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Feminism, Power, & Nuclear Weapons:

An Eye on the P5

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FORWARD: FEMINIST NUCLEAR POLICY

Marissa Conway

Since Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) first hit the scene in 2014 when adopted by the Swedish Government, there's been a growing buzz. What does FFP *mean*? What does it look like? Though we're six years in, and a handful of other countries have since expressed interest in or developed their own FFP, there is still much to be expounded.

Definitions of FFP vary, but it is generally agreed upon to be a policy framework that filters decision making through a feminist lens, with a particular focus on systemic power dynamics. It asks how people are either granted access to or kept from power and decision making spaces based on their social categories, including gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, etc. The goal of any good FFP is to rebalance these inequitable hierarchies.

These hierarchies are abundant in nuclear policy. We see patriarchal ideas reflected at domestic and localised levels, imbuing gendered and colonial ideas about who and what makes “good” policy. And we see this at a global level, where only five states (the US, the UK, China, France, and Russia) are "legally" allowed to possess nuclear weapons according to the Nonproliferation Treaty. The same five states sit as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (P5), creating an extraordinary imbalance between a small group of nations which possess almost untouchable decision making power and those that don't.

Such a system manifests in national security and nuclear policies which insist on the threat of violence and destruction as a means to achieve

peace, and alternative ideas are not often welcomed. However, three of these countries are engaging with FFP to varying degrees. France announced in 2019 that they consider their foreign policy to be that of FFP. In the UK, several political parties over the past few years have expressed interest in adopting FFP for their party manifestos. In April of this year, the state of Hawaii introduced a feminist economic recovery plan in response to COVID. And just last month, a group of 23 Congresspeople introduced a resolution in the US House of Representatives calling for a federal FFP.

All of this begs the question: **When P5 nations engage feminist approaches to foreign policy, what does that mean for their nuclear policy?**

This project is a collection of articles from five extraordinary civil society thinkers on feminism and nuclear policy to address this precise question. It is our hope that this work inspires a thoughtful interrogation of the status quo in both personal and professional capacities, and encourages us all to think more creatively and holistically about nuclear policy.

NUCLEAR POWER IN THE AGE OF FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: THE CASE OF FRANCE

Toni Haastrup

Introduction

France is flirting with feminism as part of its foreign policy. In 2019, France declared that it has a Feminist Diplomacy. Feminist Diplomacy, according to the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, is France's commitment to Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP). In this approach, gender equality is prioritised as fundamental to the broader aims of multilateralism. In particular, France aspires to centre gender equality in its contributions to sustainable development, peace and security, defence and the promotion of fundamental rights, and climate and economic issues (Feminist Diplomacy, 2020). France follows in the footsteps of Sweden which first declared an FFP framework in 2014 (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018). The commitment to gender equality as the cornerstone of France's promotion of multilateralism has come on the heels of the Paris Peace Forum initiation (About, 2020). The Paris Peace Forum, established under the auspices of President Macron, was created to find cooperative means towards resolving global conflicts with the ultimate aim of peace.

Arguably, France seeks to lead a system of international politics through a foreign policy approach that is inclusive and promotes peace. However, France's historical approach, particularly in the areas of peace, security, and defence, is characterised by militarism and militarisation, especially in former colonies. This contradicts inclusive peace and security practices and its FFP aspirations, especially as militarism is an ideology that reifies military values (Luckham, 1982). Ann Scales defines it as "the pervasive cluster of forces that keeps

history insane: hierarchy, conformity, waste, false glory, force as the resolution of all issues, death as the meaning of life and a claim to the necessity of all of that" (Scales, 1989). Militarisation refers to "a socio-political process normalising the use of armed force and violence as a means to address conflict" (Geuskens, Gosewinkel, Schellens and Johnston, 2014). Within French foreign policy, militarism and militarisation has been honed first through the management of colonies, and then through security assistance in former colonies (France's Action in the Sahel, 2020). Militarism allows a government like France to use the military as the primary means of guaranteeing security (Reardon, 1996).

Feminists have long been critical of militarism, militarisation, and its relationship to gender. Betty Reardon (1996) argues that militarism demonstrates excessive masculinities. Masculinities in general, and as attributes of militarism, are defined by qualities like "aggression, rationality and physical courage" (Hutchings, 2008). Of militarism, Cynthia Cockburn (2010) argues thus:

"the power imbalance of gender relations in most (if not all) societies generates cultures of masculinity prone to violence. These gender relations are like a linking thread, a kind of fuse, along which violence runs. They run through every field (home, city, nation-state, international relations) and every moment (protest, law enforcement, militarization), adding to the explosive charge of violence in them."

So, what does it mean for a nuclear power to consider gender equality and an FFP framework within its nuclear power supported defence and security architecture? This is the question that we unpick here. This intervention on France as a nuclear power is explored in three subsequent sections, with a short conclusion. The first section presents an overview of French nuclear power in an historical context. The second section explores the contradictions between France's current nuclear policy and the aspiration of a truly feminist foreign policy. The third and final section proposes recommendations for achieving feminist (foreign) policies for a new age and for peace. This entry concludes with a reflection on what FFP must mean for a world beyond nuclear weapons.

A History of French Nuclear Power

France's nuclear weapons exist within a security architecture characterised by militarism. France spent approximately €4.5 billion on nuclear weapons in 2019 and currently has an estimated 300 nuclear warheads (Kristensen and Korda, 2019; Macron, 2020; Nuclear Weapons: Who Has What at a Glance, 2020). As one of the five nuclear weapons states recognised in the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, France occupies an important strategic position in the global governance of peace and security. Its emergence as a promoter of FFP thus matters for international politics.

France's nuclear programme began in response to World War II. Yet, while the focus was on supporting the war effort, its aim was not a bomb but rather, energy. This shifted by 1960 when France tested its first atomic bomb in its former colony, Algeria. While France's role as a nuclear power was overshadowed by the rival arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union, and later Russia, France has the third-largest arsenal of nuclear weapons with a stockpile of 300 functional warheads.

France acquired its nuclear weapons in the context of the Cold War competition, as the United States emerged in a global power in part due to its nuclear capabilities. World War II and decolonisation had served to undermine France's perception of itself as a great power and obtaining nuclear weapons made sense, particularly as France also sought to distance itself from the United States-dominated North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Nuclear power for France thus served three purposes: first, as a deterrence to Soviet aggression in Western Europe, to balance out the United States' power and influence in Western Europe, and as a means to 'retain' the power lost by the loss of its colonies.

France is a signatory to the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which put limits on the spread and use of nuclear weapons. NPT signatories included the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and non-nuclear states.

While France has decreased its nuclear arsenal, it is far from abolition. Successive governments since Charles De Gaulle's administration have been firmly against a nuclear free France. They have stated that nuclear weapons are only for self-defence purposes although there is

no policy barring first-use (Kristensen and Korda, 2019). Recently, French President Emmanuel Macron has suggested that the campaign for abolition is unrealistic in a strategic context (Macron, 2020). Macron stated that France's nuclear power is essential to guaranteeing European security, as in an age of nuclear opacity, the French programme is transparent. Through this narrative, the French nuclear security architecture is European and thus furthers a Eurocentric discourse of security. Moreover, it is sold as a superior form of security in its ability to protect (from un-European threats) and because it is transparent (unlike mainly non-European) nuclear powers. This discourse is appealing particularly in the wake of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union (EU), which is often considered to be synonymous with Europe, as well as due to its fraught relationship with Russia. Yet, we know that the retention of nuclear weapons is not the only means to realistically guarantee security. South Africa, for example, voluntarily gave up its nuclear weapons in 1989, and similar to France's quest for regional security leadership, has instead promoted the idea of Africa as a nuclear free zone. It is thus possible to create a security vision that is absent of nuclear weapons.

What is clear is that France's defence/security architecture relies on nuclear power as the ultimate means to keep a militarised foreign policy. French foreign and security policy is thus characterised by nuclearism, the "the celebration of nuclear weapons as the ultimate symbol of western technological progress" (Shaughnessy, E.C., 2014). This ultimately undermines the possibilities of a gender equality or feminist centred foreign policy inasmuch as militarism troubles such aspirations. There is thus reason to be sceptical about France's 'Feminist' Foreign Policy through feminist critiques to war making and militarism. Moreover, given the three reasons why France acquired and retains nuclear power, a feminist critique that examines global power hierarchies and creates space for the intended recipients of France's FFP is not only appropriate but essential.

A Feminist Critique of French ***Nuclearism***

Feminists have long critiqued the possession of nuclear weapons on a number of grounds relevant to France's retention of its weapons and to its aspirations of an FFP framework. Much of the feminist analyses of nuclear weapons draw on anti-war standpoints (Cohn and Ruddick, 2004), which considers war making, including its preparations as

evidenced by the maintenance of nuclear weapons, as gendered and favouring men's participation and practices of masculinities while relying on women's often unacknowledged or downplayed labour.

