American National Security

Seventh Edition

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Foreword by
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To
Amos A. Jordan and W

Two exceptional scholars, educators, me
officers, who taught and inspired generati

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The Role of the Military in the Policy Process

The role of the military in US national security policy is unique and crucial for several reasons. First, the military's coercive capabilities make democratic civilian political control a matter of central importance. This concern shaped the drafting of the US Constitution, which establishes the basic legal framework that continues to govern military affairs to this day. Second, especially since the 1950s, the US military has received a large share of national resources. The Department of Defense (DoD) is in effect America's largest company, spending over $689 billion each year, and it has over 2.9 million active-duty, reserve, and civilian employees who work in more than 160 countries.[1] Military spending constitutes the single largest category of discretionary spending in the US federal budget (see chapter 9). The importance of the military instrument to US national security policy makes the effectiveness of America's military institutions a matter of great consequence (see chapters 13 through 17). While other chapters discuss how military power is used, this chapter concentrates on the ways in which military leaders and institutions engage in national security policy making.

The American Historical Experience

Early American History and the US Constitution. America's wariness of standing armies is rooted in the colonial experience (as discussed in chapter 2). The founders had experienced the negative effects of a powerful and often oppressive British army, and they also recognized the unfortunate consequences of militarism in the countries of Europe.

After the Revolutionary War, the American army was essentially disbanded. The national government had the task of governing under the Articles of Confederation,

which gave it very little power to maintain an army or even to raise one for national emergencies. After several violent domestic uprisings (most notably an uprising of farmers against crushing debt and higher taxes in 1786 and 1787, known as Shays' Rebellion), and with increasing border threats, the founders convened a constitutional convention in 1787 to improve a government that was decidedly weak in many facets of national security.

The Framers of the US Constitution found it challenging to agree on a formulation that would provide for physical security from foreign and domestic threats while simultaneously protecting the state and society from the potential dangers of a standing army.[2] Douglas Johnson and Steven Metz explain: "Amid intense debate and calls to ban a standing army altogether, the Framers of the Constitution crafted a compromise between military effectiveness and political control. They trusted balance, the diffusion of power, and shared responsibility—all basic elements of the new political system—to control the military."[3] These elements were codified in the final document and the Bill of Rights through several provisions designed to "provide for the common defense."[4]

- Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution gives control over the military to the legislative branch by granting it specific powers such as "to declare war," "to raise and support Armies," and "to provide and maintain a Navy." The Constitution grants the states the explicit authority to maintain militias. These provisions were intended to preclude the executive branch from making war without the consent of the legislature and to balance state and federal power.

- Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution gives the roles of both chief executive and commander in chief to the president. This ensures civilian supremacy by placing the chief executive at the top of the military chain of command, and aids military effectiveness by providing for unity of command in the employment of military forces.

- The Second Amendment emphasizes the role of the citizen-soldier by providing for "the right of the people to keep and bear Arms." Like the militia clause, this provision keeps the federal government from having a monopoly on the means of war.

- The Third Amendment protects US citizens from the pre-Revolutionary British custom of quartering soldiers in private homes "without the consent of the Owner."

The intricate system of checks and balances was meant to enable the establishment and employment of an effective military while ensuring it could never become a danger to the society it was created to protect. This formulation also ensured the involvement of both the president and Congress in the making of military policy (see chapters 4 and 5).

Influence of the Military on National Policy Is Historically Rare.   Prior to World War II, the military had significant influence on the formulation of national policy only in exceptional cases, mostly linked directly to wartime. For example,

General Winfield Scott, commander in Mexico in 1846, established occupation policies in the territory that he conquered. During the Civil War, the commanding general of the Union army exerted great influence upon the secretary of war, the president, and Congress, especially in the latter years when Ulysses S. Grant held that command. Perhaps the most direct instance of military policy making in that conflict occurred with the reestablishment of state and local governments in the South; President Abraham Lincoln adopted the programs instituted by military commanders for such governance as national policy in 1863. Military influence in policy formulation was also evident during the occupation of the Philippines beginning in 1902, immediately after the Spanish-American War. Later, during World War I, General John J. Pershing had wide discretion in dealing directly with Allies and in imposing requirements on the national government at home. Shortly after World War I, General Pershing and General Peyton C. March proposed plans to Congress for maintaining an army substantially stronger than the pre–World War I establishment. Congress seriously considered these plans but ultimately rejected them, primarily due to budget limitations.[5]

The examples above typify the generally accepted rule prior to World War II that the military should play little role in the formulation of national security policy except during wartime, when the armed forces were responsible for executing such policy. The general absence of any major threats to the nation's existence, apart from the Civil War, left the military services in times of peace with only the tasks of continental defense, suppression of indigenous peoples, internal development (especially of rivers and railroads), protection of trade, contingency planning, and passive support of a largely isolationist foreign policy. Neither the structure of government nor the necessity of military missions compelled sustained involvement of the military in national policy.

World War II and the National Security Act of 1947.   World War II and the immediate postwar years marked a significant break with the past. The clear wartime need for interdepartmental coordination of political-military affairs led to the establishment of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee in late 1944, consisting of senior civilian officials from each department and supported by a system of interdepartmental subcommittees, which included senior military participants. This committee structure marked the beginning of institutionalized military influence at the highest levels of the national security bureaucracy.

