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**Citation:**

FARR, Vanessa (2024). UN Peacekeeping Operations as Sites of Caregiving? Notes for a Feminist Approach to the 'Summit of the Future'. Peace Prints: South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding, 10 (1): 8. [Article]

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# UN Peacekeeping Operations as Sites of Caregiving? Notes for a Feminist Approach to the 'Summit of the Future'

Vanessa Farr

## Abstract

The 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future offers an opportunity for peace feminists to influence the reform of peacekeeping operations. To take full advantage of this moment, the women, peace and security agenda could be expanded by incorporating the ideas of activists who work on care and caregiving. This will revitalize the intention of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) to overcome the negative impacts of exclusionary peace-making, and transforming peacekeeping operations into sites in which insecurity is answered with care and caregiving rather than militancy and machismo. Drawing from evidence that a peacekeeper's personal commitment to democratic values strengthens peacekeeping operations, this paper proposes that Indian feminists, as members of a troop-contributing country, should amplify their experiences of domesticating SCR1325 and contributing to India's own demilitarization, to strengthen India's official position at the UN as a champion of WPS and invigorate feminist efforts to transform peacekeeping into a praxis of care.

## Author Profile

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# UN Peacekeeping Operations as Sites of Caregiving? Notes for a Feminist Approach to the 'Summit of the Future'

**Vanessa Farr**

## Prologue

The world is "at a moment of acute global peril" (UNP4F 2024, 1), admit the co-authors of the United Nations Pact for the Future Zero draft. Presented in late January 2024 in preparation for the UN's Summit of the Future, a global high-level meeting planned for September 2024, the draft offers Member States initial language on how "to forge a new international consensus on how we deliver a better present and safeguard the future," (UNP4F 2024, 1) including through reform of the UN's intergovernmental organs and its peacekeeping operations (PKOs).[1] While noting that reforming the Security Council is an essential task of the Summit, the draft's authors are silent about what that could look like, promising, by June 2024, initial language on this contentious issue. Reiterating a commitment to the human rights agenda, in which it includes the empowerment and full inclusion of women and girls in all reform efforts, the Zero draft refers to the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS), which was set in motion through the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000):

> *"We reaffirm our collective commitments under the women and peace and security agenda, and we recognize the necessity of urgently advancing its implementation. We also recognize that without the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decisions on peace and security, and the realization of women's rights in their indivisible entirety, peace cannot be achieved and sustained"* (UNP4F 2024, 9).

This language is, of course, familiar to peace feminists; but if it is an honest invitation for women to participate fully in peace and security decision-making, then what directions should this work take, especially in organizing our ideas about PKO reform and the emphasis in UN peace operations on "non-military approaches to advance peace" (UNP4F 2024, 11)?

[1] See the website of the Summit of the Future, https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future.

**Directions for the WPS Agenda**

In organizing our ideas about rethinking peace and security and PKO reform, an initial key task is to ask, as the feminist theorist of somatics[2], Staci K. Haines does: "how do we think, act and relate from what we most care about, including in the most challenging of circumstances, rather than reacting from what is familiar and accepted?" (Haines 2020, n.p.). This paper aims to overcome a silo between two strands of feminist thinking: that focused on advancing WPS work, and that of activists to advance a feminist ethics of care. Drawing from both personal experience of the author in PKOs and secondary literature, this paper explores whether WPS feminists might influence the Summit to reconsider PKOs—through a "reformulation of security" (Nixon 2011, 131) and a reorientation of our ideas about what it means "to be secure in space and time" (Nixon 2011, 130)—as sites in which insecurity is answered with care and caregiving rather than militancy and machismo.

PKOs have long been sites of struggle for gender equality (Valasek 2012), not least because they are imbued with and rely on invisible rules and relationships between paid and unpaid, valued and unvalued work, as performed by differentially remunerated and respected male and female peacekeepers deployed from Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). Feminist commentaries on the stereotypes that undermine PKO success pivot around the fact that men are "highly overrepresented" and dominate valuable roles as actors and decision-makers, while the few women personnel are sidelined "as especially fit to be caring, non-violent security providers" (Valasek 2012, 309, 312). To address this imbalance, raising the military profile of women personnel has been emphasized. This not only goes directly contrary to the vision of SCR1325 but has become a limitation on the global agenda for peace, as veteran feminist activist Cynthia Cockburn lamented a decade after its passage (Cockburn 2011, 1).