President Macron has clearly articulated his resistance to signing the legally binding international Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), otherwise known as the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty. The possession of nuclear weapons is instead framed as realistic, and as a deterrent to conflicts and ostensibly the key to maintaining peace. Yet, as feminist Jane Caputi (1993) contends, this sort of rationalisation is an outcome of a sex and gender system the reinforces 'masculine' domination over the 'feminine', where the feminine, or more appropriately feminized, includes women and non-binary people, the Global South, and the planet. The system within which nuclear weapons functions is, as Cohn and Ruddick (2003) suggest, shaped by a gendered system of meanings: "a symbolic system – a central organizing discourse" and "a set of ways of thinking, images, categories and beliefs." Thus, when President Macron pushes back on those that seek abolition, within the symbolic gender system of meanings, he, representing France, assumes a hegemonic authoritative masculinity while abolitionists are feminised and dismissed as emotional and unrealistic. [1]

The discourse around nuclear weapons, has a tendency to sanitise the lethality of these weapons (Cohn, 1987). Yet, the reality is that nuclear weapons, particularly through testing, continues to take a devastating toll on the lives of real people outside of contiguous France. Postcolonial feminism can help call attention to how the retention of nuclear weapons by France directly contributes to the reinforcement of masculinised global power hierarchies.

Since 1960, France has tested its nuclear weapons in or near former colonies including Algeria and French Polynesia (Peyron, 2009). Although France's colonial domination of Algeria ended in 1962 with the Évian accords, fighting between French forces and independence fighters was guaranteed with French access to nuclear testing sites for five years. Soon after the accords, however, evidence of radioactive material was found in the Algerian desert. According to France's Ministry of Defence, approximately 27,000 Algerians have been affected by the testing. Others suggest a higher estimate of about 60,000 people who did not know they were being exposed (Chrisafis,

2013). [2] As a result, these people have suffered from various cancers, blindness, and limb deformities (Magdaleno, 2015). Similarly, in French Polynesia where testing commenced in 1966, France tested a hydrogen bomb which is supposedly 170 times more powerful than the bomb used in Hiroshima – the last test was conducted in 1996 (Peyron, 2009). One test carried out in 1974 exposed Tahiti to 500 times the allowable levels of plutonium (Chrisafis, 2013). To date however, France has not dealt with the human costs of testing as evidenced by the lawsuit filed in the International Criminal Court (ICC) by French Polynesia. While a 2010 law allowed military veterans and civilians to claim compensation for the effects of the nuclear programmes, very few people have been compensated.

While France plays the role of the masculinist protector of European security as a justification for its retention of nuclear weapons, it has clearly not followed the same standards of testing externally as it would have within its own borders. Owning and maintaining nuclear weapons has therefore depended on a gendered hierarchy that demands the subordinate position of (former) French colonies. Moreover, nuclear ownership also facilitated coloniality (Grosfoguel, 2008). Today, even as the world continues to grapple with the devastating impact of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75 years on, the devastating human costs of French nuclear power is downplayed in popular discourse.

The way nuclear weapons sustain the root causes of conflict stands at odds with France's adoption of FFP. Possessing the ultimate weapon of violence cannot be consistent with such a foreign policy approach. On a practical level, the resources spent on the maintenance of France's nuclear weapons could be otherwise used for more peaceful means to attain gender equality for poverty reduction and climate justice. The estimated billions spent per annum on France's nuclear arsenal is a third of its official development assistance (ODA) (France spent $12.2 Billion on ODA in 2019, 2020). This is significant. With such an amount spent on weapons of violence, the prioritisation of militarisation over non-military means serves only to ensure the maintenance of an unstable and fraught international system within which foreign policy is conducted. As feminist activist Ray Acheson argues, nuclear weapons serve simply as "political tools to manipulate international relations" (Acheson, 2014).

Given the history of French ownership and retention of its nuclear

power, as well as insights from feminist scholarship and activism around nuclear arsenals, a positive justification for France as a nuclear power is difficult particularly as it attempts to forge a feminist informed foreign policy. In reality though, a superficial focus on gender equality that focuses mainly on representation, protection against sexual violence, and women's participation in traditional areas of international politics does not necessarily seek transformation of the gendered system that Cohn and Ruddick (2003) describe. It is thus possible that in this conception, owing nuclear weapons can sit easily next to claims of FFP. The lethality of nuclear weapons, however, requires us to think of truly feminist visions of peace and consequently alternatives to the current foreign policy approaches of France.

Recommendations: Reconciling Feminist Foreign Policy

The practices of France as a nuclear power undermines the country's articulated aims of an FFP framework, and the impacts of nuclear power demands that FFP takes priority. To take leadership in FFP, it is essential that France adopts the following policy recommendations.

Short Term Interventions

1] **Adopt a no-first-use policy.** France's nuclear power is explicitly for defence purposes only, according to successive governments and experts. Yet, there is currently no bar on using nuclear weapons for pre-emptive self-defense, in theory. A no-first-use policy demonstrates a legal and political commitment that nuclear weapons will only be deployed in response to a prior attack and truly as a last resort.

2] **Rapidly divest from nuclear arsenal maintenance.** The current gendered and racialised impact of the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need to further support policy initiatives that prioritise marginalised people, including women, non-binary people, and people of colour (Hankivsky and Kapilashrami, 2020). Implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda provides an entry point for this support and here, France has already shown clear commitment (France's International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018–2022), 2020). Currently France spends 0.44% of gross national income (GNI) on official development assistance (ODA) from which its FFP is funded. Diverting further resources from the billions of euros currently spent

on maintaining its nuclear arsenal would make a substantial contribution to fostering gender equality globally and leading on the implementation of the WPS agenda.

3] **Halt the modernisation agenda and recommit to the reduction of warheads.** Compared to the United States or Russia, France's nuclear arsenal is significantly smaller. However, this does not decrease the significant and lethality of these weapons, particularly when France has committed to a modernisation programme (Kristensen, 2015). Such a programme reinforces the acceptability of nuclear weapons as an option to resolve conflicts, while glossing over the violence they cause. The time to stop is now.

4] **Begin financial reparations to survivors of nuclear testing.** The 2010 Morin Law, which decrees compensation for victims of French nuclear testing, does not go far enough to obtain reparative justice. A compensation committee in France constitutive of defence and health ministry officials is tasked with quantifying the level of harm caused by testing (for example, determining what level radiation is high enough to qualify for compensation). To facilitate reparative justice and move towards reconciliation, the compensation committee must include representatives of those who have been impacted by nuclear testing. This requires the discussion to move away from compensation to reparations (Maiese, 2003).

Long Term Interventions

5] **Sign and ratify the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty.** Acceding to this legally binding instrument ensures accountability to the whole of the international community, and in particular marginalised groups that have been victimised by France's nuclear programme. As a nuclear possessing state this treaty obligates France to specify a timeframe for decreasing and eventually eliminating its nuclear arsenal. Moreover, it allows for international accountability in a fully transparent process.

6] **Public Education.** To be a leader in European (and global) security, France should commit to better education on the impacts of nuclear weapons, highlighting unintended consequences. Presently, much of the public perception of nuclear weapons focuses on United States activities in Japan during World War II. The war context of this nuclear use, and by another nuclear power, paves over France's complicity in

the harms of nuclear weapon ownership. Public education as an ongoing intervention in nuclear weapons discourse commits France to learning from its past errors and owning up to the ongoing impacts of colonialism. Being a leader means taking responsibility, and public and transparent education that acknowledges France's role in nuclear politics is an essential path to resisting global gendered hierarchies, and therefore build a stronger FFP.

7] Adopt a post-nuclear Feminist Foreign Policy beyond gender equality. The elimination of nuclear weapons is integral to a holistic FFP that goes beyond paying lip service to gender equality. As the ownership and operation of nuclear weapons has shown in the case of France, the gendered and indeed racialised power hierarchies that are required for France to exercise its hegemonic masculinity underscores this incompatibility. For France to embrace a truly feminist approach to foreign policy, it must be explicitly anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-militarist, and seek to transform the systems within which gender hierarchies thrive.

Conclusion

France's FFP is not consistent with the retention and strengthening of its nuclear arsenal. Nuclear weapons sustain patriarchal global relations and is the ultimate reification of militarism. Though the number of weapons have decreased over the years, President Macron's aspiration to transform its nuclear arsenal as a guarantor of European security is worrying.