The demands of World War II also led to other important changes in the role of the military in the national security policy-making process. First, the uniformed chiefs of the services began to meet regularly as the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and to maintain direct liaison with the president.[6] Second, the services played the leading role in developing war-termination and postwar occupation policies, due to factors that included the relative detachment of the State Department from military operations and the national goal of "total victory." The key political decision of whether the US Army would take Berlin, for example, was not made in Washington but was left to the discretion of the military commander in Europe, General

Dwight D. Eisenhower.[7] After the war ended, officials of the military government made critical decisions in occupied areas, including Berlin. For example, senior War Department officials determined the number and ideological composition of the political parties permitted in postwar allied-occupied Germany.[8] In Japan, General Douglas MacArthur ruled over the occupation with enormous autonomy. Third, superior organization and resources enabled the military to play an expanded role in all areas of national security policy formulation. The Operations Division of the War Department's general staff, which formed the core of US wartime and immediate postwar political-military planning efforts, was particularly effective.[9]

In the postwar years, civilian elements gradually began to reassert their traditional roles in foreign policy.[10] State Department leadership in postwar European recovery, symbolized by the Marshall Plan, and the central role of the State Department in postwar political and economic planning shifted the initiative in policy making away from the military establishment. The military's advantage in organizational terms began to shrink, and so did its resources. Military appropriations dropped sharply, and army strength contracted from over 12 million active duty personnel in 1945 to less than 1.6 million two years later.[11]

Nevertheless, policy makers and military personnel retained the lessons of political-military coordination learned during World War II. The National Security Act of 1947 formalized many of the joint and interdepartmental committees and advisory groups that had been formed during the war, creating a structure to facilitate civil-military coordination. In addition to establishing the National Security Council (NSC) and a secretary of defense (see chapters 3, 4, and 10), the act created a "national military establishment," consisting of the three service departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force) linked together by a series of joint committees and coordinated by the chiefs of the three services sitting collectively as the JCS. The members of the JCS, who were authorized to have staffs to assist in their roles, became the principal military advisors to the president and secretary of defense. The act also provided the legal basis for the creation of US military unified and specified commands worldwide.

The Key West Agreement of 1948 designated the JCS to be the executive agent for unified and specified commands.[12] The JCS would be responsible for day-to-day communications and supervision of operational forces, as well as coordination among the services to define the roles and missions of each. Legislation in 1949 strengthened the secretary of defense by creating a unified DoD with authority over the services. It also removed the service secretaries from the president's cabinet and from the NSC, increased the size of the joint staff, and added a chairman to preside over the JCS.

The gradual centralization of a national military establishment during and after World War II, first codified in the 1947 National Security Act, dramatically changed the power relationships between and among the services, Congress, and other executive branch departments.[13] With America deeply involved in global affairs after its overwhelming victory, how each institution or organization influenced national security policy in relation to the others became a dynamic issue that continues to challenge policy makers to this day.

The Cold War.   By 1949, the Communist Party's victory in China's civil war, Soviet initiatives in Greece, the Middle East, Berlin, and Eastern Europe, and the Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons prompted a series of Western countermeasures, which together constituted the policy of containment (discussed in chapter 3). Recognition of the urgent necessity for allied cooperation led to significant US military assistance to friendly states.[14] Military expertise was also relied upon in the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and to secure allied agreement for the rearmament and participation of Germany in the build-up of NATO.[15] Military officers charged with overseeing occupied areas after the war, such as General MacArthur in Japan and General Lucius Clay in Germany, as well as distinguished World War II leaders, such as Generals George C. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Omar Bradley, continued to serve in national positions of great responsibility and influence.

With the beginning of the Korean War in 1950, a major reallocation of national resources again took place; this time the change was more enduring. In a period of four years (1950–1954), the share of the gross national product (GNP) devoted to national defense rose from 5.2 percent to 13.5 percent, and military expenditures nearly quadrupled from $13 billion in FY 1950 to $50.4 billion in FY 1953.[16] The hostilities in Korea expanded and complicated the military's role in the formulation and execution of policy. One of the first lessons of the Korean War was that the World War II concept of autonomy for the theater commander in the prosecution of the war would have to be curtailed significantly. MacArthur was relieved of command in the Far East by President Harry Truman after a long series of attempts by MacArthur to shape US policy in his theater independent of consideration of events in Europe or of overall national policy.[17] At a time when concern about war with the Soviets in Europe was high, a local commander could no longer be allowed to make policy without regard for worldwide ramifications. The JCS and their civilian superiors feared that the communist attack in Korea was a feint and a prelude to a full-scale assault in Europe. As the nation moved through the uncharted waters of a war fought for limited objectives that did not require total national mobilization, military leaders had to assess how to use military means to support political objectives in ways that differed strikingly from the "unconditional surrender" and "total victory" formulations of World War II.

Despite the enlargement of the military establishment after the Korean War and the increased US projection of military influence abroad, strong interservice rivalries tended to weaken the military's voice within the national security establishment. These rivalries had certain strategic and political advantages. The conflict of ideas and doctrines generated rival solutions to strategic and technological problems; for example, the Army and the Air Force each developed its own intermediate-range ballistic missiles (known as Jupiter and Thor, respectively).[18] Some potential conflicts between civil and military institutions were deflected into competition among military groups, whose resolution required civilian judgment; civilian control was thus enhanced. Civilian political leaders were able to find military support for different strategic concepts, and interservice rivalry gave them convenient political cover. Interservice rivalry provided an easy target to place blame

for "deficiencies in the military establishment for which just possibly they [political leaders] might be held responsible."[19]

Yet the drawbacks of these rivalries were also evident. Cost-effective management of DoD proved inordinately difficult, as the uniformed services sometimes appealed departmental—or even presidential—decisions to congressional allies for support. The JCS was seldom able to agree upon an overall defense program within budgetary ceilings. In turn, the public spectacle of disagreement and dissension eroded confidence in the efficacy of military judgment, which had been so high in the early years after World War II. More serious were fears that the defense organization was simply ineffective, relying on logrolling and compromise, without effective planning or real control by anyone.[20]

In the years that followed the National Security Act of 1947, efforts at DoD reorganization repeatedly sought to increase civilian control over the military while reducing the harmful tendency to allocate resources and develop policies on a bargaining-for-shares-of-the-pie basis. Controversies over weapons systems procurement and service missions also prompted efforts toward centralization of control. In 1958, Congress amended the National Security Act to give the secretary of defense greater authority, more influence in strategic planning, and greater control over the JCS. The military departments were further downgraded administratively, and the functions of the military were revised to take away control over unified and specified commands and give it to the secretary of defense.

