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United States civil-military relations: Finding equilibrium in the changing national security environment

Sean W Pascoli

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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UNITED STATES CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS:
FINDING EQUILIBRIUM IN THE CHANGING
NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

by

Sean W. Pascoli

Bachelor of Arts
University of Chicago
1990

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

**Master of Arts Degree
Political Science Department
College of Liberal Arts**

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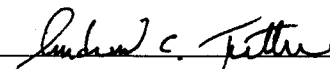
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United States Civil-Military Relations:

Finding Equilibrium in the Changing National Security Environment

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of


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Examination Committee Chair


Dean of the Graduate College


Examination Committee Member


Examination Committee Member


Graduate College Faculty Representative

ABSTRACT

United States Civil Military Relations: Finding Equilibrium in the Changing National Security Environment

by

Sean W. Pascoli

Dr. Andrew C. Tuttle, Examination Committee Chair
Associate Professor
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

There has been an ongoing debate for several years on the “crisis” that has developed in American civil-military relations. The U.S. military has been criticized for inappropriate behavior and insubordination to civilian control. Some scholars believe that the American military has become an independent bureaucracy, more concerned with its own interests as opposed to national security.

While there is evidence of problems demanding attention, these issues are more symptomatic of the traditional ebb and flow of American civil-military relations. Although there is no “crisis”, the American military’s attempts to dictate when and where it will intervene with force (i.e. the Powell Doctrine) is very disturbing in light of the changing national security environment. Civilian leaders need to ensure they increase their understanding of the military and the role it plays in national security to help alleviate this potential problem.

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My numerous discussions of civil-military relations with several senior officers, especially Lieutenant Colonel Patrick S. Penn USMC, greatly informed my thinking on this issue as well. To them I am grateful for indulging my desire to discuss this topic.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the valuable assistance provided by my lovely wife, Lisa. She willingly gave up precious family time to allow me to complete this thesis and was my biggest supporter during my graduate studies.

Of course, the end product is my own effort, and any shortcomings contained herein are purely mine.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and Government needed a Dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you command. Only those generals who gain successes, can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship ...

President Abraham Lincoln to Major General Joseph Hooker, 26 January 1863

Much has been written in the past decade on the state of crisis that exists in civil-military relations in the United States today. Numerous books, television programs, journal and newspaper articles have discussed this crisis in depth. Thomas Rick's book, *Making the Corps* ignited a barrage of critical articles accusing the U.S. military of inappropriate behavior and insubordination to civilian control, followed by a debate on the nature and sources of this alleged crisis. Following Ricks, many close observers of the American military detected a growing "gap" between the military and civil institutions. These scholars believed that military leaders were usurping civilian control, touching off a flurry of articles, conferences and studies.¹ Viewed as a whole, these scholars believed that important changes are occurring in American civil-military relations that could have serious effects on national security.

While there are instances of problems demanding attention, these issues are more symptomatic of the traditional cycle of U.S. civil military relations, which will be examined on the following pages. Any study of a country's civil-military relations must also be examined with respect to that country's culture and tradition. In the American

case, its civil-military tradition has its roots in English colonialism, but was forged in the long Revolutionary War struggle for independence. On closer examination, the body of evidence on civil-military crisis is not indicative of a rebellious military. Rather it reflects an abdication of responsibility, and lack of interest by civilian government to properly exercise their constitutional responsibility with regards to civilian control of the military. When there is little guidance, interest, and understanding in military operations by civilian leaders national security policy will suffer.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

¹ In particular see Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, eds., *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

CHAPTER 2

MEANING OF AMERICAN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

To understand the current state of civil-military relations in this country it is first important to outline in its broadest sense what the concept entails in the context of the United States. While theorists and students of civil-military relations do not agree on a precise definition, several important elements are common to the theory of civil-military relations, and which inform the uniquely American variety outlined in this paper. Civil-military theory accepts that military institutions and leaders have dual obligations. The first is a duty to protect the nation from threats to its existence using military expertise and capability, and concurrently a societal obligation to uphold the values, beliefs, and ideologies of the nation. This requires the military obligation to be carried out with the least impact on society's values.¹ In executing its obligations, the military has three responsibilities to the state: to represent requirements for military security to government authorities, to advise such authorities on the "implications of alternative courses of action" from the military standpoint, and to execute state decision regarding military policy "even if it is a decision that runs violently counter to its military judgment."² S.E. Finer further refines this model by insisting that the military must respect the principle of civil supremacy as the key for appropriate civil-military relations in any society.³ Kenneth Kemp and Charles Hudlin expand on this by identifying responsibilities from which the military is generally excluded – doing routine police work, running courts, and

making policy. They focus on the “principle of civil control over the military” as a subsidiary but crucial principle to Finer’s civil supremacy, where “civilians make policy, and the military implements it.” However, they assert that the military has decision authority in “the means” of policy implementation, and since there is a kind of ends-mean logic in which one organization’s ends is another’s means, they acknowledge that the military has its own sphere of control.⁴ Understanding that the military has a sphere of control is crucial to examining if there is a crisis in civil-military relations in the United States today. Although most of the current debate focuses on the policy-making arena, Deborah Avant clarifies a broader consideration of civil-military relations by “disaggregating” the indicators into three general categories: “the level of military influence on policy ... the degree to which the military is representative of society ... and the amount of friction in day to day interactions between civilians and the military.”⁵ Rebecca L. Schiff further clarifies the full nature of civil-military relations by pointing out that civil-military relations not only consist of the military and civil institutions, but that “the important influences of civilian society and culture” must be considered as well.⁶ Thus civil-military relation theorists form a general consensus that civil-military relations are based on dynamic interactions between political, military, and societal institutions and leaders trying to balance the dual obligations. These interactions occur via a means-ends logic with changing spheres of control over their affairs, and reflect the historical and cultural traditions of the nation.

The essential dilemma of American civil-military relations, a dilemma faced by all democracies, is to ensure adequate military capabilities to deter and respond to threats while sustaining the fundamental liberties delineated in the Constitution. From this

freedom-security paradigm has emerged, over 200 years, governing and military bureaucracies. Civil-military relations consist of the interactions and dialogue between the military institutions and the sectors of society, especially governmental institutions representative of society and responsible for national security issues, which the military is designed to protect and defend. These relations consist of a broad range of power and control mechanisms, which mutually influence each side of the relationship.⁷

The relationship is not restricted to civil-military governmental institutions. Although a separate and distinct institution, the military emerges from (and returns to), American society. Thus military relations with society must be considered to understand the complexity of the issue. Critical to understanding this aspect of American civil-military relations is the duality of the military member as both serviceman sworn to protect and defend the Constitution, and as citizen who cherishes the values and liberties enjoyed by all Americans. Thus, contrary to popular thought, the citizen-soldier is not constrained to service in the militia (whose modern day equivalent is the National Guard or the Reserves). Rather, the full time professional soldier, who is a citizen first, retains those rights that apply to all citizens, with the exception of those few rights appropriately curtailed because they are related to partisan politics.

THE LEGACY OF CIVILIAN CONTROL

One of the bedrocks of the American system of government is the subordination of the military to civilian leadership. Associated with this is a division of power in the government on the raising and maintaining of military forces, and the authority to declare war (the Congress); and the position of commander-in-chief and command over such

forces (the President). The “Founding Fathers” of our republic were cognizant of the problems inherent in the civil-military relationship. They knew their ancient Roman history, the events of 17th century England were of recent memory, and the former “colonists” had experienced the British Crown’s use of the army in a domestic dispute. The latter included the Boston Massacre, the closing of the port of Boston, the forced billeting of soldiers on households, the attempted seizure of arms in the various colonies, and the ultimate use of military force in war, i.e., the American Revolution.

The creation of the Continental Army of the War for Independence and later the Regular Army of the United States in the early Republic sowed the seeds for the gap in civil-military relations that is seen today. As Alexander Hamilton wrote in Federalist Paper 26, the American people may be said to have “... a hereditary impression of the danger to liberty from maintaining standing armies in peace.”⁸ Many of the framers of the Constitution feared that the military might move to take power or that a government facing electoral defeat might use the military to hold power by force. Richard Kohn explains:

Few political principles were more widely known or more universally accepted in America during the 1780s than the danger of standing armies in peacetime. Because of its arms, its isolation from society, its discipline, and its loyalty and obedience to its commander, an army could not necessarily be controlled by law or constitution. An army represented the ultimate in power, capable, even when it did not attempt a coup on its own, of becoming the instrument by which others could terrorize a population, seize power, or perpetuate tyranny.⁹

In response to these fears, the framers created constitutional structures that provided two layers of civilian control of the military. The first was the clear subordination of the military to civilian authority, and the second was the divided control of the military and security policy between the executive and legislative branches. The American

Constitution assigns the President, the elected head of the civil government, the role of Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. But it also reserves for the Congress the power to declare war and the power to raise and equip armed forces. And to ensure that military policy is continuously scrutinized and publicly debated, the Constitution prohibits the Congress from appropriating funds for the Army for any period longer than two years. The President commissions and promotes officers, but requires Senate approval. Also the Constitution mandates state militias that were meant to be the firebreaks of last resort to the power of the standing army.

This constitutional structure has been in place for more than 200 years. But American leaders have continually adjusted specific aspects of civil-military relations within that framework. Until the Cold War, the United States did not maintain large military forces during peacetime. Instead the United States mobilized forces when necessary to fight a war. In fact, when war broke out in Europe in 1939, the United States had a smaller military than the Netherlands and Romania. Only the Cold War and its new position of leadership in a bipolar world compelled the United States to retain peacetime force levels of unprecedented size. This change, in turn, required new structures for directing the military and formulating security policy, while at the same time ensuring civilian control.

The organization of America's military was significantly changed in the postwar period by the National Security Act of 1947. Its stated purpose was to "provide for the authoritative coordination and unified direction under civilian control." The law brought the armed services into an agency called the Department of Defense, in part to overcome

shortcomings demonstrated during World War II in the United States' ability to plan and conduct operations involving more than one branch of the armed services.