Appending 'feminist' to new foreign policy practices that emphasise gender equality is a necessary but insufficient condition for attaining a truly feminist foreign policy. While gender equality is a progressive step forward in the different foreign policy practices of some Global North countries, the particular conception of gender equality risks becoming an alibi for persistent global gendered power hierarchies, or a handmaiden to lethal hegemonic masculinities. Attention to the work of feminist activists and those ordinarily marginalised from the hierarchies of foreign policy making shows that maintaining nuclear power is incompatible French aspirations of a truly feminist foreign policy.

France is in a position to lead on further disarmament and eventual

elimination of nuclear weapons. For this to happen however, it must confront the legacies of owning nuclear weapons including the real harms caused in former colonies. Through reparations, transparency, and signing on to progressive international law, the possibilities of a transformative FFP agenda can be within grasp.

Endnotes

1] In his speech making the case for the retention of nuclear weapons, Macron dismissed abolitionists (including survivors of Hiroshima) as simply being ethical, which is juxtaposed against his more 'realistic' approach.

2] French nuclear tests "showered vast area of Polynesia with radioactivity."

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TRAVERSING MULTI-WORLDS: HOW LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES CAN SAVE US FROM CURRENT U.S.-CHINA NUCLEAR PERCEPTIONS

Lovely Umayam

Language is a life saver. Knowing a language other than your native tongue is akin to possessing a compass that can help navigate a complicated and precarious world. It opens portals into new intellectual and emotional planes unreachable by a singular frame of mind or lexicon.

Every word has the potential to enrich experience: Tagalog has a word for the thrill of seeing a lover, a feeling that has no equivalent in English (*kilig*). Tamil has one word with three different yet interlinked meanings: violence, intervention, and protest (*adi*). Diné has a word that is all-encompassing for everything that is good in the world, a definition so expansive and complex that it is best understood as an embodied experience, rather than a spoken concept (*hózhó*).

Language is the ability to familiarise, empathise, and reconcile in a divided world governed by univocal perceptions of whole communities, cultures, and even countries. This act of immersion – the opening to alternative ways of knowing, being, and doing – can yield a more nuanced analysis of international relations, including the prevention of nuclear conflict.

To think in this way can truly save lives.

***

For most Americans, the image of China is based on a composite of truths and exaggerations viewed from a purely Western gaze. China is a country with a vibrant culture, tumultuous history, and authoritarian

communist government that shaped its identity as an economic powerhouse, master of social surveillance, and cunning international influencer. Mainstream conversations in the United States tend to flatten China's complex economic and geopolitical ascendancy into a simplified narrative that serves as a foil to American values. The United States has dramatically shifted its diplomatic approach towards China from measured engagement (pursued by President Nixon all the way through the Obama era) to an aggressive reproach led by President Trump (The New Yorker, 2020). Under his leadership, the United States reframed its relationship with China as a competition where one must "crush" the other (Appelbaum, 2016).

Thus, the line between the two "great powers" have been drawn. Democrat and Republican criticism of China's delayed response to the COVID-19 pandemic, while fair in some respects, have taken on alarming xenophobic overtones (Lynch, 2020; Heer, 2020). In foreign policy, China is characterised as the recalcitrant rival in a new Cold War environment, with rising tension triggering trade disputes and terse exchanges over the future of nuclear arms control (Bloomberg News, 2019). Chief U.S. arms control negotiator Marshall Billingsea openly denounced China's lack of interest in pursuing arms control negotiations with the United States and Russia, emphasising that the United States has the wherewithal "to win these races and spend the adversary into oblivion" – a direct reference to a renewed nuclear arms race should Moscow and Beijing fail to cooperate (Reuters, 2020).

While it is important to remain clear-eyed and cautious of China's ambition, there is a danger of leaning towards "*us-vs-them*" interpretations of its geopolitical activities. Doing so dismisses underlying drivers that shape China's motivations, some of which have nothing to do with a desire to unseat the United States from the global stage. As long-time China historian Odd Arne West observed, to destroy America is "not China's game" (The New Yorker, 2020). There may be other priorities, including reclaiming influence in Asia, that does not entail completely outcompeting the United States. Similarly, nuclear policy experts have long argued the disconnect between the United States' and China's misaligned perception over nuclear weapons, which explains Beijing's disinterest in pursuing current arms control efforts, and Washington's subsequent reading of this as uncooperative (Kulacki, 2020). Still, the line dividing the two sides is calcifying and in danger of becoming permanent.

Language is a portal that circumvents this line. In my research, I relied on my knowledge of Mandarin to understand China's nuclear posture with the belief that language can help illuminate a country's worldview. As China scholar Gerard Chan writes, "A familiarity with Chinese language and culture are prerequisites to a thorough analysis of [international relations studies in China]...it plays an important part in shaping Chinese thinking, and hence their behaviour, in domestic as well as international affairs" (Chan, 1999).

Certain words are telling. In Mandarin, the terms "safety" and "security" (安全: anquan) are entangled and in some cases synonymous, giving it a unique Chinese context: preventing a situation – accidental or intentional, internal or external – that would be detrimental or damaging to what is considered a state of stability or peace (Bin 2015). It differs from a Western frame in which safety and security are separate concepts, with "security" focusing on external or foreign forces. For China, security takes on a comprehensive meaning to include domestic and international threats facing the current regime (Weixing, 2016). This definition of "security" is embodied in a wide range of austere policies: a long-standing assertion of territorial integrity in South China Sea, repressing any progressive movements challenging the status quo (i.e., emergence of feminist thinking triggered by detaining the "Beijing Five" in 2015), and more recently the "national security law" (国家安全法： guojia anquan fa) imposed on Hong Kong that many experts fear will put an end to the "one country two systems" framework (Dingli; Fisher, 2016, Feng 2020).

But how does this holistic notion of "security" affect China's nuclear policy? After a successful nuclear test in 1964, China focused on achieving a nuclear capability that is "small quantity, but high quality," with the intent of developing sufficient means to strike back only if attacked (Facini, 2018). China is the first nuclear weapon state to implement a "no first use" (不首先使用) policy – a pledge to not start nuclear conflict by attacking first – which is also reinforced by its decision to place its nuclear weapons on "low alert" status, such that nuclear warheads are stored separately from their missile launchers (Lewis, 2014; Heginbotham, 2017). While U.S. policymakers worry that China may eventually ramp up its nuclear development (speculation on whether the Chinese government will invest in advancements to put multiple warheads in a single missile or abandon its "low alert" status is of great concern), it has consistently adhered to a limited

number of nuclear weapons, with the most recent figures hovering around 290 bombs. Chinese scholars observe that this unique nuclear policy corresponds to China's nuanced and holistic understanding of security (Kristensen and Korda, 2019). It is also reflected in language: the Chinese term for deterrence (威慑; weishe) is closer in meaning to "coercion" (to force someone to yield), which explains why China interprets the word differently[1] than its American counterparts (Bin, 2016). Again, one can appreciate how misalignment and misunderstanding can occur, even worsen, between the two countries without proper cultural context.

This analysis of Chinese nuclear policy is not new and has been offered by (majority male) Chinese, as well as American experts. There is general agreement among nuclear scholars that cultural and ideological differences can influence nuclear thinking. But what is still woefully unrecognised is the practice of *seeing through someone else's worldview* as a prerequisite skill within nuclear policy, and the international relations discipline writ large. In other words, to analyse foreign affairs demands a conscious embrace of multi-world perspectives, whereby typically ignored histories, memories, structures, and economies are intentionally centred as equally legitimate realities. What is also overlooked is the fact that this analytical framework has *feminist* roots. It takes experience to be on the outside in order to see the value of the outsider and the unseen.

This multi-world approach is best expressed by political theorist L.H.M. Ling through her work on *worldism*: a feminist and post-colonial research methodology that "highlights and celebrates multiple subjectivities and worlds" to escape the us-vs-them dichotomy embedded in international relations (Agathangelou and Ling, 2009). Ling calls out the unimaginative framework of foreign policy that favours the hyper-masculine and Eurocentric source of knowledge, whereby countries are always seeking to be hegemonic in geopolitics. She believes that her proposed worldist intervention – the study of "socio-ontologies" through histories, culture, and counter-culture often seen irrelevant in the chess game of international affairs – will lead to less corrupt and less violent possibilities for the future (Agathangelou and Ling, 2009).

Worldism is a response to mainstream international relations theories

that reduce the world into an "oppositional relationship" between the *superior self* and the *othered*. [1] Following this configuration, the latter only achieves a sense of security by displacing or matching the capabilities of the former. Ling and colleague Anna Angathangelou argue that this inevitably presents "only one world available to anyone, anywhere" – a world that is immediately untrusting, dangerous, cynical and lonely (Agathangelou and Ling, 2009). In this world, there is only one road to survival: becoming the superior self. This is the default logic found in Eurocentric and masculine constructs.