The reforms of the 1950s empowered the secretary of defense to exercise greater control over the department and the services. The tools of cost accounting and systems analysis developed under Secretary Robert McNamara in the 1960s enhanced this control. Supported by a host of talented "whiz kids," McNamara used the new techniques to preempt military influence in both procurement and strategy.[21] In part, this greater centralization was a logical outcome of the development of new budgetary and analytical techniques. More fundamentally, however, it grew out of persistent service disagreements, expansion of civilian staff, and increased public demand for civilian control over the military. (See chapter 9 for more discussion of McNamara's effect on defense management.)

Although centralization was necessary for both strategic and economic reasons, it posed a severe dilemma for the military, especially for the JCS. The chairman of the JCS directed the joint staff, but was not empowered to provide a unified military opinion unless all of the service chiefs agreed. Unanimous agreements among the chiefs could be obtained, but often required suboptimal compromises. Split decisions, where the chiefs were not unanimous, were even worse from the perspective of the military because they placed the final decisions on military matters in civilian hands without benefit of a military recommendation. The loyalties of the individual chiefs to their own services were, of course, sometimes a factor in disagreements, but continued rivalry also reflected fundamental differences over strategy and sometimes the relative capabilities of the various military staffs. The 1958 DoD reorganization expanded the joint staff and directed the joint chiefs to concentrate on their joint responsibilities and to delegate the running of their respective services to their vice chiefs. However, service staffs remained larger and more prominent than the joint staff and promoted parochial service interests in the joint arena. The tension between independent service perspectives and the need for a joint military approach continued throughout most of the Cold War.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.   It took nearly three more decades and several episodes of poor performance by the military (including the failed hostage rescue attempt in Iran in 1980 and the poorly coordinated invasion of Grenada in 1983) before Congress again addressed military effectiveness and civilian control. The Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, commonly known as Goldwater-Nichols, was the most far-reaching legislation to address military organization since the National Security Act of 1947 (see also chapter 5).

Goldwater-Nichols had several key features intended to promote "jointness" among the services. First, the authority of the chairman of the JCS was strengthened. The chairman was designated the principal military advisor to the president, the NSC, and the secretary of defense; no longer required to report only JCS consensus positions, the chairman was authorized to offer his best professional military advice. Second, the new position of JCS vice chairman was created, with the expectation that this officer would act in the interest of the military establishment as a whole with a focus on integrating the separate research, development, and procurement activities of the services. Third, legislation created a "joint specialty" within service personnel systems and required the services to send their best officers to both the joint staff in Washington and to the unified commands in the field. Goldwater-Nichols required that officers with joint service receive their fair share of promotions and specified that no officers could be promoted to general or admiral without joint service experience. The authority of commanders of unified and specified commands was also strengthened through the establishment of a chain of command that ran directly from the president to the secretary of defense to these commanders. Increased jointness and interservice operational cooperation were the underlying purposes and end result of the 1986 Act.

Post–Cold War Policy Making in the 1990s.   There have been no significant structural changes in the formal role of military advisors and their advice on national security matters since the passage of Goldwater-Nichols in 1986. Instead, it is the nature of the personal relationships between senior military leaders and senior civilian leaders, including the president and secretary of defense, that has dominated discussions of the role of the military in the policy-making process. Soon after the end of the Cold War, US armed forces were deployed to the Persian Gulf after Saddam Hussein's Iraqi Army seized Kuwait in August 1990. In those military operations, President George H. W. Bush gave JCS Chairman Colin Powell the forces he requested and allowed Powell and the theater commander to conduct the campaign without detailed political oversight. As an example of his influence, Powell reportedly influenced the president to stop the ground war after one hundred hours.[22] The war resulted in a lopsided military victory for the

US-led coalition. As one observer later noted, "In less than six weeks, 795,000 Coalition troops destroyed a defending army of hundreds of thousands, losing only 240 attackers."[23] Despite the military success, however, failures in planning for war termination and shortcomings in US political achievements were soon apparent.[24] Consequently, the lessons for US civil-military relations were mixed. Some praised the high degree of professional military autonomy in the design and conduct of the military campaign, while others argued that greater political involvement—especially in planning for war termination—might have led to a better political outcome for the United States.[25]

As the 1990s progressed, the US military experienced a post–Cold War drawdown even as the armed forces were increasingly used for stabilization operations. The number of active-duty service members decreased from 2.1 million in 1990 to 1.4 million in 2000; this smaller military was deployed to crises in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and elsewhere (see chapter 3).[26] The election of Bill Clinton, who was president from 1993 through the end of the decade, created a further important dynamic because he was the first president since World War II without military service. Many senior members of his administration had little or no military experience, and the president himself had a reputation for a general lack of interest in military affairs as well as a perceived personal lack of regard for the military.[27] Anecdotal evidence indicating that the professional military lacked appropriate respect for Clinton as commander in chief, as well as the apparent influence of powerful JCS chairmen, particularly Powell, led some observers to claim that threats to adequate civilian control over the military constituted a "crisis" in US civil-military relations.[28]

