deputy assistant secretary level. Women have already begun to identify these new leaders as important role models.

Women at all levels expressed hope that having women with school-age children in high profile positions would result in more support for work-life balance in the government. In at least one case, a woman with previous government service who had left to spend more time with her children had accepted a senior-level DOD policy position under the current Administration. She cited Michèle Flournoy, the current Under Secretary for Defense for Policy, as a leading model for achieving professional success with young children at home, as well as a reason for accepting the senior-level DOD position. In fact, with the recent increase in women in leadership roles in OSD, many cited Flournoy as an example of how to maintain a family life with a demanding position. As one female Deputy Assistant Secretary in OSD commented: "Michèle sets a command climate of efficiency. Part of that is forcing yourself to leave and go home. It's about injecting balance in the life cycle."[117] This study found that senior-level women in OSD with children are setting this trend by demonstrating balance in their own schedules.

Younger women expressed optimism about the possibilities for work-life balance in their future careers, though the degree of interest in this area varied as some were facing these decisions more immediately than others. As with the previous generations, this younger cohort of women has made a commitment to prioritize their government service, and many have yet to experience family responsibilities. That said, women are clearly looking to senior-level women to observe how they balance these priorities, to ask for advice, and to see if the increase in women at the senior-levels of government will bring about changes in policy environments.

Work-life balance issues continue to present unique challenges to women who are rising through the ranks of government in international security. Women still remain conflicted about satisfying the needs of both work and family on a daily basis. There is no consensus among women about whether work-life balance is indeed possible in government positions, especially at the senior-levels. There have certainly been both institutional and cultural improvements in the way that work-life balance has been promoted and supported within government agencies, even in the demanding policy arena. With more women with young children and family obligations now assuming leadership positions, it remains to be seen whether these role models will significantly affect the continuing pressures to be visible, present in the office, and working long hours in many of these agencies.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Support Work-life Balance and Keep Women on the Leadership Track

➤ Recognize work-life balance is not just a "women's issue" and that it is relevant for all employees, including those with and without children, and those who are responsible for elder care of family members.

➤ Ensure that formal mechanisms exist to support the increasing demand for flexible work options. For example:

- Institutionalize alternative working arrangements in departments, including flex time and telecommuting.
- Develop a roster of employees who are currently utilizing flex options or have in the past to be available for those who are setting up these arrangements.
- Ensure that all agencies and offices, down to the lowest management level, have information available on how to establish flexible work arrangements, within the U.S. and overseas.
- Specify the availability of part-time or job share options in job postings.
- Respond to demand for part-time positions and job shares for foreign policy/national security portfolios. Develop creative models that provide full coverage for these portfolios but maintain a manageable work schedule for employees.
- Establish a lessons-learned website or blog where employees can compare their experiences with flexible work options, discuss challenges, and share successful strategies.

➤ Recognize and support family needs by providing paid maternity and paternity leave for the full period allowed under the Family Medical Leave Act, and ensure access to childcare facilities on-site or proximate to the workplace.

➤ Establish an office culture that supports work-life balance. Highlight those leaders who set a positive work-life example, and provide opportunities for leaders to share strategies with younger women, especially at the mid-level. Incorporate accountability and incentive mechanisms for managers to support work-life balance needs of all employees.

➤ Recognize the importance of flexible career paths for women. Create mechanisms that allow government employees to leave federal service for a fixed period of time and readily return into the system at an equal or higher level.

➤ Devote adequate resources for agencies to provide flexible work arrangements, and to create work environments that allow women in leadership roles to do their jobs and care for their families.

CONCLUSION

The expansion of the international security field over the past several decades has created new career opportunities in the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government. At the same time, there has been increasing recognition that the U.S. Government benefits from a diverse workforce, including women, at all levels. Recruiting and retaining talent in government service has become even more vital in the face of large numbers of retirements. Yet, information on women's participation in government remains limited in the specific sector of international security, and data and women's perspectives have not previously been systematically analyzed to determine the realities of women's experiences and opportunities in this area.

This study is intended to present an initial picture of women's participation in international security in the U.S. Executive Branch. The findings indicate that progress has been made in the numbers of women who have pursued careers and risen to senior levels in these agencies. Gender-based discrimination, which was pervasive in previous decades, is not the common experience that it once was for women in this sector. Laws, regulations, and policies have not only prohibited discrimination, but have established commitments to increase opportunities for women and other underrepresented groups. More resources and options are available for work-life balance, which has been identified as a key area of concern for women. These institutional improvements reflect wider societal shifts over time in how women and men are viewing working environments and career choices.

