



# Issues of Democracy

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*Civil-Military  
Relations in a  
Democracy*

# Issues of Democracy

## *Civil Military Relations in a Democracy*

**T**he United States has never known military coups nor arbitrary military rule, a rarity among the nations of the world. Some might say that George Washington set the precedent in refusing to back his troops in a mutiny over unpaid wages, shortly after the Revolution. Others might argue that it is the resolve of the American people, who, in good times and bad, always have been committed to civilian control of their armed forces. Whatever the reason, this uniquely American tradition of the citizen-soldier has worked for more than 200 years.

In the modern world, however, the role of the citizen-soldier is constantly changing. Today's soldiers often find themselves building bridges in a peacemaking endeavor rather than for the battlements of war. Soldiers also assist in exercises that are designed to bring both military and



civilians together in humanitarian, peace-keeping, and search and rescue missions.

In this issue, H. Allen Holmes, assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict, emphasizes the importance of civil-military relations and its future in an ever-changing world. Military historian David F. Trask talks about the historic U.S. view of civilian control of the military up to World War II, from an adapted version of the USIA pamphlet, *Democracy and Defense: Civilian Control of the Military in the United States*. From the post-Cold War era to the present, Louis W. Goodman, dean of the School of International Service at American University, continues the focus on civil-military relations in a democracy, and looks at its future. Finally, in an interview with

General John Sheehan, supreme allied commander for the Atlantic, contributing editor David Pitts asks how the NATO initiative, Partnership for Peace, has helped participating countries strengthen civil-military relations in the newly emerging democratic states.

*Above, medical technician treats a Somali child during a medical civic action program in Mogadishu. Today's soldiers often find themselves participating in peacemaking endeavors rather than preparing for war.*

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# Civil Affairs

## *Reflections of the Future*

*by*

*H. Allen Holmes*

In a world of decreasing military confrontations, the U.S. military turns its attention increasingly to the restoration of war-torn infrastructures, such as rebuilding bridges, digging wells, and demining farmland. In a speech before the 1997 Worldwide Civil Affairs Conference, the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict, describes the civilian dimensions of today's military operations in many parts of the world.

**A**s we approach the 21st century, the United States faces a dynamic and uncertain security environment. We are in a period of strategic opportunity. With the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the threat of global war has receded. The values that we hold dear—democracy and market economy—are being embraced in many parts of the world. Meanwhile, the changing global economy and proliferation of international information systems continue to transform culture, commerce, and global interactions.

Nevertheless, the world remains a highly uncertain place, with increasingly complex and dangerous national security threats. We continue to face a variety of grave regional dangers in Southwest Asia, the Middle East, and East Asia. Moreover, as we saw in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, and Zaire, failed or failing states threaten to create instability, internal conflict and humanitarian crises. In some cases, governments will lose their ability to maintain public order and

provide for the needs of their people, creating the conditions for civil unrest, famine, massive flows of migrants across international borders, and aggressive actions by neighboring states.

In this context, the work of our civil affairs forces has grown more and more salient. In four short years, we have seen an increasing importance of civil affairs in military operations other than war. Moreover, recognizing the value of civil affairs, the staff officers and planners of our conventional forces are becoming increasingly involved in planning the civil dimensions to military operations. For example, in Bosnia, the planning for military support to elections was accomplished by operations and strategic and policies staffs, while our civil affairs personnel served as critical links between military and civilian planners.

In recent years, many countries outside of the United States have experienced the value of U.S. civil affairs missions, and are incorporating these types of skills into their own militaries, using our civil affairs forces as a model. A number of countries have recognized the importance of civil affairs and sent their military personnel to the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, requested mobile training teams, and visited our civil affairs units to understand what makes our civil affairs so useful to military commanders. Two of our chief allies, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea, are represented here at this worldwide conference. Others, including France and Germany, have expressed an active interest.

One of our future challenges will be to prepare our civil affairs units to work from a multinational perspective. Our

civil affairs planners must anticipate differences in civil affairs doctrines among our allies and be prepared to work together to meet overall goals.

The recently completed Quadrennial Defense Review was a comprehensive review of U.S. defense needs through the turn of the century. As part of this review, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, articulated a clear vision for the Defense Department through the year 2015 and provided a blueprint for a strategy-based, balanced, and affordable defense program. Adhering to a national security strategy of engagement, we will continue to exercise strong leadership in the international community, using all dimensions of our capabilities to respond to the full spectrum of contingencies, to shape the international security environment, and to prepare now to meet the challenges of an uncertain future. These three components—respond, shape and prepare—represent the strategic basis for both the Quadrennial Defense Review and our future defense strategy.

### Responding to Crises

Recent experiences in the Gulf, Haiti and Bosnia have demonstrated the extent to which our special operations forces and in particular, our civil affairs personnel, enhance the effectiveness of our conventional combat forces in responding to crises and, after the crisis is over, helping our diplomats to shape the security environment.

During *Operation Desert Storm*, for example, our special operations forces supported a major coalition combat operation for the first time since their reconstitution. Our civil affairs forces were critical during the post-conflict stage of *Desert Storm*, in assisting the Kuwaiti government

to restore essential services going to the people of Kuwait and to reestablish its authority.

