

The Relationship between the American People and its Military

The Growing Divide since Operation Iraqi Freedom

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Année académique 2018-2019
**Master [120] en sciences politiques, orientation relations internationales, finalité diplomatie et
résolution de conflits**

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James I. Vansandt III

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am in debt to the faculty of l'Ecole des Sciences Politiques de l'Université catholique de Louvain (UCL). The professors have expanded my world view, introduced me to new ways of thinking, and challenged my assumptions about war, diplomacy, culture, institutions, and international relations. The grades I received do not reflect how much I have learned under their tutelage.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Masters of International Relations Program, without whom I would not have been able to navigate a foreign academic system.

I would like to thank the Olmsted Foundation, which provided me the scholarship funding to broaden myself with two, great years in Belgium.

Finally, I would like to thank my family – Kara and Foster. Their patience and willingness to allow me to pursue this educational opportunity at UCL has been most generous.

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“As it has for generations, free men and women in America’s military will fight with skill and valor to protect us.”¹

Jim Mattis

I. Introduction

In the United States, there is a perception of a growing divide between the American military and the population. To explore the topic, James Mattis – former 4-star general and Secretary of Defense – published *Soldiers and Citizens* in 2016, and he later commissioned a study at the Department of Defense (DoD) to form a National Commission to Explore the Civil-Military Divide and Military Service Policy Options.² Politicians, general officers, and national security writers sounded the alarm of a shift from the American public’s sense of duty and obligation to serve in the military – only half of one percent of Americans have served on active duty in the last decade.³ Secretary Mattis’ concern is well-founded, as seen in recent headlines: *Foreign Policy* reported that “Civil Military Relations haven’t been this Bad in Decades,”⁴ the *Los Angeles Times* warned that “U.S. Military and Civilians Are Increasingly Divided,”⁵ a think-tank researcher declared that “Those serving in the U.S. Military Don’t Actually Represent the Country as a Whole”⁶ and *Stars and Stripes* cautioned “Pentagon: Military-Civilian Disconnect Could Endanger All-Volunteer Force.”⁷ Senior military officials like Generals Mattis, Petraeus, and McChrystal, as well as civilian leaders like Secretary Leon Panetta and Ambassadors

¹ *National Defense Strategy 2018*, U.S. Department of Defense 2018.

² “National Commission to Explore the Civil-Military Divide and Military Service Policy Options During Hearings,” News Release, Department of Defense, 15 May 2019, Online: <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/1848527/national-commission-to-explore-the-civil-military-divide-and-military-service-p/> (accessed 19 May 2019).

³ Pew Research Center, “War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era: The Military-Civilian Gap,” 5 October 2011, 3.

⁴ Micah Zenko, “The Public and the State Go Public: Civil-Military Relations haven’t been this Bad in Decades,” *Foreign Policy*, 26 September 2013, Online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/09/26/the-soldier-and-the-state-go-public/> (accessed 15 February 2017).

⁵ David Zucchini and David S. Cloud, “U.S. Military and Civilians Are Increasingly Divided” *Los Angeles Times*. 24 May 2015. Online: <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-warrior-main-20150524-story.html> (accessed 15 February 2017).

⁶ Amy Schafer, “Those Serving in the US Military Don’t Actually Represent the Country as a Whole.” *Task and Purpose*. 27 September 2017. Online: <https://taskandpurpose.com/serving-us-military-dont-actually-represent-country-whole/> (accessed 11 October 2017).

⁷ Dianna Cahn, “Pentagon: Military-Civilian Disconnect Could Endanger All-Volunteer Force.” *Stars and Stripes*. 18 January 2018. Online: <https://www.stripes.com/news/pentagon-military-civilian-disconnect-could-endanger-all-volunteer-force-1.507427> (accessed 8 February 2018).

Karl Eikenberry and Ryan Crocker have all commented on the subject of civ-mil relations. The U.S. Military Academy, Army War College, Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and numerous think tanks have held symposiums and panels to discuss the issues regarding modern civ-mil relations in the United States. Thus, if the brightest minds and leaders of both the civilian and military establishments are concerned about a divide in civ-mil relations, then the subject is surely worth exploring.

This paper will examine this perceived divide, the causes of the divide – whether real or imagined – and possible solutions to bridge the gap. This paper hypothesizes that the perceived civilian-military divide since 2003 is a result of American reliance on the All-Volunteer Force (AVF), the types of modern wars fought by the U.S., and the American reliance on technology.

Problem-set, Research Questions, Hypothesis, and Methodology

Under the current system of American government and employment of armed force, the United States military must be able to draw upon its population for support – recruitment to fill the ranks, sympathetic politicians for budgetary allocation, and domestic and political support for overseas deployments. If this support link is broken completely, then the U.S. could find itself extremely vulnerable to competitors, non-state actors, and domestic unrest. In this context, the study will seek to answer the following: Since the Iraq invasion of 2003, how does the use of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF), modern warfare, and development in armament technologies combine to create a greater divide – imagined or real – between the American military and the American people? If this question can be adequately answered, then perhaps viable solutions could be proposed. The research questions explored in this paper are:

- How does the **reliance on the AVF** affect the types of war in which the United States engages and its reliance on technology?
- How does **modern warfare** affect the employment of the AVF and reliance on technology?
- How does the **reliance on technology** affect the AVF and the types of war in which the United States engages?

In addition to the questions, this paper will examine and develop other ideas associated with those questions. Namely:

- The lack of political will to employ large numbers of ground troops, which might result in high casualty rates, prevents the American public from “experiencing” the loss associated with war.
- The contemporary operating environment (COE) consists of “Gray Zone” operations, focused on counter-insurgency (COIN), policing, and advise and assist missions, which require fewer personnel than traditional force-on-force operations, thereby reducing the need for large military formations forward deployed.
- Technological advances have enabled, while domestic politics require, the use of fewer troops, who are more specialized, to conduct combat operations, thereby reducing the need for mass armies, which further erodes the people’s necessity to serve.
- The lack of an existential threat prevents citizens from developing an identity of duty to defend the state.
- The unwillingness of the people and politicians to institute a mandatory service obligation leads to an “us” and “them” mentality within the military.
- This divide reduces the American credibility of both hard and soft power, thereby weakening the ability of the U.S. to project power and conduct combat operations.

The methodology employed in this project is primarily qualitative in nature, while referencing quantitative data when appropriate, applicable, and available. While the collection of tangible numerical data, statistical analysis, and replicable testing of the hypothesis would be ideal, this project is much too subjective, fluid, and skewed. For example, most researchers and academics concerned with this subject are themselves associated with the military and foreign policy in some way – Carl von Clausewitz, James Mattis, Samuel Huntington, Michael Howard, David Kennedy, James Burk, Karl Eikenberry, Kori Schake, Anthony Cordesman, and Eliot Cohen to name a few. Inherently, their research methods, points of emphasis, and conclusions will be biased, as will mine.

In spite of inherent bias, this qualitative methodology pairs well with an inductive approach to the thesis topic, while employing an interpretive analysis to secondary sources' narratives and interpretations of cross-sectional data and research domains. This research relies upon the observations from historical examples, military theorists, think tanks from across the political spectrum, studies commissioned by both the military and academia, congressional reports, and journal articles, heavily relying on *Armed Forces and Society* – the subfield of civ-mil relations preeminent publication.⁸ However, and unfortunately for political science, “much of the debate about civil-military issues is driven by anecdotal or impressionistic evidence.”⁹

H.F. Wolcott warned that “Qualitative researchers seem particularly prone to the tendency – and urge – to go beyond reporting what is and to use their studies as platforms for making pronouncements of what ought to be.”¹⁰ Though military practitioners are trained to identify and solve problems, a qualitative methodology realizes that this study is unlikely to definitively prove – or disprove – the hypothesis. It may, however, lend itself to more deeply understanding this perceived divide between the people and the military. Though the study won't be replicable, perhaps the combination of methodology and framework may serve as a model for future researchers. Peter D. Feaver – director of the Triangle Institute for Security Studies and former member of the National Security Council in both the Clinton and Bush administrations – distinguished three forms of analysis essential to understanding civ-mil relations: normative, empirical, and theoretical.¹¹ This study relies most heavily upon a normative lens for analysis, while occasionally drawing upon the empirical and theoretical lenses.

Civ-mil studies are designed – by Samuel P. Huntington and Morris Janowitz – to study the “relationship between the civilian and military, the extent to which they do and ought to differ, and how to manage whatever differences arise.”¹² It is a multi-disciplinary endeavor that spans political science, history, sociology, and policy

⁸ Peter D. Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2, (1999): 211.

⁹ Kori Schake and James Mattis, *Warriors and Citizens: American Views of Our Military*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2016, 13.

¹⁰ Harry F. Wolcott, *Writing Up Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001, 5.

¹¹ Peter D. Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations,” 216-217.

¹² Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver “Thanks for Your Service: Civilian and Veteran Attitudes after Fifteen Years of War,” in *Warriors & Citizens: American Views of Our Military*, edited by Kori N. Schake and James N. Mattis, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press/Stanford University, 2016, 98.

analysis.¹³ Andrew Bacevich, of Boston University, defines civilian-military relations by two categories. The first is the relationship between senior military leaders and senior civilian officials. This is often referred to as “elite” and focuses on “civil control” of the military, but can also be referred to as the policy-making level. The second is the relationship between the military and American people as a whole, or the societal level.¹⁴ From the “people” perspective, this relationship is manifest by participation in the military, allocation of resources through the raising of taxes, oversight of military employment through Congressional approval,¹⁵ and accountability through the media.¹⁶

Why is a civilian-military gap an issue? Defense Secretary Mattis and Kori Schake – a professor and former official within the Department of Defense, Department of State, and National Security Council – identifies five applicable issues: 1) civilian society may be more willing to engage in wars if they are insulated from the costs; 2) veterans’ reintegration into civil society could be seen as difficult, and perhaps a threat to society itself; 3) the military may see itself as a separate part of society, more virtuous in its upholding of ideas like duty, honor, and self-sacrifice; 4) the military may develop an entitlement syndrome in thinking that “society owes them something” for their service; or 5) civilian society may “become apathetic to the issues that dominate the consciousness of those who have been putting their lives on the line for the rest of us” since 9/11.¹⁷ Schake and Mattis have expanded on the monumental study conducted by Peter Feaver and Richard Kohn at the Triangle Institute of Security Studies. These issues, however, are the same ones identified by Feaver, Kohn, and their team during the Clinton administration.¹⁸ David Kennedy, of Stanford, postulates that a civ-mil gap of the populace will “undoubtedly exacerbate the festering social tensions that palpably threaten America’s social comity.”¹⁹

Is there a gap? Schake and Mattis conclude that there is no real gap, only the perception of one, but Feaver, Burk, Eikenberry, and host of others disagree. Their

¹³ Peter D. Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations,” 211.

¹⁴ Andrew J. Bacevich, “Whose Army?” *The Modern American Military*, edited by David M. Kennedy, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, 194.

¹⁵ Leonard Wong, “Civil-Military Relations in a Post-9/11 World,” Colloquium Brief at the Strategic Studies Institute, 15 May 2008, 4.

¹⁶ Karl W. Eikenberry, “Reassessing the All-Volunteer Force,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 36, no 1 (2013): 15.

¹⁷ Kori Schake and James Mattis, 1-3.

¹⁸ Peter D. Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations,” 231.

¹⁹ David M. Kennedy, *The Modern American Military*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, 3.

conclusion then begs the question, “What leads to this perception?” That is the primary question of this work.

Perhaps the civ-mil gap is over-amplified, as the American public is “dismayingly ignorant across a wide range of issues.”²⁰ Support for the military is “an easy social convention because it demands little from the broader populace.”²¹ Military members are treated to retail discounts at various chain stores; receive verbal ‘thank yous’ when wearing uniforms; are allowed to board civilian aircraft at the front of the queue, receive gift boxes from churches, civic clubs, or elementary classes; and are offered free meals from various restaurants on Veterans Day – or Remembrance Day as is known outside of the U.S.

²⁰ Rosa Brooks, “Civil-Military Paradoxes,” In *Warriors and Citizens: American Views of Our Military*, edited by Kori Schake and James Mattis, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2016, 37.

²¹ Kori Schake and James Mattis, 5.

“Our society is exceptional in its openness, vast diversity, resilience, and engaged citizenry.”²²

President Barack Obama

II. Overview

A. Theoretical Overview

This study is based upon the Clausewitzian theoretical framework found in *On War*: the explanation of war and its “paradoxical trinity.” In homage to Clausewitz’ trinity, this study will utilize its own trinity to explain the civ-mil gap since 2003 – the relationship between the all-volunteer force, modern wars, and reliance on technology all combine to create a perception of a civil-military gap. Further theoretical dependence is cast on Samuel Huntington’s *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* and Morris Janowitz’ *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*.

1. Carl von Clausewitz and the Trinity

In reflecting on the Napoleonic wars in which he participated, Clausewitz noticed firsthand the devastating effects of national power that Napoleon was able to utilize through mobilization of the French people – *levée en masse* – through total or absolute war.²³ As a result, Clausewitz developed a theoretical framework through which to view the tendencies of war as a paradoxical trinity – composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.

The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled

²² Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy 2010*, Washington: The White House, 2010, 9.

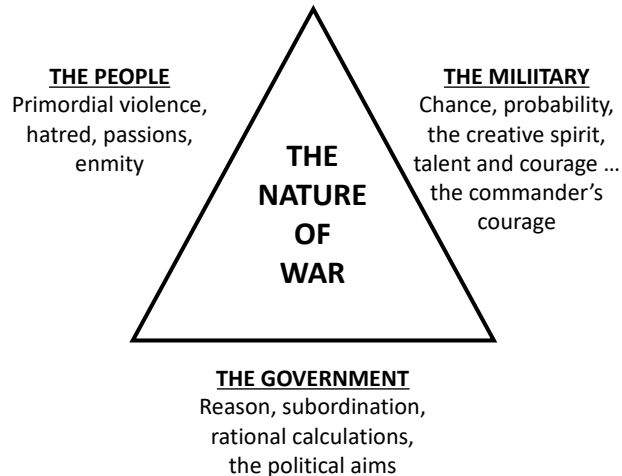
²³ Walter C. Opello Jr, *War, Armed Force, and the People: State Formation and Transformation in Historical Perspective*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016, 6.

in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army, but the political aims are the business of the government alone.

These three tendencies are like three different codes of law, deep-rooted in their subject and yet variable in their relationship to one another. A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone would be totally useless.²⁴

Each of those first mentioned tendencies generally correspond with a group of society: the people, the military, and the government. He correlated the people to primordial violence, hatred, passions, and enmity; the military to chance, probability, the creative spirit, talent, courage, and the commander's character; and the government to reason, subordination, rational calculations, and the political aims – as seen in the below figure,²⁵ which depicts the Trinity. This paper seeks to explore the “variable ... relationship” in the nexus of military and people.

Figure 1: The Three Dominant Tendencies of War



Source: Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, 3rd ed, New York: Routledge, 2005, 104.

²⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976, 89.

²⁵ Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, 3rd ed, New York: Routledge, 2005, 102-103.

In the variable relationship of the Trinity, each element affects the other.²⁶ For an example moving clockwise from the people: the public's opinion could influence military strategy and doctrine; the military could advise a strategy to meet the government's objectives, and the government could justify its actions to the people. In reverse, the people could vote for leaders to enact a shared foreign policy; the government could assign and distribute resources to the military; and the military seek to secure the public support for its actions. These examples are in no way exhaustive, but they serve to articulate that one element does not operate in a "vacuum, but is a collection of our culture and our collective decisions."²⁷

Furthermore, discounting the Trinity as a simple analytical tool or theory of war is to discount its value. Each element of the Trinity serves to restrain the others, thereby reducing any damage that might be inflicted if one of the elements becomes untethered. On a grander scale, the United Nations constrains the governments, while the Geneva Convention constrains the people, and the Rules of Engagement constrain the military.²⁸

The Trinity's adjective often rests on the translation of *On War*. It has been called "remarkable" or "shocking" or "astonishing" or "fascinating."²⁹ Clausewitz made his observations in the wake of nationalistic movements, which caused him to note the mobilization of the people in war and their new "political energies" as the most important development in the nature of war during his lifetime,³⁰ which became known as the Second Military Revolution in Knox and Murray's Five Military Revolutions.³¹

In this manner, the Remarkable Trinity is still applicable to analysis in the American context because of the American reliance on cultivated nationalism – disregarding ethnic and religious identity in favor of a civic identity focused on a

²⁶ There are other depictions of Clausewitz' Trinity, representing a "Squaring of the Triangle" to account for material and technological environments, or a vector analysis to better represent the difference between conventional and unconventional wars, but those are not used in this analysis. For further examples, see Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War*, p105-110.

²⁷ Rosa Brooks, 64.

²⁸ Julie Anna Glascott, "The Trinity and the Law of War," *The Strategy Bridge*, 12 November 2017, Online: <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2017/11/12/the-trinity-and-the-law-of-war> (accesses 12 April 2019).

²⁹ Kenneth Algreen Starskov, Major Danish Army, "Clausewitz's Trinity: Dead or Alive?" (Master's Thesis, US Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 2013), 7.

³⁰ Michael I. Handel, 129.

³¹ MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray, *The Dynamics of Military Revolution: 1300-2050*, New York: Cambridge UP, 2001,13.

broader, national adherence to laws, values, and institutions.³² The United States is widely considered a nationalistic country. In an effort to indoctrinate from an early age, public schools in 46 states require students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance before school.³³ Visual displays of patriotism are represented by displaying the American flag on the lapels of politicians, the helmets of football players, the uniforms of police officers and even waste disposal workers, and outside of all government buildings. The U.S. has a vested interest in creating a national American identity, and thus the Trinity is applicable to modern analysis. This deliberate, cultivated approach to encourage adopting arbitrary cultural markers reinforces “the American pride” identity, that promotes a patriotism proud of its military, unique institutions, and liberal values.³⁴ The U.S., along with Great Britain and France, once led the way in developing and promoting a liberal nationalism, which was based on human rights, the rule of law, individual freedoms, equality, and economic and political opportunity – though minorities and women have been slower recipients of these benefits.³⁵ Sadly though, liberal nationalism has been eroded by disturbingly bipartisan views of a more exclusive, rather than inclusive, American identity.³⁶

2. **Martin van Creveld’s Non-Trinitarian Warfare**

Martin van Creveld – former lecturer at the United States Marine War College – contends that Clausewitz’ Trinitarian framework is not only limited but also outdated. He argues that the Trinity is invalid prior to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, since the state is a relatively modern invention, and that wars since WWII have been low-intensity and limited in nature, often occurring intra-state in weaker countries and with non-state actors.³⁷ Mary Kaldor, of the London School of Economics, supports that the

³² Henry R. Nau, *Perspectives on International Relations: Power, Institutions, and Ideas*, 5th ed, Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2017, 329.

³³ Amy Crawford, “How the Pledge of Allegiance Went from PR Gimmick to Patriotic Vow,” *The Smithsonian Magazine*, September 2015, Online: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/pledge-allegiance-pr-gimmick-patriotic-vow-180956332/> (accessed 12 April 2019).

³⁴ Robert Sapolsky, “This Is Your Brain on Nationalism: The Biology of Us and Them,” *Foreign Affairs* 98, no 2, March/April 2019, 47.

³⁵ Henry R. Nau, 112.

³⁶ Chris Cillizza, “The Astounding Political Divide over what It Means to Be ‘American,’” *The Washington Post*, 6 March 2017, Online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/03/06/the-astounding-political-divide-over-what-it-means-to-be-american/> (accessed 5 August 2019).