Heading into the Summit, peace feminists, especially from the global south, should re-evaluate progress made towards overcoming key contradictions in what PKOs are intended to offer to war-stressed civilians, and how they play out once implemented. The reality is that feminists have been unable to control how WPS gets translated on the ground. This is despite some successes, such as placing more women security personnel in post-conflict contexts (Valasek 2012); SCR1325 being invoked in PKO mandates; and fifteen years of efforts to reform PKOs that have included pre-deployment training programs to tackle PKO personnel's inbuilt misogyny. Are these sufficient to argue that the WPS agenda has contributed to changing negative behaviors and structures? Overall, WPS has not measurably altered the domination-based institutional design of PKOs (Eisler and Fry 2019). Instead, many of the initial proposals of the WPS agenda have been eroded and distorted

[2] Somatics "is a mind/body methodology that supports deep personal change, trauma healing, and embodying new practices for individuals and groups." It recognizes that "justice and injustice are lodged deep inside our bodies, thinking and habits, so engaging that mind-body connection is crucial to realizing the future that we want" (Haines 2020).

to make them amenable to military objectives. This is not only "an enraging example of how good feminist work can be manipulated by a patriarchal and militarist institution" (Cockburn 2011, 9) but a sobering reminder of how hard it is to operationally insert new ideas or practices into an inert and exclusionary institution designed by and for "the ruling elite" (Anderlini 2007, 3).

How, then, do we approach the Summit of the Future's aim of reforming "the intergovernmental organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, so that they can deliver on their mandates in a changing world"? How do we expand these mandates further to "protect the priceless land" and ecosystems on which human life depends (Maathai cited in Nixon 2011, 131)? How do we play our part in making the Summit fit "to address the peace and security implications of climate change in the mandates of peace operations and during discussions on other country or regional situations on its agenda," as laid out in the Pact for the Future Zero Draft, which lays out the objectives of the Summit (UNP4F 2024, 4, 10, 16)? I propose that emerging feminist discussions of "the practices of care that recognize the complexity of human interactions [and that] also enhance our ability to reimagine and participate more fully in democratic processes at all levels of society" (Care Collective 30), offer important rubrics for WPS feminists to follow as we address these questions.

**Problematic PKO Personnel**

Feminist human rights analysts have wrestled with the challenge that PKOs tend to prioritize militarism while overlooking and devaluing the importance of caregiving. Indeed, in the history of peacekeeping, their contribution to building lasting peace is decidedly uneven, and there are striking examples of how they let vulnerable people down. Examples include peacekeepers failing to protect civilians in distress in the Democratic Republic of Congo (HRW 2014). Peacekeepers ran away and hid in barracks when their protection was most needed in Juba, South Sudan (CIVIC 2016); and they seem helpless to prevent the organized environmental crime that funds much of the illicit economy in African warzones that are rich in minerals required for capitalist enterprises (Caparini 2022). In late 2023, more than a hundred civilians were killed or wounded during protests against MONUSCO (UN PKO in DRC) which has done little to protect civilians from decades of militia attacks. Four peacekeepers (including two Indian peacekeepers) were also among those killed (*Al Jazeera* 2023).

It is especially hard to argue for the value of PKO when peacekeepers sent into situations that are known to be complex, volatile and dangerous are reported to have taken advantage of, and even enacted further violence on the vulnerable populations they are sent to support (Nakaya 2012; Westendorf 2020). They have proven particularly ill-suited to safeguarding women and girls, as is discussed in several feminist critiques (Duncanson and Farr 2019; Razack 2004; Westendorf 2020). Evidence collected by feminists indicates that over decades, wherever well-paid peacekeepers were deployed, immiserated women and girls were exploited by their brutalizing

