American Military Culture and Strategy

By PHILLIP S. MEILINGER

DOD

General Creighton W. Abrams briefs President Lyndon Johnson on the military situation in Vietnam

Culture is generally defined as socially transmitted behavior patterns, beliefs, and institutions that shape a community or population. These beliefs and behavior patterns influence the way a people fight, affecting not only goals and strategies but also methods, technologies, weapons, force structures, and even tactics. There is no denying that cultural analysis is exceedingly difficult; even a limited analysis of one's own culture is a complex endeavor with elements that are impossible to quantify even if they are not changing over time. Nevertheless, analysis must be attempted because the influence of culture is fundamental to a vast panorama of military art—from strategic communication to order and discipline.

The U.S. military subculture has obviously been shaped by American culture writ large. Although partly inherited from its European forebears, our approach to war has developed in its own distinctive way. Events since the Cold War have made our contemporary military culture more finely tuned to the demands of domestic and international politics than ever before. Increasing sensitivity to the use of force has shaped the way Americans fight today, emphasizing speed, precision, power projection, and information fusion to produce decisive results in a short period of time with low casualties—to both sides. In addition, the tension between a professional military and one composed of citizens—a national guard—continues to be a subject of intense political debate. Finally, civilian control of the military, the bedrock of American military culture, must be offered loyal opposition from military professionals to avoid political decisions to employ military power in ways that are antithetical to sound grand strategy.

Colonel Phillip S. Meilinger, USAF (Ret.), served in the U.S. Air Force for 30 years. After military retirement, he worked for both Science Applications International Corporation and Northrop Grumman. He holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan.

Observations

Outside observers have stressed certain themes in American culture and their impact on military organization and strategy. Alexis de Tocqueville noted that Americans emphasized equality and democracy and believed they had a God-given mandate to further those concepts throughout the world, prompting him to write in exasperation: "Nothing is more embarrassing in the ordinary intercourse of life than this irritable patriotism of the Americans."[1] A heightened ethnocentrism would become an American trait.

Regarding the military, Tocqueville noted that geography, in the form of a huge land mass bounded by oceans and weak neighbors, meant that a standing army was unnecessary. As a consequence, military affairs were little discussed by the average American or his politicians. This, in turn, led to naiveté and lack of preparedness when a crisis did arise: "There are two things that a democratic people will always find very difficult, to begin a war and to end it."[2] This was a prescient observation.

Another foreigner observer was Alfred Vagts, who served in the German army during World War I but fled to America when Hitler came to power in 1933. A military historian, Vagts defined two related but fundamentally different terms. The *military way* sought to achieve specific war objectives with efficiency and dispatch. The military way was limited in scope and inherently scientific in its methods. *Militarism*, on the other hand, was a combination of "customs, interests, prestige, actions and thought associated with armies and war and yet transcending true military purposes." Militarism was an evil, focused on "caste and cult" rather than science, and was often antithetical to the military way.[3] Germany was militaristic, but Vagts' adopted country was not: "The American system at the outset was a military system, not a militaristic system. It conceived of the army as an agent of civil power, to be organized and disciplined with that purpose in view, not as an end in itself."[4]

The most influential authority on the culture of the American military has been Samuel Huntington. In *The Soldier and the State*, Huntington covered a wide range of topics including the nature of a profession, military professionalism, and civilian control

of the military. He too noted the distinction between the military way and militarism, the profound security of the United States for over a century that stunted strategic thought, and the tension between professional Soldiers and the National Guard. Regarding this last item, he noted that the Guard is an inherently political instrument. Commanders are appointed by state governors (or in some cases are elected), so these positions are often seen as a form of patronage.[5] Once appointed, senior officers have a dual loyalty to their state and to the Federal Government. In short, because the regular military force was small and the Nation had to rely on its Guard, there arose continual tension regarding the political nature and influence of the U.S. military.

In sum, observers identified several factors that characterize American military culture.[6] First was the fear of a standing army that might prove dangerous to the liberties of a free people. Related to this fear was an affinity for the citizen-soldier. It was a strongly held belief that every able-bodied man in America was capable of taking up arms to defend his home. At the beginning of the colonial era, this was not an unreasonable assumption. Colonial America was a dangerous place, and most men, especially in frontier areas, had to be proficient with firearms for their own safety. By the time of the Revolution, the English were also aware of this latent military capability. As one magistrate warned London, these were "a people numerous and armed."[7] The United States was born in conflict—to secure its independence and survival—and this had a defining effect on its military culture.

