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Civil-Military Module Discussion Questions

1. Your oath of loyalty and fealty is to the Constitution, and does not, like the oath of enlisted members, include language about obeying orders. Yet the Constitution clearly establishes the President as Commander-in-Chief and with that goes the presumption of obedience by everyone junior in the chain of command. The system has clear guidance on how to respond to illegal orders. What about “unwise” orders? In dealing with civilian leaders, can your oath to support the Constitution override requests, hints, directions, directives, or even orders that you deem unwise? Under what circumstances and with what processes can senior military people deal with orders they find problematic?
2. Leaving the question of legality, what do you do as a senior leader about orders that you find immoral or unethical? Do you have any recourse, e.g., resign? Quietly or in protest? Can you ask to be relieved or retired in these, or any other, circumstances? What other circumstances?
3. Is it possible to be caught between the executive, legislative, and/or judicial branches of government in a situation or situations in which legal and constitutional authorities over the military are in conflict? Think of some situations; what would you do?
4. Thinking about the so-called civil-military gap, how can we celebrate the distinctiveness of military culture without appearing to disparage civilian culture? Are there aspects of military culture today that need to be adjusted to better track with civilian society? What are they? Are there aspects of military culture today that need to be protected from pressures to conform to civilian society? What are they?
5. How do we go about lessening the suspicion, distrust, tension, and even outright conflict between senior military leaders and the top political leaders, elected and appointed--and still fulfill our responsibilities under various laws pertaining to positions we might hold, to provide advice and execute orders? What avenues are appropriate/inappropriate in circumstances when senior military leaders believe that the civilian leadership is preventing them from providing their professional advice candidly and privately?
6. What responsibilities do senior leaders have to mentor officers under their command on civil-military relations? What venues could be used for that? How could senior leaders go about it?
7. A bedrock of civil-military relations is an a-political, or non-partisan, military. How does that square with retired flag officers endorsing political candidates? Are such endorsements proper for some ranks and not for others? Is there a distinction between endorsing in local elections, and getting involved in local community service-- like school boards--that some might consider "political" if not partisan? How about running themselves for office or speaking out/sharing expertise and perspectives on national defense and security? Would that be permissible? Why or why not?

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Originally a lecture for a two-day seminar for senior flag officers on civil-military relations held at UNC-Chapel Hill and sponsored by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies, this essay will be published in slightly different form as the introduction to *Civil-Military Relations in the United States* (London: Routledge, 2017). *Not to be circulated, cited, or quoted without permission of the author.*

Six Myths about Civil-Military Relations in the United States

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Very few people today think about civil-military relations until something out-of-the-ordinary occurs. A top general clashes in public or in congressional testimony with the President. Or the President fires a prominent four-star commander or chief for malfeasance of some kind. Even fewer Americans have heard of civil-military relations or know what it means. While one of the least studied subjects, it can be the most important aspect of war and military affairs, and thus national security.

A chief reason is that the substance of civil-military relations is extremely broad. It encompasses the entire set connections between a military and its host society, from the interactions of military bases with surrounding communities to consultations between civilian political leaders and their most senior military officers. All of that affects national defense in peace and in war, in ways great and small. For example, civil-military relations are deeply involved in cyberwar, where the government has only begun to address the problems of agency responsibilities, command and control, and legal authorities for defense and attack in cyberspace against civilian businesses and public infrastructures. Civil-military relations pervade the campaign against terrorism, in the controversies over government surveillance or drone killings of American citizens. Cyber and terrorism revisit age-old debates about the balance between liberty and security, which for countries with political systems like that of the United States, have always been central to civil–military relations.

What follows, as an introduction to the subject, began as a lecture in 2012 to a workshop for senior American generals and admirals. In many iterations since for civilian and military audiences, the text has undergone revisions as I’ve gathered more evidence and refined the central message, which is that much of our understanding of civil-military relations is myth. Long experience convinces me that what most people (including the military) know or think they know about the subject is simplistic or actually untrue. Mark Twain supposedly remarked that “It’s not what you don’t know that hurts you. It’s what you know that just ain’t so.” And in national defense, what we know that just ain’t so, can be extremely dangerous.

* * * * *

The *first myth* is that *everything is fine in the relationship* between the top military and political officials in the government. This is demonstrably false. There have been problems throughout American history, but particularly since World War II. The relationship has been messy, filled with mutual misunderstanding and suspicion. Historians frequently mention Abraham Lincoln's disagreements with his generals but rarely mention bad blood between cabinet secretaries and their most senior unformed subordinates. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's distant and dysfunctional relationship with the generals and admirals had many precedents well over a century old; two commanding generals moved their headquarters out of Washington to escape their cabinet bosses, and the first Chief of Naval Operations rose over the heads of all the serving admirals at the time, so terrible was the Navy secretary's working relationship with them. Presidents from John Adams to Barack Obama have distrusted their generals, occasionally clashed with them and occasionally relieved them of their posts. Mr. Obama fired two American commanders in Afghanistan and declined to put his most prominent general, David Petraeus, in the top military job. The problems, while episodic, have been consistent.¹

A flag officer once questioned whether this tension, even the conflict, was relevant, since our system "works:" the U.S. has been most frequently successful in war and in defending itself, civilians can fire generals, and we can go on about our business. That's certainly true enough. We have plenty of generals and admirals. We fire them rarely, and there are always others available to take their place. The problem, however, is that the distrust and discontinuity in the relationship have impeded communication, produced poor decisions, warped policies, and on occasion harmed the nation's effectiveness in wartime. Perhaps the most blatant example was Douglas MacArthur's attempt to widen the Korean War and undermine the Truman Administration's decisions, including not to send American troops to the Yalu River, which MacArthur, of course, did, leading to a disastrous defeat. Some forty years later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff publicly resisted the 1992 effort to repeal the ban on open homosexual service. This was as open and egregious (if less dangerous) a rebellion as MacArthur's, and rebellion is the right word. Blocking President Bill Clinton so weakened him politically as to unhinge his administration at its inception. So everything is not fine in the relationship.²

* * * * *

A *second myth* follows closely upon the first: that civilian control of the military is safe, sound, and inviolate, or, in other words, *No Coup, No Problem*. We seem to believe that the Constitution assures civilian control when in fact it does not. The Constitution *intends* civilian control of the military, but doesn't *assure* it. In his memoirs, Harry Truman

¹For a survey of conflict during American wars, see Mathew Moten, *Presidents and Their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (New York, 2014).

²See Richard H. Kohn, "The Erosion of Civilian Control of the Military in the United States Today," *Naval War College Review* 55 (2002): 9-59.

commented about firing Douglas MacArthur for publicly opposing the limiting of the war in Korea to that peninsula: “If there is one basic element in our Constitution, it is civilian control of the military,” Truman wrote. “If I allowed him to defy the civil authorities in this manner, I myself would be violating my oath to uphold and defend the Constitution.”³

Certainly civilian control has been embraced by all Americans from the beginning of the Republic to the present; it is the foundation for the relationship between the military and the government. The framers of the Constitution structured the national government explicitly for civilian control. They believed, however, that nothing could physically restrain an army. A standing army in peacetime might seize power or act as the instrument for someone else to do so. Or so history suggested. Yet in spite of inserting all sorts of devices in the document to restrain the military, all involving essentially shared and overlapping civilian powers, in the end the framers divided authority over the military so that one branch of the government could not use the military against the others. The military couldn’t even exist without explicit agreement by civilians, much less act on its own, unless it ignored or overthrew the Constitution.

Now divided and shared powers, as we know from recent history, can be a recipe for paralysis or conflict between the branches, or for irrational policies and decisions. Budget “sequestration”—the 2011 law that capped the budgets of all agencies of the federal government at an arbitrary figure for ten years and required percentage cuts across the board—is the most blatant recent example. But it is not the first instance of the use and abuse of the military (which accounted for half the cuts under sequestration) for struggles between the President and Congress. “The Constitution is an invitation to struggle,” wrote one scholar.⁴

Divided and shared power also permits the Pentagon to play the executive and legislative branches off against each other, something frequent since World War II, or to limit the control either branch exercises over the military. The President is commander in chief, but time and again has had to negotiate with his military leadership in order to get his way, as President George W. Bush felt he had to do to get his chiefs to agree to the surge in Iraq in 2006 lest they oppose it or undermine it in some way and Congress withhold

³*Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, Volume Two: Years of Trial and Hope* (New York, 1956), 503.

⁴John T. Rourke and Russell Farnen, “War, Presidents, and the Constitution,” 18 *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 18(1998):513; Christopher J. Deering, Congress, the President, and Military Policy, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1988):136–47.

funding.⁵ Presidents negotiated with the military during the Cold War in order to get support for arms-control agreements with the Soviets so the Senate would ratify the treaties. Mr. Obama negotiated the Afghan surge with his military. He negotiated the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. It took him almost two years into his administration, and it succeeded only in the legislative equivalent of the "dead of the night," a special session of the lame-duck Congress in late 2010.⁶ Similarly difficult has been the opening of combat duty to women. In truth, the pictures of the chain of command that grace the walls of all military headquarters ought to include the Capitol building on an even level with that of the President of the United States.

What has made civilian control work has been, in my judgment, at least four factors in American history: first, reverence for the Constitution and the primacy of law that undergirds society; second, geographic separation from Europe, which allowed the country to avoid a substantial standing military until the Cold War with its nuclear weapons and their delivery by air, which diminished the safety of ocean boundaries; third, reliance in war on a policy of mobilization using citizen soldiers in the form of state militias, reservists, and volunteers, and later conscription; and fourth, the professionalism of the military itself—its willing subordination as a core value of the profession of arms in the United States. But all four of these factors have weakened to a greater or lesser extent in the last seventy-five years.

While the lampooning of lawyers in American culture goes all the way back to Shakespeare's day, the reverence for law, including the Constitution and judges, has declined in the United States. Respect for the Supreme Court, as revealed most recently in polling, has also lessened because some recent decisions have seemed starkly partisan. Law, lawyers, judges, and the legal system have eroded in credibility and respect, certainly since the Warren Court's epochal decisions and the opposition they provoked.

⁵Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006-2008* (New York, 2008), 286–89; George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York, 2010), 375-378; Peter D. Feaver, "The Right to Be Right: Civil-Military Relations and the Iraq Surge Decision," *International Security* 35 (2011):89–124. According to Stephen Hadley, Bush's National Security Adviser, "If the president had just decided, without . . . bringing the military on board, " it would have produced "a split between the president and his military in wartime. Not good. That's a constitutional crisis. But more to the point, Congress--who did not like the surge and was appalled that the president would do this--would have brought forward all those military officers who'd had any reservation about the surge in order to defeat it. And the president would have announced his surge, but he'd have never gotten it funded." Quoted in Peter Bergen, *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and al-Qaeda* (New York, 2011), 282-283.

⁶The best description of the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell to date is Chuck Todd, *The Stranger: Barack Obama in the White House* (New York, 2014), 184-203.

The second weakened pillar of support for civilian control of the military has been a permanent military of real size since the beginning of the Cold War, ironically the result of nuclear weapons and air power, two innovations the U.S. itself pioneered, and the transformation of the United States into the guarantor of security and stability in Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia.

Third of all, citizen soldiers. How many people in our society are conscious of the obligation to serve if the nation calls? All of the military, including the National Guard and the Reserves, while they call themselves citizen soldiers, are resolutely proud of their professionalism, and when surveyed about their values, attitudes, opinions, and perspectives in 1998-99 by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies, they expressed views hardly different from those of the regular military.⁷ We have no active planning for mobilization beyond the callup of the Reserves and the National Guard. The possibility of drafting American youth to create a traditionally citizen military has all but died.

Last, the willing subordination of the military itself to civilian control has also weakened. The entire military subscribes to civilian control, believes in civilian control, but like the rest of society, many in the military sometimes have a dim understanding of the behaviors and attitudes necessary to foster and support it. People in the military, and sometimes the armed services as institutions, have engaged in behaviors that—all through American history, but particularly in the last two generations—dilute civilian control.⁸

Of course any attempt to overthrow the government is unthinkable. Indeed, only a couple of plausible scenarios have ever been advanced that imagined the possibility, and they're farfetched.⁹ In the United States, power and authority are too separated, divided, shared, and distributed amongst national, state, and local governments, for anybody to *control* anything (not to mention the power of the private sector to act independently and to influence government at all levels). This causes constant tension, competition, suspicion, misunderstanding, and outright conflict in many areas of national life, civil-military relations among them.

Yet, the absence of a revolt has not prevented occasional defiance or regular instances of passive resistance, evasion, or manipulation by the military establishment and, of course,

⁷Ole R. Holsti, "Of Chasms and Convergences: Attitudes and Beliefs of Civilians and Military Elites at the Start of a New Millennium," *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, ed. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 28, 33, 3538-39, 48-49, 52-54, 55, 58, 60, 61, 64, 65, 67, 68-69, 71, 72-73, 76-77, 78-79, 81, 83, 86-87, 88, 89, 91.

⁸Kohn, "Erosion of Civilian Control," 23-33; Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

⁹Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey II, *Seven Days in May* (New York, 1962); Charles J. Dunlap, Jr, "Origins of the American Coup of 2012," *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* 22 (1992):2-20.

by the politicians of the military. From the beginning, beneath subordination, there has often been the kind of distrust that prevents civil–military relations from working in a healthy fashion. Congress and state governors distrusted George Washington and the Continental Army throughout the War for Independence. On at least one occasion, the officer corps teetered on the brink of outright mutiny. Andrew Jackson, appointed a regular army general after the War of 1812, defied the Secretary of War and wiped out an Indian tribe in Florida, precipitating a crisis that led to the purchase of what was then foreign territory. During the Mexican War, James K. Polk so distrusted his chief general, Winfield Scott, that Polk acted as his own Secretary of War and watched Scott closely. For his part, Scott ran for the presidency twice in the 1840s, then in 1852 actually wrested the Whig party nomination from his commander and chief, all the while on active duty as a general, and during two elections, the Commanding General of the entire Army.

During the Cold War, the services actively fought each other over unification and contested Truman’s budget limits. The admirals revolted against the administration’s cancellation of the super carrier *United States* in 1949, a clash that resulted in several sackings. Eisenhower, certainly the most knowledgeable modern president about the military in America, replaced a number of his chiefs. The Army leadership under him attempted everything short of open revolt to undermine the policy of emphasizing air, naval, and nuclear weapons. In his last year in office, Eisenhower considered firing his Air Force chief. At one point, he called the behavior of some of his senior military leaders “damn near treason.”¹⁰ Eisenhower first labeled Richard Nixon's secretary of defense, Melvin Laird, "too devious," but after a meeting with him, Ike told Nixon "Of course Laird is devious, but for anyone who has to run the Pentagon, and get along with Congress, that is a valuable asset."¹¹ Kennedy, too, had to fire some of his military leaders. They had opposed Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's reforms of military policy, strategy, and budget procedures. The bad blood between McNamara and the military antedated the Vietnam War but escalated dramatically during that conflict, spreading into the Nixon years with a President who so distrusted his own secretary of defense, and he the President (and the military distrusting both), that, according to the official history, "The secretary, the White House, and the JCS would deliberately keep each other in the dark about their actions or intentions."¹²

From the military’s revolt over open homosexual service in the early 1990s through Donald Rumsfeld’s sour relationship with the services and beyond, conflict has flared regularly, to include the struggle over strategy in the Afghanistan War from its beginning

¹⁰Robert J. Watson, *Into the Missile Age, 1956–1960* [*History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, v. 4] (Washington, DC, 1997), 775.

¹¹Richard Nixon, *RN: the Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York, 1978), 289.

¹²Richard A. Hunt, *Melvin Laird and the Foundation of the Post-Vietnam Military, 1969-1973* [*Secretary of Defense Historical Series Volume VII*] (Washington, 2015), 28-29. See also 59, 549-50.

in 2001 to the drawdown that began in 2011. The most consistent conflict and mutual manipulation has been over budgets. One officer told me in the 1990s that his job in legislative liaison was to go up on Capitol Hill and restore two billion dollars to his service's budget that the Secretary of Defense had eliminated.

While conflict has diminished in the last ten years, it has become endemic. In 2015, responding to a question about “the tension between civilian decision makers and their military advisors in making wartime decisions,” the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Martin Dempsey, reflected after some four years in the job that “the system is actually designed to create that friction in decision making.”¹³ Furthermore, the tension is more visible, partly because Congress and the press are always trying to lure the military into expressing disagreement with executive branch bosses, forcing generals and admirals to choose their words carefully in testimony. When military witnesses do practice such caution, they're sometimes accused of lying or holding back their real views; and if they do disagree, then they are criticized for undermining their civilian superiors (and on occasion enraging them). So the senior military in our system is damned either way. Dempsey was accused of being a Democrat general when supporting the White House and in September 2014 was widely bashed for contradicting presidential statements (which he did not do) on using ground troops to combat the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. During the prior administration, the liberal organization MoveOn.org smeared General David Petraeus, testifying before the House and Senate after he took over in the Iraq “surge,” of being General “Betray Us.” The Democrats were on his case consistently probing for disagreement between him and the Bush Administration. Suspicions were so aroused that the General did not clear his testimony with the White House because that itself would have undermined his credibility.¹⁴ Imagine a general in charge of a war who cannot clear his testimony with his boss. It was an amazing scene, but one repeated in minor ways for many years.

Military leaders have returned this distrust. Douglas MacArthur, the army chief of staff at the depth of the Great Depression, recounted in his memoirs that he became so frustrated, in a meeting at the White House with the President and the Secretary of War (before the President had a Secretary of Defense), that he, MacArthur, “[s]poke recklessly and said something to the general effect that when we lost the next war and a American boy lying in the mud with an enemy bayonet through his belly and an enemy foot on his dying throat spat out his last curse, I wanted the name not to be MacArthur but Roosevelt.” Roosevelt, “[g]rew livid,” MacArthur remembered. ““You must not talk that way to the President,’ [Roosevelt] roared.”¹⁵ MacArthur recognized immediately the truth of that,

¹³From the Chairman: An Interview with Martin E. Dempsey,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, 78 (3d Quarter 2015):5.

¹⁴Woodward, *War Within*, 385–88; Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008*, (New York, 2009), 243-251.

¹⁵Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York, 1964), 101.

said he was sorry, apologized, and offered his resignation. Roosevelt in his cavalier way brushed off the offer; MacArthur left with the Secretary of War and vomited on the White House steps. The General recalled that Roosevelt never again consulted him on anything of substance even though MacArthur remained Chief of Staff of the Army and became one of the four major theater commanders of World War II.¹³

Tension and distrust continue down to today. In the last two decades, a surprising number of four-star officials have been relieved or were forced to retire early three Chiefs of Staff of the Air Force, a Commander of the Army Training and Doctrine Command, a Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (NATO), two commanders of Central Command, a Pacific Air Force commander, and two commanders in Afghanistan. There was in 2013 the clumsy retirement a few months early of the legendary Marine General James Mattis. In 1995, the chief of naval operations committed suicide while on active duty in the office. In the George W. Bush Administration, a chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was not renewed for a second two-year term.

In 2007 I asked a colleague who wrote a book on the Secretaries of Defense, an office created in late 1940s, whether any secretary had ever embarked on the office trusting the military. He said no.¹⁶ Leon Panetta, Mr. Obama's first CIA director and second Secretary of Defense, told people in the White House in 2009, "No Democratic President can go against the military advice, especially if he asked for it." Panetta's attitude was, "So just do it. Do what they say."¹⁷

Even so, over time, there's been enough divisiveness to make cooperation and collaboration quite difficult, sometimes to the detriment of sound policy and effective decision-making. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recalls in his memoir that at one point, General Petraeus said "with half a chuckle, 'You know I could make your life miserable.'"¹⁸ Gates was struck by the cheekiness of the remark, but any observer of civil-military relations could agree that what Petraeus said was true. The very fact that he would say it was an implicit threat. Earlier, President Obama had told Gates, in the midst of the review of Afghanistan strategy, "I'm tired of negotiating with the military."¹⁹ Former congressman Jim Marshall, the son and grandson of army generals and himself a decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam War, summed it up in this way: "Those of us

¹⁶This exchange with Charles A. Stevenson, author of *Warriors and Politicians: US Civil-Military Relations Under Stress* (Washington, DC, 2006) and *SECDEF: The Impossible Job of Secretary of Defense* (Washington, DC, 2006) took place at West Point at the annual Social Sciences Department Senior Conference in June 2007.

¹⁷Woodward, *War Within*, 247.

¹⁸Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York, 2014), 68.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 382.

who have experienced both sides of the civil-military relationship see a wide gulf of misunderstanding, dislike, and distrust. . . .”²⁰

* * * * *

A *third myth* is that a clear bright line exists between military and civilian responsibilities, in peace and in war. The civilians decide policy and make big decisions on budgets, interventions, strategy, and the like while the military advises and then executes. One knowledgeable journalist of military affairs described it this way: “The military’s view is, tell us where you want to go and leave the driving to us.”²¹ The problem is that this has rarely been American practice historically and it isn’t today. Often, civilians haven’t decided on their goals and objectives. “Elected officials are hardwired to ask for options first and then reverse-engineer objective,” Dempsey observed.²² They want to know as exactly as possible the price in blood and treasure beforehand so that they can calculate the cost–benefit ratio. Or they want assurances of success. If they don’t get one or the other (or both), or if they receive answers from their military advisers that are unduly hedged, politicians may, and often have, changed the policy and the strategy accordingly, and unpredictably. The effect on a military commander responsible for success, with history looking over his shoulder and responsibility for the lives of American children and grandchildren, can be daunting.

In his thoughtful book on his command in Iraq, General George Casey remembered no specific directives from his civilian bosses when he took over in 2004. He had to research his own mission from presidential speeches, from other documents, and from meetings with various officials. He did not recall a four-page list of some ten goals that his superior officer, the US Central Command commander General John Abizaid, had given him, perhaps because Casey and Abizaid were so close; they talked every day and their close friendship and collaboration went back years. So Casey would not necessarily remember such a document. But his uncertainty was not as unusual as one might expect. “Years of experience at the strategic level had taught me that the higher up you go, the less guidance you receive.”²³

²⁰Foreword, *American Civil–Military Relations: The Soldiers and the State in a New Era*, ed. Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider (Baltimore, 2009), x. See also biographies at https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/james_marshall/400254 and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Marshall_\(Georgia_politician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Marshall_(Georgia_politician)).

²¹James Kitfield of the *National Journal* made this remark at the Conference on the Military and Civilian Society, First Division Museum, Cantigny, Wheaton, Ill. (Oct. 27–29, 1999). I attended and was struck by the insight of the analogy.

²²“From the Chairman: An Interview with Martin E. Dempsey,” 5.

²³George W. Casey, Jr, *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom July 2004–February 2007*, (Washington, DC, 2012), 6. I read a draft of the memoir at General Casey’s invitation and discussed the manuscript with him in person.

Going back into the nineteenth century, the best example of this disjunction between the military and its civilian overseer was Lincoln, who began the Civil War without a strategy. He soon adopted army Commanding General Winfield Scott's Anaconda plan. The next year, the President expanded the goals of the war from restoring the Union and defeating Southern armies to crushing the Confederacy and abolishing slavery. Many Union army officers opposed the new objectives. At times, Lincoln haunted the telegraph office, ordering troops around himself and telling his commanders what to do. Even after he appointed Ulysses Grant as chief general in the eastern theater, Lincoln had his own agent—a presidential spy in effect—traveling with Grant and reporting on what Grant was doing and thinking. Grant was one of the smartest generals in American history; he welcomed that person and treated him with candor and transparency.²⁴

A century and a half later, General Stanley McChrystal remembered meeting only once with President Obama before leaving for Afghanistan, and in that meeting *not* discussing strategy. Of course, after General McChrystal's assessment was leaked, President Obama changed the strategy and the timetable of the war.²⁵

The truth of post World War II history is that nuclear weapons and the limited conflicts of the Cold War increased the oversight and intrusion of political leaders into military affairs, into what had been, during World War II and before, the domain of military authority. The 1964 satirical film *Dr. Strangelove*, about the outbreak of a nuclear war provoked by iconic caricatures of deranged generals Jack D. Ripper and Buck Turgidson, dramatized the reasoning. But real life experiences were equally influential in producing increasingly restrictive rules of engagement imposed on military operations. Early in the Korean War, four Air Force jets set out to bomb an airfield in northeastern North Korea. Because of dense cloud cover, the two that didn't abort navigated by dead reckoning. Upon finding a break in the clouds where they expected to find the target (it was the right timing), they dropped down and attacked the airfield. Unfortunately, it was a Soviet installation dozens of miles inside the Soviet border.²⁶ Presidents have imposed strict rules of engagement at the cost of considerable civil–military friction, in an effort to synchronize policy with strategy and strategy with operations, and sometimes even with tactics. When those rules are unclear or civilians do not communicate honestly with

²⁴Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York, 2002), 42–45.

²⁵Stanley McChrystal, *My Share of the Task: A Memoir* (New York, 2013), 288–89. For a description of the review of the strategy for Afghanistan in the fall of 2009, see Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York, 2010), 144–352; and Gates, *Duty*, 352–85.

²⁶Entries for Oct. 10–13, 1950, *The Three Wars of Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer: His Korean War Diary*, ed. William T. Y'Blood (Washington, DC, 1999), 226–31; Robert Frank Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea 1950–1953* (Washington, DC, 1961), 142n.

military leaders--as occurred in the bombing of North Vietnam in the latter stages of that war--military commanders can be caught in the middle, as was Seventh Air Force General John Lavelle in 1972. He was fired and retired as a two-star general.²⁷ Civilian control empowers the politicians to make the rules and forces the military to follow them. Senior officers who recognize the changed circumstances since World War II try to help the civilians as much as possible in order to get workable, effective orders.

The most powerful constraint on the civilians, beyond the need for military effectiveness, is political. In the last thirty years, the military has risen to be the most trusted and respected institution in American society. This prestige and legitimacy put considerable restraint on the civilians. They know it; they're jealous of it; and they fear it. During the 1990s, when Mr. Clinton tried to impose open homosexual service on the armed services, he weakened himself enormously. Though he intervened overseas with more force more often than any of his predecessors, it was almost always after negotiation with his military advisors. One heard at the time that a sardonic joke, perhaps apocryphal, circulated in the Pentagon in the middle of the 1990s to the effect, "The answer is 500,000 troops in ten years. Now what's the question?" More than one official has admitted that Clinton feared those in uniform.²⁸

The caution with which presidents deal with their military advisers and commanders brings up a corollary myth to the division between civilian and military responsibilities: that the military should push back in such a fashion, even speaking out publicly, even to the point of either threatening or actually "resigning" if they oppose orders that promise disaster, or are professionally untenable, or are immoral or unethical in a senior officer's view. This idea is articulated regularly among officers and sometimes in print in military journals. The problem is *whose* definition of disaster and *whose* system of morality? The implications for civilian control and civil-military cooperation after a four-star chief or field commander "resigns" over a critical issue, with or without going public about it, are almost certain to damage civil-military relations and erode military professionalism. Few senior officers think about such circumstances, expecting that they'll know and react appropriately were such a situation to arise.

I asked General Curtis LeMay, with whom I had a friendly relationship when I was Chief of Air Force History in the 1980s, if he'd ever considered "resigning." He clashed frequently with his civilian superiors when he was Air Force chief of staff in the 1960s. Given the implications of resignation, officers' obligation to the profession, their duty to

²⁷Mark Clodfelter, *Violating Reality: the Lavelle Affair, Nixon, and Parsing the Truth* (Washington, DC 2016).

²⁸Kohn, "Erosion of Civilian Control," 18–19, 32–33. A useful review of civil–military relations during the Clinton years is David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (New York, 2001).

the people under their care and command, LeMay responded with words to the effect, “No. I knew they’d just get some toady in there. I was going to stay and fight.”²⁹

Military officers also have an obligation to their oath and the civilian control implied in that oath. There’s no tradition of resignation in the American armed forces and for good reason. The very threat chills civil–military relations, destroying any trust in a relationship that contains inherent distrust. Resignation pits an officer’s judgment of a policy or decision against that of his or her civilian boss. The role of the military is to advise and then execute a decision provided the orders do not violate law.

Furthermore, “resignation,” even the discussion of it, much less the threat of it, is likely to cause a political problem for the politicians involved, and they know it; thus a flag officer under consideration for appointment to a sensitive position at the highest level is sometimes asked directly or indirectly to discuss under what circumstances he or she might resign, or to reveal their political “affiliation” as a way to investigate the officer’s comfort with the policies of an administration. In other words, politicians have for some years now been vetting senior military people for appointments on the basis of whether they will be loyal or whether they might resign and go public with disagreements they might have with a decision or policy.

Many officers chafe at the subordination of the senior leadership to civilian policies and decisions. On occasion, one hears officers claim that their oath is to the Constitution, not the political leadership (the wording is different than the oath that enlisted people take). The distinction first became prominent in 1951 when Douglas MacArthur used it as an excuse for his public opposition to Truman’s Korean War policies. What he ignored was the clear conflict between swearing or affirming “to support and defend the Constitution” and “bear true, faith and allegiance” to it, while, at the same time, refusing or evading the orders of the top civilians in the chain of command, or the laws passed by Congress and signed by the President. One cannot have it both ways: supporting the Constitution while ignoring or disobeying legal orders, or laws, or the policies set by the President, is simply inconsistent.

Thinking otherwise erodes civilian control, undermines military professionalism, and can lead to enormous dysfunction in the civil–military relationship. Yet the thought endures for some in uniform. So the ugly truth is that the only differentiation between civilian and military responsibility is what the civilians choose to accept or allow the military to control. That authority can be revoked at any time if it’s not written into law. And in any event, the differentiation of responsibility and authority has changed over time, and is inherently situational.

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²⁹During the 1980s, I periodically met with General LeMay at his request when he visited Washington as the member of the governing board of the National Geographic Society.

A *fourth myth* comes in two versions: first, that the military is nonpartisan and apolitical; second, that the military is political and politicized. Both of these are true, and both are false.

Part of the ambiguity turns on the definition of *political*. The military functions as the neutral servant of the state. Yet officers know and on occasion practice politics: in the promotion of their careers, advancing or protecting their branch or community within their service, championing a weapons system, or their armed service itself—to name only a few examples. Beginning in the late 19th century, when the services expanded their roles in national defense, embracing new technologies and doctrines, their need for more money from Congress and thus public support increased.³⁰ The large standing military establishment for the Cold War intensified both the need for larger budgets and competition between the services to capture that funding. As national security rose in importance, it sometimes crowded out other issues as an arena for domestic partisan combat. Americans are not so careful to distinguish bureaucratic or national security politics from partisan politics; the line between them has in recent decades become somewhat murky anyway. When the Triangle Institute for Security Studies surveyed civil and military elites and the general public on the gap between the military and society, one question asked whether the military would seek to avoid carrying out orders it opposed. Two-thirds of the public judged that such would occur at least some of the time, and a sizable minority of the officers themselves said that it would be likely, suggesting that both saw the military to some extent as just another bureaucracy practicing the politics of self-interest.³¹

Over the last three generations, the perception has grown that the officer corps is not only political but has become partisan; survey data indicates less identification as independents and greater affinity for the Republicans. To a degree, this is unsurprising—inherent in the conservatism of the military. When lives and the fate of the nation are involved, a certain cautious skepticism and conservatism is not only natural but

³⁰Allan R. Millett, *The American Political System and Civilian Control of the Military: A Historical Perspective* (Mershon Center Position papers in the Policy Sciences, Number Four, April 1979) (Columbus, OH, 1979), 19, 27-29.

³¹Paul Gronke and Peter D. Feaver, "Uncertain Confidence: Civilian and Military Attitudes about Civil-Military Relations," in *Soldiers and Civilians*, ed. Feaver and Kohn, 154-57. In the Princeton Survey Research Associates telephone survey of the public (1,001 individuals over age 18) in the fall of 1998 commissioned by the Triangle Institute, 9 percent answered "all of the time," 21.1 percent "most of the time," and 38.2 percent "some of the time." See Triangle Institute for Security Studies, 2003, "Survey on the Military in the Post Cold War Era, 1999", <http://hdl.handle.net/1902.29/D-31625> Odum Institute; Odum Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina [Distributor] V1 [Version] at http://arc.irss.unc.edu/dvn/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml?globalId=hdl:1902.29/D-31625&studyListingIndex=1_4c184fe10a520f873284e31cda

functional. However Vietnam accelerated the trend: bitter conflict with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations over how to prosecute the conflict, and in its aftermath, the abandonment of the military by the Democrats, the embrace of military spending by the Republicans, and their outreach to the military as a core constituency.

Contributing to the politicization of the military has been the growing salience of national security in American life beginning in World War II. A huge step occurred when Truman fired MacArthur and the military leadership publicly endorsed the Administration's policy of limiting the Korean War. Most memorably, Omar Bradley, the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, called expanding the conflict to attack China would "in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs . . . involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy."³² The hearings were a politicizing event, and many chairmen since have found that avoiding the appearance of politicization quite challenging.

The most dramatic break with past tradition burst onto the scene in the election of 1992 when the most recently retired chairman, the respected and popular Admiral William Crowe, along some two dozen other retired flag officers, endorsed Bill Clinton for the presidency. Here was a direct intervention in politics, both a symptom of politicization, and a spur to more of it. In one act, Crowe took Clinton's fitness to be commander-in-chief off the table. In the next twenty years, more and more retired four stars began endorsing presidential candidates. The number has grown beyond the top rank to hundreds of retired generals and admirals. It's now typical for both parties to trot out senior retired flags in order to burnish the candidate's national-security credentials. One retired Chief of Staff of the Air Force traveled the country introducing a presidential candidate named Barack Obama. In the 1990s there were frequent reports of officers, sometimes on active duty, taking positions on the political issues of the day in private amongst their peers or in public spaces. While there is a long history of writing memoirs or articles, or speaking out, after retirement, it has rarely been explicitly partisan. Yet in much of the public's minds and politicians' thinking, the military has become an interest group that is not always scrupulously nonpartisan. In truth, many professional officers have lost sight of the necessity to be, and to appear to be, steadfastly apolitical. And politics can infect the ranks; the day after the election of 2008, a group of soldiers, officers and enlisted, apparently posted a picture of Mr. Obama at the rifle range for a target, and then destroyed the big-screen TV on which they watched the election returns.³³

Over the last half-century, military people have come to vote in higher percentages than the rest of the public. In the 1950s, during a time when Americans were drafted into the military, the Eisenhower Administration created what became the federal voter-assistance

³²*Military Situation in the Far East: Hearing before the Senate Committee on Armed Services and Foreign Relations*, 82d Cong. 732 (1951) (testimony of General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff).

³³ Email from an historian colleague, Sept. 2, 2015.

program to help military people vote because they're so often away from home. What began as an effort to make voting available grew to one making it easier, then encouraging it, and then hectoring service people to vote; every unit designates an officer to provide assistance. They can't very well tell people to vote, praising the act as a citizen's duty, and then abstain from voting themselves; officers are citizens, too, and proud of it. They take citizenship and voting seriously, knowing the direction of the country affects them personally. They devote a meaningful period of their lives, perhaps a whole career, to serving the nation.

Officer voting was not typical before World War II. Army chief of staff General George C. Marshall did not vote. Soldiers in his generation thought it was politicizing; many believed it would undermine their ability to do their duty (and besides, absentee voting was not as extensive or as convenient then). When I mention this to military audiences, an officer almost always pops up and says, "You're telling us we don't have the right to vote," or "You're telling us not to vote." I always reply, "No, you have the right. If you want to vote, go ahead. You just shouldn't discuss it in front of subordinates, peers, or superiors. Every time you go into the voting booth, recognize that you are disagreeing with George C. Marshall. Ask yourselves, since he's one of the most revered generals in American history, why you disagree with George C. Marshall, and why you're right and he's wrong."

Whatever the sources or the perceptions, politicization threatens healthy civil-military relations. If the armed services lose their reputation for being nonsectarian, nonpartisan, and non-ideological, they will lose esteem and could cease being viewed as the military of all the American people. Indeed trust and confidence in the military already divides to some extent along partisan lines, suggesting that Republicans have more confidence because they think the military is conservative and Republican.³⁴ No amount of testimony by officers that they do their duty regardless of party or personal views can diminish the impression of political bias. A partisan military will be even less trusted by presidents and congresses, further harming the candor and privacy so indispensable to civil-military consultation and collaboration in the Executive Branch, and trust in military testimony and advice in Congress. Presidents and secretaries of defense will begin to "vet" officers for their political views or loyalty to administration policies and decisions, fearing leaks or warped advice or poor implementation of decisions or even endorsement of a political opponent once the officer retires. Thoughtful officers know this. The vast majority of retired four-stars reject endorsing presidential candidates, not wanting to encourage partisanship in the ranks or misleading the public into thinking that the military is partisan. General Petraeus announced that he stopped voting when he became a two-star general. General Petraeus has a PhD in Politics (the label for political science at Princeton). He certainly understands civil-military relations, as he wrote about it his PhD

³⁴James T. Golby, "Self-Interest Misunderstood? Political Activity by Military Officers and Public Trust," Inter-University Seminar on the Armed Forces and Society Biennial Conference, Oct. 2013, Chicago IL.

dissertation in the 1980s. But I have wondered why that particular rank represented some dividing line for him to stop voting.

* * * * *

A *fifth myth* is that Americans love their military. On the surface, this seems no myth. Ours is a patriotic nation that flies the flag and honors it in all sorts of ways. The national anthem and pledge of allegiance are so central to public culture as to constitute civic religion. In annual surveys for three decades, Americans express more trust and confidence in the military than in any other American institution. Thousands of programs in government, business, and the nonprofit world offer help and benefits to veterans and their families. Federal pensions for wartime service or for families of those killed in battle go back nearly two centuries. There are special jobs program and “veteran preference” in federal hiring, even reserved parking spots for vets in local supermarkets. In 2000, one congressman, an expert on the military and later chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, told a colleague and me that virtually anything helpful to veterans flies through Congress almost automatically. Since 9/11, public honoring of soldiers and veterans have become far more vocal and virtually obligatory, even to the point of the personal salutation “thank you for your service” frequently voiced to uniformed personnel and recent veterans. The Obama administration seems to shower more praise and gratitude, more often and in more venues, than any administration in memory. As the journalist James Fallows explained, Americans, who have a “reverent but disengaged attitude toward the military,” expect the rhetoric of “Overblown, limitless praise” from politicians and the media to be routine.³⁵

³⁵James Fallows, “The Tragedy of the American Military,” *The Atlantic* (January/February 2015), <http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/12/the-tragedy-of-the-american-military/283516/>. See also Matt Richtel, “Please Don’t Thank Me for My Service,” *New York Times*, February 22, 2015, p. SR6. For polling, see Jeff Manza, Jennifer A. Heerwig, and Brian J. McCagbe, “Public Opinion in the ‘Age of Reagan’: Political Trends 1972-2006,” Tom W. Smith, “Trends in Confidence in Institutions, 1973-2006,” in *Social Trends in American Life: Findings from the General Social Survey since 1972*, ed. Peter V. Marsden (Princeton, 2012), 130, 138, 178-207; David C. King and Zachary Karabell, *The Generation of Trust: Public Confidence in the U.S. Military since Vietnam* (Washington, 2003); Hunter Walker, “Harvard Poll Shows Millennials Have ‘Historic Low’ Levels Of Trust In Government,” *Business Insider*, April 29, 2014, <http://www.businessinsider.com/poll-millennials-have-historically-low-levels-of-trust-in-government-2014-4>; Stephen J. Hadley and William J. Perry, *The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America’s National Security Needs in the 21st Century* (Washington, n.d. [2010]), 43. In a January 2015 interview with Vox, President Obama used his typically laudatory language when mentioning “the incredible valor of our troops—and I’m in awe of them every single day when I work with them.” <http://www.vox.com/a/barack-obama-interview-vox-conversation/obama-foreign-policy-transcript>.

