SECURITY and the WAR ON TERROR

Edited by Alex J. Bellamy, Roland Blair, Sara E. Davies and Richard Devetak
The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 marked a turning point in international politics, representing a new type of threat that could not easily be addressed through conventional state-based structures of security. Opening up interdisciplinary conversations between strategies, economic, political, and legal approaches to global terrorism, this edited book recognizes a fundamental issue. While measures taken to reinforce old thinking and behaviours perhaps, they also feed into established ethical and psychological entrenched habits, thereby creating the foundations for a new and perhaps more peaceful future.

The objective of this volume is to address the issues that arise in state and non-state processes of terrorism, violence, and terrorism to redefine how states can respond to new threats. The contributors offer a unique contribution to the development of a methodology that can be applied across social sciences from various disciplines to understand this domain. This book explores how terrorism has had a critical impact on state security and how it is being constructed and implemented, and poses a range of questions regarding the concept of threat. It analyses the relationship between power, violence, law, and ethical dilemmas to conceptualize the nature and meaning of security in a rapidly changing world.

This book is of interest to students of Terrorism Studies, Security Studies, International Law and International Relations in general.

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Security and the War on Terror

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 marked a turning point in international politics, representing a new type of threat that could not easily be anticipated or prevented through state-based structures of security alone. Opening up interdisciplinary conversations between strategic, economic, ethical and legal approaches to global terrorism, this edited book recognises a fundamental issue: while major crises initially tend to reinforce old thinking and behavioural patterns, they also allow societies to challenge and overcome entrenched habits, thereby creating the foundations for a new and perhaps more peaceful future.

The objective of this volume is to address the issues that are at stake in this dual process of political closure, and to therefore rethink how states can respond to terrorist threats. The contributors offer a unique combination, being drawn from leading conceptual theorists to policy-oriented analysts, from senior academics to junior researchers. The book explores how terrorism has had a profound impact on how security is being understood and implemented, and uses a range of hitherto neglected sources of insight, such as those between political, economic, legal and ethical factors, to examine the nature and meaning of security in a rapidly changing world.

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Contents

Contributors ix

Introduction 1
ALEX J. BELLAMY AND ROLAND BLEIKER

PART I
Security and terrorism 7

1 Security studies, 9/11 and the long war 9
PAUL D. WILLIAMS

2 Cause and effect in the war on terror 25
ANTHONY BURKE

3 ‘War on terror’/‘war on women’: critical feminist perspectives 42
KATRINA LEE-KOO

PART II
Ethics, emotions and law in the war on terror 55

4 Emotions in the war on terror 57
EMMA HUTCHISON AND ROLAND BLEIKER

5 International law and the state of exception 71
SARA E. DAVIES

6 New thinking in the just war tradition: theorizing the war on terror 93
CIAN O’DRISCOLL
PART III
Fighting terror 123

8 Failures, rogues and terrorists: states of exception and the North/South divide 125
   RICHARD DEVETAK

9 US bioterrorism policy 142
   CHRISTIAN ENEMARK

10 Ethics and intelligence in the age of terror 156
   HUGH SMITH

11 The international campaign to counter the financing of terrorism 177
   J. C. SHARMAN

Conclusion 190
   SARA E. DAVIES AND RICHARD DEVETAK

References 199
Index 224
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Introduction

Alex J. Bellamy and Roland Blumberg

The purpose of this volume is to offer a critical but practically oriented platform for debates around the key-law issues that are central to defining the nature of contemporary wars-wars that are fought not just on the battlefield but also in the corridors of international politics. To this end, the editors have invited experts from around the world to contribute their insights on a range of topics, including the role of international law in preventing and responding to war, the impact of modern warfare on the civilian population, and the challenges posed by the use of new technologies in military operations. Through these essays, readers will gain a deeper understanding of the complex issues at play in contemporary conflicts and the legal frameworks that seek to address them.
The evolution of the way we interact with our environment is a crucial aspect of our development as a species. Our understanding of the natural world and our ability to adapt to it are fundamental to our survival and prosperity.

Linguistic means of communication are not just essential for human beings, but are also critical for the development of any species. The evolution of language has been a key factor in the evolution of the human species. As our ability to communicate with one another has increased, so has our capacity to understand and interpret the world around us.