The 1947 law also sought to guarantee that the new organization would be structured for civilian control. As a result, the idea of creating a general staff for the armed forces was unequivocally rejected, and all of the key positions associated with military policy were reserved for civilians. The law further stipulated that the head of this department be a civilian nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. To ensure that the new Secretary of Defense would be a true "civilian," the law disqualified anyone who had served as a military officer within the past ten years from serving in that office.

The National Security Act grants the Secretary of Defense full "authority, direction, and control" over all aspects of the Defense Department and its military components. He exercises that control with regard to policies, programs, budgets, and military operations. The law stipulates that the chain of command runs from the President, as Commander-in-Chief, through the Secretary of Defense to the commanders of the nations unified and specified commands.

It is significant to see who is not in the operational chain of command. Neither the Joint Chiefs of Staff nor the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are included, though the President may direct the Secretary of Defense that orders to the combatant commanders be passed through the JCS Chairman. This is not to say that military advice from the Chairman and the JCS is not an essential component of decisions regarding the use of force or the conduct of military operations. It certainly is, and both the President and Secretary of Defense have relied on it during every American military operation since this structure was created.

But the division of responsibilities intended in the law is clear: The civilian leadership sets forth the policy and objectives, and the military commanders are tasked with using their professional judgment to execute policy through the most effective and efficient means possible. It is important to underscore that the ultimate control over the employment of military forces rests with an elected President and his principal civilian advisors: the Secretary of Defense, and with Congress.

Finally, the 1947 law also provides that civilians must fill many subordinate offices throughout the defense establishment, including those of the Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretaries, and the Assistant Secretaries of Defense and even those of the Military Department secretaries. These officials have professional, largely civilian staffs, with the Office of the Secretary of Defense employing roughly 2,100 staff members, 1,500 of whom are civilians.

The second layer of civilian control of the military involves the division of responsibilities for national security between the executive and legislative branches. All funds for government operations must be appropriated by Congress. The Department of Defense requests appropriations that are reviewed by professional staff members on the House and Senate armed services committees. To justify the funds requested, the President and his advisors must articulate a coherent strategic vision for the future, taking account of potential threats to the United States in coming years and proposing a defense program to meet those threats within available financial resources.

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the military reform movement that produced it were intended to strengthen civilian control of the military by improving strategy formulation and contingency planning as well as fiscal

management and efficiency. Most of the attention paid to the Goldwater-Nichols Act has been focused on the enhanced role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as principle military advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Council. However, many opposed the legislation based on principal such as Senator John Tower, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, and Secretary of the Navy John Lehman. They were concerned about potential threats to U.S. civil-military relations, including the question of civil control of the military. They believed that a more powerful Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and a unified Joint Staff would tend to impose a single strategic view on the U.S. military establishment when the geographical position of the nation requires competing, but complementary approaches to national security. The performance of the U.S. military since the passage of the law demonstrates that Goldwater-Nichols (GNA) has not been as good as its defenders hoped, or as bad as its critics warned. While there has been undeniable improvement in U.S. military performance since the bill's passage, there remain concerns about balanced civil-military relations and the danger of the President only receiving a single strategic view from the Pentagon. In addition, a number of unintended consequences have emerged. Goldwater-Nichols can claim its greatest success in the area of increasing the authority of the combatant commanders to bring it into balance with their responsibilities. Supporters of Goldwater-Nichols contrast the failures of military operations before passage of the act (Vietnam, Lebanon, and Grenada), with the success in the Gulf War in 1991. The Gulf War was hailed as the perfect example of why the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act was necessary. However, recent analysis indicates that success in Desert Storm was not as rousing as it initially appeared to be. In their

definitive account of Desert Shield/Desert Storm, *The Generals' War*, Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor argue that the combatant commander in the theater, General Schwartzkopf, did not adequately coordinate the plans of his Marine and Army component commanders. As a result the destruction of the Iraqi Republican Guard was not achieved. Gordon and Trainor then reveal the extent to which the Air Staff in Washington infringed on Central Command's operational planning authority after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The Air Staff unilaterally developed a plan in response to the invasion without direction from General Schwartzkopf, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, or the President. The expanded power of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff continues to be the most intensely debated aspect of Goldwater-Nichols. This debate centers over two main issues: First, whether the quality of today's military advice is superior to that of the pre-GNA era; and second, whether a more powerful JCS Chairman has thrown American civil-military relations out of balance by substantially increasing the influence of the military in national affairs. Advocates of GNA believe that military advice is superior today. Vice President Dick Cheney praised the quality of advice he received as Secretary of Defense, considering it an advance over the "lowest common denominator of whatever the chiefs could collectively agree upon."¹⁰

But others have disagreed, claiming that the current advice is narrowly based on the Chairman's own views rather than reflecting the broad range of opinions available from the JCS as a whole.¹¹ The empowerment of the CJCS as a result of the GNA can lead to a more active role by the military in the formulation of national security policy. This can be interpreted by civilian leaders as an overstepping of traditional boundaries. For example, then Secretary Of Defense Cheney gave a sharp rebuke to CJCS General

Powell's inquiries if liberating Kuwait was worth going to war. "Colin," he said, "you're Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. You're not Secretary of State. You're not the National Security Advisor anymore. And you're not Secretary of Defense. So stick to military matters."¹² The impact of a more powerful Chairman on the civil-military balance has been the subject of a number of critical studies since 1994. Eliot Cohen, one of the foremost experts on American civil-military relations has expressed concerns that the Chairman of the Joint Staff now exerts undue influence on national decision makers. He provides persuasive evidence that civilian control of the military has atrophied since the passage of GNA. One of the consequences of GNA has been to shift power from the armed services to the Joint Staff. Cohen writes:

When in 1986 Congress strengthened the Joint Staff and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ... Henceforth the civilians would have one primary military advisor-the chairman of the JCS-overshadowing all others, and behind him a powerful staff under his own personal control, rather than that of the services. The president and the secretary of defense would have a single authoritative source of professional military advice, and even if the chairman did not formally occupy a place in the chain of command (which ran, in theory, from the secretary of defense to theater commanders in chief) he would, in practice, act as a conduit for military advice to the president, and relay orders from him and the secretary to the military.¹³

This raises the very real possibility that a single strategic concept can come to dominate defense policy. A good example of this took place while General Colin Powell was CJCS and the chairmanship became an exceptionally powerful position and one which shut off many other sources of military advice to civilian authority.

Powell's jealousy of his position as the preeminent advisor erupted when he learned that Chaney (secretary of defense) had had his military assistant, Rear Admiral William Owens, canvass the Pentagon for options other than those provided by Powell-an operation that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarded as 'freelancing' even if it came by the secretary's direction.¹⁴

“Strategic monism,” a term coined by Samuel Huntington, refers to primary reliance on a single concept, weapon, branch of service, or region.¹⁵ The underlying danger is the assumption it makes that one can predict and control the actions of possible enemies. Critics of GNA worry that a powerful chairman and a centralized Joint Staff would be in a position to impose a single view on the defense establishment, to the detriment of U.S. security requirements.

Some of the unintended consequences of GNA are relatively minor but others are not. An example is the re-emergence of the problem of careerism, which is the jockeying for assignments in order to enhance individual prospects for promotion. At the end of the 1980’s, all the services had made careerism a term of derision. However, as a result of GNA’s stress on joint service, such jockeying far surpasses anything that occurred before. In addition to shifting power from the military services to the Joint Staff, GNA has also transferred power from the services to the Unified Commands. A consequence of this change has been to emphasize the near term at the expense of the future, since the Unified Commanders tend to be more concerned about the former and less about the latter, traditionally the perspective of the services. This is not to suggest that funding for readiness or operations and maintenance should be reduced, but to observe that these categories have been funded largely at the expense of modernization. GNA has contributed to this reallocation of resources.

BUMPS IN THE ROAD

In recent American history, there are examples when the balance in civil-military relations has been disrupted. During the Korean War, General McArthur challenged President Truman’s definition of war objectives and policy for the United States.

McArthur was dismissed as a result, and the senior military leadership agreed with President Truman's decision to do so. Presidents Johnson and Carter have been criticized for overstepping the limits suggested for civilian involvement of operational matters in the early years of the Vietnam War and the Iranian hostage rescue attempt. David Halberstam recounts how at the end of the Bush Administration General Colin Powell, then CJCS, assumed an "unprecedented political role" by writing wrote op-ed pieces that appeared in the New York Times on whether the United States should intervene in Bosnia.¹⁶ President Clinton was forced to retreat from his efforts to change the military's exclusionary policy on gays and was the object of harsh personal criticism from many members of the armed forces, including sailors who heckled him on the USS Theodore Roosevelt and a high ranking Air Force officer who called him a "dope-smoking ... skirt chasing ... draft dodging" Commander in Chief.¹⁷ Senator Jesse Helms, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, questioned Clinton's fitness to serve as Commander in Chief and hinted that military hostility toward the president was so intense that if Clinton went ahead with a planned visit to a military installation in North Carolina, "he better have a bodyguard."¹⁸ More recently the Army has locked horns with Secretary of Defense Ronald Rumsfeld over the Crusader Artillery System and numerous leaks to the press by uniformed military personnel about military actions against Iraq have been published in leading newspapers.¹⁹ These examples are part of the cyclical nature of United States' civil-military relations.

From the beginning, career soldiers saw themselves in a hostile environment, distrusted by American civilians. This civilian distrust was inherited from England's tradition of enmity to standing armies even before any such armies appeared in the

colonies that were to become the United States. The soldiers responded to this civilian mistrust with an attitude of moral superiority that was the result of a conviction that the military ethos of discipline and manly virtue was superior to the easygoing values of civilian society - a military attitude still familiar today. When a professional military officer corps emerged during the middle years of the nineteenth century, the military culture became, and its members felt themselves to be, more separate from civilian society and values, yet more representative of a distinctive kind of discipline, virtue, and responsibility.²⁰ Hence, the issue of civil-military relations has been, and is, a fundamental one in American history. The raising and maintaining of standing armies, the role of the militia, the potential threat to the liberties of the people, the proper forces to raise and defend the state against external threats, and the possible use of internal military force, concerned the framers (and opponents) of the Constitution.