Strategy and U.S. History

At the same time, Americans were not particularly militaristic in that the rigid discipline characteristic of European armies was not present in the colonies. General William von Steuben, who helped train George Washington's Continental Army, noted that Americans wanted to be told why they were doing things—orders were not sufficient.[8] This trait meant that American military personnel were imbued with an unusual amount of independence and initiative. This independent streak would also be a lasting cultural trait.

A–10 Warthogs strike targets in Kosovo as part of Operation *Allied Force*

1st Combat Camera Squadron (Greg Davis)

The United States was founded on law, so the role of the military was carefully circumscribed. The law similarly governed the way the military conducted itself. It is significant that one of the first legal treatises governing the conduct of an army in war, in any country, was drawn up by Francis Lieber for the U.S. Army in 1861.[9] This mandate to follow the law has become even more pronounced today.

Isolationism, to a great extent fostered by geography, has long been a characteristic strain in the American spirit. George Washington warned of foreign entanglements in his "farewell speech" of 1796, and it was not until 1948 that the United States joined a military alliance in peacetime. Americans, therefore, viewed war as an aberration not to be taken lightly. This total commitment often led to a policy of unconditional surrender—anecdotally what the initials of U.S. Grant stood for.[10] If wars were thus total and the subjugation of the enemy was necessary, then it followed that the aftermath of war—indeed its goal—should be the spread of the American spirit of democracy and an abhorrence of war. Democracy was the desired endstate for Mexico in 1847, for Cuba and the Philippines in 1898, for Europe through Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of 1918, and for Germany and Japan after World War II. Even in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq, free and democratic societies were the ultimate U.S. policy goals. Unfortunately, it was also a characteristic of the "aberration" mentality that when wars ended, things were expected to return quickly to normal. The troops would come home and be demobilized, the defense budget would be cut, America would return to its isolationist shell, and the budding democracy in the defeated enemy country would be left to fend for itself. Postconflict pacification and stabilization efforts were often given short shrift.[11]

The military strategies followed by U.S. leaders over the past 2 centuries have been shaped by these varied characteristics. One of the most respected historians of the American military has been Russell Weigley, who argued that through the end of World War II at least, American Soldiers held a narrow definition of the term *strategy*. To them, the term merely meant "the art of bringing forces to the battlefield in a favorable position," and generals did not consider broader issues, such as the political, economic, or social implications of battle. Using this narrow definition, Soldiers tended to see battle as an end in itself.[12] Carl von Clausewitz had said precisely the same thing, so American Soldiers could at least claim a dubious pedigree.[13] The art of American strategy therefore focused on how the battle should be set up, and how it should then be fought. Much time was spent on logistics, command and control, staff work, and battle tactics. The goal was to get there fast, get there first, and get there heavy. If one did so, annihilation might result: the enemy would be decisively defeated, and peace, whatever politicians meant by that term, would ensue. This meshed with an American military culture that saw war as an aberration to be quickly ended and then forgotten.

A corollary of this emphasis on annihilation was that America would rely on its massive industrial and natural resources to overwhelm an enemy. For America, there would always be an unlimited supply of weapons, ammunition, fuel, and steel. Technology could substitute for manpower.

And so, American strategy was an attempt to mass forces for a decisive battle that would lead to enemy defeat. Some generals got quite good at this; by the end of the Civil War, Grant was battering Robert E. Lee's army to bits—as well as his own. In World War I, John Pershing followed the same unimaginative strategy used by the British and French—a series of bloody frontal assaults against German lines. As for World War II, many believe that Eisenhower's refusal to move beyond the Elbe River toward Berlin was the epitome of myopic strategic thinking. To him, taking the German capital would cost many lives, and they were not worth the seizure of the city for "mere" political ends.[14]

Tocqueville noted that a huge land mass bounded by oceans and weak neighbors meant that a standing army was unnecessary

Korea was a turning point because the world had changed. The American and Soviet colossi faced each other, armed with atomic weapons, across the devastated but invaluable landscape of Europe. When North Korea moved south in June 1950, American leaders saw the attack as a feint dictated by Moscow that was intended to distract America from Europe. Chinese intervention a few months later aggravated these

fears. Such concerns were either not shared or not understood by the commander in Tokyo; Douglas MacArthur believed that his mission was to destroy the enemy's forces. The lessons of Clausewitz and his own experiences in two world wars had taught him that there was no substitute for victory. Harry Truman thought otherwise, and the Old Soldier faded away.