Some observers attributed these perceptions of a crisis to timing: an administration that seemed to lack credibility in military affairs came into office at the same time that the JCS had a particularly popular and activist chairman in the person of Powell. Others emphasized structural factors, such as a concern that Goldwater-Nichols had centralized too much power in the chairman and the JCS.[29] A third potential source of friction was the nature of the stabilization missions assigned to the military in the 1990s. These services tended to see these operations, in which decisive victory could not be the goal, as undesirable distractions from preferred core tasks.[30] However, most analysts agreed that claims of a crisis were exaggerated.[31] Even during the Clinton administration, at least one observer saw the balance being restored during the tenures of successive JCS chairmen.[32]

Policy Making after September 11, 2001. In contrast to concerns during the 1990s about excessive military influence, after 9/11 there were concerns that the balance had tipped too far in the opposite direction.[33] When Donald Rumsfeld, who had served previously as secretary of defense under President Gerald Ford, reassumed that office under President George W. Bush in January 2001, he had a definite agenda. His priorities included the transformation of the military and the assertion, or reassertion, of stronger control by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) over the services, as well as stronger civilian control over the military. Rumsfeld's

transformation agenda drew upon considerable thinking in the US defense community about a "Revolution in Military Affairs" based on high-technology, precision stand-off weapon systems, and information dominance (see chapter 3).

The need to reestablish civilian control seemed to arise from the belief that the military "had become too independent and risk-averse during eight years under President Bill Clinton."[34] Rumsfeld pursued his agenda with a high degree of personal self-confidence and aggressiveness. Although JCS Chairman Richard Myers praised him as having healthy relationships with senior officers and the joint staff, many others described Rumsfeld as "frequently abusive and indecisive, trusting only a tiny circle of close advisers, seemingly eager to slap down officers with decades of distinguished service."[35]

Rumsfeld's tenure as Secretary of Defense got off to a rough start, but his reputation rebounded after the 9/11 attacks. One of Rumsfeld's first tasks was the Quadrennial Defense Review of 2001. This process generated such tension between Rumsfeld and the services, as well as between Rumsfeld and Congress, that there was speculation that Rumsfeld could be the first member of George W. Bush's cabinet to depart.[36] The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the apparent success of the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan transformed this dynamic. The US and coalition campaign appeared to validate both Rumsfeld's intensely hands-on management style and his goal of transformation to a more high-tech form of warfare.[37]

Despite vast budget increases in the wake of 9/11, however, relations between Rumsfeld and senior military leaders continued to deteriorate during the planning for the war in Iraq and especially after the 2003 invasion. These tensions were made public with the testimony given by Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2003. When Senator Carl Levin asked Shinseki for his estimate of the forces that would be required to stabilize Iraq after an invasion, Shinseki's answer of "several hundred thousand" drew official and public rebuke from Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and Vice President Dick Cheney.[38] This episode implied that the war-planning process for Iraq did not include broad and open consultations with senior military leaders.

The failures in planning and adaptability that led to serious US difficulties in post-invasion Iraq were partly a function of ineffective coordination and cooperation among military and civilian leaders.[39] The 2006 Iraq Study Group report documented the importance of effective civil-military relations and the specific challenges of that time:

> The U.S. military has a long tradition of strong partnership between the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense and the uniformed services. Both have long benefited from a relationship in which the civilian leadership exercises control with the advantage of fully candid professional advice, and the military serves loyally with the understanding that its advice has been heard and valued. That tradition has been frayed, and civil-military relations need to be repaired.[40]

The report went on to recommend that "the new Secretary of Defense should make every effort to build healthy civil-military relations, by creating an environment

in which the senior military feel free to offer independent military advice not only to the civilian leadership in the Pentagon but also to the President and the National Security Council, as envisioned in the Goldwater-Nichols legislation."[41]

Soon after the Iraq Study Group issued its report, DoD gained new leadership: Robert Gates became secretary of defense in December 2006 and General David Petraeus became the commander of forces in Iraq in February 2007. Direct communication of senior military with civilian leaders increased, including a weekly video teleconference among Petraeus, Gates, George W. Bush, and other NSC members.[42] Petraeus shaped the doctrine and strategy that would provide the foundation for the 2007 troop surge, and many viewed him as the public face of the administration's policy. Petraeus adeptly built coalitions among academics, military leaders, and political leaders that enabled the adoption of US counterinsurgency policies in Iraq.[43]

After the election of President Barack Obama, debates about troop levels and counterinsurgency policy continued, although the focus shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan. The prominence of senior military leaders in those debates was not always welcome in the White House. In September 2009, a classified assessment by General Stanley McChrystal, the US commander in Afghanistan, was leaked. This assessment included McChrystal's observation that the US military required both a change in strategy and increased resources to avoid failure in Afghanistan.[44] One month later, Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, a retired three-star general who had commanded US and international forces in Afghanistan, sent a series of classified cables expressing his concern that increased troop levels without Afghan political reform would be costly and counterproductive. These, too, became public. The release of both these documents coincided with a major review of the administration's Afghanistan policy and gave the impression that military leaders were inappropriately trying to force the president into a specific decision. In early December 2009, Obama announced that the United States would send an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan.[45]

It appears that there was a vigorous debate prior to the president's announcement of this "surge," but several commentators suggested that civil-military interactions under Obama were characterized by conflict rather than cooperation. Author Bob Woodward alleged that senior military leaders—including JCS Chairman Michael Mullen, McChrystal, and then US Central Command (CENTCOM) commander Petraeus—had blocked the development of a counterterrorism option that the president had requested.[46] Such accusations contributed to a growing perception of civil-military conflict at the highest levels. This was reinforced by McChrystal's resignation after the publication of a damaging article in *Rolling Stone* magazine.[47] Although the article did not offer explicit evidence that McChrystal had undermined the administration's goals, it portrayed his staff officers as irreverent, unprofessional, and disrespectful of senior administration officials.[48] Both incidents contributed to perceptions that senior military officers were attempting to assert more influence over policy than they had during Rumsfeld's tenure.