³⁷ Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, New York: Free Press, 1991, 49.

Trinitarian framework has been misapplied in the modern area.³⁸ Michael Handel – professor of strategy at the Naval War College – counters that the Trinity is simply a framework, and that even pre-state wars involved the people, a military force, and some sort of government or leader. Furthermore, the original elements of the trinity were certainly present in pre-modern wars – passion, creative leadership, and rational choices.³⁹

Though van Creveld and Kaldor are dismissive of a Trinitarian analysis regarding wars after WWII,⁴⁰ Handel retorts that many modern conflicts – “chaos, civil strife, civil wars, and low-intensity wars” – are better understood as internal political and stability concerns.⁴¹ Van Creveld is not alone in his thinking that Trinitarian analysis is now obsolete: “It can be said that the tight connection between the state, the army, and the people that came into being over the last two centuries of Clausewitzian inter-state war has completely broken apart.”⁴²

Despite the arguments against a Trinitarian analysis, Clausewitz was primarily concerned with dissecting war made by states, so his theoretical framework remains relevant as long as the United States remains a central antagonist or protagonist in wars, even in wars of limited liability.

3. *Huntington’s Theory of Civil-Military Relations*

In the middle of the 20th Century, as the American military first maintained a large standing-force during peacetime, two works began to examine the civilian-military relations in the United States. The first was titled *The Soldier and the State*, and it was written by Samuel Huntington, who is widely considered one of the top American political scientists of the 20th century. His work is considered a “landmark study” in the field, and most scholarship since his book “has been an implicit or explicit response.”⁴³ The second – *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* – was written by Morris Janowitz, who was a sociologist who specialized in military studies. These two works formed the basis for much of the understanding, theoretical

³⁸ Mary Kaldor, “Clausewitz and Contemporary War.” *Global Policy*. 1 no 3 (2010): 271.

³⁹ Michael I. Handel, 401.

⁴⁰ Martin van Creveld, *Transformation of War*, 57-62.

⁴¹ Michael I. Handel, 404.

⁴² Walter C. Opello Jr, 264.

⁴³ Peter D. Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations,” 212.

framework, and scholarship regarding American civ-mil relations, at both levels as identified by Bacevich.⁴⁴ This study will refer to both of their theoretical paradigms.

Huntington argued that the military is a profession like any other professional group – lawyers or doctors for example. The military possesses expertise, responsibility, and a corporate structure. Its expertise is in the “management of violence” for officers and “application of violence” for the enlisted soldiers with American society – the people – as the client.⁴⁵ The military acts as an agent of the people, dutifully executing the directives of the government, though the military profession is decidedly more conservative than America’s liberal society.⁴⁶ Huntington’s belief that the military is separate from society has withstood scrutiny through Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and a host of other low-intensity conflicts in that “Military life ... remains a way apart ... with its distinctive way of life on self-contained bases, a perhaps anachronistic commitment to service, discipline, and honor continue to pervade [the] institution.”⁴⁷

Huntington’s argument hinges on the fact that the military has its own professional culture, traits, beliefs, language, and dress that makes it different from society⁴⁸ – an identity that has been cultivated.⁴⁹ To further exacerbate the difference, American society is rooted in liberal values inherited from “economic expansion and international isolation” where national security was “a simple given fact – the starting point of political analysis – not the end result of conscious policy.”⁵⁰ Except during times of war, the American public did not want, need, nor seek a large, standing – read professional – military.

Huntington’s theory of objective control of the military by a civilian structure, a military that is professionalized like any other profession, and a cultivated value system for military members has become known as the “normal theory” of civ-mil relations.⁵¹ The “civ-mil problematique” is a paradox: the institution charged with protecting the polity is a threat to the polity.⁵² Huntington’s objective control sought

⁴⁴ Andrew Bacevich, 194.

⁴⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge: University Press, 1957, 9-18.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 143-147.

⁴⁷ Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, New York: Anchor Books, 2003, 255.

⁴⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, 9-18.

⁴⁹ Henry R. Nau, 112.

⁵⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, 145.

⁵¹ Eliot A. Cohen, 4.

⁵² Peter D. Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations,” 214.

to “provide for national security without undermining the democratic system of government” and “insulate the military from politics and the political system from military power”⁵³ – think of the rulers who have been plagued by military coup attempts throughout history. A staple of Huntington’s theory was political neutrality, which seems to be eroded by retired military officers in recent years. In today’s political climate, presidential candidates of both parties have an incentive to recruit retired military elites to campaign on their behalves – “further undermining the norm of an apolitical military.”⁵⁴ In a climate where retired generals lead chants of “lock her up” during a campaign rally, or Presidents refer to military leaders as “my generals,”⁵⁵ the importance of the military’s political neutrality cannot be dismissed.⁵⁶

Huntington’s theory of objective control, however, has been under unceasing attack since his theory’s inception. The most common critique is that objective control presumes that political and military matters may be comprehensively distinguished – an identifiable distinction between politics and war.⁵⁷ The famed war historian – John Keegan – disagrees with Huntington in regards to strategy and implementation,⁵⁸ but he does agree that military culture is different than the political. “War is wholly unlike diplomacy or politics because it must be fought by men whose values and skills are not those of politicians or diplomats.”⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the objective control by civilians has provided the bedrock for American civ-mil relations, balancing civilian supremacy in the political realm with deciding where and when to go to war with military effectiveness and lee-way in how to wage war.⁶⁰ Simply put, the division of labor should be: “civilians give due deference to military professional advice in the tactical and operational realms in return for complete military subordination in the grand strategic and political realms.”⁶¹

⁵³ Donald S. Travis, “Saving Samuel Huntington and the Need for Pragmatic Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces and Society*, 43, no 3 (2017): 396.

⁵⁴ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 134.

⁵⁵ David Barno and Nora Bensahel, “The Increasingly Dangerous Politicization of the US Military,” *War on the Rocks*, 18 June 2019, Online: <https://warontherocks.com/2019/06/the-increasingly-dangerous-politicization-of-the-u-s-military/> (accessed 18 June 2019).

⁵⁶ Eliot A. Cohen, 13.

⁵⁷ Donald S. Travis, “Saving Samuel Huntington,” 398.

⁵⁸ Eliot A. Cohen, 254.

⁵⁹ John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, New York: Knopf, 1993, xvi.

⁶⁰ Stephen M. Walt, “Why have the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan been so Corrosive of Civil-Military Relations?” *Foreign Policy*, 18 October 2010, Online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/10/18/why-have-the-wars-in-iraq-and-afghanistan-been-so-corrosive-of-civil-military-relations/> (accessed 12 February 2017).

⁶¹ Michael C. Desch.

4. Janowitz' Theory of Civil-Military Relations

Janowitz, by contrast, did not believe that a professional military was separate from society, but that “civilian society permits him [the military officer] to maintain his code of honor and encourages him to develop his professional skill ... he is integrated into civilian society because he shares its common values.”⁶² While Janowitz – the father of American Military Sociology – agreed on some points of Huntington’s professionalism, he did not believe that his theory would continue to hold true in a more technologically advanced warscape. He classified military professionals not as a separate part of society, but as “military managers” who are a product of the civilianization of the military.⁶³ He saw their role expanded beyond the simple control of violence, as operations conducted by a professional military pre, during, and post war might include population or infrastructure protection, peace keeping, establishing the rule of law, or law enforcement.⁶⁴ For Janowitz, the post-WWII military with its reliance on technological hegemony more closely resembles the civilian workforce than it did before WWII. Instead of being separate and distinct, it now resembles society, shares its values, and parallels civilian life. The military has “internalized civilian views” of how it should conduct wars, “blurring the military and civilian mind.”⁶⁵ In the closing of his book, Janowitz warned that “To deny or destroy the difference between the military and the civilian cannot produce genuine similarity, but runs the risk of creating new forms of tension and unanticipated militarism.”⁶⁶

In terms of control of the military, Janowitz argued for a “pragmatic control” based on the “character of the conflict – the threat, crisis, or mission instead of position, profession, or institution.”⁶⁷ He derided Huntington’s “objective control” as absolutist in nature – not allowing for fluidity, ambiguity, or nuance in warfare.⁶⁸

Professor Eliot Cohen – a political scientist at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies – argues that civilian oversight and control

⁶² Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, New York: Free Press, 1971, 440.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 15-21.

⁶⁴ Donald S. Travis, “Decoding Morris Janowitz: Limited War and Pragmatic Doctrine,” *Armed Forces and Society* (2018): 12.

⁶⁵ Eliot A. Cohen, 248.

⁶⁶ Morris Janowitz, 440.

⁶⁷ Donald S. Travis, “Saving Samuel Huntington,” 400.

⁶⁸ Donald S. Travis, “Decoding Morris Janowitz,” 14.

are likely to loosen during heightened times of life and death. Harkening back to Huntington's "normal theory," whereas civilian leaders tend to trust the professionals within the military in terms of policy, strategy, and the implementation of each. However, his book – *Supreme Command* – argued that effective civilian control could also probe, push, and query military leaders about the operational and tactical employment of the force. This is often referred to as the "unequal dialogue," where the civilian leadership has the final say in civ-mil relations.⁶⁹ President Bush, in the months leading to the Iraq Invasion, read Cohen's book, paving the way for a civilian leadership that would regret disregarding military advice.⁷⁰ One can easily wonder if this is why the U.S. is still fighting in Afghanistan, when both Presidents Obama and Trump have pledged to withdraw from Afghanistan, but each relented in favor of the advice offered by his military professionals.

Regardless of theoretical preferences for objective (Huntington) or pragmatic (Janowitz) control of the military, the adherence to civilian control of the military – the President, the Secretary of Defense, and Congress – is "foundational ... and must be preserved and protected at all costs ... against the danger of a military dictatorship."⁷¹

5. **De-Coupling**

The American people have been reduced to mere spectators of modern warfare, while the military becomes increasingly "detached, de-coupled, and insulated from the general population."⁷² The United States military conducts expeditionary warfare without the populace making any contribution or sacrifice. A common quip among the American military sounds something like: "America is not at war in Afghanistan and Iraq ... the military is." This sentiment was echoed by Admiral Michael Mullen, when the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff spoke to a graduating class at the U.S. Military Academy. He said, "I fear they [civilian Americans] do not know us. I fear they do not comprehend the full weight of the burden we carry ... We're also fairly

⁶⁹ Eliot A. Cohen, 245.

⁷⁰ Michael C. Besch, "Bush and the Generals," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2007, Online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2007-05-01/bush-and-generals> (accessed 12 February 2017).

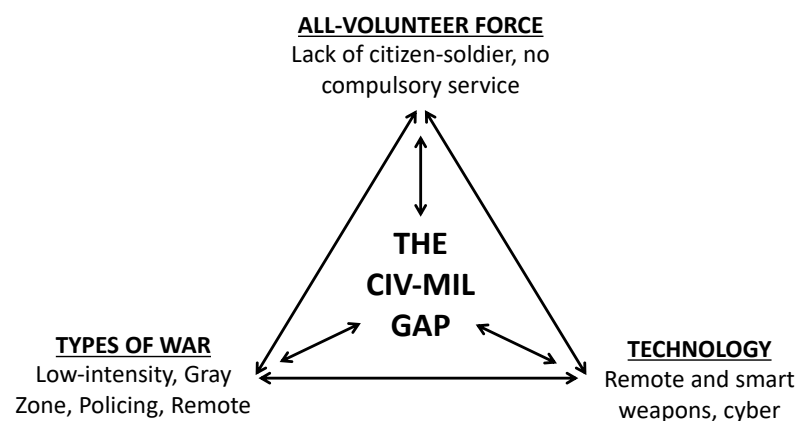
⁷¹ Andrew J. Bacevich, 194.

⁷² Walter C. Opello Jr, 264.

insular, speaking our own language of sorts, living within our own unique culture.”⁷³ This lack of understanding and shared hardship has come to exemplify the perceived civ-mil gap, or de-coupling of the relationship.

Stanford professor – David Kennedy – concluded in his edited study on the U.S. military that “the creation of the AVF, combined with some impressive technological innovations has allowed the United States to rely on an ever-smaller proportion of its citizens to shoulder its military burdens.”⁷⁴ Professor Opello writes, “The people, in effect, have become ‘spectators’ of unmanned policing war conducted by all-volunteer military forces and private military companies (PMCs).”⁷⁵ Combining the thoughts of Professors Kennedy and Opello becomes the thesis of this paper: the civ-mil gap, real or perceived, is a result of the interplay between the all-volunteer force, the types of wars being waged, and the reliance on technological advancements. Yet, each variable simultaneously effects the civ-mil gap, which in turn effects each variable, as illustrated by Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Trinity of Reasons for the Civ-Mil Gap



Source: Author’s Depiction.

Though pin-pointing an exact date or event that triggered the de-coupling is near impossible, sometime in 2004/2005 Americans came to realize that they were simply spectators of the increasingly unpopular wars. The wars, spiraling out of control in the headlines of the American media, in the dusty streets of Iraq, and in the

⁷³ David M. Kenney, *The Modern American Military*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, 1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 3.

⁷⁵ Walter C. Opello Jr, 264.

remote mountains of Afghanistan, forced the United States to realize that “it had too much war and too few warriors.”⁷⁶

B. Historical Overview of American Relations Between the People and the Military

Though this study is limited to after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, tepid support between the people and the military is not a new problem.⁷⁷ The debate of a civ-mil gap in the United States began shortly after the Republic’s establishment, but the debate has continued, with different environments, issues, and concerns.⁷⁸ American society has a history of being uncomfortable with a professional military. The Revolutionary War was fought by citizen-soldiers against the professional British and Hessian mercenaries. The Civil War was fought against a militant South, whose leaders were educated at West Point, Virginia Military Institute, and the Citadel. World War I was fought against German militarism, and WWII was against the militarized Nazi regime.⁷⁹ In each instance above, the United States called on its ordinary citizens to join the fight against a professional foe.

Concerned about a powerful, standing military usurping civilian power, Founding Father Samuel Adams wrote, “A standing army, however necessary it may be some times, is always dangerous to the liberties of the people. Soldiers are apt to consider themselves as a body distinct from the rest of the citizens.”⁸⁰ To further demonstrate America’s historic discomfort with a professional military, Huntington identified four characteristics of the civilian-military divide throughout American history: 1) a large military is a threat to liberty; 2) a larger military is a threat to democracy; 3) a large military is a threat to economic prosperity; and 4) a large military is a threat to peace.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Andrew Bacevich, 210.

⁷⁷ This perceived divide is not a new phenomenon since 2003. See Tom Rick’s 1997 article in *The Atlantic* entitled “The Widening Gap Between Military and Society” or Ole R. Holsti’s 1998 article in *International Security* entitled “Widening Gap between the US Military and Civilian Society: Some Evident” or Joseph J. Collins’ and Ole R. Holsti’s 1999 article in *International Security* entitled “Civil-Military Relations: How Wide is the Gap?”

⁷⁸ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 98.

⁷⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, 154.

⁸⁰ David M. Kennedy, 4.

⁸¹ Samuel P. Huntington, 156.

Americans opposed to a professional military point to the pinnacle of “military heroes” drawn-out of society when needed – not intentionally separated by a professional society. The most famous examples include George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Theodore Roosevelt. Huntington strengthens this historical viewpoint by comparing the election campaigns of professional versus non-professional “military heroes.” Non-professionals won 10 of their 15 presidential campaigns. In each instance, voters seemed to value simple “idealism, patriotism, and valor of the citizen-soldier” over the “stiff formality” or “mercenary motives” of professional soldiers running for the Presidency.⁸² The exceptions would be Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight D. Eisenhower, but both of those sought the office shortly after delivering victories.

The American apprehension to a professionalized standing Army dissipated in the post-WWII years. The negative connotations feared by the Founding Fathers were replaced by a belief that “for the defense” was insufficient, and “national defense” and its limited scope was expanded to “national security” and ambitious, albeit ambiguous requirements.⁸³

The Vietnam War was one of the low-points in civ-mil relations between both levels – elite and populace. Public protests against returning troops as “baby killers” and “war mongers” served to further isolate the military from mainstream society, exacerbating the distrust between the military and its civilian elites for having sent them to fight an unpopular, unwinnable war. Military officers accused the politicians of losing the war, unable to turn tactical success into strategic or political ones.⁸⁴ Additionally, the military self-chastised itself for “blind obedience” rather than providing advice to civilian leaders and “speaking hard truths to power.” Senior leaders like Generals Norman Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell – the architects of the 1991 Gulf War victory, lamented the failings of military leaders in confronting their civilian leaders, which led to a military that was “demoralized ... and wrecked our credibility with the American public.”⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid, 159.

⁸³ Andrew Bacevich, 207-208.

⁸⁴ Stephen M. Walt, “Why have the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan been so Corrosive of Civil-Military Relations?”

⁸⁵ Michael C. Desch.

The Clinton Administration – the first post-Cold War one – endured a tense civ-mil relationship.⁸⁶ The Administration increased the operational tempo with deployments to Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and other locales, all while reducing the defense budget by 27% (from 1990 to 2000), reducing the personnel strength by 33% (from 1990 to 2000), and attempted to force the military to acquiesce to social initiatives of inclusion.⁸⁷ Without an existential threat with which to rally support for military spending, recruiting, arming, and deployment, Clinton’s reduction in force (RIF) was fiscally responsible in matching spending with capabilities, but its implementation negatively impacted the morale of the military and its relationship with his administration.⁸⁸ The senior military leadership – who had served as young officers in the Vietnam debacle – committed themselves to not allow another Vietnam to occur, where military leaders quietly acquiesce to ill-advised demands of the civilian leadership.⁸⁹ Thus, Generals Colin Powell and Hugh Shelton slow-rolled Clinton’s intervention efforts in the Balkans. They harkened to the Caspar Weinberger Doctrine, later referred to as the Powell Doctrine, about military interventions.⁹⁰

The Bush Administration immediately struggled with civ-mil relations, though Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Donald Rumsfeld had previously served in that position, as well as the Vice President – Dick Cheney. Yet, Rumsfeld’s prickly personality, and defensive assertion that “The Constitution calls for civilian control of this department, and I’m a civilian” won him few friends among the uniformed class.⁹¹ The patriotic fervor that followed the 9/11 attacks offered little room for views or policies that did not call for military action against Al Qaeda.⁹²

For the sake of the timeframe of this study – Iraq Invasion of 2003 to current day – consider that the U.S. found its civ-mil relationship in an unprecedented situation. The AVF was fighting a “prolonged, bloody, and increasingly unpopular

⁸⁶ For an insight into issues plaguing the civ-mil relationship immediately following the Cold War, see Charles J. Dunlap Jr’s “The Origins of the American Military Coup of 2012,” *Parameters*, US Army War College, Winter 1992-93.

⁸⁷ Michael C. Desch.

⁸⁸ Michael O’Hanlon, “Clinton’s Strong Defense Legacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003, Online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2003-11-01/clintons-strong-defense-legacy> (accessed 26 February 2018).

⁸⁹ Michael C. Desch.

⁹⁰ Stephen M Walt, “Applying the 8 Questions of the Powell Doctrine to Syria,” *Foreign Policy*, 3 September 2013, Online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/09/03/applying-the-8-questions-of-the-powell-doctrine-to-syria/> (accessed 12 April 2018).

⁹¹ Michael C. Desch.