The evolution of the way we interact with our environment is a crucial aspect of our development as a species. Our understanding of the natural world and our ability to adapt to it are fundamental to our survival and prosperity.
Although the current policy, and the other effective policies discussed above, have a significant impact on the situation, it is essential to consider the impacts of the policies on the long-term outcomes. The policies need to be evaluated in light of the projected outcomes to determine if they are effective in achieving the desired results. The policies should be adapted and adjusted as necessary to meet the changing circumstances. The policies should also be reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to be effective and relevant. The policies should be transparent and open to public scrutiny to ensure accountability and trust. The policies should be backed by strong evidence and research to support their effectiveness. The policies should be designed to be flexible and adaptable to changing needs and circumstances. The policies should be monitored and evaluated regularly to determine their effectiveness.
Security and Terrorism

Part I

...economic, legal and ethical factors that the pressures of
range of, at least partially, sources of insight, such as those between political,
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Questioning the key assumptions that guide security thinking should therefore be

...
3 ‘War on terror’/‘war on women’

Critical feminist perspectives

Katrina Lee-Koo

The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and the dignity of women.

This claim was made by the First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush, in a radio address to the nation two months after the September 11 terrorist attacks. It was designed to ‘kick off a world-wide effort to focus on the brutality against women and children by the al-Qaida terrorist network and the regime it supports in Afghanistan, the Taliban’ (Bush, 2001). Fulfilling a long-held feminist ambition, the world’s most powerful leaders (and their wives) turned their focus and resources to the abuses suffered by Afghan women at the hands of the brutal Taliban regime. After decades of neglect, complicity, and perhaps even tacit involvement in the terror facing Afghan women, the United States government now claimed to be taking the lead in addressing gendered oppression. While most feminists applauded the attention that this issue was now receiving, many did so with caution. And they were right to be cautious.

It has been over half a decade since Laura Bush’s proclamation. Yet, in this ongoing and bloody ‘War on Terror’, now fought in both Afghanistan and Iraq, security still eludes women. If anything, the situation for women has dramatically worsened. Unfulfilled promises of economic, personal and political security linger in Afghanistan while increasing, deliberate, and chaotic violence rages against women in Iraq. The ‘War on Terror’ has distanced many women in these battle zones from any sense of basic physical security. Consequently, when examined from a critical feminist security studies perspective, the ‘War on Terror’ has in many ways become a ‘War on Women’ as multiple terrors infiltrate their lives.

Critical feminist intervention has sought to reveal and analyse these new terrors burgeoning out of the ‘War on Terror’ project. Overwhelmingly this research points to a security project which is driven by a western hyper-masculinity, relies upon the use of force, and attempts to enforce a singular, hegemonic notion of political security. All three of these designs disparage characteristics assigned to the feminine. Feminist analysis reveals how the ‘War on Terror’ project sometimes relies upon this denigration, while at other times carelessly causes and disregards it. This analysis reveals, embedded in the ‘War on Terror’s’ design, the potential for a plethora of human security threats to women. For example, US servicewomen fighting the war in Iraq have reported some of the worst sexual harassment the
US military has seen. Since the 2003 invasion there have been over 500 filed complaints of sexual harassment in the US military (Goldenberg, 2006b) while cases of domestic violence in military families in the US have risen dramatically since the US deployment to Afghanistan (Komp, 2006). Furthermore, gendered identities are tightly patrolled and the ‘War on Terror’ is played out on women’s bodies. In Australia and the UK, the debates surrounding Muslim women’s wearing of the veil in workplaces and public spaces (BBC, 2006) see the use of women’s bodies to patrol and discipline identity and belonging in this time of terror.

Elsewhere, the perceived emasculation of Afghan and Iraqi men by the presence and power of occupying Coalition troops is considered a contributing factor to the rise in domestic violence in those countries (see IRIN, 2006a and Hammer, 2003). Approximately 90 Iraqi women become widows every day (IRIN, 2006c) and women in both Iraq and Afghanistan are now more likely to become victims of honour crimes, trafficking, poverty and spontaneous violence than they were prior to the invasions of their countries (Beaumont, 2006). While this is only a snapshot, critical feminist analysis carefully traces, reveals and documents these consequences of the ‘War on Terror’ for women.

This chapter applies a critical feminist security studies analysis to better account for these crises facing women’s lives. In doing so it peels away the layers of misrepresentation that suggest this ‘War on Terror’ is a ‘War for Security’. Instead, it points to the terror that bedevils women’s lives to argue that the current course of action will not address terrorism, in any of its forms, or bring security to people’s lives in a way that encourages peace to germinate. By investigating examples from both the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns of the ‘War on Terror’, this chapter suggests that a critical feminist approach offers three useful insights into the study of security and the ‘War on Terror’. First, it offers a new way of theorising key decisions, issues and events by highlighting the gendered dynamics implicit in them, as well as the gendered effects of them. Here, the manipulation of the identities of the ‘Afghan women’ during the bombing of Afghanistan, the rescue of Pfc Jessica Lynch in Iraq, and Lynndie England’s role in the Abu Ghraib scandal is revealed. These examples demonstrate the deep seated gendered assumptions that the ‘War on Terror’’s claim to moral justification, ethical behaviour, and an emotional/political sense of ‘right’, relies upon. Second, this chapter offers a hitherto unexamined range of gendered issues which are clearly embedded either as integral to, or a product of, the ongoing conflict. It looks particularly at the appalling raft of insecurities facing women in central and southern Iraq in the current phase of the ‘War on Terror’ campaign. In doing so, it does not claim that women are the only victims of the ‘War on Terror’ or that their suffering is necessarily more drastic than other members of their community. Rather, this analysis demonstrates the utility of feminist methodologies in reflecting gendered experiences and therefore constructing and revealing more honest narratives of the ‘War on Terror’. 
Unveiling gendered wars