Realists insist that this worldview is simply pragmatic. Indeed, John Mearsheimer maintains that realism reigns supreme in the new millennium since "security competition continues to be a central element of international relations" (Brecher and Harvey, 2002). But subscribing to the realist desire to achieve the superior self comes at a cost: the ability to see "affinities and complementarities" that create the collective "we" (Agathangelou and Ling 2009). Arundhati Roy's words in her essay "The End of Imagination," a searing condemnation of nuclear weapons in South Asia, clearly articulates this sacrifice. She laments a world with nuclear weapons because it means that *the collective "we" (humanity) has lost the ability to imagine an alternative world without these bombs.* Roy's words are plain, but haunting: "Nuclear weapons pervade our thinking. Control our behaviour. Administer our societies. Inform our dreams" (Roy, 1998). The desire for the bomb as a symbol of superiority has inevitably created a devastating blindspot, such that we can no longer see a world without nuclear weapons.

Instead of realism, Ling (as well as Pinar Bilgin and other political theorists influenced by postcolonial and feminist thought; this body of research runs deep) encourages security practitioners to consider the multitude of inequalities and conditions that impact how "security" is defined and perceived (Bilgin, 2016). Culture, including language, provides invaluable reference points that help traverse and shape these worlds. This defies the assumption that culture is "soft" power that only operates at the fringes, while "hard" state action remains as the central force that moves policy along. As Ling critiques, this is a misconception that soft power is a "wifely appendage" to "manly" hard power, i.e., culture charms, so that states can achieve their goals short of flexing its military muscle (Ling, 2017). Ling believes that soft power culture has agency of its own, and can influence the hard power state.

When worldism and the scholarship of feminist thinkers like Ling, Angathangelou, Pinar, and others are intentionally applied to nuclear policy, it will reveal under-explored contours of the China-U.S. nuclear dynamic. First, it becomes clear that the escalatory rhetoric and policies that draw the dividing line between the two countries are impulsive, banal, and dangerous. Impulsive and banal because it falls victim to the same blindspots produced by a singular worldview. Dangerous because the more confrontational the China-U.S. relationship becomes, the harder it will be to reroute the discourse to a place of meaningful arms control policy. The Trump Administration has threatened to stall, or worse abandon, New START renewal with Russia unless China agrees to join the conversation, even though Beijing's nuclear orientation – in terms of its low stockpile and unique security posture – does not match the conditions necessary to pursue negotiations at this level (Reif and Bugos, 2020). Worse, the Trump administration is also exploring possibilities to revive nuclear testing to flex its nuclear capabilities, even though this act would defy current international norms (Sanger and Broad, 2020). A single world begets single-mindedness begets the same reactions that prioritise the "superior self" before the collective "we."

Second, worldism legitimizes policy thinking and making anchored by cultural context. Consider the aforementioned "no first use" policy, a creative way for the Chinese to signal that its nuclear force is solely for self-defense, and that it does not intend to pursue numerical parity with the United States and Russia's nuclear forces (Tannenwald, 2019). To believe in this policy requires a de-centering of one's perspective to see China's worldview irrespective of its flaws, or whether one agrees or disagrees with it. Western-based nuclear policy experts often worry about the sincerity of China's No First Use policy, but the pledge has held up for over 50 years, with Chinese scholars constantly needing to re-explain its historical, cultural, and ideological groundings (Acton, 2013; Yunzhu; 2013; Pry, 2020). The repetitive debates around the credibility of China's No First Use is indicative of the disconnectedness of how "security" is perceived by others. Of course it is entirely plausible for the Chinese government to decide, at some point in the future, to shift policy for a multitude of reasons. But critical thinking around no first use must be applied both ways. What would happen if the table is flipped for a change? Instead of doubting China's no first use policy, what does it say (or not say) about the United State's unwillingness to subscribe to a similar policy? Pausing to answer these

questions is tantamount to "suspending judgement long enough to consider alternative ways of understanding" (Agathangelou and Ling, 2009).

Moreover, diplomatic projects such as the "P5" Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms that encourage nuclear weapons states to discuss the linguistic nuances of nuclear terminologies should be championed, not ridiculed (U.S. State Department, 2015). Comparing Chinese, Russian, American, French, and British interpretations of nuclear concepts such as "deterrence" could be a way to pierce through the hardened realist perceptions of nation-states, and find space to imagine collective security in ways that dialogue about numerical parity cannot achieve. Exploring the undercurrents of these nuclear words is a difficult and time-consuming project, but potentially powerful when taken seriously. The value of the glossary may not necessarily lie in a tangible end-product, but the process of making it: the verbal battles about what words to include or not include, and the insider intimations diplomats might learn about their foreign counterparts that would otherwise go unsaid or unnoticed without engaging in this exercise (Hoell, 2019). Even more radical is the prospect of chronicling these nuclear terms not for present consumption and value, but to serve as a historical artefact for future analysis, a linguistic compendium summarising the similarities and differences articulating the meaning of security and violence. The diplomatic potency of the glossary is contingent upon the nuclear policy community believing in its utility. But as it stands, it is derided as an excuse for the five nuclear weapon states to twiddle their fingers at the negotiating table and delay real progress, which may very well be true. And yet, how are these countries to agree on disarmament if it is trapped in its own babel? How are they to establish norms towards peace if they cannot synchronise their perception of what makes one another insecure in the first place?

Human existence is not only complex, but also protean: ever expanding, changing, and responding to the conditions of life. It is the same for countries; governance constantly shifts based on cultural influences and relational perceptions with the rest of the world. Imagine: global politics as overlapping concentric circles of state histories, identities, and ambitions. These intersections create friction between and among political and social relations. Experts, media, and political actors often misread or reduce these relationships into an *us-vs-them* calculus. But the world is too rich to dilute, too expansive to see through a monocular lens. Feminist and post-colonial approaches to

foreign policy – such as Ling's *worldism* – insist that it is possible to manuever through the coexistence and collisions of country experiences. Culture, including language, serves as the trusted compass during this kaleidoscopic journey. Without this tool, we can be easily led to a narrow, destructive road of competition and domination. And what a dear price to pay for not being able to see from another's point of view.

Endnotes

1] There are interesting parallels between worldism as an analytical framework and present contemporary conversations encouraging a more expansive approach towards gender determination. The traditional gender binary does not make room for alternative ways of being because its norms are assumed fixed. This inevitably pits the "othered" – those who identify as women or gender non-conforming – as rivals as they attempt to reach recognition and parity within the current, male-dominated construct. Many trans activists and scholars point out that the greater goal is not to eliminate gender itself, but to free individuals from gender norms that constrict possibilities of being. To push the boundaries beyond hyper-masculine interpretations of IR necessitates an openness to other branches of study, including Queer International Relations.

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THE JUXSTAPOSITION OF FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY AND THE UK'S NUCLEAR POLICY

Carina Minami Uchida

Introduction

In the midst of a pandemic, nuclear policy might not be at the top of British political consciousness. However, the United Kingdom's (UK) approach to nuclear weapons is part of a larger conversation about the role of Britain's foreign policy in relation to the rest of the world. Particularly as the UK continues to struggle through its pandemic response, reckon with its colonial history as the Black Lives Matter movement grows, and finalise a long-drawn Brexit, Britain's place in the world is uncertain. But what is certain is that the UK's foreign policy, if not revisioned within a new ethical framework, will seek to sustain its power by exacerbating pre-existing global inequalities at the expense of marginalised communities both at home and abroad. Nuclear weapons play a key role in this process and demonstrate a highly gendered discourse of British exceptionalism tied to continuing legacies of colonialism. With recent government reforms, Brexit, and widening of social inequalities through coronavirus, it is more important than ever for the country to adopt a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) and under this framework, reconsider its commitment to possessing nuclear weapons. This article explores the meaning of FFP, its relevance and necessity to the UK both broadly and in regards to nuclear policy, and the appropriate policy recommendations towards achieving FFP in the future. Ultimately, when holding the UK's nuclear policy under an FFP framework, a difficult tension emerges between Britain boasting itself a multicultural society while being deeply embedded in masculine notions of the state, which invariably oppress marginalised communities.

What is a Feminist Foreign Policy?

FFP is a human-centred approach to policymaking. It is a multi-layered framework which implements policies that strive for gendered and racial justice in political, social, and economic spheres of everyday life (Thompson and Clement, 2019). FFP is largely concerned with the lived and embodied experiences of marginalised individuals at the receiving end of policymaking (Aggestam et al., 2019, p.23). By doing so, the aims and strategies of governments are shifted to re-structuring the institutions which have justified a narrow understanding of foreign policy for the sole goal of achieving and maintaining a militarised and violence-inducing 'security' (Conway and Herten-Crabb, 2019).