NOTES

CHAPTER 2

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 2.

² Ibid, 72.

³ S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: Military Intervention into Politics* (Westview Press, USA, 1988).

⁴ Kenneth W. Kemp and Charles Hudlin. "Civil Supremacy over the Military: Its Nature and Limits" in *Armed Forces and Society*, (Fall 1992): 7-9.

⁵ Deborah Avant, "Conflicting Indicators of 'Crisis' in American Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces and Society* (Spring 1998), 375.

⁶ Rebecca L. Schiff, "Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance," in *Armed Forces and Society* (Spring 1998), 10-11.

⁷ Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999): 33-37.

⁸ *The Federalist Papers*, 26.

⁹ Richard H. Kohn, "The Constitution and National Security: The Intent of the Framers," in Richard H. Kohn, ed., *The United States Military under the Constitution of the United States, 1789-1989*, New York: New York University Press, 1991, 81-82.

¹⁰ Powell, *My American Journey*, 321.

¹¹ Malina Brown, "Jones Says Plan To Cut Terms Of Service Chiefs Is Worth Considering," *InsideDefense.com*, November 7, 2002, 12.

¹² Powell, 465.

¹³ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 188.

¹⁴ Ibid, 190.

¹⁵ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 418.

¹⁶ David Halberstam, *War In A Time Of Peace* (New York, NY: Scribners, 2001): 34-36.

¹⁷ Eric Schmitt, "General to Be Disciplined for Disparaging President," *New York Times*, June 16, 1993, 10.

¹⁸ "Helms vs. Clinton," *Washington Times*, Nov. 23, 1994, 3.

¹⁹ Rowan Scarborough, "Lobbying Effort Likely Work of Civilian," *Washington Times*, May 7, 2002, 3; and Isby, "Leaks and Leadership," *Washington Times*, August 7, 2002, 17.

²⁰ James H. Toner, *Morals Under the Gun*. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000, 158-161.

CHAPTER 3

EXAMINING THE GAP IN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The history of the United States' civil-military relations shows that civilian control enhances the military. Citizens view the military as their own. The history of the United States is resplendent with examples of its citizens committing their children and their resources to defend democratically vital interests, insisting though that it be done wisely. Much has been written over the past decade suggesting that there is a growing philosophical “disconnect” between the military and the country it serves. It is widely described as a “gap” in civil military relations. Although most agree that there will always be a gap, concerns are that the gap is growing larger than ever, and that it could have significant consequences on national security policy in the future. The good and bad aspects of this gap are examined in detail below.

THE BAD GAP

In recent years, conventional wisdom has suggested that the post-Cold War U.S. military is not very representative of society. The argument goes that our military no longer reflects the ideological norms, or even the geographical and demographic make up, of the society it lives in and exists to protect.

A debate is taking place over this possible crisis in U.S. civil-military relations. Richard Kohn writes:

The American military conceives of itself as loyal and patriotic; it universally expresses support for civilian control as a fundamental principle of government and of military professionalism. Yet at the same time, the evidence is overwhelming that civil-military relationships have deteriorated in the U.S. government. The underlying structures of civilian society and the military profession that traditionally supported civilian control have weakened.¹

If there is indeed a crisis, it may be only the first stages in a trend that could dramatically change the relationship between the military and society in the United States. Thomas Ricks is a noted author of two works on United States civil-military relations and the Pentagon correspondent for the *Washington Post*. He sees the current state of civil-military affairs as particularly worrisome: "It now appears likely that the U.S. military over the next 20 years will revert to a kind of garrison status, largely self-contained and increasingly distinct as a separate society and subculture."² The civil-military gap could represent a failure of Carl von Clausewitz's trinity (the people, military, and government) and hold significant implications for strategy and force planning. For example, Ricks and others have suggested that the Department of Defense might wish to increase the number of officer accessions from reserve officer training and other broad-based sources, in hopes of widening the demographic and ideological makeup of military leadership. Efforts could be made to open up more military bases to the public and to encourage military personnel to live in the civilian community.

A more systematic look at this gap in civil-military relations shows that there is a clear gap in the relationship, however that is not inherently bad. What is more, a review of the history of U.S. civil-military relations shows that a gap has always existed. It should not be expected, or desired, that the military be a direct reflection of society. During times of peace, it is common for the military to feel alienated. But such periods of tension actually lead to productive military planning and thought. Examples of this

occurred prior to the outbreak of World War, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, with Marine Lt. Col Pete Ellis's development of amphibious strategy and Alfred Thayer Mahan's landmark work, *Sea Power and Naval Strategy*. More recently the maneuver warfare theory developed by Air Force Colonel John Boyd during 1975-1982 was directly responsible for the stunning operational prowess of the Marine Corps during the Gulf War.³ When a true national threat develops, the country and its military are likely to operate in synchronization once more.

In what way is the military less reflective of today's society? A geographic gap is perhaps the most obvious manifestation of the post – Cold War military becoming somewhat less reflective of society. A smaller military with fewer bases and reduced presence automatically will be connected to fewer families and communities.

But Ricks and others see an especially wide gap developing in recent decades as a result of the military stationing its personnel on increasingly comfortable, but less numerous, military bases. "The base closing process is returning the military to its pre-World War II political and geographic remoteness, when most military posts were in the South and West," writes Ricks.⁴ He quotes one junior Marine as saying that the high quality of new military facilities is "almost make believe" in comparison with what would be available if he lived outside the gate.⁵

Chales J. Dunlap goes Ricks one further, describing such bases as "the ultimate Marxist paradise," where the military is becoming too comfortable and too removed from the crime, cost, and other aspects of life in civilian society. In a widely quoted article in which he outlined the results of an "American Military Coup of 2012," he described the military of the 1990s as too physically isolated and alienated from society.⁶

Dunlap also is concerned about intellectual alienation, whether the issues are political, cultural, or moral. According to Ricks:

There has always been an element of aloofness from society in the Marines' stance, as with any elite military organization. But over the last 30 years, as American culture has grown more fragmented, individualistic, and consumerist, the Marines have become more withdrawn; they feel they simply can't afford to reflect the broader society. Today's Marines give off a strong sense of disdain for the society they protect.⁷

This sense of feeling apart from, and better than, civilian society was summed up by a retired Marine Corps general who wrote in *Proceedings* that "the social fabric of the U.S. military is showing signs of wear. This should come as no real surprise, since the society from which it springs also is showing signs of serious decay."⁸

Most of the evidence of this social and ideological gap has come from military writings and newspaper reporting. Survey data recently has become available suggesting that military personnel are indeed becoming more conservative than in the past, and are feeling estranged from the political and moral views of society.⁹

This is a not a new trend in U.S. civil-military relations. Russel F. Weigley writes in *Soldiers and Civilians*, "After the Civil War ... military resentment of neglect grew so severe as to include a certain diminution of respect for the Constitution itself, and for American democracy. While the outward military acceptance of civilian control remained for the most part exemplary, the distrust between the two cultures that had existed from the beginning continued to fester and to some degree worsen, at least on the military side; most civilians were too indifferent to care."¹⁰

This isolation resulted in a strong feeling of detachment from and rejection of civilian values by military officers, especially after the Civil War. By the turn of the century, many had developed a considerably more conservative outlook than civilian society, as

well as a disdain for politics and even civilian society in general. Writing in professional journals of the day, military officers described civilian society as dominated by negative values: jingoism, individualism, and commercialism. Samuel Huntington writes that, “Rejected by a commercial society, the military services were contemptuous of the values of such a society and sure of the superiority of their own creed.” This gap was noticed outside the military as well: The New York Sun observed in 1906 that, “in the United States the professional soldier has a feeling of detachment and futility.”¹¹

After World War I some military officers attempted to bridge the gap by identifying more closely with society. One naval officer wrote that “the character of our Army and Navy ... must reflect the character of the American people-American ideas, ideals, and thoughts,” and it was proposed that the military hire publicity men to explain its position to the public.¹² The effort failed largely because the public was tired of war and thinking about the military, and the military retreated to its professional prewar isolation.

Military writers in the years just before World War II were contemptuous of civilian morals, and especially of civilian universities, intellectuals, and liberals. Huntington quotes from several articles that sound as if they could have been written today, including one comment from 1936 that “the soldier and the civilian belong to separate classes of society. The code of the soldier can never be the same as that of a civilian; why try to mingle them?”¹³ As the civil-military gap widened again Huntington writes that “the United States was viewed as a country abandoning its moral anchor and venturing out into a chaotic sea of pragmatism and relativism.”¹⁴ This strong feeling of conflict and alienation in U.S. civil-military relations subsided as the nation faced a national enemy in World War II, but it has reemerged following Vietnam and the Cold War.

