

produced by the dominant discourse in order to highlight discursive strategies for resisting the production of gender and other hierarchies. I draw something from all of these approaches in answering the question of *whose* security is of primary importance in the post-Cold War era.

Security is one of those slippery concepts which can take us in contradictory directions. Security goals can be used “protectively” to reinforce an oppressive *status quo* or they can be a means of promoting “liberating” outcomes which challenge the *status quo*. We have seen this paradox played out in domestic legal responses to girls who are at risk of sexual abuse by members of their families or from within their communities. All too often girls’ lack of security is addressed by removing them from their homes and communities and housing them, for their own *protection*, in institutions which we call *secure* but which are in fact little more than prisons. Analogous protective⁵ measures have been adopted in post-Cold War responses to threats to international security in the creation of *secure* spaces like the safe havens in Northern and Southern Iraq, and the partitioning of the former Yugoslavia along ethnic lines. This approach restricts the liberties of those whose security is threatened and has the corresponding effect of allowing the threatening or dominating behaviour to continue outside the boundaries of the protective enclosures. The outcome, which passes for a form of peace, is the defence of the *status quo* of global power distribution. This outcome is disguised by cogent arguments which talk of the need to *protect* the vulnerable while, in reality, they justify an intensification of militarization.

Alternatively, security measures can be aimed at the aggressor, at addressing

⁵ There is a considerable body of feminist analysis of “protective” approaches to women taken by legal discourse. The effect is to disempower and control women and to reconfirm the dominance of men. See Natalie Hevener, “An Analysis of Gender-based Treaty Law: Contemporary Developments in Historical Perspective” (1986) 8 *Human Rights Quarterly* 70; Rebecca Cook, “The Elimination of Sexual Apartheid: Prospects for the Fourth World Conference on Women”, *Issue Papers on World*