

Brenda Oppermann

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A “pracademic” with extensive experience as a practitioner and academic working on conflict, peace, security, and gender equity. Serving as a senior advisor and subject matter expert applying knowledge and skills gained from 30+ years of experience -- including more than seven (7) years in conflict-affected countries -- working with a variety of organizations including the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, USAID, the United Nations, U.S. Institute of Peace, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and assorted NGOs. Specializing in women, peace, and security, stability operations, organizational change, and informal justice with experience working in Africa, Central Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Significant experience with interagency processes, civil-military relations, and bi-lateral and international collaboration.

EXPERIENCE

GameChangers 360, Lee, MA www.gamechangers360.com

Founder/Chief GameChanger Sep 2014 – present: Lead GameChangers 360, a social enterprise dedicated to facilitating organizational, community and personal change by promoting gender equity and diversity of thought. Provide education, training, and research support specializing in women, peace, and security, stabilization, conflict mitigation, civil-military relations, and international development.

U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI

Associate Professor, College of Leadership and Ethics, May 2017 - present: Conduct research and write about leader development and organizational change. Facilitate implementation of DOD’s Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan (SFIP).

U.S. Department of the Navy, Arlington, VA

HQE/Special Advisor Feb 2016 – April 2017: Assisted in operationalizing the U.S. Navy *Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* (2016), focusing on agile learning, organizational change, and leadership.

Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Applied Research Inquiries, various locations

Facilitator (intermittent) Feb 2018 – Feb 2020: Co-facilitate Applied Research Inquiries (educational events utilizing a design thinking approach) sponsored by Special Operations Forces entities focusing on complex issues like Salafist jihadism in West Africa, trafficking in North America, and competing & cooperating with China.

The Bush School of Government and Public Policy, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

Visiting Professor Aug 2016 - Jan 2017: Conducted research on achieving national security objectives through human security. Developed and taught a graduate seminar: Sex and U.S. Defense: Integrating Women and Gender in the Military.

I Corps, U.S. Army, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA and Brisbane, Australia

CFLCC Sr. Gender Advisor May – Jul 2015: Led the integration of UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security into the Australia-U.S. military exercise Talisman Sabre 2015.

USAID Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, Washington, DC and Islamabad, Pakistan

Sr. Gender Advisor Jan – Jul 2015: Supported the Pakistan Mission to fully integrate gender equality and female empowerment considerations into all programs; identify priority gender-related issues and recommend solutions; and liaise with other USAID offices and the larger USG and donor community.

SosaCorp, Fairfax, VA

Civil-Military Expert Aug – Nov 2014: Integrated civilian conflict analysis tools with military planning and campaign doctrine as part of developing a computational model for conflict analysis.

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Engility, Alexandria, VA

Gender Specialist Jun – Sep 2014: Conducted research and analysis and drafted strategies and proposals concerning gender issues.

Land O'Lakes International Development Fund, Shoreview, MN

Research Analyst Apr 2014: Conducted a conflict triggers analysis for Yemen, examining issues that could negatively impact a USAID-funded agricultural project and generate conflict to include: tribal dynamics, external resources, Yemeni migration, women's empowerment and religious fundamentalism.

Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS), Newport, RI

Human Rights and Rule of Law Subject Matter Expert (SME) Apr 2013 – May 2015: Instructed international military members and civil servants on human rights, civ-mil relations and informal justice.

USAID PROMOTE Project, AECOM, Arlington, VA

Gender/Women's Issues Technical Advisor Sep 2012 – Jan 2013: Provided technical expertise and strategic guidance in preparation for AECOM's PROMOTE Project proposal submission.

Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC), Hohenfels, Germany

Scenario Developer Dec 2012: Developed civil affairs scenarios as part of training exercises for NATO units deploying to Afghanistan in support of ISAF.

Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Academic Week, Savannah, GA

Stability Operations and Development SME Oct 2012: Conducted presentations and served as a resident SME concerning the challenges and opportunities in Regional Command-South, Afghanistan and the gendered aspects of agriculture in Afghanistan.

COMISAF Advisory and Assistance Team (CAAT), Kandahar, Afghanistan

Governance/Development Advisor Jan - Jun 2012: Provided advice to COMISAF, operational and tactical commanders and PRTs/DSTs on all matters pertaining to civil affairs, civ-mil operations, stability operations, governance, development and gender and suggested ways to leverage and synchronize military and non-military capabilities in a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment.