The military may also be losing its demographic ties with society. Some have reported that the military is tending to recruit from a narrower segment of the population today than in the past, with more new entrants coming from military families and with the service academies providing a larger proportion of the officer corps.¹⁵ Such a reduced diversity, largely the result of ending the draft, could increase the insularity of the military and diminish its links with the broader society. David J. Andre has argued that the end of the draft has caused another kind of problem: the all-volunteer force is really a type of “economic draft” with the result that “in the military of today, the sons and daughters of the poor, working class, and people of color predominate.”¹⁶ Such a demographic gap certainly could reduce the diversity in the military and reinforce other aspects of civil-military separation, but this gap, too, is hardly a new phenomenon and appears less serious than it was in the previous periods in U.S. history. The strong separation of the military from civil society was emphasized by Huntington, “... with the exception of their affiliations with the South, the military have had no significant ties with any group in American society. Yet it is precisely this isolation which makes them eligible to be everybody’s enemy.”¹⁷

The gap may be widened further by the lack of knowledge and experience concerning the military on the part of the public and government elites. The apparent lack of military experience and interest among members of the Clinton administration was reported widely several years ago, and commentators have bemoaned the increasing lack of military experience among members of Congress and other governing elites.¹⁸ As Ricks puts it, “American political and economic elites generally don’t understand the military.”¹⁹

But public opinion polls indicate that there has been no significant drop off in the level of public support for the military, suggesting that this gap is not a problem in terms of the general public's perception of the military. Most data indicates that the military has remained at the top of the list of institutions in terms of popular respect since the end of the Cold War.²⁰ But more research is needed in several areas. Some critics see too much popular support as potentially dangerous, as it could indicate a lack of knowledge about the military and overconfidence that could backfire through unrealistic expectations.²¹ Also high approval ratings do not necessarily lead to enthusiasm for joining the military, as the TISS survey has shown that young males and their parents are becoming less interested in military service.²²

Samuel Huntington and others have written that the most significant problem in U.S. civil-military affairs today may be the increasing hostility among the elites towards the military. Huntington believes that it is not so much the military that has changed, as has the new generation of civilian leaders. "In recent decades the basic outlook of the military has not changed," he wrote in 1994, but the baby boom generation is "more antagonistic" to and questioning of the fundamental assumptions of the military approach than any previous generation."²³

The final type of civil-military separation relates to an uncertainty over the nature of the military itself-whether the proper model for the U.S. military is that of citizen-soldier or professional. Former Navy Secretary John Lehman has argued that as the military has become populated with large numbers of career professionals, an important link to civil society has been lost. "Perhaps the most important dimension of civilian control is our

tradition of citizen soldier,” Lehman has written. But since the introduction of the all-volunteer force, “we have created a separate military caste.”²⁴

Richard Kohn makes much the same point about an officer corps that has changed from the days of the draft:

I sense an ethos that is different. They talk about themselves as ‘we,’ separate from society. They see themselves as different, morally and culturally. It isn’t the military of the fifties and sixties, which was a large semi-mobilized citizen military establishment, with a lot of young officers who were there temporarily, and a base of enlisted draftees.²⁵

Some have argued that the increased level of professionalism may have helped make the military too powerful a force in national security decision making, and may have encouraged military officers to protect the military’s interest by engaging in partisan politics. This argument has died down in recent years, especially since the retirement of General Colin Powell as Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman. But more recently, several critics have observed that today’s military officers appear to be more politically active and more willing than in the past to criticize their civilian leaders.²⁶

Some, such as Eliot Cohen, see this as a very dangerous trend:

When officers do not hesitate to refer to themselves as an interest group, when they willingly identify themselves by party affiliation and feel free to comment in public, and in front of their subordinates, about the faults of their civilian superiors, corrective action is needed.²⁷

Here again, the evidence of greater political activity is largely anecdotal, and it does not appear that such activism, if it exists at all, has tended to reduce civilian control over military affairs. But one area deserves further study: what will be the effect on civil-military relations of keeping such a large (even if downsized) military into the 21st century. Cohen has described the civil-military gap as being more important today,

because the U.S. military is much larger than in the past and is a much more important factor in American life- and in world affairs- than at any time before World War II.²⁸

Many think civilian control of the military has been eroding since the early days of the Cold War. Andrew Bacevich states: “Indeed, today’s politicized and politically adroit military is yet one more legacy of the Cold War. In ways that many Americans fail to appreciate, the imperative of keeping the nation on a perpetual, semi-mobilized footing transformed the civil-military equation.”²⁹ Even worse, Bacevich argues, the debates over new missions and threats have encouraged greater dissension within the military.

THE GOOD GAP

History suggests that some sort of civil-military gap may not only be the norm, but it also may be beneficial to military readiness and effectiveness. Two specific periods - the post Civil War years, and the interwar period between the world wars - indicate that military innovation actually can flourish in times of military separation and neglect. Weigley writes that in the period following the Civil War, 20 years of military draw down and neglect produced the flowering of professional study and discussion among military officers.³⁰ Paul Bracken makes a similar argument about the period after World War I: “During the interwar period, when support for a large military was quite low, the U.S. military was often at its most creative and innovative.”³¹

Huntington writes that it was in fact the very isolation of the military after the Civil War that allowed it to look inward and concentrate on developing the professionalism that served the nation so well in later wars. “The isolation of the military,” he writes, “was a prerequisite to professionalism, and peace was a prerequisite to isolation.”³²

There must be a point, however, at which the distance between the military and civil society grows too large - as during the Vietnam War, perhaps. Given the importance of Clausewitz's trinity, how closely should the military, the people, and the government reflect each other?

Most analysts would agree that the military in any society should support the general interests and values of that society - after all, the primary purpose for the military's existence is to defend those interests.³³ Richard Kohn writes that it is helpful to have an officer corps that to the extent possible is "representative of the diversity or homogeneity of the larger society and not just the elite."³⁴ Sam Sarkesian has proposed that the military, political elites, and the citizenry should work together toward "concordance," broadly agreeing on goals and ideals and specifically agreeing on several issues such as the social composition of the officer corps and the political decision-making process.³⁵ But in general, political scientists as well as military analysts have written that a key aspect of any civil-military relationship is the separation of authority between civil and military leaders - and in order for this to exist there is no need for the military to be closely linked to the civilian community and the government.³⁶

Lawrence J. Korb has pointed out that in order to reflect society, the military obviously does not need simply to look like a literal cross-section of that society; few would recommend that the age distribution of the military should reflect societal norms, for example. It does, however, need to be able to respond to social forces and change, as the U.S. military has in the past in relation to women and blacks.³⁷ The issue of whether or not the military should reflect or be closely linked to society may not be an issue, as long as that military is doing its job well and responding to civilian control. The history

of the U.S. military suggests that civilian control remains strong despite occasional disagreements.

Rather than having closely related opinions or agreement on the issues of morality, the best relationship between the military and society may be, as Eliot Cohen termed it, educated skepticism. “Overall, healthy civil-military relations need a military with standards distinct from those of general society and a society that appreciates the need for the difference, even if it does not always approve of the military’s view.”³⁸

The U.S. military does not appear to be an imperfect reflection of society. But the broader history of U.S. civil-military relations indicates that this is the norm, and we may be witnessing a return to normalcy rather than a crisis. The symptoms of a more conservative military, a growing lack of military experience among the public and elites, and even a disdain felt by many officers for perceived faults in civilian society, are trends we have seen before as U.S. democracy turns away from war and adjusts to a period of peace.

It should be expected- and even required- that military leaders and thinkers take this opportunity to regroup and plan for the future. This effort surely includes discussion of the nature of civil-military relations and a reconsideration of the role of the military in society. The existence of that debate should be seen as a positive sign that this effort is under way. There is a natural conflict between the military way of preparing for war, and the civilian way of responding to peace. But our history demonstrates, recently with the war on terrorism, that when a national threat arises, the nation will be able to unite to meet it, and the military will once again successfully serve the society that it so imperfectly reflects.

NOTES

CHAPTER 3

¹ R. H. Kohn, "The Erosion of Civilian Control of the Military in the United States Today", 15 September 2002, 1.

² Thomas E. Ricks, *Making the Corps* (New York: Scribners, 1997), 275.

³ Robert Coram, Boyd: *The Fighter Pilot Who Changed The Art Of War* (Boston: Little Brown, and Company, 2002), 380-397.

⁴ Ricks, *Making the Corps*, 278.

⁵ Ibid, 277.

⁶ Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., "The Origins of the American Military Coup of 2011" *Parameters*, Winter 1992-93.

⁷ Ricks, *Making the Corps*, 22.

⁸ J.D. Lynch, "All Volunteer Force is in Crisis," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, September 1997, 30.

⁹ Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians* (Cambridge: MIT, 2001)

¹⁰ Feaver and Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 216.

¹¹ Huntington, S.P., *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1957) 266-268.

¹² Ibid. 284.

¹³ Ibid. 310.

¹⁴ Ibid. 310.

¹⁵ Feaver and Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 333-342.

¹⁶ David J. Andre, "National Culture and Warfare-Whither Decisive Force," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1996, 155.

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- ¹⁷ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 155.
- ¹⁸ Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999): 23.
- ¹⁹ Ricks, *Making the Corps*, 288.
- ²⁰ Feaver and Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 132.
- ²¹ Ibid, 159-161.
- ²² Ibid, 330.
- ²³ Samuel P. Huntington, "An Exchange on Civil-Military Relations," *The National Interest*, Summer 1994, 28.
- ²⁴ Ibid, 24.
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- ²⁶ Ibid, 286.
- ²⁷ Eliot A. Cohen, "Are U.S. Forces Overstretched? Civil Military Relations," *Orbis*, Spring 1997, 179.
- ²⁸ Ibid, 186.
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- ³⁰ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1973), 171.
- ³¹ Paul Bracken, "Reconsidering Civil-Military Relations," chapter 7 in Snider and Carlton-Carew, *U.S. Civil-Military Relations*, 161.
- ³² Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 226-230.
- ³³ S.E. Finer, 6.
- ³⁴ Richard H. Kohn, "The Forgotten Fundamentals of Civilian Control of the Military in Democratic Government," Harvard University John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, June 1997, www.data.fas.harvard.edu/cfia/olin/cvm/wrkg.htm. Accessed 21 May 2002.

³⁵ Sam C. Sarkesian and Robert E. Connor Jr, *The U.S. Military Profession Into the Twenty-First Century* (Portland, OR: Cass, 1999), 181.

³⁶ Peter D. Feaver, "The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian control," *Armed Forces and Society*, Winter 1996.

³⁷ Lawrence L. Korb, "The Military and Social Change," Olin Institute for Strategic Studies Research Project on the U.S. Military in Post-Cold War American Society, August 1996.