Yet beneath the surface, the evidence is much more ambiguous. To begin with, Americans have celebrated and assisted their citizen soldiers—the people who fight our wars and then return to civilian life—far more than the professionals, who have historically suffered varying degrees of distrust and disparagement. Since the end of the draft in 1973, the citizen soldier and professional soldier have become conflated in the public mind and even amongst some in the military, as when a Marine major insisted to me in the late 1990s, after a panel discussion at his staff college, that he was a “citizen soldier.” Everyone in the military considers themselves “professional” (even the enlisted and the reserves) while wearing their citizenship proudly.

The “trust” and “confidence” indices have been high for the armed forces only beginning in the late 1980s, and only in comparison to other institutions; the overall trend since the Vietnam War has been declining trust in government and institutions generally. While analysis of the polling data indicates that millennials have greater confidence in the military than their elders, the numbers among the young have dropped off rather significantly recently and their propensity to serve has also been declining. Analysts of the numbers attribute the rise in respect since Vietnam to military success, to the perception of high professionalism in the armed forces, and to the favorable portrait in military advertising and in popular culture. Support for increased military spending has generally been low except for short-term spikes in the late 1970s, when military capability seemed in decline, and then after the 9/11 attack. Confidence in the military is highest among the least educated in American society, and noticeably higher among Republicans than Democrats, among whom the more education, the less confidence.³⁶ Even the yellow ribbons that sprouted during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, and graced so many vehicles for years, seemed more an expression of public guilt for the way soldiers returning from Vietnam suffered blame and disrespect. Differentiating “support for the troops” and support for a war may be a way to assuage such guilt and muffle a potential civil-military conflict. Americans seem to have a more mixed reaction to the military than commonly appreciated. “The Brass” as a term almost immediately elicits suspicion and jealousy, if not outright contempt, perhaps in part because of a general dislike of elites and authority (one thinks of the sardonic comic strip *Beetle Bailey*, with the bumbling General Halftrack, begun in 1950 and still running—and other caricatures in popular culture). It even turns out that the salutes to the troops by the National Football

³⁶Jeff Manza, Jennifer A. Heerwig, and Brian J. McCagbe, “Public Opinion in the ‘Age of Reagan’: Political Trends 1972-2006,” Tom W. Smith, “Trends in Confidence in Institutions, 1973-2006,” in *Social Trends in American Life: Findings from the General Social Survey since 1972*, ed. Peter V. Marsden (Princeton, 2012), 130, 138, 178-207; David C. King and Zachary Karabell, *The Generation of Trust: Public Confidence in the U.S. Military since Vietnam* (Washington, 2003); Hunter Walker, “Harvard Poll Shows Millennials Have ‘Historic Low’ Levels Of Trust In Government,” *Business Insider*, April 29, 2014, <http://www.businessinsider.com/poll-millennials-have-historically-low-levels-of-trust-in-government-2014-4>; Stephen J. Hadley and William J. Perry, *The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America's National Security Needs in the 21st Century* (Washington, n.d. [2010]), 43; Golby, “Self-Interest Misunderstood.”

League were actually subsidized--paid for--by the Defense Department; between 2012 and 2015, the Pentagon paid over "\$10 million in marketing and advertising contracts with professional sports teams . . . for what . . . senators called 'paid patriotism.'"³⁷

A corollary to the myth of loving the military--that there is a contract or covenant between the American people and soldiers--is also suspect although commonly believed in the national security community. The contract was best articulated on the first page of the first joint officer guide put out by the new Department of Defense in 1950: "the Nation also becomes a party to the contract [with officers inherent in their commission], and will faithfully keep its bond with the man. While he continues to serve honorably, it will sustain and will clothe him with its dignity." The commission provides "a felicitous status in our society. . . . Should he become ill, the Nation will care for him. Should he be disabled, it will stand as his guardian through life. Should he seek to advance himself through higher studies, it will open the way."³⁸

Such a bargain has been partly true but for the citizen forces raised for major conflict until the 1970s. Mass armies before the 1940s involved thousands or millions of people who, with their families, were or would become voters. The pensions and bonuses created for soldiers and their families who had served or died in the Civil War (but for only one side) were the largest government social program in American history until then.³⁹ The symbol for the promise originated in the 1944 GI bill, which did so much to help veterans with loans for homes and businesses and education. In the last twenty years, those benefits have escalated with the merging in the public mind of citizen soldiers and professionals--and the need to recruit people into uniform for distant and controversial wars. A comprehensive "contract," fully funded and implemented, has not been the historical norm. Benefits expanded only with the merging of citizen-soldiers and professionals, the need to attract recruits, and the rise of trust and confidence for the military in the 1980s which has evolved into near adulation after 9/11, at least

³⁷ "Pro Football," *New York Times*, May 20, 2016, p. B14.

³⁸[S.L.A. Marshall], *The Armed Forces Officer* (Washington, 1950), 1-2. The first chapter is reprinted in the most recent edition as an appendix [U.S. Department of Defense, *The Armed Forces Officer* (Washington, 2007), 149-158] because, while "Marshall's language is a bit dated, . . . the chapter retains its original ability to inspire officers of all generations alike" (p. xviii).

³⁹See William H. Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions in the United States* (New York, 1918); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA, 1992).

rhetorically. A covenant appeared to be functional and necessary, and politically unassailable.⁴⁰

Promises to citizen armies have gone unfulfilled more often than we like to admit. Officers in the Continental Army came within a hair of revolting in Newburgh in 1783 over unpaid bonuses and pensions at the end of the Revolutionary War; World War I veterans, the Bonus Army, marched on Washington over promised payments in 1932, camping in Anacostia Flats until dispersed with force by the regular army. The Veterans Administration only became a cabinet department in 1988. The VA has often been underfunded, overworked, understaffed, mal-administered, and to be charitable, sluggish. Who can forget the way Vietnam servicemen were disparaged, or even reviled, or the way the VA resisted accepting disabilities for diseases related to Agent Orange, or PTSD, or Gulf War syndrome? Or the scandals over crippling delays in medical appointments, along with lies about the waiting times?⁴¹

However that consensus is fraying. Since the rise of the Tea Party, deficit hawks have attacked all government spending, fracturing longstanding Republican support for the military. The potential for the split was always there. In the late 1990s, in a bar in Newport, Rhode Island, I asked former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich whether Republicans cared more about tax cuts or a strong national defense. After glancing around as though to check whether someone might be listening, he replied: “tax cuts.” Knowledgeable people aware of the money going into military pay, retirement, and

⁴⁰For an example of the benefits now available, see the 2013 edition of *Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors* published by the Department of Veterans Affairs at http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/2013_Federal_Benefits_for_Veterans_English.pdf, and apparently published yearly. The edition cited is 132 pages long. Evidence for the dysfunction of the VA was in the news for most of 2014 and 2025.

⁴¹See Richard A. Oppel Jr., “Needing to Hire, Chief of V.A. Tries to Sell Doctors on Change,” Dave Phillips, “Veterans Affairs Official Overseeing Backlog of Claims Resigns” and “Report Finds Sharp Increase in Veterans Denied V.A Benefits,” *New York Times*, Nov. 9, 2014, A18, Oct. 17, 2015, A3, Mar. 30, 2016, A14; “Robert McDonald: Cleaning Up the VA; The Secretary of Veterans Affairs tells Scott Pelley about his personal mission to reorganize the troubled agency for his fellow vets,” CBS News *Sixty Minutes*, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/robert-mcdonald-cleaning-up-the-veterans-affairs-hospitals/>; David B. Caruso, “VA struggling to shorten waits,” James Ferguson, “An appalling record on caring for veterans,” *The News & Observer* (Raleigh, NC), Apr. 10, 2015, 1A Apr. 22, 2014, 7A; Jordan Carney, “McCain wants answers on VA delays in healthcare for veterans,” *The Hill*, Aug. 13, 2015, <http://thehill.com/blogs/foor-action/senate/251108-mccain-wants-answers-on-va-glitch>.

health benefits predict that the all-volunteer military is unsustainable, and pressure has been building to revise the pay and benefits of the military.⁴²

So if there is a covenant, it is an uncertain one grounded in political and military expedience. With veterans dying at over 1000 a day, the larger wars fading into the past, and now paralyzing budget limits, the treatment of soldiers may well revert to some historical norm of neglect or at least inconsistency.

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A sixth myth is that **Americans understand civilian control of the military.**

If civilian control of the military were widely understood in government and by the American people, it is unlikely that there would be so much tension and conflict in the relationship, or so much confusion in the press or in public opinion. And there is much evidence for the latter: in the public's belief that, in wartime, military leaders should be unleashed to make strategy and even policy; in the deference, apprehension, and fumbling of political leaders in all three branches of the government when dealing with the military; and in the behavior and thinking of many officers at all ranks about civil-military relations.⁴³ Military subjects are not taught widely in the nation's college and universities. Yet decisions "about war and peace are made by civilians," two distinguished military historians have pointed out, "civilians who, increasingly, have no historical or analytical frameworks to guide them in making the most consequential of all decisions."⁴⁴ Military officers, while far better informed, spend little time studying or thinking about their relationship with such political leaders. A most distinguished retired officer with whom I worked on the civil-military gap study, and for whom I have enormous respect and admiration, once said to me, "Dick, I don't understand why you think we in the military are not committed to civilian control." I replied, "Walt, I understand that everybody in the military believes in civilian control. The problem is that large numbers of officers and sometimes the institutional culture seem not to understand civilian control, particularly many of the attitudes and behaviors that are necessary to make it work and operate smoothly and consistently."⁴⁵ Since that conversation, over

⁴²See, for example, Arnold Punaro, Conference on Civil-Military Divide and The Future of the All-Volunteer Force, session on "Redesigning The All-Volunteer Force of the Future," Center for a New American Security, Washington, D.C., November 20, 2014, [http://www.cnas.org/media/list?field_media_type_tid\[\]=541&field_media_type_tid\[\]=542](http://www.cnas.org/media/list?field_media_type_tid[]=541&field_media_type_tid[]=542), from 11:30 to 18:00 on the recording.

⁴³See the tables cited in note 7 above.

⁴⁴Tami Davis Biddle and Robert M. Citino, "The Role of Military History in the Contemporary Academy," Society for Military History White Paper, Nov. 2014, <http://www.smh-hq.org/docs/SMHWhitePaper.pdf>.

⁴⁵This exchange, with retired army lieutenant general Walter Ulmer, took place in 1999.

fifteen years ago, there has been improvement, but with the constant turnover of officers and the political leadership, the problems recur.

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What these examples, explored in the essays in this book, suggest is that the relationship between the most senior military officers and the political leaders with whom they interact at the top of the American government, is highly situational: dependent on the context, the issues, the people involved, and more.⁴⁶ There are some commonalities that repeat over time: differing perspectives, suspicion on both sides, frequent distrust, occasional conflict, and of course everyday cooperation and collaboration that we expect to be normal. The point is that civilian control is not a fact but a process that varies over time. It isn't a matter of control or a coup. We know who writes and signs the laws. We know who issues the orders. But civilian control in reality depends to a considerable extent on the relative power over national defense of the political leadership and the leaders of the uniformed military. What we are talking about is not "control," but who calls the tune, who frames the choices. The issue is what each side in a relationship, in which both are dependent on the other, can achieve at any given time if they have differing perspectives and judgments.

No discussion can be complete without addressing what might be labeled the "Zinni question," after retired Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni: what about the civilian side of civil-military relations? In March 2014 when I gave a version of this essay to the International Society of Barristers annual meeting, the General, a former commander of US Central Command, asserted that "If you want civilian control of the military—which I fully subscribe to" and "think . . . is absolutely a key underpinning of the way we govern—somebody had better teach those civilians how to use it." He is absolutely right. He and others emphasize the importance of educating the civilian leadership. "It's like giving the car keys to your sixteen-year-old son," Zinni said; "you don't give him the keys without first teaching him how to drive."⁴⁷

The difficulty is how to educate politicians and their appointees in military affairs in general and civil-military relations in particular. Years of pondering this part of the equation have led me to very low expectations. Civilian officials—elected and appointed—come and go. They are picked by voters and presidents for all sorts of reasons only a few of which have to do with experience and understanding of war, military institutions, and military service. Sometimes they are terrific despite thin backgrounds and sometimes they are terrible despite wide and deep experience in military subjects. Perhaps the best cabinet secretary in the history of American defense, Elihu Root, when offered the War Department in 1899, responded honestly "that it is quite absurd, I know nothing about

⁴⁶I owe this insight to Alfred Goldberg, for over thirty years the chief of the historical office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, who offered the interpretation to me in the early 1980s based on his own observations and his wide knowledge of the history.

⁴⁷Gen. Anthony Zinni, "The New World Disorder," *International Society of Barristers Quarterly* 48 no. 3 (2014):49-50.

war, I know nothing about the army." The response: "President McKinley directs me to say that he is not looking for any one who knows anything about the army; he has got to have a lawyer to direct the government of these Spanish islands, and you are the lawyer he wants."⁴⁸ We've now had some sixteen years of Democratic presidents with Clinton and Obama, and of the seven Secretaries of Defense who have served them, three have been Republicans who occupied the office about half the time. What does that say about the situational nature of civilian leadership? Among other considerations, Republican appointees could stifle the charge of Democratic weakness on national defense. In his memoirs, Robert Gates wrote that Mr. Obama practically tried to handcuff Gates to the Pentagon.⁴⁹

In closing, I always remind military audiences that while the civilians are in charge, the military is the constant in the equation of civil–military relations, the steward of the military profession charged with the nation's defense over time. Lawyers, doctors, and other professionals essentially determine their relationship with their clients and patients. The military's client is the civilian political leadership. Other professions can refuse to advise or represent a client, but the military cannot. But like all professionals, the top generals and admirals can educate their bosses and shape to some degree the relationship, even if it is a less equal and more subordinate role than other professions possess. The military's bosses are whomever the American political system chooses.

One very high-ranking general said to me once, when a new administration took office, "You know, it's like waking up in the morning and looking across the bed, and you have a new spouse. You don't know who she is. You don't know what she thinks or is going to do." He looked at me. "We-all on this side of the river don't have to take it."

I asked, "What do you mean, you 'don't have to take it?'"

He said, "Well, I can resign."

I replied, "You certainly cannot. You can't resign; there's no tradition of that."

"Well, Ron Fogleman [Air Force chief of staff in the mid-1990s] resigned," he insisted.

"He did not," I insisted. "I interviewed him after he left. I'll send you the galley proofs of the article that showed that he did not resign."⁵⁰

⁴⁸Root remembered the telephone exchange some years later, in a speech, quoted in Philip C. Jessup, *Elihu Root*, vol. 1 (New York, 1938), 215. See pages 215-20 for some of the politics of the appointment and the reaction.

⁴⁹Gates, *Duty*, 430-31, 488-89.

⁵⁰Conversation with a four-star officer, Washington, DC (January 2001). See "The Early Retirement of Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force," ed. Richard H. Kohn, *Aerospace Power Journal* 15 (2001):6–23.

To civilian audiences, I close with a plea to take civil-military relations seriously. I ask them to reverse the old aphorism attributed to Mark Twain that “Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody is doing anything about it.” Turning it upside down: “Nobody talks about civil–military relations, but almost everyone is doing something about it (even if ignoring it).” If the public and the political leadership neglect this subject–don’t think about it, don’t care about it until it’s too late–and a crisis or a conflict threatens our military effectiveness or the trust that’s indispensable to decision-making in government, who then will be responsible for making the relationship work before something happens to produce disaster?

While the military defends the United States, the American people elect those who bear ultimate responsibility for the nation’s security. They must take military affairs seriously enough to learn to understand war and use the military instrument wisely. If top officials know nothing about war or the military, as Elihu Root and Abraham Lincoln did not when they embarked on high office, then they must study it, understand it, and try on their own side to build trust in the relationship with their military subordinates. Politicians should not manipulate the military or hide behind it, or use it for political purposes, as civilian leaders have often done.⁵¹ In the end, it’s up to the American people to make their government work. A lady accosted Benjamin Franklin as he emerged from the constitutional convention in 1787. “Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?” Franklin replied: “A republic, if you can keep it.”⁵²

⁵¹See Richard H. Kohn, “Building Trust: Civil-Military Behaviors for Effective National Security,” *American Civil–Military Relations*, ed. Nielsen and Snider, 284–87.

⁵²Quoted in Richard H. Kohn, “Using the Military at Home: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow,” *Chicago Journal of International Law* 4 (2003):192.

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Civil-military relations at the pinnacle of government has often differed, and differed dramatically, in war from the relationship in peacetime. And relations have often differed depending on the era, country, type of war, personalities, and other variables. The "normative" theory in the United States, frequently voiced by political leaders since the Vietnam War and indeed extant in the scholarly literature beginning with Samuel P. Huntington's influential and iconic volume in 1957, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, is that once the fighting begins, the politicians set the goals and then turn the war over to the military, refraining from further direction and interference.

Such has not been the case in American history, at least for presidents since the beginning of the Republic, with the possible exception of Woodrow Wilson in World War I. And during the Cold War, from the mid-1940s to the beginning of the 1990s--a period marked by both active wars and periods without major military operations involving combat--American presidents and their secretaries of defense sometimes actively monitored and even directed strategy and military operations, and sometimes not--with inconsistent results. Eliot Cohen argues that a common pattern of successful wars has been the intervention of presidents and prime ministers at crucial points of their conflicts, contrary to what most political and military leaders think or say in the United States today.

Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, State, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), pp. 1-14, 199-207, 225-233, 239-248.

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THE SOLDIER AND THE STATESMAN

Few choices bedevil organizations as much as the selection of senior leaders. Often they look for those with high-level experience in different settings: New York City's Columbia University sought out America's most senior general, Dwight D. Eisenhower, to lead it after World War II; President Ronald Reagan made a corporate tycoon his chief of staff in 1985; in the early 1990s, Sears Roebuck, an ailing giant, looked to the chief logistician of the Gulf War to help it turn around. Frequently enough the transplant fails; the sets of skills and aptitudes that led to success in one walk of life either do not carry over or are downright dysfunctional in another. The rules of politics differ from those of business, and universities do not act the way corporations do. Even within the business world, car companies and software giants may operate very differently, and the small arms manufacturer who takes over an ice-cream company may never quite settle in to the new culture.

To be sure, leaders at the top have some roughly similar tasks: setting directions, picking subordinates, monitoring performance, handling external constituencies, and inspiring achievement. And they tend, often enough, to think that someone in a different walk of life has the answers to their dilemmas, which is why the generals study business books, and

the CEOs peruse military history. But in truth the details of their work differ so much that in practice the parallels often elude them, or can only be discovered by digging more deeply than is the norm.

The relations between statesmen and soldiers in wartime offer a special case of this phenomenon. Many senior leaders in private life must manage equally senior professionals who have expertise and experience that dwarf their own, but politicians dealing with generals in wartime face exceptional difficulties. The stakes are so high, the gaps in mutual understanding so large, the differences in personality and background so stark, that the challenges exceed anything found in the civilian sector—which is why, perhaps, these relationships merit close attention not only from historians and students of policy, but from anyone interested in leadership at its most acutely difficult. To learn how statesmen manage their generals in wartime one must explore the peculiarities of the military profession and the exceptional atmospheres and values produced by war. These peculiarities and conditions are unique and extreme, and they produce relationships far more complicated and tense than either citizen or soldier may expect in peacetime, or even admit to exist in time of war.

“LET HIM COME WITH ME INTO MACEDONIA”

To see why, turn back to the year 168 B.C. The place is the Senate of the Roman republic, the subject the proposed resumption of war (for the third time) against Macedonia, and the speaker Consul Lucius Aemilius:

I am not, fellow-citizens, one who believes that no advice may be given to leaders; nay rather I judge him to be not a sage, but haughty, who conducts everything according to his own opinion alone. What therefore is my conclusion? Generals should receive advice, in the first place from the experts who are both specially skilled in military matters and have learned from experience; secondly, from those who are on the scene of action, who see the terrain, the enemy, the fitness of the occasion, who are sharers in the danger, as it were, aboard the same vessel. Thus, if there is anyone

who is confident that he can advise me as to the best advantage of the state in this campaign which I am about to conduct, let him not refuse his services to the state, but come with me into Macedonia. I will furnish him with his sea-passage, with a horse, a tent, and even travel-funds. If anyone is reluctant to do this and prefers the leisure of the city to the hardships of campaigning, let him not steer the ship from on shore. The city itself provides enough subjects for conversation; let him confine his garrulity to these; and let him be aware that I shall be satisfied with the advice originating in camp.¹

The Consul's cry for a free hand echoes that of generals throughout history—although the historian Livy records that, as a matter of fact, an unusually large number of senators decided to accompany him on campaign. Still, the notion that generals once given a mission should have near total discretion in its execution is a powerful one.

Popular interpretations of the Vietnam and Gulf wars, the one supposedly a conflict characterized by civilian interference in the details of warmaking, the other a model of benign operational and tactical neglect by an enlightened civilian leadership, seem to confirm the value of a bright line drawn between the duties of soldiers and civilians. Thus the chief of staff to General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of US forces in Southwest Asia: “Schwarzkopf was never second-guessed by civilians, and that's the way it ought to work.”² Or more directly, then-President George Bush's declaration when he received the Association of the US Army's George Catlett Marshall Medal: “I vowed that I would never send an American soldier into combat with one hand tied behind that soldier's back. We did the politics and you superbly did the fighting.”³ Small wonder, then, that the editor of the US Army War College's journal wrote to his military colleagues:

There will be instances where civilian officials with Napoleon complexes and micromanaging mentalities are prompted to seize the reins of operational control. And having taken control, there will be times when they then begin to fumble toward disaster. When this threatens to happen, the nation's top soldier . . . must summon the courage to rise and say to his civilian masters, “You can't do that!” and then stride to the focal point of decision and tell them how it must be done.⁴

Such a view of the roles of civilian and soldier reflects popular understandings as well. The 1996 movie *Independence Day*, for example, features only one notable villain (aside, that is, from the aliens who are attempting to devastate and conquer the Earth)—an overweening secretary of defense who attempts to direct the American military's counter-attack against the invaders from outer space. Only after the interfering and deceitful civilian is out of the way can the president, a former Air Force combat pilot who gets back into uniform to lead the climactic aerial battle, and his military assistants (with the aid of one civilian scientist in a purely technical role) get on with the job of defeating the foe. To this comfortable consensus of capital, camp, and Hollywood one can add the weight of academic theory. Samuel Huntington, arguably the greatest American political scientist of our time, in a classic work, *The Soldier and the State*,⁵ laid out what he termed a theory of "objective control," which holds that the healthiest and most effective form of civilian control of the military is that which maximizes professionalism by isolating soldiers from politics, and giving them as free a hand as possible in military matters.

THE NORMAL THEORY OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

We can call this consensus the "normal" theory of civil-military relations, which runs something like this. Officers are professionals, much like highly trained surgeons: the statesman is in the position of a patient requiring urgent care. He may freely decide whether or not to have an operation, he may choose one doctor over another, and he may even make a decision among different surgical options, although that is more rare. He may not, or at least ought not supervise a surgical procedure, select the doctor's scalpel, or rearrange the operating room to his liking. Even the patient who has medical training is well-advised not to attempt to do so, and indeed, his doctor will almost surely resent a colleague-patient's efforts along such lines. The result should be a limited degree of civilian control over military matters. To ask too many questions (let alone to give orders) about tactics, particular pieces of hardware, the design of a campaign, measures of success, or to press

too closely for the promotion or dismissal of anything other than the most senior officers is meddling and interference, which is inappropriate and downright dangerous.

The difficulty is that the great war statesmen do just those improper things—and, what is more, it is *because* they do so that they succeed. This book looks at four indubitably great and successful war leaders, Abraham Lincoln, Georges Clemenceau, Winston Churchill, and David Ben-Gurion. The period of their tenure spans a substantial but not overwhelming period of time and different kinds of democratic polities. These four politicians have enough in common to bear comparison, yet differ enough to exhibit various features of the problem of civil-military relations in wartime. Given the dangers of thinking through these problems exclusively from an American perspective, it makes sense that only one of them should come from the pages of American history.

Lincoln, Clemenceau, Churchill, and Ben-Gurion led four very different kinds of democracies, under the most difficult circumstances imaginable. They came from different traditions of civil-military relations, had had disparate personal experiences, and confronted different arrays of subordinates and peers. The nature of each of their democracies shaped the nature of the leadership that they could exert and that was required of them. They faced much in common, however. Institutions of a more or less free press and legislative bodies constrained their powers, and they had to deal with populations whose temper and disposition could affect their behavior directly. Powerful as each of these men was, he had to consider the possibility that his conduct of the war could bring about his fall from power by constitutional—that is, civilian—means. At the same time, in their dealings with the military they did not need to fear a violent coup. However, military opposition could and did translate into a variety of forms of political opposition, sometimes with a potential to overthrow them.

The period spanned here—a bit less than a century—saw the development of a distinctive style of warfare, sometimes called "total war" but perhaps more accurately described as "industrialized warfare." Success in war depended in large measure on an ability to obtain (through production or importation) mass-manufactured weapons. At the same time, these leaders did not have to cope with one of the distinctive challenges of a later strategic era, that of weapons of mass destruction. Interestingly enough, however, it was Churchill who early on grasped the para-

doxical peace-inducing nature of atomic terror, and Ben-Gurion who laid the groundwork for an Israeli nuclear program at a time when Israeli conventional strength was set on a course of prolonged improvement.

These four statesmen conducted their wars during what may come to be seen as the time of the first communications revolution, when it became possible to communicate useful quantities of information almost instantaneously and to move large quantities of men and war matériel at great speed by means of mechanical transportation. In physics, the product of velocity and mass is momentum, and the same is true of warfare. Thus, these statesmen had to conduct wars at a time when the instruments of conflict themselves were changing and gathering speed. One might suggest that a second communications revolution is now upon us, in which a further quantum increase in the amount of information that can be distributed globally has occurred, and the role played by that information in all of civilized life will again transform society and ultimately the conduct of war. Thus these four cases exhibit the problems of wartime leadership during a period of enormous change. By understanding the challenges of those times we may also understand better the nature of the changes that are upon us today, in an age that looks to be quite different. The fundamental problems of statesmanship faced by the leaders of today have not changed as much as one might think. These are matters that I will explore in the conclusion to this book.

Finally, these statesmen were separated in time but linked by deep respect. Clemenceau visited the United States after the Civil War and professed a great admiration for Lincoln; Churchill paid Clemenceau the homage of rhetorical imitation (verging on plagiarism) on more than one occasion. And Ben-Gurion paid a tribute to Churchill's leadership in a note written a few years before the latter's death: "It was not only the liberties and the honour of your own people that you saved," wrote one aged giant to another.⁶ Thus a thin but definite personal, not merely conceptual thread links these four men. The personal similarities and contrasts among them will bear examination. Three of them (Clemenceau, Churchill, and Ben-Gurion) assumed the reins of high command at an advanced age; two of them with very little in the way of preparation for the conduct of large-scale warfare (Lincoln and Clemenceau, although one might make a similar point about Ben-Gurion). Each exhibited in different ways similar qualities of ruthlessness, mastery of detail, and

fascination with technology. All four were great learners who studied war as if it were their own profession, and in many ways they mastered it as well as did their generals. And all found themselves locked in conflict with military men. When one reads the transcripts of Ben-Gurion's furious arguments in 1948 with the de facto chief of staff of the new Israel Defense Forces—Yigal Yadin, a thirty-two-year-old archaeologist who had never served in any regular army—they do not sound very different from the tempestuous arguments between Winston Churchill and the grim Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Alan Brooke, twenty-five years older than Yadin and with a career spent in uniform. For all of the differences in their backgrounds the backwoods lawyer, the dueling French doctor turned journalist, the rogue aristocrat, and the impoverished Jewish socialist found themselves in similar predicaments: admiring their generals and despairing over them, driving some, dismissing others, and watching even the best with affection ever limited by wariness.

"WAR IS NOT MERELY AN ACT OF POLICY,
BUT A TRUE POLITICAL INSTRUMENT."

If these four could have had a collective military adviser, one suspects that it would have been an older figure yet, Carl von Clausewitz, the greatest theorist of war, whose *On War* remains a standard text for aspiring strategists to the present day. For the Prussian general, who spent most of his adult life on active service fighting against the French Revolution and Napoleon, the attempt to separate the business of politicians and soldiers was a hopeless task. For that reason, early in the nineteenth century he rejected the "normal" theory. To understand why, at the deepest level, these statesmen did not delegate war fighting to the generals, one turns to Clausewitz's famous dictum, that war is merely the continuation of politics by other means. But by this he has something far more radical in mind than is commonly thought.⁷

"We see, therefore, that war is *not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument*, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with

other means.”⁸ The first part of the sentence (“not merely an act of policy”) illuminates the second and suggests its radical nature. For Clausewitz there is no field of military action that might not be touched by political considerations. In practice, politics might not determine the stationing of pickets or the dispatch of patrols, he writes, but in theory it could (and, one might add, in the day of CNN often does). Although Clausewitz fully recognizes the power of war untrammelled to overwhelm political rationality—by intoxicating men with blood lust, or through the sheer difficulty of making things happen, which he termed friction—he thought that all activity in war had potential political consequences and repercussions, and that every effort must therefore be made to bend war to serve the ends of politics.

The Clausewitzian view is incompatible with the doctrine of professionalism codified by the “normal” theory of civil-military relations. If every facet of military life may have political consequences, if one cannot find a refuge from politics in the levels of war (saying, for example, that “grand strategy” is properly subject to political influence, but “military strategy” is not), civil-military relations are problematic. The Clausewitzian formula for civil-military relations has it that the statesman may legitimately interject himself in any aspect of war-making, although it is often imprudent for him to do so. On most occasions political leaders will have neither the knowledge nor the judgment to intervene in a tactical decision, and most episodes in war have little or no political import. But there can be in Clausewitz’s view no arbitrary line dividing civilian and military responsibility, no neat way of carving off a distinct sphere of military action. “When people talk, as they often do, about harmful political influence on the management of war, they are not really saying what they mean. Their quarrel should be with the policy itself, not its influence. If the policy is right—that is, successful—any intentional effect it has on the conduct of the war can only be to the good.”⁹

The political nature of war drives the Clausewitzian to this conclusion. So too does the curious nature of military professionalism. The peculiarities of that calling (see the appendix “The Theory of Civilian Control”) mandate more action by the politician than may be customary among the clients or employers of other professionals. The selection of and dismissal of generals is one such activity. Generals rarely enter a war having commanded for any length of time forces comparable to those assigned them on the outbreak of a conflict; hence they are almost always

unproved. It often falls to the political leadership to determine the competence—the narrower tactical ability, in fact—of the military leaders in the face of ambiguous information, for not all defeated generals are inept. Furthermore, it often occurs that generals fit for one type of operation fail dismally at another; the slashing, attacking commander may lack the talents of his more stolid brethren for conducting a defense or those of his more tactful colleagues for handling allies. Of course, contenders in lawsuits occasionally fire their attorneys, patients seek new doctors, and companies look for different engineers. But the problem of selecting military leadership is altogether more acute. Not only is it more pervasive (most patients, after all, do not in fact fire their doctors—or if they do decide to do so, they often come to that conclusion too late), but the problem of selecting military leadership frequently covers a far wider field. Rather than picking a single professional or firm to handle a task, politicians must select dozens, even scores. Often enough they cannot know that the next man they pick will be any better than his predecessor, for all alike are inexperienced at the task before them. Except at the end of a very long war, there is no recognized expert at hand with a proven record in the managing of complex military operations against an active enemy.

And there is little parallel in civilian life to the problems of morale and domestic political disharmony that beset a politician considering dismissal of a general. In daily life the professional’s employment is understood to be simply at the sufferance of his client; but in the world of war, generals become semi-independent political figures of considerable importance. Soldiers are not merely neutral instruments of the state but warriors, and in wartime warriors elicit respect and admiration. Most generals know this, and many are human enough to act accordingly. Rarely in wartime are senior military leaders cut off from the highest echelons of politics; rather they mingle (rather more than they do in peacetime, in fact) with legislators, journalists, and senior bureaucrats. They appear on the front pages of newspapers and are lionized by social élites, and they may even attempt to undermine their nominal superiors in the forum of public opinion.¹⁰ A dismissed lawyer or doctor does not normally seize such opportunities.

It is not, however, only the selection and dismissal of generals that constitute a politician’s chief responsibility in war, nor is it even (as the military textbooks would suggest) the articulation of goals or the alloca-

tion of resources. Rather, a politician finds himself managing military alliances, deciding the nature of acceptable risk, shaping operational choices, and reconstructing military organizations. During World War II, for example, the British War Cabinet found itself called upon to make decisions on matters as minute as whether certain trans-Atlantic convoys should travel at thirteen as opposed to fifteen knots, because although their naval advisers could tell them about the pros and cons of a decision on either side, the assumption of risk to Britain's lifeline to the outer world required a political decision.¹¹ Or, to take an even more telling case, in June 1943 it was a prime-ministerial decision whether or not to introduce WINDOW—radar-jamming chaff—to help British bombers break through to Germany. The Royal Air Force was divided: Bomber Command favored such a measure, but those responsible for the air defense of Great Britain, expecting enemy imitation of such a move, feared that for half a year they would lose all ability to defend the night skies over Britain.¹² Once again, the balance of risk required a political decision. In both these cases (and there are many more) the politicians had to resolve important questions not only because of the scope of the issues at stake, but because the professionals could not agree. Divided among themselves not merely by opinion but by professional background, military leaders often differ sharply about the best course of action. Ben-Gurion, for example, had to arbitrate between the home-grown socialist élites of the Palmach and the more stolid veterans of the British Army. As Stephen Rosen has noted, military organizations may be understood not simply as professional organizations but as political communities that struggle internally over fundamental issues. "They determine who will live and die, in wartime, and how; who will be honored and who will sit on the sidelines when war occurs."¹³

In all four of the cases we will examine here, there was little debate about the fundamental subordination of soldiers to civilian control. Co-existing, however, with that subordination—that acceptance of the legitimacy of civilian dominance—is a deep undercurrent of mutual mistrust. In practice, soldiers and statesmen in war often find themselves in an uneasy, even conflictual collaborative relationship, in which the civilian usually (at least in democracies) has the upper hand. It is a conflict often exacerbated by the differences in experience and outlook that political life and military life engender. These differences are not ideological but temperamental, even cultural.

"THIS MAN TOO HAS ONE MOUTH AND ONE HAND"

The memoirs of two soldiers turned politicians illustrate this. Ariel Sharon, prime minister of Israel as this book goes to press, was a uniformed hero of Israel's 1956, 1967, and 1973 wars, but subsequently became, in the eyes of many of his countrymen, a civilian villain as minister of defense during the 1982 war in Lebanon. His memoirs capture the essence of a general's mistrust of politicians, and render (perhaps disingenuously) his own wonderment at his entry into politics. He reflects on joining the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, for the first time:

Like politics, military life is a constant struggle. But with all the difficulties and bitterness that may develop, at least there are certain rules. In politics there are no rules, no sense of proportion, no sensible hierarchy. An Israeli military man setting foot in this new world has most likely experienced great victories and also terrible defeats. He has had moments of exultation and moments of deepest grief. He knows what it is to be supremely confident, even inspired. But he has suffered the most abject fear and the deepest horror. He has made decisions about life and death, for himself as well as for others.

The same person enters the political world and finds that he has one mouth to speak with and one hand to vote with, exactly like the man sitting next to him. And that man perhaps has never witnessed or experienced anything profound or anything dramatic in his life. He does not know either the heights or the depths. He has never tested himself or made critical decisions or taken responsibility for his life or the lives of his fellows. And this man—it seems incredible—but this man too has one mouth and one hand.¹⁴

Charles de Gaulle, writing more than half a century earlier, captured these fundamental differences no less starkly:

The soldier often regards the man of politics as unreliable, inconstant, and greedy for the limelight. Bred on imperatives, the military temperament is astonished by the number of pretenses in which the statesman has to indulge. . . . The impassioned twists and turns, the dominant concern with the effect to be produced,

the appearance of weighing others in terms not of their merit but of their influence—all inevitable characteristics in the civilian whose authority rests upon the popular will—cannot but worry the professional soldier, broken in, as he is, to a life of hard duties, self-effacement, and respect shown for services rendered.

Inversely, the taste for system, the self-assurance and the rigidity which, as the result of prolonged constraint, are inbred in the soldier, seem to the politicians tiresome and unattractive. Everything in the military code which is absolute, peremptory and not to be questioned, is repugnant to those who live in a world of rough and ready solutions, endless intriguing and decisions which may be reversed at a moment's notice.¹⁵

De Gaulle goes on to argue that this contrast explains the preference of politicians in peacetime for complaisant and docile military leaders, who frequently must be replaced at the outset of a war. Allowing for the differences in time and nationality, there is a kernel of truth here.

Yet the ultimate domination of the civilian leader is contingent, often fragile, and always haunted by his own lack of experience at high command, for he too is usually a novice in making the great decisions of war. For a politician to dictate military action is almost always folly. Civil-military relations must thus be a dialogue of unequals and the degree of civilian intervention in military matters a question of prudence, not principle, because principle properly opens the entire field of military activity to civilian scrutiny and direction. Perhaps the greatest of all leaders, Winston Churchill, noted in his reflections on World War II that "It is always right to probe."¹⁶

"THE SURPRISING CAPACITY OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE FOR ERROR"

A fictional general famously remarked:

. . . do you recall what Clemenceau said about war? He said war was too important to be left to the generals.

When he said that, fifty years ago, he might have been right.

But today, war is too important to be left to politicians. They have neither the time, the training, or the inclination for strategic thought.

The words, one suspects, would win approval from more than a few practitioners and observers of contemporary civil-military relations—until they realized that they were expressed by the half-crazed Brigadier General Jack D. Ripper, of Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964). There are few, if any, General Rippers in the American military, but the sentiment surely persists, and indeed is even shared by some politicians. "The notion that it is inappropriate for civilian leaders to involve themselves in the details of military operations is pervasive in the military," writes Scott Cooper, a Marine captain troubled by the views of the generals. "It is also misguided."¹⁷

The generals and politicians who nonetheless cling to the "normal" theory do so for understandable reasons. It has much to be said for it. The "normal" theory reaffirms our belief in a distinctive "military way," a compelling if somewhat anachronistic code by which most military officers live. There are military values that are indeed distinct from those of civil society: self-abnegation, altruism, loyalty, and of course, courage. To set aside those differences or to ignore their importance would be not merely unwise, but devastating to military effectiveness. Nor should anyone cast aside the ideal of political neutrality, which has, if anything, grown in importance in an age when politicians populate political staffs with officers, be it on Capitol Hill or in the White House.¹⁸ But where the "normal" theory goes awry is in its insistence on a *principled*, as opposed to a *prudential* basis for civilian restraint in interrogating, probing, and even in extremis, dictating military action. Taken to extremes, it would free politicians of real responsibility for the gravest challenges a country can face, and remove oversight and control from those whose job most requires it.

Only the surprising capacity of human intelligence for error can explain the opinion of prominent authorities who, although they acknowledge the role of politics in preparing for war and drafting the initial plan, rule out the possibility that politics can affect strategy

once a war has started . . . A politics that would renounce the retention of its authority over the leadership of a war and acknowledge the primacy of military specialists and silently conform to their requirements would itself acknowledge its own bankruptcy.¹⁹

Thus the words of a shrewd Russian strategist, a victim of Stalin's purges, who had studied closely the disaster that had befallen his country and the rest of Europe in 1914–1918, partly as a result of faulty civilian control of military operations.