Subsequently, our civil affairs forces helped respond to a broad spectrum of humanitarian crises that followed—including *Provide Comfort*, where our civil affairs personnel assisted with the resettlement of the Kurds, and smaller operations such as *Pacific Haven*, during which we helped move other Kurds that had provided us with intelligence, and other assistance to Guam.

In Haiti, our civil affairs soldiers performed activities that ranged from restoring electricity throughout the countryside, to serving as expert advisors to 12 government ministries.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, during the implementation force (IFOR) phase, under the leadership of a British Corps commander, U.S. civil affairs personnel helped coordinate military involvement in the reconstruction of the civil infrastructure and provision of relief efforts of more than 500 international, government, and non-government organizations.

During IFOR, the focus of civil affairs was on peacekeeping operations and small community projects in areas in which troops were deployed. With the deployment of the stabilization force or SFOR, there has been a change in focus to national-level objectives. To that end, SFOR uses the civil-military task force as its primary interface with the civilian establishment in promoting the economic regeneration and rebuilding of the country, in promoting returns of refugees, and in building lasting institutions for peace. The task force, which is being led by a U.S. commander, has been involved in literally hundreds of major projects in support of

SFOR and in furtherance of civil implementation of the Dayton Accords.

Our recent experiences illustrate an increasing possibility that the U.S. military will be called upon to participate in more complex, non-traditional operations—ones that involve close interaction with other U.S. government agencies, non-governmental and international organizations, and our allies. Thus, the work that we have done in the past truly points the way toward the future security environment that we will face.

In this context, our civil affairs units have a lot to offer. But the way in which these forces are to be employed must be considered very carefully before we participate in an operation. Some of this can be addressed during the early planning stages of an operation, by incorporating mechanisms for transitioning responsibilities from our military to appropriate U.S. government agencies and ultimately back to the host country. This means involvement by relevant offices within the State Department, the Justice Department and others when we plan an operation.

### Shaping the International Security Environment

The work of our civil affairs units in the Gulf, Haiti and Bosnia-Herzegovina demonstrates how well civil affairs units shape the international strategic environment after our traditional forces respond to a crisis. Equally important is the day-to-day work of our civil affairs units before a crisis hits. Our humanitarian demining efforts around the world offer a poignant example of the significant contributions made by our civil affairs personnel.

The anti-personnel landmine crisis has taken an enormous toll on populations



and governments around the world. The failure or inability of a country to address the proliferation of anti-personnel landmines, beyond the obvious personal suffering, denies farmers use of their fields, which stymies the resumption of agricultural production, denies access to markets, reduces public confidence in fledgling governments and creates many other hurdles for a nation trying to heal the wounds of war. Beyond the injuries inflicted and the medical expenses incurred, minefields drive whole societies into helpless poverty with no obvious way out.

Humanitarian demining is one of the most fundamental missions that the United States can be involved in, and is a high priority for the Clinton administration. The goal of our demining effort is to help countries establish long-term indigenous infrastructures capable of educating the population to protect themselves from landmines, eliminating the hazards posed by landmines and returning mined areas to their previous condition.

The program assists the host country in development of all aspects of mine awareness and mine clearance procedures, with the caveat that no U.S. personnel will clear landmines or enter active minefields. Special operations forces are the primary U.S. military resource for the training programs.

When we met this time last year, our civil affairs personnel had only recently been incorporated into demining teams. Now, our civil affairs soldiers are beginning to play a key role in our humanitarian demining program. Civil affairs personnel serve as liaisons among our demining teams, the host government and the U.S. embassy. Moreover, the civil affairs forces provide the necessary skills to

train host-nation personnel to develop indigenous demining entities and maintain self-sustaining long-term programs, which is the ultimate goal of this critical program.

Our civil affairs personnel also create immediate, direct, tangible benefits in host countries around the world: roads and schoolhouses are built, wells are dug, governments are stabilized, chaos and confusion are diffused and order is reestablished. By making a difference in the lives of the local populace, our civil affairs personnel are helping to strengthen the goodwill of the United States in the eyes of the world—clearly, our civil affairs forces are invaluable diplomacy multipliers.

As we look to the future, it is critical that we maintain a presence and develop relationships in regions that are important to our national interest. Our challenge is to maintain an effective military presence throughout the world within a tighter budgetary environment. In order to do so, we must avoid high-cost solutions and seek greater international cooperation. Our civil affairs personnel allow us to do just that.

Looking at a snapshot in time, we see civil affairs personnel serving in Rwanda and Namibia as part of humanitarian demining teams, acting as intermediaries with the host country of Mali in a medical operation, working on small engineering projects such as well-digging and road improvement in Belize, continuing to help plan for elections in Bosnia, coordinating the allocation of humanitarian assistance flowing into Cambodia and also assisting the government of Cambodia to establish an infrastructure capable of providing necessary governmental services to its people, and working with non-governmental agencies and private entities on

civic action projects in Laos, where up until a year ago, no U.S. military personnel had been permitted.

The work of our civil affairs personnel plays a critical role in promoting regional stability, preventing or reducing conflicts and threats, and deterring aggression and coercion worldwide. And in turn, civil affairs capabilities provide a wide range of options for our regional commanders, ambassadors and policymakers.