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CHAPTER 4

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The two classic works of American civil-military relations are Samuel Huntington's *Soldier and the State* (1957) and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier* (1960) which both address civilian control and relations between political and military leaders at the highest level. These two scholars expanded the analysis of military professionalism and civil-military relations to encompass a variety of political and sociological components. Most students of civil-military relations are familiar with the works of Huntington and Janowitz, so no detailed summary of their works needs to be presented here. What will be focused on is the applicability of several major themes in these works that focus primarily on politics and the convergence and/or divergence between the military and society. These include the concept of military professionalism in the context of the post-Cold War security environment. The aim is not to give another comparison on the similarities and differences in the theme of Huntington and Janowitz, or to analyze later studies that were undertaken as an analysis of their works. Rather the goal is to identify reference points from their books and the starting point for further analyses with respect to politics and the military profession.

Although the works of Huntington and Janowitz were published more than three decades ago, they still provide fundamental themes of military professionalism. Both works also give a greater appreciation for understanding the complexities of the specific guidelines for the military profession in terms of political dimensions. This problem also

exists in translating and interpreting the professional value system throughout the military establishment and in relationship to the civilian sector.

The political science perspective of Huntington deals with civil-military relations and control of the military; that is state control of the coercive instruments legitimacy, and the proper functioning of the instruments of the political system. The fundamental military-professional principle, according to Huntington, is “the direction, operation, and control of a human organization whose primary function is the application of violence.”¹ Moreover, the skills required of the military professional is, “an extraordinary, complex intellectual skill requiring comprehensive study and training.”²

Huntington has much to say regarding politics and the military profession. The military profession must disdain political involvement. Concerned about a balance between the military profession and civilian society, he argued that: “A strong, integrated, highly professional officer corps ... immune to politics and respected for its military character, would be a steadying balance wheel in the conduct of policy.”³

The military profession must remain distant from society. It is conservative and has a ‘realistic’ set of values that drive the military establishment – an establishment that must function within a liberal society. Society’s control rests on both objective and subjective factors. To maintain military character and integrity, the military profession must remain distant from society, while still operating within the orbit of the nation state: an apolitical military profession, well grounded in the specifics of military skills and perspectives. This raised the issue of convergence, divergence, or fusion of the military and society, issues that remain the basis for much of the debate today.

Huntington repeated his major themes in a 1978 publication.⁴ He also noted that the “professional military ethic tends to be one of conservative realism.”⁵ He concluded: “In the end, the dilemma of military institutions in a liberal society can only be resolved satisfactorily by a military establishment that is different but not distant from the society it serves.”⁶

Stating that the military was basically a conservative oriented organization functioning within a liberal society, Huntington argued for a politically neutral military, isolated from society, and focused primarily on its *raison d’etre* – victory in war.⁷ This required a shift from subjective to objective civil control, that is a shift from responsiveness to civilian political control mechanisms to responsiveness to perceived military threats. This has been labeled the traditional approach to military professionalism.

Janowitz’s sociological approach focuses on attitudes and values, the political-social system within the military, the socioeconomic characteristics of military professionals, and the impact these have on military professionalism. The results are the well-known “absolutist-pragmatist” categories and the constabulary view of military professionalism. The absolutist approach rests on the belief of the permanency of war and the concern with victory. The pragmatist emphasizes, “the discontinuity of the past with the future ... the distinction between ‘absolute’ and ‘pragmatic’ codes is roughly equivalent to that which obtains between conservative and liberal doctrine.”⁸

In the constabulary concept, Janowitz distinguishes between absolutists and pragmatists, where absolutists are those professionals whose view rests in traditional concepts of military victory and pragmatists are those who are more concerned with the

measured application of force and its political consequences.⁹ Janowitz's views placed the military profession much closer to societal values and as sensitive to the political-social expectations.

The military establishment becomes a constabulary force when it is continuously prepared to act, committed to the minimum use of force, and seeks viable international relations, rather than victory, because it has incorporated a protective military posture. The constabulary outlook is grounded in, and extends, pragmatic doctrine.¹⁰

Janowitz affirms the need to maintain some differences between the military and the civilian: "the constabulary force is designed to be compatible with the traditional goals of democratic political control."¹¹ He concluded, "To deny or destroy the difference between the military and civilian cannot produce genuine similarity, but runs the risk of creating new forms of tension and unanticipated militarism."

One of the most important works on American civil-military relations to appear since Huntington and Janowitz published their works over 50 years ago is *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*. The book is based on the results of a survey of military officers, civilian leaders, and members of the general public conducted by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies (TISS). The project completed a broad, in-depth survey of 4,891 respondents.

The project's survey instrument was designed to generate data that would be comparable to data obtained by earlier surveys of attitudes about foreign and domestic policy. The survey sought responses to 250 questions covering a range of issues: from the respondent's social and religious values to views on national security policy, and from military professionalism to the civil military relationship itself. Between 1998-

1999, the survey instrument was mailed to civilian leaders and administered to military officers in person and electronically at various formal military schools.

The group referred to as 'civilian elites' were drawn from directories of prominent Americans in the categories of 'Clergy,' 'Women,' 'American Politics,' 'State Department,' 'Media,' 'Foreign Affairs,' and 'Labor.' This category generated 989 responses out of 3,435 requested (29%).¹²

The survey designers sought to reach a comparable group of military officers, referred to as 'military elite.' This group was defined as "officers whose promise for advancement has been recognized by assignment to attend in residence the professional military education courses appropriate for their rank."¹³ This category generated 2,901 responses out of 5,889 surveys sent out (49%).¹⁴ The fact that twice as many military personnel responded to the survey compared to their civilian counterparts gives credence to what was seen as a marginalization of the military by the civilian elites during the Clinton administration.¹⁵

This is the most complete study on the distinct culture of the military and the separation of the professional soldier from society. It is principally concerned with two distinct gaps in civil military relations: the political gap where the military identifies disproportionately with the Republican Party and strongly conservative values when compared with civilian society, and the experience gap where fewer and fewer members of our civilian society have experience or have association with military members.

While the political gap seems to receive the majority of the attention, the experience gap is perhaps more pronounced, and directly affects the increased role that the military has taken in national defense policy. Fewer and fewer members of the general public

have military experience or any connection with the military. The number of elected officials who have served is consistently decreasing. Since 1971, the number of veterans in the House of Representatives has dropped from over 75 percent to around 25 percent. A similar smaller decline can be seen in the Senate.¹⁶ This trend will likely increase as more World War II and Korean veterans retire. Even though Congress still has a greater percentage of veterans than the comparable general population and the current representation is higher than most throughout U.S. history, the current level of oversight and management of military operations by Congress mandates a certain level of understanding and experience with military issues.¹⁷

The experience gap touches on the areas of recruitment and the subordination of the military to civilian leadership. With regards to recruiting, the link between familiarity with the military and the desire to enlist is strong. This is evidenced in the disproportionate number of military family members who choose the military for a career.¹⁸ Recruiters rely heavily on family contacts in order to influence young Americans. With more and more relatives lacking military service, this connection grows increasingly difficult. As to subordination of the military to civilian rule, the likelihood of a situation arising where civilian policies would draw military resistance increases when the military perceives that the decisions are not founded in an understanding of military culture and capabilities.

A further impact of the experience gap is the reduced ability of civilian leadership to translate military inputs into sound policies. As civilian leaders take an increasing role in decisions on military operations, this experience gap could become critical. With respect to Congress, budget oversight is perhaps the best example. With very few exceptions

Congress has altered every defense budget since 1947.¹⁹ In a review of data during the post-Vietnam era (1971-1991), Congress reduced the administration's procurement budgets by an average of over six percent annually.²⁰ To assist in the management process, Congressional staffs and budget committees have grown as has the number of reports Congress requires from the Department of Defense (from 36 in 1970 to 719 in 1988).²¹ While Congress controls the budget, Presidential decision-making can also come into question when the President lacks military background as former President Clinton did. The change in homosexual policy is one possible example. During his tenure, the debate over the military's role in peacekeeping and nation building flared. During the initial stages of the Bosnia deployment and later in the Kosovo Campaign, American military leaders conflicted with administration leaders on force employment issues.²² While reforms such as the Goldwater-Nichols Act serve to institutionalize military advisors in the national security policy process, final decisions remain with the civilian leaders, who may be more influenced by their civilian advisors, thereby making this experience gap a likely fact in the foreseeable future.

Despite the fact that great efforts were taken by the TISS project to complete a quantitative analysis of present day American civil-military relations no clear consensus on the implications of a widening gap in civil-military relations was reached. As editor, Peter Feaver states, "From the perspective of the project as a whole and in the context of all the findings, the project directors do not always agree with every interpretation of the authors, and on some occasions we interpret the authors' data and analyses somewhat differently than do the authors themselves."²³ The general consensus reached from the survey is that there is no present emergency in American civil-military relations that

demands immediate actions. However, if the gap between the military and society in values, attitudes, opinions, and perspectives is not addressed civil-military cooperation will be undermined and military effectiveness will be hampered. This could result in a degradation of the national security of the United States.

THE POWELL DOCTRINE AND THE GOLDWATER-NICHOLS ACT

Today the American military is as loyal to the Constitution of the United States as it ever has been in the history of the United States. However, as Eliot Cohen notes in *Supreme Command*, the central problem of civil-military relations in the United States has not been the prevention of a military takeover of the state, “But the adjustment of relations regarding the preparations of the use of force to serve the ends of policy has proven a very different matter.”²⁴ He goes on to say:

The notion that if there has been no fear of a coup there can be nothing seriously amiss with civil-military relations is one of the greatest obstacles to serious thinking about the subject. The proper roles of the military in shaping foreign policy, in setting conditions under which it acts, mobilizing civil society to support its activities-these are all contentious issues. The military is almost invariably the largest single element of national government; it claims a vast chunk of its discretionary spending, and it has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. There is nothing obvious or inevitable about the subordination of the armed forces to the wishes and purposes of the political leadership.”²⁵

Richard Kohn remarks:

In recent years civilian control of the military has weakened in the United States and is threatened today. This issue is not the nightmare of a *coup d’etat* but rather the evidence that the American military has grown in influence to the point of being able to impose its own perspective on many policies and decisions.”²⁶

An example of this emergence of the military as a political behemoth more concerned with its own well being, vice the national interests of the United States, is the military's preference to use force only under the conditions elaborated in the Powell Doctrine.