FFP exposes the patriarchal values historically deep-rooted in the practice and consequences of foreign policy. Traditional notions of security tend to envision peace linked to the threat of violence, particularly in the vein of deterrence theory. Revisioning peace under an FFP framework means not only acknowledging peace as the absence of war but also as the undoing of all forms of violence. When re-shifting foreign policy goals towards sustainable and 'positive' peace governments must actively recognise ongoing structural violence which systematically ostracises the most marginalised. Then in response to this, an FFP also focuses on creating social structures and policies which address this head-on (Galtung, 1996). This extends well beyond so-called 'gender issues'. FFP is oriented more broadly towards power and understanding why certain people have easy access to it while others do not. Gender equality invariably makes up a core component of this power mapping, as does race, ethnicity, and class, to name a few. FFP, then, is a framework cognisant of the complexities of how social categories play a key role in understanding unequal systems in the social world and aims to tackle all forms of injustices through an intersectional lens.

Sweden, in 2014, was the first country to enshrine FFP. Alongside Mexico's recent January 2020 adoption of FFP, these two states are the only countries to fully formalise FFP in their governments. The US recently introduced a resolution on FFP in the House of Representatives, and Canada and the UK's Labour Party have adopted one-off feminist policies. France, Spain, Luxembourg, and the UK's Women's Equality Party have committed to adopting FFP in the future. Parallel agendas that fall under a wider FFP framework like the

United Nation Security Council's (1325) Women, Peace and Security agenda have spearheaded gender inclusiveness in policy and practice in many more states around the world. With an increase in interest by UK policymakers, due consideration must be given to how such a political framework would impact current UK foreign policy.

This article offers an overview of a conversation in need of ongoing oxygen: how UK nuclear policy would change under a Feminist Foreign Policy. I argue it is impossible to operate under a FFP and continue to maintain and possess nuclear weapons. Policies oriented toward justice, reducing inequalities, and centring the experiences of the marginalised are directly at odds with a national strategy of investing in nuclear weapons. FFP exposes these weapons as a pinnacle of the masculinised state. Justification for their maintenance lies on the assumptions of maintaining security through mutually assured destruction. Their mere existence endangers the safety of entire populations whilst reproducing global hierarchies by delineating who is and who is not allowed to possess nuclear weapons - and therefore power. FFP calls for the purposeful redistribution of investment away from militarisation, arms acquisition, and weaponisation, and toward matters that strengthen human security more broadly. And in order to do this, it is necessary to see the total elimination of British nuclear weapons.

Why does the UK need a Feminist Foreign Policy?

Gender equality has been increasingly featured in UK foreign policy. The 2014 International Development (Gender Equality) Act spearheaded the inclusion of gender sensitivity in humanitarian and development delivery programmes (Bryce and Herten-Crabb, 2017). The Foreign & Commonwealth Office's (FCO) National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security instilled a hopeful commitment towards prioritising gender equality and human rights in its foreign policy (Kirby, 2015). Led by Joanna Roper, the FCO's first ever Special Envoy for Gender Equality, the UK took initiative towards increasing women's participation in the Syrian, Somalian and Colombian peace processes (DFID, 2017). The Department of International Development (2018) outlined its strategic vision for gender equality (2018 - 2030) calling for transformational change and "challenging...unequal power relations" in foreign policy.[1] The treasury approved a £18 million budget for the Government's Equality Office (2019 - 2020) which placed tackling

gender inequalities and LGBT+ issues, domestically and globally, as a key strategic outcome (Government Equalities Office, 2019). But despite increasing attention, the state remains inconsistent and selective in its commitment to gender equality, and most of these initiatives are not without their issues. For example, while the UK actively funds development programmes with an explicit aim to focus on women's rights, it maintains harmful policy positions such as the continuing arms sales to Saudi Arabia, a country which is exacerbating the long-standing humanitarian crises seen in the war in Yemen (Graham-Harrison, 2019; Keaten, 2019). This vein of hypocrisy and paradoxical policy stances would be weeded out under FFP.

In addition, FFP further questions the role of careless complacency in the deaths of millions of people from the post-colonial spaces, and turns inwards in how racialised communities are treated at home. From the disproportionate use of force against black people by the police to the Government rejecting definitions of Islamophobia being rooted in racism, the dehumanisation of minorities within the UK are inherently linked with foreign policy (Elgot, 2019; Francis, 2018). The recent 2019 General Election witnessed an overwhelming Conservative majority during a campaign that was run on misinformation [2] and a rhetoric of racialised hatred that left marginalised communities in fear (Bunyan, 2019). The decision to leave the European Union is a by-product of global inequalities embedded in imperial nostalgia (Whyman, 2017). By understanding how Brexit and a 'Global Britain' plays on ideas about British exceptionalism, we subsequently begin to unmask the patriarchal status-quo of the UK's vie for more power (Conway, 2019).

There is no feminism, let alone a Feminist Foreign Policy, without anti-racism and anti-imperialism. It calls for actively undoing harmful policies and discourses that further pre-existing inequalities. There are clear tensions and grievances that the UK must overcome in order to fully commit to a foreign policy based on feminist values, many of which are directly reflected in its nuclear policy (Ashcroft and Bevir, 2018). Nuclear policy, then, presents fertile ground to explore in more tangible terms how FFP is a means to confront the ongoing oppression of the most marginalised.

Why is Feminist Foreign Policy important to UK nuclear policy?

The 2019 Conservative manifesto has recommitted to "maintain our Trident nuclear deterrent, which guarantees security" (Lye, 2019). Trident is the UK's development, procurement, and operation of nuclear weapons. Despite having the smallest nuclear arsenal in relation to other UNSC's Permanent 5 (P5) members, it continues to hold considerable financial and political weight. In 2018's financial year alone, 14% of the Ministry of Defence's total budget (equivalent to £5.2 billion) went to the nuclear programme (Committee of Public Accounts, 2018). Meanwhile, there are long-term commitments and costs in maintaining nuclear arsenals. The National Audit Office estimates an extra £2.9 billion is needed to update Trident over the next 10 years (*ibid.*). In 2016, the House of Commons voted by a large majority to build a fleet of Dreadnought-class submarines by 2028 (Mills, 2019). These recent developments showcase how the UK is committed to updating and maintaining nuclear arsenals in the name of ensuring security for the foreseeable future.

At its core, FFP provides insight on how obtaining nuclear weapons systems in the UK is counter-productive towards achieving long-term sustainable peace. Renewing programmes such as Trident will not deter violence, but simply lead to further nuclear proliferation (Johnson et al., 2006). Additionally, nuclear policy is highly subjective, despite being placed on the pedestal of objectivity within the defence industry. The 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) established the P5 as the sole Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) and in turn villainized 'rogue states' for not being capable enough to handle nuclear weapons. This demonstrates "the Eurocentric assumptions of international regimes and delegitimiz[es]… non-Western perspectives on issues of nuclear security" (Chung, 2015). By taking into account those underprivileged in the discussion of nuclear policy – non-possessor nations, formerly and currently colonised countries and people, and local populations – it becomes clear that fortifying nuclear arsenals not only reproduces global power inequalities but considerably increases the probability of violence. FFP unravels the assumptions embedded in the nuclear deterrent rationale by centring those side-lined in the conversation.

A Feminist Foreign Policy aims to deconstruct how the continued proliferation of nuclear weapons – and the funding of the defence industry more broadly – is based on masculine notions of strength, violence, and aggression.[3] Nuclear disarmament is therefore perceived

as the state being 'weak', emasculated, and feminised for not maintaining its military status. Consequently, nuclear weapons are understood in largely masculine terms of upholding status and power, a discourse monopolised by men in the defence industry (Acheson, 2018). The male-dominant industry has created a 'technostrategic' and sexualised discourse surrounding nuclear weapons which is highly gendered (Cohn, 1987). For example, in the UK's 2006 *White Paper* on the future of its nuclear deterrents, they allude to nuclear weapons in terms of its "invulnerability, invincibility and impregnability" (Duncanson and Eschle, 2008, p.553). Through gendered euphemisms and masculine rhetoric, defence intellectuals are able to remove the emotional and subjective reality behind the catastrophic consequences tied to nuclear proliferation.