#### Preparing Now for an Uncertain Future

Like the special operations forces of yesterday, today's special operations forces face unusual challenges. They must adjust to the non-traditional challenges we face today and at the same time, transform U.S. combat capabilities and support structures to be able to shape and respond effectively in the face of future challenges.

To be prepared to help fight and win our nation's wars, to be capable of a range of challenging contingency operations, and to be ready to assist our friends and allies in the Third World in establishing a secure environment, we must continuously develop new tactics and equipment that address the New Age warfare we will face in the 21st century.

We must anticipate that our adversaries will increasingly use asymmetric means or unconventional approaches to circumvent or undermine our strengths while exploiting our vulnerabilities. In order to avoid direct military confrontation with the United States, our adversaries may threaten us with the use of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction or information warfare to achieve their goals. When faced with a conventional war, these means could also be used to delay or deny us

access to critical facilities, disrupt our command and control networks, deter allies and potential coalition partners from supporting our efforts, or inflict higher-than-expected casualties in order to weaken our national resolve. Faced with these non-military threats, the work of our civil affairs forces becomes even more important, because they possess a greater understanding of the civil sector than our conventional forces.

Last year, I mentioned that the civil affairs community can play an important role in preparing other governments and their citizenry to manage the consequences of a terrorist attack. I urge you to continue to explore ways that you can contribute in this area.

I urge you to listen carefully to the speakers during this conference as they discuss future challenges and available resources that can help you in your work. I encourage you to ask questions, offer comments or suggestions based on your own past experiences and introduce new ideas. All of this will be helpful for the interagency policymakers and the commanders-in-chief to take back home with them.

The years ahead will be a time of testing for all of our armed forces. Pressure on the defense budget will place a premium on adaptability and our ability to accept change. I am confident that today's civil affairs forces have the creativity, versatility and professional skills to tackle new, unconventional tasks while maintaining their traditional skills, and that the civil affairs community will emerge strong in the coming decade, with a renewed sense of purpose in a changing world.

# Democracy and Defense

## *Civilian Control of the Military in the United States*

*by*

*David F. Trask*

In this adapted version of the USIA pamphlet, the former chief historian for the U.S. Army Center of Military History, explains how the concept of the citizen-soldier in a democracy helps to ensure the basic fundamental freedoms, without compromising the necessity of a military force.

**I**n 1782, just after the Revolutionary War (1775–1781), certain officers who felt that they had received inadequate pay for wartime services contemplated a military revolt against the civilian government.

Hoping to secure the support of their commander, they gathered in Newburgh, New York, to hear the views of General George Washington. But Washington flatly refused to support a military mutiny, calling instead for disbandment of the army and continuing loyalty to the civilian government. Washington's firm stance forestalled the mutiny. Ever since, U.S. military leadership has accepted civilian control.

This enviable record results from the unshakable conviction of the American people that civilian control of the armed services is an essential aspect of government of, by and for the people. In a democracy, public policy is decided by the majority, subject to the rule of law instead of brute force. Civilian control of the military helps to ensure that decisions

concerning defense policy do not compromise fundamental democratic values, such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of religion.

However, as George Washington recognized, democratic nations such as the United States must maintain armed forces. From time to time, external threats develop, and on occasion, internal conflicts also occur—such as the American Civil War—to which the government must respond by enlarging the military. These circumstances generated some tensions between military and civilian leaders, but the latter always prevailed.

Certain criteria have governed American civil-military relations from the beginning of the nation. Louis Smith, a leading student of civil-military relations, has summarized them effectively. They include:

- ▶ Civilian leadership of the executive branch of government. The national leadership is accountable to a popular majority through frequent and regular elections.
- ▶ Civilian leadership of the professional military services and departments. The professional military heads of the army, the navy and the air force are subordinate to civilian departmental heads, who are appointed by the president and confirmed by Congress. In other words, the civilian executive stands at the head of the military chain of command, supported by civilian subordinates who oversee the day-to-day activities of the armed forces.
- ▶ Statutory provisions to establish fundamental national security policies. Elected legislative representatives of the people enact laws that define the

defense, organization and policies of the nation. The chief executive enforces these directives. In the United States, the Constitution provides basic guidelines, and the Congress passes legislation that defines the scope of military activity.

- ▶ Judicial defense of civilian control. The judiciary prevents the military from compromising civil liberties, including those of the members of the armed services. In the United States, the Supreme Court is empowered to hear cases that involve military infringements on the rights of the citizenry.

How did the American people come to establish civilian control of the military? How did they manage to preserve such control despite significant challenges to national security at various points over the last two centuries?

### The Constitution and Civilian Control

The successful defense of the American colonies during the colonial era strengthened local confidence that a militia or volunteers sufficed and that a standing army was not necessary to ensure security. Colonial legislatures, which possessed the power of the purse, proved effective in preserving control over military matters and resisting the English Crown. These bodies became the principal exponents of American ideas about the dangers of permanent military organizations, and they were the main advocates of civilian constraints on the military.

Thus during the Revolution, civilian control of the military became an indispensable attribute of liberty and therefore



of democracy. It also reaffirmed that citizen-soldiers, called to arms in emergencies, could provide needed military personnel without threatening the well-being of the state or civilian values.