The dramatic opening of the ‘War on Terror’ reads like an old-fashioned rescue romance drama. Smarting from an attack on its homeland, the strong and brave hero/protector seeks out those supposedly responsible and not only exacts revenge but rescues oppressed and vulnerable damsels in the process. Far from being facetious, this underlying tale of powerful masculinity and feeble femininity motivated the moral, political and ethical justification for the US attack upon Afghanistan in the wake of the September 11 tragedies. In doing so it relied upon a widespread acceptance of what feminists refer to as the ‘protection myth’. The ‘protection myth’ simply identifies uncivilised ‘bad’ men torturing or threatening vulnerable and powerless women who require rescuing by enlightened and heroic ‘good’ men. Stehlm (1982) articulates this as being a triangular relationship between the protected/victim, the threat/villain, and the protector/hero. However, despite its simplicity, the ‘protection myth’ only functions if each party conforms to their gendered roles. For the protector, his gendered identity reveals a parallel masculinity in operation. On the one side his masculinity is embodied in the aggressive and militaristic characteristics required to launch war, but attending that is also a chivalrous and gallant attitude towards the vulnerable feminine (Young 2003: 224). On the other hand, the threat/villain identity embodies masculinity’s dark side: uncivilised, barbarous and cruel, while the victim/protected remains helpless and often voiceless. The ‘protection myth’ is a powerful narrative that has a long association with wars and colonial and frontier projects. It directs and disciplines gendered identities in ways that serve the state project. Men who refuse to defend women’s honours in war are labelled cowards and unpatriotic; women who refuse to accept help or support their men are considered similarly treacherous or ignorant of their own good.

It was within this framework of a ‘protection myth’ that the US drew much of its moral and political justification for launching the ‘War on Terror’. The US drew upon the very real barbarism exacted upon Afghan women by the Taliban regime to assuage any doubt that the enemy they were facing was indeed ‘evil’, or that the US wanted more than revenge. In order to establish an emotional and moral grounding for this campaign, Afghani women were cast into the role of the feminine victim in need of rescue. Promoted by war leaders and the media, the plight of Afghan women became one of the main international news stories after September 11. Coverage of Afghan women in print and broadcast media across the US increased dramatically in the weeks after September 11 (Stabile and Kumar, 2005: 772). Images of Afghan women in burqas were splashed across front pages and in the period between September 11, 2001 and January 1, 2002 US mainstream newspapers published six times as many articles on the plight of Afghan women than they had in the previous 18 months (Stabile and Kumar, 2005: 772). Behind their burqas these women remained largely silent but were nonetheless the dividing line between the ‘evil’ Taliban and ‘good’ Coalition forces. Furthermore, suggestion of the women’s overwhelming gratitude for their liberation was a focal point of the ‘success’ of Operation Enduring Freedom.
For instance, as US ground troops forced their way into Afghanistan *USA Today* described a scene where 'six (Afghan women) shed the enveloping burqas that the Taliban forces all women to wear, threw them on the fire and lit the way for their rescuers' (quoted in Stabile and Kumar, 2005: 773).

While the role of Afghan women was more visual than vocal, the wives of both the US and UK’s leaders provided the moral, feminine legitimacy to the bombing campaign. In what were unique interventions into politics by both Laura Bush and Cherie Blair, each made a major address to their respective nations on the issue of women’s rights in Afghanistan. Bush’s address from her family’s Texas ranch on 17 November 2001 was the first time that a First Lady had given the weekly radio presidential address. She used her on-air time to describe the oppression of the ‘Taliban and its terrorist allies’ and claimed that ‘civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror – not only because our hearts break for the women and children in Afghanistan, but also because in Afghanistan we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us’ (Bush, 2001). Two days after Mrs Bush’s speech, Cherie Blair, along with women Cabinet ministers, made a similar plea on behalf of Afghan women. Mrs Blair claimed that ‘the women in Afghanistan are as entitled as the women in any country are to have the same hopes and aspirations for ourselves and for our daughters – a good education and career outside the home if they want one, the right to healthcare and, of course, most importantly, a right for their voices to be heard’ (BBC, 2001). References by Bush to ‘civilised people’ and Blair to the universalising of women’s rights alludes to both an orientalism as well as a universalism of liberal feminist views on women’s rights. Furthermore, the use of the ‘wives’ to speak of ‘women’s issues’ suggests a maternal or feminine knowledge which legitimises only women to speak with authority and empathy of these issues as if they weren’t human rights concerns.

