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STATEMENT:

Honored members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I am delighted to be with you today. I hope my short remarks on the linkages between male/female relations, radicalization, and terrorism may be of use to you.

My research team at The WomanStats Project (<http://womanstats.org>) has been examining the relationship between gender inequality and marriage market obstruction on the one hand, and the security and stability of nation-states on the other, for some time now. This research is most recently funded by the Minerva Initiative of the US Department of Defense.

In our efforts, we have concentrated on women’s personal empowerment or disempowerment at the household level, rather than examining broader indicators such as female literacy, female laborforce participation, or female representation in parliaments. Rather, we examine things closer to home, such as property and inheritance rights, rights in marriage, rights in divorce and custody, level of violence against women in the home--in total eleven such indicators of women’s empowerment at the household level. Then, using large-N multivariate modeling techniques, we found that this measure is strongly and significantly related to multiple measures of political instability, autocracy, lack of freedoms, corruption and internal conflict. In fact, the overall best predictor of state stability was not our control variables, such as urbanization, ethnic fractionalization, former colonial status, and several others, but rather women’s empowerment at the household level. [1]

Why would there be such a strong and significant association? We argue that the character of male/female relations at the household level is the first political order created within any human society, and that this order shapes the development of the nation-state in indelible ways. If the household is an autocracy where men rule over those who are different from them—women; if men feel they have the right to use physical force against those who are different from them—women; if men feel entitled to greater access to household resources than those who are different from them—women; this is the template that will be applied to *all* who are deemed different in the larger society. This explains why Elin Bjarnegard and her co-authors have found that men holding deeply gender unequal beliefs also hold far more hostile attitudes towards minorities and foreign nations—and are also more likely to be involved in committing political violence. [2, 3] How women are treated by men becomes a boot camp, if you will, training men in the arts of violent and exploitative autocracy.

Does the boot camp hypothesis hold for terrorism, as well? Yes, it does. Again using large-N multivariate modeling, we found that every measure of terrorism we examined, including the Political Terror Scale, the Terrorism Impact Score, and

Terrorism Fatalities, was strongly and significantly associated with women's personal disempowerment at the household level. Train men to terrorize women, and you train them in terrorism. Relatedly, this also helps explain why the overwhelming majority of mass shooters in the United States have histories of domestic violence. [4]

We also undertook a second angle of investigation into the links to terrorism, and examined nations' comparative rate of production of foreign fighters going to ISIS-controlled territory over the last few years. That is, adjusting for their total population size, which nations were producing more (or less) of these foreign fighters? Using data from the Soufan Group on estimated numbers of foreign fighters from each country, we found a very strong and significant relationship between the national production rate of foreign fighters and our measure of women's personal disempowerment at the household level. This is a second corroboration of the boot camp hypothesis, and I'd like to note that this particular research was conducted by my graduate capstone research team at the Bush School of Government and Public Service for the Office of Global Women's Issues at the US State Department.

There is an additional way in which the societal structure of male/female relations affects the level of terrorist and rebel activity within the society, and that is through providing goads that make the recruitment of young men by terrorist and rebel groups very easy. For example, about 75% of the world's population lives in societies in which marriage involves a substantial payment, and most of the time that takes the form of brideprice, where the groom must pay the bride's father. This often involves a large sum of money or assets—usually several times the annual income of the family. Brideprice is subject to often dramatic inflation, much like real estate bubbles, and such inflation prices many young men out of the marriage market altogether. Terrorist and rebel groups become aware of the ensuing grievance, and will offer to pay brideprice on behalf of young men who would otherwise not be able to marry. In a recent article, Hilary Matfess and I explore this phenomenon, and find that many groups use brideprice to attract recruits, such as Boko Haram, Lashkar-e-Taiba, ISIS, Hezbollah, and many others. Some governments, such as the Saudi government, understand this linkage and try to put legal caps on brideprice, as well as pay brideprice for their most vulnerable young men. [5]

Remembering that brideprice is part of that first political order that subordinates and "others" women within their own households, we see that in addition to being a boot camp for terror, this first political order can also produce goads for young men to join terrorist and rebel groups. That is, the marriage market becomes chronically obstructed as a result of that subordinative order. Polygyny also serves the same type of goading function; for example, recruitment of young men into terrorist and rebel groups in West Africa has been linked by researchers to areas of more prevalent polygyny, for polygyny also obstructs the marriage market for young men. [6] In similar fashion, sex ratio alterations, in which girls are culled from the population through sex-selective abortion and female infanticide, can likewise produce outcomes in which tens of millions of women go missing, similarly obstructing marriage markets due to the scarcity of women. [7] Lest you feel this is an issue only in China and India, there are now 19 nations with seriously abnormal birth sex ratios, including countries such as Armenia, Albania, and Azerbaijan. [8] When you subordinate women at the household level, as brideprice, polygyny, and sex ratio alteration all do, societies become *structurally* unstable, and the link to terror and rebellion become clear.

In conclusion, by providing a training course in terrorism as well as creating structural instability within a society, the character of male/female relations is a strong

determinant of the horizon for peace and security within a society. This means that gender equality is thus a hard security issue, and is recognized as such by this Congress through its passage of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017. As a former Secretary of State put it in 2012, “The subjugation of women is a threat to the common security of our world and to the national security of our country.” [9]

Thank you so much for your invitation to address this subcommittee.

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