

*“Masks and Veils: Uncovering Gender Inequalities from COVID-19 in Iran and Their  
Threat to U.S. Security”*

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14. ABSTRACT  The COVID-19 pandemic in Iran is not only a <i>health</i> crisis—its disproportionate effects on women and girls pose a <i>security</i> crisis that threatens U.S. vital national interests of peace and stability within the region. Gendered socio-economic disparities in Iran, exacerbated by the pandemic, have profound implications for U.S. national security. First, an intensified economic downturn destabilizes the region by encouraging a weakened Iran to deflect domestic turmoil by escalating the long-running conflict with the United States. Secondly, gender-biased economic and health impacts could create a geopolitical conflict with an elevated risk of internally displaced people seeking refuge. Further, this crisis also creates new opportunities for U.S. Great Power competitors—Russia and China—to expand their soft power influence in Iran by exploiting U.S. missteps in the Middle East. Under these circumstances, the U.S. must pursue a female-focused theater security strategy to coordinate a combination of various levers of national power, also known as <i>smart power</i> . This approach includes re-engaging <i>diplomatic</i> , <i>humanitarian</i> , and <i>economic</i> tools of power, emphasizing medical aid and economic support to Iranian women, using a multilateral framework of regional partners, allies, and organizations to build partner capacity and manage these security challenges.					
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*“My hopes for Iran's future lie with women first and foremost. Iran's feminist movement is very strong. This movement has no leader or headquarters. Its place is the home of every Iranian who believes in equal rights. This is currently the strongest women's movement in the Middle East.”<sup>1</sup>*

- Dr. Shirin Ebadi, J.D., 2003 Nobel Peace Prize recipient

## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic in Iran is not only a *health* crisis—its disproportionate effects on women and girls pose a *security* crisis that threatens U.S. vital national interests of peace and stability within the region. Gendered socio-economic disparities in Iran, exacerbated by the pandemic, have profound implications for U.S. national security. First, an intensified economic downturn destabilizes the region by encouraging a weakened Iran to deflect domestic turmoil by escalating the long-running conflict with the United States. Secondly, gender-biased economic and health impacts could create a geopolitical conflict with an elevated risk of internally displaced people seeking refuge. Further, this crisis also creates new opportunities for U.S. Great Power competitors—Russia and China—to expand their soft power influence in Iran by exploiting U.S. missteps in the Middle East. Under these circumstances, the U.S. must pursue a female-focused theater security strategy to coordinate a combination of various levers of national power, also known as *smart power*.<sup>2</sup> This approach includes re-engaging *diplomatic*, *humanitarian*, and *economic* tools of power, emphasizing medical aid and economic support to

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<sup>1</sup> “Meet Our Laureates,” Nobel Women’s Initiative, 2021, <https://nobelwomensinitiative.org/laureate/shirin-ebadi/>. This initiative spotlights Nobel Laureate, Dr. Shirin Ebadi, who was awarded the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to promote democracy and human rights, particularly those of women and children in Iran. She is the first Muslim woman and first Iranian to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. Ebadi was also the first woman to become a presiding Judge in Iran, was a lawyer, and is a university professor specializing in teaching human rights training courses. An internationally-recognized advocate of human rights, she established many non-governmental organizations in Iran, including the Million Signatures Campaign, an initiative demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in Iranian law.

<sup>2</sup> Derek Reveron, “From National to Theater: Developing Strategy,” *Joint Force Quarterly* no. 70 (2013): 113

Iranian women, using a multilateral framework of regional partners, allies, and organizations to build partner capacity and manage these security challenges.