It is not a popular view. The former Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, Admiral Harry Train, wrote in an analysis of the 1982 Falklands War, "when the duly accountable political leadership assumes the military role of deciding *how* the armed forces will perform their duties, the nation has a problem."²⁰ On the contrary, the truth is that when politicians abdicate their role in making those decisions, the nation has a problem. In the words of a wise observer of an earlier generation, reflecting upon the disaster of Vietnam and the role of weak civilian and unimaginative military leadership in bringing it about, "The civil hand must never relax, and it must without one hint of apology hold the control that has always belonged to it by right."²¹

Thus far the theory; we now turn to the practice.

“BY GOD, WE’VE KICKED THE VIETNAM
SYNDROME ONCE AND FOR ALL.”⁴⁷

Many soldiers and politicians thought that the Gulf war had put to rest the ghosts and demons of the Indochina war. Throughout the Gulf war President George H. W. Bush, by his own account, brooded about Vietnam—indeed, his exuberant declaration at the end of the war revealed how much it had preyed upon his mind. His diary for 26 February 1991, two days before the end of the war, includes a passage, “It’s surprising how much I dwell on the end of the Vietnam syndrome.”⁴⁸ “Vietnam will soon be behind us.” He regretted that the war had not ended with a “battleship *Missouri* surrender. This is what’s missing to make this akin to WWII, to separate Kuwait from Korea and Vietnam. . . .”⁴⁹ The very insistence on the “end of the Vietnam syndrome” (by which Bush seems to have meant sloppy, unsatisfying endings, internal divisions, and a hampered military) reveals, of course, just how painfully present that experience remained for him. The sloppy ending of the Gulf war—which left Saddam Hussein still in power, still a menace, and increasingly free of externally imposed sanctions a decade later—showed that the president had fallen short of his immediate objective as well.

For, in fact, the Gulf war did not end the “Vietnam syndrome” but, if anything, strengthened it. The lessons of the Gulf war learned by the American defense establishment amounted to a powerful reinforcement of deep-seated beliefs that go back to Vietnam and that amounted to a tremendous reinforcement, to the point of distortion, of the “normal” theory of civil-military relations. In the decade that followed, the twinned lessons of Vietnam and the Gulf combined to create a version of the “normal” theory of civil-military relations that ended by weakening the principle of civilian control of the military in the United States,

deepening mistrust between senior officers and politicians, and even, in some measure, politicizing the officer corps.

The lessons of Vietnam and the Gulf war did not disappear with the gradual retirement of the Vietnam generation of military officers. Extensive surveys of officers conducted by social scientists from the Triangle Institute for Security Studies in 1999 asked officers whether they should be neutral, advise, advocate, or insist on control of certain elements of the use of force. The results revealed that officers believed that it was their duty to “insist” on the adoption of certain courses of action (rather than advise or advocate), including “setting rules of engagement” (50 percent), developing an “exit strategy” (52 percent), and “deciding what kinds of military units (air versus naval, heavy versus light) will be used to accomplish all tasks” (63 percent).⁵⁰ What “insist” meant in this context was, of course, unclear. Still, something profound had changed in American civil-military relations. Officers, their self-confidence strengthened by two decades of increasing prestige and by a generally accepted version of civil-military relations marked by the morality tales of the Vietnam and Gulf wars, had come to believe that civilians had little business in probing *their* business.

The TISS survey data indicate that the post-Gulf war American military had a view of who should control the use of force very different indeed from the unequal dialogue discussed here. Nor is it the case that these views were theoretical propositions only, not reflected in action. When, for example, sources on the Joint Chiefs of Staff leaked military opposition on the conduct of the 1999 Kosovo war to the press, the stated objection was that “I don’t think anybody felt like there had been a compelling argument made that all of this was in our national interest”—as if the determination was the military’s to make.⁵¹ Indeed, by the turn of the twenty-first century it was the norm for military officers to leak to the press their opposition to government policy involving the use of force. This is a far cry from the outraged but dutiful muteness with which the chiefs of staff of the Army and Navy accepted President Roosevelt’s decision to invade North Africa in 1942, against their explicit and firm advice.

In the Gulf war, and in the host of small wars since then, military “advice” has not really been “advice” at all, but something different: a preparation of options, and sometimes a single option, for the civilian leadership. American civilian decision-makers hesitated before demanding much of their military subordinates. Having earlier denounced the

passivity of the first Bush administration in Yugoslavia and particularly in Bosnia, the Clinton administration in 1992 was paralyzed by military estimates that it would take 400,000 troops or more to intervene there.⁵² When American forces were used, it was with virtually no cooperation and communication with—let alone subordination to—a broader political effort. Indeed, Richard Holbrooke, America’s chief negotiator in the Balkans in 1995, recalls that his military counterpart, Admiral Leighton Smith, viewed himself as an independent force: “. . . he told me that he was ‘solely responsible’ for the safety and well-being of his forces, and he would make his decision, under authority delegated to him by the NATO Council, based on his own judgment. In fact, he pointed out, he did not even work for the United States: as a NATO commander he took orders from Brussels.”⁵³ Smith’s mulish opposition to the man charged with implementing American policy reflected the same kind of presumptuousness that, in far graver circumstances, had afflicted the relationship between Foch and Clemenceau. It was a reminder that coalition operations, now a staple of peacekeeping and limited interventions, produce their own difficulties in the area of civil-military relations.

The Somalia intervention of 1993 offered another such case. A commitment of American forces under the auspices of the United Nations allowed for the pursuit of parallel and conflicting policies, which culminated in a disastrous attempt to kidnap a Somali warlord whose cooperation was essential to any stable arrangement in Mogadishu. Here too civilian abdication, not military arrogance, was to blame. Deferring to a zealous United Nations high commissioner—an American—neither the president nor the secretary of defense regarded American forces operating in Mogadishu as forces fighting a low-level war, but a war nonetheless, in which some effort should be made by national authority to harmonize ends and means. Far from abusing the military by micro-managing it, the Clinton administration abused it by failing to take the war seriously and inquire into means, methods, and techniques. Its civilian leadership failed (to take just the Somalia case) by refusing to ask why American forces in Somalia were operating under several different commands—commands which communicated with one another poorly and in some cases not at all.

Particularly in the years after the Gulf war, it became expected that civilian leaders, not their military subordinates, would take responsibility for military failure. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin resigned follow-

ing the death of eighteen Rangers ambushed in downtown Mogadishu in 1993—even though his military advisers had not urged upon him a course of action other than that undertaken by American forces there, and had, in fact, favored the withdrawal of the one system that might have rescued the Rangers, the AC-130 aerial gunship. In a similar if less extreme vein, Secretary of Defense William Perry, confronted by the Senate Armed Services Committee, took responsibility for any failures associated with the bomb attack on the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, that killed nineteen servicemen in 1996, while the theater commander in chief sat silently beside him. Lower-level officers might suffer for sins of omission and commission (an Air Force brigadier general was denied promotion after the Khobar attack, which he could neither have prevented nor defended against more effectively than he did), but higher commanders were not penalized. For civilian leaders to hold military leaders accountable for their operational performance far graver failures, apparently, would have to occur.

The decline in the quality of American civil-military relations at the top has coincided with the emergence of an American military edge—technological, organizational, and quantitative—that stems from the United States' extraordinarily prosperous economy and the overall quality of its armed forces. Yet even in successes such as the 1999 Operation ALLIED FORCE, the NATO war with Serbia led by an American, General Wesley Clark, the failure of statesmen and commanders to come to terms with one another had deleterious consequences. Clark, a bright, ambitious, and politically sophisticated general, supported American policy as articulated by the secretary of state:

One of his colleagues asked him where his civilian pals were going to be if things went sour. Would they, like the civilians behind the Vietnam debacle, go off to write their books and take their big jobs, the way Mac Bundy and Bob McNamara had done? . . . In the military, someone who was too nimble, too supple with words, too facile, someone who was able to go to different meetings and seem to please opposing constituencies, was not regarded with admiration; he was regarded with mistrust.⁵⁴

Clark paid dearly for getting crosswise of military colleagues who had no use for the Kosovo war or for the president who had led them into it. But

neither the president nor the secretary of defense chose to speak with their theater commander, who found himself on the receiving end of admonitions from a hostile chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and uncooperative generals at home. "I had little idea, and never had during the entire crisis, how the commander in chief, or the secretary of defense were making their decisions."⁵⁵

For their part the civilians scrutinized target lists but generally approved the requests of their theater commander, who faced far more unwillingness from NATO allies. President Clinton, seeking to avoid casualties which he felt himself peculiarly unable to justify, declared early on that the United States would commit no ground forces to Kosovo—an indiscretion that virtually guaranteed a prolonged air campaign, during which Serb forces could massacre the Albanian Kosovars at leisure. This decision seems to have preceded rather than followed any strategic discussions with military leaders. An unthinking requirement for "force protection" as the first mission for American soldiers, ahead of any objective for which they might be put in harm's way, reflects an unwillingness to come to terms with what the use of force means; today, rather than the reckless dissipation of strength, it means an only slightly less reckless conservation of it.⁵⁶

The Kosovo war ended with no American combat casualties, and with the eviction of Serb forces from Kosovo. For this success Clark, who had no friends in the military high command and who had alienated Secretary of Defense William Cohen—a civilian leader who had absorbed the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—found himself unceremoniously retired early. In his place General Joseph Ralston, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had expressed all of the conventional military reservations about fighting the Serbs, moved up to become Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

"ROUTINE METHODS"

At one level, civil-military relations today are smooth and easy; senior military leaders mix far more easily with their civilian superiors than they did in Lincoln's or even Churchill's day. They attend the same

meetings of the Council on Foreign Relations and converse with equal ease on political, although not often military subjects. They share offices in the bureaucracy and interact easily in interagency meetings. This superficial harmony has even led some scholars to talk of a theory of concordance as a more attractive paradigm for civil-military relations.⁵⁷ This is, however, a mirage.

During the Cold War the American military accumulated, while scarcely being aware of it, an enormous amount of power and influence. It divided the world into theaters of operation; these have mushroomed into commands whose staffs dwarf those of the immediate office of the president.⁵⁸ In order to fight a Cold War characterized by multiple and often delicate alliances, it schooled its senior officers in politics, beginning when they were cadets at the military academies, by having them serve as interns in Congress. It taught politics, under the name of strategy, in its war colleges. At the same time, particularly after Vietnam, it deprecated efforts by civilian leaders to become overly expert in the details of military affairs. As for explaining its failures or half-successes since World War II, even thoughtful general officers declared that to have victories, "You must have the political will—and that means the will of the administration, the Congress and the American people. All must be united in a desire for action."⁵⁹ If accepted, such an extreme precondition—a unity that has escaped the United States in every major war except the World Wars—means that the civilians will always disappoint the military and the soldiers will always have an excuse.

There was nothing deliberately malign in this hardening of military views about the use of force, very much along the lines of Weinberger's rules and the Powell doctrine.⁶⁰ More deeply disturbing at the end of the century were signs that the American military was increasingly willing to take sides in politics in order to preserve its own interests. This politicization occurred as much at the top of the hierarchy as it did lower down. Having successfully wooed a group of recently retired general officers to endorse his candidacy in 1992, President Bill Clinton found himself trumped by the son of the man he had defeated. George W. Bush collected a longer and more impressive list, topped by three men who had retired only weeks or even days earlier from military service: the professional chiefs of the Navy and the Marine Corps, and the commander of the American forces in the Persian Gulf.⁶¹ The use of senior generals as props for political campaigns, and the flags' willingness to sign

up as partisans, was a long way from the standards of behavior set by men like George C. Marshall, the Army's chief of staff during World War II. Marshall chose not even to vote (admittedly an extreme choice) in order to avoid any partisan taint. In 1943 he lectured a subordinate: "We are completely devoted, we are a member of a priesthood really, the sole purpose of which is to defend the republic." Hence, he insisted, public confidence in a politically neutral military was "a sacred trust" to be borne in mind "every day and every hour."⁶²

There was a paradox here. The "normal theory, which called for sealing the military off from civilian meddling in the details, had eventually given way to a military willing to involve itself, if only tentatively at first, in politics. Yet this willingness follows from the "normal" theory's unrealistic view of the use of force as something divorced from politics in all but the broadest sense of the word. The post-Cold War world being one in which the interplay of force and politics has grown ever more complex, it is not surprising that soldiers tend to engage in politics, albeit with the best of motives. The tendency to do so was reinforced by the increasing gap between traditional military values of hierarchy, order, loyalty, and self-sacrifice and a civilian world that seems increasingly egalitarian (at least in work habits), fluid, individualistic, and acquisitive. Both the steady spread of gender integration in the modern military and weakening barriers to homosexual participation in the armed forces have quietly reinforced a sense of siege among more traditionally minded officers, even as they have blurred the barriers between institution and interest group for others.⁶³ These subtle but powerful societal forces exacerbated a sense of civil-military tension, if not of crisis, by the time a new president took office in 2001. Not entirely coincidentally his new secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, who had held the same job a quarter-century before, began his tenure with an elaborate set of defense reviews that ostentatiously excluded the active-duty military from participation save as a kind of uniformed research assistants. Until the outbreak of a new and different kind of war following the terror attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the Rumsfeld Pentagon exhibited levels of civil-military mistrust as bitter as anything seen in the Clinton administration.

For the leaders of America today, the strong temptation in a world dominated by American military power is to brush aside the lessons of civil-military relations hard won over a century of total wars. There is a

danger that absent recent or current experience of really dangerous war—war in which the other side can inflict damage and has options—civilian and military decision-makers alike will forget the lessons of serious conflict. Those lessons are, above all, that political leaders must immerse themselves in the conduct of their wars no less than in their great projects of domestic legislation; that they must master their military briefs as thoroughly as they do their civilian ones; that they must demand and expect from their military subordinates a candor as bruising as it is necessary; that both groups must expect a running conversation in which, although civilian opinion will not usually dictate, it must dominate; and that that conversation will cover not only ends and policies, but ways and means. “Our highest civilian and military heads [must] be in close, even if not cordial, contact with each other . . .,”⁶⁴ declared a weary but wise general officer veteran of the Vietnam war.

Just before the turn of the twenty-first century, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations was reviewing the 1999 war fought by the United States and its NATO allies against Serbia. “I was troubled,” Senator Gordon H. Smith, (R-Oregon), who was chairing the hearing, remarked, “over the degree to which political considerations affected NATO’s military strategy.” He was disturbed that matters had gotten “even to the point where politicians . . . questioned and sometimes vetoed targets that had been selected by the military.” He continued:

I firmly believe in the need for civilian control of the military in a democratic society, but I also believe we can effectively adhere to this critical principle by clearly outlining political objectives and then, within the boundaries of those objectives, allowing the military commanders to design a strategy in order to assure the achievement of those objectives.⁶⁵

The “normal” theory of civil-military relations was alive and well.

A great statesman is a rarity, and an average politician who poses as a Churchill or a Lincoln may come to grief. But it is also the case that a mediocre statesman who resorts to rules of thumb—including “defer to the professionals”—is heading, and probably by a shorter path, to ruin. Interestingly enough, General Colin Powell himself took as a life lesson, “Don’t be afraid to challenge the pros, even in their own back yard. Just as important, never neglect details, even to the point of being a pest.”⁶⁶

Except under uniquely favorable conditions (as, for example, in 1999 when the United States and its allies went to war with Serbia—a country whose gross national product was one fifteenth the size of the American defense budget) the outcome of civilians taking military advice without question is unlikely to be a good one.

The hopeful belief in bright dividing lines between civilian and soldier, political matters and military ones, is what Carl von Clausewitz termed a “theory of war”—a set of beliefs and doctrines that seem to make the use of force more manageable. As he also noted, however, in the absence of “an intelligent analysis of the conduct of war . . . routine methods will tend to take over even at the highest levels.”⁶⁷ The “normal” theory of civil-military relations is, in effect, an effort to make high command a matter of routine. The unequal dialogue, to which we turn next, is the essence of the technique of the successful war statesman discussed in previous chapters, and the opposite of Clausewitz’s “routine methods.”

APPENDIX

The Theory of Civilian Control

"A BODY OF MEN DISTINCT FROM THE BODY OF THE PEOPLE"

The issue of civil-military relations is one of the oldest subjects of political science. Plato's *Republic* discusses the difficulties inherent in creating a guardian class who would at once be "gentle to their own and cruel to enemies," men who, like "noble dogs," would serve as the ideal city's guardians.¹ Fear of military dictatorship plagued English and American political philosophers, who saw in both classical and recent history the threats to civil liberty that could arise from large standing armies. As a British parliamentarian put it in the eighteenth century: "[soldiers] are a body of men distinct from the body of the people; they are governed by different laws, and blind obedience, and an entire submission to the orders of their commanding officer, is their only principle . . . it is indeed impossible that the liberties of the people in any country can be preserved where a numerous standing army is kept up."² Despotism often wears a uniform, and even in republics such as early twentieth-century France statesmen urgently pondered ways and means of reducing military autonomy and ensuring adequate civilian control of the armed forces of the state. Despite the relatively small size of the peacetime military establishment of the United States, civil-military relations in this country have experienced periodic crises—most notably during the Civil War, when on more than one occasion President Abraham Lincoln found himself deeply at odds with his generals. The overall record of the American military, however, remains one of complete "subordination and loyalty" to the Constitution.³ For the United States, and indeed for most democracies, the central problem of civil-military relations has not been the most fundamental one—that of preventing a military takeover of the state. For many reasons, including the acculturation of the military itself and the presence of numerous countervailing forces and institutions,

that specter has never seriously haunted American statesmen. But the adjustment of relations regarding the preparation and use of force to serve the ends of policy has proven a very different matter.

The notion that if there is 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 the conditions under which it acts, in creating the kind of forces most appropriate for its tasks, in 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.

Almost half a century ago, in what became a classic work of political science, Samuel P. Huntington set out a theory of civil-military relations to guide both civilians and soldiers in their relationships. *The Soldier and the State* has ever since set the terms of debate about civil-military relations in this country. A simplified secondhand version of the book has come, in fact, to be commonly viewed as the “normal” theory of civil-military relations—the accepted theoretical standard by which the current reality is to be judged.⁴ Like most classics *The Soldier and the State* is more cited than read, and many of its subtleties have been lost on those who have admired it most. But extraordinarily influential it remains.

Huntington begins with an analysis of officership as a profession, much like medicine or the law. Like those vocations, he writes, officership is distinguished by *expertise* in a particular area of human affairs, a sense of *responsibility* that lends an importance transcending monetary rewards to one’s work, and *corporateness* or a sense of community and commitment to members of one’s group.⁵ For Huntington, the central skill of the soldier is the “management of violence,” the arts of planning, organizing, and employing military force, but not applying it. At least in ground and naval warfare, officers orchestrate and coordinate the use of force: they do not, except in *extremis*, fight themselves. To be sure, this may mean that “not all officers are professional military officers” in the restricted sense of the term.⁶ Those who specialize in career areas not directly related to the management of violence are not truly professional

according to this admittedly narrow set of criteria. Neither, by implication, are those whose specialty is the direct *application* of violence rather than its management and planning.

Huntington believes in the distinctiveness of the military mindset. It is, he says in a notable passage, “pessimistic, collectivist, historically inclined, power-oriented, nationalistic, militaristic, pacifist, and instrumentalist in its view of the military profession. It is, in brief, realistic and conservative.”⁷ To be sure, this is an ideal type. But he maintains that it is powerful nonetheless, and that this military ethos is a source of great strength not merely for the military but for society more broadly. In *The Soldier and the State*’s concluding pages he draws a striking contrast between the appearances and the inner realities of the United States Military Academy at West Point and the neighboring town of Highland Falls, New York—appearances that reflect cultural differences. The austerity and purposefulness of the military order has something to teach, or at least complement, the dazzling heterogeneity and anarchy of democratic society.

Huntington offers a recipe for ensuring civilian dominance over the armed forces, arguing as he does for a sharp division between civilian and military roles. “Objective control”—a form of civilian control based on efforts to increase the professionalism of the officer corps, carving off for it a sphere of action independent of politics—is, in his view, the preferable form of civil-military relations. He contrasts “objective control” with what he calls “subjective control,” which aims to tame the military by civilianizing it, thus rendering it politically aware, or by controlling it from within with transplanted civilian elites. In the contemporary world those who support this latter means of control are “fusionists” who believe that the old categories of political and military matters are difficult to distinguish.⁸ In a previous age these fusionists would have asserted civilian control by keeping officership the preserve of the ruling social class; in the current era they seek to blur the autonomous nature of military professionalism. “The essence of objective civilian control,” by way of contrast, “is the recognition of autonomous military professionalism.”⁹ There is good news here: soldiers not only respect the bounds of democratic politics when subject to objective control, they also fight more effectively. When politicians leave purely military matters to officers, and when they draw clear distinctions between their activities and those of civilians, outstanding military organizations

emerge. Officers motivated by dedication to a politically sterile and neutral military ideal—"the good soldier," and "the best regiment"—will turn in a performance superior to those motivated by ideology or merely personal drives such as ambition or vainglory.¹⁰

This view has profound implications for strategy. Huntington quotes approvingly a Command and General Staff College 1936 publication:

Politics and strategy are radically and fundamentally things apart. Strategy begins where politics ends. All that soldiers ask is that once the policy is settled, strategy and command shall be regarded as being in a sphere apart from politics . . . The line of demarcation must be drawn between politics and strategy, supply, and operations. Having found this line, all sides must abstain from trespassing.¹¹

This sharp separation is possible because military expertise is, indeed, definable and isolatable. "The criteria of military efficiency are limited, concrete, and relatively objective; the criteria of political wisdom are indefinite, ambiguous, and highly subjective."¹² Political leaders enhance their control by making the military austere professional, while reserving to themselves alone the passing of judgments on matters of policy as opposed to technical military matters.

Many democratic politicians and even more of their fellow citizens find the understanding of strategy as craft reassuring. To believe that war is a professional art is to believe that it is not subject to the errors and follies, the bickering and pettiness, the upsets and unpredictabilities that characterize politics. Military expertise, in this view, is a constant.

The peculiar skill of the military officer is universal in the sense that its essence is not affected by changes in time or location. Just as the qualifications of a good surgeon are the same in Zurich as they are in New York, the same standards of professional military competence apply in Russia as in America and in the nineteenth century as in the twentieth.¹³

Such a belief offers reassurance to perplexed politicians and anxious citizens. As many an injured or sickly patient in desperate straits yearns to

trust a doctor with a soothing bedside manner, so too many civilians look to put their reliance in generals who cultivate a calm or dominating demeanor and an attitude of command. Paradoxically, perhaps, it is in matters of life and death that many people become more rather than less trustful of the professionals. And indeed this, in Huntington's view, is how the United States did so well during the Second World War: "So far as the major decisions in policy and strategy were concerned, the military ran the war."¹⁴ And a good thing too, he seems to add.

A simplified Huntingtonian conception of military professionalism remains the dominant view within the American defense establishment. In the mid-1980s the Congress conducted a debate on military reforms that led to the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, which substantially increased the power of the Joint Staff and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the expense of the military services and even, to some extent, that of the office of secretary of defense.¹⁵ Not only did the originators of that legislation explicitly endorse Huntington's reading of American military history; they saw their responsibility as one of providing more and better centralized, autonomous military advice to civilian leaders.¹⁶

Huntington's theory has particular importance in a period during which the United States finds itself chronically resorting to the use of force. The concept of "objective control" offers a way of coping with the dangers that military organizations pose for democracies—what Tocqueville described as "a restless, turbulent spirit" that "is an evil inherent in the very constitution of democratic armies, and beyond hope of cure."¹⁷ Objective control offers a simple formula for the guidance of politicians and the education of officers and it promises not merely civilian control and constitutional governance but strategic success.

And yet the theory of objective control does not suffice as a description of either what does occur or what should. Scholarly critics have taken issue with its assumptions about the nature of military professionalism and, as we shall see, these views have some foundation. Furthermore, an examination of recent history—including even the relatively successful Gulf war—suggests that the Huntingtonian model of desirable civil-military relations does not characterize conflict. The most successful cases of wartime leadership in a democratic state—Lincoln's stewardship of the Union cause in the American Civil War, Winston Churchill's conduct of British affairs during World War II, or David

Ben-Gurion's skillful handling of Israeli war policy during the country's struggle for existence—reveal nothing like the rigid separations dictated by the “normal” theory of civil-military relations.

CRITICS OF THE “NORMAL” THEORY

The standard conception of military professionalism, despite its general acceptance, nonetheless attracted criticism from a number of sources. Historian Allen Guttman contended that Huntington had misinterpreted American history in constructing his argument.¹⁸ Rather than being isolated from the American polity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and during the interwar years, Guttman argued, American officers were in fact quite representative of it. And rather than adhering to a conservative world view at odds with that of the broader society, they shared the pragmatic and democratic views of American society generally. Huntington detects and approves of a deep tension between civil and military values, and asserts the value of military detachment from society. Guttman rejects that assessment and deprecates Huntington's endorsement of it.

Huntington's ideal officer is a well-defined aristocratic type—a Helmuth von Moltke, to take a Continental example—who is at once patriotic and yet, in some fashion, almost above patriotism in his sense of membership in the brotherhood of arms. Where Huntington noted and celebrated the honor of soldiers as a central aspect of the military way, Guttman points out the stubborn pragmatism of American generals. Guttman observes that such quintessentially American figures as Stonewall Jackson had little sense of the punctilious chivalry that European officers admired, and that (in his view) characterize Huntington's theory.¹⁹ When a Confederate colonel reporting on the successful and bloody repulse of a Yankee attack expressed his admiration for the enemy's bravery and his regret at having to kill such courageous foes, Jackson replied, “No. Shoot them all. I do not wish them to be brave.”²⁰ Other observers of the American military, taking a somewhat different tack but arriving at a similar conclusion, note the conventionality of its officer corps, which is solidly middle class in its values and aspirations

and thus firmly anchored in the society from which it emerges.²¹ Huntington's hopes for creative tension between civilian and military values find no resonance in a military that watches the same television programs and listens to the same music as society at large.

Sociologist Morris Janowitz and others have made a similar if more contemporary argument. The traditional notion of professionalism has weakened, they contend, as war itself has changed. “As a result of the complex machinery of warfare, which has weakened the line between military and nonmilitary organization, the military establishment has come more and more to display the characteristics typical of any large-scale organization.”²² While Huntington's concept of “objective control” may have made sense in the age of the World Wars, the nuclear revolution gave birth to “a convergence of military and civilian organization.” Janowitz proposes what he calls a “constabulary concept” of officership—one dedicated to the limited use of force in carefully defined circumstances.²³ He draws a distinction between “heroic leaders, who embody traditionalism and glory, and military ‘managers,’ who are concerned with the scientific and rational conduct of war.”²⁴ There is little doubt in his mind that it is the modern military managers who are winning out, and a good thing too, he seems to believe. Janowitz thus appears to have accepted Huntington's definition of military professionalism but to have smoothed off its rough edges: where Huntington anticipates—indeed welcomes—a divergence between civilian and military values as a by-product of professionalism, Janowitz sees no such necessity.

Other military sociologists have gone even further. In 1977 Charles Moskos suggested that the military had begun a slow, but steady transformation from an institution—“legitimated in terms of values and norms”—to an occupation—“legitimated in terms of the marketplace, i.e., prevailing monetary rewards for equivalent competencies.”²⁵ The increasing harmonization of military and civilian pay scales, the reduction of special military perquisites (e.g., the PX and the commissary) seemed to him to weaken the distinctiveness of the military way of life. Implicitly, at any rate, all militaries exist under some form of what Huntington would call “subjective control.” Indeed, one optimistic scholar proposes a theory of “concordance” in which “the very idea of ‘civil’ may be inappropriate.”²⁶ It is a theory of “dialogue, accommodation, and shared values or objectives among the military, the political elites, and society.”²⁷ In some ways, this practically defines away the problem of civil-military relations.

Disagree as they might, Huntington and these critics of his ideas both deliver reassuring if conflicting messages. For Huntington the good news lies in his discovery that those elements of the military persona and outlook that liberal America finds unsettling (indeed, he contends that "liberalism does not understand and is hostile to military institutions and the military function")²⁸ are, in fact, not merely functional but desirable. For Guttman, Janowitz, and Moskos the good news was just the reverse: the military *resembles* America, shares its elite's values and, increasingly, parallels its social origins and way of life. As the all-out conflicts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries gave way to more limited struggles, the military internalized civilian views of how it should conduct military operations. The stark differences between the military and civilian mind, so central to Huntington's theory, have blurred.

For neither Huntington nor his critics, however, is there anything intrinsically problematic about combining civilian control and military effectiveness, in peace or in war. Indeed, for more than one writer the term "civilian control" is a faintly absurd echo of dark popular fantasies like the 1964 film *Seven Days in May*, in which the military tries to take over the government.²⁹ "The concept of civilian control of the military has little significance for contemporary problems of national security in the United States,"³⁰ wrote one author in 1961—a dubious assertion, it now appears, at the beginning of a decade that spawned some of the most destructive tensions between civilians and soldiers the United States has ever seen. Similarly, in 1985 Congressional staff drawing up legislation aimed at enhancing the power of the military declared that "instances of American commanders overstepping the bounds of their authority have been rare. . . . None of these pose any serious threat to civilian control of the military."³¹

Neither Guttman nor Janowitz nor Moskos, we should note, delve into civil-military relations in wartime. They accept much though not all of Huntington's characterization of America's military history in war. Indeed, some of the most influential writings on civil-military relations criticizing Huntington barely mention warfare at all.³² And, in fact, most of the civil-military-relations literature, with the exception of Huntington, has somewhat oddly steered away from close examination of what happens during wartime.

An exception is British scholar S. E. Finer, whose critique of Huntington is very different from his American counterparts'. He argues that Huntington has severely *underestimated* the problem of civilian control. Blessed with the advantages of centralized command, hierarchy, discipline, and cohesion, and embodying virtues (bravery, patriotism, and discipline, for example) that civil society finds attractive, the military can resist civilian control effectively.³³ Noting that one of the armies that Huntington has praised as the most professional—the German—has repeatedly intervened in politics, Finer suggests that military professionalism could in fact incline militaries to engage in politics rather than not.³⁴ And in wartime in particular civilians are often too insecure about their knowledge, too fearful of public opinion, and too overawed by their military's expertise to exercise much control at all. "War is too important to be left to the generals.' Few civilians seem to have agreed with this and still fewer generals," Finer writes.³⁵ A difference in national experience may have been at work here as well. In the United States the archetypal civil-military conflict was between the imperious general Douglas MacArthur and the doughty president Harry Truman, a confrontation crisply decided by the dismissal of the former by the latter. For British authors, the Curragh mutiny (or, as some would prefer, "incident") of 1914, in which a group of cavalry officers (fifty-seven out of seventy in one brigade) offered their resignations rather than suppress Ulster loyalists determined to keep Northern Ireland part of the United Kingdom, presents a more typical and a more disturbing threat to civilian control.³⁶ More instructive yet in the British experience is the struggle between civilian and military leadership during World War I. Prime Minister David Lloyd George believed himself thwarted and even endangered by a military clique resting on an alliance between the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir William Robertson, and the commander of British forces in France, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, aided by docile civilian politicians and journalists.³⁷ Finer contends that by construing civilian control too narrowly, as the formal subordination of the military to the civilian power, and particularly in peacetime, one may underestimate the difficulty of controlling the use of military power in wartime. Precisely because, unlike most other students of civil-military relations, Finer has looked at war, he has a considerably more pessimistic view of the prospect for civilian control.

THE EXCEPTIONAL PROFESSION

Despite these various rebuttals of Huntington's argument, his general concept still stands and retains its popularity. Military life has witnessed many changes, but it nonetheless remains a way apart—a point brought home to the Clinton administration in 1993, when the president attempted to lift the US military's ban on homosexuals serving in uni-

form. Journalist Tom Ricks may have said it best when he described life in today's military as "what Lyndon Johnson's Great Society could have been. . . . It is almost a Japanese version of America—relatively harmonious, extremely hierarchical, and nearby always placing the group above the individual."⁶⁵ With its distinctive way of life on self-contained bases, a perhaps anachronistic commitment to service, discipline, and honor continue to pervade an institution that, for example, will still penalize a senior officer for adultery—a sin usually overlooked by the civilian society around it.

Those who predicted a mere constabulary role for the military, hence its transmutation into a kind of heavily armed police force, have also been proven wrong. Two real wars—Vietnam and the Persian Gulf—have been fought between the time those predictions appeared and the present day. The rarity of large wars is not, of itself, an indication of the obsolescence of the military profession understood as the management of large-scale force. There are other explanations including the configuration of international politics in which one country, the United States, dominates all others, and the possession of overwhelming power by the status quo dominant nations. Even so, Keegan's curious declaration that "the suspicion grows that battle has already abolished itself"⁶⁶ rings hollow, followed as it has been by conventional conflicts such as the Falklands, Lebanon, Persian Gulf, and Yugoslav wars, to name only the larger ones.

Furthermore, and contrary to what proponents of the "constabulary function" of the military suggest, the minor interventions, demonstrations of force, and peacekeeping operations of today do not diverge from the norms of the past. Soldiers and Marines of a bygone era suppressed hostile Indians and Nicaraguan rebels; their counterparts today have returned to Haiti, invaded Grenada, overthrown a Panamanian dictator, dueled with Somali tribesmen, and suppressed Serb paramilitaries. The differences do not look all that great. As intellectually intriguing as the arguments of the strategic nihilists might be, they too have proven ultimately unconvincing. Some wars and lesser uses of force clearly achieved their objectives (for example, Egypt's October 1973 campaign which broke the Arab-Israeli peace deadlock, or the Gulf war). Beyond this, nihilism is ultimately a doctrine of irresponsibility that provides no standards of conduct for either statesman or soldier. Even Finer's dispute with Huntington seems to be confounded by the apparent deference of military leaders to their civilian superiors. With the sole

exception of the MacArthur controversy, and perhaps not even that, the Western world has not recently witnessed the kind of virulent antipathy between "brass hats" and "frocks" that in 1914–1918 characterized civil-military relations in both Britain and France.

There is, however, another possible critique of Huntington's theory, and that rests on his and his critics' conception of professionalism. Put simply, it is that although officership is a profession, it differs in many respects from all others: in some of the most important respects it does not, in fact, resemble medicine or the law. Indeed, the Huntingtonian construct represents a concept of professionalism prevalent in the 1950s, but since challenged in many spheres as unrealistically pristine; "incomprehensibility to laymen, rather than rationality, is the foundation of professionalism," in the acid words of a scholar writing in the more cynical 1970s.⁶⁷ Officership differs in a number of important ways from other professions. Unlike law, medicine, or engineering, it binds its members to only one employer, the government, and has only one fundamental structure—the large service branch. But other differences are more important, in particular those bearing on the goals of the professional activity and the nature of the expertise involved.

All professional activities present difficulties of moral choice and ultimate purpose to those who practice them. The wrenching choices involved in the treatment of terminally ill patients are well known; so too are the ethical dilemmas of a lawyer who becomes privy to knowledge of the criminal activities of his client. But by and large in the professions of law and medicine, on which the classic conception of professionalism is based, the ultimate goals are fairly straightforward. They are, for the doctor, to cure his patients of their diseases, or at least to alleviate the pain they suffer. Occasionally, of course, these two imperatives conflict. For the lawyer they are, at least within the American legal system, to achieve the best possible result (be it acquittal, or, in civil cases, maximum financial and other forms of redress) for his clients.

The soldier's ultimate purposes are altogether hazier: they are, as Clausewitz and others insist, the achievement of political ends designated by statesmen. But because political objectives are just that—political—they are often ambiguous, contradictory, and uncertain. It is one of the greatest sources of frustration for soldiers that their political masters find it difficult (or what is worse from their point of view, merely inconvenient) to fully elaborate in advance the purposes for which they

have invoked military action, or the conditions under which they intend to limit or terminate it. The "professional" concept of military activity, moreover, depicts political purpose in war as purely a matter of foreign policy; and yet in practice the "high" politics of war is suffused as well with "low" or domestic politics. President Lincoln wants a victory at Atlanta in the summer of 1864 in order to crush the Confederacy—but also to boost his own chances of reelection, which in turn is necessary for the ultimate victory of the Union. President Roosevelt dismisses professional military advice and orders an invasion of North Africa in 1942 rather than a landing in France in 1943—this, he explains, in order to engage American public opinion in the fight in the European theater, rather than in hopes of achieving an early end to the war. President Johnson limits air attacks on Hanoi and Haiphong in 1965–1968 in part to preserve his ability to launch the Great Society, but also to limit the chances that China will enter the war.

The traditional conception of military professionalism assumes that it is possible to segregate an autonomous area of military science from political purpose.⁶⁸ In many ways one can. Frequently, however, a seemingly sharp separation crumbles when it encounters the real problems of war. Consider the question confronted by the Allies in the late summer and fall of 1944 in France: whether to advance on a wide front or to concentrate scarce logistical resources behind a northern thrust along the French, Belgian, and Dutch coasts (directed by a British general) or a southern thrust into central Germany (directed by an American general). One might say that there was a military "best answer," assuming that the ultimate objective was simply the defeat of Germany—which in turn incorrectly assumes that the word "defeat" lends itself to a simple definition. But in fact the political objectives of even the Second World War were far more complex than that; they involved questions of cost in lives and treasure, minimization of damage to Allied civilian populations (including Londoners under threat from V-2 missiles launched in Holland), and matters of national prestige. These were not political modifications to a "military" objective of defeating Germany, but essential to it. "The distinction between politics and strategy diminishes as the point of view is raised. At the summit true politics and strategy are one."⁶⁹ Careless readers of Huntington have missed his awareness that these kinds of mixed political-military decisions do indeed occur; in truth, they occur even more frequently than the "normal" theory would suggest.

That the good military officer requires technical expertise no one would deny. But is it indeed true that "the peculiar skill of the military officer is universal" across time, nationality, and place? The qualifications of a good North Vietnamese infantry officer in Indochina in 1965 would surely have differed in some important respects from those of a good American officer opposing him. The Vietnamese would have needed a ruthless disregard for his own men's suffering and casualties that would have rendered an American not merely morally unfit to command, but a likely candidate for "fragging"—assassination—by his own men. He could have easily remained ignorant of large areas of technical knowledge (for example, the employment of close air support, or planning procedures for heliborne movements) that the American required. More than one author has suggested that the Vietnam failure stemmed at least in part from the stubborn resistance of American officers to adapting their conception of professionalism to the war before them. And American bafflement when facing unconventional opponents like Somalia's Muhammad Farah Aideed reflects, in part, the American military's reluctance to walk away from an essentially conventional conception of what it is to be "a professional."⁷⁰

Huntington's assertion that, in the modern age at any rate, professional armies are better armies may require at least some revision, although it is a belief in which many regular armies take comfort.⁷¹ The more research is done on one of the most formidable fighting machines of all time, the German Wehrmacht, the greater the role of its ideology appears to be.⁷² For a generation after World War II scholars attributed the fighting abilities of the Germans in World War II to neutral, professional characteristics: small-unit cohesion and careful practices of officer and noncommissioned officer selection and recruitment.⁷³ More prolonged and careful investigation, however, has revealed that the permeation of the German army by Nazi ideology made it a better fighting force.⁷⁴ Not only did it instill in a large proportion of its men a fanatic determination to fight—it also contributed indirectly to the maintenance of tactical effectiveness. The ruthlessness of the Nazis allowed for the harshest possible repression of dissent or doubt. The Germans, who had executed forty-eight of their own men during World War I, shot somewhere between 13,000 and 15,000 during World War II; the comparable numbers for the British army were 356 in World War I and 40 in World War II.⁷⁵ At the same time, the Hitler Jugend provided a reserve of

junior officers and leaders while Nazi ideology reinforced the central virtues of military leadership, including selflessness, physical courage, and initiative.⁷⁶ Perhaps the greatest proof of the contribution of ideology lies in the record of the units of the *Waffen-SS*, which by war's end constituted no less than a quarter of Germany's army, and which repeatedly turned in an outstanding fighting performance. Of Theodor Eicke, the leader of one of the most successful of the *Waffen-SS* divisions, the *Totenkopf* (Death's Head), one historian notes: "Eicke's style of leadership differed little in practice from the methods he had used to administer the prewar concentration camp system. . . . What he lacked in formal training, imagination, and finesse, he attempted to overcome through diligence, energy, and a constant effort to master the baffling technical intricacies of mechanized war."⁷⁷ Eicke was a successful military leader not in spite of those characteristics that would have earned him a trial for his numerous crimes against humanity had he survived the war, but because of them.