In recent years, it has become increasingly evident that the military's role in the policymaking process is not limited to the executive branch. Congress plays an

important role in lawmaking, appropriations, and military appointments, and members of Congress can call military leaders to testify before congressional committees across a range of issues (see chapters 5 and 10). As American commitments in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan waned and as budgets tightened, Congress began to take a larger role in personnel policies, including the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy concerning homosexuals in the military and in the budget decisions under sequestration imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011. Members of Congress have become more involved in attempting to influence decisions to use military force in places like Libya and Syria.[49] The committee system provides members of Congress with the means to influence national security policy, but it also can draw media attention and thus provide military leaders with a public platform for their professional opinions. Unlike private conversations in the White House, such testimony is public. In 2013, confrontations between military and civilian leaders over the use of military force, transgender policy, and the defense budget prompted at least one commentator to decry the state of civil-military relations.[50] More recently, however, the Trump administration's increases in the fiscal year 2019 defense budget request ameliorated some of the causes for tension between civilian and military leaders.

The Role of the Military Today.   Since World War II, there have been a number of trends concerning the role of the military in the national security process. First, military power has remained a central means through which the United States pursues its security. Although defense spending has declined as a proportion of the economy and the federal budget, it remains the largest single part of discretionary spending (see chapter 9) and enables the United States to maintain global presence and influence. Concurrently, the formal decisionmaking structure supporting the president and the NSC evolved and grew to meet the policy coordination needs of a global superpower with large standing military forces (see chapter 10). With resources and combatant commands that cover the entire world, military leaders are usually a part of any foreign policy discussion, even if there is only minimal military involvement.

Second, expanding overseas defense commitments have increased military involvement in policy making and ensured that such involvement is not always limited to purely military issues. Beginning with Eisenhower's unique position as the first supreme allied commander in Europe at the outset of the Cold War, combatant commanders have increasingly expanded their role and influence. Regional commanders "have evolved into the modern-day equivalent of the Roman Empire's proconsuls—well-funded, semi-autonomous, unconventional centers of US foreign policy."[51] The vast resources wielded by DoD give military personnel a distinct advantage, especially compared with their counterparts from State, the US Agency for International Development, and other agencies.

Third, individual members of the military have sometimes been selected to serve in personal advisory roles at senior levels while still on active duty. During the Kennedy years, for example, General Maxwell Taylor was recalled to active

duty to serve as military representative to the president before being appointed JCS chairman. During the Nixon administration, General Alexander Haig was deputy national security advisor and later White House chief of staff, before becoming NATO commander. The placement of military officers in senior national policy positions was criticized in 1987 after Marine Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, working as an NSC staff member, diverted funds from arms sales to Iran to provide illegal support to anti-communist "Contra" rebels in Nicaragua. These activities were undertaken with the approval of Vice Admiral John Poindexter, the national security advisor. Ultimately, the North-Poindexter episode came to be seen as an isolated incident, and it did not preclude President Ronald Reagan from appointing then–Lieutenant General Colin Powell as his national security advisor, a position normally occupied by a civilian. During the George H. W. Bush administration, General Michael Hayden was principal deputy director of national intelligence and later CIA director, both while still on active duty. Similarly, Lieutenant General Doug Lute served as deputy national security advisor for both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations while still on active duty. President Trump appointed Lieutenant General H. R. McMaster to serve as national security advisor while still on active duty after retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn resigned in 2017.

Another trend, partly the result of those previously discussed, is that military officers have become both increasingly capable of operating at higher levels of the US government and increasingly influential in national security policy matters. Goldwater-Nichols created additional billets in which officers serve at the political-military nexus, and the resulting career incentives encouraged some of the most promising military officers to pursue joint opportunities that broadened their perspectives early in their careers.[52] Greater experience was complemented by a military education system that began to produce more officers with advanced civilian university degrees. These advanced degrees became increasingly important to military promotions. In 1965, no members of the JCS had advanced degrees; by 1981, they all did.[53] In addition, senior professional schools such as the services' war colleges (where colonels spend a year of study to be eligible for promotion to general or admiral) have added study of the nonmilitary aspects of national security to their programs. Most senior service colleges are accredited to award masters degrees to their students.

The role of the military in the national security process has continued to grow and to become more complex in the post-9/11 world. Debate over whether the military has exercised an appropriate level of influence in the appropriate venues of national security policy is ongoing; achieving a stable equilibrium will continue to be a challenge.

The Civil-Military Gap and Civil-Military Relations

An additional challenge to finding a stable equilibrium in US civil-military relations may stem from a gap between the values of long-serving members of the military and the society they swear to protect and to serve. Following the Cold War,

scholars began to examine these differences, asking whether "a 'gap' in values between the armed forces and civilian society [had] widened to the point of threatening the effectiveness of the military and impeding civil-military cooperation."[54] Research confirmed that, over the preceding generation, the proportion of officers who self-identified as Republican had increased from 33 percent to 64 percent, and found other important differences between officers as a group and civilians on a range of political and cultural issues.[55] A particular source of concern was that a sample of successful mid-grade officers believed that they should "insist" (rather than merely advise) on issues relating to engagement in military conflicts.[56] While scholars and practitioners did not see a crisis, they argued that indicators of a gap were worthy of more attention by senior civilian and military leaders responsible for the relationship.