In 1787, when the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, it devoted considerable attention to the question of national defense. The Founding Fathers sought to balance the need to provide the central government with the power necessary to ensure national security against the desire to uphold civil and political liberties.

Several structural devices chosen by the Founding Fathers to guard against an unduly powerful central government affected the Constitution's military provisions.

- ▶ Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution gives dual roles of chief executive and commander-in-chief to the president. This ensures that the civilian chief executive stands at

the head of the military chain of command and through command authority, ensures civilian control over the making of military policy.

- ▶ Article I Section 8 of the Constitution gives the power to the legislative branch to “provide for the common Defence,” listing specific powers such as “To declare War,” “To raise and support Armies” and “To provide and maintain a Navy.” These provisions preclude the executive branch from making war without the consent of the legislature.

The Bill of Rights also includes two items of considerable importance for the military:

- ▶ The Second Amendment reemphasizes the role of the citizen-soldier, that is “the right of the people to keep and bear Arms.”

*Above, the Declaration of Independence is read to the troops, 1776.*

► The Third Amendment protects U.S. citizens from the pre-revolutionary custom of quartering soldiers in private homes “without the consent of the Owner.”

With the exception of the American Civil War, perhaps most important to the continuing commitment to civilian control was the absence of significant and sustained threats to U.S. national security until the 20th century. The stable balance of power in Europe from the defeat of Napoleon to 1914 contributed immeasurably to the security of the United States. By discouraging European meddling in the New World, it allowed Americans to concentrate on domestic affairs: political consolidation, westward expansion and economic growth. The nation required only tiny armed forces that emphasized peacetime missions, because it could count on geographic barriers—the surrounding oceanic expanses—to ensure security.

In these circumstances, the national preference for citizen-soldiers instead of long-serving professionals remained firm. In 1826, a secretary of war summarized the views of the people precisely: “Among the political maxims which the United States had adopted as unquestionable, there is no one more universally subscribed to than that a well-organized and well-disciplined militia is the natural defense of a free people.”

## The Civil War and Beyond

The American Civil War from 1861 to 1865 forced both sides to put large, full-time armies into the field and to devote most of their resources to the war effort. The principle of civilian

control, which had proven remarkably durable in times of peace, was put to the test. What would happen during a profound national emergency? Would military priorities and values overwhelm established civil institutions?

President Abraham Lincoln made extensive use of his powers as commander-in-chief. No previous chief executive had faced a comparable challenge; no one had anticipated the extraordinary measures, both civil and military, required to wage a great war.

Lincoln had to field a huge army and to build a powerful navy. Despite this massive war effort, he was firm in preserving civilian control of the military. During his long search for an effective commander of the Army of the Potomac, Lincoln in communications to field commanders never hesitated to assert his supremacy. In addition, when, at the end of the war, the Confederate army commanded by General Robert E. Lee was about to surrender, the president sent a sharp message through his secretary of war to his field commander, General Ulysses S. Grant, that fully captured the president’s views on this question. “You are not to decide, discuss, or confer (with General Lee) upon any political question,” Lincoln said. “Such questions the president holds in his own hands, and will submit them to no military conferences or conventions.”

At times, Lincoln’s use of his powers as commander-in-chief seemed to endanger civil liberties. He suspended the right of habeas corpus (the common-law injunction against imprisonment without trial) and authorized the use of military tribunals to try citizens accused of supporting the rebellion. Only after the war did the federal judiciary interpose its authority



and overrule some serious wartime violations of personal freedoms. Among other things, the courts limited the scope of martial law and prevented persecution of political prisoners. Even in a moment of maximal danger, the fundamental democratic values to which the nation had committed itself were upheld.

Although Confederate President Jefferson Davis denounced the “tyranny” of Lincoln, in 1862 he obtained from his own Congress the power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. Southern civil authorities, however, so feared the interference of the Confederate government, that they hamstrung Davis in prosecuting the war of secession.

The Civil War was viewed as a one-time catastrophe. The public did not discern a need to make permanent changes in military policies and practices in reaction to a threat that would never

recur. Soon after hostilities ended, the powerful wartime forces were demobilized, and the armed services reverted to the prewar status quo.

By the end of the 19th century, the United States had become recognized as one of the great powers when using such measures of strength as industrial production, national wealth and population, but its armed forces lagged far behind those of its rivals. This circumstance reflected the continuing belief that the nation, thanks to the protection afforded by the great oceans and the polar regions, could avoid involvement in warfare and thus the costs of huge and highly professional warfighting armed services comparable to those maintained by other great powers.

*Above: The 69th New York Regiment prepares to defend Washington. Even though the Confederates were within a few miles of the capital, they never attacked.*



## The Two World Wars

When war comes infrequently and causes little disruption, it is easier to establish and maintain civilian control over the military. The extensive warfare of the post-1914 period, however, greatly increased the priority and the prestige accorded to the armed services. What, then, happened to civilian control in World War I and World War II?