Nor is the German experience unique. Ideological armies—the Chinese People's Liberation Army, the international brigades in the Spanish Civil War, and the preindependence Palmach in Palestine are all examples—have often turned in superior tactical performances against larger and better equipped regular forces. The ideologically motivated fighter may make a good junior officer—he often embodies the self-sacrifice, integrity, and drive the leaders of soldiers in battle require. More than a few higher-level commanders as well have—like Eicke, albeit in very different causes—demonstrated high orders of ability.⁷⁸

If the content of military professionalism is, as Huntington contends, the "management of violence," that is a definition that excludes large areas of military activity (logistics, for example) which often have considerable civilian analogues and yet are indispensable to military operations.⁷⁹ Many of these skills are readily transferable to or from the civilian world. It is no accident that the US Army's chief logistician in the Persian Gulf, Lieutenant General Gus Pagonis, became, immediately upon retirement, an extremely successful executive at Sears, in the same way that the military rapidly promoted civilian executives to high military rank during the World Wars. Moreover, although all serious modern military organizations devote a great deal of effort to schooling and training, history is filled with examples of soldiers taken up from civilian life who very quickly master the essentials of military affairs. The World

Wars offer examples of great soldiers who spent only brief peacetime periods of their life in regular military organizations, and then flourished in times of actual war. General Sir John Monash, one of the best generals of World War I, was a civil engineer whose prewar experience consisted solely of militia duty. Yet he rose to command perhaps the most formidable of all Allied units, the Australian Imperial Force.⁸⁰ There are hardly any accounts, even a century ago, of self-taught or part-time doctors and engineers performing nearly so well.

Military professionalism is job-specific, much as business management is. Brilliant entrepreneurs may prove utterly unable to cope with the problems of running the corporations their creative genius brought into the world. Skilled managers of a long-established high-technology firm like IBM would probably find it difficult to assume equal responsibilities in an entertainment company like Disney. There is, to be sure, enough commonality in management experience to make it plausible to put a former manufacturer of repeating rifles in charge of a large ice cream company (Ben & Jerry's), but that does not guarantee success. The ruthless churning of higher management in many companies reflects what might be thought of as "wartime" conditions—a ceaseless turnover of executives who, though qualified by training and experience for the highest office, nonetheless prove unfit for their tasks, exhausted by their previous work, or merely, but fatally, unlucky. In this above all they resemble generals in an intense war. This should not surprise us, for in some sense businesses fight their "wars" every day, unlike military organizations.

This observation suggests a deeper problem with the notion of expertise in the management of violence as the essence of the military profession. Where lawyers continually appear in court or draw up legal instruments, where doctors routinely operate or prescribe medication, where engineers build bridges or computers, soldiers very rarely manage violence, or at least not large-scale violence. They prepare to manage violence; they anticipate its requirements; they study past uses of violence, but they very rarely engage in the central activity that defines their profession. In the words of one British general writing after World War I:

Imagine an immense railway system, created but not in use, held in reserve to meet a definite emergency which may emerge on any indefinite date, a date certain (with the British) to be fixed by the Di-

rectors of another, and a rival, system, instead of by its own. Once a year, and once a year only, the railway is allowed to be partially opened to traffic for a week (maneuvers): for the remaining fifty-one weeks not only are there no train services, but the locomotives are stripped, many of their essential parts being stacked in out-of-the-way parts of the Kingdom. Yet, let the signal be given, and in four days' time the parts of the engines have to be assembled, wheels have to be fixed to dismantled trucks, cushions have to be fixed to the first-class carriages, the personnel must be at their posts, the coal—mountains of it—has to be on the spot, and a huge, complicated, most rapid and crowded process of transportation and movement comes straightway into being—provided—the rival company has not sandbagged the manager or dropped a few bombs upon the terminus.⁸¹

Many, perhaps most, officers spend entire military careers without participating in a real way in war. And even those who do fight in wars do so for very small portions of their careers, and very rarely occupy the same position in more than one conflict. A lawyer may try hundreds of cases, or a doctor treat hundreds or even thousands of medical problems, of an essentially similar type during the course of several decades; a soldier will usually have only one chance to serve in a particular capacity. There are few generals who have had the experience of being divisional or corps commanders—let alone theater commanders or chiefs of general staffs—in more than one war. As a result then, particularly at the beginning of a war, a country's most senior leaders—nominally the most seasoned veterans—are in a professional position as close to that of the novice lawyer or doctor as to that of the senior partner in a law firm or the chief surgeon in a hospital.

The lack of practice military people have in their profession at the highest level is only one factor in the astounding, and by no means infrequent, catastrophic errors made by supposedly competent military organizations.⁸² The errors of the Schlieffen Plan were not merely political but logistical: those who concocted it had assumed away problems of supply and marching endurance that made it nearly impossible of execution. The highly skilled tacticians of Germany launched in March 1918 the ruinous MICHAEL offensive, which shattered the German army and made inevitable their country's defeat. The pioneering air generals of

the US Army Air Forces in World War II embarked upon a ruinous, unescorted daylight precision-bombing campaign against Germany that collapsed in the Schweinfurt débâcles of 1943. The Israelis in 1973 adhered to a doctrine of tank warfare that proved utterly unsuited against modern hand-held anti-tank weapons, and as a result suffered heavy losses in the first days of fighting against Egyptian infantry armed with portable missiles and rocket-propelled grenades. The United States Army in Vietnam, led by experienced and able veterans of World War II, adopted a strategy of "search and destroy" predicated on entirely false assumptions about its ability to control the loss rates of the Vietnamese Communists.⁸³ These and other calamities stem not from incompetence as normally understood, but from the features that make the waging of war different from other professions: the distorting psychological effects of fear, hatred, and the desire for glory; the nature of a reacting opponent; and the absence of rules that bound the activity concerned. As Clausewitz observed, "every war is rich in unique episodes. Each is an uncharted sea, full of reefs."⁸⁴ Each age has its "own theory of war, even if the urge has always and universally existed to work things out on scientific principles."⁸⁵ War is too varied an activity for a single set of professional norms.

THE UNEQUAL DIALOGUE

One should not carry such arguments against a rigid division of "professional" and "political" too far. Clearly, no one fresh from the office or the classroom can command an aircraft carrier or an armored division, much less pilot a fighter plane or repair an infantry fighting vehicle. The politician who plans his own commando operation will almost surely regret it. More than one group of revolutionary leaders, from Bolshevik commissars in 1919 to Iranian mullahs over half a century later have, willy nilly, turned to officer experts whom they may not have trusted but whose services they required. Enough of the officer's code survives, despite the allure of a materialistic culture, to make concepts like honor distinguishing characteristics of the military way. "The officer's honor is of paramount importance," write founding members of the Army's Cen-

ter for the Professional Military Ethic.⁸⁶ That a profession of arms exists—even though a more amorphous one than one might at first think—cannot be doubted. Even at the height of the Cold War an eminent British officer could detach the purposes of warfare from professionalism: “I suppose there are some, in Western countries, who have become professional fighting men to fight Communism, though I hope not.”⁸⁷ It is a remark instantly comprehensible to other professional soldiers, if not perhaps to most citizens.

Besides, a repudiation of “objective control” carries with it grave risks. To reject Huntington’s idea of sequestering issues of policy from those of military administration or operations is to open the way to a military that is politicized and, by virtue of its size and discipline, a potentially dominant actor in the conduct of foreign and internal affairs. In states with less-established democratic traditions such changes would open the path to direct military intervention in politics. Huntington is correct in his contention that such partisanship will eventually diminish military proficiency.

But the “normal” theory still requires emendation in its understanding of the military profession and hence in its understanding of civilian control. If, as argued above, officership is a unique profession, military expertise is variable and uncertain, and if the boundaries between political ends and military means are more uncertain than Huntington suggests, civilian control must take on a form different from that of “objective control,” at least in its original understanding.

One of the broader and most frequently commented upon developments in civil-military relations has been the gap between the military and society. Concern about making military forces reflective of the broader society, and connected to it, began with the founding of the United States. Until the all-volunteer armed force came into existence in 1973, the raising of citizen forces for wars or a draft for the Cold War tended to avert much of the concern.

While some voiced worries in the 1970s, the prominence of the issue rose in the late 1990s, leading the Triangle Institute for Security Studies to undertake a large, multi-disciplinary effort comparing the attitudes, opinions, and perspectives of a slice of the officer corps with elite civilians and the general public. This reading summarizes that study and updates it with similar surveys in the last fifteen years. The focus was on whether a "gap" existed, and if so, its characteristics and implications.

Should the military establishment be concerned about a "gap? Why or why not?

Jim Golby, Lindsay Cohn Warrior, and Peter D. Feaver, "Thanks For Your Service: Civilian and Veteran Attitudes After Fifteen Years of War," in *Warrior and Citizens: American Views of our Military*, ed. by Jim Mattis and Kori Schake (Palo Alto: Hoover Institution Press, 2016)

In 2011, Mark Thompson wrote a piece for *Time* magazine titled "The Other 1%." The title was a direct reference to the then-prominent cry of the Occupy movement about how nearly half of the wealth in the United States was controlled by only one percent of the people. The Occupy movement alleged that "real" or "regular" Americans were estranged from this tiny group of the super-rich, whose lives were utterly different from everyone else's. The one percent to which Thompson was referring, however, was the tiny number of Americans serving in the armed forces. His argument was that, if Americans were unhappy about half of their wealth belonging to only one percent, shouldn't they also feel that it was unfair for the entire defense burden to rest on only one percent of the people?

Thompson's piece was just one more salvo in the long-standing debate about the idea of a civil-military "gap" in American society (for recent prominent examples in the media, see Fallows 2015, Eikenberry and Kennedy 2013; for the older literature, see Ricks 1997a, Cohn 1999, Feaver and Kohn 2001). The issue is as old as the American republic itself (Weigley 2001; Langston 2003). The Framers of the Constitution wanted to create an army under national control, but nevertheless devoted a considerable amount of their efforts to designing a system that would minimize the fledgling republic's dependence on standing military forces to ensure ratification (Kohn 1991). Along with other institutional checks, the maintenance of the citizen-based militia system would allow for a military that would share "the same spirit as the people" but that would still help meet the country's security needs.

Systematic scholarly attention really took off in the United States in the first decades of the Cold War with the publication of two seminal works on civil-military relations: Samuel P. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* (1957) and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier* (1960). These works were in part a reaction to the fact that the United States was, for the first time in its history, maintaining a large, standing, conscription-based military to meet an indefinite threat; while perhaps not truly "peacetime" the Cold War posture was certainly not the wartime

frame of previous conflicts – Civil War, World War I, and World War II – when Americans had tolerated mass mobilization. They set up a debate based on differing normative interpretations of military professionalism and civilian control of the military but also about the relationship between civilian and military cultures – the extent to which they do and ought to differ and how to manage whatever differences might arise.

Later, after the war in Vietnam and the return to an all-volunteer military, the literature focused on two issues: first, how the shift to a necessarily smaller and more self-selective volunteer force would change the military and its relations with society; and second, to what extent military officers at the top of the chain should push back against civilian policy decisions, whether coming from the executive or the legislature. The end of the Cold War ushered in another period in the gap debate, inspired by the changing security environment, the shrinking military establishment, and a spike in friction between civilian and military leaders over controversial policy choices, most visibly the question of whether gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in the armed forces. This era was characterized by various pressures to adapt the military culture to a new, peacetime context.

Now, we are in a new and in some ways unprecedented period. It is an era during which the Afghanistan and Iraq wars required the active duty military to fight prolonged, bloody, and increasingly unpopular engagements with extended and repeated call-ups of the National Guard and the Reserves, but without the other resources of a full wartime mobilization of society – something that had never been contemplated for the All-Volunteer Force. The strains on the force and the strains on public support for the missions raised anew the traditional themes of alienation, difference, and lack of understanding, despite the apparent popularity and general admiration of military personnel. Many people hope now to move beyond the post-9/11 war on terror and America’s long and contentious counter-insurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, yet a new war against the Islamic State in Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) is accelerating, Russia is actively destabilizing Ukraine, and China is making ever more assertive moves in the South and East China Seas. Global uncertainty is increasing. This new period has included public discussion of the apparent partisanship of the military officer corps, the inequity of the defense burden, and the possible policy repercussions of these phenomena.

This new study is thus a timely contribution to a long-standing issue. The YouGov survey is particularly valuable because it provides something that has been comparatively rare over the decades of scholarly analysis: systematic data comparing the responses of civilians and the military across a rich array of questions. The largest study of this kind was the Triangle Institute for Security Studies (TISS) Project on the Gap Between the Military and Civilian Society, which marshaled the efforts of some two dozen scholars across a range of disciplines to study the gap from all perspectives. The centerpiece of the TISS study was a one-of-a-kind dataset of survey results comparing the attitudes of “elite civilians” (defined as up and coming civilian leaders drawn from *Who’s Who* and other similar registries), “elite military officers” (defined as up and coming military officers drawn from the professional military education schools – National War College, Army Command and General Staff College, and so on – that prepare such leaders for future promotion), and the general public. The TISS survey has never been fully replicated, although portions of it have been updated in recent years (which we discuss more below). The YouGov survey is one of the more extensive updates and sets the stage for a renewed discussion informed by valuable and current public opinion data.

This chapter will summarize the most relevant findings from the TISS survey, discuss the scholarly literature on post-9/11 civil-military relations in the United States, and then

compare the YouGov survey results with those from the TISS survey to shed new light on how much the gap has changed over the last fifteen years. We conclude with some thoughts about what may be driving the changes we see, a discussion of the policy relevance of these phenomena, and some suggestions for further research.

A. The TISS Study.

In the 1990s, civil-military relations were often on the front pages. President Clinton had a notoriously rocky relationship with the military, and it was not unusual for pundits to voice concerns about the conservative military's loyalty to the liberal president and American public. Tom Ricks's 1997 book, *Making the Corps*, argued that the virtues and discipline required of military personnel estranged them from what many of them considered the overweight, lazy, pot-smoking, welfare-dependent American people and that this disconnect was a dangerous problem. Debates raged over initiatives to allow homosexuals to serve openly and to allow women to serve in previously closed specialties. In response to this debate, Peter Feaver and Richard Kohn brought together a number of scholars to gather and examine the data. Was there a "gap"? In what sense? What factors were shaping it? Was it different from earlier civil-military relations? Did it matter?

The resulting study was published in 2001¹ and found the following: there did appear to be several "gaps," only some of which gave reason for concern. There were some differences and disagreements that appeared to threaten military effectiveness and needed to be addressed. There were other gaps that did not seem to have any negative implications. There were yet other areas where no gaps appeared at all. In a number of areas, the views of military officers were more conservative than those of the political elite, but on other subjects they were actually less conservative than those of the American public. It is perhaps interesting to note that almost 70% of military leaders agreed (either "strongly" or "somewhat") with the idea of "placing stringent controls on the sale of handguns" (Holsti 2001, 49). Military officers tended to support civil liberties at significantly higher rates than did the general public. On the other hand, military leaders were the least likely of all groups to consider protecting the environment important, and military and Active Reserve leaders were together the least likely to consider growing income inequality to be a problem. Both military and civilian elites were more likely than the general public to feel that most people could be trusted and to have trust specifically in government institutions. The military sample was more "religious" than the civilian elite, but not dramatically so. Veteran status did not appear to have affected Congressional voting patterns, and the gap did not seem to be a major driver of the size of the defense budget or the salience of the military institution in American society. However, the trends were notable, and there was a possibility for a growing gap in the understanding each group had of the others' norms, roles, and nature, which might lead to other negative consequences if nothing was done.

Although the TISS finding most noticed by the media was that military officers were significantly more Republican than the general public, the survey found that this was due largely to a decline in the number of officers who reported themselves as independent or non-partisan, not to a decline in self-identified Democrats. This was striking because it represented a departure from the tradition of military officers avoiding partisan identification. The TISS study did not pose specific questions to discover whether officers were particularly activist or extreme in their political beliefs or behavior, and thus could not reveal anything about the specific content of the

¹ The TISS project resulted in multiple publications, including Feaver and Kohn's 2001 edited volume, *Soldiers and Civilians*, a special edition of the journal *Armed Forces and Society* (27(2), 2001), a special section in the *Journal of Strategic Studies* (26(2), 2003), and Feaver and Gelpi's 2005 book, *Choosing Your Battles*.

officers' partisan identification.

With respect to attitudes toward military culture and missions, and foreign policy, the opinion gaps between the military and civilian *elite* samples were quite small: about a third of each agreed that a cultural "gap" might hurt military effectiveness; only small percentages thought that a social-engineering role for the military was "important" or "very important" (although the civilians agreed at a slightly higher level than the military officers); and the groups were roughly in agreement about the military's *ability* to perform constabulary missions, although the civilians were more likely than the military to *want* to use the military for such missions. There was a very large opinion gap on the issue of allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the military: 76% of the military officers opposed it, while more than 50% of both the elite and mass civilians supported it. Military and non-veteran civilian respondents were also in some disagreement about providing economic aid to poor countries (with military and veteran respondents less likely to agree to such aid) and about the relative importance of military and economic strength for American security (with civilian non-veterans more likely to rate economic strength as more important).

Another issue the TISS study addressed was that of the "familiarity gap", or the decreasing levels of personal contact and familiarity between civilians and service-members. James Davis notes that "elite officers are disproportionately highly educated, middle-aged, and male. They are also somewhat more likely than the general population to be white and Catholic but differ little from it in class or regional origins" (Davis 2001, 122). James Burk argues that the military remains a highly visible and salient institution in American society, despite its declining numbers and shrinking geographic presence. Bill Bianco and Jaime Markham find that the trend of veterans' overrepresentation in Congress, which had been evident since at least the late 19th century, had begun to fade in the 1970s and disappeared entirely by the mid-1990s. They argue that generational replacement alone could not explain this trend, but their study was unable to produce a clear explanation. However, they also find that veteran status has no significant impact on roll-call votes, so if the dearth of veterans in Congress has an effect on politics, it must be through other means (such as, e.g., determining what issues are discussed, setting the tone of debates, or providing information). Feaver and Kohn (2001) note, however, that a decline in the number of veterans in Congress could also lead to less knowledgeable oversight of the military and of national security issues (464). Later research (Feaver and Gelpi 2005) shows that military experience among the policy elite does matter on decisions about the use of force, but that finding includes both appointed and elected members within the "policy elite."

On the very basic issue of personal familiarity with someone who has served in uniform, the TISS survey showed that an average of 63% of respondents had an immediate family member who had served in the military at some point (The group with the lowest level of family connections was the civilian veteran elite, with only 50% reporting having a veteran in their immediate family; the military elite had the highest level, with 72%.) In the workplace, about 43% of both veteran and non-veteran civilian elites reported working with at least some current members of the military; among the military elites and the masses – both veteran and non-veteran – the numbers were closer to 90%. As for whether respondents believed the military got more or less respect than it deserved, between 40% and 50% of civilian elites felt that the military got less respect than it deserved, 56% of the military elite thought it got less respect than it deserved, and between 60% and 66% of the general public felt that Americans gave their military too little respect. In all cases, the vast majority of the remaining respondents felt that the military got about the right amount of respect; in no group did more than 10% think the military got more respect than it deserved.

On issues of the civil-military relationship, one problem uncovered by the TISS survey was the apparent willingness of the mass public to give the military far more influence in its dealings with political leaders and in the formation of foreign policy than many elites – including the military themselves – would find appropriate (Davis 2001, 121). Another significant gap that emerged between the military and civilian respondents to the TISS survey was over the questions asking what military officers should do if confronted with either unethical (but legal) or unwise orders. Overwhelmingly, the military respondents felt that unethical orders ought to be resisted in various ways, while the civilians felt that they ought to be carried out; the officers felt that unwise orders should be met with a smart salute, while the civilians thought they should be “appealed” and “resisted.” It may be relevant to note, however, that the civilian respondents, both veteran and non-veteran, were also much more likely than the military respondents to *expect* that officers would seek to avoid carrying out orders with which they disagree.

In general, however, there was a lot of agreement. Although military leaders were slightly more likely than civilians to think that media depictions of the military were hostile, the differences were not significant. While the military respondents were more likely than civilians to think that civilians did not understand the sacrifices made by service-members, all groups agreed that civilians had a great deal of respect for the military. Military leaders disagreed with civilian leaders about civilian leaders’ relative levels of knowledge or ignorance about military matters, but all groups agreed that civilian leaders were neither very knowledgeable nor very ignorant. Both military and civilian elites were almost equally divided on the question of whether civilian political leaders shared the same values as the American people. On the other hand, civilian non-veteran leaders were less likely than military elites to believe that military leaders shared the American people’s values, but this may be because the civilians felt they did not know what military leaders’ values were. On a battery of questions about things that might hurt military effectiveness – such as lack of public trust in military leaders or the military culture becoming less masculine –military and civilian respondents generally agreed that most were not significant threats.

B. Post-9/11.

The Party Gap

The TISS finding that 67 percent of “elite” officers self-identify as Republican generated a great deal of media attention and public commentary. After 9/11, the friction between the administration and high-ranking military officials contributed to scholars’ desire to understand the complex relationship between military partisanship and civilian control (Teigen 2007; Teigen 2008; Dempsey 2009; Urben 2010; Golby 2011; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012). The overall tenor of these newer studies is that fears about extreme military partisanship are overblown for several reasons, but the phenomenon still requires attention and management.

Teigen (2007) finds that veterans’ Republican slant appears to have little to do with military service or experience, as such, and more to do with their race, gender, education level, and parents’ partisan identification. Similarly, Golby (2011) finds that, once you condition for respondents’ partisanship, opinion differences between civilian elites and military officers generally disappear on foreign policy issues. In other words, Republican military officers and Republican civilian elites hold roughly the same foreign policy attitudes. Because of the small number of liberals in the senior ranks of the military, however, senior military Democrats tend to be more moderate than Democratic civilian elites. Many of the differences in opinion between military officers and civilian elites appear to be the result of the partisan composition of the force, not time spent or experience in the military.

Urben’s (2010) findings support Teigen’s argument that military officer partisanship is

explained largely by the same demographic factors that explain partisanship among Americans in general. She also finds, as does Dempsey (2009), that military officers appear to be less partisan and activist than civilians in general, though Golby (2011) finds that Democrats enter the officer corps at lower rates than Republicans and leave at higher rates after their initial terms of service. Nevertheless, Dempsey (2009), echoing earlier studies by Segal (2001), notes that the enlisted ranks are far more politically diverse than the officer corps, and enlisted service members constitute the bulk of military personnel.

A recent Pew Social Trends survey (2011) also found some attitudes among post-9/11 veterans that do not seem excessively partisan: “About half of post-9/11 veterans (51%) say relying too much on military force creates hatred that leads to more terrorism, while four-in-ten endorse the opposite view: that overwhelming force is the best way to defeat terrorism. The views of the public are nearly identical: 52% say too much force leads to more terrorism, while 38% say using military force is the best approach.” The survey also observed, “About six-in-ten post-9/11 veterans (59%) support the noncombat “nation-building” role the military has taken on in Iraq and Afghanistan. The public and pre-9/11 veterans are less enthused. Just 45% of both groups say they think this is an appropriate role for the military.”²

The Familiarity Gap

Post-9/11 anecdotal commentaries also revived attention to the concerns identified by TISS about the familiarity gap: one, that only a tiny percentage of the population was bearing the brunt of the burden; and, two, that this meant that the general population didn’t care and was either unwilling or unable to exercise control and oversight over politicians’ policies (Roth-Douquet and Schaeffer 2006; Wrona 2006; Thompson 2011; Fallows 2015). On the other hand, Mackubin Owens (2011) argues that “the nexus of two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the explosion of communications, both electronic and otherwise, and the unprecedented reliance of the military services on the reserve component arguably have made the military *more* visible to the American public than it was in the era of the draft and Vietnam” (129, emphasis added). He argues that “the idea of a civil-military “gap” that took hold in the 1990s was probably overstated then and is less salient now” (129).

The 2011 Pew Social Trends survey³ mentioned above found that 61% of Americans had an immediate family member (parent, child, sibling) who served in the military – essentially no change from the TISS study. For Americans under the age of 40, however, about 40% had an immediate family member who served in the armed forces, and for Americans under 30 it dropped to 33%. One plausible inference is that the pattern of high social familiarity was a legacy of the large World War II and Cold War-era militaries, and as that generation dies off so too do its familial ties to military service. In its stead is a more tightly linked and narrower network, where families with social ties beget new families with social ties. Among veterans under the age of 40, for instance, the percentage with a veteran in their immediate family was 60%. Furthermore, veterans were more than twice as likely as the general public to say they had a child who had served in the military (21% vs. 9%), and half of veterans had a parent who served, compared to 41% of the general public. However, whites are more likely than African Americans to have such a connection (68% vs. 59%), and Hispanics are much less likely than either (30%). Those who live in the South are somewhat more likely than those in the Northeast or West to have a family member who has served (64% vs. 56% vs. 57%). Finally, Republicans are far more likely to have a family member who served (73% vs. 59% for Democrats and 56% for Independents), and it is possible that some

² <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/10/05/war-and-sacrifice-in-the-post-911-era/>

³ <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/11/23/the-military-civilian-gap-fewer-family-connections/>

of these demographic and partisanship factors explain much of the military family member effect. Perhaps most importantly, however, a finding that between 30% and 60% of the American public still report having immediate family members who have served in uniform shows the lingering generational impact of the large mobilization militaries of the mid-20th century. It also contrasts markedly with the claim that the U.S. military is isolated from society or that American civilians have no contact with or familiarity with the military as an institution – though the demographic trendline is inexorable and so, barring a massive mobilization, the percentage in coming years will continue to decline.

In determining whether or not this “familiarity gap” matters, the Pew study found that American adults with a veteran in the family were more likely to consider themselves more patriotic than most other Americans, more likely to consider America the “greatest country in the world,” and more likely to recommend a career in the military. Interestingly, however, while having a veteran as a close relative did have some negative effect on views of how President Obama is handling his job as Commander in Chief (41% of those with veterans in their families disapprove vs. 34% with no veteran family member), it had no effect on people’s views of whether the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were worth fighting, nor did it appear to make a difference in their feeling that the wars made little difference in their lives (about half of each sample agreed with that statement). Teigen (2008) finds that veteran status did not help candidates for office significantly in elections between 2000 and 2006, and to the small extent that veteran status did make a difference, it benefited Republicans and incumbents more than Democrats and challengers (122). Inbody (2008) argues that the veteran deficit in Congress was temporary: while Bianco and Markham (2001) find that veterans in Congress had fallen below their percentage of the general population for the first time, Inbody finds that veterans “remain vastly overrepresented in Congress compared to the population as a whole” (141).

The executive summary of the Pew report states: “Some 83% of all adults say that military personnel and their families have had to make a lot of sacrifices since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks; 43% say the same about the American people. However, even among those who acknowledge this gap in burden-sharing, only 26% describe it as unfair. Seven-in-ten (70%) consider it ‘just part of being in the military.’”⁴

C. The New Survey.

This much is already known and discussed in the debate. What new insights does the YouGov survey add to the public conversation? While the YouGov data is especially rich and our summaries below only begin to analyze its findings, we argue that a few results are of special importance.

Comparing any two surveys across fifteen years poses challenges, and this effort was no exception. The biggest issue we faced was due to the different techniques that TISS and YouGov used to identify an individual’s “military status.” Although YouGov did ask all respondents whether they or a family member had served in the military since 1991, YouGov asked only certain respondents whether they were veterans themselves. In order to make apples-to-apples comparisons, we had to go with smaller sample sizes, reducing the YouGov “veteran or family member of a veteran” sample down to just “veterans.” Using smaller sample sizes increases our statistical margin of error, but it also ensures that we do not falsely claim that attitudes have changed over the last fifteen years when we are actually just comparing different groups.

Moreover, because the sampling design for identifying elites was different in both surveys, we are cautious about attributing changes among elites to the effects of the last thirteen years of war.

⁴ <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/10/05/war-and-sacrifice-in-the-post-911-era/>

The YouGov elite sample differs from the TISS sample across several important demographic categories to a larger extent than we would have expected; for example, the YouGov elite sample, both civilian and veteran, is much more Republican and male than the TISS sample, and the magnitude of these changes is not reflected in similar changes in other polls over the last fifteen years. Consequently, it may be that the changes we note below are due to changes in the underlying attitude profile of the populations (and thus a reflection of deeper societal changes such as the impact of the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan), but it is also possible that they are due to differences in sampling design, especially among elite respondents.

Several summary findings emerge from the comparison of the two surveys and are depicted in the figures below. First, some of the patterns observed in the TISS survey reappear in the YouGov survey. There is still a significant tendency for veterans and military personnel to identify as Republican at a higher rate than non-veteran/military groups. Feaver and Gelpi's (2005) finding about the effects of veteran status on preferences about the use of force appears to remain true, at the very least for the mass public: veterans are more reluctant about the use of force but favor fewer restrictions on its employment, whereas non-veterans are supportive of more wide-ranging use, but favor greater restrictions on force levels and how they are employed. There is less evidence for this difference among the elite, but that may simply be a result of the fact that the YouGov elite sample is much more Republican and male than the TISS sample was. And, though we do not reproduce every question in a figure, many of the unsurprising results of the earlier civil-military survey show up again.

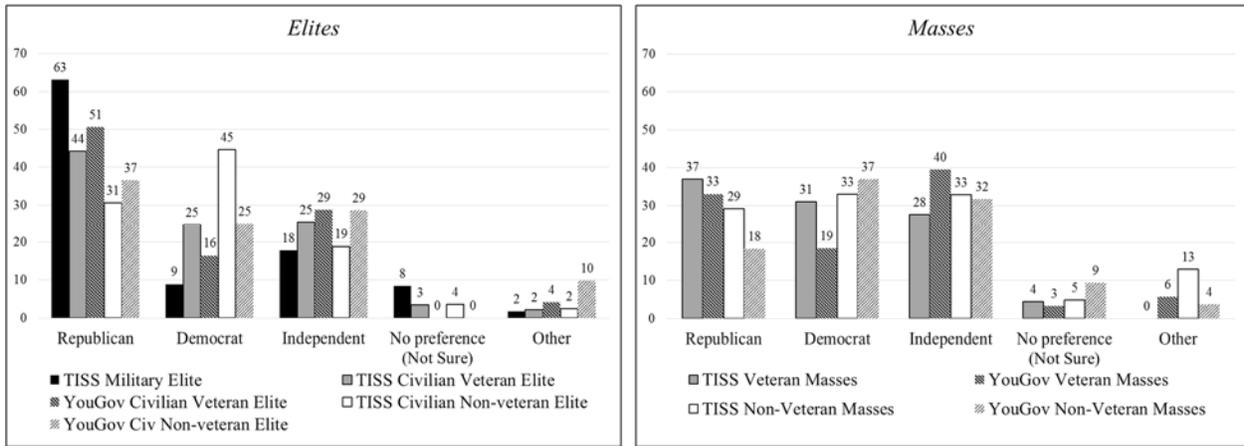


Figure 1: Party Identification

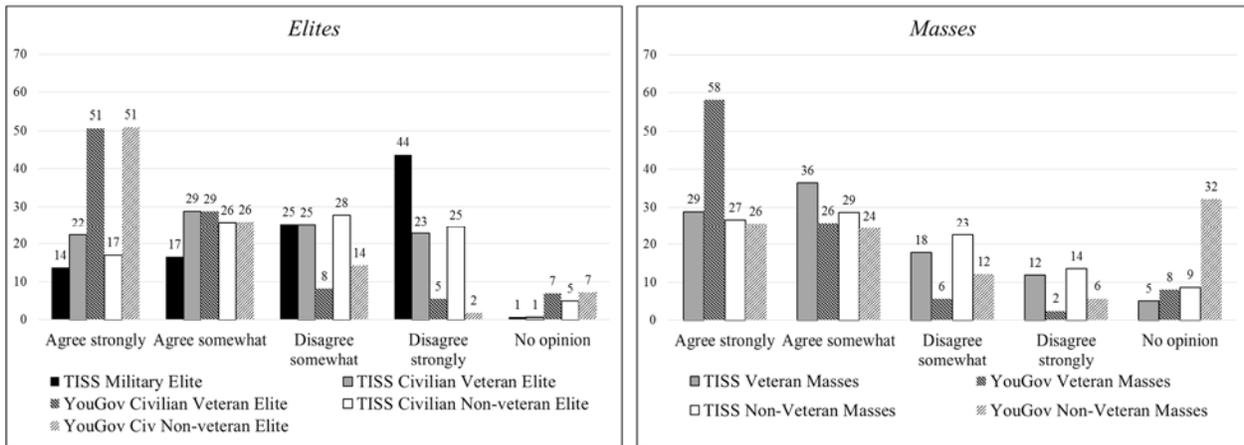


Figure 2: Military vs. Political Goals and the Use of Force

TISS Question Text: This question asks you to indicate your position on certain propositions that are sometimes described as lessons that the United States should have learned from past experiences abroad: When force is used, military rather than political goals should determine its application.

YouGov Question Text: (same as TISS)

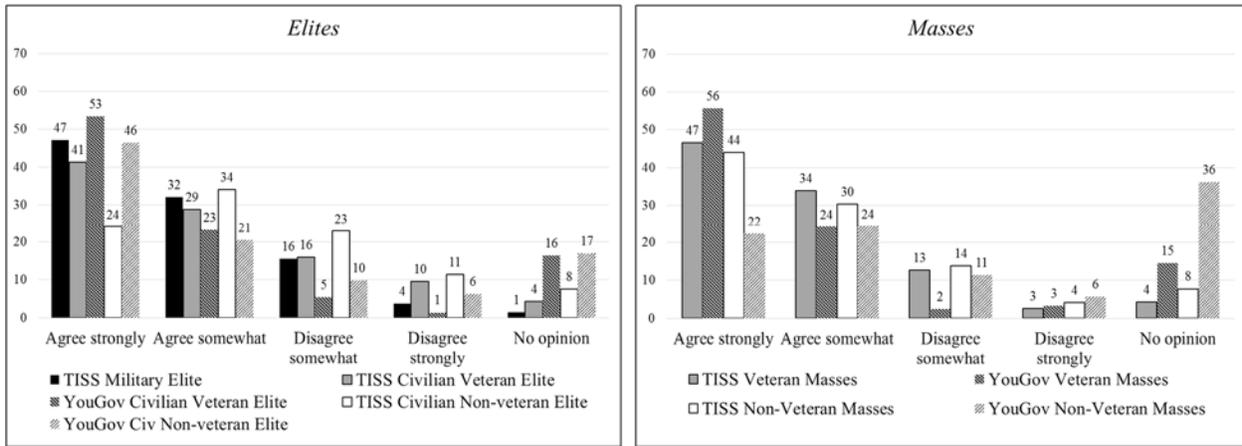


Figure 3: Quick and Massive Interventions vs. Gradual Escalation

TISS Question Text: This question asks you to indicate your position on certain propositions that are sometimes described as lessons that the United States should have learned from past experiences abroad: Use of force in foreign interventions should be applied quickly and massively rather than by gradual escalation.

YouGov Question Text: (same as TISS)

Second, there are new patterns that emerge that were not evident in earlier data or stand out far more prominently now. There is a significantly higher tendency for non-veterans to respond to questions about the military with “don’t know” or “no opinion.” Indeed, every time that YouGov asked the non-veteran civilian masses a question about the military, there was a large and significant shift compared to the TISS study in the number of respondents who offered the “no opinion” response (see, for example, Figure 3). Moreover, as shown in Figure 4, there appears to be markedly less contact between civilians and military personnel, but this finding should not be taken too literally, as the questions about both work contacts and family members were worded very differently. That being said, the change is so enormous that it is unlikely to be due entirely to question wording.

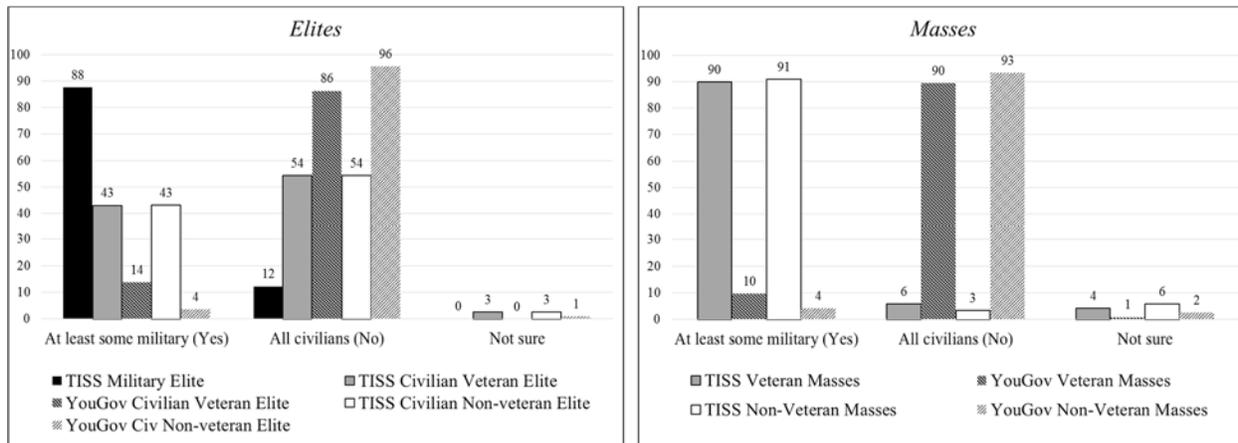


Figure 4: Workplace Contact with Military Personnel

TISS Question Text: Now consider the people you come in regular contact with at work. Are they all civilians, mostly civilians with some military, about equal civilians and military, mostly military with some civilians, or all military? For the purposes of this question, "civilian" here refers to civilians other than civil servants or contractors working for the military.

YouGov Question Text: Do you work with anyone currently in the military? (Responses in parentheses.)

The later survey indicates that, after Afghanistan and Iraq, Americans are less likely to believe that they, as a group, are casualty-phobic, but this appears to be a matter of degree rather than a change in direction. The YouGov results also indicate that Americans have even less trust in their civilian leadership than they did at the end of the 1990s. For example, respondents in the post-Afghanistan and Iraq YouGov survey were much more likely than their pre-9/11 countrymen to think that civilian politicians should essentially let military leaders run the foreign policy show ("when force is used, military rather than political goals should determine its application"). In the TISS survey, the military elite sample sharply disagreed with that sentiment, and sizable portions of both civilian elites and masses also disagreed. For the YouGov survey, supermajorities of both elite and masses supported this claim, with the veterans discernibly more supportive than non-veterans (although again there is a large bump in "no opinion," from 8% to 32% among non-veteran civilians). Similarly, both groups of masses also are more willing to agree that the president should basically follow the advice of the generals, though the question wording is slightly different. Respondents in the later survey were also more likely than TISS respondents to believe that political leaders did *not* have the same values as the American public.