American military leaders learned from MacArthur's experience in Korea: they learned to keep quiet and not argue with their civilian superiors. Unfortunately, the more vital strategic issues were not grasped. Vietnam was the result.

Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson saw Vietnam, and indeed all of Southeast Asia, as another proxy war pushed by Communist leaders in Moscow and Beijing to distract attention from Europe. To avoid falling into this trap, the Presidents decided that there would be no attempt to annihilate or overthrow the enemy. There would be no invasion of North Vietnam. Johnson confined himself to throwing some bombs at North Vietnam, although never enough and seldom at the right targets.[15] In an unusually candid passage, Johnson explained his reasoning for a military strategy that offered something less than victory:

I saw our bombs as my political resources for negotiating a peace. On the one hand, our planes and our bombs could be used as carrots for the South, strengthening the morale of the South Vietnamese and pushing them to clean up their corrupt house, by demonstrating the depth of our commitment to the war. On the other hand, our bombs could be used as sticks against the North, pressuring North Vietnam to stop its aggression against the South. By keeping a lid on all the designated targets, I knew I could keep the control of the war in my own hands.[16]

Unfortunately, Johnson's stick was never big enough to stop the North Vietnamese from stealing the carrots.

General William Westmoreland was thus heavily constrained. As the heir to the tradition of decisive battle and annihilation, he struggled to reconcile divergent goals and the means to achieve them. Denied the option of moving north, he devised a strategy of attrition that emphasized body counts, search and destroy operations, free fire zones, and an astonishing use of firepower. The Air Force dropped 5 million tons of bombs on South Vietnam, while the Army and Marines fired an even more astonishing 8 million tons of artillery rounds.[17] And South Vietnam was on our side. Had the enemy been the German army of 1944, this kind of strategy might have made sense; in 1968 against the Viet Cong, it most certainly did not. The political and cultural components of strategy were barely considered, largely because American military leaders had never been educated to worry about such things.

Exacerbating this, wars now took place far off and, for the United States at least, for limited ends. These small wars had international repercussions that had to be understood by military leaders, but it was a lesson slow to take root. America would need to use its military power in a most circumspect fashion. American strategy needed to be reexamined.

Service Cultures

In the face of this context, it should be noted that the Services themselves have differing views of strategy. During the first century and a half of our nation's history, the Army tended to dominate strategic military thinking. Those officers who entered the political arena—and thus had further influence on strategy—almost exclusively were Soldiers.[18] With the advent of serious global and joint warfare during World War II, as well as the addition of airpower as a new dimension to military operations, U.S. strategic thought necessarily began to evolve. Culture—the beliefs, traditions, and behavior patterns that shape any country or organization—also shaped the American military. The result of these factors has made the Services unique. Carl Builder wrote a classic work on the subject, arguing, for example, that the Navy has a tradition of independence as a result of virtual autonomy while at sea and out of direct contact with Washington. This led to a spirit of initiative, but also an aversion to politicians who attempted to "meddle" in its affairs. The Army, on the other hand, saw itself as an obedient and willing servant of the people. Although often neglected by its masters, it remained steadfastly loyal and dependable. The Air Force, as the youngest Service, boasted that its only tradition was a refusal to have any traditions. It saw itself as technologically oriented and therefore progressive.[19]