## **SECURITY CRISIS IN IRAN: GENDERED IMPACTS FROM PANDEMIC**

Iran is the epicenter of the deadliest pandemic in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> More pointedly, the adverse effects of COVID-19 disproportionately impact females in Iran and the surrounding region. Data indicate that while men are more likely to perish from COVID-19 globally, the social and economic toll is paid disproportionately by women and girls.<sup>4</sup> In Iran, several gender-biased consequences reveal themselves through this crisis: excessive female job loss and unemployment, a rapid increase of unpaid work conducted by women, and a spike in gender-based violence (GBV), where women are victims of increased domestic abuse with the expansion of shelter-at-home orders.<sup>5</sup> Women are more vulnerable to virus exposure in female-dominated work sectors, such as nursing, hospitality, and teaching. However, they are less likely to access quality health services or insurance coverages.<sup>6</sup> In Iran, the pandemic has regressed women's already-low economic participation rates by 20 percent.<sup>7</sup> These impacts present themselves as security challenges to the United States and partners in the region as they remain unresolved and exacerbate unstable economic and health crises, leaving Iran weak and open to exploitation and hostilities.

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<sup>3</sup> Haleh Esfandiari, "COVID-19 Delta Variant Hits Iran," *United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer*, August 26, 2021, 1, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2021/jul/13/delta-variant-hits-iran>

<sup>4</sup> Michelle Morse, "The Shadow Pandemic: How the COVID-19 Crisis is Exacerbating Gender Inequality," *United Nations Foundation*, 14 April 2020, 1, <https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/shadow-pandemic-how-covid19-crisis-exacerbating-gender-inequality/>

<sup>5</sup> Morse, "Shadow Pandemic," 3.

<sup>6</sup> Morse, "Shadow Pandemic," 2.

<sup>7</sup> Nadereh Chambou, "Covid-19 Depressed Women's Employment Everywhere, and More So in Iran," *Atlantic Council*, 29 April 2021, 1, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/covid-19-depressed-womens-employment-everywhere-and-more-so-in-iran/>

From an economic perspective, the pandemic has exacerbated gender inequality within Iran and the Middle East. Before the pandemic, pre-existing inequalities plagued the nation and region, reinforced by structural, legal, and societal barriers to women and girls.<sup>8</sup> Women were already at a societal disadvantage with fewer job opportunities, high unemployment rates, lower wages and benefits, and poor access to quality health services and education. COVID-19 *accelerated* these gender-based inequalities. Now, many women also shoulder the burden as a single head-of-household, often facing poverty.<sup>9</sup> These problems become even more aggravated within rural and marginalized communities across the region. In Iran, the unemployment rate of women is now twice that of men.<sup>10</sup> Many women who can work are often limited to menial or part-time jobs that Iranian authorities consider "unofficial employment," which often offer no benefits or insurance. The Iranian administration does not have any dedicated plan to help Iranian women who have lost their jobs to COVID-19.<sup>11</sup> When the economy recovers, there is a genuine concern that the Iranian government will prioritize men's return to employment at the expense of Iranian women, which creates the real possibility of more women living in permanent abject poverty.<sup>12</sup> These gendered economic impacts of the pandemic are likely to accelerate existing trends within the Middle East, as evidenced by Iran's crippled and deteriorating economic position and social unrest.

Instability within Iran and the Middle East aggravates the hazards of several COVID-related gender impacts, to include women's limited access to critical resources and aid, and

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<sup>8</sup> "United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security." The White House, October 2019, p.7

<sup>9</sup> Ali Dadpay, "Covid-19 and the Marginalization of Iranian Women," *Al-Monitor*, 14 September 2020, 2, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/09/iran-women-covid19-marginalization-permanent-damage.html>

<sup>10</sup> Chambou, "Covid-19 Depressed Women's Employment," 1.

<sup>11</sup> Dadpay, "Covid-19 and the Marginalization of Iranian Women," 3.