In the spring of 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger delivered a draft document to his senior military assistant, Army Major General Colin Powell. He asked Powell to review the draft and pass it along to other members of the administration national security team for their review. Together they produced what became known as the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine, or simply the Powell Doctrine. Weinberger, who had been deeply troubled by the October 1983 terrorist bombing of the US Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, had analyzed the question of when and where not to commit U.S. military forces abroad. The result of his analysis was a list of six tests or rules intended to guide decision-making in employing America's military might in combat around the world:

1. First, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies. That emphatically does not mean that we should declare beforehand, as we did with Korea in 1950, that a particular area is outside our strategic perimeter.
2. Second, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly. When Hitler broke treaties and remilitarized the Rhineland, small combat forces then could perhaps have prevented the holocaust of World War II.
3. Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that. As Clausewitz wrote, "No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so, - without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it." War may be different today than in Clausewitz's time, but the need for well-defined objectives and a consistent strategy is still essential. If we determine that a combat mission has become necessary for our vital national

interests, then we must send forces capable to do the job – and not assign a combat mission to a force configured for peacekeeping.

4. Fourth, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed – their size, composition and disposition – must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements. We must continuously keep as a beacon light before us the basic questions: “Is this conflict in our national interest?” “Does our national interest require us to fight, to use force of arms?” If the answers are “yes”, then we must win. If the answers are “no”, then we should not be in combat.
5. Fifth, before the U.S. commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation. We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas or, as in the case of Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win, but just to be there.
6. Finally, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.²⁷

General Powell succinctly summed up the Powell Doctrine as follows: “In short, is the national interest at stake? If the answer is yes, go in, and go in to win, otherwise stay out.”²⁸ Over time, the premise that overwhelming force and an exit strategy were also necessary to the use of American force became accepted tenets of the Powell Doctrine.

The Powell doctrine grew out of the debacle of Vietnam. The Vietnam War cost the lives of nearly 60,000 young Americans, left many more maimed, and for a generation tore apart the fabric of American society. The military felt that it had been left ‘holding the bag’ by the government of the United States. Civilian micromanagement of strictly military matters, such as President Johnson personally approving target lists to be bombed by American war planes in Hanoi and Haiphong, and its preference for incremental uses of force as opposed to a massive application of power that the military advocated, left an indelible mark on the psyche of the military men and women who fought the Vietnam War. President Johnson even bragged, “They can’t even bomb an outhouse without my approval.”²⁹ How emotionally unsettling the Vietnam experience

was upon the military elite can be discerned by reading the biographies of the junior officers of Vietnam who have risen to the top of the military command structure. General Colin Powell remarks:

Many of my generation, the career captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels seasoned in that war, vowed that when our turn came to call the shots, we would not quietly acquiesce in halfhearted warfare for half-baked reasons that the American people could not understand or support. If we could make good on that promise to ourselves, to the civilian leadership, and to the country, then the sacrifices of Vietnam would not have been in vain.”³⁰

For a generation of young officers who had undergone their baptism of fire in the Vietnam War their battle cry would become: ‘Never again!’ General Norman Schwarzkopf expressed the sense of abandonment by the government and citizens he felt upon returning to the United States following his second tour in Vietnam,

I hated what Vietnam was doing to the United States and I hated what it was doing to the Army. It was a nightmare that the American public had withdrawn its support: our troops in World War I and World War II had never had to doubt for one minute that the people on the home front were fully behind them. We in the military hadn’t chosen the enemy or written the orders – our elected leaders had. Nevertheless, we were taking much of the blame. We soldiers, airmen, and Marines were literally the sons and daughters of America, and to lose public support was akin to being rejected by our own parents.”³¹

General Wesley Clark, NATO Commander during the Kosovo Campaign in 1999, constantly used his Vietnam experiences as a reference point while directing the campaign.

The difficulties and complexities of modern war can be measured in part by the American military in coming to grips with Kosovo. The top leaders in the American Armed Forces were still heavily impacted by their early experiences in the Vietnam War. We knew about the dangers of ‘political micromanagement,’ when bombing targets were picked by Lyndon B. Johnson’s White House and pilots were restrained from attacking key enemy airfields and air defense sites.”³²

This military disillusionment with the political leadership of the Vietnam War deserves further reflection. Much of it in fact was self-imposed. The strategy proposed

by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for an all out effort to win the Vietnam War with huge bombing campaigns was so inappropriate with regards to the enemy arrayed against it and the political landscape, that the politicians had no choice but to ignore the military's counsel. President Johnson became so exasperated by the military counsel he was receiving that he screamed out during a staff meeting, "Bomb, bomb, bomb, that's all you know!"³³

To some degree, the assumption can be made that the Joint Chiefs of Staff chose irrelevance rather than accepting and working within the political constraints that America's civilian leaders believed they had to live with.³⁴ They were generals who were unprepared for the dynamics of a communist insurgency. They earned their spurs in World War II and Korea, large conventional conflicts with clearly established operational parameters. These generals wanted to fight the World War II way: Find the enemy, fix him in place, and annihilate him with withering firepower. The obvious solution from the Pentagon's perspective would have been to invade the North and make Ho Chi Minh cry 'uncle.' But that was not politically possible. President Johnson was afraid that an invasion of the North might bring China into the conflict, a concern that was later discovered to be well founded.³⁵ Instead of adapting to the situation on the ground and tailoring military strategy to combat the new threat, the military chose to fight the last war. Despite the efforts of the United States Marine Corps to adapt to the insurgency threat by developing a pacification program to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Vietnamese people, it was dismissed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the American commander in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, as too unconventional and time

consuming. Marine Lt. General Victor Krulak responded to General Westmoreland's opposition:

General Westmoreland told me, however, that while the ink blot idea seemed to be effective, we just didn't have time to do it any other way; if we left the people to the enemy, glorious victories in the hinterland would be little more than blows in the air – and we would end up losing the war.”³⁶

The conclusion of the Vietnam War bore out General Krulak's warning. The military proved unable to adapt itself to the exigencies of the Vietnam War, and when left to its own devices by its civilian leadership, often developed plans and policies that diverged from the political goals being pursued by the United States government.

The best example of this is the military's reluctance to intervene with force only under the conditions elaborated in the Powell Doctrine. While the Powell Doctrine is focused on external threats, it has undermined civilian control by asserting a greater domestic role for the military in foreign policy decision-making. Since Vietnam the military has not really been ordered anywhere. It has become a self-interested bureaucracy that negotiates with the National Command Authority. In addition the Powell Doctrine undermines the basic tenet of military subordination to civilian authority. As General Powell stated in his memoirs:

As a corporate entity, the military failed to talk straight to its political superiors or itself. The top leadership never went to the secretary of defense or the President and said, 'this war is unwinnable the way we are fighting it'.³⁷

This lesson caused civil-military conflict when the end of the Cold War led to the civilian decisions to use the military in operations other than war, driving home the point that civilian and military ideas about the use of force have diverged substantially. General Powell's reluctance to use force in the 1991 Gulf War and in Bosnia are well documented.

Under Bush, and again under Clinton, when the top civilians asked what it might cost to intervene militarily, Powell would show his lack of enthusiasm by giving them a high estimate, and they would quickly back off. The figure never went under two hundred thousand troops.³⁸

Powell used his casualty estimates as a measuring stick to see how badly the U.S. Government really wanted to intervene in operations other than war/low intensity conflicts. General Powell and the majority of the other officers of his generation remembered how the steady mounting of casualties in Vietnam had sapped the will of the American people to stomach that conflict. This perception of the American people as casualty-averse has become an unwritten law between the civilian and military elites since the end of the Cold War. This 'body bag' syndrome has become a convenient scapegoat for military and political leaders who hide behind it as a way to justify their unwillingness to contemplate certain policy options. The TISS study shows that belief by the military and civilian elites that the U.S. public is especially casualty-shy is, in fact, a myth.

All populations dislike casualties, and democratic societies are particularly able to express this dislike. However, our study found evidence that the American public will accept casualties if they are necessary to accomplish a declared mission, and the mission is being actively pushed by the nation's leadership. With regard to the constabulary interventions that have dominated the post-Cold War security landscape, the public is much more tolerant of casualties than the military officers we surveyed.³⁹

It has become an operational philosophy in the armed forces of the United States that a mission is considered a success, first and foremost, by the number of friendly casualties suffered. Tactical successes are a distant second. As a battalion commander from the 1st Armored Division recalled before going to Bosnia as part of IFOR in 1995:

When I received my written mission from Division ... absolutely minimizing casualties was the mission prioritized first, so I in turn passed it on in my written

operation order to my company commander. If mission and force protection are in conflict, then we don't do the mission.”⁴⁰

Ironically, by placing force protection above mission accomplishment it becomes much more difficult to implement a lasting peace. The U.S. military does not want to get involved in the nation building process, which in turn makes it that much more difficult to end the mission any time soon.

Because the military's influence over national security policy is largely informal, its influence is directly related to whether its recent endeavors are considered successes or failures. Influence is thus repetitive. Following a perceived failure like the Vietnam War, the prestige and influence of the services diminished. Since the American military has never faced outright defeat, such declines are usually temporary, lasting only until the next success. The opposite is also true: after perceived successes like the Gulf War, the military's influence surges, but this too is fleeting. The relationship of influence to perceived operational success or failure has caused the military to become timid in its recommendations to national policymakers. For instance, Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor suggest that the Powell Doctrine reflected General Powell's fear “that American public opinion could turn against the armed forces, as it did during the Vietnam War.”⁴¹

The Powell Doctrine seeks to make civilian leaders aware of the imperatives of military operations. It was designed to ensure that the nation would never be involved in another Vietnam quagmire. Instead the military would apply overwhelming force quickly in a campaign with clear objectives and public support.