Despite these positive achievements, women continue to grapple with challenges to career advancement within this sector. The numbers indicate that women remain well below 50 percent in decision-making positions. Although the overall participation of women in the federal sector has gradually been moving toward 50 percent, the percentages of women in senior level positions average below 30 percent. Women are keenly aware that they remain in the minority in many offices, departments, and sub-fields of international security, and women at all levels feel pressure to prove competence and credibility. Mentoring is a significant factor

that influences advancement opportunities for women, and what matters most for women is not whether mentors are male or female, but whether mentors are willing to truly advocate for their mentees. Influential mentors open doors to new positions and promotions—key steps to attaining leadership roles.

The societal and institutional shifts over time have paved the way for more women taking on decision-making positions in government agencies responsible for international security. But women often have no assistance in developing needed leadership skills, and they often have few positive examples of other leaders to draw upon in formulating their own leadership styles. Women view consensus building, inclusiveness and transparency as key attributes of good leadership and areas where women excel. Women are also very aware of the pitfalls of being either too aggressive or too passive in their leadership approaches.

There is no consensus among women about how to define work-life balance or whether it is possible to achieve it in international security positions in the government, especially at senior levels. However, women do agree that they face unique challenges in balancing the demands of these jobs with family responsibilities, although the gender dimension is beginning to break down as more men are also prioritizing family. Although there are now many more flexible work options and benefits available for federal employees to support work-life balance, there are real disincentives to taking full advantage of these options. Leadership plays a key role in whether women feel that work-life balance considerations are supported. Women are hopeful that those in senior level positions in the current Administration, especially newly appointed women who have children, will set a positive example for work-life balance.

Although many of the challenges identified in this study cannot be solved by institutional changes alone, there is much more the U.S. Government can do to support women's opportunities in this sector. The recommendations in this report highlight some of these areas. Strengthening mentoring programs, expanding the availability and the value that is placed on leadership training, and closing some of the remaining gaps in work-life balance benefits, such as maternity leave, can have a significant impact on the morale and retention of women in these agencies. But perhaps most important is the role of government leaders—both women and men—in recognizing the remaining barriers to women's advancement opportunities and setting positive examples for women in the pipeline to follow in their own paths to leadership.

Organizations like WIIS and government agencies must partner together, as we seek the way ahead for improving women's participation and leadership in international security professions. This report represents a new starting point to reinvigorate the dialogue on examining and solving this critical issue. It is hoped that this study will contribute to understanding and addressing the nuanced and multifaceted challenges that professional women face today.

RECOMMENDATIONS
for Government Leaders and Foreign Policy/National Security Agencies

The following recommendations are based principally on ideas from interviewees and from the key findings that emerged in the course of this study. The purpose of these recommendations is to provide general guidance to U.S. Government actors as they seek to build a talented, dedicated, and diverse workforce in international security.

For positive and lasting improvements in women's participation to be possible, there are four prerequisites:

1. **LEADERSHIP** that values recruitment, retention, and promotion of talented and capable women and takes proactive steps to address the obstacles and expand the professional opportunities for women.

2. **FLEXIBILITY** in workplace arrangements, to retain talented women in government who otherwise move on to new opportunities.

3. **SUPPORT** for the continuing professional development of talented and capable women throughout their careers.

4. **MANDATES AND RESOURCES** for agencies to develop new, creative, and more effective ways to groom future female leaders in government.

WIIS proposes the following:

Promote Leadership Development for Women

➤ Demonstrate a strong commitment at the Cabinet level to creating workplaces that allow talented women to rise in level and responsibility.

➤ Highlight as role models successful female leaders and offices that support women.

➤ Reward women who exhibit excellence in leadership at all levels through promotion and other workplace opportunities.

➤ Identify and promote women to the director level or equivalent in government offices so that they gain important management experience for higher levels. Give mid-level women increasing management responsibilities.

➤ Ensure that each department/agency has a formal policy commitment to gender diversity, that these policies are accompanied by specific objectives and strategies, and that leaders prioritize their full and timely implementation.