Regional Initiatives Group (RIG), Regional Command-South (RC-S), Kandahar, Afghanistan **Stability**

Operations/Development Advisor Nov 2010 – Nov 2011: Provided guidance to the Commanding General and Senior Civilian Representative concerning security, governance, and development issues in the context of COIN/stability operations. Played a leading role in the development of the first Regional Command Gender Strategy in Afghanistan.

US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Ft. Leavenworth, KS

US Army Battle Command Battle Lab (BCBL), Ft. Leavenworth, KS

Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG), Ft. Meade, MD

Interagency SME (intermittent) Sep 2009 – 2012: Served as an Interagency SME at the Joint Advanced Warfare Studies (JAWS) NATO/SHAPE and CGSC ILE exercises; Task Strike/Omni Fusion simulation exercise and a humanitarian exercise for the 82d ABC.

IRIS Center, College Park, MD and Khartoum and Juba, Sudan

Core Team Lead Nov 2009 – May 2010: Responsible for directing all substantive activities related to the UNIFEM-funded Law Review Study conducted in Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The Study examined the degree of compliance of domestic law in each country with CEDAW and the African Protocol. Supervised three Country Team Leaders and conducted the Sudan country study.

International Resources Group (IRG), Washington, DC

Civil-Military Lead Consultant Sep 2009 – Jan 2010: Assisted IRG in developing a strategic vision concerning its stability operations training programs for the military. Supported the 10th Mountain Division in developing the Specialty Skills Initiative, an integrated initiative to create an interagency approach to stability operations within a Division HQ.

USAID Community Stabilization Program (CSP) Assessment, Baghdad, Iraq

Technical Advisor Apr – Jun 2009: Analyzed the effectiveness of CSP as a nonlethal tool for COIN operations with a particular focus on the program's vocational education component. Developed assessment design, analyzed and synthesized data and drafted an assessment report.

Multi National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I), 18th Airborne Corps, Baghdad, Iraq

Pol/Mil/ROL Advisor, Jul – Dec 2008: Analyzed political, military, and legal issues concerning the post-UNSCR/SOFA environment in Iraq. Assisted in developing plans and operations to ensure a continuity of effort vis-à-vis civil ROL capacity building activities. Increased the Corps' situational awareness of non-military civil capacity building organizations and coordinated efforts with them.

American University Center for Global Peace (AU-CGP), Baghdad, Iraq

Legal Advisor, (part-time) Sep 2007 – Apr 2008: Strengthened AU-CGP activities to assist in establishing the Iraq Human Rights Commission (IHRC). Liaised with representatives from DOS, B. USAID, DOD, DOJ, INL, the UN, Government of Iraq, World Bank, EU, and international officials.

Environmental Chemical Corporation (ECC), Baghdad, Iraq

Capacity and Business Development Manager, Feb 2007 – Apr 2008: Established a Capacity Development Program to provide vocational, management, and business skills training to Iraqi workers and sub-contractors involved in infrastructure projects valued at \$1+bil.

U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), Baghdad, Iraq

Chief of Party, Dec 2005 – Feb 2007: Served as USIP's representative to the Government of Iraq, international and local entities, and civilian and military officials of the US government. Managed the USIP Baghdad Office and supervised implementation of programs dealing with conflict mitigation, grants, religious dialogue, education, rule of law, and governance.

US Agency for International Development (USAID) Iraq Reconstruction Office, Washington, DC

Gender Policy Advisor, Aug 2004 – Nov 2005: Designed and implemented a gender strategy that fully integrated gender and women's considerations throughout all USAID sector programs in Iraq. Identified projects that enabled women to become economically self-sufficient, engaged in the democratic process, and ensured gender equality through the legal system and constitutional drafting process.

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatrics AIDS Foundation, Swaziland and South Africa

Program Operations Consultant, May – Jul 2004: Initiated rapid start-up of HIV/AIDS program, e.g., drafted contracts, instituted reporting mechanisms and procured goods and services.

USAID Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI), central and northern Iraq

Gender Initiatives Advisor, Dec 2003 – Jan 2004: Assessed OTI's programs vis-a-vis the needs of Iraqi women. Drafted recommendations concerning the role of women in politics, the economy, legal system, and civil society.