⁹² James Burk, 7.

engagement” with multiple deployments for National Guard (NG) and Reserve (USAR) forces without the “full war-time mobilization of society.”⁹³ In an effort to prove that the civ-mil divide has increased since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, consider this: there was mistrust between the people and the military/government and between the military and civilian elites – both levels of Bacevich’s civ-mil relations. The decision to invade Iraq renewed the civ-mil divide within the administration, as highlighted by the Shinseki incident. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was despised by both the upper and lower ranks of the military. In an episode called “The Revolt of Generals,” retired general officers openly called for Rumsfeld’s resignation.⁹⁴ Most damningly, the Iraq Study Group – a bipartisan, administration commission review panel – concluded that the American civ-mil “tradition has *frayed*, and civil-military relations *need to be repaired*.”⁹⁵ In 2006, 60% of servicemen who responded to a *Military Times* poll believed that the Pentagon’s civilian leadership – i.e. Secretary Rumsfeld – “did not have their best interests at heart” and 42% disapproved of Bush’s handling of the war.⁹⁶ The Bush administration, as spear-headed by Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Cheney, ignored military advice regarding the invasion of Iraq and troop levels, disregarding the fundamental imperatives of the objective control of the military. At the societal level, the draining of public support for the unpopular wars renewed the traditional concerns of “alienation, difference, and lack of understanding.”⁹⁷ Scholars and practitioners concerned with civ-mil relations agree that “civil-military relations were troubled even before the Iraq War, which conflict has only exacerbated frictions.”⁹⁸

Fortunately, Bush removed Rumsfeld as the SECDEF, and replaced him with Robert Gates – a former CIA chief and veteran of both Republican and Democratic administrations. He also worked on the Iraq Study Group before his appointment.

⁹³ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 99.

⁹⁴ Michael C. Desch. For additional reading on military dissent the ‘revolt of the Generals,’ see Don M. Snider’s *Dissent and Strategic Leadership of the Military Professions*, Strategic Studies Institute, 2008. In a similar manner, a consortium of retired senior military and civilian leaders sent “An Open Letter to President Trump on US Tensions with Iran,” at *War on the Rocks*, 24 May 2019, Online: <https://warontherocks.com/2019/05/an-open-letter-to-president-donald-trump-on-u-s-tensions-with-iran/> (accessed 25 May 2019).

⁹⁵ James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, *The Iraq Study Group Report*, New York: Vintage Books, 2006, 77.

⁹⁶ Michael C. Desch.

⁹⁷ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 99.

⁹⁸ Michael P. Noonan, “Mind the Gap: Post-Iraq Civil-Military Relations in America,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, 8 August 2008, Online: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2008/08/mind-the-gap-post-iraq-civil-military-relations-in-america/> (accessed 15 November 2017).

Tellingly, “Recommendation 46” of the report advised “The new Secretary of Defense should make every effort to build healthy civil-military relations.”⁹⁹

C. Conclusion

In review, this paper embraces Trinitarian framework – or the “secondary Trinity”¹⁰⁰ – of the people, the government, and the military. This framework provides a basis for the civilian-military relationship, which is considered to be de-coupling, fraying, blurring, or outright severed. The two most relied-upon theorists of civ-mil relations – Huntington and Janowitz – offer competing views of the relationship. Huntington argues that the military is separate from society, and that it is objectively controlled by the civilian leaders with a clear demarcation between war and non-war activities. Janowitz believes that the military is a part of society, and that civilian leadership exercises pragmatic control over its employment in a blending of security activities.

The civ-mil gap (the bond between the people and the military) has always been an issue for discussion in the United States, where civilians have been leery of a professionalized, standing Army capable of trampling upon individual liberties. For most of American history, the military has been a small force that relied upon the activation of compulsory service in times of need. Since Vietnam, however, the United States has strictly employed an all-volunteer force, which has led to a gap between the populace and the military. The following pages will demonstrate how this gap is caused by a reliance on the All-Volunteer Force, the American engagement strategy in modern warfare, and the reliance on technology.

⁹⁹ James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, 77.

¹⁰⁰ Craig Beutel, “How Socio-Political Changes Might Disrupt Our Framework for Understanding War,” *The Strategy Bridge*, 31 October 2017, Online: <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2017/10/31/disruption-in-the-trinity?rq=disruption%20in%20the%20trinity> (accessed 2 November 2017).

*“The soldier is the Army. No army is better than its soldiers. The soldier is also a citizen. In fact, the highest obligation and privilege of citizenship is that of bearing arms for one’s country.”*¹⁰¹

General George S. Patton

III. All-Volunteer Force

The All-Volunteer Force (AVF) offers volunteers the opportunity to serve the United States Armed Forces. Should the need arise, then they are prepared to defend it – even to the point of death. Yet, there are very few serving today. Fewer than one percent of the population is in uniform. The paragraphs below will elaborate on the history of the AVF, the “gaps” that are further caused by its use, the efforts to better reflect the American population’s diversity, and some of the negative impacts of the AVF: the rise of private military companies, isolation, and hero worship. The AVF affects the civ-mil gap by separating the military personnel from the civilian population, instilling and cultivating different values and cultures from the people, and is on the verge of becoming a warrior caste. The AVF drives policy-makers to conduct limited warfare so as not to burden the people, and it allows them to engage in military adventurism when the public is not watchful. Furthermore, the AVF encourages the use of sophisticated weaponry to make-up for the limited number of servicemembers.

On 4 May, 2017, General Mark Milley – the United States Army Chief of Staff – addressed a gathering of senior military leaders, government officials, and think-tank experts at the Atlantic Council. To this distinguished gathering, he delivered a message on the state of the Army and its future employment. In addressing the current state of civ-mil relations, he stated that a close link between the military and the people “is fundamental, in my view, to the health of the republic and the health of democracy.” He went on to note that “We are the people’s Army ... We are the people, by the people, and for the people.”¹⁰²

As stated earlier, the civ-mil relationship has always been an issue for the United States. At the nation’s infancy, the framers of the Constitution wrestled with

¹⁰¹ George S. Patton, “Helpful Hints to Hopeful Heroes,” Originally distributed as a pamphlet in 1946, later published in *Infantry Magazine*, US Army, 78 No 6, November-December 1988, 29.

¹⁰² David Barno and Nora Bensahel, “Three Things the Army Chief of Staff Wants You to Know,” *War on the Rocks*, 23 May 2017., Online: <https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/three-things-the-army-chief-of-staff-wants-you-to-know/> (accessed 23 May 2017).

how to mitigate the threat of a standing army to democracy, while balancing the necessity of a military force capable enough of defending the democracy.¹⁰³ When the Constitution was written, obligated service was an expectation: “It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system, that every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a free Government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even his personal services to the defence of it.”¹⁰⁴ In the 200 years following the words of George Washington, conscription was only used four times in American history, for a total of 35 years: the Civil War, WWI, WWII, and the Cold War (Korea and Vietnam).¹⁰⁵ Obligation to serve against a justified existential threat was “understood through the grand narrative of nationalism and [patriotic] service.”¹⁰⁶

In the wake of 9/11, the Global War on Terror (GWOT) was declared, patriotic fervor rose to a deafening pitch, and the people expected to mobilize for war against this existential threat. However, President Bush advised the population to use public transportation, shop at malls, and carry-on with normal life in the face of this terror threat.¹⁰⁷ But mass mobilization – of people or resources – never materialized. Not only was the Selective Service¹⁰⁸ not activated, but overall troop strength and budgetary allocation stayed below Cold War levels.¹⁰⁹ In January of 2003, Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Senator Fritz Hollings (D-SC) introduced identical proposals – House Resolution 163 and Senate Resolution 89 – to “provide for the common defense by requiring that all young persons in the United States, including women, perform a period of military service or a period of civilian service in furtherance of the national defense and homeland security, and for other purposes.” The resolution failed by a vote of 402 to 2 on October 5th, 2004 ... as Iraq was spiraling

¹⁰³ Peter D. Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations,” 214

¹⁰⁴ George Washington, “Washington’s Sentiments on a Peace Establishment, 1 May 1783,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, 13 June 2018, Online: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-11202> (accessed 1 December 2018).

¹⁰⁵ Karl W. Eikenberry, 8.

¹⁰⁶ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 272.

¹⁰⁷ Pascal Vennesson, “Globalization and Al Qaeda’s Challenge,” In *How 9/11 Changed our Ways of War*. Edited by James Burk, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013, 248.

¹⁰⁸ The Selective Service was instituted during the Roosevelt Administration in the Selective Service Act of 1940. Samuel P. Huntington, 271.

¹⁰⁹ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 267. For further evidence, see the US Census Bureau’s *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012*, Tables 503 and 511, Online: <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab>.

out of control.¹¹⁰ With no existential threat against the homeland, the reinstatement of the draft did not have political, public, nor military support.¹¹¹

A. History

Due to the unpopular, draining, and protracted Vietnam War, the civ-mil system that hinged on compulsory service collapsed.¹¹² In the early 1970s, the Vietnam War raged, soldiers died in record numbers, progress was elusive, civilians protested, universities shuttered their Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs,¹¹³ the Pentagon misled the public, and civilian elites evaded compulsory service by either escaping to foreign countries, joining the National Guard or Reserves, or applying for medical waivers.¹¹⁴ Despite bi-partisan consensus during the Cold War, the people lost faith in the narratives of both the government and the military.¹¹⁵

As a political promise of Richard Nixon, he created the Gates Commission in 1970 to study options for adopting an all-volunteer force. The report was adopted into law in 1973, but it did warn of the potential side effects of an AVF: 1) isolation of the military from society and a threat to civilian control; 2) erosion of civilian respect; 3) filled with low-income recruits; 4) declined public interest in foreign policy activities; and 5) more likely to engage in “military adventurism.”¹¹⁶ These concerns were identified and debated by both Huntington and Janowitz, which likely shaped the commission’s findings.

In an effort to improve civilian engagement with an AVF, General Creighton Abrams (Army Chief of Staff) restructured the U.S. Army into the Total Force, giving a greater role to the NG and USAR forces. The new forces were structured so that during a “large-scale protracted conflict,” significant mobilization of the NG and USAR forces would be required, with the Selective Service registrants serving as the

¹¹⁰ William M. Raymond Jr. “Uncle Sam says, “I Want You!” – The Politics of the Draft and National Service, Monograph at the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 2005, 39.

¹¹¹ Martin van Creveld, *Pussycats*, notes that the US is not alone in its aversion to compulsory service. Since the end of the Cold War, most every other Western Democracy has eradicated their own mandatory service programs after the end of the Cold War. Some, however, are starting to re-introduce conscription in the wake of renewed, Cold-War’esque tensions.

¹¹² Andrew Bacevich, 209.

¹¹³ Kori Schake and James Mattis, 314.

¹¹⁴ Andrew Bacevich, 208.

¹¹⁵ Ronald R. Krebs, “The Rise, Persistence, and Decline of the War on Terror,” In *How 9/11 Changed our Ways of War*. Edited by James Burk, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013, 56.

¹¹⁶ Karl W. Eikenberry, 9.

strategic reserve. Even today, the Selective Service System requires all males of 18 years to register for “a fair and equitable” service requirement if the “President and Congress” require their activation.¹¹⁷ Abrams designed this structure to prevent a decoupling – between both the people and the military and the people and the government – in hopes of staving-off military adventurism.¹¹⁸ However, he could not have envisioned the simultaneous, troop intensive, unpopular wars of Iraq and Afghanistan being sustained solely on the AVF – an anomaly in American history.¹¹⁹ Despite the two wars requiring an average of 200,000 troops continuously deployed from 2003 to 2009, “political pressures prevented military and civilian leadership from activating the Selective Service [for] prolonged, large-scale deployments.”¹²⁰

Initially, “the creation of a new class of warrior-professional made everyone happy,” in the years that followed the AVF implementation.¹²¹ The people no longer feared receiving a draft summons in the mail. The military received higher pay and improved professionalism for the servicemembers. The national security policymakers then were free to engage around the world, since doing so did not impact the daily life of civil society. In the years since the eradication of the draft, an increase in military involvement abroad has occurred. In the 27 years that the draft was used during the Cold War, the U.S. conducted 19 overseas deployments. In the 45 years since the eradication of the draft, the U.S. has conducted more than 144 overseas deployments – that we know of.¹²²

In hindsight, “The advent of the AVF severed the link between citizenship and service.”¹²³ Americans, lovers of their individual liberties, were not comfortable with forced service, seeing the draft as a mechanism for government elites to manage the military-age male population, while doling-out deferments and exemptions for well-connected young men.¹²⁴ However, the peaceful conclusion of the Cold War and speedy victory in Operation Desert Storm “convincingly validated the AVF.”¹²⁵

¹¹⁷ The Selective Service System, United States Government, Online: <https://www.sss.gov> (accessed 8 August 2019).

¹¹⁸ Karl W. Eikenberry, 10.

¹¹⁹ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 137.

¹²⁰ David R. Segal and Lawrence J. Korb, “Manning and Financing the Twenty-First-Century All-Volunteer Force,” in *The Modern American Military*, edited by David M. Kennedy, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013: 111, 122.

¹²¹ Andrew Bacevich, 209.

¹²² Karl W. Eikenberry, 10.

¹²³ David M. Kennedy, 4.

¹²⁴ Andrew Bacevich, 208.

¹²⁵ Karl W. Eikenberry, 7.

Despite the success and optimism, the AVF would come to be plagued by two “gaps”: mobilization and familiarity.

B. Mobilization Gap

The abuse of the Total Force in Iraq and unwillingness by political and military leaders to call for the activation of the Selective Service – referred to as the “mobilization gap”¹²⁶ – resulted in: 1) raising the budget for recruiting while simultaneously lowering standards for recruits; 2) to retain the troops, the military raised bonuses and promotion rates; 3) the Army and Marines raised their end-strength by 15% in 2007; 4) repeated deployments with little dwell-time increased the mental, emotional, personal, financial, and familial strain on troops and their families; and 5) increased pay and benefits for military members.¹²⁷ As an aside, just as the military sees itself at war while the country is spared, the same feeling exists within the services. The infantry of the Army and Marines has sustained 90% of the casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, reducing the argument of overextension and deployment fatigue, what Retired Major General Robert Scales calls “political rhetoric.”¹²⁸

As the Army and Marine Corps bore the brunt of the high operational tempo after 2003, the need to extend both components to longer than planned wars strained the military’s ability to meet recruiting goals from 2005 to 2007. Some of the measures taken to entice recruits were increased bonuses and lowering of enlistment standards – i.e. high school dropouts, reduced age and fitness restrictions, minimum aptitude scores, and waivers for criminal backgrounds, which grew by 65% between 2003 and 2006.¹²⁹ As a result of the need for people, the military accepted “the lowest mental and moral standards deemed acceptable since the advent of the volunteer force.”¹³⁰ In addition to lowered standards, the Bush administration made the decision to increase its reliance on Professional Military Companies (PMCs).

¹²⁶ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 268.

¹²⁷ David R. Segal and Lawrence J. Korb, 124-127.

¹²⁸ Robert Scales at “Blurred Lines: Civil-Military Relations and Modern War.” Executive Summary from War Studies Conference at West Point’s Modern War Institute. 25-27 March 2018.

¹²⁹ David Stewart, “Connecting America’s People with America’s Army: Breaching the Perceptual Divide,” 11.

¹³⁰ David R. Segal and Lawrence J. Korb, 122.

C. Familiarity Gap

Golby, Kohn, and Feaver note that with the implementation and maturation of the AVF, the “gaps we see are due either to a lack of military experience or a lack of personal familiarity.”¹³¹ The AVF has resulted in fewer Americans serving in the military. Military experience for members of Congress – the body that represents the people and serves as a connection with the military because of its oversight and budgetary allocations – has understandably fallen. Members of the 91st Congress – during the time of the Gates Commission in 1970 – with military experience numbered 398. The Congressional Research Agency reports that only 102 Members of the 115th Congress (2018) have military experience. That’s a drop from 73% to 18.8% in the number of Congressional members who have served in the military.¹³² This is often called the “familiarity gap,” as increasing numbers of civilians and politicians have decreased interaction and familiarity with the military.¹³³ Martin van Creveld calls these civilian leaders “pussycats” for their willingness to “send others to do ... what they are unwilling to do ... or permit their sons [to do].”¹³⁴ This lack of experience comes at a cost: 1) a lack of understanding and expertise when charged with providing oversight and 2) a lack of family ties with the military.¹³⁵ Both costs speak to the decoupling of the people and the military.

Military service is becoming the responsibility of a shrinking portion of American society. Rosa Brooks, in utilizing data polled from you.gov in 2014, noted that 75% of Americans over 60 had a member of their immediate family serve in the armed forces. These older Americans were the descendants of WWII veterans, and the brothers and sisters of those who served in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. She goes on to contrast that only 15.6% of respondents have an immediate family member who served after 9/11 – despite enduring the nation’s longest wars.¹³⁶ Like any other profession, people often make career choices based on the influence of the adults

¹³¹ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 125.

¹³² “Membership of the 115th Congress: A Profile,” Congressional Research Service, 20 December 2018, 8.

¹³³ J Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 102.

¹³⁴ Martin van Creveld, *Pussycats: Why the Rest Keeps Beating the West – and What Can Be Done About It*. Israel: DLVC Enterprises, 2016, 81.

¹³⁵ Karl W. Eikenberry, 14.

¹³⁶ Rosa Brooks, 23.

around them, which is termed “professional inheritance.”¹³⁷ Similarly, lawyers are the children of lawyers, doctors are the children of doctors, and sports coaches are the children of sports coaches.¹³⁸ Though “families with social ties beget new families with social ties,” veterans are twice as likely as non-veterans to have a child serving in the military.¹³⁹ An Army survey in 2007 found that of the 304 general officers polled, 180 had children in the military. The military has become a “family business, hence the makings of a self-perpetuating military caste.”¹⁴⁰ This hereditary service breeds a sense of “otherness” among military personnel,¹⁴¹ which can obviously affect civ-mil relations.

As an alternative viewpoint, Mackubin Owens of the Naval War College argues that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to greater connectivity between the people and the military at the societal level. Increased access to media and electronic communications have given the American public greater access to the military than ever before.¹⁴² Though his idea is on the fringe of the civ-mil gap debate, the rash of books, TV shows, and movies centered on the modern military experience in Iraq and Afghanistan – *American Sniper*, *Restrepo*, *Zero-Dark Thirty*, *Generation Kill*, *War Machine*, or *Lone Survivor* – may serve to educate civilian society about the military as one veteran of both wars suggests.¹⁴³

The “familiarity gap” is concerned that decision-makers with no “skin in the game” might use military force cavalierly while lacking the knowledge and experience to make appropriate cost-benefit analysis.¹⁴⁴ Currently, only .5% of the American population serves in the military. Comparatively, 2% served during the Vietnam War and 9% during WWII.¹⁴⁵ Within the halls of policy-making, military leaders may capitalize on deference and “hero worship” from civilian leaders when making

¹³⁷ Amy Schafer, *Generations of War: The Rise of the Warrior Caste and the All-Volunteer Force*, Center for a New American Strategy, 8 May 2017, 6.

¹³⁸ Rosa Brooks, 34.

¹³⁹ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 107.

¹⁴⁰ Karl W. Eikenberry and David M. Kennedy, “Americans and Their Military, Drifting Apart,” *The New York Times*, 26 March 2013, Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/27/opinion/americans-and-their-military-drifting-apart.html> (accessed 1 March 2017).

¹⁴¹ Amy Schafer, 9.

¹⁴² Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 106.

¹⁴³ Adam Linehan, “5 Movies and a Miniseries about the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan Everyone Should See,” *Task and Purpose*, 6 February 2018, Online: <https://taskandpurpose.com/5-movies-miniseries-wars-iraq-afghanistan-everyone-see> (accessed 19 February 2018).