In this sense, it neatly demarcates the gendered roles and responsibilities of the issue. In her address Laura Bush spoke as a mother, a wife and a woman from her home in Texas while her husband directed a military campaign from his office in Washington. For Laura Bush, the abuse in Afghanistan was not a political or a politised issue but one of morality and common humanity. After all, what civilised person would stand idly by while innocent and defenceless women were tortured?

Reminiscent of the ‘white feathers campaign’ of the First World War where British women goaded young men to join the Army, Laura Bush linked the ‘War on Terror’ and the violence against women in a way that suggested that to not support the war was tantamount to complicity and cowardice. As a strong and powerful feminine (but not feminist) character, Laura Bush played an important role in legitimating the protection scenario and disciplining gendered identities. She was aptly suited to her role as feminine mother of the nation sending her sons to war in a just cause. Less prominent, however, were those whose behaviour did not conform to the dominant narrative. For example, the US and UK media and political establishments had a short-lived alliance with RAWA (Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan). RAWA, a women’s rights NGO founded in 1977, used the opportunity provided by the media interest to expose
the treatment of women in Afghanistan. In return, their stories and resources were used by the war leaders to demonstrate the demonic nature of the enemy. However this became politically inconvenient for the war leaders as RAWA behaved less as vulnerable and grateful damsels in distress and more as active, self-determining feminists. With a long tradition of political activism, RAWA independently stepped out of the feminised private realm and into public sphere politics unchaperoned by a male protector. When it became clear that RAWA's emancipatory ambitions diverged from those of liberal feminists in the US and, particularly, when they opposed the US-led bombing of their homeland (Pettman, 2004: 90) the alliance came to an abrupt end. On the fifth anniversary of the US bombing of Afghanistan, RAWA member Zoya (2006) proclaimed: 'No doubt the war on terror toppled the misogynist and barbaric regime of Taliban. But it did not remove Islamic fundamentalism, which is the root cause of misery for all Afghan people; it just replaced one fundamentalist regime with another'. Such conclusions, contrary to those of the architects of the 'War on Terror', meant that RAWA lost its legitimacy and alliance with the US war leaders.

During the Iraq campaign, the political manipulation of gendered identities as a means of encouraging an emotional and moral response to the war was best seen during the dramatic rescue of US Private Jessica Lynch by US Navy Seals and Army Rangers in April 2003. The rescue of Jessica Lynch 'was one of the most extensively covered events [by media in the US] of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq' (Kumar, 2004: 297). Lynch was a 19 year old woman from West Virginia who had been deployed to Iraq as a supply clerk with the US Army. During a transport mission in Nassiriya her convoy had taken a wrong turn and was ambushed by Iraqi soldiers. A gun battle ensued in which 11 US soldiers were killed. Lynch was taken by Iraqi soldiers to a nearby hospital where she was held for eight days and given medical attention before her comrades, in spectacular fashion, burst through the doors of the civilian medical facility and whisked Lynch to nearby transport. The rescue was filmed and edited into a five minute tape which was released to media networks. When Lynch returned to the US she arrived home to a mass of media and public interest who lauded her heroism and bravery in the face of the enemy. She was the subject of a mass of print and broadcast media. The documentary Saving Private Lynch and the drama Saving Jessica Lynch were both aired in November 2003. This coincided with Veterans' Day in the US and the publication of her book I am a Soldier, Too written by journalist Rick Bragg. She was interviewed in the US by Diane Sawyer, Katy Couric and David Letterman, and was the feature story in many news magazines. Yet, while this simple narrative remains largely uncontested, the rest of her story has been a complex matrix of competing interests and intrigues most of which have been motivated and mobilised in pursuit of a particular political vision about the war, and the roles of gendered identities within it.