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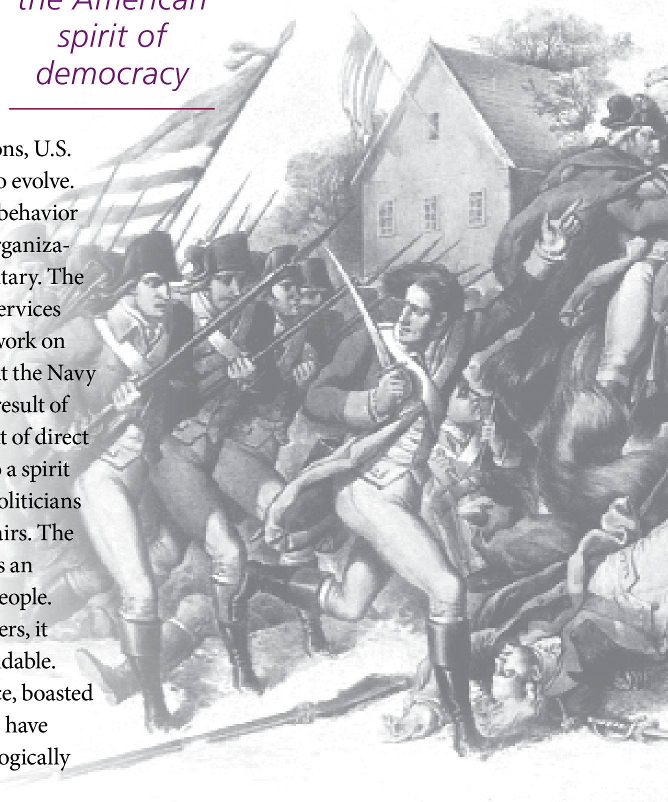
Granted, these characterizations are too facile, but the Services are different. Their histories and traditions have induced mindsets that shape the way they view strategy and war. As noted, the Army tends to follow a Clausewitzian bent, and its focus is on reaching close combat with the enemy. The Navy has traditionally followed a more economic form of war that emphasizes control of sealanes and the gradual disruption of an enemy's trade.[20]

Airmen also question the focus on an enemy's land forces. In 1930, Billy Mitchell wrote, "The advent of air power, which can go straight to the vital centers and either neutralize or destroy them, has put a completely new complexion on the old system of making war. It is now realized that the hostile main army in the field is a false objective, and the real objectives are the vital centers."[21] The point is that differing Service cultures shape the way Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen view war—its purpose, its strategies, and its tactics. For decades, these diverse views generated confusion. After Vietnam, missteps in the Iran hostage rescue attempt of 1980, and the invasion of Grenada in 1983, the Services



National Archives

made concerted efforts to adopt a more joint approach to warfighting. This move toward increased jointness accelerated with the end of the Cold War. To minimize mistakes and confusion, military operations became more centralized and joint. At the same time, a technological breakthrough in the area of precision guided munitions was taking place.

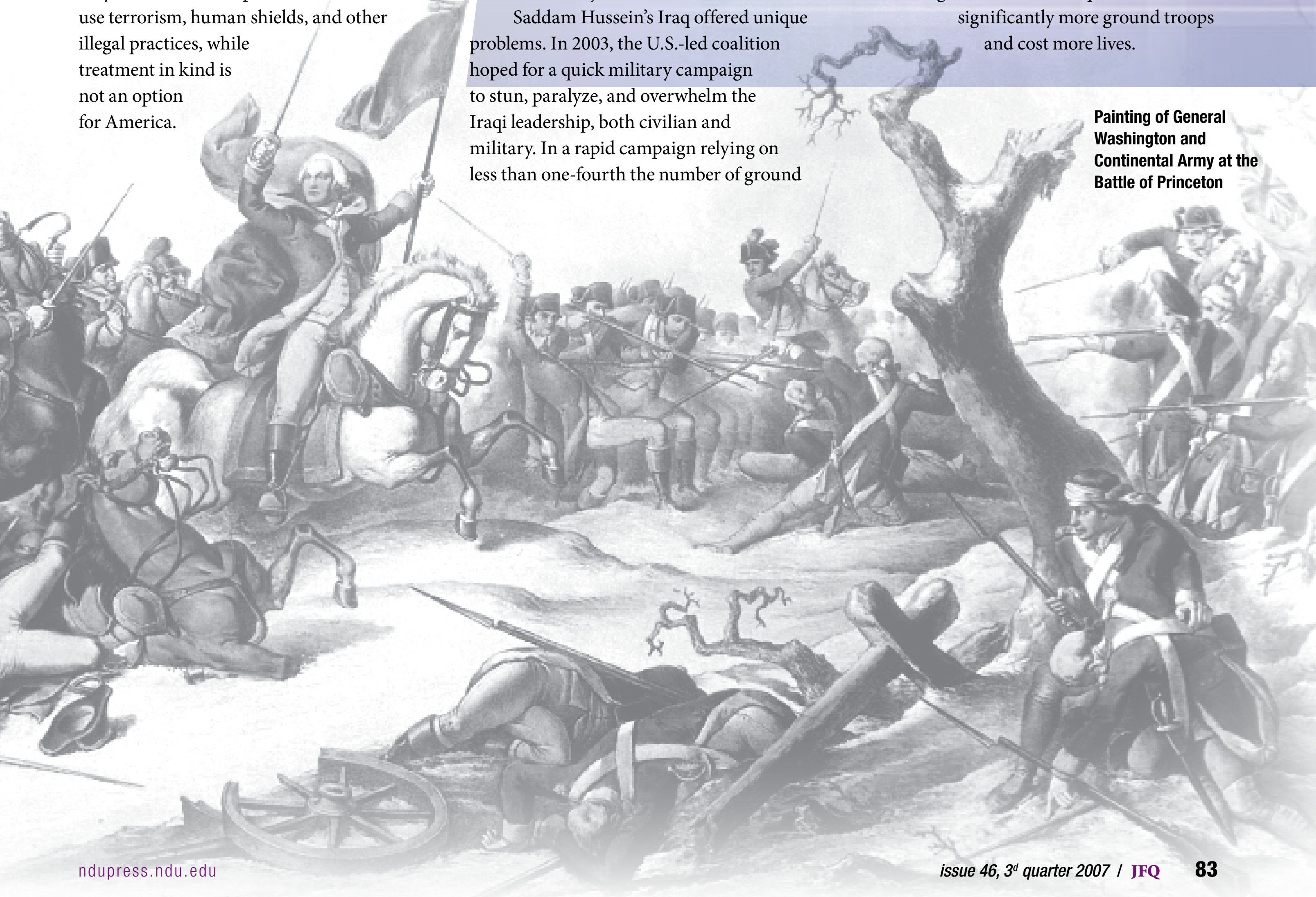
The emergence of these new weapons produced an increasing demand for discrete and less blunt applications of force. Annihilation—the goal of U.S. combat in the past—became inappropriate. Instead, military operations were planned to minimize casualties to enemy forces: the objectives became to dissuade them from fighting at all or to paralyze them so that they were unable to fight effectively and quickly surrendered.[22] More importantly, eliminating collateral damage to civilians became essential. Any bomb that went astray or any civilian killed by an edgy Soldier on patrol would be reported worldwide, thereby harming American foreign policy. Significantly, the United States is held to far higher standards than the adversaries they face. It is now expected that enemies will use terrorism, human shields, and other illegal practices, while treatment in kind is not an option for America.