economies. PKOs in Cambodia and Timor-Leste in the late 1990s, whose purpose was to support "the security of the local population," were undermined by the on-the-ground "conduct of peacekeepers… [who] largely discredited the legitimacy of the operations in the eyes of the local populations because of the association of the mission with the proliferation of sexual exploitation of local women and children" (Nakaya 2012, 98-99). In Haiti, too, PKOs harbored perpetrators of sexual violence and related war crimes, including abusers of very young children (Razack 2004 and 2013; Chinkin and Rees 2016). In addition to attacks on women and girls, peacekeepers are known to have spread the "slow violence" (Nixon 2011) of HIV and AIDS;[3] and they have fathered and abandoned uncounted numbers of so-called peacekeeper babies. Overwhelmingly, these children are not perceived as belonging or rooted in their community (Wagner 2022), making PKOs a vector of longitudinal and intergenerational suffering (De Coning et al 2007; Simić and O'Brien 2014).

Even after 2002, when the early impetus of the WPS agenda led the UN to develop "clear, coherent policies that could guide or regulate staff interactions with local populations" (Nakaya 2012, 107), relief offered to those who are most vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) has been found to be inadequate. Perhaps this is because official reactions to reports of abuse are marked more often by hand-wringing and injunctions against such violence than measurable punishment for perpetrators (Westendorf 2020), or indeed, reparations for survivors.

A strong strand of feminist and anti-racist analysis has come to regard PKOs with ambiguity and even as an inappropriate measure through which to support humanitarian post-war efforts. Some critics look upon PKOs as a mechanism to maintain and expand the "contemporary and ongoing domination" that is structured into patriarchal coloniality (Roche 2021). Sherene Razack has strongly and consistently made this point, starting with her critique of Canadian peacekeepers' "contempt for the rule of law" in Somalia in the 1990s, where they behaved with "legally authorized lawlessness" (Razack 2013, 370) in a mission she regards as amounting to a form of military occupation (Razack 2013).

## Bringing in Perspectives of Care

What are WPS feminists to do in the face of this history, as we continue to make feminist meaning of the oft-repeated institutional promise, faithfully repeated in the "Pact for the Future" Zero draft, to advance women's "full, equal and meaningful participation…in decisions on peace and security" (UNP4F 2024, 9)? Instead of being derailed by what militarists think SCR1325 calls for (Cockburn 2011), I propose taking fresh hope from feminist endeavors that have continued, far

[3] Paragraph 6 of UNSCR1325, which focuses on peacekeeping, calls for strong efforts for pre-deployment training of military, police and civilian personnel to raise awareness of, and control, the spread of HIV and AIDS, but does not make a specific call for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) against anyone, military or civilian, associated with PKOs. A zero-tolerance policy on SEA was only passed in 2018.

away from the UN, to explore the possibilities of "precarity as activism" (Butler 2015, x), especially the post-Covid-19 emphasis on care and caregiving as crucial sites of feminist political work (Fraser 2019; The Care Collective 2020; Spade 2020). While there is little overlap at present between feminist work on care and caregiving, and feminist work on WPS, feminists could take forward the non-military emphasis of the Pact for the Future Zero draft by imagining how to ensure PKOs are conciliatory initiatives, as envisioned in its invocation of "non-military approaches to advance peace and to avoid over-securitization and civilian harm" (UNP4F 2024,11). This articulation invites thinking about deploying personnel with capacities to act as vectors of connection and care, whose presence creates the "conditions that allow deep healing" after the horror of war (Raffo 2022, 27).

It is undoubtedly a difficult task to reimagine peacekeepers as non-military personnel, but a conversation along these lines might be achievable if feminists in troop-contributing countries (TCCs) use the occasion of the Summit to differently engage with the security sector at home, claim places of social transformation within these highly masculine entities, and explore possibilities to render them capable of making both an internal/national, and an outward-facing peacebuilding contribution without any privileging of normative associations with the military. This idea is not as far-fetched as it may initially seem. The grounding intention of feminists who argued for SCR1325 was to create the conditions for a different kind of peacemaking to emerge. At this critical juncture, feminists should hold fast to that ideal, remembering "the brave and persistent efforts of women from many countries [and the] co-operation between women very differently positioned in relation to structures of power, and differently located in relation to wars" (Cockburn 2011, 1) that led to the initial feminist breach of the androcentric UNSC in 2000.