The masculine-coded and abstract language surrounding nuclear policy is utilised to reproduce the narrow understanding of security as purely through its ability to wage war in an already highly unequal global arena. This discourse upholds Britain as a 'masculine' state who is a "responsible steward" in proliferating nuclear weapons (ibid., p.556). Thus, the UK continuously establishes themselves as the protector – based on 'masculine' norms of aggression, fearlessness and superiority – against its 'feminine' enemy, spoken of in highly abstract terms of "weak and failing states" (Defence Committee, 2006, p.18). The UK relies on terrorizing an abstract enemy via "deterring, blackmail and acts of aggression" in order to justify proliferating nuclear weapons as a means of being a global protector against constructed threats (*ibid.*, p. 7). FFP brings to light how contemporary nuclear policy relies on unequal binaries: us vs. them, good vs. evil, masculine vs. feminine, in order to sustain Trident and other systems of militarised oppression. A feminist analysis deconstructs such binaries for being highly normative and constructed to benefit those in power such as the UK. In turn, FFP unravels how Britain's nuclear policy relies on a problematic ideal of the enemy – one who is constructed and lesser than within the racialised global hierarchy and therefore dangerous – in order to continue assuming the protector role through nuclear proliferation.

Ultimately, Feminist Foreign Policy widens perspectives to the indirect consequences of nuclear proliferation by adopting a human-centred approach to foreign policy. Women and communities from the 'Global South' suffer disproportionately from "men's nuclear hubris" and

wider global militarisation efforts (Watson, 1984). Women in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are dying twice as much as men from cancer whilst girls in Chernobyl are more likely than boys to develop thyroid cancer (ibid.). Despite the lack of nuclear war, today's system of nuclear proliferation, including the NPT and the P5's negligence of its subsequent 2017 Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,[4] is based on an international regime born from the Cold War which had devastating consequences to non-Western populations. Proponents of nuclear proliferation are adamant that nuclear weapons have been effective in preventing war and human loss. However, the post-World War II period was marked with proxy wars and resource exploitation (in order to obtain materials to build nuclear arsenals), which led to millions of deaths in newly independent nations across Southeast Asia and Africa. UK nuclear policy requires FFP to acknowledge how nuclear weapons are at "the beating heart of our colonial and patriarchal order" and how disarmament is at the heart of achieving equality (Watson, 1984).

What makes good policy and other feminist foreign policy recommendations?

Short-term policy recommendations:

1] **A Feminist Foreign Policy requires the UK to immediately stop funding, proliferating and renewing Trident** as it stands in direct opposition to FFP's foundations of anti-militarism and placing emphasis on individual embodied experiences. UK's nuclear policy is more than just individual arsenals, but part of a larger reckoning with their persistence in maintaining a patriarchal status quo founded on colonial inequalities.

2] **It is more important than ever to redirect large funds from Trident towards issues that place people first** and are proven to lead to longstanding sustainable peace. The COVID-19 pandemic in the UK has shown the stark underfunding and devaluing of the National Health Service (NHS), care work and frontline industries which require emergency and long-term increase in funding and wages. Additionally, combatting gender-based violence during war and peace is directly related to furthering sustainable security for populations (Blair et al., 2016). Shifting investments from defence spending to welfare budgets are proven to provide more security for women and marginalised

communities (Peterson, 1992). Nuclear disarmament under FFP is thus the opening up of political, economic and social space for policies that directly benefit the individual long-term whilst consciously undoing persisting structural inequalities.

Long-term policy recommendations:

3] **A Feminist Foreign Policy calls for civil society, international and local organisations, P5 and non-possessor states to engage in equal terms in discussions, negotiations and exchanges of best practises to lower levels of nuclear weapons.** The struggle for global nuclear elimination is embedded in unequal channels of communications, such as the NPT establishing who is capable enough to have nuclear programmes, the NWS' refusal to participate in the Ban Treaty and the overall hierarchy of the P5 within UNSC. Equalising such platforms through organisational reform and governmental prioritisation for nuclear disarmament would in turn, push for global recognition on how those most affected by the humanitarian consequences of nuclear proliferation are women and communities of the 'Global South'.

4] **Move away from sexualised and technostrategic language when discussing nuclear weapons and focus on its catastrophic humanitarian consequences instead.** The UK must simultaneously abandon nuclear weapons and the current threat-based understanding of masculinised security. Sexualising nuclear arsenals whilst re-creating abstract enemies in reports, speeches and discourse justifies the proliferation of nuclear weapons whilst further entrenching global inequalities in the conduct of foreign policy.

5] **The UK, and other nation-states, must evaluate political decisions based on achieving equality and rebalancing inequitable hierarchies rather than its current elite hyper-masculinised focus on security, power and status.** A Feminist Foreign Policy highlights the historically gendered notions of 'good' policies being fixated on 'masculine' notions of militarism, weapons acquisitions and warfare. Unlearning such assumptions and placing individual lived experiences as the basis of creating productive, efficient and progressive policies should be the ultimate goal for FFP.

Endnotes:

1] At the time of writing, the DFID had yet to merge with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office which was announced on the 16th of June 2020.

2] An investigative report found 88% of ads by the Conservative party from 1st to the 4th of December were 'misleading'(Panjwani, 2019).

3] Hegemonic masculinity is the legitimisation and practices that upholds normative male standards of violence, aggression and subordination (Connell, 2005).

4] The Ban Treaty, hosted by the UN, developed a legally binding treaty which would prohibit any and all nuclear proliferation (UNODA, 2017).

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A FEMINIST LENS ON RUSSIAN NUCLEAR POLICY

Marianna Muravyeva

Introduction

Nuclear policy remains one of the most important foci of Russia's foreign policy and defence strategy. It occupies a central place in levelling outside threats and feeding patriotic sentiment inside the country. Particularly after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, public discourse on national security strategy and nuclear policy has become increasingly militarised and more provocative.

Russia is in the middle of a decades-long modernisation of its strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces to replace Soviet-era weapons with newer systems. These modernisations, combined with an increase in the number and size of military exercises and occasional explicit nuclear threats against other countries, contribute to uncertainty about Russia's long-term intentions and the growing international debate about the nature of their nuclear strategy. These concerns, in turn, stimulate increased defence spending, nuclear modernisation programs, and political opposition to further nuclear weapons reductions in Western Europe and the United States (see Kristensen and Korda 2019).

Combined with a conservative turn that took place around 2012 which resulted in promoting the ideology of 'traditional values' at the expense of gender equality, Russian foreign policy and nuclear policy, in particular, is hardly expected to be receptive to Feminist Foreign Policy (FPP) principles. At the same time, a feminist analysis of Russian nuclear policy is helpful for identifying the main concerns and fears the Russian government has and for thinking beyond the bipolar

framework of renewing 'Cold War' discourses.

Russian foreign policy and FPP

The link between gender and security has become a prominent issue in the public debate over the last few decades. At the most basic level, it is understood as the greater inclusion of women in security policy decision-making processes. The motivations to promote leadership roles for women in foreign policy are manifold, ranging from social justice arguments about equal political representation of different societal groups to the benefits of diversity in fostering creativity and innovation to the special characteristics of women's leadership styles and their distinct communication skills (Hushcha 2020).

Initially, Russia supported the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda adopted by the United Nations Security Council (Resolution 1325) but did not support the idea of creating a special Security Council mechanism for gender equality policies (Security Council 2013; Security Council 2019), which was very much in line with an overall approach that deemed specialised mechanisms unnecessary.

Contemporary Russian foreign and security policy is generally described as a *realpolitik*-oriented vision, viewing global politics as a zero-sum game, focusing on traditional hard power and understanding international cooperation as dominated by strong states. Lo (2016) describes the Russian regime's worldview as 'neo-Hobbesian', understanding the world as a dangerous place where the strong win and the weak lose. Russia's foreign policy doctrine from 2016 denounces all attempts to interfere in other states' affairs, put pressure on, or seek to remove regimes on the basis of moral concepts such as human rights. However, despite its declared preference for realpolitik over idealism, Russian foreign and security policy involves an increasingly strong normative dimension in its new emphasis on 'traditional values' (Agius & Edenborg 2019).

A cornerstone of Russia's foreign and security policy discourse is the idea that the country is in a constant state of danger (Chebankova 2014). The protests in Moscow during the winter of 2011-12 augmented the regime's fear that the 'colour revolutions' that took place in Ukraine and Georgia would be replicated in Russia, and after Putin's reelection in 2012 the Kremlin's discourses about external and internal enemies

have been reinforced. The national security doctrine from 2013 (and recurrent doctrines since) described societal security as 'unstable', stating that despite the state's efforts to 'fight against criminal and other illegal encroachments, and to prevent extraordinary situations from emerging, the necessary level of societal security has still not been achieved' (Kremlin, 2013). Such hypersecuritising discourse constructs all sectors of society as potential targets of security policy.

In recent years there has been a sharp increase in anti-Western rhetoric and various domestic groups are routinely described as surrogates for foreign interests, most clearly manifested in the 2012 law deeming organisations receiving funding from abroad as 'foreign agents'. In this way, external aggression and internal repression are linked and reinforce each other (Hedenskog et al., 2016).