Read in its simplest terms, the rescue of Lynch was a rare, yet spectacular, good news story from a war zone that was degenerating for the United States. The narrative of brave, heroic and self-sacrificing hyper-masculine identities who stormed in to save a weaker, captive, distressed feminine identity from a brutal and
calculating enemy provided a number of simple moral metaphors for which the US, as a nation, could once more feel good about the war. In each of these metaphors Lynch plays the identities which have been feminised by September 11. She plays the feminine nation of the United States, aggressively and violently attacked and violated on September 11: a simple, kind-hearted, home-grown all-American girl. She loves her family and is from a small, close-knit community where she once won Miss Congeniality in a beauty pageant. References to her homeland, her femininity and her vulnerability all play into the broader representations of the US nation and its innocence. For Takacs (2005: 302), ‘this exclusive yet reassuring image of national identity conforms to the Bush administration’s own conception of the homeland as a vulnerable community in need of militarised protection’. In this case the military protection of the feminine nation is provided by the masculine state. Yet, in Iraq, Lynch provided a clear juxtaposition of American identity against that of the alien Iraqi Other. Against the backdrop of the Iraq desert, Lynch was both familiar and modern. Her blue eyes and blonde hair, her Army fatigue and big smile dramatically contrasts those of war weary Iraqi women who are largely covered up, denied many liberal rights, and lack the familiarity that Lynch inspires. Here Lynch embodies freedom, equality and modern entitlements, the very qualities which the US proposed to defend in the ‘War on Terror’.

This representation of Lynch, as soldier (yet feminine), and hero (yet in need of rescue) served a number of agendas within the US. On the one hand, the Lynch drama reveals the US to be a liberal, and indeed liberal feminist state. Initial reports, which later proved to be false, that Lynch ‘fought fiercely and shot several enemy soldiers ... firing her weapons until she ran out of ammunition’ (Schmidt and Leob, 2003) during the dramatic gun battle in Iraq reminded the nation of its liberal equality in allowing women to be heroes. On the other hand, while the ‘fact’ that Lynch is a hero is unquestioned, ‘her heroism is tempered by sexist notions of women’s bravery’ (Kumar, 2004: 301). After all, at the end of the day, she was still in need of masculine protectors. Either way, the narrative served as a sound and rational justification for the need for a hyper-masculine foreign policy, one which acts chivalrously and with aggressive determination, but is nonetheless in service of the moral good. While it superficially raised feminist issues relating to the role of women in fighting the ‘War on Terror’, the manipulation of Lynch as a gendered identity was ultimately undertaken in the service of a patriarchal foreign policy designed to use gender to generate ‘good spin’ on a war going badly. It encouraged an emotional, rather than strategic, response to a situation by manipulating the perceived vulnerability of femininity in international politics. This femininity was literally embodied in Jessica Lynch but metaphorically graphed onto the nation of the United States and to an extent, the nation of a feminised Iraq, brutally raped by Saddam Hussein and rescued by American soldiers. The public acceptance of the multiple metaphors of Lynch’s rescue relied upon, and needed to be unsuspicious of, deep-seated gendered politics manipulated by the Pentagon and the Bush Administration. These gendered politics promoted and privileged a powerful and hegemonic hyper-masculinity and reinforced its obligation to do whatever it takes to protect the weak, the powerless and the vulnerable: in other words, the
feminine. In Jessica Lynch’s own words, ‘they used me as a way to symbolize all this stuff’ (quoted in Kumar 2004: 308).

The use of gendered identities becomes more complex when we include those of another young woman who, like Jessica Lynch, hailed from West Virginia and became an emotional, gendered symbol of the ‘War on Terror’. Lynndie England represented Jessica Lynch’s antithesis: England was not attractive, bright, bubbly, pure or adored by the nation. Yet, like Jessica Lynch, she prompted an emotional reaction to the ‘War on Terror’ and fuelled a particular public understanding of its role as a security project. Lynndie England was one of the seven reservists (three of whom were women) who were initially charged with prisoner abuses at the US run Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Images of England and her colleagues torturing and sexually abusing Iraqi prisoners became infamous around the world. Most recognisable of these photographs was one depicting England, only 20 years old when the photograph was taken, holding a naked Iraqi prisoner on a dog’s leash. While the raft of photographs included a number of England’s colleagues, with 13 eventually charged in relation to the abuses, it was England who became the poster-girl of Abu Ghraib.

Like Lynch, the representations of England’s femininity are both complex and, at times, carefully choreographed. Her gendered identity, within the context of Abu Ghraib, enabled her to be both powerful (though not in a feminist sense) and powerless. Her power derived from her ability, as a woman, to exact torture upon Iraqi prisoners. Her use of torture upon Iraqi prisoners elevated her to a position of masculine power while simultaneously serving to further feminise her victims. In addition to this, England’s position as American, part of an occupying force, in command of the prisoners, and being white all encouraged a masculine image of England. In the context of the Abu Ghraib prison these were all powerful identity markers in comparison with being Iraqi, brown-skinned, Muslim and captive. Juxtaposed to England, the Iraqi captives were stripped of their masculinity, and thereby their power. This also accounts for the sexualised nature of the violence. Now infamous pictures of naked men being forced to lie on top of each other, to masturbate in a line, to wear women’s underwear, and simulate homosexual acts can all be read as a manipulation of power dynamics designed to feminise the captives and masculinise the captors in a powerless/powerful dynamic. With her short hair and tomboy appearance England was assimilated into this role with comparative ease. The same could not be said, however, of her colleague Sabrina Harman, also convicted in the Abu Ghraib scandal, whose her blond hair and blue eyes made her seem, perhaps, uncomfortably like Jessica Lynch.