The U.S. intervention in World War I in April 1917 signalled a departure in the nation's security policy. Enhanced concern for national security required improvements in the means of coordinating the efforts of the civilian sector and the military establishment since both were faced with the task of conducting a rapid mobilization on an unimagined scale. On the military side, the War and Navy Departments underwent reorganization and expansion. On the civilian side, President Woodrow Wilson created many emergency

agencies to mobilize and deploy the armed forces as rapidly as possible.

A definite division of responsibility for the war effort emerged during the short period of combat from April 1917 to November 1918. On the one hand, military leaders were allowed considerable freedom of action in conducting field operations when tactical measures did not compromise the larger political objectives of the nation. On the other hand, civilian leaders largely controlled the mobilization, working hand in hand with military departments.

Despite the remarkable expansion in the size and prestige of the armed forces, civilian control was never relaxed during World War I. Wilson retained firm direction of the armed forces, acting through

*Above: General John J. Pershing (left) and Colonel George C. Marshall in France during World War I. Pershing disagreed with President Wilson's armistice policy, but the general was not formally disciplined after the war.*





the civilian heads of the military departments. Only one breach of the traditional pattern occurred. Just before the end of the war, General John J. Pershing, the commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces, broke from Wilson's policy of seeking an armistice with Germany. With the war's end, however, Wilson did not seek disciplinary action against Pershing.

Some violations of civil liberties did occur during the war. Political radicals, conscientious objectors and German-Americans sometimes encountered persecution as popular passion overcame good sense in the heat of conflict. Fortunately, the judiciary, as it had during the Civil War, managed to mitigate some of these serious errors and eventually made amends.

Along with the Senate's rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, and thus the League of Nations, was the unwillingness

of the American people to countenance Wilson's revolutionary departure from the old foreign policy of isolation. Not yet convinced that the United States should participate extensively in the affairs of the Old World to guarantee America's security, Americans were also reluctant to maintain large combat-ready armed forces in support of an activist foreign policy. Hence, during the period between World War I and World War II, the United States reverted to its 19th-century policy of isolation.

Developments during World War II paralleled those of World War I in many respects. Following the precedent set during 1917–1918, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created many emergency agencies to manage what he called “the arsenal

*Above: Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower (center) confers with General Omar Bradley (left) and General George S. Patton during World War II. Although Eisenhower commanded the troops, he deferred to civilian policy.*

of democracy.” The professional heads of the armed services came together in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which organized essential inter-service cooperation, and arranged distribution of resources between the theaters of war. Although civilians dominated the emergency agencies, uniformed military leaders remained free to direct operations in the field, provided that their actions were consistent with the president’s policy and strategy.

Although the wartime crisis enhanced military participation in national planning and decision-making, military leaders displayed no inclination to supplant appropriate civilian influence. The much-enlarged defense establishment included many civilians and citizen-soldiers, who identified with established traditions of civilian control. As it had during World War I, the judiciary interposed its authority to control violations of civil rights. After the war ended, indemnities were twice distributed to Japanese-Americans, in at least partial recompense for their internment during the war.

## Conclusion

What accounts for the preservation and even the strengthening of civilian control of the military in the United States?

Americans view the expansion of the military establishment as an unavoidable measure to ensure the preservation of their freedoms. They perceive civilian control of the military as an indispensable aspect of the democratic process they seek to preserve.

During the last years of the 19th century and continuing into the 20th century, the U.S. military services became thoroughly professionalized. Professional-

ism requires of each officer a commitment to professional excellence—the observance of the highest technical standards in meeting the requirements of his or her chosen field. Hence, by definition, professionalism embraces the commitment to civilian control of the military.

Both ideological commitments and professional creeds helped prevent undue military influence in the U.S. government during World War I and World War II. The preservation of civilian control did not stem from impersonal forces. It flowed from the active and sustained commitment of both civilians and military professionals to an idea that had proven itself in good times and bad.

Louis Smith has written that “civil dominance, regardless of how securely grounded it may be in the Constitution and in the statutes, is not self-implementing. Like any other principle, it must be cherished in the public mind if it is to prevail. Like any other policy, it requires translation into effective administration.” The U.S. national experience in civil-military affairs confirms this judgment.

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# Civil-Military Relations in the Post-Cold War Era

*by*

*Louis W. Goodman*

The dean of the School of International Service at the American University in Washington, D.C., explores the changes in civilian-military relations since the end of the Cold War and looks ahead at what is needed to preserve this relationship.

**S**ince 1985, the number of men and women in national armed forces worldwide has dropped by more than 15 percent and overall military expenditures have been cut by more than twice that percentage. While these figures reflect the cuts carried out in countries with large military forces such as the United States and the states of the former Soviet Union, substantial reductions also have been carried out in nations as diverse as El Salvador and Argentina, Ghana and South Africa, and India and Vietnam.

These cuts are largely the result of the changed security environment in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. With few exceptions, the era is now past in which large combat forces need to be deployed at high states of combat readiness. The United States, Russia, and most of their allies, including many democratizing countries, have initiated comprehensive programs of military downsizing and defense conversion.

Despite downsizing, however, the military is the largest, best financed and, usually, best organized institution in virtually every country in the world. The military budget easily eclipses that of the next largest organization, be it a government ministry or a private corporation. What are the implications for civil-military relations worldwide, especially in democratizing countries with fragile political systems? Who is in charge? Does sufficient civilian control of the armed forces exist to guarantee that there will not be military interference with the overall workings of governments?