¹⁴⁴ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 132.

¹⁴⁵ David M. Kennedy, 2.

decisions on budgeting and strategy.¹⁴⁶ For policy-makers to feel that they cannot question or disagree with a military leader leads to an unhealthy policy-making environment.¹⁴⁷ Without a massive restructuring or enlargement of the military, whose effects would be a greater inclusion of society into its ranks, the “number of Americans with some kind of military connection” will continue to decline.¹⁴⁸ As that number continues to decline, more civilians with no familiarity of the military will continue to grow apart from their military. In the best case, they will continue with their token displays of appreciation, hero worship, and over-estimation of what the military can accomplish – an “expectation gap.”¹⁴⁹

D. Recruiting

The military makes a concerted effort to recruit across the spectrum of ethnicities. Military recruiters abide by quotas and goals based on ethnic diversity across military specialties to ensure that the military is as diverse as society in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender – though gender equality remains a hot topic for inclusionary discussions.¹⁵⁰ As an example, 19.3% of the active-duty enlisted force was composed of African-Americans, though the civilian labor force only registered 12.6% for ages 18 to 44.¹⁵¹ This diversity mirroring of society lends credence to the belief that the civil-military gap is really more of a perception than a reality, but “a more diverse force is the best guarantor of a continued stream of recruits from all parts of American society.”¹⁵²

The military does not simply target potential prospects, but it also targets Centers of Influence (COIs). The Army Recruiting Manual identifies COIs as “individuals who can help develop a better image of the Army, influence individuals to enlist in an Army program, or refer names of leads to Army recruiters. They can be civic or business leaders, educators, or members of professional groups.”¹⁵³ COIs –

¹⁴⁶ Amy Schafer, 9.

¹⁴⁷ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 134.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 127.

¹⁴⁹ Benjamin Wittes and Cody Poplin, “Public Opinion, Military Justice, and the Fight against Terrorism Overseas,” In *Warriors and Citizens: American Views of Our Military*, edited by Kori N. Schake and James N. Mattis, 97-142, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press/Stanford University, 2016, 154-155.

¹⁵⁰ Rosa Brooks, 35.

¹⁵¹ David R. Segal and Lawrence J. Korb, 113.

¹⁵² Amy Schafer, 11.

¹⁵³ U.S. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 601-2, *Army Promotional Recruiting Support Programs*, 2 March 2010, Section II, Terms, 25.

teachers, coaches, parents, business leaders, politicians, professional athletes, pop-culture icons, or mentors – can encourage participation, or they can also discourage participation in the Armed Forces. An example of a COI discouraging was seen in Southern California in January 2018. Gregory Salcido – a teacher and city council member – criticized a student’s decision to enlist in the Marines. He attempted to dissuade the student from joining the Marines by giving his class an expletive-filled rant against the U.S. Military. In speaking about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, he said: “Because we have a bunch of dumb shits over there. Think about the people who you know who are over there. Your freaking stupid Uncle Louie or whatever ... They’re not like high-level thinkers. They’re not academic people. They’re not intellectual people. They’re the lowest of our low.”¹⁵⁴

1. Advancement

The military is considered a reliable means of economic advancement for minorities or the poor, where the fruits of one’s individual labor can be rewarded in a merit-based system.¹⁵⁵ It has a history of being the most “effective institution in American society for promoting racial equality and nurturing career opportunities for minorities.”¹⁵⁶

In the post-9/11 years, the pay for the average military member has risen above the average federal service employee with commensurate experience. With increased pay and a healthy benefits package – free health care, college tuition assistance, free or subsidized housing, discount groceries at the local commissary, and a competitive retirement system, the military offers an attractive career, whether middle or lower class. In essence, the military’s benefits programs represent an attractive, “substitute welfare state” for its constituents, a paradoxical socialist organization for a country decidedly anti-socialist.¹⁵⁷

Immigrants can take the place of citizens in today’s armed forces, where service can earn citizenship. For thousands of noncitizens who have served in the post-

¹⁵⁴ Alex Horton and Eli Rosenberg, “California Teacher Fired after Calling U.S. Troops ‘the Lowest of our Low,’” *Washington Post*, 21 March 2018, Online: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2018/03/21/the-military-is-lowest-of-our-low-a-teacher-told-his-students-he-was-just-fired/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8e21f490cc4a (accessed 21 April 2018).

¹⁵⁵ Kori Schake and James Mattis, 4.

¹⁵⁶ David M. Kennedy, 2.

¹⁵⁷ Rosa Brooks, 38.

9/11 wars, they received accelerated access to citizenship.¹⁵⁸ In September 2003, there were 30,000 foreign-born persons in the American armed forces, who were not yet American citizens.¹⁵⁹ The French have a similar concept with their Foreign Legion.

2. Location

Proximity to military bases is also a factor for young people joining the military. Base closures and relocation policies across various administrations have concentrated 50% of active duty military personnel to only five states: California, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia – further isolating military personnel and their families in predominantly rural areas of these states. Former DoD Advisor Rosa Brooks notes that as a consequence of these policies, the American military has become “more southern, less urban, and more politically conservative than American society as a whole.”¹⁶⁰ Her assessment that this leads to a more politically conservative military may not be true, as Huntington asserted that the American military has always tended to be more conservative than American society. The preponderance of American bases in the Southeast is a legacy of post-Civil War reconstruction and occupation, and the U.S. bases in the rural Plains and West are holdovers of the Mexican and Indian Wars in the 1800s.¹⁶¹ Military bases tend to be found in rural states where land is plentiful and cheap.¹⁶² There are a few exceptions for older bases – Fort Myers in Washington, D.C., Naval Base Coronado in San Diego, or Joint-Base Lewis McChord in Tacoma – but the bulk of military bases are clustered where land was available. Yet, surprisingly, California is home to the largest concentration of active-duty military personnel.¹⁶³

To create a more geographically and ideologically diverse military, military installations should be redistributed across the country, reducing the concentration of military bases in the conservative Southeast. This redistribution would equalize recruiting across the country, thereby giving the military a more diverse demographic.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ David M. Kennedy, 4.

¹⁵⁹ Tarak Barkawi, *Globalization and War*, Rowan and Littlefield: Oxford, 2006, 46.

¹⁶⁰ Rosa Brooks, 24.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 34.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 33. Confirmed with Demographics Report 2017, p 167-182.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 35.

E. Effects

As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan eroded the support of the public, drained the resources for the military, and sowed horrors upon the inhabitants of Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States suffered from “GWOT fatigue.” Sir Lawrence Freedman, of King’s College London, noted that “the longer the war drags on, the more uncertain the situation becomes, as both sides increasingly depend on allies; the test becomes one of social and economic endurance more than military skill; morale suffers; and politicians become impatient.”¹⁶⁵ This war fatigue should not have been a surprise, because both Clausewitz and Sun Tzu advised that “the longer a war drags on without decisive results, the more difficult it becomes to maintain the support of the people.”¹⁶⁶

Renowned Professor Edward Luttwak of the London School of Economics would recommend employing stand-off munitions as a means to reduce human cost to American forces. “The prospect of high casualties, which can rapidly undermine domestic support for any military operation, is the key political constraint when decisions must be made on which forces to deploy in a crisis, and at what levels.”¹⁶⁷ This statement rings ever true in the wake of the still-ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but it is not a new concept. Governments have always tried to win wars with an economy of force, but now the tools are different.

1. Private Military Companies

The Gates Commission even went so far as to predict a strengthening of the bond between the people and the government, giving greater democratic participation in the debate to raise taxes for war.¹⁶⁸ During the Global War on Terror, this has not been the case for two reasons: 1) the U.S. Defense budget has been largely immune to budget debates and 2) the rise of the Political Military Companies (PMCs) has obscured the

¹⁶⁵ Lawrence Freedman, “The Counterrevolution in Strategic Affairs,” *The Modern American Military*, Edited by David M. Kennedy, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, 20.

¹⁶⁶ Michael I. Handel, 120.

¹⁶⁷ Edward Luttwak, “A Post-Heroic Military Policy: The New Season of Bellicosity,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1996, Online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-america/1996-07-01/post-heroic-military-policy-new-season-bellicosity>, (accessed 15 July 2019).

¹⁶⁸ Karl W. Eikenberry, 11.

actual cost of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁶⁹ In 2004, once policy-makers realized that American troops were overstretched in two theatres of war, they began to employ large numbers of PMCs – a euphemistic phrase for modern mercenaries.¹⁷⁰ This further eroded the idealist concept of a citizen-soldiery and linkage between the people and the military.¹⁷¹ Between 2007 and 2011, it is estimated that contractors outnumbered American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, peaking at 200,000 in 2008. Comparatively, only 4,000 contractors were deployed for Operation Desert Storm.¹⁷² Contractors provide a range of services: transport, cooking, maintenance, medical services, training, intelligence augmentation, construction, waste removal, and security, for which they are most notorious.¹⁷³

Rather than the stereotypical ex-soldier for hire, many of these contractors are “third-country nationals” – who have been recruited through PMC world-wide recruiting networks. For example: a group of Ugandans might guard the front gate of a base in Iraq, while a group of Nepalese cook inside the dining facility, while a group of South Africans provide bomb-sniffing dog support, and a group of Ukrainians clean the facilities.¹⁷⁴ In this way, Iraq was truly an international affair. Thomas E. Ricks – author of *Fiasco*, *The Surge*, and *The Generals* – has written on a host of concerns involving the Iraq war and the civ-mil divide. Concerning PMCs, he notes that the continued reliance on PMCs creates ambiguity regarding rules of engagement and “unintended political consequences for the countries of returning third-party nationals.”¹⁷⁵ This reliance on a civilian workforce did not arise after the Iraq invasion, but it did escalate. As part of the force-restructuring post-Vietnam, the DoD began to “privatize, civilianize, and contract out as many support functions as possible,” which allowed the uniformed military to focus on core competencies.¹⁷⁶ According to the

¹⁶⁹ Karl W. Eikenberry, 12.

¹⁷⁰ Andrew J. Bacevich, 210.

¹⁷¹ James Burk, 8.

¹⁷² Karl W. Eikenberry, 12.

¹⁷³ Deborah Avant and Renée de Nevers, “Military Contractors and the American Way of War,” in *The Modern American Military*, edited by David M. Kennedy, 2013, New York: Oxford University Press, 137-140.

¹⁷⁴ Deborah Avant, “The Mobilization of Private Forces after 9/11,” in *How 9/11 Changed our Ways of War*, Edited by James Burk, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013, 212.

¹⁷⁵ Michael P. Noonan.

¹⁷⁶ David R. Segal and Lawrence J. Korb, 118.

Department of Defense, it employed 868,648 civilians in 2017, though the information is not clear if this number includes contractors across the globe.¹⁷⁷

Professors Deborah Avant and Renée de Nevers warn the employment of contractors “has raised questions about the effectiveness of using force, political accountability for the use of force, and the social values to which force adheres.”¹⁷⁸ But in considering the use of PMCs to carry-out foreign policy objectives and absolve the people – and to some extent the military – of fighting a nation’s wars, we must simply look to what was said before. In decrying the use of mercenary forces rather than levied vassals in Medieval Europe, Clausewitz quipped, “War lost many of its risks.”¹⁷⁹ Even Machiavelli, in *The Art of War*, warned against the use of mercenaries by Italian city-states. He described them as “the servants of tyranny” and a “disunited, ambitious without discipline, [and] disloyal” group that “will be the ruin of the king.”¹⁸⁰

This “privatization of war” further removes the people’s requirement to participate, enables policy-makers to keep the people less informed, and has the potential to delegitimize America’s efforts. As the United States continues to be involved in multiple small, asymmetric, and limited wars, then the reliance on PMCs will continue.¹⁸¹ If, however, the U.S. is to become engaged in an existential, large-scale conflict, then perhaps the U.S. will mobilize the people, reasserting the linkage between the people and the military.

2. *Isolation and Sacrifice*

As already mentioned, the military is in danger of becoming a warrior caste, with increasing rates of familial service. Amy Schafer’s research, of the Center for a New American Strategy, finds that in 2015, 83% of recruits had a family member who had served in the military. As another example, 65% of white officers had a father with military service, “demonstrating how the warrior caste promotes homogeneity.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Demographics Report 2017, Profile of the Military Community, MilitaryOneSource. Online: <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2017-demographics-report.pdf> (accessed 30 January 2018), Table 1.03 and 1.04.

¹⁷⁸ Deborah Avant and Renée de Nevers, 141.

¹⁷⁹ Carl von Clausewitz, 587.

¹⁸⁰ As quoted by Michael I. Handel, 130.

¹⁸¹ Deborah Avant, “The Mobilization of Private Forces after 9/11,” 215.

¹⁸² Amy Schafer, 7.

Regarding the effects of this professional inheritance, she concluded that “The propagation of military service within families not only skews the demographics of the recruiting pool, but also contributes substantially to feelings of isolation and excessive burdens falling upon the few.”¹⁸³

While much of the literature asserts that the military is isolated from society because of its unique culture, profession, and location, there is something to be said for self-isolation. The military imposes self-isolation: 1) living on military installations rather than in neighborhoods composed of locals; 2) shopping at the on-base commissary rather than the local grocery store; 3) not paying local taxes, as most states allow servicemembers to claim a different state residency; or 4) not participating in local elections, as they are not residents of that town, county, or state.¹⁸⁴ Author and Army officer, Crispin Burke, noted that the military is “just as guilty of not understanding our fellow Americans. We cannot understand them if we do not understand the nation we come from, protect, and ultimately, return as veterans.”¹⁸⁵

“War or no war, life in the military is full of difficulties and disruption of a type born by few civilians with comparable education and income benefits.”¹⁸⁶ Military members are required to move more often, do not have the option to quit work until their contract is completed, do not have the option to choose their health-care providers, all aspects of the job that are different from civilian counterparts – to say nothing of the dangers of deployments. A Pew report states: “Some 83% of all adults say that military personnel and their families have had to make a lot of sacrifices [since 9/11]; 43% say the same about the American people.”¹⁸⁷

Of note, the Reserves and NG forces are also volunteers. Thus, the mobilization of those forces “has not had a significant impact on the willingness of Congress or the American people to raise the threshold for going to war.”¹⁸⁸ The public perception may be that “you volunteered for this.”¹⁸⁹ Polling validates this assumption: 70% consider deployments and a lack of burden-sharing “just part of being in the military.”¹⁹⁰ By

¹⁸³ Amy Shafer, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Crispin Burke, How Veterans Can Help Bridge the Civil-Military Divide,” *The Atlantic*, 13 November 2017, Online: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/11/how-veterans-can-help-bridge-the-civilian-military-divide/545669/> (accessed 15 November 2017).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Rosa Brooks, 26.

¹⁸⁷ Pew Research Center, “War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era,” 2.

¹⁸⁸ David R. Segal and Lawrence J. Korb, 117.

¹⁸⁹ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 108.

¹⁹⁰ Pew Research Center, “War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era,” 2.

2007, 80% of the NG and USAR had served at least one deployment, with 20% serving more than one.¹⁹¹

3. *Hero Worship*

Leonard Wong of the Strategic Studies Institute assessed the current civ-mil relationship as, “The military has an obedient relationship with the Executive Branch, a weak relationship with Congress, and a relationship with society that is so good that it is detrimental.” The public, by extension Congress, is inhibited from holding the military accountable for fear of “not supporting the troops.”¹⁹² His assessment of the relationship with society harkens back to the near universal support that the military enjoys from the public, despite their spectator status. In today’s era of fiscal austerity since the crash of 2008, the military budget has continued to increase at the expense of non-military government spending. Politicians are unwilling to commit political suicide by cutting military pay, benefits, or acquisitions. To do so would allow political rivals to accuse them of not supporting the military, veterans, or military families – an accusation that no politician, regardless of Democrat or Republican, is willing to risk.¹⁹³ Former Ambassador (and Army officer) Karl Eikenberry noted that the AVF has enabled a “high degree of corporate autonomy and entitlement” that allows senior military leaders to plan, resource, and employ with fear of little restraint from Congressional or public accountability.¹⁹⁴

As veterans return from wars abroad – with visible and non-visible wounds – they are often greeted with waving flags at sporting events, yellow ribbons (signifying support for the troops) on lamp posts, and discounts at retail stores. These displays of appreciation, along with a sense of “the military is the only one who sacrifices,” can combine to develop an entitlement syndrome among the military.¹⁹⁵ Young men who have experienced hardship, are generally more educated, more physically fit, and are expected to live up to a higher moral and physical code can develop a sense of elitism, which also serves to increase isolation, otherness, and furthers the civ-mil gap.

¹⁹¹ David R. Segal and Lawrence J. Korb, 123.

¹⁹² Leonard Wong, 3.

¹⁹³ Rosa Brooks, 37.

¹⁹⁴ Karl W. Eikenberry, 20.

¹⁹⁵ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 134.

Despite American citizens' lack of familiarity or understanding of their military, they try to demonstrate a commitment and connectedness through routinely thanking servicemembers for their service, military tributes during sporting events, airlines' policy of boarding military members first, businesses making concerted efforts to hire veterans, or Congress consistently increasing military budgets, military pay, and benefits.¹⁹⁶ However, some within the military may interpret these gestures as "empty tokenism" and accuse civilian society of covering its guilt of sacrifice insulation by approving budgets and entitlement programs.¹⁹⁷ Despite society's efforts, the civ-mil gap at the societal level seems to be growing because of isolation, a sense of otherness, and elitism.

4. Stigma

There is also an alternate civilian view of the American soldier – a victim of the wars and a danger to himself and society. Unfamiliarity with military life, culture, and sacrifice leads civil society to take pity on their soldiers, rather than respect.¹⁹⁸ Veterans report having difficulty relating to civilian counterparts upon leaving the military, and are often made uncomfortable with civilians' questions about their war-time experiences.¹⁹⁹

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has become an unintended consequence of the Bush wars, creating a stigma of the returning soldier who is emotionally broken, on the verge of "losing it" in an instant, and unable to re-assimilate into society. While Soldier's Heart and Combat Fatigue have been used to describe PTSD-like conditions since the Civil War,²⁰⁰ the explosion in cases over the last 15 years is astounding. The Department for Veterans Affairs (VA) reports that 11-20% of veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom are diagnosed with PTSD. The VA website informs veterans that their experiences in war, the politics surrounding the war, the type of enemy faced, the location of the deployment, and

¹⁹⁶ Kori Schake and James Mattis, 4.

¹⁹⁷ Rosa Brooks, 38.

¹⁹⁸ Kori Schake and James Mattis, 310.

¹⁹⁹ Kay Whitley, Paul F. Tschudi, and Courtney T. Gieber, *Life Beyond War: Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Student Veterans*, The HSC Foundation, October 2013, 6.

²⁰⁰ Martin van Creveld, *Pussycats*, 152-154.

previous mental health issues may all serve to inflict soldiers with PTSD.²⁰¹ Furthermore, suicide rates among veterans are believed to be 1.5 times higher than the civilian rate, with about 20 veterans committing suicide each day.²⁰²

The above paragraphs focus on the emotional, psychological, and mental wounds that some veterans face, but the physical wounds affect re-assimilation as well. With improved battlefield medicine and rapid evacuation capabilities, soldiers who would have died in previous wars are being spared, albeit with permanent wounds, amputations, and disfigurements.

Businesses have been reluctant to hire veterans because of the stereotype and stigma associated with PTSD, a lack of understanding about military job skills, and being uncomfortable with someone from a military culture (familiarity gap). To combat this reluctance, initiatives such as “hire our heroes” and companies with “veterans hiring goals” are trying to re-connect and ease their transition into civil society. Universities and businesses are establishing engagement strategies and advisory councils about how to best engage with veterans.²⁰³ Though these attempts are admirable, the programs speak of the civ-mil gap in terms of culture, experiences, and sacrifice.