<sup>12</sup> Dadpay, "Covid-19 and the Marginalization of Iranian Women," 3.

elevated risk of internally displaced people (IDP) and refugees.<sup>13</sup> Following the withdrawal of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, the deteriorating security situation and subsequent Taliban takeover exacerbated the health crisis in the adjoining region. Thousands of Afghans fled the violence and upheaval—including a predominance of women and children—and migrated to Iran through neighboring provinces.<sup>14</sup> Nearly 1,000 new coronavirus cases were directly traced to the Afghan migrants and refugees, generating a contentious situation between Tehran and Kabul from added economic strain in Iran.<sup>15</sup> These factors invite significant *geopolitical challenges* as a byproduct of population displacement. Migrants and refugees place additional burdens on fragile economies and political systems, such as those of Iran. Still, many frameworks—such as the EU-Iran Framework for a Comprehensive Dialogue on Migration and Refugee Issues—do not even mention women or gender whatsoever.<sup>16</sup> This program addresses migration flows, improved border management, and voluntary repatriation. However, it completely omits humanitarian assistance and protections for gender-specific issues, such as gender-based violence resulting from refugee migrations and displacements.<sup>17</sup>

Under these conditions, Iran is backed into a corner with few viable options to salvage economic and health care collapse, leaving it susceptible to unsavory partnerships with adversarial states. Both Russia and China have already opportunistically capitalized on Iran's weaknesses, providing vaccine supplies, masks, and medical aid to Iran during the pandemic.<sup>18</sup> Taking advantage of Iran's vulnerable position, China is also maneuvering itself as a global

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel Egel, “Economic Consequences of COVID-19 in the Middle East: Implications for U.S. National Security,” *Rand Corporation*, 01 April 2020, 3, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/04/economic-consequences-of-covid-19-in-the-middle-east.html>

<sup>14</sup> Haleh Esfandiari, “COVID-19 Delta Variant Hits Iran,” 1.

<sup>15</sup> Haleh Esfandiari, “COVID-19 Delta Variant Hits Iran,” 1.

<sup>16</sup> Cornelius Adebahr, “A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran? Assessing the EU’s Options.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* Nov 23, 2020, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Adebahr, “A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran,” 14.

<sup>18</sup> Kaye, “COVID-19 Impacts on Strategic Dynamics in the Middle East,” 1.

frontrunner with pandemic support to Iran, likely exercising a long-term expansionist model in the region, threatening U.S. values and regional stability.<sup>19</sup> As of July, Iran reported importing 9.4 million vaccine doses—nearly a million doses were the Sputnik V vaccine donated by Russia. Another million doses were the Sinopharm vaccine donated by China.<sup>20</sup>

To compound these problems, women in Iran do not have equal representation or involvement in COVID-19 response planning or decision-making efforts. COVID-19 is reversing any progress with women's rights and gender equality within Iran. Iranian authorities do not have any official plan to help women who have been affected by the economic crisis caused by the pandemic.<sup>21</sup> The United States must seize an opportunity to assist Iran by looking through a gendered security lens, leveraging allies and regional partners to aid and support Iranian women. Equipping women with the same *resources, tools, and information* to influence policymaking effectively across decision-making levels is paramount to equalizing gender disparities, thereby strengthening socio-economic stability.<sup>22</sup>

## **U.S. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

In response, the U.N. recommends building and sustaining social policies that place *women's* economic equity and health at the center of pandemic response and recovery plans, to include extending protection to informal workers and enacting economic and humanitarian relief measures for women.<sup>23</sup> Because men and women experience conflict and pandemics differently, the U.S. needs to leverage these cooperative approaches with a gendered lens to achieve mutual

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<sup>19</sup> Egel, “Economic Consequences of COVID-19 in the Middle East,” 3.

<sup>20</sup> Haleh Esfandiari, “COVID-19 Delta Variant Hits Iran,” 1.

<sup>21</sup> Dadpay, “Covid-19 and the Marginalization of Iranian Women,” 3.

