



## A Story of Courage and Perseverance

*The day will come when men will recognize woman as his peer, not only at the fireside, but in councils of the nation. Then, and not until then, will there be the perfect comradeship, the ideal union between the sexes that shall result in the highest development of the race.*

—Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906)  
American Women’s Suffragist

In this issue, four women writers address the progress toward gender equality that Susan B. Anthony envisioned years ago. Ms. Kristal Alfonso, a pilot and lieutenant colonel in the US Air Force, highlights in her article “Femme Fatale 2010” the arduous battle women had to wage in order to serve, fight, and die for their country as soldiers. During operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, American female warriors have proven that they are formidable fighters who can engage in direct ground combat. This advance in women’s rights, however, would not mitigate what girls and women still endure in many countries around the world. Ms. Vanessa Mousavizadeh’s article “Legitimizing Change among Muslim Women in Malaysia and Egypt” introduces us to the long, hard struggle of Muslim women to free themselves by reforming Islamic scripture, tradition, and society from within. Ms. Waltraud Queiser Morales, PhD, acquaints us with the plight of the girl soldier, a victim of many of the grossest violations of human rights ranging from battery, sexual abuse, and torture to outright slavery. In “Girl Soldiers: The Other Face of Sexual Exploitation and Gender Violence,” she points to the International Rescue Committee’s description of “the systematic atrocities committed against the world’s children as no less than a slow ‘genocide’ or ‘holocaust.’ ” Finally, Ms. Christine Mwongeli Mutuku, in her article “Youth Empowerment in Kenya: A Policy-Science Analysis of Government Values and Priorities,” apprises us of a prophetic initiative—the Kenya National Youth Policy. If developing countries had adopted and earnestly implemented such an initiative, perhaps we would not be witnessing the “Jasmine Revolution” in Tunisia and the expected political tsunami in Africa and the Middle East.

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