Veterans, however, are rarely seeking pity from civil society. According to one report, 80% of post-9/11 veterans “would join the military again if they had the chance.”²⁰⁴ Van Creveld, however, sees the spike in PTSD-like issues to be symptomatic of the current society, rather than the horrors of the wars. He argues that recent, limited wars, peace since WWII, and de-masculinization of society’s men has weakened the resolve of soldiers.²⁰⁵ To this point, the VA encourages the victimization and conflagration of PTSD by “coaching” veterans to transition out of the military to claim PTSD on their disability papers, in hopes of maximizing their disability benefits.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ National Center for PTSD, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Online: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_veterans.asp (accessed 12 August 2019).

²⁰² Leo Shane III “VA: Suicide Rate for Younger Veterans Increased by More than 10 Percent.” *Military Times*, 26 September 2018, Online: <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2018/09/26/suicide-rate-spikes-among-younger-veterans/> (accessed 12 August 2019).

²⁰³ Kay Whitley, Paul F. Tschudi, and Courtney T. Gieber, 15.

²⁰⁴ Kori Schake and James Mattis, 310.

²⁰⁵ Martin van Creveld, *Pussycats*, 39.

²⁰⁶ Kori Schake and James Mattis, 311.

F. Conclusion

Even in today's world, the American government's ability to recruit, train, equip, and maintain a citizen-army is a hallmark of good governance. The American people have a social contract with the government: if they are provided with individual freedoms and participation, they will reciprocate by displaying patriotism and service to the state by joining the military. For the American military to participate in expeditionary wars, there is a fundamental "need to strike a proper balance among the government, the people, and the citizen-army."²⁰⁷

Despite the perception that America's wars are fought by the poor and destitute, today's military is "distinctly middle class" because military recruiting requirements often disqualify those of the lowest socio-economic status. For example, the poorest Americans are often beset by not finishing high school, incarceration or other "run-ins with the criminal justice system," or poor health and obesity – all of which are disqualifying factors for recruits.²⁰⁸ A concern of the end of the draft is that American wars would be fought by minorities and the poor, but whites make up 68.7% and blacks 17.3% of the active force.²⁰⁹ Also, the military is well-educated: 84.8% of active officers have at least a Bachelor's Degree and 41.6% advanced degrees. For the enlisted soldiers, 99.3% have a high school diploma, which is 10% higher than the national average.²¹⁰ Despite the end of the draft, use of the all-volunteer army, and repeated deployments – the United States military remains extraordinarily diverse.²¹¹

Huntington was right that the military is separate from society, but the gap has been exacerbated since the Iraq War. The AVF perpetuates the civ-mil gap by its military base locations, by its culture, by the very nature and experiences of deployments, and the sense of otherness as compared to their civilian counterparts. This physical and cultural separation can lead to difficulty with assimilating veterans into civil society, seeing them as victims to be pitied. The AVF also perpetuates a mobilization gap, where civil society has not had to bear the burdens of the recent wars, which has caused the government to turn to private military companies to fill the gap. Civil society has not had to mobilize to meet an existential threat like it has in

²⁰⁷ Michael I. Handel, 133.

²⁰⁸ Crispin Burke.

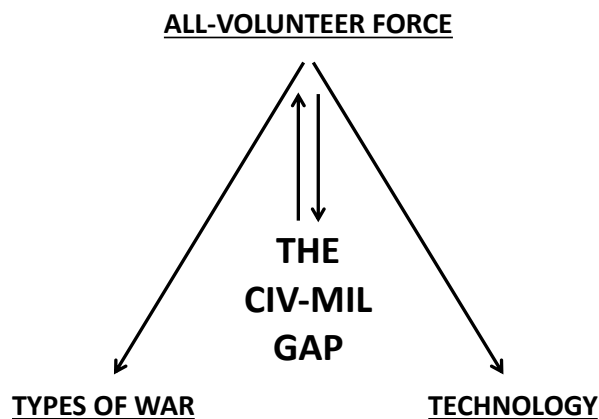
²⁰⁹ Demographics Report 2017, Table 2.21.

²¹⁰ Ibid, Table 2.50 and 2.51.

²¹¹ Rosa Brooks, 36.

times past, so the American citizens become spectators of the wars being fought, rather than participants. Civilian leaders, because of the familiarity gap where they do not understand the military or do not want to appear unsupportive of the troops, become a rubber stamp of approval to meet the military's requests – abdicating their responsibility to provide leadership and oversight. As demonstrated in Figure 3, the AVF enables American policy-makers to engage in limited war and gray zone tactics to maintain power projection and military engagement, which is wearing-down the volunteer force. To lessen the burden on the troops, the AVF drives the reliance on technology, as policy-makers become more casualty-averse when engaging threats around the world.

Figure 3: The All-Volunteer Force Impacts the Types of War and the Reliance on Technology



Source: Author's depiction.

*“Every age has its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions and its own peculiar preconceptions.”*²¹²

Carl von Clausewitz

IV. Modern War

With the advent of the All-Volunteer Force replacing the citizen-soldier concept as employed throughout most of American history, the United States made the costly decision to invade Iraq in March 2003. The initial victory was a quick one for the Coalition, overpowering Iraqi forces with American in short order. The euphoria of removing Saddam from power did not last long, as the Coalition set-forth to rebuild Iraq. By 2004, the military and the Bush administration recognized that the window of success for Operation Iraqi Freedom had faded. No longer was overwhelming force the key to victory in Iraq, so the U.S. began to adjust its strategies. The decisions taken in Iraq would have lasting consequences on American strategy, the region, and the American civ-mil relationship. However, the wars in Iraq did not cause the civ-mil tension, but they “simply exposed a rift that had existed for decades.”²¹³

In the 15 years since the Iraq invasion, the United States has been forced to alter its engagement strategy against existing and rising security threats. It transitioned from a high-intensity conflict against a trained and equipped Iraqi force, to one focused on nation building and counterinsurgency (COIN) – which the military had mostly ignored since Vietnam. As the situation evolved, the U.S. began to prefer an advise and assist approach to work by, with, and through host-nation partners, while accelerating kinetic strike capabilities from remote platforms. Thus, the modern wars since 2003, characterized by limited objectives with limited means, have allowed the civ-mil gap to grow. These wars are “war without the people.”²¹⁴ Simultaneous to widening the civ-mil gap, these wars also affect the AVF and the reliance on technology. Limited wars need fewer ground troops for prolonged deployment, so the AVF is ‘right-sized’ for the missions. Limited wars and gray zone activities tend to be conducted outside of the public eye, so Congress continues to prefer the AVF because

²¹² Carl von Clausewitz, 593.

²¹³ Michael C. Desch.

²¹⁴ Thomas Waldman, “Vicarious Warfare: The Counterproductive Consequences of Modern American Military Practice, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 5 December 2017, 6.

those actions are less likely to be publicly debated if civil society is spared from the burden of participating. Finally, these wars rely on technology to enable risk transference, limit collateral damage against civilians, and project power across the globe.

A. Operation Iraqi Freedom

At the onset of the Iraq invasion, the United States employed its version of maneuver warfare based on: “precision-guided weapons and suppression of enemy air defense, followed by deep strike and an air-land battle, rapid maneuver, high tempo 24-hour conflict, radical advances in intelligence and targeting, and a near real-time decision cycle based on ... an improved mix of digital battle management.”²¹⁵ Even with all of this lethality, the Coalition was careful to “avoid collateral damage to civilian life and property.”²¹⁶ If the quick victory over Saddam’s forces had been sufficient to war termination and political objectives, then the world might be a very different place today. Alas, however, Iraq descended into chaos, re-opened old wounds of Shia and Sunni factions, allowed Iranian influence through funding and training of militias, and enabled the spread of Al Qaeda and the eventual creation of the Islamic State (ISIL). The effects of the Iraq invasion have become prevalent in the mindset of the American military, much like the cloud of Vietnam shaped the culture, direction, and thinking of the previous generation. Without mentioning the financial cost, loss of prestige in the Middle East, and unfathomable number of Iraqi deaths, the U.S. has grown tired of war in Iraq. Between 2003 and 2010, 4,410 American personnel were killed and 31,957 wounded.²¹⁷

The Iraq War saw the military over-stretched across two theatres, under-equipped from accelerated wear on equipment, repeatedly deployed, and having difficulty making recruitment. The Iraq Study Group summed the situation by saying that the military was “near the breaking point.”²¹⁸ Despite the military being near the breaking point, the U.S. was unwilling for civil society to play a larger role in the

²¹⁵ Anthony H Cordesman, “21st Century Conflict: From ‘Revolution in Military Affairs’ to a ‘Revolution in Civil-Military Affairs,’” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 15 February 2018, 2-3.

²¹⁶ Lawrence Freedman, 19.

²¹⁷ Operation Iraqi Freedom U.S. Casualty Status, U.S. Department of Defense. 31 August 2010. Online: <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Casualty-Status/> (accessed 10 August 2019).

²¹⁸ James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, 76.

conflict. As already discussed in the previous chapter, the military felt they were alone in the fight, while the majority of Americans lived their life without interruption.

In an effort to limit ambiguous reasons and objectives for fighting messy counterinsurgencies – like Iraq – General Creighton Abrams set-out to reform the Army structure. His idea was to restructure the Army Reserve forces if the military was deployed, thus the American public would be mobilized.²¹⁹ Larger portions of the public would not only be forced to deploy, but they would first-hand endure the costs and hardships associated by the AVF. The benefits would be two-fold: 1) the government would be less inclined to cavalierly employ of the military, and 2) the military would receive public support for the war. Thus, the military would no longer be forced to fight unpopular wars.²²⁰ The policy, however, did not prevent the Reserves and National Guard from participating in the unpopular wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, rendering Abrams overly optimistic in attempting to rein-in a militaristic foreign policy.²²¹

1. Counter-Insurgency

“The U.S. military was caught flat-footed by the rise of terrorism and insurgency inside Iraq and by the challenges of post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction. ... In Afghanistan, our troops were confounded by an invisible enemy that left IEDs in roadways and then melted back into the civilian population.”²²² To stabilize the growing insurgency, General David Petraeus developed a “surge” to flood Iraq with troops to conduct COIN. A hallmark of COIN is that it requires the military officer to be part diplomat, part aid worker, part cultural anthropologist, and soldier.²²³ The Army’s COIN Manual charges military officers to provide “security from insurgent

²¹⁹ Martin Skold, “Clausewitz Turned on His Head,” *The Strategy Bridge*, 21 September 2014, Online: <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2015/12/28/clausewitz-turned-on-his-head> (accessed 15 February 2019).

²²⁰ Karl W. Eikenberry, 10.

²²¹ Martin Skold.

²²² Rosa Brooks, 49.

²²³ The author has multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, where personal experience confirms this assessment. Officers across a range of specialties led raids to capture/kill suspected insurgents, participated in city-council meetings to restore basic services, attended tribal shuras to discuss reconciliation efforts to disenfranchised and young men susceptible to insurgent recruitment, oversaw reconstruction projects to improve hospitals and schools, and distributed funds to local tribes to establish security checkpoints – most of which had little to do with being a military professional in the Huntingtonian sense.

intimidation and coercion, as well as nonpolitical violence and crime; provision for basic economic needs; provision of essential services, such as water, electricity, sanitation, and medical care; sustainment of key social and cultural institutions; [and] other aspects that contribute to a society's basic quality of life.”²²⁴ With such a diverse set of possible roles for military professionals practicing COIN, perhaps Huntington's idea that military professionals “manage violence” is no longer applicable.²²⁵

One of the problems encountered in Iraq during COIN and nation-building efforts was the question of: Who is in charge of reconstruction?²²⁶ Was the military in the lead, with its larger budget and larger personnel on the ground? Or, was it the State Department and their Provincial Reconstruction Teams designed to spur development and economic growth? Or, was the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in charge, since they had the requisite expertise and experience with reconstruction and development in war-torn areas? All three actors disagreed about the best way to spend the initial \$18.6 billion in reconstruction money from the “dual chain of command” between the military and civilian agencies.²²⁷ The military is not trained for overseeing reconstruction projects – wells, dams, schools, mosques, and hospitals, yet that mission is precisely what large swaths of deployed personnel found themselves doing – overseeing development projects while seeking to evade insurgent ambushes and IEDs.

Despite the struggles at success, the small tactical victories that never materialized into strategic ones, and the continuation of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 59% of post-9/11 “veterans support non-combat ‘nation building’ [missions],” according to the aforementioned Pew Poll.²²⁸

For the mission it was assigned, much of the military lacked the necessary skills to perform the tasks it was assigned. Thus, the military tapped-into civil society to augment the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan: anthropologists who study tribal conflicts in the remote regions of Afghanistan, farming experts who seek to improve irrigation practices in Iraq, and retired American police officers serving as police mentors in both countries to help train local forces on evidence collection and

²²⁴ *Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, US Department of the Army, December 2006, 2-1 – 2-2.

²²⁵ Karl W. Eikenberry, 17.

²²⁶ James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, 25.

²²⁷ Michael P. Noonan.

²²⁸ Pew Research Center, “War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era,” 3.

prosecution.²²⁹ Since the military is the primary “tool of the state,”²³⁰ it increasingly finds itself in need of skills and attributes that are non-traditional for military – “technical experience, scientific know-how, foreign language and regional expertise, an anthropological cast of mind, media savvy, maturity, and good judgement.”²³¹ While these attributes have been beneficial to militaries in the past, they had little influence on the fighting-man’s ability to load his rifle, move under a heavy load, or display forbearance in the face of the enemy, much less the Huntingtonian “management of violence.”

Harvard professor Stephen Walt points to the nature of America’s wars as the greatest factor affecting the civ-mil fracture, with civilian leadership wanting and expecting a “can do” attitude from the military, while the military is fighting wars for which it is ill-suited – a focus on counterinsurgency and nation building. These types of wars “blur the distinction between the ‘political’ and the ‘military’ realms.”²³² President of FPRI, Harvey Sicherman, noted that civ-mil “frictions [were] exacerbated because we lack the capabilities, both military and civilian, to conduct the kind of conflict that we have found ourselves conducting in Iraq.”²³³

B. Limited Warfare

Limited war is not new. It is also been called low-intensity conflict, small wars, counterinsurgencies, military operations other than war, and – now – gray zone.²³⁴ The benefit of fighting limited wars, for limited objectives, with limited personnel, inflicting limited violence, is that the military and government need only limited support from the people.²³⁵ Thus, the US turned to a more limited global engagement strategy, preventative in nature, heavily relying on advanced technology to enable maximum standoff, and out of the public eye. In fact, much of the public is oblivious to the fact that the US military currently occupies 800 bases in 70 countries with over

²²⁹ James Burk, 5.

²³⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, 83.

²³¹ Rosa Brooks, 59.

²³² Stephen M. Walt, “Why have the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq been so Corrosive?”

²³³ Michael P. Noonan.

²³⁴ United States Special Operations Command, “The Gray Zone,” 9 September 2015, 1.

²³⁵ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 273

200,000 service-members deployed.²³⁶ The United States has developed an armed force that can be sent into battle on behalf of a society that scarcely breaks a sweat – demographically, economically, or financially – when the force is deployed.”²³⁷

As a result of the death and destruction in Iraq, the U.S. developed “a casualty aversion syndrome.”²³⁸ The U.S. has grown more “wary about entering into any more long-term commitments involving direct combat.”²³⁹ The U.S. decided to change its strategy to a more limited approach. “The decrease in public political participation affected the capacity to extract resources and thus encouraged forms of military intervention that minimized the sacrifices imposed on the people in both lives and wealth.”²⁴⁰ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker – two giants in their fields – see the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan as a turning-point in war. The change is from states’ mass mobilization and overwhelming force – Clausewitzian in nature – to states and non-states’ partial mobilization to achieve limited objectives with minimal force. They point to the lack of success with 200,000 troops deployed, as evidenced by the continued fights in both Afghanistan or Iraq.²⁴¹ A lesson from General Petraeus’ surge of 2006/2007 was that it “encouraged the perception of the utility of conventional military force in the war on terror.”²⁴² Thus, the militaries transitioned to strategies of more limited objectives – establish a host-country force capable of defending their own fledging governments.

Observing the lessons of Iraq, the futility of large amounts of combat troops, and constrained by the Americans’ aversion to casualties, the American military began to reduce its involvement in direct combat to focus on more limited objectives with more limited means. In 2015’s National Security Strategy, the President trumpeted American troop presence in the Middle East had been significantly reduced. He

²³⁶ David Vine, “Where in the World is the US Military?” *Politico*, July/August 2015, Online: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/06/us-military-bases-around-the-world-119321> (accessed 9 November 2017).

²³⁷ David M. Kennedy, 2.

²³⁸ David Rothkopf at “Blurred Lines: Civil-Military Relations and Modern War.” Executive Summary from War Studies Conference at West Point’s Modern War Institute. 25-27 March 2018, 9.

²³⁹ *Ibid*, 35.

²⁴⁰ Pascal Vennesson, 248.

²⁴¹ James Burk and Christopher Bandeker, “Conclusions.” In *How 9/11 Changed our Ways of War*, Edited by James Burk, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013, 261.

²⁴² Lawrence Freedman, 27.

proclaimed: “We have moved beyond the large ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that defined so much of American foreign policy over the past decade.”²⁴³

The new “American way of war” has come to be exemplified by hunting and killing nonstate and surrogate enemies through “limited, low-intensity, and unconventional wars endure based on tenuous legal authorities.”²⁴⁴ These wars however, also limit the scope of violence and destruction, which is a byproduct of employment of advanced technology.²⁴⁵

One of the most recognizable tenets of American limited war is that it will use precision force around the globe – targeted “assassination” via drones. One of the paradoxes of the United States engaging in these types of conflicts is that it is still expected to do so in accordance with the values of its liberal society.²⁴⁶ Historically, assassination has been a violation of domestic and international laws.²⁴⁷ The U.S. is able to conduct kinetic strikes – in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and others – because of advanced technology of drones, munitions, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), without a robust personnel force forward deployed, and without public knowledge – a display of the civ-mil gap.²⁴⁸ Low-intensity, limited, and even prolonged air campaigns are preferred by civilian leaders because they are relatively cheap – in terms of blood and treasure – and are publicly acceptable, since American troops are less likely to come home in a coffin.²⁴⁹

1. Low-Intensity Conflict

Bacevich asserts that traditional American thought held that military force could solve American foreign policy problems,²⁵⁰ but after almost two decades of war, Americans are no longer “seduced” by it. The American mindset has become casualty-adverse, “to the extent that the U.S. intervened in any wars at all, it did so almost exclusively by using aircraft, cruise missiles, and drones against which the chosen opponent had

²⁴³ President Barack Obama, Preface, *National Security Strategy 2015*, Washington: The White House, 2015.

²⁴⁴ Donald S. Travis, “Decoding Morris Janowitz,” 6.

²⁴⁵ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 269.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 262.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 272.

²⁴⁸ Thomas Waldman, 8.

²⁴⁹ Martin Skold.