#### Democracy Indicators

What kind of indicators might one seek to answer such questions? Latin America provides, perhaps, the best record. In 1979, 19 governments on the mainland—between Tierra del Fuego at the tip of Argentina and the Rio Grande River on the Texas-Mexico border—had military officers as heads of state. Today, there is none. In fact, the only successful military coup in the Western hemisphere since the end of the Cold War took place in Haiti, where civilian rule was restored in 1994.

In support of these indicators, the Organization of American States, in its 1991 *Santiago Commitment to Democracy*, explicitly directed its secretary-general to devise incentives for restoring democracy in any country where a democratic regime was overthrown by the military.

While some countries in other parts of the world are less committed to strengthening their regional organizations' ability to support democracy, military governments such as those in Nigeria and Burma, and military coups such as took place in Sierra Leone in 1997, are the exception rather than the rule.

In the post-Cold War world, coups and military governments are so rare that more nuanced measures need to be found to understand whether a nation's armed forces are strengthening or weakening its democracy. While it is imperative that the military, like all executive branch agencies in a democracy, respect the rule of law and take orders from the nation's supreme-elected authority, it is equally important that non-military organs of government not micro-manage the armed forces through civilian control of specific military functions.

#### Transitional Missions

With civilians in nominal control of the vast majority of post-Cold War governments, how can a nation gauge the nature of its civil-military relations? A key answer is whether the military assumes too much or too little responsibility within a country's political system.

While the primary purpose of the world's military forces continues to be the provision of national security, military downsizing has resulted in the assignment of new roles for the armed forces. These functions have ranged from supporting police efforts in maintaining internal order, to combatting environmental deterioration, to providing basic health and education services, to constructing highways and bridges.

The traditional secondary military mission of disaster relief—providing emergency food, shelter, medical care and security to victims of floods, storms, droughts, earthquakes and civil disturbances—also has combined with the new post-Cold War military mission of participating in peacekeeping operations—promoting democracy or conflict resolution worldwide through joining in international

efforts under the aegis of the United Nations or another international body.

Such secondary missions are usually seen as short-term or transitional and taken on in addition to the core military mission of deterring aggression through combat readiness. Thus, a timetable should be established for their transit back into civilian hands; and checks should be put in place to require authorization by civilian authorities (executive and legislative) if the timetable for these transitional missions needs to be extended.

### Checks and Balances

National statutes in many democracies do specify clearly restricted missions for the military as well as precise procedures through which exceptions to these restrictions can be made when governments determine that there is an emergency. However, political practice of these rules has differed in accordance with some countries' legal heritage.

A number of governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, for example, have adopted legal structures which protect democracy by providing for the right of presidents, the police, and military officers to exercise "extraordinary powers" on a temporary basis, for the suspension of civil liberties, and for the armed forces to play a specified role in defending (and, by definition, defining) the permanent interests of the nation. By allowing the military to serve as institutionalized guardians determining the nation's permanent interests, civilian participation in politics is carried out under the threat of military veto.

To judge whether a particular mission by the military strengthens or weakens democracy, it is necessary to ask a few

pointed questions: The first question is whether a non-traditional military mission enhances prospects for the consolidation of democracy. If, for example, education and health officials are incapable of bringing services to remote rural areas, then military involvement may be critical for sustaining national integration or promoting economic development.

A second relevant question is how military involvement in a non-combat role affects the nature of the armed forces' participation in national politics. For example, if military involvement in civic action, internal security, education, or the economy can be carried out in such a way that the state or the military do not gain extra privilege, then successful execution of these roles can be said to strengthen democracy.

At times it has appeared that the military may so relentlessly pursue its institutional interests that it directly competes for power with political parties. As the largest, best resourced, and best organized institution in most countries worldwide, the military has a tremendous capacity to realize its interests if it chooses to do so. While it may be difficult for the military to sustain the popular support and legitimacy required to do this openly for extended periods, it can do great damage to democracy-building through the pursuit of self-interest or through intimidation or overt blocking of rivals.

Finally, and at least as important, military involvement in non-combat roles only can be seen as helpful for the consolidation of democracy if it does not harm the military's ability to carry out its core mission: providing for the nation's external security.

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## Civilian-Defense Experts

While the post-Cold War world has seen impressive progress in the election of civilians to high office, great gaps remain in the social and institutional foundations of many nations. Few civilians in most newly emerging democracies have the knowledge and understanding of the institutional requirements of the military to serve as civilian-defense policy experts. Such authorities are needed to interpret military needs for elected officials and to serve as interlocutors between the armed forces and society. Military officers, too, wishing to take on strictly core-professional military roles need civilian counterparts whom they can trust to understand the needs of the military infrastructure.

This is particularly important in the post-Cold War world in which the end of super-power competition and technology-driven changes in military structure are creating unprecedented uncertainty for military planners worldwide. As changes in military operations favor smaller, more mobile forces relying increasingly on highly sophisticated technologies and improvements in military capabilities, military officers need to be certain that civilians responsible for oversight will understand their needs. Without such expertise, confidence needed to undergird civil-military relations easily can be eroded. The lack of such skills has contributed to mutual isolation and political breakdown in many nations.