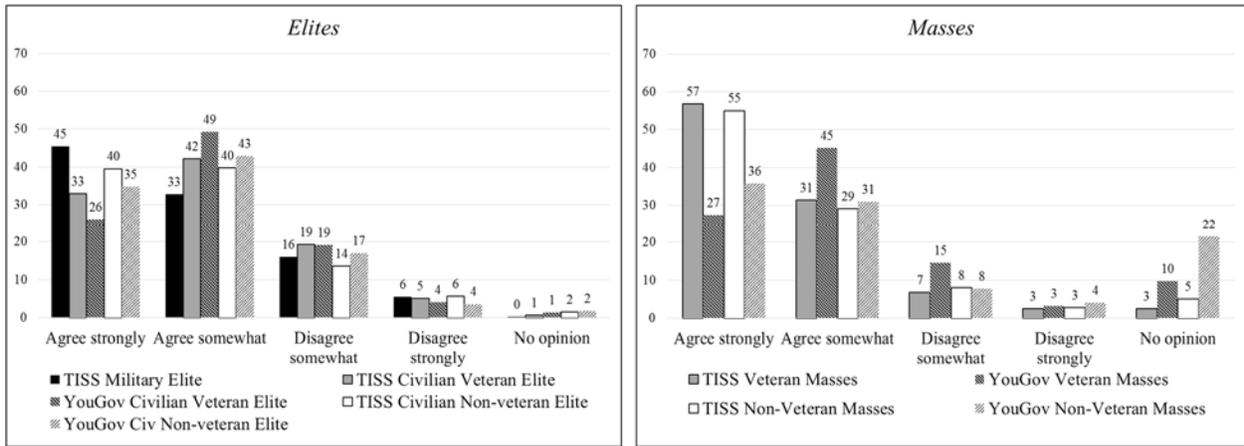


Figure 5: Perceptions of the Public's Casualty Tolerance

TISS Question Text: This question asks you to indicate your position on certain propositions that are sometimes described as lessons that the United States should have learned from past experiences abroad: The American public will rarely tolerate large numbers of U.S. casualties in military operations.

YouGov Question Text: (same as TISS)

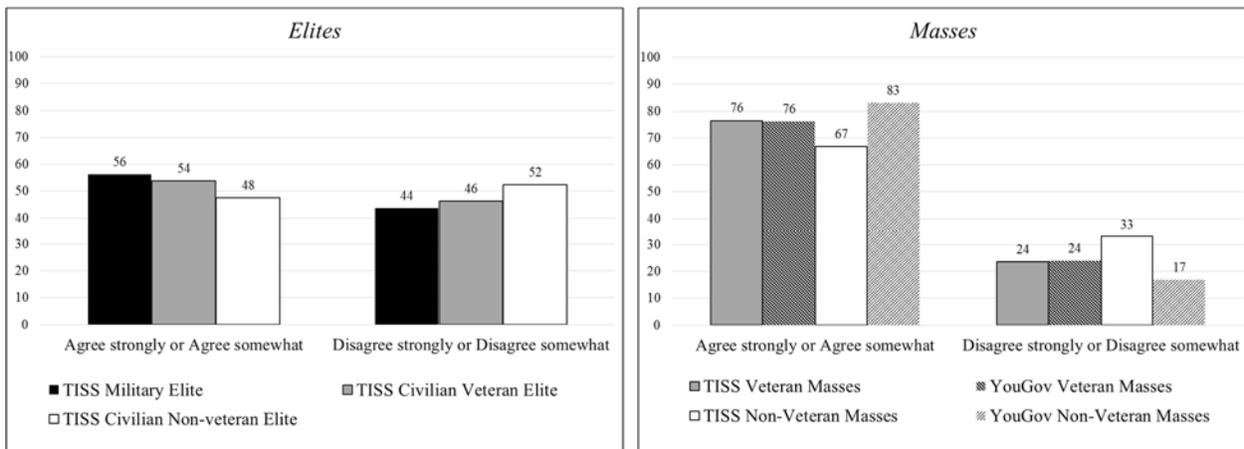


Figure 6: The President's and Military's Leadership Roles during War

TISS Question Text: This question asks for your opinion on a number of statements concerning relations between the military and senior civilian leaders: In wartime, civilian government leaders should let the military take over running the war.

YouGov Question Text: When the country is at war, the President should basically follow the advice of the generals.

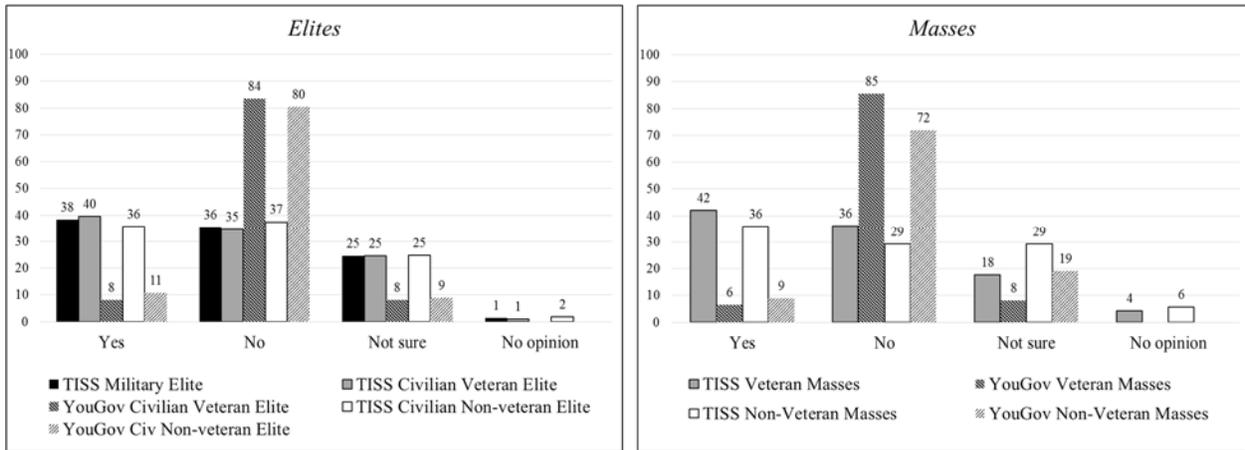


Figure 7: Political Leaders and the Public's Values

TISS Question Text: Do you think our political leaders, in general, share the same values as the American people?

YouGov Question Text: In general, do you think political leaders share the same values as the American people? (Did not include "No Opinion" response)

The issue of women in ground combat units is still controversial, but less so than it was in the TISS era. All groups are likely to support women in combat roles; however, the rise in support among non-veterans has been large, while the rise in support among veterans has been quite modest. YouGov still shows strong confidence that the military has addressed racial discrimination within the military more effectively than American society has in general, but the confidence there has ebbed somewhat. The gays in the military issue is much less controversial, though there is still a noticeable veteran vs. non-veteran gap even today, with non-veterans far more supportive of allowing gays to serve.

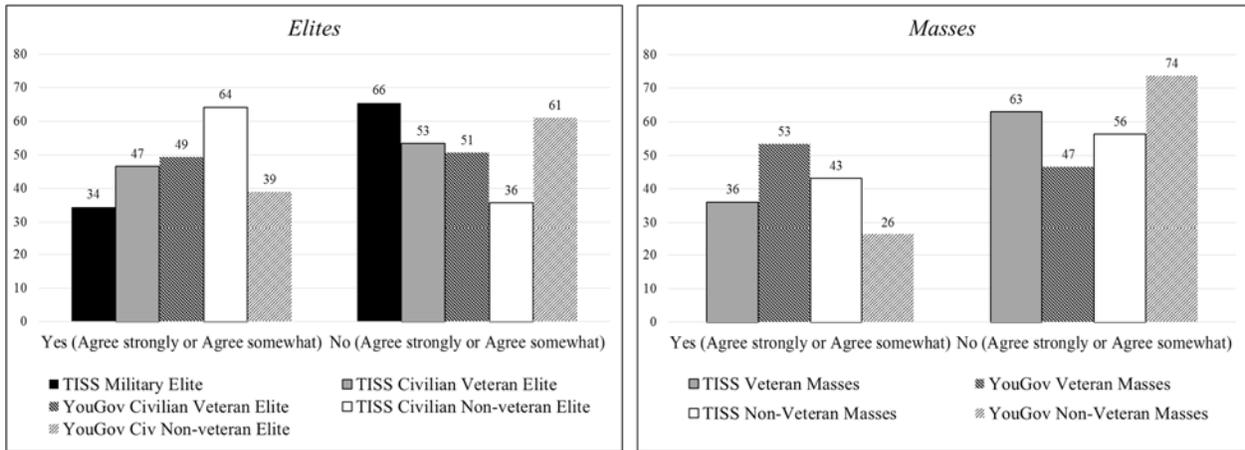


Figure 8: Allowing Women in Combat Jobs

TISS Question Text: Do you think women should be allowed to serve in all combat jobs?

YouGov Question Text: Do you agree or disagree with excluding women from the infantry? (Responses in parentheses.)

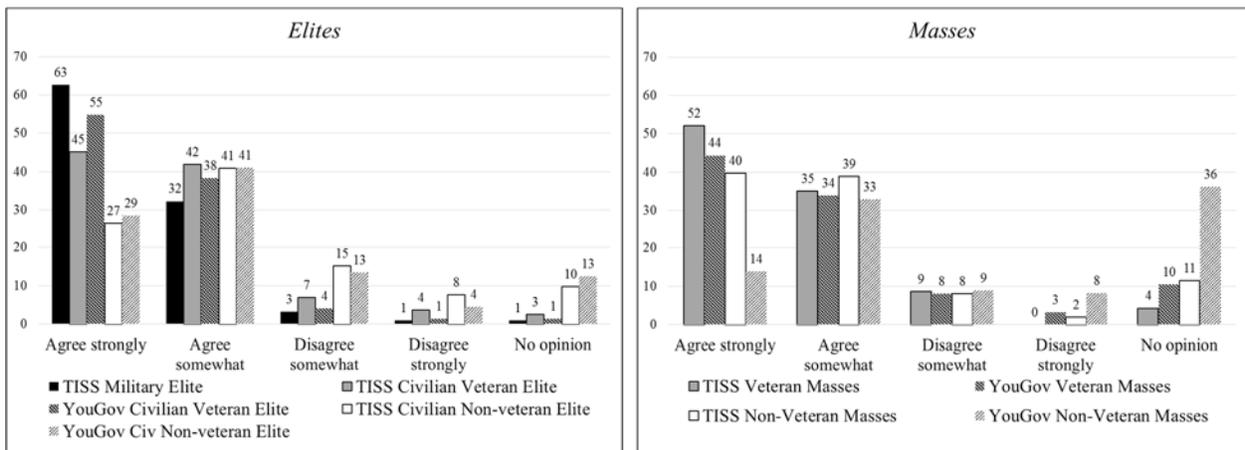


Figure 9: Racial Discrimination in the Military

TISS Question Text: The U.S. military has done a much better job of eliminating racial discrimination within the military than American society in general.

YouGov Question Text: (same as TISS)

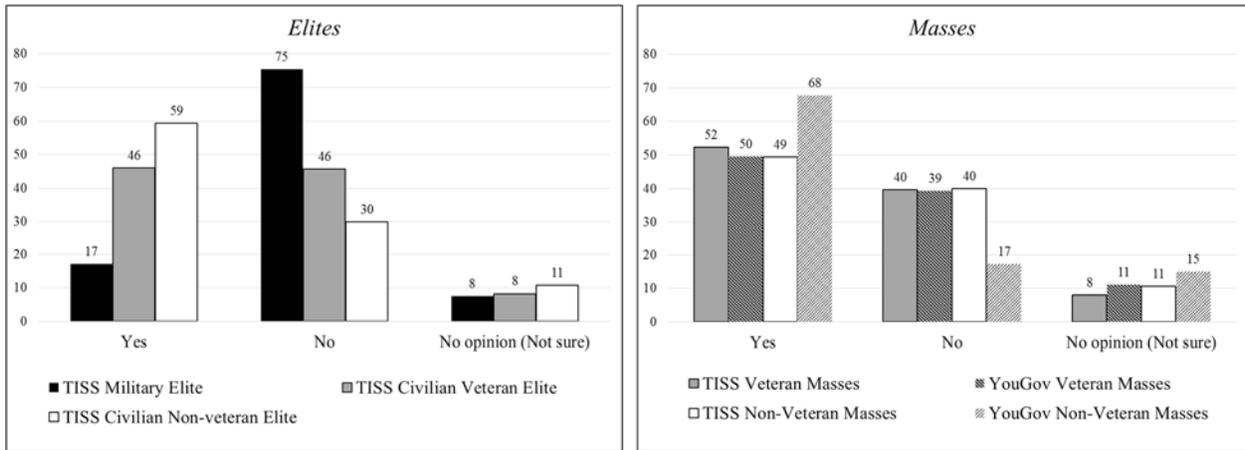


Figure 10: Allowing Homosexuals in the Military

TISS Question Text: Do you think gay men and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in the military?

YouGov Question Text: Do you think people who are openly gay or homosexual should be allowed to serve in the U.S. military?

One of the disturbing findings from the TISS survey was the high numbers of the non-veterans, elite and mass, who seemed to accept improper civil-military norms – in particular, the idea that a military officer ought to resist (actively or passively) direct orders from the civilian political authorities if the officer thought the orders unwise. It should cause significant concern that the portion of the public that accepts this view of things is even greater in the YouGov survey. Respondents to the YouGov survey were more likely than their earlier TISS counterparts to support an officer leaking what he or she thinks are unwise decisions to the press, even though that remains the form of resistance considered least legitimate by all respondent groups.

In the TISS surveys, approximately 30% of respondents in each group thought it was appropriate for a military officer to retire or leave the service in protest when faced with an unwise order. This was already taken by some scholars of civil-military relations to indicate a dangerous breakdown in what they saw as a critical norm against resigning in protest (Kohn 2009). The YouGov survey shows that this norm has broken down completely among all groups except non-veteran masses. Solid majorities of elite veterans, elite non-veterans and mass veterans said that an officer could retire or leave the service to protest an unwise order. Additionally, veterans' attitudes regarding civil-military norms shifted on almost every question. Whereas veterans and military respondents in the TISS survey were more likely to give answers consistent with appropriate norms of civil-military relations than were their non-veteran civilian counterparts, the gap has now narrowed, with veterans becoming more likely to give normatively problematic answers. With the notable exception of resignation, however, the overwhelming majority of veterans still give "correct" answers (cf. Cloud and Schmitt 2006).

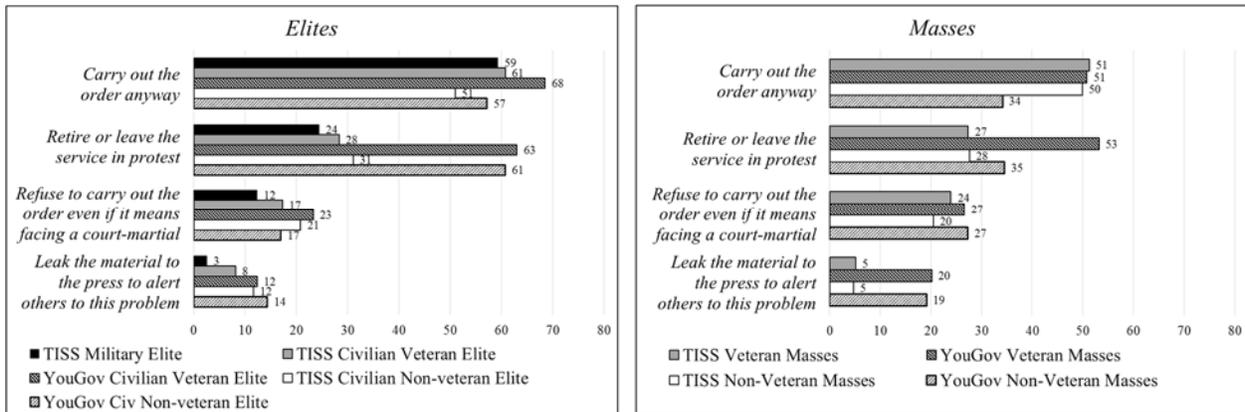


Figure 11: How Officers Should Respond to Unwise Orders

TISS Question Text: If a senior civilian Department of Defense leader asks a military officer to do something that the military officer believes is unwise, would it be appropriate for the officer to...

YouGov Question Text: (same as TISS)

Given its centrality to current debates, it is interesting to compare attitudes on the defense budget. We only have one comparison question, and the wording is not the same. However, the comparison is suggestive. In the TISS survey, 60% of both veterans and non-veterans in the mass public disagreed with cutting defense to increase education. By contrast, in the YouGov survey, there is a gap. A 40% plurality of veterans is in favor of *increasing* the defense budget, compared with 21% of non-veterans.

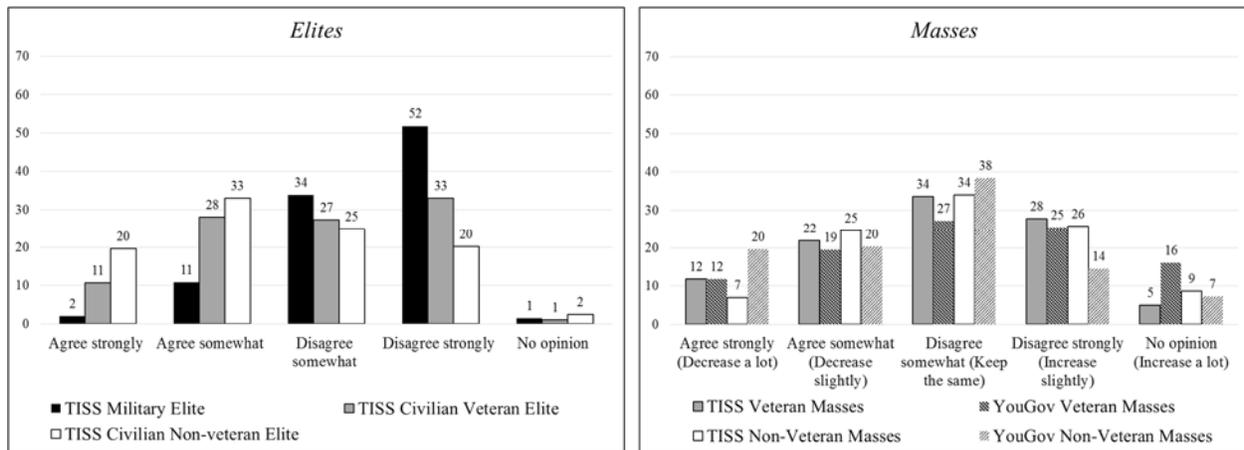


Figure 12: Changing the Federal Defense Budget

TISS Question Text: This question asks you to indicate your position on certain domestic issues: Reducing the defense budget in order to increase the federal education budget.

YouGov Question Text: Do you think the federal government should increase or decrease spending on [National Defense]? (Responses in parentheses.)

Finally, in both surveys, respondents appear to believe there is a civil-military gap. In the TISS survey, fewer than 10% of respondents in every category believed that a “military culture and way of life that is very different from the culture and way of life of those who are not in the military” was “not happening. Similarly, solid majorities in every YouGov category stated that the U.S. military “has different values than the rest of society.” The two surveys asked different questions about how to narrow it; but, because the questions were asked in the opposite way, we cannot do a direct comparison. Nevertheless, it is possible that there has been a shift in the “who should change” answer. Neither survey found strong support for the idea that the military should change to be more like society. In the more recent survey, however, the non-veteran mass public became far less likely to venture any opinion at all about whether the military should change its culture.

The perception of the gap should not be over-stated, though, since respondents in both surveys believed that civilians respected the military and the military respected civilians in roughly similar proportions. Among the masses, the percentage of veterans who believe the military gets less respect than it deserves has dropped slightly, from 66% to 59%, while the percentage among non-veterans dropped 13 points, from 60% to 47%. The percentage of elite respondents who claim that the military gets less respect than it deserves actually has grown, from 49% to 64% among veterans and from 40% to 50% among non-veterans. This fact is striking given the high level of respect afforded to the military in the survey.

D. What Might be Driving the Gap?

The main variants on the “Gap” thesis suggest that any gaps we see are due either to a lack of military experience or a lack of personal familiarity with others who have that experience. The argument is that military training, organization, and experience produce certain attitudes, either through habituation or through a better, more appropriate understanding of the issues at stake (e.g., in decisions about the use of force). There is some evidence here for both of those claims. There is an enormous drop from the 1999 survey to the more recent one in the number of people of all

groups reporting a family member in the service, and that drop is significantly greater for non-veteran groups than for veteran groups. It is important to note, however, that part of that drop comes necessarily from the fact that respondents to the TISS survey were reporting all family members who had ever served in uniform, whereas the YouGov respondents were reporting only those family members who had served since 1991.

There is also little evidence in the data to support the popular contention that elites are less likely than the mass public to have a personal connection to a veteran. Among elites, 17% of all respondents reported that they or a family member had served in the military since 1991, compared to 20% among the masses. However, 47% of elites report having “socialized” with someone in the military over the last three months, compared to only 35% of the general population. In both cases, veterans were much more likely to socialize with someone in the military than non-veterans were. More than 45% of mass veterans and 54% of elite veterans reported spending time with someone in the military, compared to 22% of non-veterans in the general population and 38% of elite non-veterans.

There does seem to be a significant decline in contact with military service-members in the workplace: in 1999, about half of both veteran and non-veteran elite groups and close to 90% of the mass public reported that they had some workplace contact with someone currently in the military, but by 2014, those numbers had dropped to between 4% and 15%. This is a striking drop, but we must take care not to over-claim its significance. Much of that drop is likely due to differences in the question wording, and it is important to note that both surveys asked about workplace contact with *current* military personnel, not veterans. In all cases, however, veterans were more likely than non-veterans to report workplace contact with military personnel, suggesting that the concentration phenomenon seen in the higher tendency of military families to produce volunteers also extends to post-service workplace selection (Segal and Segal 2004). So there is some evidence of declining familiarity, but it probably is not as drastic as some critics claim (e.g., Fallows 2015) or as this one question at first glance suggests. Nevertheless, all the numbers above are markedly less than the 62% of individuals who reported having a veteran in the family in the TISS sample and the 61% who did the same in the 2011 Pew survey. Absent a major expansion of the military in the future, demographic trends make the decline in the number of Americans with some kind of military connection inexorable.

Another piece of evidence indicating support for the familiarity gap argument is the surprisingly large increase in the number of “don’t know” and “no opinion” responses from non-veterans when asked about issues related to the military. Although Americans typically are willing to venture answers to survey questions even on topics with which they have little familiarity (Converse 1964), 25-30 % of the non-veteran masses consistently chose not to give an answer when the YouGov survey asked them a question about the military. Table 1 shows that this surprising unwillingness to answer questions about the military is strongly related to respondents’ social contact with those in uniform. All non-veteran respondents appear to be slightly less willing to offer opinions on military matters than civilians in the TISS study were, but YouGov respondents who had not interacted socially with someone in the military during the last 30 days were more than twice as likely to offer “no opinion” than those who had. A similar pattern holds for social contact with the military over the previous three months.

Table 1: Social Contact with the Military and Norms among Non-veteran Civilians

<i>Have you socialized with someone in the military or their spouse in the past 30 days?</i>	Yes	No
<i>Do you agree or disagree with [or have “no opinion” of] the following statements?</i>	<i>Percent responding “No Opinion:</i>	
An effective military depends on a very structured organization with a clear chain of command.	6%	22%
Military symbols - like uniforms and medals and military traditions - like ceremonies and parades are necessary to build morale, loyalty, and comradery in the military.	8%	23%
Even though women can serve in the military, the military should remain basically masculine, dominated by male values and characteristics.	11%	24%
The U.S. military has done a much better job of eliminating racial discrimination within the military than American society in general.	25%	39%
Even in a high tech era, people in the military have to have characteristics like strength, toughness, physical courage, and the willingness to make sacrifices.	4%	18%
The bonds and sense of loyalty that keep a military unit together under the stress of combat are fundamentally different than the bonds and loyalty that organizations try to develop in the business world.	11%	26%
Since military life is a young person's profession, the chance to retire with a good pension at a young age is very important in the military.	13%	24%
On most military bases there are company stores, childcare centers, and recreational facilities right on the base. It is very important to keep these things on military bases in order to keep a sense of identity in the military community.	11%	27%
Military leaders care more about the people under their command than leaders in the non-military world care about people under them.	23%	31%
	<i>AVERAGE</i>	<i>12% 26%</i>

The YouGov survey does not provide an explanation for why respondents who do not interact with members of the military would be so unwilling to answer questions about the military. One plausible explanation might be that non-veteran citizens know very little about the military, and know that they know very little. Americans have less direct contact with service members, but portrayals of the military in movies or on television are common. It might be that these depictions of the military do little to bridge the gap, and that they instead only highlight that military service has little to do with the lives of average Americans. It is interesting to note that, in the YouGov sample, only the non-veteran masses were less likely to think that military leaders shared the same

values as the American people. All other groups were more likely to believe that members of the military shared their values, but the non-veteran sub-sample moved from certainty to "no opinion." Similarly, when asked "do you think the U.S. military has different values than the rest of American society?" the number of non-veteran masses answering "no opinion" climbed considerably compared to TISS, while the number giving either a "yes" or a "no" both dropped significantly. Many non-veteran civilians in the general population appear to think that that they do not understand the military enough to answer, and they are not sure whether members of the military are like them or not. If this is the true explanation and current trends continue, the decreased contact between non-veteran civilians and increasingly smaller numbers of troops will only widen and deepen this lack of understanding.

It is tempting to conclude that any gaps we see between veterans and non-veterans are all due to this familiarity or experience gap, but the data imply that there may be other factors driving the differences. Most prominently, these gaps could be driven largely by partisanship. That was the conclusion one of us reached in earlier analysis (Golby 2011), and there are indications that that may be what this data is showing, as well. Because our sample sizes were too small to yield a sufficiently high degree of confidence, we offer this as a plausible alternative hypothesis rather than a firm finding. Yet, the evidence is suggestive. For example, in closer analysis of several of the questions, we find that if we control for partisanship, the veteran-non-veteran differences practically disappear – that is, veterans who are Democrats are more like Democrat non-veterans than they are like Republican veterans. Figure 13 and Figure 14 are illustrative of this pattern, showing civil-military and partisan differences on an additive scale of four questions related to the Powell Doctrine. Figure 13 shows that veterans and non-veterans do hold different views about how and when to use military force; both elite and mass veterans score higher on the scale than non-veterans. However, Figure 14 shows that there are not necessarily uniform military and civilian positions on issues and that partisan differences are often much larger than civil-military differences.

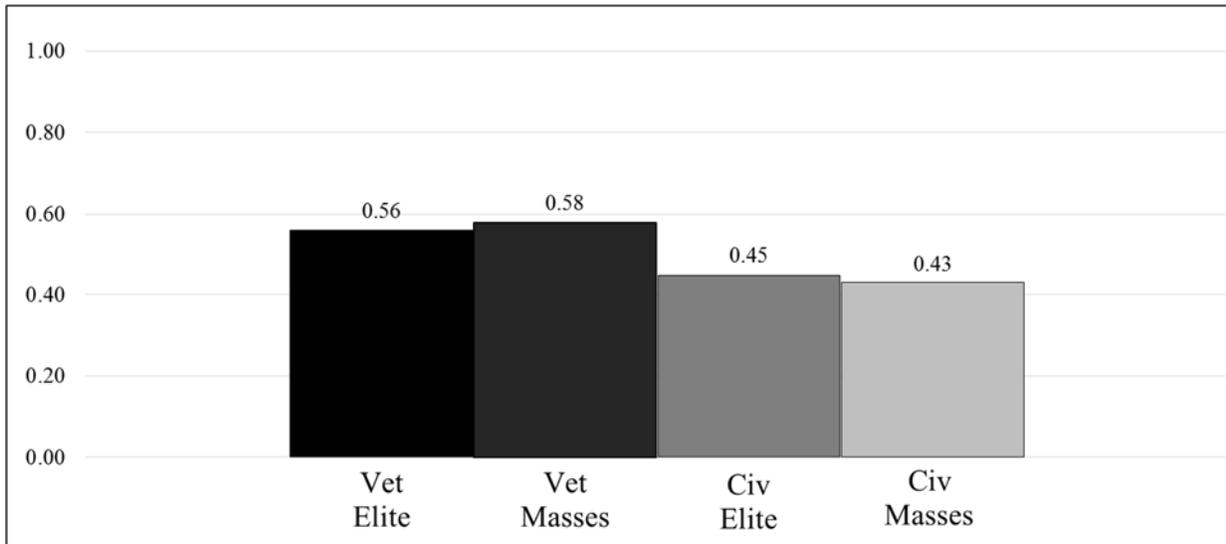


Figure 13: Mean Support on the Powell Doctrine Scale (by Civil-Military Category)

YouGov Question Text: a) Military force should be used only in pursuit of the goal of total victory; b) Use of force in foreign interventions should be applied quickly and massively; c) When force is used, military rather than political goals should determine its application; d) Public will not tolerate large numbers of U.S. casualties in military operations. (Additive scale runs from 0 to 1, with 1 signifying more support for the Powell Doctrine.)

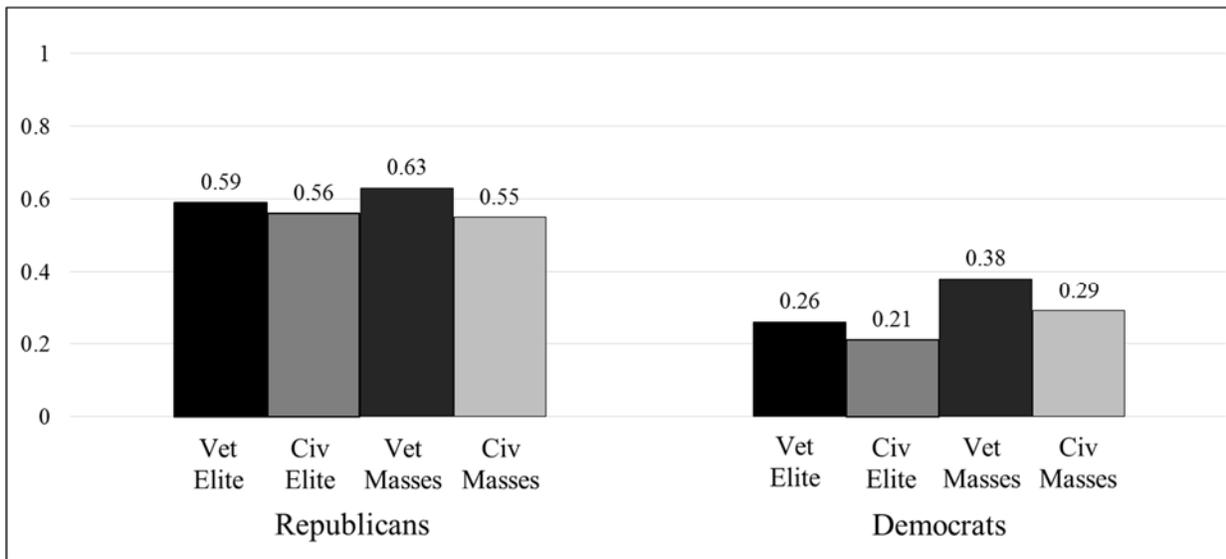


Figure 14: Mean Support on the Powell Doctrine Scale (by Civil-Military Category within Partisan Groups)

YouGov Question Text: a) Military force should be used only in pursuit of the goal of total victory; b) Use of force in foreign interventions should be applied quickly and massively; c) When force is used, military rather than political goals should determine its application; d) Public will not tolerate large numbers of U.S. casualties in military operations. (Additive scale runs from 0 to 1, with 1 signifying more support for the Powell Doctrine.)

runs from 0 to 1, with 1 signifying more support for the Powell Doctrine.)

This general pattern holds for opinions about the appropriate way to use force, and also shows up in opinions about whether people would want a child of theirs to join the military. This finding does not hold for every question – e.g., it does not explain the responses to questions about proper norms of civil-military relations (but on those questions the veteran-non-veteran difference itself shrank significantly). It is, however, a strong contender for explaining a great deal of the apparent divergence of opinions between veterans and non-veterans. Of course, finding that partisanship mediates the civil-military gap does not mean that the civil-military gap is nonexistent or irrelevant. Rather, it underscores the importance of partisan differences even inside the military, and in particular the propensity of the military to draw and retain more Republicans than Democrats in its ranks.

Moreover, it is highly likely that both of these processes – the declining level of contact and the increasing partisan divide – are happening at the same time. For example, Republican civilians in the general population are almost twice as likely as Democrats to report socializing with someone in the military in the last three months (33% vs. 16%). Among elites, the difference is smaller but still large (40% vs. 29%). Much of the partisanship difference may be due to differences in demographics (Urban 2010; Teigen 2007), which is related to the issue of military families being more likely to produce volunteers. The important policy questions then become: to what extent are any of these trends potential problems for policy-making at the top, for congressional oversight and lawmaking, for the quality and sustainability of the force, and for the maintenance of the support of the American people for the military establishment?

E. Policy Implications and Responses.

Perhaps one of our most striking overall conclusions from the new study is how many of the results resemble the ones we found 15 years ago despite the intervening experience of more than a decade of intense combat operations. We cannot say for certain whether this is a sign that the gap was unchanged in the interval, or whether the gap did change with 9/11 but then had returned to previous conditions by 2014. Regardless, some of the concerns and the remedies of that earlier study are still relevant today, while others may require a new approach.

Familiarity gap – the main concerns with a familiarity gap are that those who have no experience or connection to the military may not understand the logic or limits of the use of force. Consequently, those with no “skin in the game” might be unable to make knowledgeable cost-benefit calculations about the use of force, and are therefore prone to use force unwisely. Like the TISS study, the YouGov survey cannot answer the normative question about whether the use of force in a given case is appropriate or whether it is likely to succeed; as Feaver and Gelpi (2005) made clear, the data could at best only speak to attitude and frequency differences, not the specific wisdom or folly of different attitudes or frequencies. Moreover, although there is still some support in this data for the Feaver and Gelpi (2005) finding on a veteran/non-veteran gap in preferences over the use of force – and Groves, Gelpi and Feaver (2014) show that this pattern extends well past the 9/11 era - we are mindful of Golby’s (2011) argument that this effect is heavily mediated by partisanship rather than experience in uniform. Likewise, the YouGov data do not allow us to determine whether those with less personal contact with veterans are more likely to support the use of military force; the only indicator is that a large percentage of the population considers the sacrifices borne by the uniformed services to be “just part of being in the military.”⁵ That being said, the YouGov data suggest that large numbers of Americans still report having family, work, or social contact with both veterans and active duty military members. However, the

⁵ See supra note 4

majority of those contacts are almost certainly older veterans from the WWII, Korea, and Vietnam eras, and the trajectory of familiarity is on a steep decline. Given our finding that civilians who report no interaction with the military are less likely to even answer questions about the military, declining contact with the military potentially could become a cause for concern in the future. This indicates both a need for significantly more study on the potential effects of a familiarity gap, and initiatives geared toward mitigating the extent to which a small, volunteer military becomes isolated from its host society.

Partisanship gap – The earlier concern with an officer corps that self-identified as Republican was that a Democratic administration might have more difficulty trusting and being trusted by its top military leadership, and this could impede policy-making in dangerous ways. The YouGov survey cannot answer the question of whether this dynamic at the top does, in fact, happen, but it does demonstrate that the partisanship gap is persistent and showing no signs of moderation.

Deference and entitlement – we do perceive a troubling level of deference to the military on the side of the civilians, and feelings of entitlement on the side of the military. This increased sense of entitlement manifests itself most among veterans and civilians in the general public, with larger gaps on questions about respect for the military, spending on national defense, and deference to the military during war. While some deference to expertise and experience is appropriate, it is unhealthy for civilian policy-makers to feel like they cannot question military officers, and potentially even more unhealthy for the public to put more trust in the political judgments of its military officers than its elected officials. Moreover, because of the levels of public trust in the military, both parties have an incentive to use military officers as policy salesmen, further undermining the norm of an apolitical military. The United States benefits from a large pool of civilian and academic expertise on defense and security issues, and it is highly problematic for civil-military relations if the public identifies uniformed personnel as *uniquely* qualified and trustworthy to make policy judgments in those areas.

Professionalism – we found a significant deterioration in what are considered traditional norms of civil-military relations, including a tendency among officers to feel that they should resist orders they considered unwise, and potentially even utilize the separation of powers and the availability of the press as ways to undermine policies with which they disagreed. Civilian leaders' desire to obtain the public support of trusted senior military leaders also creates perverse incentives for senior officers to use the threat of public opposition or resignation to extract policy concessions from elected officials. While the authors emphasize that majorities of officers still support the traditional norms, the dissenting minorities are large and appear to be growing. This, added to the above concerns about partisanship and deference, may be grounds for concern about the civil-military relationship at the policy-making levels.

Recommendations:

First, institutions of professional military education (PME) need to place renewed emphasis on professional norms of civil-military, and in particular to re-establish the norm that military officers ought not to act as or even appear to be partisan figures. We grant that there is a reasonable debate to be had over the extent to which military officers are, should, or must be political actors since they are necessarily involved in the bureaucratic politics of policymaking. We are not recommending that that debate be silenced. However, we submit that there is a crucial distinction between being political and being partisan, and that the latter is undesirable, whatever the former may be.

Second, scholars, journalists, and the public must call out both politicians who hide behind military officers, and retired officers who use the public's respect of those in uniform to weigh in

on partisan debates. While there is no obvious policy solution to this problem, the development and promulgation of norms help rein it in.

Third, it is important not to exacerbate the otherwise natural tendency for the military to draw heavily from certain regions and demographics. It is an almost universal dynamic that parental work experience familiarizes children with that job and essentially does a significant portion of the recruiter's job for him. But accession into the military is very different from other professions. There is almost no lateral entry, and the military occupies a privileged place in the political discourse and in the competition for societal resources. Moreover, as we have seen in the past decade-plus, the differential burden on the military posed by the high operations tempo of recent wars versus that imposed on civilians can itself become a political problem for the country. The problem can be exacerbated by a temptation in the military to concentrate recruiting efforts on the most promising demographics. One way to address this issue is to ensure that recruiting staff are sent to currently "underserved" areas, such as large cities. At the same time, it would be necessary to change recruiters' incentive structures: quality ought to be emphasized over quantity.

Another solution that has been proposed is to reintroduce some form of universal (or near universal) military service via a draft, in the belief that such will "force" the elites to have more "skin in the game," thus producing more cautious foreign policy. Proponents of compulsory service also claim it will ensure that most Americans either serve in uniform or know someone who has. We view compulsory military service as a cure that is worse than the disease, for the following reasons. First, we note that the current all-volunteer force is actually more representative in many ways than the draft force was at any time in the country's history except during World War II (Segal and Segal 2004, esp. 24f., 37). Second, there is very little evidence in the scholarly literature to indicate that having any form of conscription makes a country less likely to use its military forces (Pickering 2011). Third, the expense of such a solution – even were it deemed constitutional – would be astronomical. The U.S. military currently accesses a little over 100,000 people per year (including all active, reserve, and National Guard components);⁶ the cohort in the United States reaching age 18 every year is more than 4 million.⁷ Even assuming that large numbers would be disqualified on grounds of conscience or disability, that is still millions of people who would have to be clothed, fed, housed, trained, and paid some kind of stipend every year. A draft lottery targeting only part of the population obviously would be less costly, but – the smaller the drafted force became – the less it would address the issue of the civil-military gap. Furthermore, the effects of this on the deployability and capability of the U.S. forces would likely be devastating. As a country, we have come to expect a level of military proficiency that minimizes casualties – ours and innocent civilians' – that are only achievable with the highly professionalized force we have today. No draft army could fight to the standards the country and the international community have come to demand of the All-Volunteer Force. We agree that there are some grounds for concern in the trends identified above, and that some of those trends are due to a declining veteran population, but that veteran bulge was due to large-scale mobilization in the mid-20th century, not to a draft, as such. The vast majority of the United States' history has been characterized by a military that constituted less than 1% of the population (Segal and Segal 2004, fig.1), and none of these problems are new.