➤ Ensure diverse representation, including gender balance, on committees that select candidates for senior-level ranks, such as the Senior Executive Service and the Senior Foreign Service, and positions such as ambassadorships and mid-to-senior level management positions.

➤ Set target numbers of female candidates for senior leadership appointments, and regularly evaluate progress towards those targets.

➤ Encourage women in government to take on active roles in agency affinity groups and outside organizations to gain leadership experience, and consider this experience as a relevant factor when selecting candidates for positions and promotions.

➤ Establish programs that identify and recruit women with demonstrated leadership skills from the private, non-profit, and multilateral sectors into government.

Support Work-life Balance and Keep Women on the Leadership Track

➤ Recognize work-life balance is not just a "women's issue" and that it is relevant for all employees, including those with and without children, and those who are responsible for elder care of family members.

➤ Ensure that formal mechanisms exist to support the increasing demand for flexible work options. For example:

• Institutionalize alternative working arrangements in departments, including flex time and telecommuting.

• Develop a roster of employees who are currently utilizing flex options or have in the past to be available for those who are setting up these arrangements.

• Ensure that all agencies and offices, down to the lowest management level, have information available on how to establish flexible work arrangements, within the U.S. and overseas.

• Specify the availability of part-time or job share options in job postings.

- Respond to demand for part-time positions and job shares for foreign policy/national security portfolios. Develop creative models that provide full coverage for these portfolios but maintain a manageable work schedule for employees.

- Establish a lessons-learned website or blog where employees can compare their experiences with flexible work options, discuss challenges, and share successful strategies.

➤ Recognize and support family needs by providing paid maternity and paternity leave for the full period allowed under the Family Medical Leave Act, and ensure access to childcare facilities on-site or proximate to the workplace.

➤ Establish an office culture that supports work-life balance. Highlight those leaders who set a positive work-life example, and provide opportunities for leaders to share strategies with younger women, especially at the mid-level. Incorporate accountability and incentive mechanisms for managers to support work-life balance needs of all employees.

➤ Recognize the importance of flexible career paths for women. Create mechanisms that allow government employees to leave federal service for a fixed period of time and readily return into the system at an equal or higher level.

➤ Devote adequate resources for agencies to provide flexible work arrangements, and to create work environments that allow women in leadership roles to do their jobs and care for their families.

Build a Culture of Mentorship Among Women

➤ Ensure that formal mentoring programs are established in all departments and agencies that target the different needs of entry, mid and senior level women. Ensure that every new hire is matched with a mentor, and that there are ongoing mentoring opportunities at each stage of career progression. Encourage both vertical and lateral mentoring at all levels.

➤ Create mentoring opportunities that support the needs of mid-level women by matching them with senior-level women and men who can guide them into leadership roles.

➤ Establish creative mentoring models. For example, coordinate regular fora that allow mid and senior level women to share wisdom with younger women. Consider a short-term mentoring model which allows a mentee to call upon a mentor for advice on a particular, time-bound problem.

➤ Recognize the vital importance of informal mentoring for women, and support the development of these relationships, especially for mid-level women.

Develop the Next Generation of Women Leaders

➤ Develop government wide lessons learned, models, and innovative programs to support women's advancement opportunities. Call upon the private and non-profit sectors to share insights and identify best practices. Compile and circulate best practices among agencies and ensure that they are incorporated into personnel and management policies.

➤ Capitalize on current interest in government service. Expand programs that encourage women and minorities to pursue foreign policy and national security careers and to gain experience in the government. Increase the number of interns and fellows to enable more young women to gain government work experience.

➤ Expand rotation programs within departments, among agencies, and with outside organizations to enable women to build expertise and key relationships. These programs will benefit all government employees.

➤ Encourage participation in activities and groups inside and outside agencies that provide leadership, mentoring, and networking opportunities.

➤ Invest more resources in designing and providing training programs for women at all stages of their careers. Offer leadership and management training for junior women in government, well before they reach SES.

➤ Call upon experienced women who have worked in foreign policy/national security positions in government to train other women. Encourage women with military experience to help develop and run leadership training for civilians.

➤ Offer training topics that incorporate issues that women have identified as important, such as building credibility and visibility, developing a leadership style and approach, overcoming gender stereotypes, balancing inclusiveness and decisiveness, building mentoring relationships and strengthening communications skills.

➤ Ensure that managers are accountable for supporting their employees taking time away from the office to participate in training programs and that senior leadership understands the value of professional development for women's advancement.