In the future, the rapid pace and complexity of a changing world will require both military and civilian authorities to closely collaborate in order to understand each other's needs. This daunting challenge is the touchstone for strengthening civil-military relations.

# Partnership for Peace

*An Interview  
with General  
John J. Sheehan*



*The Partnership for Peace (PFP) was introduced by NATO at the 1994 Brussels Summit in order to strengthen relationships between North Atlantic Alliance and non-NATO countries. By promoting the spirit of practical cooperation and commitment to democratic principles, partners work together to create greater transparency in such areas as civil-military relations and democratic control of armed forces. In this interview with Contributing Editor David Pitts, the supreme allied commander for the Atlantic discusses the Partnership for Peace, and what it means in today's world.*

Question. What are some of the obstacles to civilian control of the military? Obviously, we have a long tradition of it in the United States and the other established democracies. What is your view of how long this concept takes to become embedded in a society?

*Sheehan.* It takes time. There are varying degrees of sophistication. There are varying degrees of maturity. It's happening in every country, although at an uneven rate. But we will eventually get there. So, I'm very positive.

**Q.** What is the Partnership for Peace doing to promote civilian control of the military, particularly in the emerging democracies of Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union?

**A.** There are a couple of ways it is being done. First, there are a series of seminars on the subject of civilian control of the military. For example, there was an exercise conducted here in the United States around the middle of June (1997). We brought in people with expertise on this issue, including former secretaries of services. They talked about their role in this process. That is one way.

The other way has to do with the legal status of the forces that are participating in PFP exercises. For example, if a nation is providing forces for a PFP exercise, oftentimes the decision to send those forces has to be passed by the parliament. The parliament also has to vote on the status of forces agreement for those particular nations.

**Q.** Are there specific PFP activities that give practical encouragement to civilian control of the military?

**A.** Just having the militaries working together gives practical encouragement to civilian control of the military. For example, we're helping to put together a Central Asian peacekeeping battalion. This is from three different nations—

Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. These nations, although they used to be part of the former Soviet Union, did not have a tradition of cooperating. What we're doing is helping them work together, from a regional perspective. So, from that standpoint, we're helping to break down some of the historical divisions that existed.

We still have some minor cases where forces from one country cannot transit another country. What we're trying to do is take all of these nations, which, in the past, may not have gotten along together and helping them to re-associate in a different way.

I think the whole issue of NATO enlargement has helped, for example, the discussion between the border nations. It has helped them to ease ethnic tensions.

So, in the broad sense, I think there are all kinds of activities which are very helpful in breaking down negative traditions and establishing traditions of cooperation.

**Q.** In testimony before Congress earlier this year, you talked about civilian control of the military, saying "a commander's understanding and ability to master the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of a conflict or crisis is as important as mastering the traditional firepower solution." Have you found that the military mentality in former communist societies is subsiding?

**A.** It's in a transitional process. If you have military institutions that, for 50 years, grew up within one frame of reference and had one approach, it's very hard for them to change. But we find that the younger people have no problem adapting. For example, when we do a PFP exercise, we have an After-Action Review (AAR)



where you gather all the troops together and you have a public critique of what went right and what went wrong. When we first started this a couple of years ago, it was absolute anathema. In the old Soviet system, you never criticized the company grade officers. They just said, 'That's the way it is.' Now, they get very excited if we don't have an AAR during an exercise. But there are still older people who have a hard time adapting.

Q. It's one thing for militaries to understand the concept of civilian control of the military, it's another thing for citizens to understand it. Is this issue being addressed?

A. It's a mixed blessing. The issue is being addressed in such places as the Marshall Center (George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies), for example, where they have classes for both civilians as well as military personnel. You find that there are varying degrees of understanding in terms of what society does in exercising civilian control and oversight over the military. By and large, everyone is learning to adapt and is asking the right questions.

Just as you find that some of the military is having a hard time adapting to new realities, you have civilians who are learning what the right questions to ask are, and what the responsibilities of parliaments are. But I think, by and large, most are moving in the right direction.

Q. What kinds of programs are helping to move them in that direction?

A. There are a whole litany of programs. The Congress of the United States, for example, has a relationship with other parliaments. The North Atlantic Council also has a parliamentary relationship,

bringing in U.S. congresspersons to talk with other parliamentarians. Ministers from various countries also observe PFP exercises. So there is a whole array of activity. There is no one single solution.

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# Internet Sites

## *On Democracy and Human Rights Themes*

Please note that USIA assumes no responsibility for the content and availability of those non-USIA resources listed below, which reside solely with the providers:

### FUNDAMENTAL U.S. DOCUMENTS

#### **U.S. Constitution**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/consteng.htm>

##### **Français**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/constfr.htm>

##### **Español**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/constes.htm>

#### **Bill of Rights**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/billeng.htm>

##### **Français**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/billfr.htm>

##### **Español**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/billes.htm>

#### **Declaration of Independence**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/deceng.htm>

##### **Français**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/decfr.htm>

##### **Español**

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/dec.es.htm>

#### **The Federalist Papers**

<gopher://spinaltap.micro.umn.edu/11/Ebooks/By%20Title/Fedpap>

### U.S. GOVERNMENT

#### **Executive Branch**

<http://www.vote-smart.org/executive/>

#### **Legislative Branch**

<http://www.vote-smart.org/congress/>

##### **U.S. Senate**

<http://www.senate.gov>

##### **U.S. House of Representatives**

<http://www.house.gov>

## Judicial Branch

An in-depth site on the U.S. judiciary, from the court system to legal terms.