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Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), Springfield, MA

Student Attorney, Jan – May 2004: Served as legal counsel to MCAD clients. Duties included legal research, drafting memorandums and settlement agreements, representing clients at MCAD hearings, and negotiating settlements.

Refugees International, Iraq and Jordan

Advocate, Jul – Aug 2003: Conducted an assessment focusing on humanitarian conditions and political issues concerning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

U.S. District Court, Springfield, MA

Judicial Intern, The Chambers of The Honorable Michael A. Ponsor, Jan – May 2003: Conducted legal research, prepared bench memos and drafted opinions.

International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), Washington, DC

Researcher, Rule of Law (ROL) Program, Summer 2002: As part of a Judicial Independence (JI) “Toolkit,” drafted a working paper on promoting ROL and JI through coalition building. Developed gender and minority (anti-discrimination) diagnostic tools concerning enforcement, transparency, and creating an enabling environment.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Gnjilane, Kosovo *Democratization/Minority Affairs Officer*, Jan 2000 – May 2001: Provided capacity-building training and assistance to local women’s NGOs and minority NGOs (Serbs and Roma). Implemented programs to strengthen civil society. Established the first multi-ethnic women’s network in Gnjilane Region. Collaborated with UNIFEM, UNDP, the UN Office of Gender Affairs and local women’s NGOs to develop the Kosovo Action Plan for the Advancement of Women.

IFES, Baku, Azerbaijan

Voter Information Consultant, Sep – Nov 1999: Designed and implemented the voter information/civic education campaign for the first-ever municipal elections in Azerbaijan. Produced TV public service announcements, articles, pamphlets and posters and coordinated media events.

UN World Food Programme (WFP), Khartoum, Sudan

Project Officer, Food for Work (FFW) Program & Emergency Operations Project, Oct 1998 – Apr 1999: Managed programs on reservoir building and emergency assistance for flood-affected populations. Coordinated the first-ever FFW Conference to include female beneficiaries. Conducted field missions and appraised prospects for future projects. Oversaw two budgets totaling \$4.9 million.

International Organization for Migration (IOM), Vienna, Austria

Deputy Coordinator, OSCE Out-of-Country (Refugee) Voting Program, Apr – Sep 1998: Managed head and field office operations (200+ staff) for the by-mail elections program for Bosnian refugees. Duties included program start-up activities and serving as liaison to host-country gov’t officials.

OSCE, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Director, Out-of-Country (Refugee) Voting Program, Sep 1996 - Jan 1998: Developed and implemented policy and procedures for elections and civic education programs for Bosnian refugees (1.2 million refugees in approx. 60 countries). Drafted legislation to secure refugees’ voting rights. Oversaw \$6+ million budget and supervised four country offices. Monitored refugee migration.

Coordination Officer, Office of Resolution, Jun - Sep 1996: Established and managed the Office of Resolution that processed all appeals related to the Bosnia Herzegovina electoral processes.

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Management Consultant, 1992 - 1996: Designed and managed projects dealing with marketing, economic development, labor rights and fundraising for the following:

Association for Women in Development (AWID), Washington, DC

Global Woman (NGO promoting economic development for women), Washington, DC

Office of Development Studies, UNDP, NY, NY **International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF)**, Washington, DC

National Health Law Program (NHeLP), Washington, DC **Procter & Gamble Corporation**, Cincinnati, OH

Joint Allied Refugee Operations Center (JAROC), Berlin, Germany, 1986 - 1989 *Investigator*: Screened East Bloc refugees for NATO-member organizations. Wrote reports on economic, political, military, and social issues in East Germany.

EDUCATION

Western New England University School of Law, Springfield, Massachusetts

Juris Doctor, May 2004

Awards: Merit Scholarship 2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004 Alumni Scholarship 2003-2004

CALI Award for Excellence in International Law

CALI Award for Excellence in International Women's Rights Law National Association of Women Lawyers Award

Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

Master of Arts in International Relations, 1994 Concentration: Economic Development

Awards: Mensa Scholarship 1992-1993, 1993-1994

American Institute for Economic Research Fellowship Foreign Language and Areas Studies (FLAS) Fellowship

Hochschild Fellowship (African Studies)

Coca-Cola World Fund Fellowship

Yale African Studies Department Research Grant

University of California, Irvine, Irvine, California Bachelor of Arts in Comparative Literature, 1985

FELLOWSHIPS

Applied Research Centre in Human Security (ARCHS), Coventry University, UK, Spring 2007

Research Fellow: Conducted research concerning the role of US infrastructure companies working in Iraq and how they can more effectively contribute to stabilization efforts.