²⁵⁰ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 263.

no defense.”²⁵¹ Burk and Dandeker identify the recent aerial bombing campaigns in Libya and in Syria, as well as the cyber-attacks against Iran’s nuclear program, as evidence of this new turn in the American approach to warfare. These examples, however, seem to reflect similar engagements for limited objectives in the humanitarian interventions of the 1990s.²⁵²

The U.S. military is commonly called the most powerful – usually by senior military leaders and government officials. The military’s conventional power, however, is being “less and less useful for dealing with the complex security threats” that the U.S. is facing.²⁵³ In fact, attempting to counter asymmetric threats using conventional forces only “drives the United States deeper into the hegemon trap.”²⁵⁴ The American military is a victim of its own conventional warfare success – Iraq in 1991 and 2003.²⁵⁵ Thus, the American military’s dominance has pushed adversaries to employ asymmetric methods and strategies to neutralize the DoD’s strengths and expose its weaknesses.²⁵⁶

Limited wars require fewer forces. The technological advancement of the U.S., allows it to participate in limited wars while employing fewer troops. Two examples are Kosovo and Libya: there was no political, military, or public will for increased participation, so the administration decided – despite the pleas of allies – to limit its participation to only aerial attacks. The Libya participation was even more limited, as President Obama implored the British and French to take the lead.²⁵⁷

In the years following 9/11, the American military has conducted operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, the Philippines, Mali, Nigeria, and probably other locations. It has killed in direct combat, i.e. face-to-face, and air-based warfare via manned and unmanned aircraft. It has killed American citizens without due process. It has killed uniformed soldiers, terrorists, bomb makers, planners, recruiters, and financiers.²⁵⁸

Though the U.S. is focused on limited warfare and low-intensity conflicts, it has noticed the military rise and adventurism of Russia in Eastern Europe and China in

²⁵¹ Martin van Creveld, *Pussycats*, 6.

²⁵² *Ibid*, 268.

²⁵³ Rosa Brooks, 21.

²⁵⁴ Donald S. Travis, “Decoding Morris Janowitz,” 6.

²⁵⁵ Rosa Brooks, 49.

²⁵⁶ Lawrence Freedman, 19.

²⁵⁷ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 270.

²⁵⁸ Rosa Brooks, 54.

the South China Sea, the American military has begun to transition from COIN-centric training to high-intensity training rotations. Up to this point, American soldiers and weapons have served as sufficient deterrence to check overly aggressive ambitions in each region.²⁵⁹ However, several scholars anticipate a coming conflict between the United States and either Russia or China. Nevertheless, and perhaps because of the possibility, the United States continues to deploy all over the world for missions ranging from military engagement, security cooperation/assistance, to counter-terrorism.

2. *Advise and Assist*

If the American public is unwilling to sustain large numbers of casualties, military and civilian leadership must then devise ways to achieve more with less? The answer is to “mobilize allies and partners to share the burden and achieve lasting outcomes.”²⁶⁰ The United States military has adopted an approach of “by, with, and through.” This strategy capitalizes on American risk aversion and unwillingness to deploy large numbers of combat troops, thereby transferring the risk to others in what Thomas Waldman called “vicarious warfare.”²⁶¹ Thus, smaller units are deployed into areas to train host-country forces, sometimes to counter threats and other times to prevent escalation. President Obama’s counter-terrorism strategy relied-upon a “light footprint” of forces scattered abroad, yet using local forces as “force multipliers” to achieve limited objectives. This approach was certainly more politically acceptable than the prolonged, troop intensive deployments that characterized the Bush administration.²⁶²

The U.S. missions in Afghanistan and Iraq transitioned from direct combat to advise and assist the local forces, an approach that limited the objectives of the continued deployments, while also limiting the number of American troops in harm’s way. The objective was to train local forces that were capable of repelling enemy advances, so that the nascent government could stabilize, develop, and gain much-

²⁵⁹ Martin van Creveld, *Pussycats*, 80.

²⁶⁰ *National Security Strategy 2015*, 8.

²⁶¹ Thomas Waldman, 9.

²⁶² Steven Metz, “After Niger, Is America’s ‘Light Footprint’ Counterterrorism Strategy Sustainable?” *World Politics Review*, 17 November 2017, Online: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/23635/after-niger-is-america-s-light-footprint-counterterrorism-strategy-sustainable> (accessed 10 August 2019).

needed support from the locals. This approach allowed small elements of American trainers to project much greater firepower, lethality, and presence. For example, an eight-man squad of American troops would partner with a platoon (about thirty) of local forces, thus turning that squad into a platoon. Not only was this a combat multiplier for increased security, but this was also a mechanism of teaching, training, and mentoring local forces.²⁶³ This mission has been popularized by Special Forces elements, whose core competency is Foreign Internal Defense, but it was also employed by regular forces under monikers such as Military Transition Teams, Embedded Training Teams, and Security Force Assistance Teams. These types of missions are being conducted throughout the Middle East, Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. However, they are not always successful, as demonstrated by the Iraqi forces' disintegration in the face of ISIL's offensive in 2014, or with the Taliban resurgence and recapturing of districts throughout Afghanistan.²⁶⁴ And of course, these programs are not without risk, as evidenced by an attack in Niger in 2017. Americans and Congressmen were "shocked" to hear of the death of four Special Operations soldiers in Niger. They were surprised that the U.S. had troops in Niger, 800²⁶⁵ of them no less, though Africa Command routinely published information in their reports to the Pentagon, Congress, and even on AFRICOM's website via their annual "Posture Statements."²⁶⁶ This ignorance speaks to the fact that the AVF has suffered from a lack of ownership and oversight since the Iraq War. Citizens ought to take as much interest in the budget and actions of the military as they do in their local police forces. Additionally, Congress and the media ought to play key roles in holding senior military leaders accountable.²⁶⁷

The concept of "by, with, and through" is not endorsed by everyone. Attempting to remake Iraqi or Afghan forces in the image of the U.S. military – educated officers sworn to the Constitution, empowered non-commissioned officers, and soldiers devoted to patriotic duty – is folly. Dr Jason Dempsey of the Center for a

²⁶³ Carter Malkasian and J. Kael Weston, "War Downsized: How to Accomplish More with Less," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2012, Online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2012-02-13/war-downsized> (accessed 4 December 2017).

²⁶⁴ Thomas Waldman, 10.

²⁶⁵ Most were involved in building an airstrip and base of operations for future unmanned aerial vehicle site.

²⁶⁶ Crispin Burke.

²⁶⁷ Karl W. Eikenberry, 8.

New American Strategy says the U.S. Army exists because America exists, so “we [wrongfully] expect the same conditions to pop up around Afghan forces.”²⁶⁸

C. Preventative

An attribute of the American limited war practice is its attempt to prevent wars. In an effort to “undermine the conditions that often lead to war,” the American military has made large investments into “peacetime engagement, stability missions, and unconventional warfare operations.”²⁶⁹ Said another way, to prevent major wars, the U.S. is conducting liability wars that “pose limits on the choice to go to war, on the use of force, and on mobilizing resources for war.”²⁷⁰ Much of these activities occur in what’s become known as the “gray zone.”

1. Gray Zone

Limited warfare is sometimes synonymous with gray zone conflict – a space between peace and total or absolute war. In 2015, the United States Special Operations Command produced a white paper that defines gray zone conflicts as “competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality.”²⁷¹ In truth, the gray zone is not new. Asymmetric wars, small wars, irregular wars, and even espionage have fallen into the gray zone. In this zone, there is still a competition of wills in a Clausewitzian sense, but the conflict remains below the threshold of violence. Thus, operating within these types of conflicts appeal to decision-makers, as they do not trouble the public with participation, mobilization, or even oversight. Tellingly, Rosa Brooks aptly said, “we no longer have a coherent basis for distinguishing between war and ‘not war,’ or between military force and other forms of coercion and manipulation.”²⁷² The American Special Operations community is the military’s primary tool within the gray zone, employing a host of unconventional warfare methods. Special operations are

²⁶⁸ Jason Dempsey at “Blurred Lines: Civil-Military Relations and Modern War.” Executive Summary from War Studies Conference at West Point’s Modern War Institute. 25-27 March 2018.

²⁶⁹ Donald S. Travis, “Decoding Morris Janowitz,” 4.

²⁷⁰ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 273.

²⁷¹ “Gray Zone,” 1.

²⁷² Rosa Brooks, 22.

characterized as being more clandestine than conventional ones, leading to even less public knowledge, perpetuating the familiarity gap even further.

Though American history has preferred to think of an official declaration of war as the demarcation of hostilities – despite not having been in a Congressionally-declared war since WWII²⁷³ – the line between war and non-war activities has become blurred.²⁷⁴ Cyber-attacks, disinformation via social media, currency devaluation, and corporate espionage are methods being employed by both state and non-state actors that fall below the level of full-scale war, yet each of these methods has the potential for devastating effects.²⁷⁵ Thus, there is no longer a demarcation between peace and war, which Sun Tzu would argue are both part of the same conflict.²⁷⁶

The threats of violence towards the U.S. are limited to a few states, but inflicting great violence is more easily achieved than previously thought, by both state and non-state actors. For example, the attack on Pearl Harbor was conducted by a coordinated attack between 350 Japanese warplanes to kill 2400 people. By contrast, the 9/11 attack was conducted by 19 men and 4 airplanes to kill 3000 people.²⁷⁷ The threats have evolved, so the American military seeks to deter these threats in the Gray Zone.

For the foreseeable future, the gray zone will continue to be occupied by the U.S., since war is expected to be limited in nature, as regular warfare is “perceived to be in decline.” The capability of great powers to inflict massive destruction via conventional and nuclear means leads great powers to avoid regular conflict by engaging in irregular warfare,²⁷⁸ where they are able to “test the waters ... to determine the relative strength of domestic and international commitment to an endeavor without resorting to the more lethal violence of war.”²⁷⁹

²⁷³ Karl W. Eikenberry, 113.

²⁷⁴ Rosa Brooks, 52.

²⁷⁵ Robert D. Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris, *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*, Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2016, 36.

²⁷⁶ Michael I. Handel, 35.

²⁷⁷ Rosa Brooks, 53.

²⁷⁸ Lawrence Freedman, 25.

²⁷⁹ “Gray Zone,” 10.

D. Range of Military Operations

Policy-makers tend to use the “U.S. military as an all-purpose tool for fixing anything that happens to be broke,”²⁸⁰ but military doctrine requires it to perform a variety of operations and activities: noncombatant evacuation, counterinsurgency, counterdrug operations, humanitarian assistance, peace operations, counter-WMD, and large-scale combat – but this is not an all-encompassing list.²⁸¹ These tasks are a sub-set of a range of military operations (ROMO) that provide policy-makers options to respond to security situations.²⁸²

The American military has recently been employed in hurricane relief in Haiti, post-earthquake nuclear waste prevention in Japan, saber-rattling in Eastern Europe, isolating the Ebola virus in Africa, conducting counter-narcotics raids in South America, drone strikes throughout the Middle East, training judges and government officials in Afghanistan, border security in Texas and Arizona, defending cyber networks, or freedom of navigation trips near the Spratley Islands. In a most prescient way, Janowitz argued for the American military to evolve into a constabulary force by “redefining its professional capabilities.”²⁸³ His calling of redefined capabilities correspond with the host of military activities that fall between war and peace – the gray zone – where the military is expected to be capable of performing a range of missions from engagement to deterrence to full-scale war.²⁸⁴ In these capabilities, Janowitz echoes the “indirect approach” as advocated by Liddell Hart.²⁸⁵

In a Janowitzian sense, Cordesman argues for a civ-mil revolution in military affairs (CRMA)²⁸⁶ to blend responses not solely based on military capabilities, but based on diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic (DIME). The combination, or a “whole of government approach” as it is commonly known, could serve to win the loyalty among host-country factions.²⁸⁷ However, his plan sounds similar to what

²⁸⁰ Rosa Brooks, 50.

²⁸¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0, October 2018, V-4.

²⁸² See Annex 2 for the Range of Military Operations – Military Engagement, Security Cooperation, and Deterrence; Crisis Response and Limited Contingency Operations; and Large-Scale Combat Operation – over-layed on the Conflict Continuum.

²⁸³ Morris Janowitz, 418.

²⁸⁴ Donald S. Travis, “Saving Samuel Huntington,” 399.

²⁸⁵ Donald S. Travis, “Decoding Morris Janowitz,” 5.

²⁸⁶ Expanding on the phrase Revolutions in Military Affairs, which were identified when new weapons or tactics changed the way war was fought – gunpowder, steamships, and wireless radio). For further details, refer to Murray and Knox.

²⁸⁷ Anthony H. Cordesman, 2.

the United States attempted with the employment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. These teams consisted of representatives from the military, the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and (sometimes) U.S. Department of Agriculture. Their charge was to spur political, economic, and social development in order to “separate the enemy from the population, connect them to the government through good governance and accountability, and improve the safety, security, and quality of life for local citizens.”²⁸⁸

U.S. Military doctrine echoes the thoughts of Cordesman and Janowitz. According to Joint Publication 3-0, “Military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence missions, tasks, and operations encompass a wide range of actions where the military ... is tasked to support other instruments of national power ... to enhance security interests, deter conflict, and set conditions for future contingency operations.”²⁸⁹

E. Effects

As the human element, and thereby risk of casualties, is further reduced in America’s wars, Van Creveld warns of two consequences: 1) wars will become worse and 2) the fighting abilities of the servicemembers will deteriorate as the bureaucracy treats them like children unable to look after themselves – or “pussycats” – as he eloquently calls them.²⁹⁰ His reasoning is that without consistent warfare, proficiency and lethality will degrade. On his second point, many an American soldier stationed in Korea – where troops still have a curfew and recall – would agree.²⁹¹ Vennesson identifies a third consequence of this shift in wars: “diminished wartime sacrifice has turned citizens into passive bystanders.”²⁹² Limited wars also have a propensity to lead to perpetual war.²⁹³ The American Global War on Terror is almost 20 years old, and the United

²⁸⁸ This is not a direct quote, but it represents the general mantra of the PRTs when seeking to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan.

²⁸⁹ *Joint Operations*, VI-1.

²⁹⁰ Martin van Creveld, *Pussycats*, 54.

²⁹¹ As of 15 June 2019, US Forces Korea began a 90-day trial of removing the curfew. After 90 days, the command will review the data analysis concerning soldier misconduct. Korea is the last permanent-duty assignment to maintain a curfew, as troops stationed in Japan, Germany, or Italy are no longer bound by such.

²⁹² James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 268.

²⁹³ Thomas Waldman, 18.

States continues to fight the same groups on the same soil. Though limited wars may minimize risk to troops in the short-term, they're limited objectives – by nature – are unlikely to lead to strategic success, resulting in a perpetual war.

But even limited wars are not without risk. When the country decides to go to war, it must inevitably prepare for the possibility of things going poorly. For example, despite all of the American technological and economic might, the U.S. remains stuck in a war against non-state actors using unsophisticated weapons. Overly optimistic assessments by military planners or unrealistic objectives by civilian leaders exemplified American confidence in the decisions to invade both Afghanistan and Iraq, dispatching a disorganized Taliban and Iraqi force. However, the aftermath of each invasion and the enduring nature of those conflicts, has served to erode that overconfidence in American military supremacy, and at the very least, makes civ-mil leaders more reluctant to engage in those types of interventions.²⁹⁴ For example, Defense Secretary Bob Gates was reluctant to involve American forces in Libya in 2011, and General Martin Dempsey, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was careful to advise the White House about the costs and risks associated of conducting strikes in Syria in 2013. In both instances, those leaders' advice to the White House was shaped by over a decade of wars with no end in sight. Because of their stubborn reluctance to jump head-long into another war, they were labeled as not wanting to support the civilian leadership.²⁹⁵

Another effect of limited war, gray zone, and attempting to perform a “range of military operations” is the decline of lethality and proficiency in maneuver warfare. The focus on becoming counterinsurgents and military trainers in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq has diminished the military's warfighting capabilities.²⁹⁶ Thus, the Army is returning its focus to preparing for a high-intensity conflict against a near-peer competitor – relearning the tools of employing and managing violence.²⁹⁷

Once a decision to make war – limited or otherwise – has been taken, there is no guarantee that rules, laws, and norms will be followed.²⁹⁸ The My Lai Massacre in Vietnam, the Abu Gharib Prison Scandal in Iraq, the Robert Bales Killing Spree in

²⁹⁴ James Burk, 7.

²⁹⁵ Micah Zenko.

²⁹⁶ Karl W. Eikenberry, 18.

²⁹⁷ Gates Brown, “The Army's Identity Crisis,” *Parameters*, US Army War College, Winter 2016-17, 12.

²⁹⁸ James Burk, 5.

Kandahar serve as stark reminders that once war begins, no matter how many restrictions on the use of force are emplaced, bad things can happen. To this end, rules of engagement govern the military's conduct during hostilities, as a reflection of the professionalism and ethical conduct of the force.²⁹⁹

Finally, a limited strategy is unlikely to produce a "victory." Limited, by its very definition, will not achieve much. Thus, whatever threats the U.S. is engaging through limited strategies will only be managed, or stabilized, and not defeated.³⁰⁰ Limited wars have no clear victor – no closure. America's limited wars simply contain the violence, allowing the conflict to continue, spread, sew resentment towards the U.S., and weaken American support both at home and abroad. This intervention – often called wars of policing – is a disservice to both the US and the weak state in which it is waged. History has shown the road map to state formation, nation-building, and strength of a society – war. The U.S., and other liberal western democracies, are depriving these weak states of self-formation, all in the name of humanitarian intervention, peace-keeping, peace-building, peace-establishing, or conflict prevention.³⁰¹ While these may seem noble at first thought, the root-issues are not solved, the conflict festers at the fringes, and society is unable to develop. Perhaps suffering and violence is mitigated in the short-term, but these wars incur long-term commitment of the U.S. military. Civilians – both in the U.S. and in whatever weak state the military is fighting – wonder, "How the 'most powerful military on earth' cannot sufficiently end the war?"³⁰² This lack of understanding and loss of confidence further expands the civ-mil gap and weakening the U.S.

When was the US most successful, respected, and capable of forging the bond of the civ-mil connection? When it participated in the near-total wars of WWI and WWII. There was a clear end-state – victory through defeat of Germany and Japan. The American war record since WWII is quite abysmal – precisely because of the decision to become entangled in limited wars with limited objectives that often shift.³⁰³ There is no end in sight for the modern, limited, policing, counter-terrorism wars that

²⁹⁹ Julie Anne Glascott.

³⁰⁰ Steven Metz.

³⁰¹ Walter C. Opello Jr., 256.

³⁰² Stephen B. Young, "Why Can't America Win Its Wars?" *Small Wars Journal*, Undated. Online: <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/why-cant-america-win-its-wars> (accessed 12 August 2019).

³⁰³ Peter R. Mansoor, "Why Can't America Win Its Wars?" *Defining Ideas Journal* at Hoover Institution, 10 march 2016, Online: <https://www.hoover.org/research/why-cant-america-win-its-wars> (accessed 12 August 2019).

the U.S. is fighting today.³⁰⁴ Some would argue that these limited wars are a factor in soldiers returning with unseen wounds, as they've engaged a face-less enemy, with no clear objectives, and no clear path to ending the conflict.³⁰⁵ These wars, no matter how politically expedient and out of the public eye, result in a weakened Trinity.

F. Theoretical Observations

Does the Clausewitz definition of war – an act of force to compel our enemy³⁰⁶ – still hold-up in modern conflicts? In the conflicts in Libya, Yemen, and Syria, the question of who is fighting whom is difficult to answer: freedom fighters from group A versus the in-power government versus the terrorists from group B versus the tribes from group C versus the exiled government versus the proxy militias from regional power D. While this example may seem trite, Freedman cites the Libya conflict by observing that “irregular campaigns rarely lead to power.” Kaldor states: “Defeating the enemy is the justification, not the goal, of war. Through war and violence, armed actors transform themselves from marginal extremists into mainstream power brokers.”³⁰⁷ Simply put, no actor in these wars is seeking a decisive victory over the others, as they have no interest in a high-risk confrontation that will not yield high-rewards. Thus, limited wars simply fester, spread, and become an acceptable part of our global society's landscape.

