

INTERVIEW

By Inci Kucukaksoy and
Sonia Bjerke Abdelmaguid

Colonel Stéphane Bellamy
Former Chief of JWC's Joint Capability
Integration Division and GENAD



"UNDERSTANDING HOW TO APPROACH GENDER MATTERS IS MISSION-CRITICAL IN ANY SCENARIO, REGARDLESS OF THEATRE."

As JWC's first Gender Advisor (GENAD), can you explain some of your main focus areas?

— First and foremost, my focus was on making the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) compliant with the Bi-SC 40-1 on Implementing Gender into NATO Operations for Increasing Operational Effectiveness. With the abovementioned policy and the NATO/EAPC (Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council) Action Plan on implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) as the foundation, I developed an Action Plan specifically for JWC. It soon became clear to me that in order for this Action Plan to be properly implemented in all JWC activities, I had to involve more staff members. This resulted in the recruitment of dual-hatted Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in each key area to provide support to the GENAD and help spread awareness as to what gender perspective really means to NATO exercises. The idea was to have a GFP in each key area, e.g. Scenario, Operational Planning, Training Development, Public Affairs, Mission Support, etc. What is important to know is that gender was a relatively new discipline in JWC exercises. Consequently, I had to focus my ef-

forts in making JWC's implementation of gender known to the larger NATO gender community and Training Audiences (TAs). Thanks to the NATO gender community's excellent work; we are now starting to see gender perspective as an evaluation criteria and also as a Training Objective in exercise planning documents.

Why is there a need for more trained personnel in the gender field?

— In conflicts, men, women, boys and girls all have different gender roles which need to be analyzed. In other words, gender is about doing the right things, and doing it right. As often happens in wars, women, young men and children are deliberately targeted by terrorists, warlords and militias because of their gender. The increased situational awareness we achieve by analyzing gender through every step of our training, be it intelligence, human terrain reports, media, psychological operations etc., will help prepare us for the tough challenges ahead. What we learned in Afghanistan was that when we started to see things from a gender perspective it brought added value to our operation, e.g. a CIMIC project with a gender perspective may help us achieve the desired effect much faster.

Gender has been an integral part of the JWC-led TRIDENT Series of Exercises this year. They all had strong commitments on gender-related issues and topics. Can you elaborate a bit on how gender training needs were identified and incorporated into these exercises?

— Current operations are becoming increasingly complex and are ever-changing, and each exercise brings its own unique gender analysis with the varied geographical locations. The NATO out-of-area exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 15 offered a complex human environment in the fictional Cerasia region with challenges such as movement of populations, inter-ethnic clashes, human trafficking and sexual violence, whereas exercise TRIDENT JAGUAR 15, which was set in Europe, required a completely different approach to gender, which focused more on the human rights part of it. Understanding how to approach gender matters is mission-critical in any scenario, regardless of theatre.

Given the increased awareness of implementing gender perspective into all NATO activities, how do you envision this will impact operational level training in the future?

— The complicated reality demands increasingly complex scenarios that implicate entire populations, including children, both as victims and actors, and women, in capacity building and peace talks. Moreover, integrating gender will help us cooperate better with international organizations (IOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the ground, which is an important part of our operations. Finally, with increased gender awareness our forces will be more balanced when carrying out negotiations and they will have a more complete view on planning reconstruction and DDR—Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration.

What advice can you give to the JWC's gender community?

— In an effort to spread awareness, the best way to learn is from examples, both good and bad. Examples help people at all levels—military or civilian—to relate to what you are saying. Another advice would be to maintain contact with Gender Advisors, Gender Field Advisors (GFAs) and Gender Focal Points across the NATO commands to communicate JWC's continued commitment to this discipline. Keep up the good work! You've already showed me that you can do it! ✦