⁶ DoD Release NR 073-13, 16 December 2013; <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=16429>

⁷ US Census table: PEPSYASEX Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013; http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP_2013_PEPSYASEX&prodType=table

A peacetime draft is neither politically feasible today nor is it the norm in American history. However, fighting two long ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan while relying solely on volunteers is also unique in American history. The shift to the Total Force concept following the Vietnam War was designed in part to make it difficult for political leaders to use the military for a prolonged conflict without also expending the political capital to mobilize the country in support of the war. The designers believed that the draft had shielded the political leadership from the blowback that would have occurred if they had had to mobilize the Reserves (which came from an older cohort with greater political clout). The Total Force “succeeded” in the sense of reducing the need for a supplemental wartime draft and obliging leaders to mobilize the Guard and Reserves during these conflicts. But in so doing, it required the Guard and Reserves to mobilize on a sustained basis in a way that no one expected. And, as renewed debates about the draft show, the mobilization of the Guard and Reserve did not settle the underlying questions about the degree of political and societal support for the conflicts. Arguably, this reliance made the U.S. military extremely effective tactically and operationally, but it also may have contributed to the growing sense of entitlement among those who served. While the benefits of a supplemental wartime draft may not outweigh its costs in terms of the exceptional competence of the AVF, now is the time to debate how to mobilize the U.S. military and the population to face prolonged conflicts in the future.

F. Conclusion.

This review has just scratched the surface of the YouGov survey, but it suffices to demonstrate the richness of the data and the potential insights for civil-military relations. Far more research is needed into both what factors are causing these trends and what effects the trends have on policy-making, civil-military relations, and national security as a whole. Here, we have noted that some veteran-non-veteran divisions are growing, while others have practically disappeared; some indicate problems for American civil-military relations, and others may be harmless; but, most importantly, that the issues involved cannot be reduced to the simplistic claim that the All-Volunteer Force is dangerously isolated from American society. There are some ways in which the All-Volunteer Force is demographically and culturally similar to society, others in which, for appropriate functional reasons, it is different, and still others where its differences may be due simply to the fact that this profession, like many others, tends to draw people of a certain profile. While it is always appropriate for a society to have lively discussions of the relationship between citizenship and military service, and of the role of the expert in policy-making, it is crucial that those debates recognize the complexity of the forces at work and the trade-offs involved. The YouGov survey has given us the first opportunity since the landmark TISS study to see how more than ten years of war have affected the relationship between the American people and their military, and we find that the subject is just as important to national security and defense policy today as it was fifteen years ago.

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Members of the military must learn to connect with American civilians

By John F. Kirby, Published: March 27

Rear Adm. John F. Kirby is the U.S. Navy's chief of information. This article is adapted from commencement remarks given at the Naval War College last month.

In more than 10 years of war, we in the military have gone to great expense and trouble to listen to the concerns of foreign peoples and cultures. We have learned Dari and Arabic and Pashto. We have sat cross-legged in shura and tribal councils. And yet I worry that we do not pay our fellow Americans the same courtesy.

It's time that we do a better job understanding and relating to the people we serve.

We do not talk with them. Too often, we talk at them. We are the guest speakers, the first-pitch-throwers, the grand marshals. We show them the power of our capabilities through air shows, port visits and other demonstrations. This outreach is important, but it isn't always a two-way street. And it doesn't improve our understanding of the society we defend.

We tend to focus on the fact that, because so few Americans serve in uniform — something like 1 percent — they don't understand us. There's some truth to that. But is it solely their fault?

We are, after all, volunteers in a proportionally small military. Americans can choose to serve or not. Not everyone in the world has that option. Even among those who want to serve, there are only so many qualified to join our ranks. And those ranks are not likely to expand in this time of fiscal austerity.

Being honest with ourselves, we would admit that we have been well-resourced and fully supported by the home front. From lifesaving force-protection gear to counter-IED technology to the finest in unmanned systems and much more, the American people have — through their elected representatives — given us the tools we've needed to fight two wars.

They've also helped us find jobs when we come home. They've given us world-class education benefits. And they've helped ensure that returning troops get the physical and mental health care they richly deserve. Americans have built homes for wounded warriors and wrapped their arms around the families of our fallen. They have thanked us in airports, bus stations and parades.

They may not know us. But they certainly support us.

Of course, more can always be done to care for our troops and their families. A recent government report

says we lose a veteran to suicide nearly every hour of every day. While veterans represent less than 9 percent of the population, they are about 15 percent of the homeless. Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are more likely to report a traumatic brain injury and to have received mental health treatment than veterans of other wars — treatment that must continue without the stigma it carries.

According to some estimates, more than 1.5 million active-duty, reserve and National Guard troops will transition to civilian life in the next five years. We must continue to ensure that Americans are ready and willing to help them make that transition.

We haven't been neglected or forgotten. American civilians are simply confronted by problems other than war, problems we might have difficulty understanding from the relative permanence of our profession. They are not losing life and limb on the battlefield, but they are losing their jobs, their homes, their livelihoods. They can be forgiven for being distracted and even a little tired of war.

I've been a spokesman throughout these wars, not a soldier. It's been my job to explain military strategy and operations to people far and wide. I believe that many Americans don't try harder to know us because they are so confident in our abilities. Better we should belong to a society that trusts us and winces at war than one that lusts for it.

We should remember that we work for them. We come from them. And so shall we return. When someone thanks me for my service, I always thank them for their support.

I also try to remember that, to the degree there is a civilian-military gap in this country, all of us in uniform are responsible for closing it.

We can start by being better listeners — by finding out what Americans think, what they need and the problems they face. It's fine to give speeches and take questions. But we shouldn't be afraid to ask our own questions. If we can do that on an Afghan rug, surely we can do it on Main Street.

Second, we would do well to better understand U.S. politics and politicians. I'm not suggesting we suddenly declare for one party or another. The apolitical nature of the military is vital to the health of our republic. We can never surrender that independence.

But I have worked hard to learn about our democratic system so as to understand how and why policies are made. I've also tried to develop healthy relationships on Capitol Hill and with colleagues in other federal agencies. These are, after all, the decisions and decision-makers that drive our budgets, strategies and operations. We ignore them at our peril.

I have been struck in just the past couple of years, indeed the past few months, by how some military officers dismiss Washington's bitter partisanship as something beneath them. It's not. Political discourse may appear messy, even unseemly. But it is the very business of governing. And if the military has any hope of properly advising our civilian masters, we must take the time to understand them and even their most acrimonious arguments.

While he firmly believed that the military should play no role in political matters, my former boss, Adm. Mike Mullen, recognized that we could not be wholly divorced from them. Though he had developed solid relationships on the Hill, he was surprised early in his chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that each week he would be at the White House so often, and for so long, that he and the chiefs needed to discuss and understand political factors as much as operational ones. He refused, of course, to make political decisions or give political advice.

“My job is to tell them what they need to hear,” he told me, “but I also have to listen to what they need to say.”

Listening to what people need to say extends to other aspects of communication as well. It troubles me to see military doctrine, plans and operational memoranda that refer to public communication as some sort of weapon that can be fired downrange. It is not. Rather, it is an obligation to explain ourselves, to put into context what we are doing and why.

We live in a participatory culture, a post-audience world. People don’t just want access to information anymore. They want access to conversation. They want to be heard.

To take part in that conversation and guide it, at times, requires a humility that we don’t always possess. It requires us to listen as well as speak, to solicit as well as inform, to admit our shortcomings and accept sometimes brutally frank feedback.

I know my credibility — and that of the Navy — is enhanced when I join a discussion rather than merely lead it. That can be a hard thing for those of us in uniform to do, to let go of leadership a little. But letting go means getting ahead. It gives us a better sense of the mood and attitude in which our words and actions land. It helps us communicate more comfortably across regions, dialects and generations.

Finally, we shouldn’t become too enamored — as I fear many commanders are — of our ability to speak directly to people through technology. There is a place for social media, of course, but there is no better validation or check of our decisions than an independent press. Some of the best relationships we can form are with members of the news media — who, by the way, feel every bit as certain that they, too, perform a valuable public service. They’re right about that.

We are taught almost from the beginning of our careers that military service is something special, apart from other forms of citizenship. We hold ourselves to higher standards of conduct. We tell ourselves that not everyone is good enough to join us. All this is true.

But it’s foolish to believe we are better than the society we protect. To believe that only further separates us from the rest of America. Not everything we do is or should be accessible to the public. But as public servants, answerable to the taxpayers, we as individuals absolutely ought to be.

We need to better understand the American people and the leaders they elect, to build relationships with those outside our Spartan lives. We need to talk a little less and listen a whole lot more. It’s time for this 1 percent to say thanks to the 99 percent. They deserve it.

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Military officers expect changes in the top civilian leadership in the executive branch because of presidential elections, retirements, choices by the officials themselves or their bosses, and the like. Change is constant in the most senior uniformed ranks, also: because a position is limited in length of time by law or by tradition, by retirements, and by the choices of top civilian officials. Change in the Congress can also occur: through elections, a new majority party, retirements, rotation to new committee assignments, or other reasons.

However in a single year, 2015-2016, all seven members of the Joint Chiefs have turned over—an unusually large number of changes for so short a period of time. The new chiefs (and those who take over their previous positions) serve in the last year-plus of an outgoing administration and for some time after, for a new president and administration. Likewise there may be major changes in Congress in the coming year also.

Are there special civil-military relations issues involved in a mass turnover of this kind? What might those be? Are there particular challenges in serving an outgoing, and then an incoming administration, and an old and new congress? What in particular should senior officers be sensitive to in situations of this kind?

The New Chiefs in Town

Lt. Gen. David Barno, USA (Ret) and Dr. Nora Bensahel

June 30, 2015

On July 9, the Senate Armed Services Committee will hold a confirmation hearing for General Joseph Dunford, who has been nominated to be the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dunford's hearing should not be contentious, but it will mark the beginning of a little-noticed but incredibly significant change: the impending and near-total departure of the nation's senior military team.

Between now and the end of September, five of the seven four-star service and joint chiefs will step down from their positions and be replaced by new leaders. The chiefs of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps will exit in September along with both the chairman and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. By the same time next year, the chiefs of the Air Force and National Guard Bureau will depart as well, and the nation's entire four-star military leadership in Washington will be made up of entirely new faces.

This will be the first time in 32 years that all of the chiefs will have departed within a 12-month period, and only the fourth time since the Department of Defense was founded in 1947.* Six of the seven departing chiefs will have been at the helm of their respective organizations for four years. (Dunford is the exception that proves the rule: He served for less than a year as commandant of the Marine Corps before being nominated to be the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.) Since most service chiefs serve four-year terms, and most chairmen and vice chairmen serve two consecutive two-year terms, these new chiefs will likely constitute the nation's top military team through the summer of 2019 — about 2 1/2 years into the next presidential administration. The decisions they make during their tenures will shape the nation's military for many years to come.

The demands facing this new team will be markedly different from those that faced the past four sets of chiefs, dating back to 2001. By necessity, the first three sets of those chiefs focused on fighting large, long, and complex land wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The current chiefs have been transitional leaders in many ways, dealing with the muddled ends of these major wars while also beginning to wrestle with today's unexpected new challenges from the rise of the so-called Islamic State to a resurgent Russia. By contrast, the incoming chiefs will start their terms in a new strategic era that has moved beyond the 9/11 wars. They will need a fresh approach that is much more focused on the future, while continuing to deal with the ever-changing crises of today.

The new chiefs will have to address three main challenges, which will pose competing demands on their time, energy, and resources.

First, they will face the challenge of today's world and today's fights. These include battling the Islamic State in Iraq, Syria, and the broader Middle East; contending with Russian aggression in Eastern Europe; continuing the embattled drawdown in Afghanistan; and dealing with increased Chinese assertiveness in the Western Pacific. The new chiefs will also have to manage a wider set of lesser challenges as well as any unforeseen crises that erupt. In many cases, cyber warfare and threats from non-state actors will be greater concerns than traditional interstate violence.

The next chiefs will have to deal with these evolving global disputes while maintaining readiness during the ongoing drawdown. Having forces ready to successfully prevail in today's fights will be their primary daily concern, as it has been for the chiefs before them. Even a shrinking military with tight budgets must remain ready to respond not only to ongoing threats such as the Islamic State, but also to react quickly and decisively to unexpected crises such as a North Korean attack, a naval confrontation in the Western Pacific, or a major terrorist incident. The chiefs will have to find ways to carve out unnecessary overhead and non-combat functions to focus scarce dollars on funding flying hours, steaming days, and live-fire training.

They will also face significant budget constraints that will require very difficult strategic choices. The defense budget — already constrained by the 10-year budget caps imposed by the 2011 Budget Control Act — is now being consumed by costs that contribute little to actual military capabilities. Military buying power is shrinking, largely driven by the ever-escalating costs of military pay, benefits, and healthcare. Overhead from excess military bases, large civilian and military staffs, and waste in failed weapons procurement have also deeply eroded available dollars for both force structure and readiness. The new chiefs will have to work with Congress to mitigate if not reverse these damaging trends. Wringing the most military capability out of tighter budgets will also require rethinking roles and missions — especially the relationship between active and reserve forces.

Second, the new chiefs will have to shape the force for the wars of tomorrow. Their decisions about personnel, acquisitions, and force structure will set the foundations for what kind of military the United States fields for decades to come.

They must ensure that the military remains able to recruit and retain America's best and brightest into the all-volunteer force. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter's Force of the Future initiative promises significant — perhaps even revolutionary — changes in the military personnel system, and the new chiefs will be responsible for successfully implementing those changes. They will also need to think more broadly about who can serve in the military and whether all members of each service should have to meet the same requirements. Cyber warriors, for example, may not need the same entry-level training or physical attributes as infantrymen.

The new chiefs will make crucial acquisition decisions under tight budget constraints that will determine much of America's military capabilities 10, 20, and even 30 years from now. Before making decisions about individual weapons systems, they must first determine the best strategic investments for the force as a whole — such as finding the right balance among future land, air and sea power capabilities; how much to invest in advancing space and cyber; and how deeply to back unproven but potentially revolutionary technologies to win the wars of the future.

The decisions of the new chiefs about force structure will shape future U.S. military capabilities just as much, if not more than, their acquisition decisions. These decisions will determine what kind of military the United States will field: how many and what types of ships, the number of tank battalions or infantry brigades, and the size and number of fighter, bomber and transport squadrons, for example. These choices are ultimately all about tradeoffs, with each service inevitably arguing for a greater share of the defense budget pie. These arguments are informed by how each service views the nature of future war and levels of risk. The next chiefs will have to reach consensus on the most fundamental questions: What kind of wars should the United States be most prepared to wage, with what type of capabilities, and where can the nation take acceptable risk?

Third, the new chiefs will need to bridge the civil-military divide. One of their foremost roles and responsibilities is to communicate with and advise their civilian leaders by explaining complex military options and levels of risk clearly and effectively. To do so, the new chiefs — especially the chairman — will have to establish trust with civilian elected leaders on the Hill and in the White House, and with the senior members of the national security policymaking team. Building trust and confidence between those who hail from the vastly different galaxies from which we draw our civilian and military leaders is no small task. And the next chiefs will have to navigate that complex path through two different administrations and three different U.S. Congresses.

The chiefs will also have to take on the challenge of re-connecting the U.S. military and the American people after over 15 years of war. Americans largely lionize and revere their military today, but that supportive connection between soldier and citizen may fade with the headlines. Moreover, the U.S. military may risk looking less and less like the population it serves — more rural, white, conservative, and male than the general population. The new chiefs need ensure the nation and its military do not grow too far apart, an outcome that would be deeply unhealthy for both. (We will discuss this issue of civil-military relations at greater length in our column next month.)

The new chiefs are coming to town at a major strategic juncture for the United States. The world is rapidly changing, and the power of the United States is increasingly being challenged around the world. Yet they must exhibit far-sighted leadership while simultaneously addressing today's challenges. They must quickly begin to take steps to re-shape today's combat-experienced military toward a different future — one marked by fast-moving global change, exploding technology, and new threats. At the same time, they must rapidly become trusted advisors to the nation's civilian leadership by clearly imparting sound military judgment about risk and options while building confidence in their apolitical role. The next chiefs have a daunting set of tasks, and their decisions will shape the U.S. military, for better or worse, for decades to come.

* The previous three times were June 29, 1974 – July 1, 1975; June 21, 1978 – July 1, 1979; and June 18, 1982 – July 1, 1983. At those times, however, there were only five members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the position of vice chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff was not established until the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, and the chief of the National Guard Bureau became a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a result of the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act.

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Congress' national security brain drain

The turnover could be the highest since the 2010 midterm elections.

By Connor O'Brien



Perhaps over a dozen key lawmakers could be gone by the time a new president is sworn in January — including McCain and his hawkish ally Sen. Kelly Ayotte. | Getty

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Congress's national security leadership is facing its biggest shakeup in years as some of its longest-serving and most influential members retire, seek other offices or risk losing their seats in tough reelections.

The potential brain drain on key House and Senate oversight panels, mostly among GOP lawmakers like Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), comes as conflicts in hot spots like Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan and a series of terrorist attacks heighten worries about threats from abroad. It's also happening at a time when one of the biggest anxieties about Republican standard-bearer Donald Trump is his lack of experience in national defense.

The sweep, which would also impact some prominent Democrats, is already underway with the surprising primary loss Tuesday of Rep. Randy Forbes of Virginia, one of the highest-ranking Republicans on the Armed Services Committee. But perhaps over a dozen key lawmakers could be gone by the time a new president is sworn in January — including McCain and his hawkish ally Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), who are both fighting for their political lives, as well as nine members on the influential House panel who have decided to run for the Senate or retire.

The turnover could be the highest since the 2010 midterm elections, when four House Armed Services lawmakers retired or ran for other offices and 11 were defeated in their bids for reelection. In that

election, Republicans regained a majority in the House while the Senate ranks were thinned amid multiple retirements and the deaths of two congressional heavyweights, Democrats Robert Byrd and Ted Kennedy.

"There is a lot of turnover," said House Armed Services Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), who was first elected in 1994. "And I do get concerned how few people are still here who were here on 9/11 and remember that that can happen, out of the blue on a clear day."

The practical result of the churn, defense experts say, is a loss of institutional knowledge on the committees responsible for crafting nearly the only legislation that reliably passes Congress each year: the National Defense Authorization Act. It also raises questions about how those defense committees, with newly minted rank-and-file members replacing some seasoned legislators, will conduct oversight and negotiate with the new administration and Pentagon leadership.

"The sad truth is that Congress has already hemorrhaged generations' worth of national security thought leaders and party stalwarts who could shape the big debates, conduct robust oversight of the Pentagon and generate meaningful legislation and policy changes that transcend home districts or interests," said Mackenzie Eaglen, a defense analyst at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute.

Indeed, the tenure of an average Senate Armed Services member has plummeted from eleven and a half years of service in the chamber in 2009 to six and a half years, according to a POLITICO analysis of the committee rosters. The shift reflects the loss of a slew of congressional heavyweights on the panel, including former chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Independent Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, and Kennedy and Byrd — who died in office in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

The congressional tenure of an average member of the House Armed Service Committee, meanwhile, is seven years as of 2015, about the same as 2009, though that level of institutional experience on the committee rose after falling to just over six years in each of the last two congresses.

Forbes, who lost his primary Tuesday in a reconfigured district, is the most high profile national security departure so far this election season. The Virginian is the third most-senior House Armed Services Republican, and as chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee has been a critic of the Obama administration's shipbuilding plans, arguing instead for a major buildup to a 350-ship Navy.

Another House Republican, Rep. Joe Heck of Nevada, who as chair of the personnel subcommittee helped craft overhauls of the military's retirement and health systems as chairman of the personnel subcommittee, but has elected to pursue the Senate seat being vacated by Minority Leader Harry Reid. The panel's second-ranking Democrat, Loretta Sanchez of California, is also giving up her spot on the committee to run for the Senate.

Other retirees include Reps. Jeff Miller of Florida and John Kline of Minnesota — the fourth and ninth most senior Armed Services Republicans — as well as Rep. Chris Gibson (R-N.Y.), the architect of the committee's plan to halt the drawdown in size of the Army and Marine Corps.

"I think it's too early to make a firm call, but the HASC could lose a great deal of expertise on both sides of the aisle," said Justin Johnson, a former aide to multiple House Armed Services Republicans who is now with the Heritage Foundation.

And while no members of the Senate Armed Services Committee are retiring this year, two prominent Republicans on the committee — chairman McCain and Ayotte — face tough reelection battles. Ayotte, who chairs the panel's Readiness Subcommittee, has most notably been a vocal critic of the White House's

push to close the terrorist detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. First elected in 2010, the New Hampshire Republican has argued the Obama administration is rushing to empty the prison and authored provisions in the NDAA to slow the transfers.

McCain, meanwhile, has used his two years wielding the Senate Armed Services gavel to push controversial changes to the Pentagon's bureaucracy, particularly the department's weapons acquisitions process. Should he lose reelection, Heritage's Johnson noted that the next Republican in line, Oklahoma Sen. Jim Inhofe, "certainly has different priorities" from McCain.

Eaglen argued that, over time, Senate turnover has a deeper impact.

"Since it is the more deliberative body, it has the time ... and staff and resources to take a longer view on major change," Eaglen said. "The Senate typically provides continuity across Congresses to carry over undone work and take the time to get it right."

Mieke Eoyang, a former House Armed Services staffer and Kennedy aide now with Third Way, said the turnover results in members who advance in seniority without learning "the practice of moving issues forward."

"It certainly will be a loss of process knowledge," Eoyang said.

And while the turnover from the past several election cycles has reduced the number of seasoned legislators on the committee, what matters, lawmakers and experts say, is who replaces those departing members.

"The good news is that the HASC has a lot of rising national security stars, both at the mid and junior levels," Johnson added. "These more junior members lack the legislative experience, but many of them have great national security perspectives."

"It's the nature of life, in all aspects of it," House Armed Services ranking Democrat Adam Smith said of the churn. "And I think we have plenty of capable members further down the rows there that are going to fill those gaps quite nicely."

The Washington state Democrat and Thornberry said junior and mid-level members have already taken leadership roles on certain issues. That talent, Smith said, includes Democrats Marc Veasey of Texas and Seth Moulton of Massachusetts as well as Republicans Martha McSally of Arizona and Jackie Walorski of Indiana.

Newer members, Thornberry argued, have also brought outside experience that has proved helpful to the committee, even if it's not legislative experience.

"So you lose some of the institutional 'how Congress works,' but you've also picked up members with operational experience as a Marine on the ground in Iraq or a pilot over Afghanistan," Thornberry said.

"And that adds a lot too. So it's not all a negative," he added.

For decades, retired senior officers have participated in public in national security affairs, either as commentators in the media, as authors of articles and books, in testimony before Congress, and in other venues. However direct participation in partisan politics by retired generals and admirals is a relatively recent phenomenon, begun most visibly with the endorsement of Bill Clinton by the recently retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, ADM William Crowe, and several other retired flags, in 1992. Since then more and more have endorsed presidential candidates to the point where over 500 endorsed Mitt Romney in 2012. Beginning in 1996, retired flags also began speaking at the party nominating conventions, most recently when retired army LTG Michael Flynn and retired Marine GEN John Allen.

Scholars of civil-military relations and many retired flags, the overwhelming majority of which have not engaged in such partisan activity, worry that endorsements erode the trust of political leaders and the public in the military profession. In a letter to *The Washington Post* and subsequent essay, retired Chairman Martin Dempsey makes these points. In anticipation of disagreement, GEN Dempsey differentiated retired flags opining to the public on areas of their expertise, or running for office themselves, with using their rank to make a personal endorsement for a presidential candidate. He also agreed that retired flags have the right to speak up. Thus a longstanding discussion about politicization and participation in national debate burst again into public view.

These readings raise the issue of whether there are limits or unspoken norms for public involvement in politics and national security by retired flag officers. Certainly they have the right to make their views known; some would say even the obligation. Are there implications for civil-military relations? Does testimony, such as that of retired LTG Flynn, affect the ability of active duty military leaders to serve their civilian superiors? If so, in what way? How do you think political leaders view such participation and endorsements in presidential campaigns? Do you think there is some “waiting period” after retirement for participation? Why or why not? If so, how long should it be? What is your view of the benefits and dangers of retired flag officers participating in presidential campaigns, partisan politics, and national policy more generally?

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/19/out-of-uniform-and-into-the-political-fray/>

Out of Uniform and Into the Political Fray

Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn retired and immediately began bashing the administration. Has he crossed a line?

By Seán D. Naylor

Seán D. Naylor is the intelligence and counterterrorism senior staff writer for Foreign Policy. He previously spent 23 years at Army Times, where his principal beat was special

operations forces. He is the author of Not A Good Day To Die – The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda and the forthcoming Relentless Strike – The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command.

June 19, 2015



The witness at the June 10 House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing was tossing the equivalent of red meat to his Republican questioners, who were practically slaving in gratitude.

President Barack Obama’s plan to impose “snapback sanctions” should Iran violate a nuclear deal? “Wishful thinking.”

The awkwardness of having U.S. trainers and Iranian forces both in Iraq helping to counter a common enemy? “We have allowed this thing to get so out of kilter.”

The president’s June 8 remark that “we don’t yet have a complete strategy” for training Iraqi forces to combat the Islamic State? “I was stunned by his comments,” the witness said. “Stunned.”

But the wiry, sharp-featured man giving the representatives what they wanted and then some was no pundit from a right-leaning think tank, nor was he an alumnus of former President George W. Bush’s administration. No, the man in the gray suit sounding the alarm over the current administration’s approach to the Middle East was none other than Obama’s most recent director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn.

Since taking off his uniform last August, Flynn, 56, has been in the vanguard of those criticizing the president’s policies in the Middle East, speaking out at venues ranging from congressional hearings and trade association banquets to appearances on Fox News, CNN, Sky News Arabia, and Japanese television, targeting the Iranian nuclear deal, the weakness of the U.S. response to the Islamic State, and the Obama administration’s refusal to call America’s enemies in the Middle East “Islamic militants.” Flynn is hardly

the first retired senior officer to criticize a sitting president's policies, but in the post-9/11 era, no one else has combined Flynn's rank and high-profile position at retirement, and the speed — once out of uniform — with which he began lambasting the policies of the administration he had just been serving.

Flynn, however, is unabashed about speaking out.

"I'm not going to be a general that just fades away," he told Foreign Policy. The career intelligence officer said he was concerned that his children and grandchildren would have to live with the consequences of mistakes being made today: "I feel like I have a responsibility not only to myself, but I feel like I have a responsibility to my family, and that to me is probably the most important thing."

Flynn is particularly worried that the ties that bind the U.S. government to its people, and the United States to its allies, were fraying. "The people in the United States have lost respect and confidence in their government to be able to solve the problems that we face now and in the future," he said. "That's not a good place to be." Meanwhile, he has repeatedly criticized the administration's response to the rise of the Islamic State.

"In the military we say, 'Fight the enemy, and not the plan,'" he said. "It feels like we're fighting a plan that's not working, instead of fighting the actual threat that we're facing. If your plan's not working, it's probably because you're not understanding who the enemy is."

The role Flynn has taken on may be unusual for a recently retired three-star general, but it is not out of character, according to an intelligence officer who has worked with him in the past. "Flynn has always spoken his mind," the intelligence officer said. "It's a form of moral courage that he does speak up — and always has throughout his career — when he thinks mistakes are going to be made." Nonetheless, the path Flynn has chosen is fraught with risk, said the intelligence officer who has worked with him. "It's a dangerous road to walk," the officer said. "You want people who have the experience of prosecuting the nation's wars to pipe up when they think the country is making a wrong turn or a misstep, but you want [the criticism] to be couched in diplomatic and thoughtful language."

An even bigger concern is that Flynn could come to be seen as politicizing the military's officer corps and blurring — or erasing — the line separating senior military generals from partisan politics. Flynn is retired, but that may be lost on those who hear his blistering critiques and believe he is still talking as a member of the Army's elite. The two most recent chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — retired Adm. Mike Mullen and his successor, Gen. Martin Dempsey — have each spoken of their unease with the concept of retired officers engaging in partisan politics. When a group of former military and intelligence personnel criticized Obama in 2012 for, among other things, taking what they perceived as too much credit for the killing of Osama bin Laden, Dempsey said their actions were "not useful."

Peter Feaver, an expert on civil-military relations at Duke (and an FP contributor), said anyone in Flynn's position leaves himself vulnerable to a charge of partisanship, or, at

least, behaving inappropriately by appearing to turn on the administration publicly and so quickly after retiring. “Retired military officials enjoy a privileged position in American society in part because they are viewed as professionals who have not been politicized,” he said, noting that Flynn has appeared careful to avoid ad hominem attacks and instead focus on policy critiques. Still, Feaver said, Flynn’s remark about being “stunned” by Obama’s comments meant he was “getting close to the chalk line.”

* * *

Flynn received his commission in 1981 after attending the University of Rhode Island, a college in his home state. The first two decades of his Army career followed a fairly standard path for an intelligence officer, with stops at Fort Huachuca, Arizona; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. But in 2004 he was assigned as the director of intelligence of the Joint Special Operations Command, the secretive headquarters that then-Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal was in the process of revamping to take on al Qaeda in Iraq. With Flynn playing a key role, JSOC and the special mission units at its heart (principally the Army’s Delta Force and the Navy’s SEAL Team 6) learned to rapidly process and share intelligence materials gathered on assaults, enabling the command’s strike forces in Iraq to mount several raids a night, each based on intelligence gathered from the previous one.

In 2007, Flynn left JSOC to spend a year as the U.S. Central Command’s director of intelligence, before moving to the same position on the Joint Staff. McChrystal was director of the Joint Staff at the time, and when he became commander of the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan in the summer of 2009, he arranged for Flynn to join him in Kabul as his intelligence director. It was while stationed in Afghanistan that Flynn first gained a public profile by authoring (with Marine Capt. Matt Pottinger and senior DIA civilian Paul Batchelor) a paper titled “Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan,” which was published by the Center for a New American Security, a Washington, D.C., think tank. The paper raised eyebrows inside and outside of the armed forces because of its lacerating critique of the military’s intelligence gathering methods in Afghanistan, which the authors bluntly derided as “unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which U.S. and allied forces operate and the people they seek to persuade.”

After Obama fired McChrystal for his staff’s indiscreet comments to a *Rolling Stone* reporter, Flynn spent 18 months in staff positions in Washington before taking the reins at the Defense Intelligence Agency in July 2012, continuing a career that had given him almost unparalleled access to the intelligence regarding the United States’ post-9/11 challenges, particularly in the Middle East.

The assignment at the DIA, whose mission is to produce intelligence for senior military leaders, would eventually mark the end of Flynn’s career. He ruffled feathers in the organization by trying to reshape it for the wars of the 21st century, while also incurring the wrath of the Obama administration for making public statements that had not been fully vetted, according to a Defense Department official who works closely with the DIA and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The official pointed in particular

to Flynn's presentation of the DIA's "annual threat assessment" to the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2014 that predicted the Islamic State would probably "attempt to take territory in Iraq and Syria to exhibit its strength in 2014, as demonstrated recently in Ramadi and Fallujah, and [by] the group's ability to concurrently maintain safe havens in Syria." This forecast would, of course, prove true, but it clashed noticeably with Obama's description the previous month of the Islamic State as "a jayvee team."

Less than a month after his February testimony, Flynn gave an interview to NPR in which he was asked how he responded "to lawmakers and others who are saying that the intelligence community was caught off-guard" by Russia's invasion of Crimea. "There was good strategic warning provided to our decision-makers in order to make the right kinds of decisions about what sort of policy actions may be taken," he replied, having already said that DIA was "providing very solid reporting" on Russian troops preparing to invade "for easily seven to ten days leading up to" the invasion. The comments could be seen as effectively laying blame for the muddled American response squarely at the feet of Obama and his top aides.

Most DIA directors serve at least three years, but it wasn't long before Flynn learned he was not being extended for a third year. "I was asked to step down," Flynn said in the interview with Foreign Policy. "It wasn't necessarily the timing that I wanted, but I understand." Flynn was at pains to emphasize that his ouster as DIA director was not his motivation for speaking out. "That's not why I'm doing what I'm doing," he said.

"I'm doing it because I care about the country and the direction that the country's going and the various enemies that we're facing, and there are many."

Feaver, the Duke professor, said Flynn's criticisms ran the risk of leading civilian policymakers to decide to exclude senior officers from key meetings. "If they suspect 'this guy's going to retire and then go on MSNBC and bash me,' [they might decide] 'let's not have that person in the room when we're really discussing the issues,'" Feaver said. That dynamic "could be happening now," he added. "The current generals may be looked at with a jaundiced eye by the Obama White House."

Rather than saying that Flynn's outspoken criticism of U.S. foreign policy "cheers Republicans more than it cheers Democrats," Feaver said it would be more accurate to say that the three-star general's approach "cheers critics of the Obama administration more than it cheers defenders, because there's actually quite a few Democrats who are criticizing the president's positions."

In fact, one of those Democrats is Flynn himself. "I'm a registered Democrat," he said, before adding that he was "about as centrist as possible." As a boy, he would help arrange bus rides for Democratic voters on election days in his hometown. "I'm not a politician, but if someone were to look it up right now, I'm a registered Democrat, and I'm okay with that," he said.

"I think that I have been very good about coming across as a guy who's not one side or the other," Flynn added, noting that he has also chastised the Republican-headed

Congress for not working more closely with the White House. However, he acknowledged that he had been harshly critical of the administration's Middle East policy. "It's not working," he said. "Our fight against global Islamic radicals is not working. It's not. The [counterterrorism] component that our special operations [forces] do, the pinprick stuff, works great. But in general, we're not solving this information, this diplomatic and this cultural war that we are fighting."

* * *

Since retiring, Flynn has divided his time between Rhode Island and Alexandria, Virginia, where he has set up shop as a consultant on intelligence, cyber-related issues, and security, three areas in which he considers himself an expert. "I didn't walk out like a lot of guys and go to big jobs in Northrop Grumman or Booz Allen [Hamilton] or some of these other big companies [like] Raytheon," he said. "I'm very independent, and it's very liberating actually."

Nonetheless, despite a reluctance to reenter full-time government employment, and his criticisms of the current administration notwithstanding, Flynn declared himself available to pitch in if the call came. "If the White House asked me to come back over and said, 'Hey, we'd really like your help on trying to figure out this [Islamic State] problem, or we'd like your help with the Iranian negotiations, or we'd like your help with what's going on in China, now that you're in a different role,' I'd love to do that," he said. Flynn also said he has not ruled out running for elected office at some point in the future.

The White House declined to comment for this story, and Flynn said he had heard from nobody in the administration regarding any of his public comments since he left the Army. However, Feaver said, "I would be stunned if the White House was not grinding their teeth about it."

Flynn's military peers, both active and retired, appear to be largely at ease with the stance he has taken over the past year. "There hasn't been any great gnashing of teeth," said retired Lt. Gen. Guy Swan, a vice president of the Association of the United States Army. "I haven't heard people say he's wrong to be doing what he's doing, or even he's right to be doing what he's doing."

Gen. Jack Keane, a retired Army vice chief of staff who makes frequent television appearances criticizing Obama — and is widely seen as a conservative Republican — said the reaction of the retired senior military personnel he knew to Flynn's outspokenness has been "overwhelmingly supportive." This mirrored Flynn's own experience. "Universally, it's been very, very positive feedback ... thanking me for being honest, being very forthright, and being clear," Flynn said, adding that he had received only two "back-channel nastygrams," and those were from non-military people in the national security community. "They don't appreciate it, because the truth hurts sometimes," he said.

Nevertheless, it's notable that none of Flynn's contemporaries have carved out a similar path as an administration critic. Both McChrystal and former Army Gen. David Petraeus,

for instance, have been scrupulously careful to avoid public criticism of the White House. Another senior officer and rough contemporary of Flynn — retired Marine Gen. John Allen, formerly the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan — has even gone to work for the White House as its point person in the fight against the Islamic State.

One possible reason why the military community has not pushed back against Flynn is that he is expressing what Swan called “a collective frustration” that many current and former service members feel about events in Iraq since the departure of U.S. forces at the end of 2011. In the eyes of many veterans of the Iraq War, the failure of the Iraqi government to transcend sectarian differences and build on the platform established at enormous cost in U.S. blood and treasure paved the way for the Islamic State’s dramatic territorial gains since early 2014.

“All of us share a lot of angst over what has occurred in Iraq, given what we sacrificed there,” Swan said. “Anybody that’s been in the U.S. Army for the last 15 years has had some role in that thing.”

But not every soldier is ready to sign up for the Mike Flynn fan club just yet. “I appreciate Gen. Flynn’s comments, but why weren’t those comments made when he was the director of [the] DIA?” said retired Army Lt. Col. Jim Reese, a former Delta Force officer and an Iraq War veteran. “And if he felt that strongly about it then, why not resign in protest?”

Flynn responded by saying that while at the DIA, he had raised the same issues about which he is now speaking out. “I’ve always been adamant about the kind of challenges we’re facing,” he said. “I’ve been pretty outspoken probably since I was a lieutenant.” As for the option of resigning in protest, “I’m not going to do it that way,” he said. “Basically I stepped down. People don’t know what I was saying, or what events occurred inside. Obviously something occurred.”

However, Flynn added, even as DIA director, there was only so much influence he could exert. “I’m not going to tell you that I’ve ever had the opportunity to brief President Obama,” he said. “I never have.” That role fell to political appointees in the Pentagon, the CIA, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. “That’s part of the challenge,” he said. “Who is it that is actually advising [the president]? And if it’s the DNI and the CIA director, okay, those are two political appointees.”

But even some of Flynn’s defenders acknowledge a level of discomfort with the role he has taken on. “I’m always a little bit uncomfortable with recently retired general officers being highly critical” of any U.S. administration, said the intelligence officer who has worked with Flynn. There is “sort of an unwritten code” among generals not to step out of uniform and publicly bash whichever administration is in office, he added. Even after generals retire, “they’re still considered generals, and all of us in uniform are taught from the beginning that we swear an oath to subordinate ourselves and not to get involved in policy and politics except in discreet settings when the president or whomever asks,” the intelligence officer said.

This sums up the dilemma for those who might want to follow in Flynn’s path. “His views are valuable — the guy [has] got incredible experience,” said the intelligence officer. “He [has] just got to be careful not to create the perception for people in uniform that it’s okay to criticize the president. It’s a tricky path to take.”

Photo credit: Alex Wong/Getty Images

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/military-leaders-do-not-belong-at-political-conventions/2016/07/30/0e06fc16-568b-11e6-b652-315ae5d4d4dd_story.html

Letters to the Editor

Military leaders do not belong at political conventions

Washington Post, July 30

The military is not a political prize. Politicians should take the advice of senior military leaders but keep them off the stage. The American people should not wonder where their military leaders draw the line between military advice and political preference. And our nation’s soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines should not wonder about the political leanings and motivations of their leaders.

Retired Marine Gen. John Allen and retired Army Lt. Gen. Mike Flynn weren’t introduced at the Democratic and Republican conventions, respectively, as “John” and “Mike.” They were introduced as generals. As generals, they have an obligation to uphold our apolitical traditions. They have just made the task of their successors — who continue to serve in uniform and are accountable for our security — more complicated. It was a mistake for them to participate as they did. It was a mistake for our presidential candidates to ask them to do so.