A recent theory posits that there is not a single civil-military gap, but rather four overlapping ones: a cultural gap, a demographic gap, a policy-preference gap, and an institutional gap.[57] The cultural gap exists because military training and war create distinct experiences. The demographic gap stems from a combination of factors, including the establishment of an all-volunteer force (AVF) and the regional differences in base locations and recruiting. Both of these gaps are likely to influence the policy preferences and political affiliations of those in the military, thereby contributing to the so-called policy-preference gap. Since the 1990s, conservatism and Republican identification among senior officers have remained significantly higher than among the general population, although some evidence suggests that enlisted soldiers are more representative of society than are the officer corps.[58] The institutional gap stems from the way in which differences in the resources and capacity of the military, on the one hand, and civilian governmental agencies, on the other, may result in excessive influence by the military on policy decisions. Despite evidence of the existence of these gaps, there is significant disagreement about whether and how the differences between civilians and those in the military affect the formulation of national security policy.[59]

The "Right" Amount of Civilian Control.   Although there are many points of debate in American civil-military relations, there is fundamental agreement on one point: in the United States, civilian control—or more precisely democratic political control—is a central guiding principle. The US military is and should be subordinate to the president and to certain designated officials in the executive branch, as well as to elected political leaders in Congress. According to the US Constitution, the executive and the legislative branches of the federal government share authority and responsibility for military affairs.

Despite a broad consensus on this issue, there is nevertheless plenty of room for disagreement on more subtle points, as illustrated in previous examples from the Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama administrations. Although there is no serious concern over a military coup or military revolt in the United States, not all important issues in American civil-military relations are settled. Those that are still debated include whether there should be limits to civilian involvement in the

formulation and execution of military policy, strategy, and operations; the appropriate role and relative influence of Congress in military policy and strategy; and the appropriate extent and exercise of military influence during the formulation of national security policy. The optimal pattern of US civil-military relations would ensure democratic political control while also facilitating sound strategic decision making and the creation of effective military institutions.[60]

The "Purist" versus "Fusionist" Schools of Thought. The American military is far from monolithic in character or in outlook. One of the recurring debates since World War II has been over its appropriate role in the formulation and execution of national security policy. General Matthew Ridgway, Army chief of staff in 1955, expressed the traditional "military purist" perspective: "The military advisor . . . should give his competent professional advice based on the military aspects of the programs referred to him, based on his fearless, honest, objective estimate of the national interest, and regardless of administration policy at any particular time. He should confine his advice to the essential military aspects."[61] The purist case does not deny the complexity of national security issues—they are recognized to be a blend of economic, political, and military components—but they are to be determined by civilian policy makers. The professional officer is an expert only on the military component. In providing advice to policy makers, therefore, professional officers should confine themselves to purely military considerations. In this view, officers are not competent to provide economic or political judgments or opinions, and they should not be asked to do so.

An alternate view, the "fusionist" approach, maintains that in the changed environment of national security policy in the post–World War II environment, "purely military" considerations do not exist.[62] Moreover, in a world of global terrorism and proliferating weapons of mass destruction, in which the military consumes significant economic resources and in which the use of force may have tremendous political implications, military decisions inevitably have considerable economic and political consequences and vice versa. Therefore, in giving their advice, professional officers should incorporate political and economic considerations along with military factors.

Many civilian and military leaders tend to be fusionists. President John Kennedy implicitly expressed the fusionist thesis in a speech to graduating West Point cadets when, after stressing future military command responsibilities, he added: "The non-military problems which you will face will also be the most demanding— diplomatic, political, economic. You will need to know and understand not only the foreign policy of the United States, but the foreign policy of all countries scattered around the world. You will need to understand the importance of military power and also the limits of military power. You will have an obligation to deter war as well as to fight it."[63] Maxwell Taylor, former chairman of the JCS and military representative to the president, warned that "nothing is so likely to repel the civilian decision-makers as a military argument which omits obvious considerations which the president cannot omit. . . . If they [the Joint Chiefs] want to per-

suade the President, they had better look at the totality of his problem and try to give maximum help."[64]

This debate between fusionists and purists occurred among scholars as well as practitioners. Perhaps the foremost critic of "fusionism" was Samuel P. Huntington, who warned in 1957, in *The Soldier and the State*, that if the military "broadened" its professional worldview to incorporate civilian-defined "political realities," it might gain access to the highest levels of the policy process, but it could no longer speak on strategic matters from an adequately military perspective. The country and the national security process would be better served by a military that cultivated its autonomous ethic in a politically neutral, professional institution. In return, the state would gain a "politically sterile and neutral" professional officer corps "ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state."[65]

A leading advocate of fusionism was Morris Janowitz, who laid out his perspective in *The Professional Soldier* (1960).[66] In contrast to Huntington's emphasis on professional autonomy and a degree of separation, Janowitz believed that it would be unrealistic to rely on an apolitical and relatively detached military: "In the United States, where political leadership is diffuse, civilian politicians have come to assume that the military will be an active ingredient in decision-making about national security."[67] To be effective during the Cold War, he argued, the US military must be aware of the international political consequences of military action and must understand the primacy of political objectives and the occasional need for limits on the application of force.[68]

In practice, both the purist and the fusionist perspectives have shortcomings. The purist perspective tends to posit a degree of separation between political and military affairs that simply does not and cannot exist. As military theorist Carl von Clausewitz argued in *On War*, at the highest level of decision making the idea of a "purely military" opinion makes no sense, since "no major proposal for war can be worked out in ignorance of political factors." He goes on to argue, "To bring a war, or one of its campaigns, to a successful close requires a thorough grasp of national policy. On that level strategy and policy coalesce."[69] It is unhelpful for officers to expect that there will a bright line between political and military issues. A second problem is that a purist perspective may tend to foster a conception of military expertise that is inadequately narrow. For example, an army that focuses primarily on fighting and winning major conventional wars may have difficulty achieving military and political objectives in other environments that demand a broader array of skills.[70]

The fusionist perspective may lead to the opposite problem: a vanishing professional ethos and loss of clarity with regard to core military tasks. The military's functional expertise as prioritized by the purists, and the military's political sophistication and responsiveness as emphasized by the fusionists, are complementary values that are always in tension. Within that tension, a circumscribed sphere of professional autonomy within which the military can develop its ethos and practical expertise is necessary to ensure the military's functional effectiveness as an instrument of national security policy.