<sup>22</sup> Adebahr, “A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran,” 8.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Policy Brief, “The Impact of COVID-19 on Women,” April 9, 2020, 5, <https://www.unwomen.org//media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406>

gains—specifically, economic growth that will promote regional stability. A practical approach would focus on *human security* with females at the forefront. On the medical front, efforts to deliver robust humanitarian medical and health care assistance—such as donations of high-efficacy COVID-19 vaccine doses distributed to Iran as the hardest-hit nation in the Middle East, in place of Iran's less effective and available domestic vaccine version<sup>24</sup>—would be a step in the right direction to open meaningful security and policy conversations. President Biden pledged to work "alongside the U.N., the G-7, the G-20, the European Union, and other regional organizations, through the Global Health Security Agenda, and with international financial institutions" for the U.S. to "provide support for much-needed medical supplies and access to diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines."<sup>25</sup> This opportunity would be especially critical as the more infectious Delta virus variant spreads rapidly across the southeast and southwest Iranian provinces, aggravating gender imbalances.<sup>26</sup> This effective humanitarian lever of power could smooth tensions with Iran and achieve vaccine relation in-roads toward improved stability and economic recovery in Iran and the region—a priority for U.S. national security. A health-oriented and female-focused engagement with Iran would offer a more *holistic* perspective on regional security and foreign policy by integrating women and marginalized groups.<sup>27</sup> With a renewed focus on negotiations with Tehran, this inclusive strategy would also counter Great Power competitors from expanding their pathways of soft power and deter influence opportunities from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Esfandiari, "COVID-19 Delta Variant Hits Iran," 5. Already, lawmakers warned that Iranian domestic vaccine production would not be enough to achieve herd immunity for Iran's population of 84 million. "We need to vaccinate 60 million people, so we need 120 million doses of vaccine at present," said Jalil Mirmohammadi Meibodi, a member of the parliamentary health commission

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Biden, "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance." The White House. March 3, 2021, 12.

<sup>26</sup> Esfandiari, "COVID-19 Delta Variant Hits Iran," 3.

<sup>27</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 2.

<sup>28</sup> Egel, "Economic Consequences of COVID-19 in the Middle East," 2.

For economic recovery, a response to this crisis and its gender disparities will require a coordinated, multilateral approach that accounts for sex-disaggregated data focused on women's empowerment and opportunities as a top priority for recovery. Cash-transfer programs are the most widely used social assistance intervention.<sup>29</sup> Last year, an example from India demonstrated that the government could transfer pandemic-relief payments quickly to more than 200 million women in need because it already had sex-disaggregated data and digital infrastructure to deposit directly to their bank accounts.<sup>30</sup> If willing to broaden access to the internet and digital databases, this could be a successful template for Iran moving forward. As a data-driven response, U.N. Women has launched an initiative to collect and share this information as a global mechanism to combat gender inequalities.<sup>31</sup> Promoting equal rights for women supported by legislative alliances and female-focused aid will result in better economic development and public policy in fragile and conflict-affected regions, aligned with U.S. interests.<sup>32</sup> World Bank research illustrates this, confirming that if gender inequality were reduced, Iran's per capita GDP would increase by at least 32 percent.<sup>33</sup> This information is significant to help promote policy changes. Countries with higher female labor force participation produce greater industrial and export diversification, which is a goal that Iran has sought to achieve as it moves away from its traditional oil-centered economy.<sup>34</sup>

Accordingly, the U.S. and its allies should collaborate with the U.N., monetary institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, women's organizations, and Iranian leadership to

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<sup>29</sup> United Nations Policy Brief, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women," 5.

<sup>30</sup> Melinda Gates, "Put Women at the Heart of Economic Recovery," Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, February 18, 2021, 1, <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/articles/covid-women-recovery-economic>

<sup>31</sup> Morse, "Shadow Pandemic," 5.

<sup>32</sup> NSS also noted that "governments that fail to treat women equally do not allow their societies to reach their potential [while] societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful."

<sup>33</sup> Chambou, "Covid-19 Depressed Women's Employment," 3.