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Raleigh, N.C.

The writer is former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



Keep Your Politics Private, My Fellow Generals and Admirals

By Martin Dempsey

August 1, 2016

The relationship between elected leaders and the military is established in the Constitution and built on trust.

As a matter of law, we follow the orders of the duly elected commander-in-chief unless those orders are illegal or immoral. This is our non-negotiable commitment to our fellow citizens.

They elect. We support.

From my personal experience across several administrations, the commander-in-chief will value our military advice only if they believe that it is given without political bias or personal agenda.

Generals and admirals are generals and admirals for life. What they say carries the weight of their professional judgment and the credibility of their professional reputation.

More than an individual reputation, retired generals and admirals enjoy a collective reputation earned by having been part of a profession. It is therefore nearly impossible for them to speak exclusively for themselves when speaking publicly. If that were even possible, few would want to hear from them. Their opinion is valued chiefly because it is assumed they speak with authority for those who have served in uniform. And their opinion is also valued because our elected leaders know that the men and women of the U.S. military can be counted upon follow the orders of their elected leaders.

This is where the freedom of speech argument often invoked in this debate about the role of retired senior military officers in election campaigns fails. Unquestionably, retired admirals and generals are free to speak to those seeking elected office. But they should speak privately, where it will not be interpreted that they are speaking for us all.

Publicly, they can speak to their experiences with the issues. Not about those seeking office. Not about who is more suited to be elected. That will be decided by the voters, and they have an obligation to learn about the candidates before casting their vote.

But not from us.

Because we have a special role in our democracy, and because we will serve whoever is elected.

So retired generals and admirals can but should not become part of the public political landscape. That is, unless they choose to run for public office themselves. That's different. If they choose to run themselves, they become accountable to voters. In simply advocating—or giving speeches—they are not.

One of the two candidates is going to be elected this November. They each now have reason to question whether senior military leaders can be trusted to provide honest, non-partisan advice on the issues and to execute the orders given to them with the effort necessary to accomplish them.

Moreover, if senior military leaders—active and retired—begin to self-identify as members or supporters of one party or another, then the inherent tension built into our system of government between the executive branch and the legislative branch will bleed over into suspicion of military leaders by Congress and a further erosion of civil-military relations.

Worse yet, future administrations may seek to determine which senior leaders would be more likely to agree with them before putting them in senior leadership positions.

In the political world, trust is generally derived from party loyalty. In the interchange between civil and military, trust is derived from party neutrality.

Political candidates will continue to seek retired generals and admirals to endorse them. In the competition for public office, politicians will always seek to surround themselves with as many credible allies as possible. But we retired generals and admirals should not heed their request.

This is not something that needs to be fixed with law, policy, or administrative rule. All we have to do is say no.

The image of generals and admirals that is held in esteem by the American people is the image of loyal, determined, selfless professionalism keeping watch for threats to our country from abroad. It's not the image of angry speeches in front of partisan audiences intended to influence politics at home.

As I said, what we saw at the conventions is a mistake. Both by those who participated and by those who invited them.

I could be wrong. I suppose we could adopt a reality-TV model for our civilian-military interactions instead of the model based on our standing with the American people as a profession. Perhaps we could imitate "The Bachelor." We'll troop out as many retired generals and admirals as we can for each side, decide who has the most persuasive group, and make our decision about suitability to be commander-in-chief on that basis.

I don't think that's what we want.

Martin Dempsey, a retired U.S. Army general, served as the 18th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

<http://warontherocks.com/2016/08/generals-and-political-interventions-in-american-history/>

Generals and Political Interventions in American History

James Joyner | August 4, 2016

In a curt letter to *The Washington Post*, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Martin Dempsey, reacting to speeches by two recently retired generals — Michael Flynn and John Allen — before the Republican and Democratic conventions, declared that, “The military is not a political prize.” Dempsey explained:

The American people should not wonder where their military leaders draw the line between military advice and political preference. And our nation’s soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines should not wonder about the political leanings and motivations of their leaders.

Certainly, this is not a new controversy. Way back in 1992, one of Dempsey’s predecessors Admiral William Crowe gave a speech endorsing Bill Clinton for the White House as the future president was facing criticism over his dodging of the draft during Vietnam. He was soon joined by another 20 retired generals and admirals, many of whom, like Crowe, had seen their military advice overruled by Clinton’s opponent, sitting President George H.W. Bush.

Moreover, the United States has a long history, literally going back to the founding, of retired generals entering politics. George Washington, Andrew Jackson, William Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses Grant, Rutherford Hayes, Franklin Pierce, James Garfield, Chester Arthur, Benjamin Harrison, and Dwight Eisenhower all rose to the presidency at least partially on the strength of their military records. In recent times, Wesley Clark ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination and there was a serious effort to recruit Colin Powell to run as well. Indeed, there was an effort this cycle to draft Jim Mattis, who showed no interest in the pursuit.

Retired generals have involved themselves into political debates in myriad other ways. Ten years ago, in what came to be called the “revolt of the generals,” when several just-retired generals, most of whom had been “in the inner circle of policy formation or execution of the Administration,” openly lambasted Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, with whom they’d had disagreements while in uniform, over the Iraq War. And, of course, the nickname of the controversy was a play on the “revolt of the admirals” of 1949, in which active and retired flag officers squared off against President Harry Truman over a decision to cut an aircraft carrier to fund a new strategic bomber.

The ethical norms around each of these political interventions differs and none of them are particularly well-settled. There is no serious question whether they have a legal right

to do any of these things; they clearly do. Yet there is reason to be concerned about the impact on civil-military relations when the most senior officers join the political fray.

Clearly, there's a distinction between declaring oneself a candidate for office and endorsing a candidate. As Duke political scientist Peter Feaver notes, "When you stand for office you officially cross over and become a politician — you are viewed as a partisan politician and thenceforth can only speak as a partisan."

But what about endorsing? Obviously, it makes no sense to declare a moratorium on any veteran or former soldier ever speaking about politics. That would disenfranchise a huge number of people and deprive the public debate of an important perspective. And, indeed, it would be an odd argument for me to make, since I'm a former Army officer.

While there is no clear standard, the rank at which one separated from the service and the proximity of said separation are part of the equation. Nobody seriously thinks someone who left active duty as a first lieutenant, as I did, represents the service. And, even for very senior officers, that presumption fades with time.

Dempsey took a stab at laying out the distinction while he was still chairman. In a May 2014 session at the Atlantic Council, he observed:

If you want to get out of the military and run for office, I'm all for it. But don't get out of the military – and this is a bit controversial, I got it – don't get out of the military and become a political figure by throwing your support behind a particular candidate.

His rationale is spot on

[I]f somebody asks me, when I retire, to support them in a political campaign, do you think they're asking Marty Dempsey, or are they asking General Dempsey? I am a general for life, and I should remain true to our professional ethos, which is to be apolitical for life unless I run.

Retired Navy Vice Admiral Doug Crowder, writing in *Proceedings* last November, expanded that argument, contending that those who wear stars on their shoulder boards "are not merely private citizens after retirement" but rather part of a unique vanguard: a general or "admiral for life."

Crowder explains that his view on the issue was informed by his experience serving on the Joint Staff early in the Clinton administration when a civilian staffer, annoyed at being told that an issue being proposed would be opposed by the chairman, responded,

"Well, maybe it's time we got some Clinton generals in here."

He was aghast at the notion that the civilian leadership would think senior officers would fail to support the elected commander-in-chief for partisan reasons, until he remembered that Crowe had in fact joined the fray in endorsing Clinton during the campaign. Crowder writes, "I have never met a finer officer and gentleman, but I could see how the public

could misunderstand why an admiral was making a public political endorsement of a presidential candidate.”

As Crowder notes, “the Crowe endorsement opened the floodgates for future retired flag and general officer political endorsements.” They are now routinely trotted out by both parties. During the 2012 cycle a full page newspaper ad ran “listing the well over 300 retired flag and general officers who ‘Proudly support Governor Mitt Romney as our nation’s next President and Commander-in-Chief.’”

Certainly the Republic has not crumbled as a result. And the military continues to be near the top of all institutions in terms of the confidence of the American public. Still, the next president will surely have cause to wonder about the loyalty of the senior officers upon whose “best military advice” they are counting.

There are few general officers, active or retired, whose judgment on national security matters I respect more than John Allen’s. While there are things in his convention speech with which I disagree, I share his assessment that Hillary Clinton is more fit to serve as commander-in-chief than Donald Trump (granted, a low bar).

But Allen didn’t simply present himself as a seasoned policy hand. His very first words in his convention speech were,

My fellow Americans, I stand with you tonight as a retired four-star general of the United States Marine Corps, and I am joined by my fellow generals and admirals, and with these magnificent young veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan” [emphasis mine].

He thus wrapped himself not only in his own substantial personal credibility but in that of his profession.

That continued after the speech. Trump, as is his wont, counterpunched, calling Allen “a failed general.” In response, Allen invoked the prestige of his profession, retorting, “He has no credibility to criticize me or my record or anything I have done.” He continued, “If he’d spent a minute in the deserts of Afghanistan or in the deserts of Iraq, I might listen to what he has to say.” Worse yet, he termed Trump’s comments “a direct insult to every single man and woman who’s wearing the uniform today.”

Now, Trump’s assertion that Allen is a “failed general” because we haven’t defeated the Islamic State is at best simplistic and arguably absurd. But, having joined the political fray in such a full-throated way, Allen is fair game. Hiding behind the armor of the uniform he proudly wore and the troops who now serve is highly problematic for the institution, which holds such high prestige and has such tremendous value in our system of government precisely because it is viewed as a loyal servant of the nation rather than a partisan tool.

Further, it makes Allen’s warnings that electing Trump could result in “a civil military crisis, the like of which we’ve not seen in this country,” especially ominous. He was, rightly, pointing out the moral dilemma that would face the uniformed leadership were

Trump to assume office and actually try and enact some of the off-the-cuff musings on international relations as policy. Were Trump to assume the mantle of commander-in-chief and issue an order the brass believed unlawful, they would have a duty to advise him accordingly and to abide by the laws of this nation and the laws of war. There are appropriate venues for airing that discussion, such as a Congressional hearing. A national political convention is not one of them. But, in context of a retired general who has just spoken as a party convention, it comes across as a warning that the military would be disloyal if a president of the wrong party were elected. This could lead to a calamitous state of affairs.

Meanwhile, Flynn not only spoke at the Republican convention but was purportedly on the short list to be Trump's running mate. Even though he was not selected for the ticket, he has taken on an attack dog role, even carrying the fight to Twitter where, in what one hopes was a newbie's incompetence, he enthusiastically retweeted an anti-Semitic attack on Clinton. That is, to say the least, not a good look.

Flynn, who retired as the three-star head of the Defense Intelligence Agency just shy of two years ago, has been an active opponent of the Obama White House almost from the moment he hung up his uniform. He declared last year that, "The people in the United States have lost respect and confidence in their government to be able to solve the problems that we face now and in the future." Feaver warned at the time that Flynn's aggressive criticism could undermine policymakers' confidence in the brass: "If they suspect 'this guy's going to retire and then go on MSNBC and bash me,' [they might decide] 'let's not have that person in the room when we're really discussing the issues.'"

That would be both understandable and catastrophic.

It is technically true, as Richard Swain argues, that "retired officers remain members of the armed forces by law and regulation" and it is therefore reasonable to assume that "they remain at least ethically obliged to observe the limitations imposed by commissioned service." But there has been little precedent for holding them to that standard. Nor is it reasonable to expect, for example, a retired lieutenant colonel, who already rendered at least two decades of service, to continue to abstain from the full rights and privileges of citizenship for the remainder of his life.

Still, we can nonetheless formalize professional norms for retired generals and admirals. Don Snider, a retired Army colonel and longtime scholar of the profession, argues:

While retirement from active duty does make each one a newly nonpracticing professional, in the world of public perceptions they still act and speak, and are seen and heard, as an esteemed member of the military profession.

As such, they continue to have an obligation to ensure that officership is perceived as "a real profession as opposed to just another governmental bureaucracy." Otherwise, they undermine the confidence of the civilian leadership, the American public, and rank-and-file soldiers.

We can begin with the distinction that holds for active duty officers and, to a lesser extent, civilian employees of the Defense Department between partisan politicking and issue advocacy. It's perfectly reasonable and likely valuable for retired officers to weigh in on public debates on controversial issues, like gender integration or proposed military action, where it would be inappropriate or difficult for serving generals to weigh in where their civilian masters have spoken. (Although, here, the rule may well be the opposite as that for partisan endorsements: the longer the officer has been out of uniform, the less valuable his expertise.)

At the same time, it's clearly inappropriate for retired generals and admirals to endorse or oppose the re-election of officials they've recently served or worked alongside. It simply smacks of disloyalty and brings into retrospective question the advice they rendered while in uniform. Further, it gives the impression, true or otherwise, that their views are shared by their successors — especially those who were protégées. Relatedly, if the endorser is later appointed to a plum post in the administration, as Crowe was, then it looks very much like the imprimatur of the military profession has been auctioned off for advancement.

We already impose a statutory moratorium on certain senior officers from lobbying or accepting a contract from their former agency for two years after retirement. Adding a ban on using their title in partisan political activity for, say, five years would serve the same purpose — removing the appearance of impropriety — without permanently taking them out of the arena. This wouldn't solve the problem entirely but would put some space between an individual's time in uniform and partially mitigate the impression that they are speaking for those with whom they recently served.

In an ideal world, retired generals and admirals would simply refrain, as non-practicing members of the profession of arms, from endorsing political candidates or otherwise engaging in partisan activity. A Flynn or Allen could still speak out on national security issues that concern them, including those that are part of an ongoing campaign, without explicitly endorsing candidates or appearing at a party convention. Few would criticize them if they had instead appeared at a think tank or before Congress arguing for a more aggressive approach to fighting ISIL, warning of the dangers to embracing torture, or abandoning protections for non-combatants.

It is essential that our generals and admirals are perceived as loyal to the Constitution, not a political party. A commander-in-chief should have every confidence that they are receiving the best military advice from the chairman, the service chiefs, combatant commanders, and other senior military leaders. Otherwise, it would absolutely be appropriate for the next president to look for “Clinton generals” or “Trump admirals” to fill the top billets. And we clearly do not want that to happen.

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Don't Box Retired Generals Out of Politics

By Eric T. Olson

August 11, 2016

General Marty Dempsey recently sent a clear and forceful message to his fellow retired generals and admirals: Keep your politics private. This position is not new for the former Joint Chiefs chairman; he has held these views for many years, articulating them while on active duty and now in retirement.

It is hard for those of us who have served as flag officers and are now retired to argue with General Dempsey, for many reasons. Not the least of these is the enormous respect and credibility that he has gained with us through the many years of his distinguished service. We do not exaggerate or off-handedly flatter him when we observe that he is one of the best in our cohort.

But in this instance he has overstated his case, and in so doing may have done a disservice to some of our peers who have contributions to make towards an informed electorate—and the voting public as a whole.

No doubt General Dempsey wrote his article in response to the actions of several generals or admirals who have recently and publicly voiced opinions about candidates, most notably two who had prominent speaking roles during the recent Republican and Democratic party conventions. His primary concern seems to be captured in this passage: “The image of generals and admirals that is held in esteem by the American people is the image of loyal, determined, selfless professionalism keeping watch for threats to our country from abroad. It’s not the image of angry speeches in front of partisan audiences intended to influence politics at home.”

Elsewhere, he states that as a result of senior retired military leaders’ participation in campaign activities, elected officials and the public at large “may now question whether senior military leaders can be trusted to provide honest, non-partisan advice on the issues and to execute the orders given to them with the effort necessary to accomplish them.”

Most of us probably would argue that certain recent appearances of and presentations by retired generals have fallen in the category of the type of partisan politics that General Dempsey had in mind when he was crafting his thoughts on his article — general attacks on the character of candidates, personal judgments about unsuitability for office, cheerleading for rowdy convention crowds, and the like.

But in condemning broadly a whole category of political activeness as choosing to “become part of the public political landscape,” does he preclude the valuable contributions that experienced former military and defense officials can make as we seek wise choices about the next commander-in-chief? Specifically, don’t we want to hear from retired senior officers who have worked directly for or with individual candidates about those qualities that will serve them—and us—well if they are elected and cast into the role of leader of the most powerful and complex military establishment in the world?

To be clear, retired military leaders who make charges against candidates based not on direct experience or knowledge of her or his qualities or attributes but on talking points provided by campaign staffs, or observations about suitability for office that refer to areas of interest or expertise that are completely beyond the ken of the officer making the statement are usually inappropriate. But doesn’t the average voter understand that a retired general or admiral is not the expert that one should listen to when trying to decide which candidate will be best for the U.S. economy or the health-care system? And don’t we think that voters want to hear from senior officials with years of experience about matters of national security and foreign policy?

Specifically, what was wrong with Gen. John Allen noting that, based on his personal experience working with her and his direct observations of her actions and decisions in tough situations, that one of the candidates has what it takes to ensure that the U.S. will continue to play a role as an “indispensable, transformational power in the world.” No doubt there are voters who are wondering about how a candidate will perform under pressure, how she will work with serving military leaders, whether she will listen to commanders on the ground and take their advice. They should be able to get the views of a well-respected retired military official who has reason to know the answers to those questions.

One other point: how far is General Dempsey willing to take his argument about what is proper for a general or admiral to do in retirement? Should retired senior officers refuse to serve in key appointive positions when asked by elected officials—as presidential envoys, advisers on tough national-security problems, special representatives, and the like—for fear that in doing so they will be viewed as political appointees and risk casting into suspicion the impartial best military judgement that they provided while on active duty? Or that of those whom they knew on active duty who are still serving? What about the 4-stars who take positions in the world of business and finance? Do we start wondering if they are in the pocket of Wall Street or the defense industry now and may have been unduly influenced while on active duty?

There is no question that we must preserve the principle that military advice must be given by serving flag officers “without political bias or personal agenda.” It is almost inconceivable that the outcome of any election could be so important that we would be willing to accept risk to that principle. But the observation that “generals and admirals are generals and admirals for life” cuts both ways. True, there are certain partisan activities that must be avoided because they risk creating a perception that is unhealthy to good

civil-military relations and the trust that the American people have in their military leaders. But it is also true that retired generals and admirals have garnered the experience to be among the best judges of the qualities that it takes to command at the highest level. We should be able to hear from them in an appropriate fashion to help us decide who to support as the person to lead our military for the next four years.

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Beyond the Resignation Debate

A New Framework for Civil-Military Dialogue

Maj Jim Golby, USA

Abstract

Recent debates about whether senior military officers can offer public dissent or resign in protest have a disproportionate impact on civil-military relations. As a result, many discussions focus primarily on how the civil-military dialogue has broken down and offer little advice to senior officers about how they can—and should—engage properly in effective civil-military dialogue. Scholars should begin a more constructive discussion about how to best integrate military advice into today's policy-making process. Although military expertise is imperfect and only one input policy makers should consider, a forthright, candid civil-military dialogue decreases the likelihood of strategic miscalculation and increases the odds of effective policy making. To complement scholarly discussions that discourage political activity by military officers, this article develops a Clausewitzian framework for introducing military advice into what is always a political context. It offers practical suggestions for military officers and hopes to stimulate further debate about what positive norms could shape the civil-military dialogue.

* * * * *

Although the circumstances in which senior military officers would contemplate resignation are exceedingly rare, debates about whether officers should resign are increasingly common. The latest round in this discussion developed in 2014, following testimony by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen Martin Dempsey, US Army, before the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC). While discussing the

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campaign to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Dempsey stated that—if necessary—he would recommend to the president that US military personnel accompany Iraqi troops in ground attacks.¹ His qualified statement made immediate news, as it signaled potential disagreement with the president's position to avoid introducing US forces into ground fighting in Iraq.

The response to General Dempsey's statement was swift, with more than a dozen op-eds or blogs published on the topic over the next few days and weeks. Many of these pieces were careless exhortations to resign in a flourish of disagreement; others were explicitly partisan. However, the debate also included thoughtful contributions from several respected voices, including those of Don Snider, emeritus professor of political science at the US Military Academy, and Lt Gen James Dubik, US Army, retired.² These scholars are not alone in thinking anew about dissent and resignation; approval for the practice of resignation in protest is on the rise, at least among veterans.³

The growing acceptance of resignation as an appropriate tactic during policy deliberations threatens America's tradition of civilian control of the military. It also raises concerns about whether senior civilian and military leaders possess the mutual respect necessary for effective strategic dialogue. More importantly, perhaps, the stalemated debate about whether military officers should resign actually exacerbates mistrust and skepticism among civilian leaders and undermines effective civil-military dialogue.

It is time to move beyond—or at least significantly broaden—this unproductive debate and begin a more constructive discussion about how to best integrate military advice into today's policy-making process. Although military expertise is imperfect and only one input policy makers consider, a forthright, candid civil-military dialogue decreases the likelihood of strategic miscalculation and increases the odds of effective policy making. To complement scholarly discussions that discourage political activity by military officers, a Clausewitzian framework can be used to introduce military advice into what is always a political context. This framework will help stimulate further debate about what positive norms could shape the civil-military dialogue.

This article first discusses the most thoughtful pieces from the recent resignation debate to make the case for a different dialogue. Next, it shows how the resignation debate is emblematic of larger problems in

the broader literature on dissent and civil-military discourse. It then develops a Clausewitzian framework for the civil-military dialogue, building on insights about the unique nature and limitations of military expertise and potential implications of this model in helping military leaders know how to provide advice in a political context. Finally, the article concludes with recommended institutional changes or reforms that could reinforce more productive civil-military relations.

The Resignation Debate

The debate that emerged following General Dempsey's SASC testimony was, in many ways, similar to previous professional discussions about resignation—albeit arguably more robust.⁴ Retired officers, former defense officials, pundits, and even sitting members of Congress publicly encouraged Dempsey to resign in protest over what they viewed as the Obama administration's misguided war policies.⁵ However, this debate has advanced flawed arguments concerning resignation and has potentially contributed to deteriorating trust between civilian and military leaders.

Drawing inspiration from a misguided reading of Army lieutenant general H. R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty*, these critics generally assert that Dempsey—and other senior military leaders—have the right and even the obligation to resign in protest before they become complicit in failed military strategies.⁶ In their view, McMaster's history of the Americanization of the Vietnam War castigates senior military leaders for not resigning and instead “quietly carrying out orders they knew to be wrong.”⁷ Moreover, some of them assert that even a private resignation threat by Dempsey “might well change a bad policy” and “save this President from himself.”⁸ Thus, critics imply that military leaders should take advantage of the fact that no president would want to face the political costs resulting from a high-level military resignation.

The belief that it can be good for legitimately elected civilian leaders to fear threats from their own military is deeply flawed; such sentiments are unequivocally inconsistent with civilian control and American constitutional principles. The military may disagree with civilian decisions, but the Constitution reserves decision making for those in elected office. As scholar Peter D. Feaver has succinctly noted, elected civilian leaders have the “right to be wrong.”⁹ Moreover, the insinuation that military

leaders should view resignation as a tool to influence political leaders' policy decisions is likely to undermine the trust necessary for a healthy civil-military relationship.¹⁰ As a result, scholars like Richard H. Kohn and Peter Feaver worry that the practice of resignation by senior officers would undermine trust, risk politicization of the officer corps, and threaten civilian control of the military.¹¹ Despite these concerns, these scholars nevertheless strongly agree that officers have the right—in fact, the duty—to resign (i.e., to ask for reassignment or retirement) or to disobey if directed to carry out an illegal order.

However, several respected observers of civil-military relations suggest a slender area of legitimate resignation lies between legal obligation and policy objection. They make a thoughtful case for resignation on carefully drawn moral grounds. Don Snider argues that members of the profession require moral autonomy. Thus, there may be circumstances that demand acts of dissent or disobedience—to include resignation.¹² According to Snider, military officers not only have a Constitutional obligation to carry out the wishes of their client—the American people—but also have a responsibility to ethically apply the profession's expert knowledge. On these grounds, he argues that there is a narrow “protected space”¹³ in which military officers can voice dissent or even resign “without insubordination to civilian authority.”¹⁴

Similarly, General Dubik argues that principled resignation places “neither good order and discipline nor civilian control of the military” at risk.¹⁵ Providing senior officers resign privately without public posturing, he contends the ability to resign on moral grounds protects officers' moral agency by allowing them to remain true to their conscience. It is only when officers act for political reasons and threaten to air their concerns to embarrass or coerce that they undermine civilian control and cross an unacceptable line.

Taken together, Snider and Dubik suggest that there, in fact, may be circumstances under which senior officers could—and perhaps should—consider resignation. Yet neither author fully grapples with the difficult trade-offs their arguments imply. When placed under closer scrutiny, the “narrow protected space” for resignation that Snider and Dubik attempt to defend turns out to be vanishingly small.

Dubik, for example, considers the case of Army chief of staff Gen Harold Johnson, who contemplated resignation during the Vietnam War after he concluded that the president's war policy was “wasting

lives.”¹⁶ Although Johnson ultimately did not resign, Dubik contends the Army chief’s resignation would have been justified if he had done so quietly. Dubik properly criticizes an alleged plan under which the Army chief had intended to hold a press conference immediately after notifying the president that he intended to resign.¹⁷

What is not clear, however, is if a senior officer can control whether or not a resignation will remain private.¹⁸ As General Johnson’s case of a “near-resignation” implies, there simply is no tradition of resignation in the US military. Thus, it is difficult to know exactly how one could accomplish a “quiet” resignation in practice, especially if a senior officer were to resign in the middle of a controversial war. It is likely that any high-level resignation would prompt significant political consequences.¹⁹ Leaks from staff would be almost inevitable—as would be aggressive questioning from the president’s opponents in Congress. The resulting press coverage and public speculation would be equally aggressive and intense. As the recent Dempsey case suggests, quiet resignation would be extremely difficult—really impossible—in today’s political climate.

Even if a quiet resignation were possible, neither Snider nor Dubik help us tangibly understand what constitutes an immoral policy. In fact, their arguments rely on different moral foundations. For Dubik, resignation is a matter of individual moral conscience; for Snider, it is a matter of the moral autonomy—and hence authority—of the profession. These two approaches suffer from different problems, but both possess the potential to undermine civilian control of the military.

As he illustrates in the Johnson case, Dubik’s standard for an immoral policy is whether it “wastes lives.”²⁰ At first glance, the application of this standard to General Johnson’s doubts about the Vietnam War seems appealing. However, the issues at stake were almost certainly less clear at the time than they are in retrospect. Other officers and policy makers with recognized expertise had reasonable disagreements with Johnson at the time. Moreover, the logic of “wasted lives” versus “cost in lives” is itself highly subjective. In fact, measured against this standard, any civilian who does not give the military all the resources it requests or who does not pursue the strategy the military recommends wastes lives, at least to some degree. Consequently, there is no room for any civilian restraint on military policy. Who decides where to draw the line in terms of the cost in lives or how many wasted lives? For Dubik, this discretion

resides entirely with the individual's conscience, leaving open a wide loophole for military resignation on myriad policy issues.²¹

Snider's argument is more nuanced, relying on the moral authority of the profession instead of the individual officer's conscience. Yet this approach creates different challenges. First, expert knowledge is, by its nature, uncertain—especially for members of the military profession. Officers have fewer opportunities to practice their craft than members of other professions do. Peacetime is frequent, and officers rarely—if ever—experience war at the same level of responsibility during their careers. Moreover, war—by its nature—is extremely complex.²² Thus, judgments about the consequences of a policy decision surrounding military conflict will always involve relatively greater levels of ambiguity.²³

Second, a corporate standard for resignation based on the moral autonomy of the profession must rely, to some degree, on a professional ethic or an objective standard. Yet there is debate about whether an American military ethic can, or should, exist and whether one exists at present.²⁴ As a result, officers face significant limitations in attempting to rely on the profession's ethic as a standard for judging the morality of a policy decision.

Finally, even if military officers were relatively certain of the consequences of a policy decision and could agree to a professional standard upon which to judge the morality of consequences, this logic itself would preclude individual resignation and instead dictate disobedience by the officer corps as a whole. A judgment based on the collective moral autonomy of the profession, rather than on an individual's conscience, would require general consensus among members of the profession and thus would preclude any form of quiet resignation. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to imagine the circumstances under which an officer could resign on moral grounds without engaging in, as Snider puts it, "insubordination to civilian authority."²⁵

Snider is largely silent on the question of disobedience, but his arguments about the profession's requirement for moral autonomy rest on James Burk's concept of "responsible obedience."²⁶ Burk, a professor of sociology at Texas A&M University, agrees that senior officers share moral accountability for their actions and advice, but that responsibility is constrained and must be channeled appropriately. According to Burk, "obedience to the principle that civilian leaders rule does not necessarily create a world of blind obedience, not so long as the military profession

retains its autonomy to cultivate its expert knowledge and to introduce it into policy deliberations.”²⁷ Military leaders can neither responsibly disobey nor resign when faced with an immoral order, but they have a clear responsibility to communicate their expertise and advice candidly during policy deliberations.

The effective development of strategy depends on the close integration of civilian and military perspectives.²⁸ Nevertheless, the Constitution clearly subordinates military prerogatives to the policy decisions of civilians and civilian institutions.²⁹ Thus, at the most fundamental level, attempts by senior officers to claim the legitimate authority necessary to judge the morality of a policy on behalf of the republic are inconsistent with civilian control of the military. As Burk argues, “If there is a conflict in judgment between political leaders and military professionals over the wisdom of a policy to use armed force, it is not necessarily the case that the political leader is right and the military professional wrong. Often, the matter will be surrounded by enough uncertainty no one could be sure which judgment should be preferred. Yet, in the end, someone must decide, and . . . these rules are embedded in the Constitution.”³⁰

Our republican system of governance presupposes that there will always be moral disagreements about policy outcomes, and it establishes a system of civilian institutions within which to resolve those disputes. Operating in this system does not require senior military leaders to obey blindly, but it does require “responsible obedience.” Officers have a constitutional responsibility to offer expert advice, but they should not resign or disobey a lawful order when their advice is not taken. The status of a profession relies on its ability to *profess*, not on its ability to *dictate*.³¹

Larger Problems in Civil-Military Relations

Although Snider’s and Dubik’s arguments seem compelling in principle, their narrow space of resignation vanishes in practice. Indeed, Dubik and Snider both explicitly state that the Dempsey case came nowhere near meeting their criteria for principled resignation.³² In addition, unlike many bloggers and pundits, neither Snider nor Dubik support public resignation in protest, nor do they support politically motivated threats by senior officers intended to intimidate or coerce civilian leaders. Yet there is suggestive evidence that the resignation debate itself may be harming trust and the civil-military relationship. Support

for resignation in protest has been on the rise in recent years. In 1999, for example, only 27 percent of all veterans agreed that a senior officer should resign in protest in the face of an “unwise” order. However, by 2014, 59 percent thought so.³³ Moreover, the recent round of blog posts and op-eds supporting politically motivated, rather than principled, resignation contributes to skepticism among civilian leaders and general civil-military distrust. While levels of trust among the public remain high, partisan differences have emerged—especially among elites. Currently, 94 percent of Republicans express “quite a lot” or “a great deal” of confidence in the military, but only 61 percent of all Democrats and 49 percent of elite Democrats feel the same.³⁴

Neither Snider and Dubik nor other thoughtful observers of civil-military relations have caused the trends described above. However, by responding to partisan arguments about resignation in protest during an ongoing policy debate, scholars risk legitimizing flawed arguments about resignation. They make politically motivated resignations seem plausible to civilian leaders. Even when presented with careful analyses, it can be difficult to grasp the nuance involved in these debates. In the age of blogs and social media, continued debate exacerbates civil-military tension in ongoing policy discussions that clearly do not warrant resignation by either set of standards.

Just as important, by focusing on the question of whether officers can resign under extremely rare circumstances, scholars ignore far more pressing questions of greater import to American civil-military relations. For example, Dubik’s analysis of General Johnson’s almost-resignation never considers the Army chief’s role during policy deliberations about whether to mobilize the reserves. Although intelligence analyst and military historian Lewis Sorley argues that Johnson was sharply critical during policy deliberations, other evidence suggests Johnson failed to fully articulate his reservations about the proposed policy to the secretary of defense or the president either before or after a decision was made.³⁵ Moreover, according to McMaster’s account, Johnson deliberately misled members of Congress and withheld information because—in Johnson’s own words—he owed “allegiance principally to the President.”³⁶ By asserting that the Army chief had a right to resign, Dubik ignores prior questions about whether Johnson met his basic responsibilities to support constitutional processes as a senior military advisor.

The current debate about resignation and disobedience fuels the narrative that there is a dearth of trust between civilian and military leaders. It also focuses on the rare circumstances in which the civil-military dialogue has completely broken down. Moreover, it ignores a wide range of institutional issues, including decisions about future force structure, resource management, training, recruiting and retention, and assessments of long-term risk. Consequently, this debate offers little guidance that would help senior officers navigate their daily responsibilities during today's policy-making process. In this regard, the resignation debate is emblematic of an existing gap within the broader literature on the civil-military dialogue.

As it stands, the civil-military relations literature is heavy on prohibitions, explaining what officers cannot do, and light on specifics about how officers can be involved in the policy-making process. Beginning with Samuel P. Huntington's model of objective control, officers are told to abstain from political activity of any kind.³⁷ However, as Burk's model of responsible obedience suggests, there may not always be a clear distinction between political and military spheres. Political leaders often depend on information they obtain from military leaders to weigh their options and make decisions. Thus, senior military leaders must be prepared to operate at the nexus of policy and strategy.³⁸ Nevertheless, current Army doctrine stipulates that professionals "confine their advisory role to the policymaking process," but offers no guidance about how to exercise this role. The sole direction given in Army doctrine is that military leaders should "not engage publicly in policy advocacy or dissent."³⁹ The other military services provide no guidance in doctrine on the matter. Surely, more can be said about the role of military expertise in policy debates. How does one responsibly walk this path?

There have been some signs of progress in recent years. For example, Risa A. Brooks, associate professor of political science at Marquette University, considers the potential costs and benefits of political activity by military officers in a democracy.⁴⁰ Brooks recognizes some clear benefits of political activity by military officers but concludes that the costs ultimately outweigh the benefits. Yet Brooks's analysis also fails to recognize that military advice is always delivered in a political context. Although she identifies a typology including different types of political behaviors, she never actually defines what makes a particular act political rather than military.⁴¹ As a result, she offers little guidance to military leaders

about what they can or should say during the policy process or to civilian leaders about how they could obtain any of the benefits of military expertise. Ultimately, the inference is to safeguard civilian control and that military advice must remain only within the confines of private policy deliberations.

While agreeing that military officers should not engage in political activity, other scholars nevertheless leave room for officers to engage in dissent—sometimes even public dissent.⁴² Framing military advice and expertise in terms of dissent creates several problems, however. First, it implies that the relationship between the president and senior military leaders is of primary importance, while downplaying the importance of the congressional role in civil-military relations. Yet military leaders have a constitutional obligation to support all branches of government in their policy-making duties. When military leaders fail to provide all relevant information to congressional leaders, as General Johnson did, they undermine the proper functioning of constitutional processes of oversight.

Second, a focus on the dissent side of military advice reinforces the narrative of broader civil-military tension and distrust, undermining the positive role military expertise can—and should—play in policy debates. Rather than encouraging officers to speak candidly and to offer their considered military judgment on topics related to military expertise, framing the strategic dialogue around dissent teaches them to focus on situations in which civilian leaders disagree with them. In a divided republic, the reality is that military advice will frequently dissent from the position of at least some political actors, especially in the current political environment.⁴³ While officers should be aware of these potential conflicts and exercise some political savvy, they should not be focused primarily on which political actors agree or disagree with them. Instead, they should be concerned with giving the most accurate and candid assessment possible, consistent with their unique military expertise.

Finally, a focus on military dissent reinforces the notion that military advice is a tool to wield against civilian leaders rather than the fulfillment of a constitutional responsibility to support elected leaders in the conduct of their duties. Military leaders should not offer advice to achieve the policy outcomes they prefer; rather, they provide one form of expertise that can help political leaders make more effective policy decisions, typically as part of a broader strategy.

Instead of focusing on the question of whether apolitical military officers can resign or dissent after the civil-military dialogue breaks down, scholars should dedicate more energy toward articulating the positive role professional military officers can play in policy deliberations. Although military officers do not possess the constitutional authority to adjudicate between competing versions of the “common good,” they do have a critical responsibility to inform policy debates and discussions.⁴⁴

Professional officers looking for guidance on how to render military advice in a political context need more guidance than the current literature provides. It is not enough to tell military officers that civilians have the “right to be wrong”; officers need a new framework to help them understand how they can give advice in such a way that will help civilian leaders be right more often but that does not threaten civilian primacy. Military leaders need more robust norms and guidelines that can help them understand how to find their voice in the unequal dialogue. Drawing on the central insights of Carl von Clausewitz, the next section develops a framework for expert military advice in the policy-making process.

A Clausewitzian Framework for Military Expertise and Advice

The search for a new framework turns to an old source for inspiration. Carl von Clausewitz is perhaps best known for his insight that war is always political in nature: “the continuation of politics with the addition of other means.”⁴⁵ Yet his dialectical approach offers a much richer and more nuanced view of both the unity and distinctiveness of the military and the political aspects of war. According to Clausewitz, politics establishes the source of war, dictates the available means, and determines the desired ends.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, “war is special activity, different and separate from any other pursued by man.”⁴⁷ Within its subordinate sphere, then, war retains the logic of politics, but military expertise has its own “grammar.”⁴⁸

Since political leaders sometimes “may lack a detailed knowledge of military matters,” Clausewitz requires military leaders to provide unique military advice as part of a robust strategic dialogue.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, he is much more concerned about the influence of the political on the military, rather than vice versa. In fact, he goes so far as to suggest that the

senior military leader should sit in the cabinet so political leaders may shape his activities.⁵⁰ In contrast, Clausewitz expects military expertise may inform political decisions but not dictate political ends.

Clausewitz provides a much more complete account of the nature and limitations of military expertise. This perspective on the military leader's expert knowledge does not suggest that military leaders are always right and civilian leaders are always wrong in matters of war; rather, it suggests that close and continuous dialogue between military and civilian leaders is required to ensure strategic success. Moreover, it places clear responsibility on military leaders to develop special expertise related to military affairs.

Military Expertise

It is within the grammar of war where Clausewitz identifies unique military expertise, or military genius. Whereas civilian expertise lies within the realm of policy, the grammar of war centers on combat.⁵¹ Thus, the military leader must be expert in the conduct of war to include both tactics and military strategy, as well as the "creation, maintenance, and use" of fighting forces.⁵² All of these activities ultimately must relate to combat.

Yet military expertise faces significant limitations. Unlike other human activities, war is extremely complex because it "takes place in a unique environment of danger, fear, physical exertion, and uncertainty."⁵³ It is neither an art nor a science; rather, it is something akin to a duel on a larger scale.⁵⁴ The strategic interaction with a human adversary and the complexity of the environment in which war takes place make war inherently unpredictable.

For Clausewitz, it is precisely this capricious nature that provides the basis of military expertise and defines its limitations. Although "everything in strategy is very simple," he maintains that the military leader requires "great strength of character, as well as great lucidity and firmness of mind . . . to carry out the plan."⁵⁵ Years of experience and practice provide senior military leaders with the ability to "know friction in order to overcome it whenever possible, and in order not to expect a standard of achievement in his operations which this very friction makes impossible."⁵⁶ Clausewitz recognized that combat experience is itself punctuated and rare. Although he advises military leaders to turn to training

and the study of military history to supplement experience, he recognizes that even the best commanders will often get things wrong.

