

## CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

**Congress and Civil-Military Relations**

Edited by Colton C. Campbell and David R. Auerswald

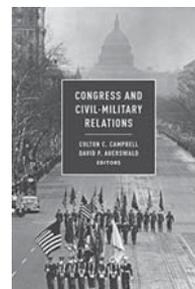
Reviewed by Charles D. Allen, Colonel (USA, Ret), Professor of Leadership and Cultural Studies, US Army War College

Trust is a recurring theme within the United States military's recent study of the profession of arms. Within the profession, it is the trust among its members: officers and enlisted as well as the senior and junior members of the armed services. More important is the trust between the profession and the society it serves. Such trust is enabled through the civil-military relations of elected officials and uniformed members of the US Armed Services. In our nation, two civilian bodies are constitutionally obligated to control the military—the Office of the President and the US Congress. While civilian supremacy is most demonstrated by the direction and orders of the Commander in Chief, equally vital roles of regulation and oversight are provided by the Congress. Hence the necessity to explore and understand this aspect of civil-military relations. National War College professors Colton Campbell and David Auerswald have compiled such a primer for national security professionals.

Campbell and Auerswald, editors of *Congress and Civil-Military Relations*, have gathered a diverse group of scholars, political scientists, and practitioners from academia, professional military education, and those who have served in US government. Within their areas of expertise and experience, each author addresses a unique element of the many facets of civil-military relations by offering a short history, establishing context with current concerns, and then providing implications for the future of defense policy making. Their contributions result in an edited work that is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, but gives readers an appreciation of the enduring nature of civil military relations as well as its shifting character through the use of well-chosen cases.

In their Chapter 1 introduction, the editors assert the congressional role is underappreciated and show how Congress shapes the culture and behavior of the US military by using four main tools. The tools are: “selection of military officers, determining how much authority is delegated to the military, oversight of the military, and establishing incentives (positive and negative) for appropriate military behavior.” (2) Accordingly, the first part of the book consists of chapters that illustrate the evolution and application of each tool. Chapter 2 reviews processes for the appointment, selection, and promotion of officers; this is especially interesting given by October 2016 each of seven four-star members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff nominated by President Obama will require confirmation by the Congress before assuming the most senior positions within the US military.

Chapter 3, “A Safety Valve” is informative and very effective in recounting the leadership of then Senator Harry Truman and the actions of the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program in the prelude to and onset of World War II. Concerns about the lack

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of military preparedness as well as “revelations of graft, greed, and corruption among defense contractors” provide an historical analogy to consider as the US seeks to discern its lessons learned during the War on Terror in this twenty-first century. (38) For World War II, as with most wars, the call for expediency in the name of military necessity quickly became suspect with accounts of poor planning and mismanagement leading to ineffectiveness and inefficiency in providing military capability and sustained capacity for national security. Decades later the Truman committee became the exemplar for a series of post-Vietnam War ad hoc congressional defense commissions detailed in Chapter 4. The chapter author contends in addition to the goal to conduct oversight of the Department of Defense, congressional commissions are created to advance an agenda or policy reform, to avoid blame, or to delay action—“kicking the can down the road”—on particularly controversial matters. (53) Such is the case in Chapters 5 and 6 as congressional members respectively embrace the reserve component for its state support versus federal role or the TRICARE-FOR-LIFE entitlements for veterans among their constituents.

While the six chapters of Part I provides historical context of the use of tools by Congress, Part II offers a more interesting examination of the debates within the two Houses of the legislative branch and, in turn, with the executive branch on the use of military force to support US foreign policy. Readers will be familiar with the discourse in Chapter 7 on lack of the consensus within the US government or its political parties on the national policy agenda. This discord has been attributed to increased polarization rather than parochialism. From Chapter 8, debates beginning with defense roles and missions affect force structure in the active component-reserve component mix of the US military. Subsequently, Congress becomes part of the political mechanism to exploit technologies that may generate new capabilities and mitigate emergent threats in the twenty-first century (see Chapter 9 cases on Cyber and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles/Drones). Chapters 10 and 11 examine the role of Congress facing the challenges of consistency in the demonstration of US national values as provided in the cases of closure of Guantanamo detention facility and the support of human rights in Latin America.

Some observers may naively bash Congress for its deference to the executive branch out of tradition or necessity, its ambivalence to issues not directly affecting local constituency or party agenda, or its abdication in areas deemed too messy or politically untenable. Former Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill often said, “All politics is local” referring to congressional members acting in short and long-term interests of their voters, which may be seemingly contrary to ambiguous national interests.

The challenge for an edited volume such as *Congress and Civil-Military Relations* is to determine how much material to include and what to leave out. A deeper discussion of the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the potential impact of its associated sequestration measures deserved more consideration since it stills looms over defense policy with implications for military readiness and force structure. Acknowledgement of the view of Congress by those in uniform as a practical and important aspect of civil-military relations is also missing from the text.

Accordingly, Campbell and Auerswald author the concluding chapter, which derives three policy issues from the contributors: ongoing congressional debate on future of the defense budget following the major operations of the War on Terror; congressional intent and ability to shape social and international agendas through US defense policy, and the growing civil-military divide between an increasing polarized Congress and a confident, professionalized military. The editors have produced a useful book for those seeking to understand the often overlooked, but critical aspect of US civil-military relations. As a primer, their work can start the conversation and spark deeper inquiry and discourse among national security professionals.

## The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation: Canada in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan

By Christopher Ankersen

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Civil-military cooperation is a hallmark of contemporary military operations in the twenty-first century. Yet, as Christopher Ankersen articulates in his book *The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation*, little has been written about this important concept/idea from a theoretical perspective. Ankersen's book concentrates on civil-military cooperation from the military's point of view. According to the author, this focus is warranted for several reasons. First, while civil-military cooperation is the product of a Trinitarian relationship within a given society, it is largely carried out by only one of those actors—the military. Second, there are some indications that this may be beginning to change, but in the time period under examination (1999-2007), “civil military cooperation” is a military practice. Ankersen's operational definition of civil-military cooperation is a long one but worth quoting verbatim:

All measures undertaken between commanders and national authorities, civil, military, and para-military, which concern the relationship between (military forces), the national governments and civil populations in an area where...military forces are deployed or plan to be deployed, supported, or employed. Such measures would also include cooperation and co-ordination of activities between commanders and non-governmental or international agencies, organizations and authorities.

While Ankersen's operational definition of civil-military cooperation is useful, there are problems with it. First, the term is a value-laden one, in that it assumes a degree of cooperation or partnership that is by no means universally present. (3) Second, the term connotes collaboration or coordination of, not necessarily direct involvement in, a range of activities.

Ankersen's *The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation* most important contribution to the civil-military cooperation debate is his Clausewitzian framework. By examining Canada's civil-military cooperation efforts in Kosovo, Bosnia, and Afghanistan through the lens of Clausewitz's



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