Yale University, New Haven, CT (based in Gaborone, Botswana), Summer 1993

Coca-Cola World Fund Fellow: Conducted independent research concerning the economic, legal and cultural obstacles confronting female entrepreneurs in Botswana.

American Institute for Economic Research, Great Barrington, MA, Summer 1992

Student Economics Fellow: Conducted research on assorted topics including business cycles, inflation and monetary economics.

PUBLICATIONS

"Enhancing US Global Competitiveness through Women, Peace, and Security," *Parameters* 53, no. 1 (2023), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.3202.

<https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol53/iss1/9/>

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Brenda Oppermann and Valerie Hudson, “Anticipating Instability: The Untapped Potential of Women, Peace, and Security,” the Council on Foreign Relations, June 18, 2021

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/anticipating-instability-untapped-potential-women-peace-and-security>

Brenda Oppermann and William Nault (2021), "Transformational Leadership in the Navy—Cultivating a Learning-Organization Culture," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 74: No. 1, Article 10.

“Women and Gender in the U.S Military: A Slow Process of Integration.” *Women and Gender Perspectives in the Military*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019. 113-140.

“U.S. Defense: The question of women’s roles in conflict,” Open Democracy, February 15, 2016

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/brenda-oppermann/us-defense-womens-roles-in-conflict>

“Defense Seeks to Double Efforts to End Global Conflict,” Small Wars Journal, November 12, 2015

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/defense-seeks-to-double-efforts-to-end-global-conflict>

“DoD Finally Gets the Point of Women, Peace, and Security”, Small Wars Journal, November 13, 2015

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/dod-finally-gets-the-point-of-women-peace-and-security>

Yemen Conflict Trigger Analysis, for USAID Competitive Agriculture Systems for High Value Crops (CASH) program, April 2014.

“Hawks, Doves and Canaries: Women and Conflict,” Small Wars Journal, August 13, 2014.

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/hawks-doves-and-canaries-women-and-conflict>

Aligning Women, Peace and Security with Military Doctrine, Women in War Conference, June 2014.

www.womeninwar.org

Evaluation of USAID’s Community Stabilization Program (CSP) in Iraq: Effectiveness of the CSP Model as a Non-Lethal Tool for Counterinsurgency, for the USAID Iraq Mission, June 2009 (co- author).

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACN461.pdf

“The Impact of Legal Pluralism on Women’s Status: An Examination of Marriage Laws in Egypt, South Africa and the United States,” *Hastings Women’s Law Journal*, Vol. 17, Number 1, Winter 2006.

Promoting Equity through Retroactive Lawmaking: Applying U.S. Notions of Retroactivity in South Africa, for the Women’s Legal Centre, Cape Town, South Africa

In Limbo at the Iraq-Jordan Border: Refugees In No-Man’s Land, for Refugees International,

www.refugeesinternational.org

The Challenges of Finding Long-Term Solutions for Refugees in Central Iraq, for Refugees International,

www.refugeesinternational.org

The Many Causes of Internal Displacement in Central and Northern Iraq: Consequences and Recommendations, for Refugees International, www.refugeesinternational.org

Promoting the Rule of Law and Judicial Independence through Coalition Building, for the International Foundation for Election Systems, www.ifes.org

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External Voting: The Experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico, www.ife.org.mx/wwwcai/sembosn.htm

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

First Resident Course, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA 2023

Guest lecturer discussing “Women, Peace, and Security: Increasing Mission Effectiveness, Mitigating Risk, and Competing Globally.”

Reynolds Scholars Program (formerly WPS Scholars Program), Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA 2023

Guest lecturer discussing “Enhancing US Global Competitiveness through Women, Peace, and Security.”

The 7th Annual Civilian-Military Humanitarian Coordination Research Symposium, The Watson Institute, Brown University and US Naval War College 2023

Keynote Panelist discussing “Humanitarian Access and Response Planning Considerations During the Era of Strategic Competition.”