**Indian Peace Feminists and Summit of the Future**

It is to India that I now turn my attention, as both a post-colonial nation still struggling with elements of unsettled state formation that political elites have exploited to justify internal militarism, and a significant TCC whose government presents a global profile as a champion of the WPS agenda. For these reasons, I argue that India's peace feminists have the responsibility, and should grasp the possibility to be active during preparations for the Summit of the Future.

A stronger presence in the UN's global peacebuilding efforts has long been a priority for the nation's political leaders. Since 1994, India has repeatedly called for a permanent seat if the UNSC is reformed (Mishra 2006). Successive regimes have claimed the country's growing demographic and economic power, its military capacities and knowledge of the operational side of UN PKOs, as grounds for elevating its position in international decision-making (Mishra 2006; Klossek and Johansson-Nogués 2021). Since SCR1325 was passed, India's official statements in the annual Open Debates on WPS have claimed the country as a champion, including promoting the early deployment to Liberia of a cohort of women police and troops (2007-2011) as a world-leading

advancement towards women's fuller and more effective participation in preventing and responding to armed conflicts (Khullar 2020; Klossek and Johansson-Nogués 2021; Valasek 2012).[4]

Yet many Indian feminist peace activists tell a more complicated story. Among them, Soumita Basu (2016) critiques the WPS agenda for its thinly-veiled imperialism and Rita Manchanda (2005) reports on how officials instrumentalize women's peacemaking efforts when it suits them. Vandana Shiva (1993, 2020), an eco-feminist, challenges India's official self-presentation as a feminist champion and reads the country as being forced into a process of self-betrayal during which "all associations of strength with the feminine and with diversity" are being eliminated so that power can be redefined "in forms of militarized masculine identity" to build "a politics of exclusion and violence" (Shiva 1993/2020, 111).

The increasingly aggressive hyper-masculine cultural embodiment of India criticized by peace feminists is increasingly militarizing its armed police services (Kapur 2017), turning them into paramilitary forces that are deployed in the central and border states in the North and Northeast that are officially designated as 'disturbed areas' (Khullar 2020). For decades, women's lives in places like Jammu and Kashmir (HRW 1993), and Manipur (Chakravarti 2010) have been affected by processes of militarism, including in the form of brutal sexual attacks. Such violations have often been overlooked or partially addressed by local machineries of state security, except when the severity of the violence and the size of women's protests forced national leaders to respond, even if not to deliver protective action or justice for victims (HRW 2023).

It is difficult to square these realities with India's position on WPS at the UN, especially its official proclamations each year at the UNSC's WPS debate. Indian peace feminists consistently argue that SCR1325 has internal relevance and should be applied with equal diligence domestically as in India's foreign contributions. Yet, notwithstanding years of domestic feminist activism, no 1325 National Action Plan (NAP) has been prepared (Rajagopalan and Hans 2016; Manchanda 2005). Consequently, no progress has been made on detailing timelines, budgets or work plans to advance WPS commitments at home (Basu 2016; Rajagopalan and Hans 2016). Peace feminists argue that this failure to domesticate the WPS Agenda undermines India's self-presentation as a state that champions and is experienced in promoting women's advancement towards equality with men in peace and security decision-making. It also does not keep pace with realities on the ground: since 2020, India has recruited women officers into the military police, deploying them into the infantry, except the mechanized infantry and armored corps, a shift which may lead to their greater availability in higher ranks in future UN PKOs. It bears repeating that this is not the intention of SCR1325, and there remains a risk that crucial activities such as the protection of women and minors may continue to be regarded as unimportant care-giving work, and be relegated to women as a peripheral activity (Khullar 2020), a minor contribution to be carried out by "the effeminate

[4] Statements related to SCR1325 are archived at http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1325.

and weak" (Shiva 2020, 2011). Thus India, while continuing to be an innovator on WPS, including in forming its Female Engagement Platoon in the MONUSCO mission (attached to the Indian Rapid Battalion) may yet, with UN complicity, continue both to privilege dangerous work, and men as more active and suited for such work, and therefore as more valuable personnel. This is a challenge, because combat experience offers officers a route up the ladders of power and influence. Given that an explicit intention of the WPS is to change how things are done by equalizing women's participation in all aspects of peace and security, an ongoing responsibility for feminist activists pursuing new kinds of peacebuilding outcomes is to overcome perceptions that care work is less important than other PKO tasks. This reality entrenches stereotypes of care work as unimportant; and it contradicts the explicit intention of the WPS agenda to change how things are done by equalizing women's participation in all aspects of peace and security, especially as decision-makers whose experiences, perspective and actions would bring about new kinds of peacebuilding outcomes.

