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Although it sounds politically correct to state that women have achieved equality in the military because all Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) are now open to women, my own experience is that it falls short of creating true equality in the SOF community because of women's undeniably different physical makeup. As an example, even when some women eventually pass United States Navy's Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) training, medical science informs us that the few who do overcome will be unlikely to maintain that level of physical readiness without soon thereafter incurring bone stress injuries and fractures. For if we genuinely are honest about the bodily differences between the sexes and the incredible demands that will be requested of women in a combat SOF environment, I believe it will be impossible to sustainably integrate women into the SOF community without the assistance of public policy experts and authorities in behavioral science. Take me as an example. My name is Renata and I am a female currently serving at 1st Special Forces Command in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I am also a Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Women And Public Policy Program (WAPPP), under whose auspices I am conducting a year-long study on how to utilize behavioral science to research conflict so that we can dismantle it before reaching full-scale violence. You'll be interested to know that a byproduct of my idea will mean an increase in the numbers of women and other minorities in the Special Operations community. Allow me to explain here.

As an Iraq veteran, former forward support company commander, and as a woman who has suffered a stress fracture after a military ruck-march, I believe I have earned a right to have a voice in this discussion. Unfortunately, all of the discussions at the tactical level that I have been privy to about the incorporation of women in SOF have mostly involved senior-ranking males who have never even heard the term "implicit bias" or the implications thereof; due to this, I believe American women's current plot to successfully integrate into SOF is being sabotaged by inefficient usage of resources and biased shortsightedness at the lowest level (even if it's unintended). Speaking from my own experience working within SOF, I can unequivocally state that what I really want isn't so much to be a "Green Beret", per se. Because if you take away all the John-Wayne-Hollywood-glamour I know that what that really means at its most basic form is someone who has trained to become a master of small unit tactics. There's definitely a need for that and there's no doubt they are truly experts in their field. But I've seen the types of problems the SOF community is encountering during my time in service and thus far none of the solutions I can think of require me to transform my body type into the shape of a man's. That is why I applied for the WAPPP's assistance and, thankfully, I received their support and validation of my proposal. To be more specific, I proposed to them that what the military really needs is to design a new MOS--what I call a Gray Zone Operator-- and a new qualification program with the help of behavioral scientists from universities like Harvard that recruits more forwardly and progressively for skill-sets like IQ/EQ because those types of skills have absolutely nothing to do with whether or not Renata can carry 75 pounds of weight on her back during a ruck march. Of course, if we recruit for different types of talents that aren't tied to a person's physical makeup, then we will inevitably end up with greater diversity within SOF because it will fundamentally change what is considered valuable in today's modern warfare.

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