Guiding the Partners' Behavior in Civil-Military Relations.   An understanding of the military's role in the national security policy process must be grounded on one fact: the American military lacks the charter, the inclination, and the opportunity to play the primary role in the establishment of strategic ends. Nevertheless, the military can be influential, albeit largely indirectly, at the most senior levels. As one scholar observes, "The potential impact of the chiefs' views on the public and the Congress can never be ignored by a president or a secretary of defense. . . . The chiefs no doubt retain power to influence national decisions to some degree on some security issues, and to add legitimacy to one view or another."[71] Recent research confirms that statements by senior military leaders do influence public opinion about whether or not to use military force.[72]

The preceding discussion underscores the challenges associated with having a professional officer corps deeply involved in planning and executing national security policy. In this context, Richard Kohn raises an important question about the civil-military relationship: "What behaviors on both sides might lead to the kind of cooperative partnership that would produce both civilian control and wise, effective decision making?"[73] One answer is to establish a guiding set of principles, or norms, that govern the behavior of both military and civilian leaders in the formulation and execution of national security policy. According to one analyst, "The military profession's first obligation is to do no harm to the state's democratic institutions and the democratic policy-making processes they establish. The civilian political leadership sets political objectives that the military supports in good faith. The military leadership should apply its expertise without 'shirking' or taking actions that, in effect, have a self-interested effect on policy outcomes."[74]

Keeping these guidelines in mind, three norms should guide military leaders' engagement in policy discussions:

- Military leaders should always represent the uniquely military perspective in all policy deliberations and discussions, both public and private;
- When asked for their professional opinions and advice, military leaders must render such advice forthrightly and apolitically;
- Once national-level policy has been formulated and announced, whether it is a budget, a strategy, or an operational concept, it is the responsibility of military leaders to follow and implement that policy to the best of their ability.

Establishing and gaining adherence to norms to govern civilian behavior presents different challenges. Competitively selected military officers stay on continuous active duty for thirty-five years or more, practicing their military arts daily whether in peace or war, advancing through several levels of professional military education, and constantly adapting new professional knowledge to their experiences. On the civilian side, however, new leaders are elected or appointed only episodically. Few serve a full career in the national security arena, and often the senior civilian leadership changes entirely after a presidential election. Although this is by design under the US constitutional system, it also has significant drawbacks.

One difficulty is the general lack of familiarity among civilian leaders with national security affairs at the beginning of each new presidential administration.[75] Civilian political leaders may enter the policymaking arena essentially "cold" on the issues and without the extensive personal networks required to support the creation of an effective global security policy. While this deficiency is usually overcome within a year or so, for a significant period, military advisors tend to be far more knowledgeable than their civilian leaders. Civilian and military leaders must rapidly develop personal relationships of trust and comity that promote mutual exploration of policy and learning so that they can develop, review, and implement policy effectively.

Although the civil-military dialogue will always be "unequal" in the sense that civilians have the last word, it is possible to conceive of norms for civilian behavior in the civil-military relationship that would facilitate effective policy making. One scholar articulated the principal norm for civilian leaders as "equal dialogue, unequal authority."[76] Civilian leaders ultimately responsible for critical national security decisions are more likely to be successful if they are aware of the full range of military views on a particular issue. An "equal dialogue" should be employed to support the civilian decision makers' "unequal authority." Not all administrations have followed this approach: military voices carried more weight during the Clinton years, while Rumsfeld dominated the dialogue during the early years of the George W. Bush administration. Intentional preparation of civilians for leadership within the national military establishment would facilitate a more equal dialogue. For example, more civilians from the intelligence, diplomatic and, congressional staff communities could attend military senior service schools.

The Political Activities of Military Officers.   One enduring issue that stems from the 1990s civil-military crisis debate concerns the political activities of serving or retired members of the military. For example, despite the fact that JCS Chairman General Colin Powell had approval from his civilian superiors in 1992 to publish his views on intervention in the Balkans in the *New York Times* and on the use of military power in *Foreign Affairs*, analysts continue to debate the appropriateness of his doing so.[77] In critiquing the concept of limited intervention one month before a presidential election, the first of these articles had the potential to constrain the next president's freedom of action on an important foreign policy issue.