<http://www.vote-smart.org/judiciary/>

## The Cabinet

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/cabinet/na0.htm>

### Cabinet Departments

<http://www.usia.gov/usa/links.htm>

RELATED SITES  
FOR ORGANIZATIONS  
DEVOTED TO  
CIVIL-MILITARY  
RELATIONS

## DemocracyNet

<http://www.ned.org/>

The homepage for the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a private, nonprofit, grant-making organization created in 1983 to strengthen democratic institutions around the world. Through its International Forum for Democratic Studies ([http://www.ned.org/page\\_1/forumbro.html](http://www.ned.org/page_1/forumbro.html)) and its publication, the *Journal of Democracy* ([http://caliope.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_democracy/](http://caliope.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/)), conducts analysis of the theory and practice of democratic development worldwide and serves as a clearinghouse for information, including the recently published *Civil Military Relations and Democracy*.

## The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies

<http://www.marshall.adns.int/marshall.html>

The Center is dedicated to stabilizing and thereby strengthening post-Cold War Europe. Specifically, it aids defense and foreign ministries in Europe's aspiring democracies to develop national security organizations and systems that reflect democratic principles.

## The Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS)

<http://www.ndu.edu/ndu/inss/insshp.html>

INSS is an interdisciplinary research institute staffed by senior civilian and military analysts from all four services. The director of INSS reports through the president of the National Defense University to the chairman and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to the secretary and deputy secretary of defense.

## International Forum for Democratic Studies

[http://www.ned.org/page\\_1/forumbro.html](http://www.ned.org/page_1/forumbro.html)

The International Forum for Democratic Studies serves as a leading center for analysis of the theory and practice of democratic development worldwide. Sponsors seminars on such topics as "Civil-Military Relations and the Consolidation of Democracy" ([http://www.ned.org/page\\_6/civil\\_military.html](http://www.ned.org/page_6/civil_military.html)).

## International Relations and Security Network (ISN)

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/>

ISN is a daily updated, searchable clearinghouse for resources in the fields of security and defense studies, peace and conflict research, and international relations. It is organized in a subject and a regional listing, covers current issues and links to related research institutions. Special directories include a conference agenda and a register of electronic discussion lists.

## The Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics (JSCOPE)

<http://www.duke.edu/jscope/>

An organization of military officers and academics formed to discuss ethical issues relevant to the military. JSCOPE exists both by virtue of its members' commitment to professional military ethics and the continued willingness of service commanders to support the members' involvement. The JSCOPE emphasis is on analysis, discussion and

education with the intent of identifying and clarifying the ethical principles which should guide the actions of military professionals.

### **Latin-American Civil-Military Listserv (LATAMCM-L)**

<http://paladin.american.edu/academic.depts/sis/democracyla/latamcml.htm>

An electronic forum for interactive dialogue among scholars, practitioners, and other parties interested in the study of civil-military relations, regional security, and peacekeeping in the Western hemisphere. An open forum where participants can discuss issues of mutual interest and express ideas freely in English, Spanish or Portuguese.

### **NATO Homepage**

<http://www.nato.int/>

### **Partnership for Peace (PFP)**

<http://www.nato.int/pfp/pfp.htm>

Partnership for Peace (PFP) is a major initiative introduced by NATO at the January 1994 Brussels Summit. The Partnership is working to expand and intensify political and military cooperation throughout Europe, increase stability, diminish threats to peace, and build strengthened relationships by promoting the spirit of practical cooperation and commitment to democratic principles that underpin the Alliance.

### **Research Project on the U.S. Military in Post-Cold War American Society**

<http://hdc-www.harvard.edu/cfia/olin/civmil.htm>

The John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University is conducting a major research project on "The U.S. Military in Post-Cold War American Society," which will explore among other things: conflicts between civilian leaders and military leaders, the civil vs. military interpretation of force projection, the use of the military in non-traditional roles, cutbacks in military spending, and the recent politicization of military figures and the military establishment.

### **The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School**

[http://users.aol.com/armysof1/ca\\_dept.html](http://users.aol.com/armysof1/ca_dept.html)

The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School Civil Affairs Department is responsible for instructing contemporary civil affairs doctrine to be used in all levels of conflict. Instruction is designed for and presented to a diverse student population. While a majority of these students come from civil affairs reserve units, the department also trains Special Forces, special operations forces, foreign area officers, U.S. Marines and foreign officer students in courses ranging from "Internal Defense and Development" to "Civil Affairs in High-Intensity Conflict."

### **The United States Atlantic Command (USACOM)**

<http://www.acom.mil/>

The mission of USACOM is to support and advance U.S. interests and policies throughout its assigned area of responsibility; to provide combat-ready land, maritime and air forces to U.S. warfighting commanders-in-chief; to conduct operations unilaterally or in concert with coalition partners; and to train forces as joint units.

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