Other technological advances emerged to continue the transformation of American military culture. Besides precision weapons, stealth, networked operations, and near-instantaneous global communications and intelligence have revolutionized the way America fights, beginning with Operation *Desert Storm* in 1991. Besides suffering remarkably few casualties, the Armed Forces achieved their objectives with unusual speed: *Desert Storm* lasted 6 weeks, and the 1999 air war over Kosovo took less than 3 months.

America's overwhelming military might generated a predictable response: enemies did not disappear; they morphed into a new form. Taking on the United States in a conventional fight was out of the question, so adversaries were left with asymmetrical strategies and weapons. This meant that the military began to worry seriously about weapons of mass destruction, cruise and ballistic missiles, information warfare, and terrorism. The catastrophe of 9/11 forced changes in American military culture by accelerating the move toward greater technological development and more joint command and control.

Saddam Hussein's Iraq offered unique problems. In 2003, the U.S.-led coalition hoped for a quick military campaign to stun, paralyze, and overwhelm the Iraqi leadership, both civilian and military. In a rapid campaign relying on less than one-fourth the number of ground troops used in 1991, the coalition struck with land, sea, air, and special operations units. Iraqi leaders were unable to organize a serious defense or even coordinate and control their forces. The coalition encountered only sporadic resistance from regular and Republican Guard forces, and within 2 weeks, Baghdad had begun to totter. A week later it was over—at least the United States thought it was. And that last comment echoes the concern advanced by Tocqueville nearly 2 centuries ago: Americans have difficulty getting out of wars.

It is useful to ask a related question regarding the strategy employed in Iraq: to what extent did the way in which the coalition fought contribute to the problems that have occurred afterward? In other words, did the coalition win too easily and bloodlessly, thereby leaving the Iraqi populace with the impression that they had not been defeated? In this argument, a slower, more deliberate, and more brutal campaign to destroy the Iraqi army and occupy all of the major population centers would have been more desirable—even though it would have required significantly more ground troops and cost more lives.



Painting of General Washington and Continental Army at the Battle of Princeton

General John Abizaid, Commander U.S. Central Command, testifies before House Armed Services Committee on progress in Iraq

U.S. Air Force (D. Myles Cullen)

The contrary argument maintains that it is not serendipitous that things had gone better in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan after major hostilities ended; it was precisely because American ground presence was so slight. From this perspective, the wisest strategy is to place as few of our troops in harm's way as possible.