However, England’s relative position of power, obscene though it was, should not be read as a successful project of women’s empowerment. Lynndie England may have had the power to ‘hold the leash’ but she was still, as a woman, in an extremely vulnerable position. Perhaps she ‘chose’ to engage in torture but she did so within a military culture whose foundation lies in a commitment to hegemonic masculinity. While England admits thinking that the prisoner abuse was ‘weird’ (quoted in McKelvey, 2005), she claims that she was ordered to be involved. This was highlighted by her personal involvement with Charles Graner, 15 years her
senior, with whom she later had a child. Graner, when he first sent the photograph of England holding the prisoner’s leash to his family annotated the photo with ‘Look what I made Lynndie do’ (quoted in McKelvey, 2005). A more sympathetic reading of England’s femininity, then, sees her beholden to Graner, and to the military. Colonel Janis Karpinski, who was in charge of the Abu Ghraib facility, suggested that England saw a protector in Graner and was powerless against his whims and the orders from above (McKelvey, 2005). One commentator notes ‘England was a small-town girl, not even of legal drinking age, when she found herself halfway around the world, in an amoral place, surrounded by violence and infatuated with a volatile, manipulative man’ (McKelvey, 2005). Yet, the fact that Charles Graner, who had a history of violence against women, orchestrated much of the prisoner abuse did not offend the nation as much as the possibility that a young woman should have stepped so far out of her traditional gender role.

Attempts by the Bush Administration to explain away England and her colleague’s actions as those of a few ‘bad apples’ (Carter, 2004) also saw her complex gender identity used against her. Her masculine actions (and even appearance) were particularly deplorable to mainstream America. Yet there was the sense that because England’s behaviour was so abnormal to her gender, then her actions could be explained away as being an isolated aberration rather than a systemic problem within the military culture. Consequently, the Abu-Ghraib scandal could be dealt with by scapegoating an unprotected, junior ranked woman. In doing so, however, it does not address the possibility of systemic problems within the military’s culture that may have enabled the torture in the first place. Furthermore, it reinforces, rather than critically examines, the deployment of gender in this ‘War on Terror’. Currently serving a three-year sentence, England’s military attorney has advised her before she appears before the parole board to grow her hair long, in order to look more feminine (McKelvey, 2005).

**‘War on terror’/‘war on women’**

From American servicewomen to civilian women, the subordination of the feminine remains a constant feature of the ‘War on Terror’. In particular, the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, designed to lift the Iraqi people from ‘insecurity and tyranny’ (White House, 2003) has caused widespread insecurity for Iraqi women. Of course women have not been alone in their suffering, nor do they suffer necessarily to a greater extent than other members of the community. Feminist research however, has been important in highlighting specific violences against women, and analysing the specifically gendered impacts arising from the broader humanitarian tragedy currently engulfing Iraq. With international preoccupation focusing upon the broader, public issues of terrorism, state integrity, governance, sustainability of the occupation, and the general humanitarian crisis, often little attention is given to the effects of the war on women.

Claims that the ‘War on Terror’ is a ‘War for Security’ resonates little across Iraq. Institutional and effective security is not uniformly or consistently available to individuals, communities or the state itself. Personal or physical security,
security in the form of access to clean water, healthcare, electricity or stable employment is similarly not widespread (Lasky, 2006: 2). Within this environment of general chaos, women are finding their personal security particularly targeted. While the experiences of women across Iraq vary, and can depend upon class and geographic region, women in southern and central Iraq are finding their lives particularly threatened in the post-invasion period. The increase of kidnapping, rapes and murder of women has been documented by a number of human rights organisations and NGOs working in the conflict zone (see, for example, Amnesty International, 2005). Women have been targeted by individual Coalition troops and contractors (Goldenberg, 2006a; Harding 2004a and b), the Iraqi police, local criminal gangs and religious extremists (Beaumont, 2006). They are targeted for a number of reasons: to send a political message to their male ‘protectors’; to intimidate and discipline women’s beshaviour and activities; for criminal and illegal profit; and as a violent opportunity arising from the state’s lawlessness. A number of women professionals and activists have been targeted for assassination by religious militia groups who are trying to redesign the rights and opportunities available to women through violent intimidation (Shumway, 2005). For example, in 2005 the body of well-known pharmacist and women’s rights activist Zeena al-Qushtaini was discovered on a Baghdad highway ten days after her abduction. She had two bullet holes close to her eyes, had been dressed by her captors in the Islamic abaya, which she rarely wore, and had attached to it a message that read: ‘She was a collaborator against Islam’ (quoted in Shumway, 2005). She is one of dozens of women targeted because of their visible public profile.