**Denying Agency and Professional Effectiveness**

India's experience offers useful global lessons. The persistence of institutionalized discrimination and stereotyping might look like nothing more than normative patriarchal misogyny, but the material effect of deploying women in low-ranking PKO roles affects their operational impact, reduces their professionalization options and denies their full agency by excluding them "from the pivotal role of security providers" (Valasek 2012, 309). This compromises the exceptional ability of women PKOs to observe and report increased street-level violence, including gendered violence—an acknowledged source of post-conflict uncertainty and destabilization—and thereby restricts and undermines PKO effectiveness (Valasek 2012). In favor of a male-dominated status quo, women peacekeepers still risk being instrumentalized and reduced "to roles that self-evidently enhance…nationalist or militarist power" (Cockburn 2011, 6) instead of community engagement. This cannot bring in the transformative gender perspectives and socially inclusive actions which SCR1325 envisions, and the Summit endorses.

There remains a risk that such limitations may weaken innovations in gendering UNPKO, including the efforts of some Indian feminists who have explored actions such as going to court to force the expanded employment and career progression of women in the security service (Klossek and Johansson-Nogués 2021) – a focus which, while domestically innovative, is not a SCR1325 priority. The Resolution is careful, in fact, not to "call for more women in armies" (Cockburn 2011, 9), instead urging *an expansion in the roles and contributions women can make*. These are precisely the non-military roles, as observers, civilian police, human rights defenders and humanitarian personnel (Valasek 2012), through which, I argue, they could re-validate the crucial importance of caregiving work, stop violence and support healing, true to the antimilitarist purpose of the WPS agenda and the "new models" of peace operations invoked in the Zero draft (UNP4F 2024, 10).

Doing the delicate work of maintaining the importance of non-military roles is crucial, even in the knowledge that over-associating them with women may have multiple negative effects, and I urge Indian feminists to keep up their efforts, in solidarity with feminists elsewhere in the global south who do not wish to support military and political elites to maintain a segregated workplace that values women's contributions less than men's. It will never be in the interest of peace feminists to endorse a political economy and patronage networks that guarantee the accrual of career prestige and influence, as well as the tax-free financial rewards associated with serving in a PKO,[5] to powerful and politically influential men in pursuit of war policies that allow them to expand their authority to militarize the domestic sphere. Peace feminists do not contribute to putting democracy in crisis (Shiva 1993/2020, 110).

Similarly, peace feminists need to redouble our vigilance against the inclusion of women in the security sector becoming an act of propaganda for an international audience, while leaving intact what the security analyst Carol Cohn calls "the pernicious, pervasive complexities of the gender regimes that undergird not only individual wars but the entire war system" (Cohn quoted in Cockburn 2011, 7). As we go into the Summit of the Future, peace feminists should be wary about what their leaders expect from UN reform. Calling for a permanent seat in the UNSC, for instance, does not necessarily advance the opportunity to contribute to decolonizing the system. It offers little support to demilitarization and peacebuilding – the core purpose of the feminist WPS agenda, to stop violence and end the suffering of war-afflicted populations – whether these are at home or abroad. Peace feminists would be wise to remain wary about the risk that emerging global elites will choose to use their expanded presence in the UN not to prevent armed conflict, but to leverage more power, more capacities to dominate, and a larger share of the political-military, social and economic benefits which global institutions have historically made available to politically elite (men) (Arruzza et. al. 2019).