Military Service culture will to a great extent determine where one falls on the complex (and oversimplified) issue outlined above. Clearly, however, the clash of Service cultures is apparent and harbors serious implications for how America fights. In sum, it appears that the peculiarities of American culture have shaped a distinctive American way of fighting. But culture changes as a result of new directions in society's circumstances, attitudes, and beliefs. American military culture has thus changed too, especially following World War II and again after the Cold War. Clearly, one cultural paradigm has been irrevocably shattered—the days of U.S. isolationism are gone.

Other cultural artifacts have not disappeared. The long-standing belief in the efficacy of the citizen-soldier is deeply ingrained. American youngsters know of the famed Minutemen, those rugged colonials who grabbed the long rifle hanging over the fireplace and went off to fight when the situation demanded. This legend has endured in American culture for over 2 centuries and for good reason. The armies that have fought U.S. wars have been populated largely by draftees, short-term volunteers, and Guard and Reserve forces, reinforced by a small cadre of professionals.[23]

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This has now changed. The demise of the draft after the Vietnam War means that, for the first time in American history, a professional military is dominant.[24] Even so, this issue is not clear-cut because the Guard and Reserve play a greater role than they did previously, due to increased overseas commitments. For example, over 50 percent of airlift and air refueling missions are now flown by Air Guard and Reserve crews. During the Iraqi campaign, the Army mobilized over 150,000 Reservists and Guardsmen, the Marine Corps activated over 20,000 Reservists, and the Navy called up nearly 10,000.[25] Clearly, both a professional military and one made up of citizen-Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines are essential.

Still, questions regarding the role of the military continue to echo in American society. What is the appropriate role of senior military leaders in political decision-making? The combatant commanders, those four-star officers assigned to geographic commands around the world, have great political influence, dealing routinely with foreign civilian leaders, as well as their military counterparts, regarding issues as diverse as status of forces agreements, contingency plans, and local terrorist threats. The war on terror, with its necessary emphasis on all aspects of terrorism—political, economic, religious, ethnic, cultural, and military—means that these combatant commanders are destined to play a greater, not lesser, role in future crises. Are they trained for such roles? Are they given sufficient guidance from Washington to help them navigate the shoals?

Civil-Military Relations

This leads to the broad yet critical issue of civil-military relations—more specifically, civilian control of the military. This is a huge topic, but the essence of this matter was perhaps best expressed by Peter Feaver: "The civil-military challenge is to reconcile a military strong enough to do anything the civilians ask them to with a military

subordinate enough to do only what civilians authorize them to do."[26]

This is an emotional subject that has generated much ink. Some today speak passionately about a crisis in American civil-military affairs, seeing danger at every turn.[27] The Clinton years were seen as particularly troubling because it appeared the military did not like their Commander in Chief. Recent studies indicate that the American military is becoming increasingly conservative, and two-thirds of military personnel surveyed thought that the military had higher moral standards than did society at large.[28] It was feared that an ideological gulf was developing between society and the military chartered to protect it, and this spelled danger. Others have argued just as strenuously that there is no crisis at all.[29] This is a vital subject that strikes at the core of American military culture. Civilian control of the military is fundamental to our political and cultural system.

Our military leaders must recognize that they have a crucial role in American military policy and strategy. Because senior commanders will generally be on the scene where crises develop, they will undoubtedly have valuable insights to share with political leaders. At the same time, and this is the heart of the matter, the military will often be directed to implement the actions that civilian leaders decide on. It is therefore essential that the military advice given—and any reservations—regarding a strategic course of action be well thought out, practical, and practicable.

Therein lies the rub. Too often in recent memory, our military leaders have fallen short in providing this necessary advice—especially when it conflicted with the views of civilian leaders. In the Vietnam War, for example, it is notable that no senior officers from any Services forcefully pressed their reservations on the strategy and the conduct of the war to the point where they tendered their resignations. Yet a number complained bitterly in their memoirs regarding that strategy.[30] By then it was too late.