Women, Peace, and Security Workshop, Inter-American Defense College, Washington, DC 2023

Panelist discussing “Setting Conditions to Advance the Operationalization and Institutionalization of WPS.”

WPS Scholars Program, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA 2022

Guest lecturer discussing “Hawks, Doves, and Canaries: Women and Conflict.”

The Next Frontier of Peacekeeping Conference, Yale University, 2018

Panelist discussing “Peacekeeping beyond the UN.”

National Security Fellows program at the JFK School of Government, Harvard University, 2018

Guest lecturer discussing “Leader Development in the Navy.”

US Army Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC) Unified Quest, US Army War College, 2016

SME participating in the Future Force (2025-2050) Human Performance Working Group

Women and Security Event, Elliot School, George Washington University, 2015

Panelist discussing “The Experience of the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division in Kandahar, Afghanistan.”

West Point Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations (CSCMO), 2014

Guest lecturer discussing, “The Diversity of Civil-Military Operations.”

Women in War, *The Place of Women in War 1914-2014 Conference*, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina 2014

Panelist discussing, “Aligning Women, Peace, and Security with Military Doctrine.”

University of Tennessee Law School, Knoxville, TN 2014

Guest lecturer discussing, “Customary Law in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

US Naval War College *Women, Peace and Security Conference*, Newport, RI 2013

Panelist discussing, “Hawks, Doves and Canaries: Women and Conflict.”

George Mason University Stability Operation Program, Arlington, VA 2012

Guest lecturer discussing, “Customary Law: A Problem to Be Solved or a Resource to Be Utilized?”

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US Naval War College *Women, Peace and Security Conference*, Newport, RI 2012
Panelist discussing, “Customary Law and Women, Peace and Security.”

Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA 2012
Guest lecturer discussing, “The Promises, Challenges, and Implications of Implementing the US National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan.”

National Defense University, Washington, DC 2011
Panelist discussing, “Gender and Stability Operations.”

US Army 10th Mountain Division *Stability Operations Seminar*, Ft. Drum, NY 2010
Panelist discussing, “The Importance of Tactics in Stability Operations.”

US Army CGSC, *Interagency Panel*, Ft. Leavenworth, KS 2009
Panelist discussing, “The Operational and Tactical Aspects of Interagency Processes.”

UN Electoral Assistance Division, *Women and Elections Handbook Launch*, New York, NY 2005 Panelist discussing, “Women’s Participation in Local Government.”

Harvard Journal of Law and Gender “*Women in War*” Conference, Cambridge, MA 2005 Panelist discussing, “Women’s Rights in Iraq.”

American University Washington College of Law, Washington, DC 2005
Guest speaker discussing, “The Importance of Gender Integration in Post-Conflict Situations”

NATO High Visibility Event: Gender Awareness in the Security and Defense Field, University of San Diego, 2017
Panelist discussing “Doing Gender Better: Evidence-based Training.”

USAID Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management and Office of Women in Development, Washington, DC 2005
Commentator on “Gender, Security and Conflict” presentation

Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, MA 2005
Guest lecturer discussing, “Improving the Status of Women in Developing Countries.”

49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, NY 2005
Advisor for USAID Iraq Office of Reconstruction

International Judicial Conference, Washington, DC, 2003
Legal Advisor for Conference co-sponsor International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES)

Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico, External Voting Seminar, Mexico City, Mexico 1998 Panelist presenting paper entitled, “External Voting: The Experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina”

Fourth UN World Conference on Women NGO Forum, Beijing/Huariou, China 1995
Workshop Facilitator presenting “Women and Development Organizations” for the Society for International Development/Women in Development (SID/WID)

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TRAINING

Introduction to Design Thinking, USSOCOM Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) *InsideNGO* Training of Trainers (ToT)

Gender 101: Gender Equality at USAID

NATO-accredited Gender Field Advisor Course

Inclusive Security ToT for Women Waging Peace/*Inclusive Security* Curriculum

Iraq Diplomatic Security Anti-Terrorism Course (DSAC)

Project Management Workshop (abbreviated USAID Contracts Technical Officer (CTO) training)

LANGUAGES

German (fluent), French (survival), Arabic (beginner: read, write, and speak limited Arabic)