**Is Transformation Possible?**

Bearing these challenges in mind, as the world prepares for the Summit, how might India's female security personnel, and India's feminist peace movement, drawing from the lessons learned in their efforts to domesticate SCR1325, offer guidance to women elsewhere? Is it better to be in, or to stay out, of the agendas of the power elite in whose interests the WPS agenda has come to be equated with advocacy for women's 'equal' representation in the security sector: police, armed

[5] By 2010, sixty percent of the total UN peacekeeping budget went to peacekeeper salaries. In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, US$6.58 billion was set aside for their running. The current General Assembly-agreed payment rate to TCCs is around USD 1,428 per month. Compare this to the average salary for a junior Indian police officer, of around USD 420 a month. Recall that this local salary continues to be paid during PKO service, making deployment to a PKO very lucrative. Understand the nepotism this enables, because receiving states decide not only who gets to serve, but how to allocate this amount in keeping with national ranking and salary structures, and can distribute it unequally, paying ranking officers more than non-commissioned ones.

forces, and PKOs? Should feminists persist in seeking entry to the security sector, even at the risk of contributing to "the feminization of soldiering" (Cockburn 2011, 7)? Should we 'lean in' as liberal feminism proposes, and keep organizing for a rights-based entry into the PKO as an equal-opportunity workplace that pays for and promotes women's specialized policing and military capacities? Should peace activists continue to do what we can on the ground, and keep lobbying to bring our experiences into systems that have been designed to oppress? Is it sufficient to keep working to establish a different set of values to influence decision-making and action, as Indian women have sought within their national police and military services?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, in this crucial year for UN reform, are there ways to unravel or decode the official WPS rhetoric deployed by countries like India in official WPS statements so that feminists can concretely use their states' public proclamations and make national security services more inclusive, not only for the purposes of increasing the country's international influence and prestige, but to support the thousands of women who keep calling, from the ground, for better and more representative security personnel to assist in the prevention and resolution of armed violence? In India's case, would this course of action make any difference to how the police and army personnel operate at home? Would it re-energize India's long and important history of non-violent citizen participation in democratic direct action (Shiva 2020)?

These questions seem to me to honor the intentions of women who refuse to be coopted into fundamentally unequal power structures, including by continuing to take to the streets to resist "[p]ower-over economic, political, and social systems" that concentrate "safety, belonging, dignity, decision making, and resources" (Haines 2019, 55) in the hands of political and economic elites. It remains inspiring that women's peace movements across India consistently protest the costs, harm, and trauma of being impoverished, excluded, abandoned by the state, and blamed for their suffering. Their resistance is especially visible to feminists in the global south, including because it complicates efforts by India's political rulers to present a sanitized image of an emerging peacebuilding superpower free of domestic contradictions, a nation in which women participate freely and assume political responsibilities, as called for in SCR1325. As the crucial task of UN reform proceeds, I am reaching out in solidarity to Indian antimilitarist activists to encourage you to expose the impacts of this contradiction more effectively. Your efforts to domesticate the WPS agenda offer valuable lessons to other peace feminists, and your leadership can support us to take what your ground-level activism teaches us back into the world, including through the mechanism of the PKO.

**Ongoing Activism, Refusing Co-optation**

Audre Lorde warned that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde 2007). Despite the splendid rhetoric attached to women as important participants in peacemaking, now reiterated in the Zero draft, WPS activists have consistently experienced the disappointment

of relationship betrayal (Raffo 2022) from the UN system (Basu 2016). This is why, within a decade of the passage of SCR1325, the legendary Cynthia Cockburn (2011) cautioned her fellow feminist peace activists that the agenda it set in motion remained vulnerable and might be "left hostage to co-optation by militarist states and military institutions for military purposes" (8), and "be used for ends quite contrary to those we intended" (1). Feminist discussions of India's official narratives around UNSCR1325 affirm these warnings (Basu 2016; Kapur 2017; Khullar 2020; Klossek and Johansson-Nogués 2021).

Still, this might not be where the story ends. There is the promise expressed by feminists theorizing care that a "regular practice of...self or collective care, can create the conditions for deep healing" as a form of justice (Raffo 2022, 28), including in the anticipated process of reforming the purpose and praxis of PKOs. To this optimistic possibility I now turn.

