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**Working Title:** Making Meaning and Building Resilience: Cognitive Learning and the Gender Perspective in Military-Strategic Applications

**Abstract:** The *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* was passed almost a quarter century ago. Its central aim was to prioritize the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacemaking, conflict prevention and peace building. The *US National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality* was released in October 2021; it represents the commitment of the U.S. government to improve meaningful participation across the security spectrum both domestically and in engagement abroad. Clearly, this very necessary change in political and security and defense thinking takes time and requires multidimensional, cross-sectional, inclusive design and implementation. Promoting meaningful participation is not only about diversity, it is a foundational element of effectively countering contemporary threats and building resilient societies.

The article is looking to discuss the complexities of the contemporary security environment by presenting an integrated frame for correctly analyzing women's influence and experience as both agents and subjects of change in societies, both in conflict and in post conflict stabilization. The proposition put forth is that understanding human learning, cognition, its socio-cultural specificity and the societal role of gender is a necessary tool for educating an effective fighting force and resilient populations.

First, the article introduces the conceptual framework: the cognitive approach in general and the cognitive learning theory in particular. A significant segment of the conceptual framework is dedicated to the concepts of making meaning, resilience, learning, especially the early years foundation stage. The second section of the article provides an analysis on the deeper meaning of WPS in the context of "making meaning" and resilience— to include the role of women as mediators of learning. Thirdly, the article shows how information processing and cognition impact the war-fighting experience as well as the ability to resist and rebuild. Finally, the article concludes with lessons learned and recommendations for developing a more effective and robust WPS inclusive military education curricula.

Advancing WPS and promoting meaningful participation of women in political and human security decisions is not only a policy priority but also an important pillar of future allied and partner success in promoting a stable, secure transatlantic space.

**Author:** Dr. Olga Chiriac is a researcher, independent consultant and professor of political science. Her work is situated at the intersection of psychology and security studies (decision making and strategic culture) with a special interest in military applications of cognitive sciences and political warfare. Dr. Chiriac is the Project Europe Head of Engagement with the Irregular Warfare Initiative of the Modern War Institute, at West Point and is affiliated as an Associated Researcher with the Joint Special Operations University in Tampa, Florida.

Prior to this; Dr. Chiriac was selected a Title VIII US State Department Research Fellow and she worked as an Associated Researcher and Black Sea Expert at the Center for Strategic Studies, Bucharest where she coordinated academic projects with the Center for NATO Studies and with NATO Multinational Division SE. Olga holds a PhD in Political Science, an MA in War Studies, as well as a BS in Finance and Behavioral Economics.