➤ Improve information gathering on women in the government workforce to identify gaps in representation and develop strategies to improve opportunities for women. For example:

　• Track recruitment, retention, and promotions of women in government agencies by both professional grade and type of position.

- Document reasons that women leave foreign policy/national security positions and incorporate what is learned into retention efforts.

- Develop evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to analyze progress in increasing women's participation in government positions.

ENDNOTES

1   Quote from Paula J. Dobriansky, former Under-Secretary of State for Democracy & Global Affairs, appointed May 1, 2001 by President George W. Bush. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. 1 June 2009.

2   See the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Employment Statistics. Available at: http://www. opm.gov/feddata/demograp/demograp.asp.

3   This percentage reflects statistics on Senior Executive Service demographics from 2006. Safir, Rose, "Moving on Up! Female Career Advancement and the Senior Intelligence Executive Service." p. xi. National Defense Intelligence College, Washington, D.C. May 2008.

4   The Foreign Service restricts employees from taking their families and/or dependents on unaccompanied tours due to the dangers of the assignment environment. While on tour, employees are separated from their families for prolonged periods.

5   Quote from Paula J. Dobriansky, former Under-Secretary of State for Democracy & Global Affairs, appointed May 1, 2001 by President George W. Bush. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. 1 June 2009.

6   16 women currently serve as heads of state of their countries, according to the Council on Women World Leaders, as cited by Catalyst in 2009. For more information, see http://www.catalyst.org/ publication/244/women-in-government.

7   In fall of 2008, WIIS organized a "Plum Book" of individual candidates from our network for consideration for federal sector positions in the new U.S. Presidential Administration. This project is part of WIIS' research and advocacy efforts to increase the opportunities for women to serve in the U.S. government in foreign policy and national security positions. Over 500 individual career profiles were included in the book and passed onto to members of the transition team, White House, and various agencies throughout the federal government.

8   Vogel, Steve. May 1, 2009. "Survey Finds College Students More Interested in Federal Jobs," The Washington Post. Available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/ 2009/04/30/AR2009043003988.html.

9   Price Waterhouse Coopers, Global Human Capital, Gender Advisory Council, "The Leaking Pipeline: Where are our Female Leaders? 79 Women Share their Stories." March 2008. Available at: http://www.pwc.com/en_GX/gx/women-at-pwc/assets/leaking_pipeline.pdf.

10   See Catalyst, http://www.catalyst.org.

11   When the Civil Service Reform Act was enacted in 1978, the federal government established a new chapter for equal employment opportunities for women and minorities, stating, "it is the policy of the United States…to provide… a federal work force reflective of the Nation's diversity…" (PL 95-454, section 3, 2301(b)(1)). Subsequently, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission assumed responsibility for enforcing anti-discrimination laws applicable to the civilian federal workforce, as well as coordinating all federal equal employment opportunity programs. See the EEOC website, available at: http://www.eeoc.gov/abouteeoc/35th/milestones/1978.html.

12   United States Government Accountability Office. "Enhanced Agency Efforts Needed to Improve Diversity as the Senior Corp Turns Over," Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organization, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives. October 15, 2003 Available at: http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04123t.pdf.

13   Senior Executive Service Diversity Assurance Act of 2009: S. 1180, introduced June 4, 2009. Tracking information available at: http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=s111-1180.

14   "Unrealized Vision: Reimagining the Senior Executive Service," Partnership for Public Service, August 2009. Available at http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/publications/viewcontentdetails. php?id=136.

15   Where the Jobs Are," Partnership for Public Service and Careerbuilder.com, 2007. Available at http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/publications/download.php?id=118.

16   "A New Day for Federal Service: Strategic Plan 2010-2015," United States Office of Personnel Management. Available at: http://www.opm.gov/strategicplan/DRAFTStrategicPlan_20090729. pdf.

17   Studies have been conducted by Catalyst, the American Council on Education's American College President Study, and The White House Project. The White House Project 2009 report on benchmarking women's leadership includes data on women in academia, business, entertainment, journalism, law, military, nonprofit, politics, religion, and sports. See http://www.benchmarks. thewhitehouseproject.org.

18   Statistics provided by Executive Women at State (as of October 31, 2008).

19   Statistics provided by Executive Women at State (as of October 31, 2008).

20   Statistics provided by Executive Women at State (as of October 31, 2008).

21   See Women's Research and Education Institute (WREI) Women in the Military Project and The White House Project Report, "Benchmarking Women's Leadership" for research and statistics.