In preparing for this paper, I found one ray of hope whose elucidation I hope will be helpful to Indian feminists in preparing for this year's Summit and beyond. Hidden deep in a recent publication by political scientists Margherita Belgioioso, Jessica di Salvatore and Jonathan Pinckney (2021) is an exploration of the potential positive personal effects of peacekeepers on long-term peacebuilding and social reconstruction. Although this is not their primary focus, Belgioioso and colleagues discuss peacekeepers as whole individuals with personal histories that shape the capacities or shortcomings they bring with them, and which affect how they contribute to a PKO. Their interest is to identify whether peacekeepers' prior experiences of participating in democratic processes with political institutions in their home country grants them a generalizable degree of personal internalization of democratic norms that can be infused into and re-shape a mission's local encounters, thus changing its outcomes for the better. As such, their focus moves beyond "top-down mechanisms such as peace settlements and power-sharing agreements" (Belgioioso et al. 2021, 1) enabling them to look, instead, for evidence of effective peacekeeper contributions to on-the-ground changes through their engagements with civil society. Specifically, they ask how the personal ethics peacekeepers bring to PKO engagements may support the emergence and effectiveness of a spectrum of non-violent actions as political transitions take place.

The authors propose that military and police peacekeepers can make an individual contribution to building peace, and have done so in the past, by proactively engaging in the 'bottom-up' work of safeguarding the right to public protest.[6] This support, they argue, facilitates stronger and more inclusive public participation in the civic actions that become possible in the aftermath of war, and are crucial for "a genuine internalization of democratic norms and progress towards positive peace" (Belgioioso et al. 2021, 2) to take hold. Of particular interest for this paper is their hypothesis that peacekeeping troops "from countries with robust civil societies and widespread

[6] While their interest is to draw current inferences, theirs is a historical analysis as they focus on the immediate Cold War period, 1990 to 2011. New rules and realities, including increased deadly attacks on UN PKOs and the 2018 rules, have changed the conditions for engagement that still existed then.

nonviolent political engagement" are highly valuable in a PKO, because they are already socialized to accept, and indeed facilitate, the emergence of "an environment that encourages nonviolent protest more effectively" (Belgioioso et al. 2021, 3).

In short, Belgioioso et al. seem to observe efforts to bring about opportunities towards more peaceful societies built on ethics of care and non-violent expression and redress of grievances ('healing justice' Raffo 2022) that is, the adaptive, foundational positive contributions officers can make when they arrive on mission with prior knowledge that democratic action, while both messy and difficult, is important and can be enabled. If officers with such exposure are supported to see their task as contributing to the crucial work of reconnection, integration and recovery (Raffo 2022, 26), they could bring to bear their personal experience in modelling democratic social norms. Such personnel can guide civil society to practice effective civic engagement even when the capacity for disciplined protest has been undermined by the cruelties of war. Moreover, they can diffuse democratic norms of policing into the host country's security services as part of their overall functions of capacity-building and reform of state institutions.

Offering eyewitness reports about positive peacekeeper behavior in MINUSTAH (Haiti), UNTAG (Namibia) and UNMIL (Liberia), Belgioioso and colleagues find that some peacekeepers, whom they regard as coming from well-socialized and more democratic settings, have "overall been an effective means of shifting societies away from large-scale violent conflict and towards positive peace," which helped achieve "a meaningful shift in a country's long-term political environment" (Belgioioso et al. 2021, 1). This argument overlooks the on-the-ground reality that PKOs go on for years, even decades, and generally only attract experienced and skilled peacekeepers into service for short periods, reducing the probability that their individual contributions can make a sustained difference to how communities engage with the reshaping of local and national institutions. Yet, it still makes feminist sense and contributes to a major argument of the WPS agenda that peacekeepers will be better equipped to exert a positive influence when they come from diverse backgrounds, making it more likely that they will possess skills they can bring to bear in the delicate, complex, highly-charged atmosphere of an aftermath society.