The Clausewitzian Trinity framework has come under increased criticism during America's most recent limited wars. It has been fought by “networks of state and nonstate actors.” The American military has partnered with allies, host-country forces, local militias, private military companies, other U.S. and foreign government agencies, supra-state organizations, and even warlords to accomplish security objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan.³⁰⁸ In this convergence of actors, state, non-state, multi-national, and supra-national, Kaldor questions the validity of the Trinity framework. But it is not just the Trinity that struggles to hold-up in today's world. Ardent critic of Clausewitz – van Creveld – noted “If any part of our intellectual

³⁰⁴ Eoin Higgins, “Limited Wars Are Forever Wars,” *Foreign Policy*, 17 July 2019, Online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/17/limited-wars-are-forever-wars/> (accessed 12 August 2019).

³⁰⁵ Van Creveld, *Pussycats*,

³⁰⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, 75.

³⁰⁷ Mary Kaldor, 274.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 277.

baggage deserves to be thrown overboard, surely it is not the historical record but the Clausewitzian definition of war that prevents us from coming to grips with [limited war].”³⁰⁹

In regards to a Janowitzian or a Huntingtonian slant, the American policy of constant engagement characterized by limited wars and gray zone activities is decidedly more on the side of Janowitz. Distinguishing between peace and war activities is more difficult than ever, and the American military has morphed into Janowitz’ “constabulary force” that is “committed to the minimum use of force ... and seeks relations rather than victory ... [whereby] the constabulary force concept eliminates the distinction between peacetime and wartime.”³¹⁰ The military’s role is a part of the “whole of government” approach, where the best weapons to win local support, may be police forces, intelligence agencies, political leaders, development experts, or diplomats. These can help minimize fighting and the use of force.³¹¹

G. Conclusion

As the war in Syria continues to rage, the United States is unwilling to transform this limited civil war into an unlimited regional war. Though, understandably, the people in Syria may already view the conflict as unlimited.³¹² Being the primary tool in the American toolbox and being employed across the globe in a plethora of roles, not to mention the types of wars that the U.S. has been fighting – against nameless, stateless, and formless enemies – have led to a degradation in the public perception of the military’s effectiveness. Citing the you.gov study, Brooks notes that 50.6% of respondents believe the military is less effective because of these types of operations.³¹³ Pew Research shows that 51% of post-9/11 veterans and 52% of the public believe that “relying too much on military force creates hatred that leads to more terrorism.”³¹⁴ Eikenberry asserts that the military – as the most robust of government departments – continues to generate new capabilities to perform tasks that are not associated with warfighting.³¹⁵ Too often in the past, the U.S. “has overused

³⁰⁹ Martin van Creveld, *Transformation of War*, 57.

³¹⁰ Morris Janowitz, 418.

³¹¹ Lawrence Freedman, 33.

³¹² James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 270.

³¹³ Rosa Brooks, 55.

³¹⁴ Pew Research Center, “War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era,” 3.

³¹⁵ Karl W. Eikenberry, 18.

its expensive military to send messages that ought to be left to diplomats.”³¹⁶ This exemplifies the adage: “If your best tool is a hammer, then all of your problems look like nails.”

Due to how swiftly public support can erode for military intervention – especially in a media-saturated age – civilian and military leaders should be careful in the application of military force. Their opinions and voting habits may require leaders to cultivate public support for actions that the government and military wish to undertake.³¹⁷ If the U.S. decides to use over-whelming force for major combat operations, the Weinberger-Powell Imperatives provide a pragmatic approach to employment of force.

- Is a vital national security interest threatened?
- Do we have a clear attainable objective?
- Have the risks and costs been fully and frankly analyzed?
- Have all other nonviolent policy means been fully exhausted?
- Is there a plausible exit strategy to avoid endless entanglement?
- Have the consequences of our action been fully considered?
- Is the action supported by the American people?
- Do we have genuine broad international support?

In the current state of the American Trinity framework, the government is afforded disinterest or apathy from the people.³¹⁸ The Iraq Study Group noted that “U.S. foreign policy is doomed to failure – as is any course of action in Iraq – if it is not supported by a broad, sustained consensus.”³¹⁹ The “need to achieve proper equilibrium among the government, the military, and the people is at the heart of the Weinberger [Powell] Doctrine,”³²⁰ but under a limited war strategy, public support seems to be irrelevant. In an effort to enhance the national will – the essential element in war – Donald Travis of Gettysburg College recommends that “policies and

³¹⁶ Barry R. Posen.

³¹⁷ Michael I. Handel, 128.

³¹⁸ Stephen M. Walt, “Applying the 8 Questions of the Powell Doctrine.”

³¹⁹ James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, x.

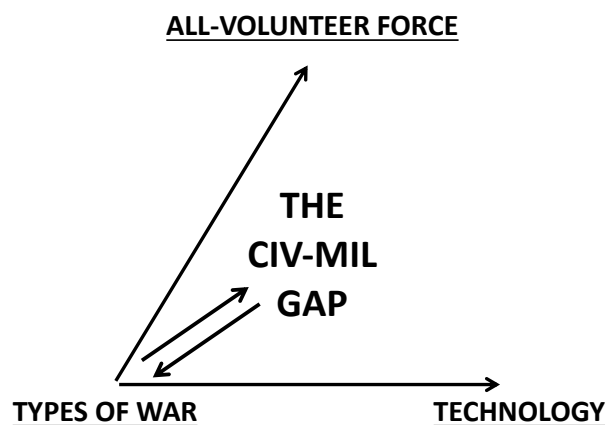
³²⁰ Michael I. Handel, 11.

strategies [be] developed as part of a pragmatic and pluralistic national security dialogue,” thereby reconciling the people and the military.³²¹

Despite the incessant calls for bridging the civ-mil divide in ways more meaningful than paying taxes, thanking soldiers for their service, and offering discounts on Veterans Day, policy-makers must understand that the Trinitarian Framework is fundamentally weakened by the pursuit of limited wars, and thus the weakening of American society as a whole. Neither the government nor the military needs the people in a campaign of limited wars. War can be outsourced to private companies or waged by a professional force, that is increasingly separated from its client – society.

Thus, the American strategy of engaging in limited liability wars requires limited forces (AVF) and technologically advanced weaponry to limit collateral damage, which prevents the people from becoming too concerned with the military’s activities. This interplay simply serves as a perpetuation of the civ-mil gap. At the same time, limited wars enable the U.S. to maintain a small “footprint” with the AVF, and it drives technological advancement because of the demands for precision weapons, rapid mobilization, and risk transference. All of these continue to cultivate the gap between the people and the military, as seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The Types of War Impacts the AVF and the Reliance on Technology



Source: Author’s depiction.

³²¹ Donald S. Travis, “Saving Samuel Huntington,” 409.

*“The history of warfare shows that every technological offensive capability will eventually be matched and offset by defensive measures.”*³²²

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger

V. Technological Reliance

Technology and war have been interwoven throughout history. Janowitz wrote that “Since combat – real or threatened – is the primary purpose of the military professional, priority was given to adapting military organization to drastic technological innovation.”³²³ The societal emphasis on technology has been a strength of American innovation for a century, but there are “limits to what technology can achieve by itself.”³²⁴ Michael Noonan observes that “the ‘cult of technology’ depreciates American grand strategy by causing policy-makers to overestimate capabilities, de-value allies, psychological insecurity, outsourcing and privatizing security, and the technical bureaucratization of the military profession.”³²⁵ Thus, the United States chooses to engage in types of warfare and with a limited force because of its overreliance on technology, though policy-makers seem to overestimate the objectives achieved. Consider that the U.S. has conducted drone strikes against the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and ISIL from Pakistan to Syria and from Yemen to Somalia, yet their leadership seems to regenerate at incredible speeds, which negates the lasting effectiveness of such strikes.³²⁶

The success of the air campaign in Kosovo was a validation of the American military’s technological superiority and seemed to imply that victory through technology could utilize “virtual war” by minimizing bloodshed.³²⁷ This minimization of risk would give the government “strategic freedom” by reducing the need for massive military engagement and public support.³²⁸ A result of Desert Storm was a renewed interest in technological integration – computing, aircraft, and ordinance. Yet,

³²² Henry Kissinger, 346.

³²³ Morris Janowitz, 303.

³²⁴ Williamson Murray, “The Future of War,” *Hoover Digest*, no 3, Summer 2018, 58.

³²⁵ Michael P. Noonan.

³²⁶ Dan de Luce and Seán D. Naylor, “The Drones Are Back,” *Foreign Policy*, 26 March 2018, Online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/26/the-drones-are-back/> (accessed 29 March 2018).

³²⁷ Martin Skold.

³²⁸ Macgregor Knox and Williamson Murray, 5.

the U.S. has been unable to turn the weapons and technology superiority into strategic success in Iraq and Afghanistan.³²⁹

Though the “American way of war” is derided as one that heavily relies on technology, this reliance is simply an extension of the “Western way of war,” whether the advances have come from the West – muskets, cannons, wireless radios, aircraft – or from the East – stirrups and gunpowder. Rapid adoption of technological advancements for violent purposes has been a hallmark of western warfare.³³⁰ Technology provides the U.S. with power projection capabilities and precision-strike methods, both of which negate the need for large numbers of ground troops forward deployed. As President Obama once said, “We possess a military whose might, technology, and geostrategic reach is unrivaled in human history.”³³¹ Thus, the U.S. is able to engage in limited warfare because of its technological advantages. Burk and Dandeker agree: “The technology of war is important. It creates a setting in which certain ways of war are more likely than others to be adopted.”³³²

The reliance on technology is highlighted by America’s remote warfare, space-based, and computing capabilities, but technologies are quickly disseminated to competitors. That competition for technical superiority has similarities to the nuclear arms race, which served as a deterrent for major conflict, and the hope is that the modern tech-arms race will as well. It is likely, however, that limited wars will continue, as neither belligerent desires an escalation.

Thus, the capabilities associated with American technology enables the AVF to have a smaller formation of troops who are more equipped for technical jobs than for carrying a weapon, while simultaneously forcing the AVF to remain small so that technology funding receives priority. Additionally, the technology enables the U.S. to employ non-traditional weapons to shape the security environment, operate in the gray zone, project power, and conduct targeted strikes while minimizing collateral damage.

³²⁹ Williamson Murray, 56.

³³⁰ Geoffrey Parker, 2.

³³¹ President Barack Obama, Preface, *National Security Strategy 2015*.

³³² James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 269.

A. Remote Warfare

As previously discussed, the U.S. has come to rely on airpower and remote warfare – “stand-off firepower” – as a way to achieve limited gains while minimizing exposure to American troops.³³³ This is not a new concept, as it was the basis for the Kosovo air campaign under the Clinton administration, where aerial bombing gave the U.S. “cheap, good enough, and publicly acceptable” options.³³⁴ Under the Obama administration, a similar air-only approach was pursued in the 2011 campaign in Libya. Throughout the literature, remote warfare is often an all-encompassing term meant to describe reduced risk to force: ie. advise and assist operations from the previous chapter, aerial bombing, naval gunfire, drones, and cyber-based attacks.³³⁵

Killing from a safer distance has been a goal of weapons development for centuries: the longbow, musket, and rifle allowed soldiers to kill from a safer distance; artillery, naval gunfire and aerial bombing enabled even greater stand-off;³³⁶ and precision guided munitions (PGMs) using global positioning systems (GPS) and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) can enable pilots to deliver violence around the globe from a cubicle in Nevada.³³⁷

A significant drawback to remote warfare is that it further “insulates” the people from war,³³⁸ allowing the military to conduct “war without the people.”³³⁹ The people are not needed to conduct precision strikes around the globe – neither their participation nor their consent. Additionally, the “easy button” mindset when using PGMs and remote assets creates a false confidence that war is bloodless, without risk, and error-free. Thus, when an errant strike is made – a PGM on a hospital in Mazari Sharif or a strike against the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade – the mistake is likely to be interpreted as a deliberate act.³⁴⁰

³³³ Thomas Waldman, 4.

³³⁴ Martin Skold.

³³⁵ Emily Knowles and Abigail Watson, “Remote Warfare: Lessons Learned from Contemporary Theatres,” Oxford Research Group, June 2018, 3.

³³⁶ Williamson Murray and MacGregor Knox, 13.

³³⁷ Thomas G. Mahnken, “Weapons: The Growth and Spread of the Precision-Strike Regime,” In *The Modern American Military*, Edited by David M. Kennedy, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, 68.

³³⁸ Karl W. Eikenberry and David M. Kennedy.

³³⁹ Thomas Waldman, 6.

³⁴⁰ Thomas G. Mahnken, 73.

B. Competition

Remote warfare capabilities are speedily being diffused to competitors. One of the observations of Knox and Murray's military revolutions framework, is that military innovation spreads quickly. The originator of the advancement maintains an advantage for but a short-time, as others seek to replicate the development. Thus, because of the reliance on remote warfare and the precision-strike capabilities, the United States is losing its advantage.³⁴¹ GPS is now available to anyone with a phone or transceiver. Drones are being employed – and shot down – by Iran and its proxies in the Middle East. China has precision-guided ballistic missiles directed towards Taiwan and layered the South China Sea with anti-access, area denial systems (A2AD).³⁴² If great-power conflict is likely in the future, the U.S. may not enjoy a significant technological over-match against China or Russia. Thus, the comfort and complacency that has been fostered through limited, remote warfare against unsophisticated enemies will not last.

The 2015 National Security Strategy recognized the reduction in forces, while focusing on expanded technologies: “Although our military will be smaller, it must remain dominant in every domain ... we will grow our investment in crucial capabilities like cyber; space; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.”³⁴³ In an effort to leverage American tech firms, the DoD has sought assistance under the Third Offset Strategy, which is designed to maintain the American military's technological superiority against near-peer competitors, particularly in network-enabled cyber weapons and artificial intelligence.³⁴⁴ The American military has driven technological advancement in the private sector, when government funded labs conducted research and development (R&D), but now the dynamic has shifted to the private sector to drive change in the military.³⁴⁵ Navigation systems, the internet, and nuclear technology are examples of military innovation that has found use in civilian society, and the military is trying to capitalize on the innovation of American technology firms. Former Undersecretary for Defense, Bob Work, established the

³⁴¹ Thomas G. Mahnken, 69.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ *National Security Strategy 2015*, Washington: The White House, 2015, 8.

³⁴⁴ Jesse Ellman, Lisa Samp, and Gabriel Coll, “Assessing the Third Offset Strategy,” CSIS International Security Program Report, March 2017, 6.

³⁴⁵ Joshua Hughes, “War and Technology Influence Each Other. Which has the Greatest Influence?” Technology, Terrorism, and Armed Conflict in the 21st Century, 30 November 2017. Online: <https://ttac21.net/2017/11/30/war-and-technology-influence-each-other-which-has-the-greatest-influence/> (accessed 11 August 2019).

Defense Innovation Unit Experimental (DIU) in Boston, Austin, and Silicon Valley to bridge the culture gap between the military and the technology sector.³⁴⁶ The coordination between tech giants and the military is not new, but it is growing more controversial for the civilian workforce, as evidenced by Google employees' recent protest.³⁴⁷

As an example of how important emerging technologies are to the military, consider the 2019 DoD Budget Analysis report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies. It noted that the Classified Procurement Budget for the Air Force – which is in charge of space-based platforms, armed un-manned aircraft, and certain intelligence-gathering tools – was about \$23 billion dollars, while the rest of the DoD was about \$1 billion. Additionally, their unclassified Space Procurement Funding was about \$2.6 billion. Furthermore, since 2017, the Research and Development Funding has increased 36% for Advanced Component Development and Prototypes, 17% for classified R&D, and 42% for Operational Systems.³⁴⁸

Furthermore, the American technological advantage is dependent on the uninterrupted use of space. Communications, navigation, imagery, tracking, intelligence gathering, and targeting all rest on a robust system of space-based capabilities. Modern soldiers struggle to imagine going into battle without their GPS, communications platforms, and intelligence tools.³⁴⁹ General Milley has warned of such parity, and he has urged troops to think about future warfare in terms of WWII's vicious fighting rather than their experience in the GWOT.³⁵⁰ Though, Williamson Murray wonders if the parity created by the influx of PGMs and next generation fighter aircraft among near peers will serve to deter major conflict, just as nuclear weapons have done between the U.S. and Russia.³⁵¹ If so, the cycle of perpetual limited wars and gray zone activities is likely to continue. Echoing the rationale for pursuing limited warfare and Gray Zone activities, Naval War College Professor Thomas Mahnken predicts that

³⁴⁶ Lara Seligman, "Why the Military Must Learn to Live Silicon Valley," *Foreign Policy*, 12 September 2018, Online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/09/12/why-the-military-must-learn-to-love-silicon-valley-pentagon-google-amazon/> (accessed 9 11 August 2019).

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Todd Harrison and Seamus P. Daniels, "Analysis of the FY 2019 Defense Budget," CSIS International Security Project's Defense Outlook Series, September 2018, 21-23.

³⁴⁹ Williamson Murray, 61.

³⁵⁰ David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "Three Things the Army Chief of Staff Wants You to Know."

³⁵¹ Williamson Murray, 59.

“Precision-strike regimes will likely focus on coercion and limited political objectives.”³⁵²

There is a strong political incentive to engage threats through remote means, which prevents risk to large numbers of the military. In a report detailing the British rationale for using remote tools, members from the Oxford Research Group identified several factors: “high political risk aversion ... the perceived security threat of safe havens ... the weakness of local partners ... and technological innovation.”³⁵³ These justifications are not unique to the United Kingdom, but could just as easily have been assessed for the U.S.

C. Theoretical Observations

A criticism of Clausewitz’ Trinitarian framework is that he ignored the material, economic, and physical aspects of war. Instead, he chose to focus on elements that were “non-material, intangible, or meta-physical” – passion, violence, and hatred to exemplify the people; chance probability, and creativity for the military; and reason, rational calculations, and the political aims for the government.³⁵⁴ Evidently, he held in low regard the technological innovations of the pike, the long bow, siege vehicles, and gunpowder – as employed by both muskets, cannons, and later rifles. These developments altered the way in which wars were conducted, increased casualties, and are often termed “Revolutions in Military Affairs.”³⁵⁵ Dr. Geoffrey Parker quipped that these advances “revolutionized the conduct of war.”³⁵⁶

Perhaps Clausewitz did not want to give too much credence to technological advances, or maybe he failed to anticipate the changes that would be sparked by the Industrial Revolution.³⁵⁷ He strongly believed that war is simply a violent competition that employs the tools of the day. He wrote, “It is clear that weapons and equipment are not essential to the concept of fighting since even wrestling is fighting of a kind.”³⁵⁸ Clausewitz’ views on the unimportance of technological developments came to cloud

³⁵² Thomas G. Mahnken, 72.

³⁵³ Emily Knowles and Abigail Watson, 5.

³⁵⁴ Michael I. Handel, 106.

³⁵⁵ See MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray, *The Dynamics of Military Revolution: 1300-2050*, New York: Cambridge UP, 2001. The book outlines the differences between military revolutions and revolutions of military affairs.

³⁵⁶ Geoffrey Parker, *The Cambridge History of Warfare*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009, 101.

³⁵⁷ Michael I. Handel, 109.