Of central importance to Russia's foreign and security policy is the near abroad, understood as the former Soviet republics in the Baltics, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and South Caucasus. As Lo argues (2015:48), regional primacy is critical to the vision of Russia as a centre of global power. Some former Soviet republics, most prominently the three NATO-integrated Baltic states, are now essentially part of the Western security community. Others are closely aligned with Russia (e.g. Belarus and Kazakhstan, both members of the newly created Eurasian Economic Union), while the geopolitical positions of states like Ukraine and Moldova are more ambivalent. In Russia's foreign policy doctrine, the principles of non-interference and territorial integrity are strongly emphasised, but in the case of the near abroad, this is a conditioned understanding of sovereignty (Hedenskog et al., 2016; Lo, 2015). According to the regime's view, the former Soviet republics acquired their sovereignty by chance rather than through formal agreements, and today constitute a Russian buffer zone which means that they cannot be allowed to act in ways contrary to Russia's national security. By this logic, Russia's support to separatists in neighbouring countries is understood as reconcilable with the Kremlin's emphasis on the territorial integrity of states.

A feminist reading helps unpack such views on sovereignty by revealing the gendered underpinnings of the patrimonial hierarchy between a masculine Russia acting as a dominant but benevolent authority, wielding its steady hand over the post-Soviet states which

are constructed as dependent, passive, and feminine. Russian foreign and security policy is structured by a male protector myth, according to which the masculine-coded Russian state is entitled and obliged to protect his feminine-coded dependents (the post-Soviet near abroad) from foreign invasion and penetration (Agius & Edenborg 2019).

The current status of Russian nuclear policy

Many observers and academics speak of the start of a nuclear arms race in current times, with the potential erosion of the 'nuclear taboo' as an unofficial practice by nuclear weapons states that had gradually emerged over the second half of the twentieth century (Tannenwald 2018). The new arms race takes place against the backdrop of the unravelling arms control and nonproliferation regime, as many treaties concluded during or in the aftermath of the Cold War are abandoned, stalled, or rendered dysfunctional. These include the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, negotiations over the Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, and, increasingly, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). More recent agreements, such as the nuclear deal with Iran or New START, are being undone or are unlikely to be extended after they expire.

While the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted in 2017, this was undertaken out of frustration among the non-nuclear weapons states about the lack of progress within the NPT. The collapse of the old treaties on one hand and the adoption of the TPNW on the other clearly highlight the polarisation of the nuclear debate (Portela 2020). It seems there are fewer advocates of a gradual step-by-step process, while abolitionists as well as nuclear weapons supporters have strengthened their positions. Such polarisation creates an even less conducive atmosphere for future cooperation. The Russian Foreign Ministry called the TPNW a mistake because it undermines NPT (Treaty on prohibition of nuclear weapons 'a mistake' - Russian foreign ministry, 2019). While other P5 countries remained neutral or cautiously offered their support, they did not join or endorse TPNW either.

As of early 2019, we estimate that Russia has a stockpile of roughly 4,490 nuclear warheads assigned for use by long-range strategic launchers and shorter-range tactical nuclear forces. Of these, roughly 1,600 strategic warheads are deployed on ballistic missiles at heavy

bomber bases, while another 1,070 strategic warheads are in storage along with about 1,820 non-strategic warheads. In addition to the military stockpile for operational forces, a large number – perhaps almost 2,000 – of retired but still largely intact warheads await dismantlement, for a total inventory of more than 6,490 warheads (Kristensen & Korda 2019, p. 72-73).

Russia has significantly reduced the number of warheads deployed on its ballistic missiles to meet the New START limit of no more than 1,550 deployed strategic warheads. Russia achieved the required reduction by the February 5, 2018 deadline, when it announced 1,444 strategic warheads were attributed to 527 launchers (Russian Federation Foreign Affairs Ministry 2018). Since then, Russia has made further reductions, bringing its total down to 1,420 warheads attributed to 517 launchers as of September 1, 2018. These numbers indicate that Russia has reduced the warhead loading on some of its missiles to less than what is typically assumed (Kristensen & Korda 2019, p. 72-73).

Overall, and despite these reductions, analysts argue that Russia's statements and behaviour continue to indicate a strong desire to leverage its status as a nuclear power. Its reduction of nuclear warheads is less a lowering of the threshold than a reminder that escalation is possible (Oiker 2016). The Russian nuclear problem is real and serious – but it is a political more rather than military problem (Tertrais 2018)?

Russian nuclear policy meets feminism

There are three strands to the feminist critique of the way in which states generally talk about nuclear weapons technology: first, the deployment of sexualised, phallic imagery; second, a tendency to abstraction; and, third, a reliance on gendered axioms (Duncanson & Eschle 2008). The latter two can be read when examining the *Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence*, signed on 2 June 2020 by President Putin. Though it seems to be gender-neutral in its language, its imagery and symbolism are highly gendered and hyper-masculinised.

The document reveals a great deal of anxiety about disarmament and a fear of emasculation, closely connected with a protectionist masculinist narrative. Following the statement that the 'ban on nuclear weapons is a mistake', this document insists on the protective nature of nuclear

weapons to ensure nuclear deterrence (paragraphs 1 and 2). It further goes into explanations as to the instances of such usage, including the protection of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, as well as reducing nuclear threats and preventing the aggravation of interstate relations that could trigger military conflicts (paragraph 4). When touching upon nuclear weapons technology, the *Basic Principles* uses highly abstract, euphemistic, and acronym-ridden language. The text talks about abstract 'deterrence' and 'protection' and when it uses descriptions of threats (paragraph 12) or principles of nuclear deterrence (paragraph 15) it never provides any specific examples. Such a discourse leaves out 'the emotional, the concrete, the particular, human bodies and their vulnerability, human lives and their subjectivity—all of which are marked [as] feminine' (Cohn, Hill, & Ruddick 2005). For a member of the defence community to speak of such things would mean they risk being discredited and disempowered in the male-dominated world in which they operate. Conversely, by silencing such perspectives using what is called 'technostrategic' language, defence intellectuals insulate themselves from the realities and consequences of their work. Russian defence intellectuals are very good at deploying these strategies when devising nuclear and military policies; indeed, technostrategic language is a prominent language of Russian diplomacy and policy making.

In the *Basic Principles*, "gender is just below the surface" (Duncanson & Eschle 2008) as the document consistently relies on gendered axioms based on underlying assumptions about the state and security which are suffused with masculine imagery. As I pointed out earlier, Russia is a firm believer in realism, a school of thought that sees the world as an anarchic system of self-interested states struggling to defend themselves through military power. Since World War Two, Realism has been the dominant approach in international relations as well as amongst statesmen, policymakers, and defence intellectuals (Sjoberg 2018). The Basic Principles construct deterrence discourse as protection against 'potential' adversaries which would perpetrate aggression against the Russian Federation and/or its allies (paragraph 9). In paragraph 12, the document outlines the main military threat that warrants deployment of nuclear weapons: building a military presence and weaponry, including defence systems, in places which the Russian Federation considers to be their sphere of influence. In realpolitik terms, the authors of the document view any military activity as a

threat that needs reciprocation and response.

As a final point, a general back-and-forth between Russia and states like the US seem to reflect hyper-masculine ideas. 'Conditional arms control' narratives reflect Russia's opening position for any future arms control negotiations (DeRosa 2017). In this way, Russia is painted as a trustworthy partner, meeting its treaty obligations, and open for dialogue that appropriately balances national interests. However, a sense of insecurity is revealed when considering the enthusiasm for a legally binding guarantee that European missile defence will not target Russia. Alongside this, a reactionary narrative of 'broken promises' is gaining prominence after accusations of Russian breaches of the INF treaty. In response, Russia has asserted that these allegations are unfounded and groundless and provided a counter-suit of American violations of the treaty, attempting to reframe Russia as a trustworthy partner fulfilling its obligations. A focus on 'partnership' is particularly interesting and echoes the early 2000s political discourses of Putin when he tried to build international policy as a modern project. However, perpetual talks of 'broken promises' and betrayed partnerships, and Russia's insistence on correcting such perceptions, demonstrates a level of fear over a loss of its prominent and dominant masculine power and respect, important components of any construction of masculinity.