The assassination of professionals constitutes only a small number of women who have been murdered or ‘disappeared’ in the new Iraq. The ‘Organisation for Women’s Freedom in Iraq’ has estimated that more than 2,000 Iraqi women have disappeared since the fall of Saddam (Bennett, 2006) while ‘Women’s Freedom’ has estimated nearly 3,500 (IRIN, 2006d). Many of these women have been stolen (or sold) into sexual slavery. Despite the new constitution explicitly prohibiting the trafficking of women and children (under Article 35), the chaos engulfing Iraq has made it easy for traffickers to force women out of Iraq and into prostitution industries and sexual slavery in Yemen, Syria, Jordan, and the Gulf countries (US State Department, 2005: 232). In a June 2005 report on trafficking the US State Department claimed that the extent of the problem in Iraq is ‘difficult to appropriately gauge’ but quoted evidence suggesting that ‘in Syria and Yemen, there are thousands of Iraqi women working in prostitution in the two countries under conditions that constitute severe forms of trafficking in persons’ (US State Department, 2005: 232). Taking advantage of women’s vulnerability and families’ desperateness, traffickers have lied, coerced and forced their way into a booming market where women and young girls are the commodity. Research indicates that women are abducted by organised criminal groups, sold by family members or tricked into believing that they will be working abroad for real wages (IRINd, 2006d). Attempts to stem the tide of trafficking by Iraqi police have been minimal. The State Department reports that efforts to train police on issues regarding trafficking have been ‘substituted with
additional security training in order to address ongoing insurgent activities' (US State Department, 2005: 233).

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism that has become evident in post-invasion Iraq has had mixed responses and mixed effects on the lives of Iraqi women. In central and southern Iraq particularly, radical clerics, conservative Shi’a political parties, and paramilitary forces have regained power after years of having their influence curtailed by Saddam’s regime. Consequently, Lasky (2006: 8) points out, ‘radical religious groups can more openly harass women who defy their interpretations of Shari’a’. This has seen a social patrolling and disciplining of women’s dress, behaviour and activities. Anecdotal evidence collected by NGOs and researchers suggest that women, particularly in urban areas, have been ‘terrorised’ into wearing the hijab (veil) or abaya (full length Islamic dress). Young women at colleges and universities have particularly been victims of attack and harassment designed to intimidate them to conform to radical interpretations of Islamic behaviour (Abdela, 2005). As already discussed, women participating in public issues and affairs have been subject to verbal threats and intimidations, acid attacks and assassination. Similarly, men and women advocating women’s rights have been subject to attacks. Reports suggest that 38 lawyers have been murdered and hundreds attacked for defending cases seen by radicals as contrary to Islam (IRIN, 2006b). The Iraqi Lawyers Association have indicated that lawyers advocating on behalf of women in cases of child custody, inheritance and honour crimes are particularly vulnerable to attack (IRIN, 2006b). In July 2006 a well-known lawyer, Salah Abdel-Kader, who handled cases of honour killings and custody issues, was shot dead in his Baghdad office. A note near his body stated ‘This is the price to pay for those who do not follow Islamic laws and defend what is dreadful and dirty’ (see IRIN, 2006b).

Lawyers have been particularly vocal in their criticisms of the new Iraqi constitution which will potentially see women stripped of their rights. Prior to the October 2005 unveiling of the constitution, US President George Bush told the American people in August that ‘the fact that Iraq will have a democratic constitution that honors women’s rights, the rights of minorities, is going to be an important change in the broader Middle East’ (Bush, 2005). Yet, for many Iraqi women, the ironic ‘fact’ is that women’s rights had better guarantee and consistency of access under Saddam’s dictatorship (Hunt and Posa, 2004: 42). While the new constitution ‘aims to achieve a percentage of women’s representation not less than one-quarter of the Council of Representatives members’ (Article 47), it does not necessarily translate into a clear women’s rights agenda. While the quota was successfully achieved in the transitional National Assembly elected in January 2005, nearly half of the women elected are members of a conservative Shi’a coalition and have not vocally deviated from the party’s conservative line (Lasky, 2006: 14). This supports suggestion that the parliament has been stacked by clerics ‘with women who had few qualifications or political ambitions of their own but who would blindly support their agenda’ (Philp, 2005). Most vocal of the women parliamentarians is Dr Jenan Al-Ubaedy who has spoken out in favour of polygamy and wife beating claiming that ‘If you say to a man he cannot use force
against a woman, you are asking the impossible ... So we say a husband can beat his wife, but he cannot leave a mark' (quoted in Philp, 2005).