The experience of the Gulf War increased those expectations. In fact the Powell Doctrine can be seen as a reason to stay out of any conflicts except Desert Storm. It rejects force as an instrument of policy, which is just not relevant in today's complex

world. Andrew Bacevich pointed out the irony that the very success of Desert Storm reaffirmed the yearning of General Powell and his peers for “self-contained decisive, conventional war, conducted by autonomous, self-governing, military elites” also ensured the demise of that concept by accelerating the blurring or elimination of the boundaries between war and peace, soldiers and civilians, and military and political spheres.⁴²

Today the propensity to question the military expertise of civilian leaders has increased to the point where Richard Kohn believes that the U.S. military is more alienated from its civilian leadership than at any time in American history.⁴³ He points to the issues of intervention in Bosnia and gays in the military as situations where the Joint Chiefs of Staff undermined administration policies they disagreed with, rather than carry out the will of their civilian superiors.⁴⁴ Russell Weigley argues that a “series of vocal military objections to civilian policies” have sometimes usurped choices that were for the civil government to make.⁴⁵

What this means today is that the military has moved away from articulating their principles and doctrine to the civilian leadership, and has instead instituted blanket opposition to missions that do not conform to their own preferences and priorities. The military establishment makes a concerted effort to avoid missions that might lead to messy insurgencies or unconventional warfare.

The integration of the reserve component into force structures to create a total force following Vietnam by Army Chief of Staff, General Creighton Abrams, can be seen as the beginning of this trend. Facing a significant draw down, the shift to an all-volunteer armed force, and a desire for ethical reform from the rank and file of an officer corps who believed the Vietnam War had weakened service integrity, Abram’s primary goals were

to establish an active force structure that maintained 16 divisions while also increasing the readiness of reserve components. His subordinates later claimed that he also had a long term vision to ensure that no president could ever again fight another Vietnam without mobilization, but that is not clear from available documents. Whatever his intent, Abrams and his staff began to integrate reserves into the force structure so that no major war deployment would be made possible without them, not only ensuring that these units would be available in a major conflict, but also that any president desiring to employ large forces would have to muster the necessary political backing from a country unified enough to support the call up of the reserves required to sustain the operation. Though Abram's motivation might be unclear, the result was a new force structure that would put a limit on the Executive Branch's ability to intervene militarily.

The initial effectiveness of this approach could be seen in the debates over the reserve deployment for the Gulf War. However, so much of the military's support structure is in the reserves now that even current operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan require an augmentation of active duty forces with the reserves. This problem with contingency support is worsened by a force structure that is still designed to employ whole divisions, such as in a Fulda Gap scenario to stop a Soviet onslaught. Changing this force structure mix will be difficult since the key objective of this total force policy is the military's need to maintain a 'political checks and balances' over the Executive Branch's ability to commit troops overseas. However, changing the active/reserve balance for support forces will be essential to meet future contingencies.

Another example of the military limiting policy options for civilian leaders is that military planners typically operate under 'worst case' assumptions. In the past decade

when briefing the National Command Authority on a military strategy for Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo the military buffered in the unexpected as the best way to handle political authorities. General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander Europe during the Kosovo Campaign remarked that planners in the Pentagon developed campaign plans with the following characteristics: extended time lines, more forces, and prohibitive costs. The reasoning for this he stated was because:

This is one of the reasons that the Services don't resist calls for planning and repeatedly urge that it be undertaken carefully before complex operations. The Washington-savvy leaders among them probably believed that the surest way to kill our engagement in Kosovo was to plan a ground operation in excruciating detail. But I believe there were also some who simply believed that the surest way to prevent our ever employing ground forces there was to refuse to plan for the possibility."⁴⁶

NOTES

CHAPTER 4

¹ S. P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1957), 12.

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⁴ Ibid, 308.

⁵ Ibid, 49.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, 181.

⁸ M. Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (London: Free Press, 1960), 15.

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¹⁰ Ibid, 418.

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¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Thomas E. Ricks, *Making the Corps* (New York: Scribners, 1997), 291.

¹⁶ Feaver and Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 278.

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¹⁸ Ibid, 299.

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- ³⁵ Herring, *America's Longest War*, 139.
- ³⁶ Boot, *Savage Wars of Peace*, 298.
- ³⁷ Powell, *My American Journey*, 149.
- ³⁸ D. Halberstam, *War In A Time of Peace* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 36.

³⁹ Feaver and Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 467.

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⁴¹ Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995), viii.

⁴² Bacevich, "A Less than Splendid Little War," *Wilson Quarterly*, 92-93.

⁴³ Kohn, *Proceedings*, 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 8.

⁴⁵ Weigley, "The American Military and the Principles of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. LVII, October 1993 Special Issue, 27-58.

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CHAPTER 5

EFFECTS OF THE CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Hart-Rudman Commission on National Security in the 21st Century concluded that “while the likelihood of major conflicts between powerful states will decrease, conflict itself will likely increase.¹ Four major characteristics will likely dominate the world of 2025.

First, globalization and interdependence will characterize the relationships between countries and regions.² Nations will draw together not only for security but also for economic and commercial reasons. Global information will become a managed commodity and the often used phrase ‘information is power’ will be truer than ever. Minor events and small conflicts will be more significant and draw the attention of the major world powers.

Second, the United States will remain the sole superpower and will be without a military peer. Regional powers will rise but none will fully challenge the global reach and capability of the United States. The United States will be challenged economically as the balance of economic power shifts to countries such as India and China. The United States will still prefer a combined approach to world problem solving, but large scale alliances will give way to smaller coalitions of the willing and able.³ As observed in the last decade of the 20th century, the military element of power will be closely linked

with the other elements of power: economic, diplomatic, and information.⁴ Military force will back up the words and interests of powerful nations and organizations.

Third, new actors and new forms of conflict will rise to challenge the preeminence of the major powers. Asymmetric threats will be increasingly directed at vulnerabilities in an effort to level the playing field.⁵ Nationalism and religious/cultural issues will fuel discontent as sovereign boundaries become more blurred. Rogue leaders and failing states will command media attention and demand world response. Globalization will make it difficult to identify 'vital' interests.⁶ Employment of military forces will focus more often on 'important national interests' not affecting survival, but affecting the quality of the world in which we live.⁷ Values as well as global and regional leadership will demand that dominant nations take actions to avert humanitarian crises and respond to natural and manmade disasters. Threats and acts of genocide, captured and reported by world media, will require policy makers to act quickly.⁸ International pressure will drive the United Nations to take on more 'peacekeeping' operations. The gap between affluent and middle class nations and the destitute nations will widen. The third world will be increasingly vulnerable to environmental, health, economic and political liabilities. The United States and other major powers will be asked to lead or substantially support stabilization efforts.⁹

Finally, the technology explosion will continue. New, cheap, and radical technological breakthroughs will place sophisticated lethal and non-lethal weapons in the hands of potential challengers.¹⁰ Technology will provide greater means for acquiring, managing and controlling information. Advances in genetics, robotics, and micro technologies will continue to improve quality of life in the developed nations. Not

everyone, however, will share in the benefits of increased technology. 'Haves' and 'have-nots' will exist and this will be a source of conflict.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY AND IMPLICATIONS ON CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

To prepare the United States for this future scenario as envisioned by the Hart-Rudman Commission, President Bush submitted to Congress *The National Security Strategy of the United States*. This doctrine moves away from the Cold War pillars of containment and deterrence towards a policy that supports preemptive attacks against terrorists and hostile states with chemical, biological and/or nuclear weapons. This document adds the words 'preemption' and 'defensive intervention' as formal options for striking at hostile nations or groups that appear determined to use weapons of mass destruction against the United States. By adopting the doctrine as part of its formal national security strategy, the administration will compel the U.S. military to implement some of the biggest changes in its history. Adopting a preemption doctrine is a radical shift from the half-century old policies of deterrence and containment that were built around the notion that an adversary would not attack the United States because it would provoke a certain, overwhelming retaliatory strike. Due to the asymmetrical threat posed by terrorist organizations the United States has been forced to move beyond deterrence since September 11th.

The nature of the enemy has changed, the nature of the threat has changed, and so the response has to change. The terrorists have no territory to defend ... It's not clear how one would deter an attack like we experienced.¹¹

Preemption carries the risk of causing a crisis to escalate quickly by increasing pressure on both sides to act sooner rather than later, forcing them to ‘use it or lose it.’ Terrorist targets will have a global reach and the ability to quickly disperse after an attack and reconstitute when the conditions are favorable to launch another terrorist attack. Defense Analyst Harlan Ullman believes that although preemption is attractive on the surface, as one gets deeper, it gets more complicated and dangerous.¹² A botched attack that blows chemicals, biological spores or radioactive material into the atmosphere could kill thousands of people, not only in the target nation, but in neighboring countries as well. Preemption will require far better and far different intelligence than the U.S. government gathers.

For a strategy of preemption to be effective, the United States will need to strike before a crisis erupts to destroy an adversary’s stockpile. Otherwise the adversary could erect defenses to protect those weapons or disperse them. The policy of preemption may be the best of a series of bad choices. In some cases, preemptive strikes against an adversary’s capabilities may be the best or only option to avert a catastrophic attack against the United States.¹³ Under the doctrine, nuclear first strikes would be considered weapons of last resort, especially against biological weapons that can best be destroyed by sustained exposure to the high heat of a nuclear blast. But the focus of the effort is finding new ways of using conventional weapons to detect and destroy weapons arsenals, and especially the missiles used to deliver them.