22   "A More Representative Foreign Service: Women," US Diplomacy: An Online Exploration of Diplomatic History and Foreign Affairs. Available at: http://www.usdiplomacy.org/history/service/ representative.php#women.

23   Former U.S. ambassador. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. September 29, 2008.

24   Former U.S. ambassador. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. April 14, 2009.

25   Kubiske, Dan. "The Issue of Gender—Despite Palmer Case, Minority Women Haven't Come a Long Way, Baby," *Foreign Service Journal,* November 1996. Available at: http://www.afsa.org/fsj/ nov/novfocus.cfm.

26   Former Principal Director, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense in the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. May 18, 2009.

27   Ambassador Phyllis E. Oakley. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project. Interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy. Initial Interview date: March 8, 2000. Available at: http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mfdip:@field(DOCID+mfdip2007oak01.

28   Ambassador Teresita C. Schaffer. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project. Interviewed by Thomas Stern. Initial interview date: September 25, 1998 Available at: http://frontiers.loc.gov/service/mss/mssmisc/mfdip/2007%20txt%20files/2007sch01. txt.

29   The Women's Action Organization (WAO) was formed in November 1970 to address some of the long standing inequities in the treatment of women in the State Department and its "sister" Foreign Service agencies: United States Information Agency and the Agency for International Development. For more information, see "Women's Action Organization Oral history interviews, 1974–1977; item description, dates. OH-39, folder #. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass." Available at: http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~sch00983.

30   "A More Representative Foreign Service: Women," US Diplomacy: An Online Exploration of Diplomatic History and Foreign Affairs. Available at: http://www.usdiplomacy.org/history/service/ representative.php#women.

31   Gamarekian, Barbara. "Washington Talk; Women Gain, But Slowly, in the Foreign Service," The New York Times. July 28, 1989. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/1989/07/28/us/washington-talk-women-gain-but-slowly-in-the-foreign-service.html.

32   "A similar sex discrimination class action suit, filed by Carolee Brady Hartman in 1977 against the U.S. Information Agency and the Voice of America, resulted in a settlement in 2000 that paid $532,000 to each of the nearly 1,100 women involved in the case." See http://www.usdiplomacy. org/history/service/representative.php#women.

33   For more information on the CIA Lawsuit, see https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol46no3/article06.html

34   Ambassador Teresita C. Schaffer. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project. Interviewed by Thomas Stern. Initial interview date: September 25, 1998 Available at: http://frontiers.loc.gov/service/mss/mssmisc/mfdip/2007%20txt%20files/2007sch01. txt.

35   For more information, see http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/aahist.html

36   Current senior-level woman at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 14, 2009.

37   Mid-level women focus group at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 9, 2009.

38   Former ambassador who served at the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. August 28, 2008.

39   Senior-level female career foreign service officer at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. November 24, 2008.

40   Mid-level women focus group at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 9, 2009.

41   Current senior-level woman political appointee at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 9, 2009.

42   Senior-level woman who served in a political position at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. 23 June 2009.

43   Reistad-Long, Sara. "Women by the Numbers: Women CEOs are still rare. A woman president still hasn't happened. Women in leadership have come a long way, but they still have a long way to go," *The Wall Street Journal,* November 13, 2008. Available at: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122609053233809313.html.

44   See Catalyst and The White House Project.

45   Current senior-level woman in the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. 14 July 2009.

46   Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. 23 June 2009.

47   Please note that this section focuses on leadership approaches and styles, which we differentiate from specific leadership skill sets, such as strategic thinking, tactical planning, operational management, etc.

48   Retired senior-level woman who served in the National Security Council and the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. April 14, 2009.

49   "Unrealized Vision: Reimagining the Senior Executive Service," Partnership for Public Service, August 2009. Available at: http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/publications/download.php?id=136.

50   Former female ambassador who served in U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 9, 2009.

51   Senior female foreign service officer, Department of State. Submitted answers to interview questionnaire via email. June 30, 2009.

52   Former ambassador who served in the National Security Council and the U.S. Department of State. January 12, 2009.

53   Former senior-level women in U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. October 14, 2008.

54   Woman currently serving at the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary level at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. March 27, 2009.