Similarly, the interpretation of the constitution could also undermine efforts to protect women’s rights. While the new constitution ensures that ‘Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination based on gender, …’ (Article 14) it also establishes under Article 2 that ‘Islam is the official religion of the State and it is a fundamental source of legislation’ and ‘no law that contradicts the established provisions of Islam may be established’. As has been evident in a number of countries using Shari’a principles, the ‘established provisions of Islam’ are open to interpretation (see Lasky, 2006: 13). Interpretation of the constitution is undertaken by the Supreme Court, but the members of the Supreme Court will be determined by the Parliament. Lasky (2006: 13) points out that if conservative groups control the Parliament then conservative rulings will follow. Evidence of this has been the power of conservative Islamists to block the appointment of a female judge in Najaf. This ‘compromise’ of sacrificing Iraqi women’s political participation to pacify vocal minorities is hardly anomalous (Hunt and Posa, 2004, 40). This trend suggests that negotiations over governance and legislation will see the loss of women’s rights as the compromise between radical and moderate factions. Yet for the most part it still remains to be seen how this new constitution and its implementation will affect women with regard to issues such as inheritance, child custody, divorce, and justice for honour crimes and gendered violence. However early indications suggest that Iraq, which had previously been lauded as having some of the most progressive family and personal laws in the Middle East, will take a step backwards.

In short, the ‘War on Terror’ has brought terror to the lives of Iraqi women. Recognition of this highlights a deep, surging, and intricately interwoven counter-narrative of the ‘War on Terror’ which sees it not as a ‘War for Security’ but rather as a ‘War of Terror on Women’. While careful not to romanticise women’s lives under Saddam, the current chaos, uncertainty and tragedy in their lives engrains a basic physical and emotional insecurity that had been recently unknown in Iraq. Subsumed by the grand narratives of democracy, freedom and liberty, their tragedies, as demanding as those who perished in the twin towers, remain largely unheard. This is not historically peculiar. Throughout history, periods of dramatic political upheaval, which laud opportunities for ‘progressive change’, have simultaneously seen women’s rights and feminist agendas overwhelmed or compromised by apparently more pressing ambitions (see Bleiker, 2000). Lost in the clamour of international politics, many of these crises only become visible under a critical feminist lens which draws upon methodological, ontological and epistemological techniques specifically designed to focus on women’s lives. The result is research, analysis and knowledge that gives voice to the silent and legitimacy to the vulnerable.

This chapter has sought to add to this research by using a critical feminist approach to examine the claim that the ‘War on Terror’ is a ‘War for Security’. It has done so first by analysing the political manipulation of gender and gendered identities. In doing so it has demonstrated how this manipulation has provided
an important foundation for the creation of knowledge about the ‘War on Terror’ project. A critical analysis of the gendered uses and representations of women such as Laura Bush, Cherie Blair, Jessica Lynch and the collective ‘women of Afghanistan’ revealed a specific manipulation of their gendered identities toward a particular end: a moral justification and reinforcement for the ‘War on Terror’ in the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns. Meanwhile, the un-ladylike behaviour of Lynndie England could be dismissed as an aberration of her gender in the same breath as the immoral acts of Abu Ghraib could be dismissed as an aberration of the nation of the United States. Yet in both cases, public acceptance of a certain understanding of gender was vital: the feminine, be it either distressed or malicious is, in the grand scheme of things, vulnerable and powerless.

It is this understanding that has encouraged a healthy ignorance, and even a quiet expectation, of the hidden violence experienced by women in the ‘War on Terror’. It also goes some way to explaining how a war can be launched with the claim of fighting for ‘the rights and dignity of women’ (Bush 2001) yet remain so derelict in demonstrating any sustained concern for women’s basic security needs. The rhetorical regard for women as enumerated by the architects of this ‘War on Terror’ is devoid of any genuine feminist ambition. The second part of this chapter addressed the extent to which this has been the case by focusing specifically on the ongoing crisis in Iraq. In doing so it revealed how the injection of a feminist analysis uncovers a very different ‘War on Terror’ to the one often portrayed by the war’s leaders. Instead, it reveals a conflict which, on both sides, uses women’s identities and abuses women’s bodies in pursuit of its own goals. Critical feminist intervention seeks to highlight, analyse, and combat this culture which has already become so ingrained in the ‘War on Terror’. And while feminists continue to amass insights into, and micro-narratives of, women’s experiences, there is, emerging in Coalition nations, a broader public support for the critical feminist argument that a war for security is an oxymoron (Weeks, 2007).