Conclusion

In no way has Russia been making any efforts to pursue an FFP and its principles. Indeed, Russian foreign policy and nuclear policy are very masculine projects designed and executed within the framework of re-gaining proper manhood and respect. At its current stage, Russian policies are deeply rooted in realpolitik ideas. However, this does not mean feminism is of no use. Utilising a feminist lens on Russian nuclear policy reveals a complex web of fear and pride oriented around specific ideas about masculinity. And there are glimmers of engagement with ideas around gender equality. Russia continues to support UN initiatives based on UNSCR 1325, if only within the 'protection of women' framework. As a first step toward state-backed enthusiasm for gender equality, Russia must overcome its protectionist frameworks and 'traditional values' ideology in order to understand security from a human point of view. In parallel to this, the participation of women in political decision-making must increase as

well, as it remains very low in present day Russia (Muravyeva & Hoare 2020). With these two aspects in place, space can be better made for new and alternative ideas, including feminist ones.

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A FEMINIST NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW

Yasmeen Silva

Throughout human history, military, governance, and diplomatic strategies have been developed with patriarchal values. The United States (U.S.) is no exception. The tactics and strategies the U.S. deploys in its foreign affairs tend to perpetuate violence both at home and abroad due to its reliance on capitalist and neo-colonial systems, as well as gendered ideas about security. Traits that are typically coded as masculine, like strength and force, tend to be valued to assert the U.S.'s agenda without compromise. Its antithesis, coded as feminine and therefore "weak", includes conversation, empathy, and compromise. In U.S. foreign policy, masculine traits are continually prioritised and accepted as "best" for managing international relationships. This manifests in a bloated defence budget with an over-reliance on militarism as the standard avenue for resolving conflict, thereby diminishing the role of the Department of State and diplomatic routes. The outcome is a roadmap for decreased stability and increased reliance on intimidation as the key means of peacekeeping.

All of these dynamics can be read through the federal government's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), an outline of the U.S.'s nuclear deterrent capabilities which tends to be updated under each new administration. The most recent iteration was published in 2018, and it's abundantly clear: when it comes to nuclear policy, military options are favoured over diplomacy, and humanity takes a backseat to bravado. But if the U.S. were to develop an NPR with feminist values instead of patriarchal ones, what would occur? This article will explore how nuclear policy would change for the better if the U.S. adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP).

Patriarchy, Kyriarchy, and Feminist Foreign Policy

Feminism has a variety of strains and means different things to different people, however, most can agree that it's a set of values that prioritises, at minimum, gender equality. To me, feminism means that all people are free to live their life without needing to worry about institutional and systemic gendered expectations and oppressions. It's an antidote to patriarchy, a system which privileges men over women, and also to kyriarchy, a term coined by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza (2001) to encompass all forms of oppression, including racism, capitalism, ableism, ageism, and classism, amongst others. Kyriarchy acknowledges that the relationship between each of these systems is intersectional, and they feed into and exacerbate one another (Ferguson, 2014).

As Schussler Fiorenza (2001) points out, in a kyriarchy, people in power are prioritised. Understanding feminism in relationship to kyriarchy, then, allows us to see larger systems of power and how they contribute to oppressing or privileging certain people based on their social category. In applying these ideas to national security, this means that security policies often act to sustain unequal social hierarchies. Everyday Americans bear the brunt of government decisions and are offered up like pawns. Nuclear testing, for example, has had devastating and long-lasting impacts on communities like the Navajo Nation and Marshallese people, while nuclear policy makers have made life-altering decisions without risk of exposure to the consequences themselves (Heely, 2018). Those who push the nuclear envelope have access to early warnings, bunkers, and knowledge that allows them the means to escape the consequences of their own decisions easily, allowing the everyday person to shoulder the consequences. In order to sustain such exploitation, a key strategy is to ensure the general population feels safe despite the absence of actual safety with ideas like deterrence.

But nuclear policy may soon get a shake up. In September 2020, 23 members of Congress introduced new legislation, H.Res. 1147, on the floor of the House calling for the USA to adopt an FFP (United States House of Representatives, 2020). It expresses the "importance of taking a feminist approach to all aspects of foreign policy, including foreign assistance and humanitarian response, trade, diplomacy, defense, immigration, funding, and accountability mechanisms." An FFP goes beyond equal representation, as simply adding more women into political leadership would not inherently change the kyriarchal

objectives of foreign policy. Instead an FFP sets human rights and equality as the main foreign policy goal, thereby creating the conditions for a safer and more prosperous country and world.

H.Res. 1147 makes no mention of nuclear policy, thought it does call for defence efforts "to support the goal of a more peaceful, equitable, and healthy planet, with peace as the ultimate aim of defense" and notes that women must be meaningfully included in peace negotiations, and that military policy must prevent and respond to gender-based violence in conflict. While an excellent start it is critical to explicitly understand how such a framework would change U.S. nuclear policy for the better.

A Feminist Nuclear Posture Review?

This article will focus on the NPR as a useful place to understand where nuclear policy currently stands, and how it could potentially change under an FFP. The NPR is used to detail an administration's approach to nuclear policy, and in recent history, has been updated with each new administration. The most recent NPR, published in 2018 under President Donald Trump, affirms the long-term commitment to expanding an already enormous nuclear arsenal. As justification for this, the NPR mentions multiple times that other nuclear powers are expanding their arsenals too (United States of America. Department of Defense, 2018, pp. 1-2, 6, 30, 33). The logic is that this game of keeping up will maintain the number of nuclear weapons in parallel and therefore mitigate the risk of a nuclear exchange. This idea is packaged and sold to the American public in order to justify the slow growing arms race. The masculinised and patriarchal underbelly was infamously demonstrated by President Donald Trump when he claimed his "button" is bigger and better than that of nuclear competitor Kim Jong Un.

Basing nuclear policy on the idea that "if others posture we must posture too" invites a greater risk of nuclear exchange. There is no shortage of disturbing historical examples to demonstrate this. From a flock of geese read by sensors as incoming missiles to the accidental dropping of nuclear bombs on North Carolina that thankfully did not go off, it is clear - the more weapons we have and the faster they can be launched, the easier it will be to engage in a nuclear exchange which would kill millions. The impact of even one nuclear detonation is

devastating and creates long-term consequences (Toon et al., 2019). This leads to another striking aspect of the NPR, which is how casually it discusses survivability not of the country's residents, but of the nuclear arsenal. It does not mention the innocent civilians who would bear the brunt of a U.S. nuclear attack, and only discusses how this posturing looks to opposing governments. The safety of everyday people are overlooked in favour of the needs of looking strong.

Bundled into the idea of "keeping up" are additional problematic modalities of thinking that have their roots in kyriarchy. The U.S. frames its expansion of the arsenal as defensive while it views other countries' expansions as threatening. The inability (or refusal) to see things from another perspective leads to arms racing and to a breakdown in diplomatic processes that exacerbate tensions. For example, China has around 300 warheads to the U.S.'s 4,000+. By holding up China's expansion of their arsenal as a reason to stall treaty negotiations with other nuclear armed states like Russia, the U.S. is practicing a kind of exceptionalism that is dangerous for its residents. Outcomes like the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA) and other diplomatic and "soft" endeavours have produced positive outcomes where traditional, patriarchal approaches have failed. However, with an administration that ascribes to hyper-masculine ideas about leadership, we have seen the U.S. not only fail to begin renegotiations of cornerstone treaties such as New START, but we have also seen it break faith with other treaties such as the JCPOA, despite Iran's compliance. To allow even a marginal increase in other states' arsenals is understood as losing a degree of power, and as the current foreign policy status quo is built on patriarchal ideas of power hoarding, ceding it is unacceptable.

Lastly, the NPR states that "the United States will strive to end any conflict and restore deterrence at the lowest level of damage possible for the United States, allies, and partners, and minimise civilian damage to the extent possible consistent with achieving objectives." (United States of America. Department of Defense, 2018, p. 23) Human life, as framed in this document, is a secondary consideration. The amount of damage that civilians are expected to endure is wholly dependent on 'achieving objectives'. Were the Nuclear Posture Review filtered through a feminist lens, the objective would be not just to preserve human life but to make the health and wellbeing of society the primary concern of any national security plan. In reality, the mere

existence of nuclear weapons is antithetical to an FFP. But as they do exist, it is critical that an FFP works to ensure that they are never used and that we take a step away from the hyper-gendered ideas about what and who makes good policies. This will allow us to lessen risks and move the U.S. toward active disarmament.

Brief Recommendations for a Feminist Nuclear Posture Review

1] Declare a No First Use policy.

2] Normalise and increase communications and diplomatic relations with other nuclear armed states and states engaging with nuclear weapons technology.

3] Prioritise diplomatic solutions.

4] Decrease the number of nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal.

5] Eliminate land-based missiles.

6] Halt large-scale nuclear modernisation.

7] Abandon “low-yield” nuclear weapons.

8] Move the money saved from cutting and eliminating some of these programs into diplomacy and domestic programs like healthcare, education, social safety nets, etc.

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