Other forms of potentially problematic political activity include the increasingly public and occasionally partisan political roles played by retired flag officers. For example, retired Admiral William Crowe, who had been JCS chairman, endorsed candidate Clinton in the 1992 presidential campaign. General Tommy Franks, previously commander of US Central Command during the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions, endorsed George W. Bush's reelection in 2004. In 2006, several retired officers precipitated the "Revolt of the Generals," publicly criticizing current US military policies in Iraq and expressing opposition to civilian leaders, Rumsfeld in particular, who were most responsible for these policies.[78] In the 2016 presidential campaign, teams of retired flag officers were led by retired Marine General

John Allen for Hillary Clinton and by retired Army Lieutenant General Michael Flynn for Donald Trump. In each case, candidates highlighted these endorsements, implying that they were indicative of broad military support. Additionally, increasing numbers of retired senior officers are participating as media analysts and endorsing candidates for political office.[79]

Some believe that such statements by retired flag officers serve an important function in better informing Congress and the American public, who may benefit from another source of military expertise. However, others argue that the continued association of these senior officers with the active military makes their public critiques of policy and civilian policy makers inappropriate and dangerous for civil-military relations.[80] In some cases, such activities raise serious conflicts of interest, as many admirals and generals have taken lucrative post-retirement jobs in the defense industry.[81] The political activities discussed here raise concerns about an erosion of the tradition of military neutrality and abstention from politics.[82]

## The Current Structure of the National Military Establishment

The Goldwater-Nichols legislation is generally viewed as having been very successful in improving "the areas that the original sponsors of the Goldwater-Nichols Act considered most pressing—military advice, the unified commanders, contingency planning, joint officer management, and military operations."[83] Such success is due in part to an organizational structure that places a premium on achieving military effectiveness through efficient planning and coordination. (See chapter 4.)

Six combatant commands have responsibility for specified regions of the globe (figure 8.1), while three other combatant commands have worldwide functional responsibilities not bounded by geography: US Special Operations Command, US Strategic Command, and US Transportation Command. The regional combatant commanders seek to address a wide variety of security-related needs whose nature varies, depending on the region. Meeting these demands requires extensive coordination within the US government as well as the maintenance of a direct line of communication along their chain of command, which includes the secretary of defense and the president, with communications generally flowing through the JCS.

Although the combatant commanders have broad responsibility, their success hinges upon close interaction and coordination with the individual services: the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. The services themselves are responsible for training, equipping, maintaining, and providing the forces that are or may be assigned to the unified commands, and then supporting them for the duration of their deployments. The services have little direct influence in decisions guiding the conduct of operations, but they do play a crucial role in providing and then supporting operationally deployed forces.

The JCS—the chairman, vice chairman, service chiefs, and the chief of the National Guard Bureau—play a preeminent role in coordinating actions among the individual services and the unified combatant commands. Because the service chiefs also sit as members of the JCS and have the statutory authority to provide

FIGURE 8.1　Global Combatant Command Areas of Responsibility

Source: https://www.defense.gov/About/Military-Departments/Unified-Combatant-Commands/
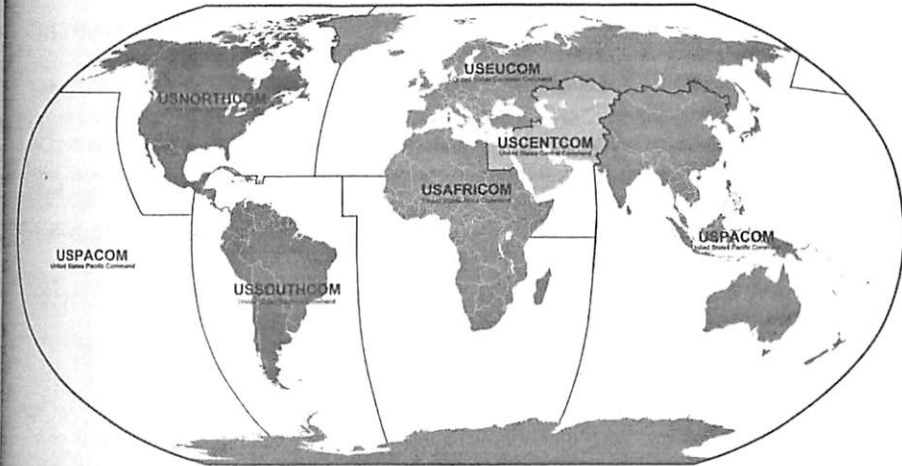
expert advice, they are the natural link between the individual services and the combatant commands. The JCS is also a critical nexus of interaction between civilian policy makers and the uniformed military.

Within DoD, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) plays a prominent role in defining and overseeing national security and military policy. Internal DoD directives mandate that "in providing immediate staff assistance and advice to the secretary of defense, the OSD and the JCS, though separately identified and organized, function in full coordination and cooperation."[84] This requirement is intended to enhance civilian control as well to ensure that the secretary of defense receives the best possible staff support and advice. The OSD is supported by a number of exceptionally qualified military officers, as well as talented civilians.

Looking Ahead

The role of the uniformed military in the national security process will continue to evolve with changes in civilian leadership and changes in the use of the military as an instrument of foreign policy. Because the United States is likely to remain a world power that is deeply involved in the international political system, it is highly unlikely that the influence of the US military will ever again be as insignificant as it was prior to Pearl Harbor. Ensuring that the future military role in the national security process is both effective and appropriate will be a continuing challenge.

Discussion Questions

1. How and why did military influence in the policy process increase significantly immediately prior to and throughout World War II?

2. How did changes in US foreign policy following World War II influence the restructuring of the national security establishment?

3. How do organizational structure and statutory guidance influence the military's participation in the policy process?

4. How did the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 alter the role of the military in the policy process?

5. Should a military officer limit professional advice strictly to military matters or should she provide a full evaluation, including consideration of diplomatic, political, economic, and other factors? Why?

6. Is there an "unequal dialogue" between military and civilian leaders in the policy-making process? What are the responsibilities of both parties to this dialogue?

7. Are there "gaps" between the military and civil society? If so, how much of a problem are these gaps? What, if anything, should be done to address them?

8. Do you believe that US civil-military relations are healthy? Why or why not?

9. What is the proper role of the military in the policy process? Are problems with national security policy more likely to result from too much military influence or too little?

10. What are the responsibilities of the military departments and the combatant commands? What is the role of the JCS and of its chairman in the relationships among these entities?

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