55   See the 2008 Wall Street Journal article, "Women Leaders by the Numbers" which cited aggressive behavior of women who came up through corporate ranks in the past toward younger women. See also Mary Alice Mason, "How the Snow-Woman Effect Slows Women's Progress" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* Sept. 16, 2009, describing the tension between assertiveness and femininity in university settings.

56   Senior female foreign service officer, Department of State. Submitted answers to interview questionnaire via email. June 30, 2009.

57   Former U.S. Ambassador and Foreign Service Officer. Interviewed by Jennifer Park and Kirsten Lundren. January 5, 2009.

58   Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. June 23, 2009.

59 "Women 'Take Care,' Men 'Take Charge:' Stereotyping of U.S. Business Leaders Exposed," Catalyst, October 2005. Available at: http://www.catalyst.org/publication/94/women-take-care-men-take-charge-stereotyping-of-us-business-leaders-exposed.

60 WIIS interviewed women who had served in government positions previously and subsequently moved into the corporate defense sector.

61 Current senior-level woman in the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. 14 July 2009.

62 Safir, Rose. *Moving On Up! Female Career Advancement and the Senior Executive Intelligence Service.* Xlibris Corporation, October 2008. 39.

63 Former Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Laura Holgate. August 13, 2008.

64 Former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of State. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. July 3, 2008.

65 Senior-level woman from the intelligence sector. Remarks taken from a meeting with Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park on July 8, 2008.

66 Retired Senior-level roundtable discussion with women from intelligence and diplomatic services. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. August 28, 2008.

67 Current mid-level women at the U.S. Department of State focus group. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. August 4, 2009.

68 Senior-level career Foreign Service officer, USAID. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Kirsten Lundgren. December 5, 2008.

69 Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. June 23, 2009.

70 Retired senior-level woman who served on the National Security Council and at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. February 11, 2009.

71 Former U.S. ambassador. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. April 14, 2009.

72 The PMF mentoring program is separate from the mentoring program available for other civil service employees. Interviewees who had utilized the PMF program expressed positive feedback. Feedback on the other program was less positive.

73 Taken from a mid to senior-level focus group at the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. June 24, 2009.

74 "When Actually Employed" refers to a category of retired Foreign Service Officers who are rehired by the Department to fill staffing gaps.

75 Taken from the testimony of the Honorable Thomas D. Boyatt on the Department of State's Human Capital Needs from July 16, 2008. The full testimony is available at: http://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/programs/FAB/Boyatt_Testimony.pdf

76 The Foreign Service has mandatory training at levels beyond the entry level A100 class, through its School of Leadership and Management.

77 See http://www.opm.gov/ses/executive_development/index.asp

78 See also http://www.cpms.osd.mil/lpdd/cldf/Framework_and_Continuum.aspx.

79 Former ambassador and career foreign service officer. Interviewed by Jennifer Park and Kirsten Lundgren. January 4, 2009.

80 Former Under-Secretary of State for Democracy & Global Affairs. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. June 1, 2009.

81 Executive Women at State focus group at the U.S. Department of State. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. 30 June 2009.

82 Former ambassador who served at the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. June 21, 2009.

83 Taken from interviews with senior-level women at the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park.

84 Retired Senior-level roundtable discussion with women from intelligence and diplomatic services. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. August 28, 2008.

85 These responses parallel findings from other studies demonstrating a clear correlation between decisions by women to turn down opportunities or opt out of the workforce based on family considerations. According to a 2006 study, 45 percent of women surveyed left their jobs to spend more time with their children and 24 percent for elder care responsibilities. See the Center for Work-Life Policy, Silvia Ann Hewlett, "Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success" (2006). Available at: http://www.workplaceflexibilitymatters.org/conf/htdocs/sessions/keeping%20talanted%20women%20on%20the%20road%20to%20success.pdf. See also Mary Ann Mason, 'How the "Snow-Woman Effect" Slows Women's Progress, The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 16, 2009. The author writes: "It is usually an accumulation of small and large incidents that marginalize female administrators. I think of this as the "snow-woman effect." The layers of missed opportunities, family obligations, and small and large slights build up over the years, slowing their career progress compared with men."

86 For more information on Family Medical Leave Act, visit http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/html/fmlafac2.asp.

87 Retired senior-level woman who served on the National Security Council and at the U.S. Department of State. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. April 14, 2009.