Similarly, in spring 2006, several recently retired generals publicly denounced the strategy being followed in Iraq and called for the resignation of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.[31] Again, however, none of these men so forcefully expressed these complaints while in uniform. This is simply not good enough when the lives of America's sons and daughters are at stake. If senior commanders sincerely believe that the military strategies directed by our civilian leaders are fatally flawed—as apparently did many officers in Vietnam and in Iraq—then they have a responsibility to the country and to those under their command to express those reservations forcefully and unambiguously. To wait several years to come forward and state "I knew it all along" is, to use the evocative phrase of H.R. McMaster, "dereliction of duty."[32]

Related to this, and putting even greater pressure on our senior commanders, is the fact that fewer American politicians have military experience than previously. Today, only 29 percent of Senators and 23 percent of Congress have served in the military—compared to 77 percent and 71 percent respectively in 1977.[33] This is not to say they are uninformed or incapable of making wise decisions regarding military issues, but it does mean that such knowledge must be gained in other ways.[34] Once again, this could indicate the need for a close relationship between politicians and the military leadership.

The Endstate

Other distinctive traits of American military culture remain. The military continues to conduct itself in a rigidly legal fashion. If anything, the growth of global news media has made this requirement even more compelling. Americans also continue to view war as an aberration that should be undertaken only with reluctance and ended quickly. Regrettably, as Iraq demonstrates, a war's aftermath is still given scant consideration by Soldiers or politicians until it is too late.[35] Our combatant commanders must therefore plan for what will happen after major combat operations are over. Our State Department must play a far greater role in advising commanders during this critical phase. Our Presidents must ensure that the desired endstate is clearly understood by all participants and that plans are developed to reach that endstate. Once again, however, it appears certain that senior military commanders must be part of this crucial process for the simple reason that they—and, more specifically, the men and women working for them—will be the ones who may have to pay the ultimate price for failure.

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Of great importance, the tendency to regard battle as an end in itself, to see annihilation of the enemy as a desirable goal, and for military commanders to be blind, or at least naïve, to anything on a plane higher than the tactical level of war, is no longer viable. Instead, the U.S. military today is far more attuned to the political, social, and cultural implications of its activities than ever before. It also relies ever more heavily on technology as a way to achieve its objectives quickly and efficiently, with the least possible loss of life—to both sides. The campaigns since *Desert Storm* in 1991 show this new trend clearly. Although specific weapons and tactics will most certainly change in the decades ahead, the basic cultural trends noted above probably will not. This is good; the American Armed Forces, the most powerful in the world, must continue to be guided by the legalistic and democratic ideals of our forebears. Moreover, the military must recognize its own cultural imperatives before it can effectively cooperate with allies and confront its enemies. **JFQ**

NOTES

1 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Everyman's Library ed., 2 vols. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994), I, 244.

2 Ibid., II, 268.

3 Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism, Civilian and Military*, rev. ed. (London: Hollis & Carter, 1959), 13.

4 Ibid., 103.

5 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 169–179.

6 See, for example, Walter Millis, *Arms and Men: A Study of American Military History* (New York: Putnam's, 1956); Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971); Jerry M. Cooper, *The Army and Civil Disorder: Federal Military Intervention in Labor Disputes, 1877–1950* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Upton and the Army* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964); William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992); Edward Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784–1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Arthur A. Ekirch, *The Civilian and the Military* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

[7] John Shy's *A People Numerous and Armed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) is an excellent book on the subject of colonial military affairs.

[8] Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 64.

[9] Richard S. Hartigan, *Lieber's Code and the Law of War* (Chicago: Precedent, 1983).

[10] Actually, Grant's given names were Hiram Ulysses; he later changed them to Ulysses Simpson. Most folks called him Sam.

[11] World War II was a sea change in this regard: in both Germany and Japan, the United States left behind occupation troops, for years, to ensure that democracy took root.

[12] Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), xviii.

[13] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). There are over 20 passages in *On War* that stress the necessity and primacy of finding and destroying the enemy army.

[14] For critiques of Eisenhower's decision, see John Toland, *The Last 100 Days* (New York: Random House, 1966), and Cornelius Ryan, *The Last Battle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966). For more balanced treatments, see Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), and Forrest C. Pogue, "The Decision to Halt at the Elbe," in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent R. Greenfield (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1960), 479–492.

[15] According to some, Army leaders continued to press Johnson for an invasion option throughout the war, but the President would have none of it. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 60, 164–165, 179, 261–262. For the argument that a move with conventional U.S. forces into Laos and Cambodia was a war-winning option, see Harry Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1982), 104, 119, 123–124.