<sup>34</sup> Chambou, "Covid-19 Depressed Women's Employment," 3.

leverage existing frameworks to extend basic protections to informal workers, who are primarily women within Iranian society. These partnerships should also reinforce social protection programs and women's networks to target ensured income for affected groups where women are heavily represented—such as teaching, hospitality, and healthcare—and introduce sustainable measures to alleviate impacts to women-led businesses.<sup>35</sup> Notably, special attention to the *care* economy—both paid and unpaid—must target women and girls to address the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic within the region. The U.S. should achieve this by incorporating grassroots organizational initiatives to develop effective partnerships in Iran and the Middle East to better combat the gender disparities in not only healthcare, but also unpaid labor and care incurred from the pandemic and to *prevent future crises*. This female framework has gained traction in several countries, including Spain, Sweden, Canada, France, and Mexico, demonstrating that prioritizing *women's* rights as *human* rights is a solid pathway to *peace* and *prosperity*.<sup>36</sup>

## COUNTERARGUMENT AND REBUTTAL

Those opposed to the concept of a female-focused security strategy or foreign policy argue that security efforts and aid provided should not concentrate exclusively on women. Instead, efforts should be earnestly directed toward *all* struggling community members, especially within Iran, which is plagued by the pandemic health crisis and reeling from political and economic strife that affects the *entire* gender spectrum. This notion points out that both men and women suffer, so overlooking nearly half the population on these crucial matters would be myopic within the larger society. What this viewpoint fails to recognize, however, is Iran's

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<sup>35</sup> United Nations Policy Brief, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women," 9.

<sup>36</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 6.

*systemic inequalities* and *unequal distributions of power*, which have placed women at the mercy of men for several generations through legal and religious justifications.<sup>37</sup> Under Iranian law, women are not afforded the same rights as men.<sup>38</sup> Men and boys have no restrictions based on their gender. Since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, women have struggled<sup>39</sup> to regain lost rights and are forbidden to serve a more prominent role in society under a regime that has been particularly hostile and unfavorable toward women's rights and issues.<sup>40</sup> Iran's "hegemonic masculinity," or "patriarchal normative framework," favors male leadership, which created and reinforced staggering levels of gendered *institutional imbalances*.<sup>41</sup> These disparities include the purge of women from most career opportunities, prominent government positions, and participation in the public sphere. They also include forced underage marriages, prohibition of divorce, elimination of Iran's family planning program, imposed educational restrictions, and the required observance of the hijab under Islamic dress code.<sup>42</sup> Men and boys have been given preferential treatment and hold more rights and privileges in Iran and the Middle East.

In that vein, opponents conflate the idea that female empowerment is a zero-sum game; however, elevating women's agency does *not* equate to deflating the position or reducing opportunities of males. Men can equally initiate and enact feminist policies, and in fact—*men need to be involved for their success*. As the dominant demographic, men also need to be vocal

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<sup>37</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 8.

<sup>38</sup> Tara Far, "Iran: Women Face Bias in Workplace," *United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer*, May 25, 2017, 2, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2017/may/25/report-women-face-bias-workplace>

<sup>39</sup> Women in Iran "confront an array of legal and social barriers, restricting not only their lives but also their livelihoods, and contributing to starkly unequal economic outcomes," according to a new report by Human Rights Watch. "Iranian women's achievements in higher education demonstrate their capability and passion for being equal partners in building a better country, but discriminatory laws are holding them back," said Middle East director at Human Rights Watch.

<sup>40</sup> Haleh Esfandiari, "The Women's Movement," *United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer*, October 6, 2010, 1, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/womens-movement>

<sup>41</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 9-10.

<sup>42</sup> Esfandiari, "The Women's Movement," 5.

advocates to help influence and propel these concepts forward to fruition. To that point, there is no requirement that feminist policies and strategies must include women because they are considered better negotiators or policymakers.<sup>43</sup> Instead, female engagement will represent society more accurately and address blind spots overlooked without women's involvement, perspectives, and experiences.