88 Current senior-level woman at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. August 13, 2008.

89 Retired senior-level woman who served on the National Security Council and at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. February 11, 2009.

90 Senior-level woman at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 14, 2009.

91 For more information on Family Medical Leave Act, visit http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/html/fmlafac2.asp.

92 For more information and legislation tracking on the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act, visit http://www.opencongress.org/bill/111-h626/show.

93 A "job share" arrangement is a form of part-time employment where individuals who mutually desire "part-time" employment are either jointly responsible for one entire position or divide up separate responsibilities of one entire position. For more information, visit OPM's guidebook on job sharing: http://www.opm.gov/Employment_and_Benefits/WorkLife/OfficialDocuments/handbooksguides/PT_Employ_JobSharing/pt08.asp.

94 Taken from interviews with senior-level women at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. August 13, 2008.

95 The Presidential Management Fellowship Program (PMF) was previously called the Presidential Management Internship Program (PMI).

96 Senior-level, political appointee woman at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. March 27, 2009.

97 Former senior-level woman who served at the U.S. Department of Defense, currently in the corporate sector. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 8, 2008.

98 Senior-level woman at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 10, 2009.

99 Senior-level woman at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. February 2, 2009.

100 The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2008 (H.R. 5781) would allow federal employees to substitute any available paid leave for any leave without pay available for either the: (1) birth of a child; or (2) placement of a child with the employee for either adoption or foster care. Makes available for any of the 12 weeks of leave an employee is entitled to for such purposes: (1) four administrative weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the birth or placement involved; and (2) any accumulated annual or sick leave. Authorizes the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to increase the amount of paid parental leave available to up to

eight administrative workweeks, based on the consideration of: (1) the benefits provided to the federal government of offering increased paid parental leave, including enhanced recruitment and retention of employees; (2) the cost to the federal government of increasing the amount of paid parental leave that is available to employees; (3) trends in the private sector and in state and local governments with respect to offering paid parental leave; and (4) the federal government's role as a model employer.

101 Senior-level, political appointee woman at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. March 27, 2009.

102 Executive Women at State focus group. June 30, 2009.

103 Senior-level career foreign service woman at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. August 13, 2008.

104 Hanovec, Susan Crais. "Speaking Out: Where Have All the Senior-Level Women Gone?," *Foreign Service Journal,* June 2008. Available at: http://www.afsa.org/fsj/june08/speakingOut.pdf.

105 Current mid-level women at the U.S. Department of State focus group. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. August 4, 2009.

106 Retired senior-level woman who served at the U.S. Department of State. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. April 14, 2009.

107 Former U.S. ambassador and foreign service officer. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 17, 2009.

108 See Endnote 5 on unaccompanied posts.

109 Former ambassador who served at the U.S. Department of State. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. April 14, 2009.

110 Senior-level woman at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. July 10, 2009.

111 Taken from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website on work-life balance arrangements: http://opm.gov/Employment_and_Benefits/worklife/

112 See Childcare Centers: http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_OVERVIEW&contentId=8355

113 See Workforce article "OPM Work/Life Effort May Have Broader Impact," available at: http://www.workforce.com/section/00/article/26/57/26.php.

114 "A New Day for Federal Service: Strategic Plan 2010-2015," United States Office of Personnel Management. Available at: http://www.opm.gov/strategicplan/DRAFTStrategicPlan_20090729.pdf.

115 "Elevating Our Federal Workforce," Partnership for Public Service and Grant Thornton, 2008. Available at: http://www.grantthornton.com/staticfiles/GTCom/files/Industries/GlobalPublicSector/CHCO%20Survey.pdf.

116 Current senior-level political appointee and former civil servant. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker. August 13, 2009.

117 Senior-level woman at the U.S. Department of Defense. Interviewed by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. May 15, 2009.

ACRONYMS

AFSA	American Foreign Service Association
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOS	U.S. Department of State
DRI	Diplomatic Readiness Initiative
EO	Executive Order
EW@S	Executive Women at State
FMLA	Family and Medical Leave Act
FSI	The Foreign Service Institute
FSO	Foreign Service Officer(s)
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
NSC	National Security Council
OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PMF	Presidential Management Fellowship
SES	Senior Executive Service
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WAE	When Actually Employed
WAO	Women's Action Organization
Y-Pro	State Department Young Professionals Society

RELEVANT LITERATURE

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