Modern attempts to develop a military science only underscore Clausewitz's perspective about the limits of military expertise. Moreover, the addition of new military and political tools of influence only exacerbates this complexity. As one commentator has noted, "Military science is not normally so exact as to rule out all but one school of thought on the question of how battles are to be fought and wars won. As a result, military planners frequently find themselves uncertain or divided regarding the kinds of preparations necessary to support the foreign policy purposes of the nation."⁵⁷

Despite recognizing these significant challenges, Clausewitz nevertheless devotes a significant amount of time to identifying the skills and characteristics required to develop military genius. Although military officers' understanding will always be limited and imperfect, a grasp of the grammar of war is nevertheless necessary to develop and implement effective strategy. Within the realm of combat, a military expert must be able to identify the military resources required to accomplish a given end and estimate the costs and risks of a campaign.⁵⁸ These skills are necessary because of both practical and political constraints. The unlimited application of resources would "result in strength being wasted, which is contrary to other principles of statecraft."⁵⁹ It could also undermine domestic support if the means used in a military operation are disproportionate to the ends sought.⁶⁰ Consequently, Clausewitz pays close attention to the military leader's need to strive for an optimal balance between the two.

According to Clausewitz, military experts must fully understand the capabilities at their disposal and how long military actions will take. This burden is indeed significant as demonstrated by the level of detail he devoted to tactical and operational questions, and it requires the careful study of military history and theories of war.⁶¹ "Practice and experience dictate the answer [to questions of feasibility]: this is possible, that is not."⁶² Thus, military experts possess a keen understanding of both what military force can accomplish and what it cannot.

In addition to understanding the means-ends relationship, military leaders must also possess the creativity and expertise necessary to generate options and develop ways consistent with war's political constraints. Clausewitz acknowledges the potential there is more than one path to

success when he argues, “given certain conditions, different ways of reaching the objective are possible.”⁶³ Yet military experts must be attuned to the political context when developing military options to support political ends because “questions of personality and personal relations raise the number of possible ways of achieving the goal of policy to infinity.”⁶⁴ Political leaders may consider certain military approaches to be off limits for moral or political reasons, or they may request to use military resources in particular ways. Yet Clausewitz suggests that military leaders must be open to allowing political leaders to choose what they consider the optimum path to their political objectives. Military leaders nevertheless have a responsibility to share their expertise on the feasibility of options, but they should recognize that nonmilitary factors may sometimes influence their approach.

Thus, even if they are deeply familiar with the grammar of war, military leaders must not be ignorant of domestic politics. Especially at the highest levels of command, military experts must have a sound grasp of national policy. Again, Clausewitz states, “No major proposal for war can be worked out in ignorance of political factors.”⁶⁵ For example, the scale of political purposes will have significant implications for the military means required and myriad other factors: “The political object—the original motive for the war—will thus determine both the military objective to be reached and the amount of effort it requires.”⁶⁶

As a result, all military planning must proceed from its political basis. If anyone attempts to separate war from its political aspects, they will be “left with something pointless and devoid of sense.”⁶⁷ For Clausewitz, then, the unity of war does not come from the overlapping nature of civilian and military spheres, but rather from the primacy of the civilian sphere.⁶⁸

Civilian Expertise

Although Clausewitz identifies the unique nature of military expertise, he identifies certain topics as outside the bounds of the military realm and squarely within the civilian sphere. Most notably, he places the onus for the ends of policy on civilian leaders. In distinguishing the commander and his army from the government, he unambiguously asserts, “the political aims are the business of the government alone.”⁶⁹ Civilian leaders alone dictate the ends of policy. Through the establishment

of policy, governments are the arbiters and custodians of the people's interests. Regardless of a nation's domestic institutional arrangements:

It can be taken as agreed that the aim of policy is to unify and reconcile all aspects of internal administration as well as of spiritual values and whatever else the moral philosopher may care to add. Policy, of course, is nothing in itself; it is simply the trustee for all these interests against other states. That it can err, subserve the ambitions, private interests, and vanity of those in power, is neither here nor there. In no sense can the art of war ever be regarded as the preceptor of policy, and here we can only treat policy as representative of all interests of the community.⁷⁰

Thus, civilian leaders alone are responsible for interpreting the "will of the people," identifying national values and interests, and making final judgments about how much risk the government can accept in particular areas. Moreover, since these factors are outside the grammar of war, military experts have no basis upon which to judge them. Instead, they must assume that the outcomes of policy are consistent with the interests of the community.⁷¹

Domestic politics and political organization also fall outside the military sphere. Civilian leaders bear full responsibility for all domestic political factors and economic considerations. When planning, military leaders must remember, "strategy does not inquire how a country should be organized and a people trained in order to produce the best military results. It takes these matters as it finds them."⁷² Even on questions of how to mobilize the nation and what level of resources can be provided during times of crisis, Clausewitz places responsibility for domestic political judgments squarely with civilian leaders. He also expects the government to dictate the size of the army and the system of supply.⁷³ After providing expert advice about the necessary resources, the military commander accepts the means he is given and uses such means as effectively as possible.⁷⁴

Of course, many policy judgments about the ends of policy or domestic organization may be contingent on the required means, costs, or duration. Political leaders may decide that the benefits inherent in some outcomes simply may not be worth the necessary effort. Consequently, they may choose to reduce the ends sought or forego an action altogether. In these cases, civilian decisions about the ends of policy or domestic organization are contingent on military expertise; however, this does not imply that military experts themselves have responsibility over these decisions. Rather, they have a responsibility to provide the

information civilian leaders require to interpret the public's will and to establish it in policy. Political ends must govern, but they must not be a "tyrant."⁷⁵

Overlapping Expertise

However, there are at least several areas where military expertise overlaps with civilian expertise. In these areas, civilian and military leaders share some degree of responsibility. The first area involves assessments of international politics, the security environment, and the opportunity costs of acting in one area while ignoring another. Changes in alliance structures or the international situation can significantly influence military operations. According to Clausewitz, in some campaigns, everything "depends on the existing political affiliations, interests, traditions, lines of policy, and the personalities of princes, ministers, favorites, mistresses, and so forth."⁷⁶ Although military leaders may not possess special expertise in all matters of state, they do share responsibility for certain aspects of international politics, such as the preservation of the military components of alliance structures.

The second area pertains to integrating the military instrument with other instruments of state power. In some cases, Clausewitz recognizes that military tools will be only part of the state's overall strategy. In other cases, the use of military power will remain confined to "such minimal wars, which consist of merely threatening the enemy, with negotiations held in reserve."⁷⁷ While military leaders do not hold any particular diplomatic expertise, they nevertheless share a responsibility in ensuring military tools complement the other instruments of the state. Additionally, military expertise concerning the consequences and limits of military power is of exceptional importance in this area. Yet even if military power is not actually used or is used only in a limited manner, military expertise plays a role in shaping the state's policies of prevention and deterrence.

The final area of shared expertise relates to the establishment of limiting principles and the management of escalation dynamics. Clausewitz recognizes that states sometimes will find it in their interest to wage limited wars, yet sees a potential trap in this approach. In situations involving minimal state interests, "the art of war will shrivel into prudence, and its main concern will be to make sure the delicate balance is not suddenly upset in the enemy's favor and the half-hearted war does

not become a real war after all.”⁷⁸ In these limited conflicts, the expertise of both civilian and military leaders must influence escalation dynamics. Together, they attempt to avoid a commitment of resources out of proportion with the desired ends.

Drawing the Lines

Although there are areas in which the military sphere overlaps with particular aspects in the civilian realm, there are nevertheless clear limits on military expertise. Clausewitz sees no circumstances under which military expertise will encompass questions regarding the ends of policy. However, he does not draw the same clear line with respect to the encroachment of policy onto combat. He reminds us that policy “is the guiding intelligence and war only the instrument, not vice versa. No other possibility exists, then, than to subordinate the military point of view to the political.”⁷⁹ He explicitly states that, at the highest levels, the idea of a purely military opinion or purely military advice is absurd.⁸⁰ However, Clausewitz also does not draw a clear line beyond which “operational expertise ought to take over and political control cease.”⁸¹ Although he admits that policy will not dictate “the posting of guards or the employment of patrols,” he does admit that political considerations will be “influential in the planning of war, of the campaign, and often even of the battle.”⁸² As Suzanne Nielsen, an associate professor of international relations at the US Military Academy, has argued, “If political considerations may also be significant here, then Clausewitz does not establish a clear limitation on political control over military operations.”⁸³ Clausewitz does not expect military leaders to be involved in politics, but he does anticipate that political leaders will direct military affairs.

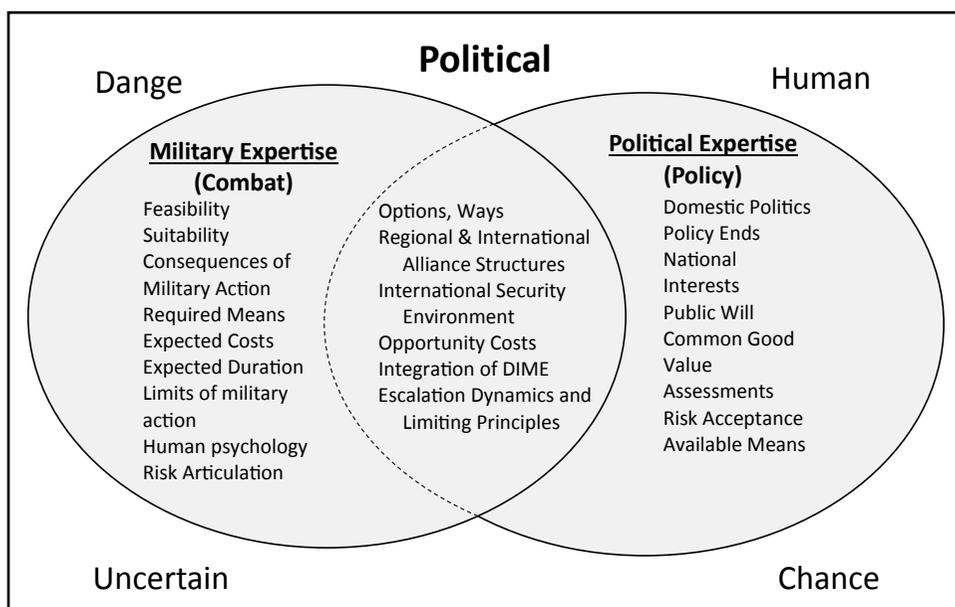


Figure 1: A Clausewitzian framework for the civil-military dialogue

Figure 1 depicts the central features of this Clausewitzian framework for military advice. First, it shows the overlapping nature of the military and civilian spheres of expertise and highlights the need for ongoing strategic dialogue. Second, it demonstrates the unique features of military expertise, while also clearly identifying those factors that fall outside the military sphere. Third, it shows there is no clear boundary preventing the encroachment of political factors into the military realm; policy permeates all military operations, and political leaders retain legitimate authority over military decisions. Finally, it illustrates that—despite the development of military expertise—war will remain an unpredictable endeavor because military operations are a form of human interaction that takes place within an environment of danger, chance, and uncertainty.

This framework has several features that make it more attractive than previous models of civil-military interaction. In many ways, it actually subsumes and unifies several of the most-prominent models. For example, it retains civilian leaders' right to be wrong and prevents political activity by military leaders. It also encapsulates the unequal dialogue and recognizes that civilian leaders have a responsibility to ensure military activities support policy goals. Finally, it is consistent with Burk's

conception of responsible obedience and suggests ways to operationalize this concept.

However, the Clausewitzian framework also adds new features to these existing models. First, it more carefully identifies the unique nature and limitations of military expertise. It focuses on the collaborative aspects of the civil-military dialogue and provides greater clarity on what role military experts can—and should—play in the policy-making process. In so doing, it takes the focus off issues like resignation and dissent, instead describing the role military experts should play in a successful civil-military dialogue. Finally, it provides a basis for military competence based on trust. If military leaders do not add value to the policy-making process, this framework suggests that civilian leaders can—and will—withdraw autonomy from the military. Thus, military leaders face incentives to develop expertise and to offer their best advice while recognizing the limits of military expertise.

Practical Implications of a Clausewitzian Framework

There are a number of practical implications that would result from adopting this framework. Although civilian and military leaders both share responsibility, this article focuses primarily on the military side of the dialogue. Below are the most important practical lessons military leaders should keep in mind when engaging in strategic dialogue at the highest levels.

Senior military leaders provide clear military advice but should avoid commenting on topics that lie beyond the sphere of military expertise. The Clausewitzian framework developed above identifies some areas of special military expertise, and some areas where military expertise overlaps with civilian expertise. Policy permeates all military operations according to this framework; however, military experts cannot claim inviolable autonomy over any of these topic areas. Rather, military leaders must earn autonomy through expert advice in practice. They do so by providing candid, frank, and accurate assessments on issues within their expertise.

However, as figure 1 illustrates, although there are some areas of overlap between civilian and military spheres, certain aspects of civilian expertise lie clearly outside the military realm. Because the conduct war is subordinate to the logic of politics, military leaders can claim no exper-

tise in questions about whether the government should pursue a particular policy. They also cannot claim any legitimate basis upon which to assess the national interest, the public will, or the common good. As such, they should refrain from both public and private comments about whether a particular military policy or budget is in the best interest of the United States.

Senior military leaders should provide appropriate military expertise in private and in public. Although military leaders do not possess the expertise upon which to assess what policy should be, they nevertheless have a duty to provide information that can inform civilian policy decisions. Unlike Brooks's focus on prohibited political tactics, however, this Clausewitzian framework instead focuses on content to determine whether military advice is appropriate. In so doing, it recognizes that military advice is always rendered in a political context and always has political implications, regardless of whether it is delivered in public or private. The framework further recognizes that military leaders often will be required to participate in events with extensive media coverage, such as official Department of Defense press conferences or congressional testimony. Thus, not only does this framework allow for public military advice, it actually requires military leaders to participate in the strategic dialogue in public. Yet it limits the topics on which they can engage to those within the clearly identified sphere of military expertise.

However, the logic of this framework is at least partially self-limiting; in addition to restricting the content of military advice, it also places de facto limits on which forums are appropriate for military engagement. For example, since military leaders base their assessments in professional expertise (limited though it may be), they should not write "opinion" articles or advocacy pieces related to policy questions. Army general Colin Powell's articles in the *New York Times* and *Foreign Affairs* violated the framework because they commented on when it is appropriate for civilian leaders to use force.⁸⁴ This framework suggests that military leaders should not give policy speeches, since policy is beyond the scope of military responsibility and expertise. Similarly, military experts should not leak information to the press in an attempt to influence policy outcomes. Yet it also recognizes that military leaders have a responsibility to clarify the record if civilian leaders distort their advice in public.⁸⁵

However, this framework does not prohibit senior military leaders from all writing opportunities, speaking engagements, or media events.

Yet it does suggest that articles and public engagements, including those with think tanks or civic groups, should remain focused on topics that do not extend beyond the military sphere. In addition, it suggests that senior military leaders will maintain a somewhat limited public profile.

Senior military leaders should provide the same information and advice to leaders in both the executive and legislative branches. Consistent with their constitutional responsibilities to serve both branches of government, military leaders have a responsibility to participate in the strategic dialogue with the president and members of Congress. Although military leaders possess no authority to hold political leaders accountable under a Clausewitzian framework, members of Congress nevertheless rely on military expertise when providing political oversight of the executive branch. When they cannot obtain that expertise, the Clausewitzian assumption that political leaders have access to military information collapses. Because of this lack of information, one also can no longer assume that policy is a repository of the public will or the common good.

Of course, the statutory authority of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the service chiefs under Title X, US Code may exacerbate the tendency for military officers to privilege their relationship with the president.⁸⁶ Moreover, the large number of legislators makes this type of broad sharing of expertise challenging, given current statutory and institutional arrangements. It is beyond the scope of this article to assess whether or not current laws or institutions undermine the civil-military relationship with respect to Congress. However, this framework does suggest that the strategic dialogue will be more effective if political leaders from both branches have ready access to military expertise. At a minimum, then, this framework suggests the need for regular military participation in robust oversight hearings in both public and unclassified settings.

Once again, however, it is worth emphasizing that the Clausewitzian framework does not simply focus on whether senior officers should dissent. Rather, it expects military officers to continually engage with elected civilian leaders from both branches in support of their constitutional duties. While Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki's comments about required troop levels in Iraq are one possible manifestation of this sort of dialogue, members of Congress may also need broader access to military advice to effectively carry out their constitutional duties to authorize the use of force and oversee executive policy implementation.

Of course, not all military information can or should be publically communicated. Closed hearings and private meetings with senior military leaders may also improve the quality of the strategic dialogue.

Senior military leaders should recognize and articulate the uncertainty and limitations inherent in any military advice. Some pundits suggest that military leaders currently emphasize uncertainty only when it benefits them and their interests and minimize it when it is convenient to do so.⁸⁷ However, a Clausewitzian perspective indicates that military leaders must include a dose of humility into their assessments. As such, the current practice of offering *best military advice* (BMA) is inconsistent with the Clausewitzian framework. In practice, it confers an air of legitimacy that military advice cannot attain.

Military expertise does provide valuable information during the strategic dialogue, and it should be one input into the policy-making process. Nevertheless, it will never be as precise in its diagnoses or prescriptions as expertise in other professions such as medicine and law is. Consequently, one might better conceive of military advice as a “considered military assessment” (CMA) containing significant uncertainty. Regardless of whether military leaders adopt a shift from BMA to CMA, the broader point remains that military leaders must be mindful not only of the friction of war but also of the uncertainty of future outcomes. The Clausewitzian framework sees experience as a lubricant that can partially mitigate uncertainty—not as something that can eliminate the effects of danger, chance, and human interaction in warfare.

Senior military leaders should render advice grounded in the profession’s expertise, not one professional’s view, and provide the full range of military opinion. Consistent with the previous point, military experts must also recognize that no one military leader can possess experience in all the aspects of joint warfare necessary to provide military advice. In short, no senior officer will have sufficient combat experience on land, in the air, or at sea. Moreover, even within one’s own experience, there often is considerable disagreement about what professional expertise has to say on the matter. As discussed earlier, this generally implies that there will be a range of opinions within or across the respective service professions.

The Clausewitzian perspective of a strategic dialogue also suggests that senior military leaders have a responsibility to share not only their “own” expert advice but also the broader range of expertise within the profession. Yet cases in which the advice of senior military officers conflict with

one another in public have become increasingly rare since the establishment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986. One notable exception is Gen Eric Shinseki's testimony during the run up to the Iraq War, which at least partially contradicted the United States Central Command commander on troop estimates.⁸⁸

Although there is a statutory requirement under Title X, US Code for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to present diverging opinions, the law provides significant discretion in practice. Nevertheless, many opportunities for senior leaders to share competing perspectives exist within the current deliberative process, including meetings of the operations deputies and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. However, on operational issues, opportunities that would inject diverse military views into the policy process are rarer since the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Additionally, there is no formal institutional process to include service perspectives into the National Security Council process, and regional combatant commanders are only included on an ad hoc basis.

Senior military leaders should provide political leaders with a variety of military options but should work with civilians to bound possibilities. Although civilian leaders have sole responsibility for determining the ends of policy, the Clausewitzian framework recognizes that cost-benefit analyses and military factors may influence their decisions. As a result, it may be rare that civilian leaders will have identified the ends of policy at the beginning of the strategic dialogue between military and civilian leaders. As Janine Davidson, senior fellow for defense policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, has noted, civilian leaders are inclined to seek options, while military leaders want end states from which to plan.⁸⁹

The Clausewitzian framework anticipates this conundrum and suggests that military leaders should expect to work with civilian leaders through an iterative strategic dialogue—even when ends are not initially clear. In some—perhaps even most—cases, military leaders may need to be prepared to provide military options for more than one potential end state. Civilian leaders, for their part, should provide some strategic guidance on possible end states. While Clausewitz is silent on what this guidance might look like, it could include a “zone of tolerance” for potential outcomes or suggest multiple end states. Civilians also may direct military leaders to develop particular options. A Clausewitzian perspective of military advice accepts that civilian leaders may include considerations beyond purely military factors into their calculations. Neverthe-

less, military experts retain their responsibility to assess the feasibility and suitability of military operations as the dialogue matures.

Senior military leaders should provide well-supported military estimates and provide all information relevant to policymakers' decisions. The Clausewitzian framework suggests that seemingly self-serving behavior will undermine effective strategy. Since political leaders alone have responsibility for determining policy that serves the political will, military leaders distort strategy by appearing to withhold information or providing erroneous or unsupported estimates. Consequently, they must clearly articulate their planning assumptions and defend their recommendations with data when available and with judgment when necessary. Although military experts must account for the friction of war and uncertainty when planning, they nevertheless should strive for optimality—the efficient use of state resources to accomplish political ends. The Clausewitzian framework suggests that, when they do not, they create an ends-ways or an ends-means mismatch.

Thus, military leaders who intentionally distort troop estimates or withhold information can also undermine confidence in military expertise and lead to further civilian encroachment into military autonomy. Since civilian leaders have the authority to dictate policy on all matters within the military sphere, they become increasingly likely to do so if military leaders do not produce results. The Clausewitzian framework depends on reliable and available military advice that allows civilian leaders to determine appropriate policy.

Conclusion

Recent debates about resignation and dissent exemplify a deeper problem in the literature on civil-military relations and the professional education of senior military leaders. Although scholars on both sides of these debates have offered thoughtful arguments about the topics of resignation and dissent, those scholars nevertheless have remained focused on issues that occur after the civil-military dialogue has broken down. This article attempts to widen the aperture of this debate and encourage other scholars to place renewed attention on how to improve the content and quality of the civil-military dialogue before it collapses. Questions about how to respond in the middle of crises are interesting, but focusing solely on crises ensures there will always be more to debate.

The Clausewitzian framework in this article is a starting point for future debate, but this model unifies several previous models of civil-military relations and integrates their insights into a more coherent whole. Perhaps most importantly, it adds additional content to discussions about the nature and limitations of military expertise. Thus, it attempts to help senior military leaders better understand how they can—and should—participate in the policy-making process. While recognizing the subordinate nature that military experts play in the unequal dialogue, this framework nevertheless aims to help military experts effectively advise political leaders so civilians can exercise their right to be wrong as rarely as possible.

Adopting norms consistent with this model would improve the civil-military dialogue, but several of the implications hint that current institutional arrangements may make some aspects of the framework more difficult to apply than others. In many cases, however, scholars have not yet fully examined the effects of the Goldwater-Nichols Act and changes to Title X have had on the processes that dictate civil-military interactions at the strategic level.

How seriously do senior military leaders take their responsibilities to Congress, and what institutional changes might improve the quality and frequency of military advice? Additionally, are there any noticeable differences in the military consensus or internal dissent between institutional and operational-strategic policy areas? Has the Goldwater-Nichols Act changed the way in which senior military leaders provide advice to the executive and legislative branches in other significant ways?

Civil-military scholars must assess what norms should govern civil-military relations at the highest level and how professional military education has taught and transmitted norms. Are these programs effective in preparing officers for their responsibilities in the policy-making process? While many scholars focus their energy on what norms should be, the field would benefit from greater attention to empirical studies about whether these programs are effective in transmitting norms. To the extent it can, the United States should begin building the foundation and habits necessary for constructive strategic dialogue now. ■■■

Notes

1. Statement of Martin Dempsey in “Testimony on U.S. Policy towards Iraq and Syria and the Threat Posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL),” unclassified testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee (Washington, DC, 16 September 2014), <http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/14-66%20-%209-16-14.pdf>.

2. Don M. Snider, “Should General Dempsey Resign? Army Professionals and the Moral Space for Dissent,” *Strategic Studies Institute* (web site), 21 October 2014, <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Should-General-Dempsey-Resign/2014/10/21>; James M. Dubik, “On Principled Resignation: A Response,” *Best Defense Blog*, ForeignPolicy.com, 14 October 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/14/on-principled-resignation-a-response/>; and James M. Dubik, “No Avoiding Moral Responsibility in War: Is There Ever a Time to Resign?,” *Army Magazine*, February 2015, <http://www.armymagazine.org/2015/01/13/no-avoiding-moral-responsibility-in-war-is-there-ever-a-time-to-resign/>.

3. In 1999, only 26 percent of elite veterans agreed that a senior officer should resign in protest in the face of an “unwise” order. By 2014, however, 63 percent thought so. See, for example, James Thomas Golby, Peter D. Feaver, and Lindsay P. Cohn, “Thanks for Your Service: Civilian and Veteran Attitudes After Fifteen Years of War,” in *What Difference Does Two Wars Make?*, eds. Kori Schake and James Mattis (Palo Alto, CA: Hoover Institution, forthcoming 2015).

4. It is possible that at least part of this increase is the result of blogs and social media that lower barriers to entry into professional debates of this type and are more accessible.

5. Gary Anderson, “Is It Time for General Dempsey to Resign?,” *Best Defense Blog*, ForeignPolicy.com, 26 September 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/26/is-it-time-for-general-dempsey-to-resign/>; Seth Cropsey, “The Obama-Military Divide,” *Wall Street Journal*, 29 September 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/seth-cropsey-the-obama-military-divide-1412033300>; and Andrew Tilghman and Jeff Schogol, “Calls for Brass to Resign Add to Debate over Mideast Policy,” *Military Times*, 30 September 2014, <http://archive.militarytimes.com/article/20140930/NEWS05/309300067/Calls-brass-resign-add-debate-over-Mideast-policy>.

6. H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997). For a discussion of various interpretations of McMaster’s book, also see Peter D. Feaver, “Should Senior Military Officers Resign in Protest if Obama Disregards Their Advice?,” *Shadow Government Blog*, ForeignPolicy.com, 7 October 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/07/should-senior-military-officers-resign-in-protest-if-obama-disregards-their-advice/>.

7. Anderson, “Is It Time for General Dempsey to Resign?”

8. *Ibid.*

9. Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 6.

10. Richard H. Kohn, “Always Salute, Never Resign,” *Foreign Affairs*, 10 November 2009, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2009-11-10/always-salute-never-resign>.

11. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, eds., *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 465–67.

12. Don M. Snider, “Should General Dempsey Resign?”

13. *Ibid.*; also see James Burk, “Responsible Obedience by Military Professionals: The Discretion to Do What is Wrong,” in *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, edited by Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 149–71; and Martin L. Cook, *The Moral Warrior: Ethics and Service in the U.S. Military* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 55.

14. Snider, "Should General Dempsey Resign?"
15. Dubik, "No Avoiding Moral Responsibility in War."
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Given that there is no tradition of resignation in the US military, it is difficult to say empirically whether a senior officer's decision to resign would become politicized in the middle of a contentious war. For further discussion, see Richard H. Kohn, "Always Salute, Never Resign."
19. Here I follow Kohn's definition of high-level resignations as only those including four-star officers serving in positions on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in combatant commands, or other ad hoc wartime command positions at that level of visibility.
20. Dubik, "No Avoiding Moral Responsibility in War."
21. Peter D. Feaver, "Military Resignation in Protest is Still a Bad Idea," *Shadow Government Blog*, ForeignPolicy.com, 24 October 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/24/military-resignation-in-protest-is-still-a-bad-idea/>.
22. On the limited nature of military expertise, see Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Free Press, 2002), 258–64; Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 68–75; and Risa A. Brooks, "Militaries and Political Activity in Democracies," in *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, edited by Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 213–38.
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26. James Burk, "Responsible Obedience by Military Professionals," 149–71.
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30. Burk, "Responsible Obedience by Military Professionals," 156.
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32. Ibid.; and Dubik, "On Principled Resignation."
33. Golby, Cohn, and Feaver, "Thanks for Your Service."
34. James Thomas Golby, "Self-Interest Misunderstood: Military Partisanship and Public Trust" (presentation, Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Chicago, IL, October 2013).
35. Lewis Sorley, *Honorable Warrior: General Harold K. Johnson and the Ethics of Command* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999); and McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 310–14.
36. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 311.
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48. *Ibid.*, 605.
49. Nielsen, "Rules of the Game?," 636.
50. Clausewitz, *On War*, 608.
51. *Ibid.*, 95.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Nielsen, "Rules of the Game?," 632.
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60. *Ibid.*, 585.
61. Nielsen, "Rules of the Game?," 633. Also, see Clausewitz, 164, for a discussion of the importance of military history as a substitute for experience.
62. Clausewitz, *On War*, 120.
63. *Ibid.*, 93.
64. *Ibid.*, 94.
65. *Ibid.*, 608.
66. *Ibid.*, 81.
67. *Ibid.*, 605.
68. *Ibid.* For a more nuanced discussion of the unity and distinctiveness of the civilian and military spheres, see Nielsen, *Political Control over the Use of Force*, 10–14.

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71. Nielsen, “Rules of the Game?,” 635.
72. Clausewitz, *On War*, 144.
73. Nielsen, *Political Control over the Use of Force*, 28. Also, see Clausewitz, 89, 196, and 360.
74. Nielsen, *Political Control over the Use of Force*, 28–29.
75. Clausewitz, *On War*, 87.
76. *Ibid.*, 569; but see Nielsen, “Rules of the Game?,” which argues that Clausewitz places all matters of international politics outside the sphere of military expertise.
77. Clausewitz, *On War*, 604.
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*, 607.
80. *Ibid.*
81. Nielsen, *Political Control over the Use of Force*, 25.
82. Clausewitz, *On War*, 606.
83. Nielsen, *Political Control over the Use of Force*, 26.
84. Colin L. Powell “Why Generals Get Nervous,” *New York Times*, 8 October 1992, A35; and Colin L. Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 5 (Winter 1992–1993): 36–41.
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The literature on Civil-Military Relations often leaves professional officers and political leaders in a state of uncertainty. Scholars, observers, and practitioners often disagree. What are the essential issues that cause tension, disagreement, and misunderstanding? How should each behave in the interaction, and treat the other? What might the future bring in this relationship, so crucial to the nation's security and overall well-being?

Civil-Military Behaviors that Build Trust

Richard H. Kohn

(Adapted from Kohn, "Building Trust: Civil-Military Behaviors for Effective National Security," *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, ed. by Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009], 2264-289, 379-389.)

For Senior Military:

1. Do everything possible to **gain trust with the civilians**: no games, no leaking, no attempts at manipulation, no denying information, no slow rolling, no end runs to Congress or up the chain, but total openness. Many, and probably most, civilians come into office without necessarily trusting the military, knowing that they have personal views, ideologies, ambitions, institutional loyalties, and institutional perspectives and agendas. There has been so much controversy, friction, and politicization in the last decades that they'd have to be Rip Van Winkles to think otherwise. Some, perhaps many, both fear and are jealous of senior military leaders: for their accomplishments, achievements, bravery, rank, status, and legitimacy in American society.
2. Insist on the right to give the military perspective, without varnish. But do not be purposefully frightening so as to manipulate outcomes--but straight, thoughtful professional advice. At the same time, do not speak out: that is, **speak up but not out**. Keep it confidential and don't let subordinates or staffs leak the advice or let it become public unless it arises appropriately in testimony before Congress. If the civilians want your advice known, let them make it known.
3. **Do what's right from a moral and professional perspective, and don't let the civilians force anything otherwise**. Help them. If they are making mistakes, warn them but then leave it at that. They have the right and the authority to make mistakes, and if they insist, then the military leadership should not prevent it by behaviors that undermine civilian control, which is foundational in American government. Military leaders have neither the experience, perspective, or functional responsibility to judge fully implications and outcomes. The integrity of our system of government overrides any conceivable national security problem short of the survival of the Republic—again, a judgment beyond the military profession.
4. **Anticipate the civilians in military policy** in terms of changing, reforming, adjusting, and thinking through national security problems, innovation, alternative thinking, etc. Evolution, transformation—however labeled—is ongoing and managing it is a chief professional duty. The standard is what's best for national defense, best for the country, broadly conceived—not necessarily what benefits one's service, or command, or the military in general. If some change or policy is in one's best professional judgment deleterious, say so when appropriate but leave it at that.

5. **Resist pressures.** Five come to mind but indeed there may be more.

A. First, **Careerism.** The pressure to conform, to stay silent, to go along, to do what'll advance one's career, while universal, is one of the most deadly behaviors for effective civil-military relations. Do not remain silent. Do not suppress open discussion and debate in one's unit, command, or service in order to avoid angering civilian superiors. National defense requires that the military communicate honestly inside its institutions the proper courses of action, in the studying of warfare and current and past operations, in projections about the need for weapons, in doctrine and strategy and tactics, and in a large variety of professional issues and concerns. One cannot keep faith with subordinates or the American people by avoiding proper professional behavior. The military profession respects most, and requires, physical courage. All professions require and respect moral courage.

B. Second, what could be called **Institutionalism:** doing what's best for one's service, command, unit, etc. when the larger national interest suggests otherwise. Few things arouse more suspicion and engender more distrust from civilian leaders, Congress, and the American people. This lowers the reputation and credibility of the military.

C. **Politicization.** Don't be driven by personal ideology or belief about what are the best policy outcomes in offering advice or any other behavior. An officer's political leanings or affiliation should never come up or become known. To function as the neutral servant of the state, the military must be seen to be not non-partisan, but un-partisan—simply above and beyond partisan politics. George C. Marshall wrote: "I have never voted, my father was a democrat, my mother was a republican, and I am an Episcopalian." Any discussion of partisan politics is out of bounds because it politicizes. If you vote, keep it private as a personal matter. There is a reason that in the old Navy, three subjects were out of bounds for discussion in the wardroom: sex, religion, and politics. All of them can cause dissension or can erode the neutrality and objectivity of an officer and the military as an institution. A distinguished senior general was once called by the White House personnel office, considering him for a job requiring Senate confirmation, to inquire of his party affiliation. The General told his aide, "tell them it's none of their business." Ten days later they called again; same response. Actually, the General should have told them, "as an officer in the American armed forces, I have no party affiliation."

D. **Manipulation.** Do not carry the water for the civilians on political as opposed to professional issues. Defending the necessity of a war, promoting a particular policy or decision, explaining how the war is going from anything other than a strictly military viewpoint is not the military's role, but merely politicizes the military, and if the issues are at all contested, reduces the military's credibility as the neutral servant of the state and its legitimacy in national life, both with the public and opposition political leaders, with attendant harm to civil military respect and trust. A recent Chairman of the Joint Chiefs on more than one occasion told public audiences that terrorism was the most dangerous threat the country faced since the Civil War. Not only did this lack believability as a historical interpretation, but it politicized the Chairman and injected him into partisan political debate.

E. **Resignation.** Personal and professional honor do not require request for reassignment or retirement when one's service, command, unit, department, or

government pursues something with which you disagree. The military's role is to advise and then execute lawful orders. One individual's definition of what is morally or professionally ethical is not necessarily the same as another's, or society's. Even those officers at the top of the chain of command—much less those below—are in virtually all cases unaware of all the larger national and international considerations involved, which is the realm of the politicians, elected and appointed. If officers at various levels measure all policies, decisions, orders, and operations in which they are involved by their own moral and ethical systems, and act thereon, the military would be in chaos.

Resignation—the act, the threat, even the hint—is a threat to the civilians to use the prestige and moral legitimacy and standing of the military in American society to oppose a policy or decision. It inherently violates civilian control. Nothing except lying does more to undermine civil-military trust. A senior officer whom the President permits to retire or reassigns can abandon their troops and the country if he or she feels the absolute necessity, in a most extraordinary situation. If so, however, the leaving must be done in silence in order to keep faith with the oath to the Constitution, that is, to preserve, defend, and protect it—because pervasive in that document is civilian control.

6. Finally, there are **professional obligations that extend into retirement** for the most senior military officers that connect directly to civil-military relations. The most important dictates against using one's status as a respected military leader to summon the reputation of the American military for disinterested patriotism, impartial service, and political neutrality, to commit political acts that in fact undermine civil-military relations and contribute to the politicization of their profession. Officers do not hang up their profession norms and values with their uniform, any more than lawyers or doctors do when they retire, or for that matter any other professional. When college professors retire, they do not suddenly promote or condone plagiarism. To endorse presidential candidates or to attack an administration in which they served at a senior level when it is still in office violates an old, and well-established professional tradition; it uses the legitimacy of the military and its reputation for impartiality for what is or inevitably becomes a partisan purpose. It tells officers still on active duty that it's OK to be partisan; it suggests to the American people that the military is just another interest group with its own agenda, rather than the neutral servant of the state; it warns politicians not to trust officers, and to choose the senior military leadership more for political and ideological loyalty and compatibility than for professional accomplishment, experience, candor, strength and steadfastness of character, courage, and capacity for highest responsibility. And it suggests that senior military officers cannot be trusted in the civil-military dialogue to keep confidences, not to abuse candid interchange, or not to undermine their bosses politically—in other words, it corrupts the civil-military relationship for those who still must work with civilians in the most intimate circumstances of policy and decision-making to defend the country.

For Senior Civilians:

1. **Get to know the military:** the people, the profession, the institutions, the culture and its needs, assumptions, perspectives, and behaviors in order to permit proper and informed decisions on the myriad of issues that decide peace and war. Read, travel, interact, and listen. Delegate but do not make the mistake of thinking that military issues, weapons, processes, behaviors, systems, strategies, operations, or even tactics are so esoteric or technical that they cannot be understood, and that civilian authority must be surrendered to uniformed personnel. Responsibility in the end will not be delegated with the authority. Ask many questions, continually, until there are answers that can be understood, and that make sense.

2. **Treat military people and their institutions with genuine respect**, and if that proves personally difficult or is insincere, serve elsewhere in government, or not at all. See to the needs of the troops insofar as at all possible, for it is one of the prime norms of military service that leaders take care of their people--their physical and emotional needs--before they take care of their own, down to the lowest enlisted ranks and most recent recruits.

3. **Support and defend the military** against unwarranted and unfair criticism and attacks, represent their needs and viewpoints elsewhere in government even if you are pursuing policies, or making or executing decisions that they do not like, such as cuts in forces or resources. Throwing them under the bus strains their loyalty and candor in spite of their professional obligations. It is not the job of civilians in the executive branch to criticize the military personally or institutionally. Political leadership includes political cover; if you want the military to stay out of politics, then you have to assume the responsibility.

4. At the same time, **work to de-politicize national defense**: don't use it for partisan advantage just as one attempts to avoid others from using it for partisan purposes against the Administration. Partner with the Congress in every way possible to avoid the *ménage à trois*.

5. **Hold the military accountable** for its actions, within the normal, legitimate processes of the services and the Department of Defense. Do not be afraid to relieve or replace officers who do not perform their duties satisfactorily, as long as this is accomplished after due consideration, and in a fair and appropriate manner. Officers who need to be relieved do not need to be dishonored or disgraced, after a lifetime of service that qualified them and earned them high rank, for mistakes or malfeasance. The firing is enough of a penalty.

6. Likewise **do not hide behind the military** for your own, or your colleagues, mistakes or when bad things happen. Be personally accountable and responsible; one gains enormous credibility and respect for taking the political heat, and for protecting the military and not trying to shift the blame to them and leave them exposed because of civilian decisions or unexpected developments that they were not necessarily responsible for anticipating. If civilian control means civilians have the ultimate authority, they also have the ultimate responsibility and accountability.

7. **Exercise authority gracefully and forcefully** but not abusively, or peremptorily, or at the expense of anyone's personal or professional dignity. Military people want and respect forceful leadership. They want decisions, guidance, instructions, goals (in as explicit and comprehensive form as possible), and above all, in a timely fashion so that time, money, and most importantly lives are not wasted because of indecision or uncertainty. If they cannot have that, be certain to explain exactly why not. The military wants and needs as ordered and as predictable a world as possible in order to deal with the chaos and unpredictability of war; make every effort to meet deadlines and keep to schedules so that they do not succumb to the feeling that dealing with you is . . . war.