To accomplish this, the Pentagon is studying how to launch ‘no warning’ raids that go far beyond quick air strikes. The key tool to execute that mission is a new ‘Joint Stealth Force’ that pulls in the least detectable elements of every part of the armed forces,

including radar-evading aircraft, special operations troops, and ballistic submarines that are being converted to carry those troops and to launch cruise missiles. However, more difficult than changes in weapons, doctrine, and organization will be the altering of the U.S. military mindset. Preemption runs completely against U.S. strategic culture as set forth in the Powell Doctrine. In the past the United States viewed surprise attacks as dishonorable, the kind of thing inflicted on the American people, not initiated by them. American forces will have to be lighter, mobile, and 'joint'. Integration of command and control systems will be critical to the preemptive, surgically precise operations required by the U.S. military.

There will be a need for a dramatic restructuring of America's military to enforce the new *National Security Strategy of the United States*. This can only be accomplished with strong oversight by America's civilian leadership. As demonstrated by the military's inability to adapt to the realities of counter-insurgency warfare in Vietnam, the American military establishment prefers large scale, conventional wars. Its tables of equipment and organization are structured to combat such a threat. It is a technology heavy force that is adverse to ground operations as has been demonstrated most recently during the Kosovo Campaign.

Although the military pays lip service to the new Washington 'buzz word' of transformation¹⁴, Cold War weapons programs continue to be fought over in the hallowed corridors of Congress. Perhaps the best example of this is the fight over the Crusader Artillery System.¹⁵ This weapon system was meant to plug the Fulda Gap during World War III. It is too big to fit on most strategic lift airplanes, requires a huge logistical train to support it, and is ill suited for combating asymmetric threats. It is not the type of

weapons system that compliments The National Security Strategy of the United States. Only the personal involvement of the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, was able to derail this cold war behemoth¹⁶. Secretary Rumsfeld's heavy-handed approach with the military establishment will continue to be crucial in the transformation process.¹⁷

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⁵ Ibid, 4-5.

⁶ Tom Donnelly, “Strategic Strife,” 29 November 2000; available from <http://ebird.dtic.mil/Nov2000/e20001116democrats.htm>; Internet; accessed on 28 August, 2002.

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¹³ Ibid, 242.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

After years of civilian deference to the military establishment it is now necessary to reestablish balance in the American civil-military relationship. Prior to September 11th there was an improper relationship between the political leadership and the military in the policymaking process. The tenet that political leaders should make policy decisions with advice from the military was being called into question. During the Clinton administration there was a reluctance to confront the military and the military's disagreement with many policy initiatives of its elected and appointed masters combined to allow the military to assert undue influence in the policy making process.¹ Critics believed that the U.S. military did not consistently follow the norm of supporting political objectives; especially those requiring the limited use of force in various peace operations. Instead the military engaged in behaviors that had a determinative effect on policy outcomes. The interjection of conditions such as the Powell Doctrine into the policy making process was an overplaying of the military's designated role as expert advisors.

During the first months of the Bush Administration, there were signs of attempts to redress this apparent imbalance, and some military resistance to change. There were many reports of friction between Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and the Joint Chiefs of Staff over his strategic review, especially concerning the impression that the Secretary of Defense was ignoring or bypassing them in shaping his policies. For the military this

brought back bad memories of Robert McNamara's use of the 'whiz kids' to formulate defense policy without consulting with his Joint Chiefs.²

Rumsfeld has taken measures, largely symbolic, to reassert civilian control over the military, which are beginning to take effect. The designator of Commander in Chief is now solely reserved for the President of the United States. The former military CINCs are now to be referred to as combatant commanders.³ Secretary Rumsfeld has been evaluating shortening service limits on the tenures of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from four years to two years.⁴ The Commandant of the Marine Corps has been appointed the next Supreme Allied Commander Europe, the first time a Marine has ever held that post. Speculation in Washington is that the appointment is a message to the Army and Air Force that they need to change their cold war mentality and adapt the expeditionary philosophy of the Marine Corps. In another symbolic move the Army Chief of Staff was notified a year before his scheduled end of tour date, who his replacement was going to be. The message here was take transformation seriously or the Secretary of Defense will find someone who will.

The role of the military in President Bush's The National Security Strategy may pose particular challenges for both civilian leadership and the military. The boundaries that regulated civil-military relations in policy making during the Cold War need to change to adapt to the different threat environment. Budget constraints that limited the demands of the services have been lifted to a degree, Congress and the Executive Branch are united to an unprecedented degree, and the nation as a whole is focused on national security in general and the war on terrorism specifically. Such an environment calls for strict adherence to traditional standards of military professionalism in policy councils.

The present process relies heavily on military expertise relevant to the application of force in the achievement of political objectives. Military professionals must be careful in their presentation of options to include all potential applications of the military instrument of power without limiting choices to those options consistent with a particular preferred doctrine, i.e., the Powell Doctrine. The current strategic challenge does not have to have a short-term exit strategy and may not be conducive to the application of overwhelming military force, as required by that doctrine. The civilian leadership should not deny military leaders the right to argue in favor of particular options, but they must demand presentation of military options to achieve political ends. The military leadership should stay within its role as expert advisor to the National Command Authority, even when greater influences may be solicited by other forces, particularly the Congress of the United States, in the policy making process. Innovative thinking about future military strategy is to be encouraged to put the United States in position to win the next war, and not be stuck fighting the last.

Restraint on the part of military professionals will be needed with regards to budgetary matters. The Defense Department has received huge increases in its budget, but it must be careful to subordinate institutional interests to national interests. The temptation exists to take advantage of the environment to fund other service specific desires that might not be consistent with the national interest. Service Chiefs must not become so focused on current needs that they forget about transforming for the future, and must not allow their civilian masters to develop similar views.

Civilian leadership will also have responsibilities for improved relations with the military in *The National Security Strategy*. National security elites over the past decade

have increasingly reflected lower levels of military experience to inform their defense policy decisions and assist their national security policy competency.⁵ Ole R. Holsti highlights the loss of experience across the federal government, and an increased blurring of civil-military roles in which “senior military ... become policy advocates and decision-makers, rather than solely advisors.”⁶

Christopher Gibson and Don Snider provide more objective data to illuminate the reality behind these claims. They point out that, as of 1999, “military experience among members of Congress has declined nearly 30 percent since its high point in the early 1980’s.”⁷ In addition Bill Clinton was the first president since FDR to not have military experience (although FDR served in the Navy secretariat). Most importantly they carried out a detailed study of civilian and military defense expertise over a forty year period, using ‘coding rules’ which assessed the level of national security expertise based on past experience and assignments, to include higher education and service in senior staff positions in the defense bureaucracy. Their findings are first, that military competency to operate at the highest levels of government in policymaking and political issues has dramatically improved.⁸ Military officers routinely attend elite graduate schools to study national security policy, and are now assigned to the upper echelons of the defense bureaucracy, dramatically improving their knowledge of and experience dealing with national security.

Contrasted with the military’s increased expertise, the relative influence on civilian leaders on defense policy making has declined. This is an issue that could cause tension in the coming years. Civilian leaders need to understand the military as well as the military understands the national security process. Civil-military relations will become

even more complicated and interwoven in the new security environment. Robert Kaplan writes about the new world security civil-military dynamic in Warrior Politics. He states,

Every diplomatic move will also be a military one, as the artificial separation between the civilian and military command structures that has been a feature of contemporary democracies continues to dissolve. We will revert to the unified leaderships of the ancient and early-modern worlds – what Socrates and Machiavelli recognized as a basic truth of all political systems, whatever the labels those systems claim for themselves.”⁹

In the future as the United States confronts these asymmetrical threats in possession of weapons of mass destruction, there will not be time for the President to consult the Congress or people before inserting combat brigades anywhere in the world in 96 hours and entire divisions in 120 hours. According to Aubin:

The majority of our military actions will be lightning air and computer strikes, and the decision to use force will be made by small groups of civilians and general officers, the differences between them fading as time goes on.¹⁰

It is imperative that civilian leaders increase their understanding of the military and the role it plays in national security. The U.S. military thrives when it is working hand in hand with its civilian leadership to achieve national policy objectives. To give the military free reign to accomplish military goals, with no clear civilian guidance, will cause strains on the civil-military relations in the changing national security environment.

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¹ David Halberstam, *War In A Time Of Peace*, 241.

² H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 18-21.

³ Maureen Dowd, "Rummy Runs Rampant," *New York Times*, October 30, 2002, 1.

⁴ Greg Jaffe, "Rumsfeld Floats Plan To Cut Terms Of U.S. Service Chiefs," *Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 2002, 1.

⁵ A.J. Bacevich, "Tradition Abandoned: America's Military in a New Era," *National Interest* 48 (Summer 1997), 21-22.

⁶ Ole R. Holsti, "A Widening Gap between the U.S. Military and Civilian Society?: Some Evidence, 1976-96," *International Security* 23/3 (Winter 1988/99): 5-43.

⁷ Christopher P. Gibson and Don M. Snider, "Civil Military Relations and the Potential to Influence: A Look At the National Security Decision-Making Process," *Armed Forces and Society* 25/2 (Winter 1999), 199.

⁸ *Ibid*, 209-213.

⁹ Robert Kaplan, *Warrior Politics*, New York: Random House, 2002, 116.

¹⁰ Stephen P. Aubin, "Stumbling Toward Transformation: How the Services Stack Up," *Strategic Review*, Spring 2000, 12.

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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Sean W. Pascoli

Local Address:

1601 Blooming Rose Street
Las Vegas, NV 89144

Home Address:

805 Basil Road
Charleston, WV 25314

Degrees:

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, 1990
University of Chicago

Thesis Title: United States Civil-Military Relations: Finding Equilibrium in the Changing
National Security Environment

Thesis Examination Committee:

Chairperson, Dr. Andrew C. Tuttle, Ph. D.
Committee Member, Dr. Gary Jones, Ph. D.
Committee Member, Dr. Dina Titus, Ph. D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. David L. Holmes, Ph. D.