[16] Quoted in Dennis M. Drew, *Rolling Thunder, 1965: Anatomy of a Failure*, CADRE Paper (Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University Press, 1986), 31.

[17] Wayne Thompson, *To Hanoi and Back: The USAF and North Vietnam, 1966–1973* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2000), 5–6.

[18] Besides career officers such as Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, U.S. Grant, and Dwight Eisenhower, there were many others who had served as senior Army officers and had run for the Presidency, some successfully: George Washington, William Henry Harrison, Franklin Pierce, Winfield Scott, John Fremont, and George McClellan. Indeed, the six Presidents after the Civil War had all been Union generals. In contrast, it was not until 1960 that a former naval officer—and John F. Kennedy had only served as a Reserve lieutenant—became President. An admiral has never run for the Presidency, although James Stockdale was Ross Perot's Vice-Presidential running mate in 1992.

[19] Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), passim.

[20] U.S. Navy, Naval Doctrine Publication 1, *Naval Warfare* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, March 1994), 35.

[21] William L. Mitchell, *Skyways* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1930), 155.

[22] In decrying those who complained that too many Iraqi soldiers died in *Desert Storm*, Harry Summers wrote a trenchant editorial with the heavily sarcastic title, "Bambifying War: A Virus from the Ideological Swamp," *The Washington Times*, September 19, 1991, G1.

[23] For spirited accounts from the late 19th century, see Emory Upton, *The Military Policy of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1912), who argues the need for a professional military, and John A. Logan, *The Volunteer Soldier of America* (Chicago: R.S. Peale, 1887), who extols the virtues of the citizen-soldier. Upton and Logan had been Union generals during the Civil War. Upton was a West Point graduate and career Soldier. Logan had been an Illinois congressman before the war who resigned from office and took up arms, rising to the rank of major general and temporary command of a corps. After the war, he returned to politics.

[24] Paradoxically, an all-volunteer force is viewed by some as undemocratic because it removes an important check on government's power. In this view, it is a good thing for political leaders to have to worry about disgruntled draftees—and their families. Thus, it would be a step for democracy if men and women were *forced* into the armed services. See, for example, Diane H. Mazur, "Draft May be Needed to Rein in All-Powerful Military," *The Chicago Tribune*, December 28, 2003.

[25] See Department of Defense, News Release, March 26, 2003, available at <www.defenselink.mil/releases/2003/b03262003_bt156-03.html>; Air Force Office of Public Affairs, "U.S. Air Force Snapshot," April–June 2004. The Army and Air Force have both National Guard and Reserve Components; the Navy and Marines have only Reserve forces.

[26] Peter D. Feaver, "The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control," *Armed Forces and Society*, no. 23 (Winter 1996), 149.

[27] Richard H. Kohn, "Out of Control: The Crisis in Civil Military Relations," *The National Interest*, no. 35 (Spring 1994), 3–17.

[28] Gordon Trowbridge, "Today's Military: Right, Republican and Principled," *Army Times*, January 5, 2004, 15.

[29] For a response to Kohn, see "An Exchange on Civil-Military Relations," *The National Interest*, no. 36 (Summer 1994), 23–31. The four respondents were Colin Powell, John Lehman, William Odom, and Samuel Huntington.

[30] See, for example, U.S. Grant Sharp, *Strategy for Defeat* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio, 1978); William W. Momyer, *Air Power in Three Wars* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978); and William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

[31] Evan Thomas and John Barry, "Anatomy of a Revolt," *Newsweek*, April 24, 2006, 28–32; Michael Duffy, "The Revolt of the Generals," *Time*, April 24, 2006, 41–42. Anthony Zinni was an exception; he had retired before the Bush administration decision to invade Iraq.

[32] H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997).

[33] "Vets Aren't Taking Hill: Military experience in Congress is at a 60-year low," *Military Officer*, January 2007, 32.

[34] Some politicians are, however, very aware of the effects military operations have on their political fortunes. Wesley Clark stated that he was under pressure to end the war in Kosovo before July because Vice President Al Gore wanted it over before he began his Presidential campaign that month. R. Jeffrey Smith, "Clark Papers Talk Politics and War," *The Washington Post*, February 7, 2004, A1, A5. In December 1972, Richard Nixon was anxious to end the war before the new, and heavily Democratic, Congress took office in January. He therefore gave his military commanders great latitude in prosecuting the *Linebacker II* air campaign. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 1,458.

[35] For a discussion of this issue, see Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin, 2006), passim.