Consequently, security considerations and effective policy reform cannot be gender-blind. Iran must prioritize gender-equitable security efforts, which will, in turn, benefit the larger society by factoring in all necessary stakeholders' needs and contributions. Women must be at the core of the state's strategy for post-pandemic economic recovery, with an expansion of the definition of *cooperative security* to look at the importance of *women's rights*, *long-term sustainable development*, and *gender analyses*.<sup>44</sup> Research reveals that gender equality contributes to social and economic development, strengthens democratic institutions, and advances national security and peace.<sup>45</sup> When women participate<sup>46</sup> in policy and play integral roles in negotiations, peace agreements and socio-economic reforms are more sustainable and create longer-lasting stability and equality in society.<sup>47</sup>

## **CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITIES, CONSTRAINTS, AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

While gender disparities plagued Iran long before COVID-19, they do not have to dictate its response.<sup>48</sup> Investment in women in Iran is a strategy that develops and employs the most

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<sup>43</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 20.

<sup>44</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 11.

<sup>45</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 5.

<sup>46</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 6. Unfortunately, women make up only 3 percent of mediators, 4 percent of signatories, and 13 percent of negotiators. These structures and frameworks must change for fundamental reforms to occur.

<sup>47</sup> Adebahr, "A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran," 5.

<sup>48</sup> Morse, "Shadow Pandemic," 5.

persuasive tools of national power to advance and defend U.S. interests. This approach demands U.S. levers of *smart power* that eschew military involvement and instead pivot to *diplomatic*, *humanitarian*, and *economic* assistance as the U.S. reduces its military footprint in the region. It leverages frameworks, resources, and support available to Iran's leaders, highlighting mutually shared goals of economic prosperity resulting in regional stability. These efforts should abolish barriers by promoting equal rights for women and girls supported by opportunities and resources. Investments would also include an increase in women's political and civil leadership by empowering them to lead and contribute to all areas of society where decision-making exists.

While Iran is ideologically at odds with many western feminist ideals, more countries now recognize the participation and inclusion of women as a vital *economic* lever of power to achieve growth and resiliency, which is a goal that will resonate with Iran.<sup>49</sup> The combined mechanisms of economic and humanitarian relief efforts using female-focused frameworks led by the U.S. with regional cooperation and partnerships will serve as the cost-sharing and expanded partner capacity *ways* and *means* to alleviate gendered socio-economic challenges in Iran. This strategy is directly linked to the U.S.' national security interests to reduce tensions with Iran and achieve peace and stability within the Middle East<sup>50</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic will persist as one of the most critical public health and safety issues—and thus, security challenges—moving into the future, with women suffering the most but having the most to gain. Constraints in Iran and the underlying region will prove challenging to overcome, despite solid coalitions and partnerships. Years of deeply entrenched societal norms are considerable obstacles for this female-centric security strategy to succeed. Recovery from the

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<sup>49</sup> Chambou, "Covid-19 Depressed Women's Employment," 3.

<sup>50</sup> Kennerth McKenzie, "Posture Statement of U.S. Central Command," April 22, 2021, <https://www.centcom.mil/ABOUT-US/POSTURE-STATEMENT/>

adverse impacts of COVID-19 will be slow, and the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on women's livelihoods, opportunities, and rights are likely to outlast the actual epidemic.<sup>51</sup> Economies like Iran—already struggling with access to resources from maximum pressure sanctions and a health care system on the brink of collapse—will continue to be impacted by the spreading pandemic.

Working with the international community to allocate more resources toward women's rights will be a long-term investment and worthwhile endeavor to bridge strategic U.S. *interests* of stability and *values* of humanitarian assistance and gender equality. Joint efforts toward financial support and female-focused social programs—bolstered with reinforced cooperation between regional partners, activist groups, and women's organizational involvement— will strengthen partner capacity and help expand regional alliances, which is integral to U.S. defense strategy.<sup>52</sup> These measures will combat the gendered impacts of COVID-19 and establish a post-pandemic posture strengthened for years to come, not just during periods fraught with illness.

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<sup>51</sup> Morse, “Shadow Pandemic,” 1.

<sup>52</sup> Derek Reveron, “Exporting Security: International Engagement, Security Cooperation, and the Changing Face of the U.S. Military” 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016), 125.

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