In such a society, it is likely that both unarmed individuals and collectives, and the state and armed opponents, have come to accept violence as "a legitimate avenue for the expression of grievances" that preceded, and probably remain unaddressed, after war (Belgioioso et al. 2021, 3). In such volatile situations, peacekeepers with experience in the arts of healing justice, among which are non-coercive crowd control and the capacity to protect "grassroots political activism" (Belgioioso et al. 2021, 3), should have an advantage in undertaking two important tasks. They could be capable of, and committed to, holding space for civil society actors if they choose to mobilize and take to the streets to express legitimate grievances against the state and its institutions. At the same time, they could successfully constrain the state from deploying violence to repress civil society actions, including when their effects are disruptive, and they could support state officials not to

retaliate or in other ways escalate armed violence if it is deployed by fringe or outlier opponents. UN police (UNPOL), who come into most regular contact with both civil society and national counterparts in the host country, could become especially dexterous both to "provide 'perceived resources' for non-violent mobilization" (Belgioioso et al. 2021, 9) and to guide peaceable state responses. As the cases of PKO disappointments detailed above show, the absence of such values in their personnel undermines the advancement of the mission's mandate overall and betrays the longitudinal peacebuilding potential that is the purpose of these interventions.

While finding that pro-democratic peacekeepers support normative processes of inclusive peacebuilding such as Portuguese UNPOL in Timor Leste in 2006-2007, Belgioioso and colleagues also conclude that it is not always efforts to advance the formal signs of political normalization—peace agreements, elections, and other such modalities prioritized by elites and their corporate and donor backers—that make the greatest difference on the ground. They warn that these spectacles of state-making, even if they are favored by the UN, the World Bank Group, donors and other powerful actors, too often fail to attract the support of a population wounded by war, afraid and under threat, distrustful of state institutions, and in need of time to process some of what they have endured before putting their faith in outward-facing mechanisms like elections that indicate a return to a functioning rule of law, or the business-as-usual of state-making.

Yet their purpose is not to amplify activist arguments for justice as a vector of healing, or to propose peacekeepers as transformational presences. Belgioioso et al never cite, and seem oblivious to, the feminist analysts who have made similar arguments for all the years of the WPS agenda. For instance, Rees and Chinkin have warned that rushing to ready populations for the formalities that signal a transition to peace "often just institutionalize[s] the competing forces, pay[s] lip service to reform, and merely freeze(s) the public violence," resulting, "on the whole" in "peace transitions…not working" sustainably, inclusively and over the long run (Rees and Chinkin 2016, 2011-13). Yet, even if unintentionally, Belgioioso et. al. reinforces such feminist analysis and helpfully elevate the importance empathetic peacekeepers can make to people claiming their democratic rights after a violent political upheaval.

Feminist peace activists would be more cautious than Belgioioso et. al. about claiming non-violent protest as an unarguable good in every situation, and would scrutinize whose interests are served if protesters feel pressurized to remain calm. As scholar and activist Dean Spade observes, public processes hastily pushed onto "disruptive movements demanding justice" are, "for the most part…designed to demobilize by asserting that the problem has been taken care of," which allows those in power to "provide no material relief and change only what the system says about itself," including through issuing new policies while ensuring "nothing about the behavior" of elites and institutions, "or the outcomes of their operations change" (2020, 132).

To avoid extending "the colonial storyline of civilized nations disciplining, keeping in line and saving uncivilized nations," as Sherene Razack observes, or entrenching "the very same story that underpins peacekeeping", justifying the continued installation of "a racial global order…and racial superiority, plain and simple…[through] the story of a civilized West and a savage non-West" (Razack 2013, 370, 378), Indian feminists' domestic experience of differently conceiving of and carrying out policing work is especially crucial in the Summit and afterwards. It makes feminist sense that India's homegrown experience of policing democratic protests on the street, and in the process developing personal commitment to supporting community approaches to healing justice, could enable the reconceptualization of PKOs. Drawing on this deep pool of experience would better support the longitudinal transitions PKOs are intended to facilitate. Indian peace feminists, informed by feminist advocacy for care-based and relational interventions, could revitalize their domestic WPS agenda – and go on to make a novel contribution to advancing the Pact for the Future's vision of "new models of peace operations that can respond to the evolving nature of conflict in traditional and new domains" (UNS4F 2024, 10). Such a development would guide and reinvigorate peace feminists in the global south as we carry forward the agenda for building a truly 'positive peace' in the decades to come.

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