³⁵⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, 107.

the judgement of future Prussian officers. They remained suspicious of the Industrial Revolution in the latter half of the 19th century, preferring to cling to the lessons noted by Clausewitz in regards to the French Revolution at the turn of that century – enthusiasm, will-power, mass mobilization, and violent expression of national identity rather than the exploitation of new technologies – even though they were advanced in fielding the breech-loading rifle during the middle of the century.³⁵⁹

This criticism that he disregarded technology is somewhat harsh, as he clearly states that the most important changes in warfare correspond with the people and the government – political and sociological changes: “Very few of the new manifestations in war can be ascribed to new inventions or new departures in ideas. They result mainly from the transformation of society and new social conditions.”³⁶⁰ Echoing Clausewitz, Peter Mansoor – retired Army officer and Professor at Ohio State – noted that “advanced sensors and precision-guided munition are technical capabilities – they are not a substitute for strategy.”³⁶¹

“The technological imperative applied to military technology guarantees the continued development of weapons that require less and less human intervention to operate and, therefore, a smaller and smaller, more technologically sophisticated, armed force dependent upon civilian technology and interwoven into civilian society.”³⁶² However, technology will not be able to eliminate suffering in war.³⁶³ The Clausewitzian ideas of “[chance], friction, uncertainty, and confusion in warfare are not superficial annoyances to be gradually eliminated by technological progress.”³⁶⁴

As warfare continues to become more technologically advanced, Janowitz’ observation seems to fit: “the line between military and non-military” becomes weakened as a “result of the complex machinery of warfare.”³⁶⁵

³⁵⁹ Dennis E. Showalter, “The Prusso-German RMA, 1840-1871,” in *The Dynamics of Military Revolution: 1300-2050*, edited by Knox and Murray, New York: Cambridge UP, 2001, 96-98.

³⁶⁰ Carl von Clausewitz, 515.

³⁶¹ Peter R. Mansoor, “Why Can’t America Win Its Wars?”

³⁶² Walter C. Opello Jr, 266.

³⁶³ Consider the accidental strikes of civilian targets – mosques, hospitals, or schools – while drones are piloted from thousands of miles away.

³⁶⁴ Macgregor Knox and Williamson Murray, 178.

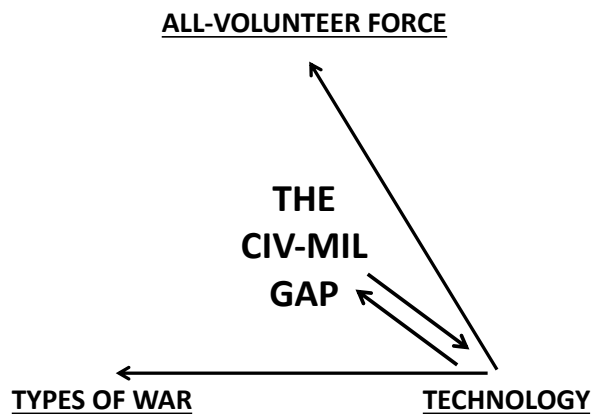
³⁶⁵ Morris Janowitz, 15.

D. Conclusion

Advanced technologies offer the policy-makers a promise of security ‘on the cheap’ and with diminished risk to American troops. In consideration of domestic social and political forces, U.S. policy-makers continue to rely on technological advancement – remote platforms, cyber tools, and even autonomous concepts – as a means to pursue security objectives.³⁶⁶ This reliance on technology, however, comes at a cost: 1) the force needs fewer people, so it is less connected with the people;³⁶⁷ 2) the capabilities of remote weapons systems challenge the norms and laws associated with armed conflict, leading to the loss of international support for American actions;³⁶⁸ and 3) U.S. capabilities may become vulnerabilities because of an overreliance on them.³⁶⁹

As demonstrated in the paragraphs above and Figure 5 below, the American reliance on advanced technology helps to limit the types of wars fought, which reduces the need for mass armies, which further reduces the population’s participation in war. Technology does not determine the American propensity for limited engagement, gray zone activities, and surgical kinetic strikes, but it does enable them.

Figure 5: The All-Volunteer Force Impacts the Types of War and the Reliance on Technology



Source: Author’s depiction.

³⁶⁶ Thomas Waldman, 8.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, 6.

³⁶⁸ James Burk and Christopher Dandeker, 262.

³⁶⁹ Williamson Murray, 60.

“The burden is on us, the guys in uniform, to make sure that we reach out beyond just the news and TV. That we reach out to communities, and we let the people know who we are and what we do and what we’re about ... The American people deserve to see what they’re getting for their money. And they ought to get to know their military.”³⁷⁰

General Mark Milley

VI. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that there is clearly a division between the civilian and military portions of American society – at both the elite, policy-making level and at the societal level. There has always been a divide between the two, but the divide seems to have become more pronounced since the invasion of Iraq in 2003. A widening of the civ-mil gap weakens the ability of the U.S. to make war, and thereby weakening American society. This civ-mil gap can be explained by the use of the All-Volunteer Force, policy of engaging in limited wars, and reliance on technology. These factors not only widen the civ-mil gap, but they also drive each other, leading to a deeper reliance on those three factors, which serves to further widen the gap. Thus, the gap is likely to widen as long as those three variables continue to be at the forefront of US policy.

American society was not asked to participate in the Iraq War, which led to a ‘mobility gap,’ despite the rhetoric of an existential threat posed by Saddam and his defunct weapons program. The All-Volunteer Force became over-extended between two theatres of war. The over-use strained the military personnel and equipment, led to the increased use of Private Military Contractors, created a sense of otherness among the military, fostered an entitlement syndrome where servicemembers saw themselves as better than society, and victimized veterans for their experiences and unseen wounds. From the civilian side, there remains a lack of understanding because of the ‘familiarity gap.’ With fewer Americans serving in the military, civilians come into contact with them less often, so they do not understand them. Furthermore, the advent of the All-Volunteer Force has enabled American policy-makers to engage in limited warfare and gray zone tactics to maintain power projection and military engagement, which is wearing-down the volunteer force. To lessen the burden on the

³⁷⁰ David Barno and Nora Bensahel, “Three Things the Army Chief of Staff Wants You to Know.”

troops, the AVF drives the reliance on technology, as policy-makers become more casualty-averse when engaging threats around the world.

After war fatigue from the Iraq War, the American public has become disinterested, and the government has capitalized to expand a policy of limited warfare. Limited, low-intensity, persistent engagement, and policing weakens the Trinitarian model, as the people are no longer needed to conduct these wars, which can be conducted by a small cohort of professionals, or by private military companies. Thus, limited warfare drives the use of the AVF and the development of high-tech weapons capable of preventing casualties. Low casualties mean less interest from the public and Congress, and so the cycle continues. Limited war and gray zone activities enable the U.S. to maintain a small “footprint” with the AVF, and it drives technological advancement because of the demands for precision weapons, rapid mobilization, and risk transference. All of these continue to cultivate the gap between the people and the military.

Advanced technologies provide decision-makers with low-cost and low-risk options for engagement. High-tech weaponry, aerial platforms, rapid computing systems, and the future of autonomous concepts require less people to operate them and less people to serve as ground forces. The tactics and weapons employed have faced resistance within the international legal community, as norms, treaties, and laws have moved slower than the technology in recent years. When the U.S. employs some of these questionable technologies, it develops an overreliance on them, it loses international legitimacy for its actions, and it showcases the technology that can then be duplicated by competitors. Thus, the American reliance on advanced technology drives a policy of limited war, which reduces the need for mass armies, which further reduces the population’s participation in war.

The evolution of warfare is not linear – it does not conform to a particular thought pattern, but the future seems to indicate that the classical Clausewitzian interstate war and the trinitarian relationship between the people, armed force, and the state is no more. Therefore, the political establishment has little incentive to change the civil-military relationship. It is able to employ the AVF without significant popular influence on policy decisions. To rekindle a citizen-soldier program or increased participation would take herculean efforts by civilian society, and a willingness to share in hardship and sacrifice experienced by the military. Furthermore, increased political discourse and participation might lead to a demilitarization of American foreign policy, where

diplomatic, informational, or economic tools could be applied rather than the military one. But Congress, however, has abdicated its legal and moral responsibility of declaring war, allowing Presidents to circumvent the War Powers Act of 1973, which was specifically enacted to prevent the type of decoupling and incessant military engagements in which the United States is embroiled in Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, the decision to invade Iraq was posed to Congress for support, but not for war declaration. Congress passed the resolution to invade Iraq with 77% in the Senate,³⁷¹ though many politicians who supported the Iraq invasion now claim to have been against the war or been misled by the Bush Administration.

Congress often appears as a “rubber stamp” when approving anything related to the military – funding, pay raises, increased benefits, and procurement programs. As noted earlier, since only 18.8% of current Congressmen have military experience, they either do not wish to challenge the military for fear of their lack of understanding and knowledge, or for fear of appearing to be “unsupportive of the troops” – which would be political suicide. Debating alternatives, however, is an important democratic value where public discourse can ensure support for war efforts.

If Americans do not like the war being waged by their military, then they must cast-off the apathy of spectatorship and reclaim their right to having a voice of where, when, and how the U.S. military is employed – in practice through Congress. Though even if more political discourse happens when taking the decision to make war, much of the dialogue and decisions will happen behind closed doors, rendering the public ill-informed. That’s simply the nature of war-making decisions, when public transparency is sacrificed in the name of secrecy to prevent disclosing methods or plans that the enemy – state or non-state – might use as an advantage.

A. Theory

Maybe a strong connection between the people and the military is not necessary, especially if the United States adopts a more “restrained grand strategy” that lessens global military involvement, reduces the defense budget, encourages allies to provide for their own security, and reduces the government’s willingness to exercise global policing. Or, maybe using the Trinity to examine and relate modern scenarios, wars,

³⁷¹ “Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002,” Govtrack.us, 11 October 2002, Online: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/107-2002/s237> (accessed 7 August 2019).

policies, and applications is an exercise in futility. Clausewitz designed his Trinity to examine historical examples, heavily influenced by the Napoleonic Wars. Mary Kaldor critiques Clausewitz' assertion that total war's "tendency to lead to extremes" is no longer possible, since modern wars have a tendency to be "inconclusive, long lasting, and to spread."³⁷² However, a total war of high-intensity conflict against a near peer adversary is possible. Much has been written about possible conflict with China and Russia, as well as the pugnacious activities of Iran and North Korea. If a large-scale war should come, the U.S. will certainly need a stronger link between the people and the military. A war against a peer competitor is likely to be grimmer than the war in Iraq and could necessitate mass-mobilization of American society – the likes of which have not been seen since WWII.

In regards to Huntington and Janowitz, the military views itself in a Huntingtonian light, striving for professionalism, preaching apolitical adherence, and self-isolating from society. In practice, however, the military is more Janowitzian for four reasons. 1) It conducts a wide-range of missions –raids and strikes, disaster relief, non-combat evacuation, and advisory training, which reflect his "constabulary force" concept. 2) The military has recognized the folly of "force alone" in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it has come to better appreciate a whole of government approach. 3) The reliance on technology helps to blend the military and non-military aspects of foreign policy. 4) The military is nearly as ethnically diverse as the United States, and it remains a pathway to middle-class for man Americans, meaning it is fairly representative of society. These observations do not invalidate that the military is somewhat apart from society or that it relies on a professional cadre of officers and non-commissioned officers, but that those observations from the 1950s should be more flexible if they are to have value for present analysis.

B. Lack of Trust

Australian Army Officer Craig Beutel notes that not only the institutions of the Trinity can inhibit the ability to make war, but so too can the relationship between each element.³⁷³ Thus, the civ-mil gap is not the only crucial issue, but so is the people to

³⁷² Mary Kaldor, 271.

³⁷³ Craig Beutel.

government gap (civ-gov if you will). Citing a Gallup poll in 2015, Annex C, Rosa Brooks points out that the military still enjoys a high approval rating from the American public, with 72% citing “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in the institution. This confidence may speak to less of a civ-mil gap than people think, when compared to the public’s confidence in other institutions: 8% for the American Congress; 23% in the Criminal Justice System; 32% in the Supreme Court; and 33% in the Presidency.³⁷⁴

The civ-mil gap at the policy-making level is wider than the one at the societal level: a gap of knowledge, trust, and culture. This gap leads to poor collaboration, political bickering and leaks, inefficient decision-making, and bad policy. The military is often frustrated that their voices are not heard or that decisions rest on political motives by elected politicians. The civilians – in turn – find the military leaders to be reluctant to employ force, instead of giving the civilians appropriate military options. This name-calling, misunderstanding, mistrust, and willful ignorance cloud the relationship. For examples of these types of incidents, consider the Bush Administration’s treatment of General Eric Shinseki in 2003 when he testified that the White House and Pentagon were unprepared for an insurgency in Iraq. The Army Chief of Staff, who enjoyed a stellar reputation up to that point, was villainized and marginalized for his comments before Congress.³⁷⁵ Under the blueprint of the Total Force, military leaders should have recommended to the Bush administration – and Congress – that the activation of the Selective Service was necessary for the prolonged deployments required to fight the insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the Shinseki case served as a cautionary warning to military leaders about challenging the narrative of civilian leaders.³⁷⁶

Public disagreements between senior military and civilian leaders are a result of disagreements that were unresolved in private. Leaks, political maneuverings, and distrust between civilian and military elites become troubling for the American public, leading to a loss of confidence in the political neutrality of the military and a loss of confidence in the civilian leadership’s openness to military advice.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Rosa Brooks, 38.

³⁷⁵ Thom Shanker, “New Strategy Vindicates Ex-Army Chief Shinseki,” *The New York Times*, 12 January 2007, Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/12/washington/12shinseki.html> (accessed 5 Aug 2019).

³⁷⁶ David R. Segal and Lawrence J. Korb, 121.

³⁷⁷ Micah Zenko.

To further illustrate the gap at the policy-making level, the 2009 Strategic Review of the U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan under General Stanley McChrystal displayed the great mistrust between civilian and government leaders. McChrystal, and the Pentagon, were accused of leaking the troop level assessments before the President could make his decision, and the military was unhappy with the President's narrow guidance and deliberative tendencies. The McChrystal-Obama partnership did not last very long, when the latter was fired for unflattering remarks that his team had made to a Rolling Stones Reporter.³⁷⁸ These two instances speak to the civ-mil gap that mostly preoccupied both Huntington and Janowitz in their studies, and which most modern scholarship is still concerned about in regards to civ-mil relations: the subordination of the military to civilian leadership and oversight.

C. *Civ-Mil for the Future*

Despite the discussions about future war, revolutions in military affairs, next-generation technology, or eradication of war, the truth is that the future of war is unknowable. Freedman noted that war in the 1980s was not like that of the 1990s, which was not like the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan. The lack of an existential threat, around which Americans can coalesce, prevents the United States from strengthening the Remarkable Trinity. Short of a threat to spark that change, then the gap will likely grow. For example, as of 2010, 71% of survey respondents between the ages of 16-21 reported they are "less likely" to join the military due to the Global War on Terror.³⁷⁹

The current model of AVF using high-tech tools to conduct persistent limited warfare around the world is not sustainable. The cycle of higher costs (for manning, equipping, and maintaining) leading to a reduced force structure leads to a high tempo/stress (because of increased engagement and commitments) leads to higher costs to retain and incentivize, and so the cycle goes. In time, this path could lead to even greater force structure reduction. To break the cycle, the DoD could 1) grow the size of the force 2) improve efficiency of DoD budget; 3) employ capabilities and

³⁷⁸ Andrew Bacevich, 200-201.

³⁷⁹ David Stewart, "Connecting America's People with America's Army: Breaching the Perceptual Divide," 9.

concepts to accomplish the same mission with fewer forces; or 4) reduce security commitments for peacetime presence activities.³⁸⁰

A return to compulsory military service is a bad idea for four reasons: 1) the AVF is more representative of society than the drafter version of Vietnam; 2) having a conscripted force does not ensure that the government is less likely to employ the military; 3) the expense would be exorbitant; and 4) professionalism, proficiency, and expertise would degrade.³⁸¹ The draft, last used in Vietnam, is not coming back to combat the current threats that the U.S. faces. American society, despite its professed support for the military, has a low tolerance for a collective obligation.³⁸²

D. Ways to Bridge the Gap

To bridge the gap, the onus should be on the military, though articles and reports usually blame society. At both levels of the civ-mil relationship – elite and non-elite – education is necessary, for both the military and civilian, to better understand one another.³⁸³ Increased education for military officers, consisting of courses on “professional norms of civil-military relations” may help to re-establish norms of political neutrality for uniformed personnel.³⁸⁴

Retired Navy Captain and professor at Loyola University, John Williams, foresees a “supplemented volunteerism” program designed to give young Americans both civilian or military service options, since support for compulsory military service is unlikely to increase.³⁸⁵ This could be in the form of President Roosevelt’s Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) or President Kennedy’s Peace Corps or President Johnson’s Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), which would later merge with President Clinton’s AmeriCorps.³⁸⁶ Morris Janowitz advocated for national service in these organizations, as well as in the Police Cadet Corps, Health Corps, and Teachers Corps.³⁸⁷ He saw national service not simply as an obligation or substitution for

³⁸⁰ Todd Harrison and Seamus P. Daniels, 50-51.

³⁸¹ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 136.

³⁸² Andrew J. Bacevich, 211.

³⁸³ Leonard Wong, 4.

³⁸⁴ Jim Golby, Lindsay P. Cohn, and Peter D. Feaver, 135.

³⁸⁵ Michael P. Noonan.

³⁸⁶ William M. Raymond Jr., 45.

³⁸⁷ Morris Janowitz, “The Case for a National Service System,” *The Public Interest*, Fall 1966, 106-108.

military service, but also as an opportunity for “broadening the range of experience” of young people, overcome “problem[s] of the inner city,” offer second chances for wayward youth, “supply an avenue of social mobility,” and contribute to society.³⁸⁸ Similar ideas have been echoed by President Obama, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta,³⁸⁹ General Stanley McChrystal,³⁹⁰ and others. Service in a uniform is not the only kind of service to one’s country, society, neighbor, and betterment of the world.

E. Further Areas to Study

How does the practice of having military leaders serve as “messengers” to Congress and the people affect the apolitical nature of military professionals?

- How has the politicization of retired senior military leaders degraded the trust in the military as an apolitical organization?
- How does the American civ-mil relationship compare with the models in Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom?
- What factors have enabled the Swiss model of mandatory service to survive, despite no existential threats, low unemployment levels, a robust GDP, and advanced liberal values?
- How has social media been able to garner, or alienate, public support for low-intensity conflicts?
- Does the lack of martial training and legitimized outlet for violence contribute to the spate of mass shootings by young males?

³⁸⁸ Morris Janowitz, “The Case for a National Service System,” 109.

³⁸⁹ Leon Panetta, *The Case for National Service: A Fellowship Research Project*. The Panetta Institute for Public Policy. Undated.

³⁹⁰ Stanley McChrystal, “You Don’t Have to Wear a Military Uniform to Serve Our Country?” *The Atlantic*, 20 July 2016, Online: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/you-dont-have-to-wear-a-military-uniform-to-serve-your-country/491765/> (accessed 15 February 2017).

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VIII. Annexes

A. Acronyms

AVF: All Volunteer Force

COE: Contemporary Operating Environment

COIN: Counter-Insurgency

CRMA: Civ-mil Revolution in Military Affairs

DIME: Diplomatic, Intelligence, Military, Economic

DOD: Department of Defense

GWOT: Global War on Terror

OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom

OIF: Operation Iraqi Freedom

PGM: Precision-Guided Munition

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

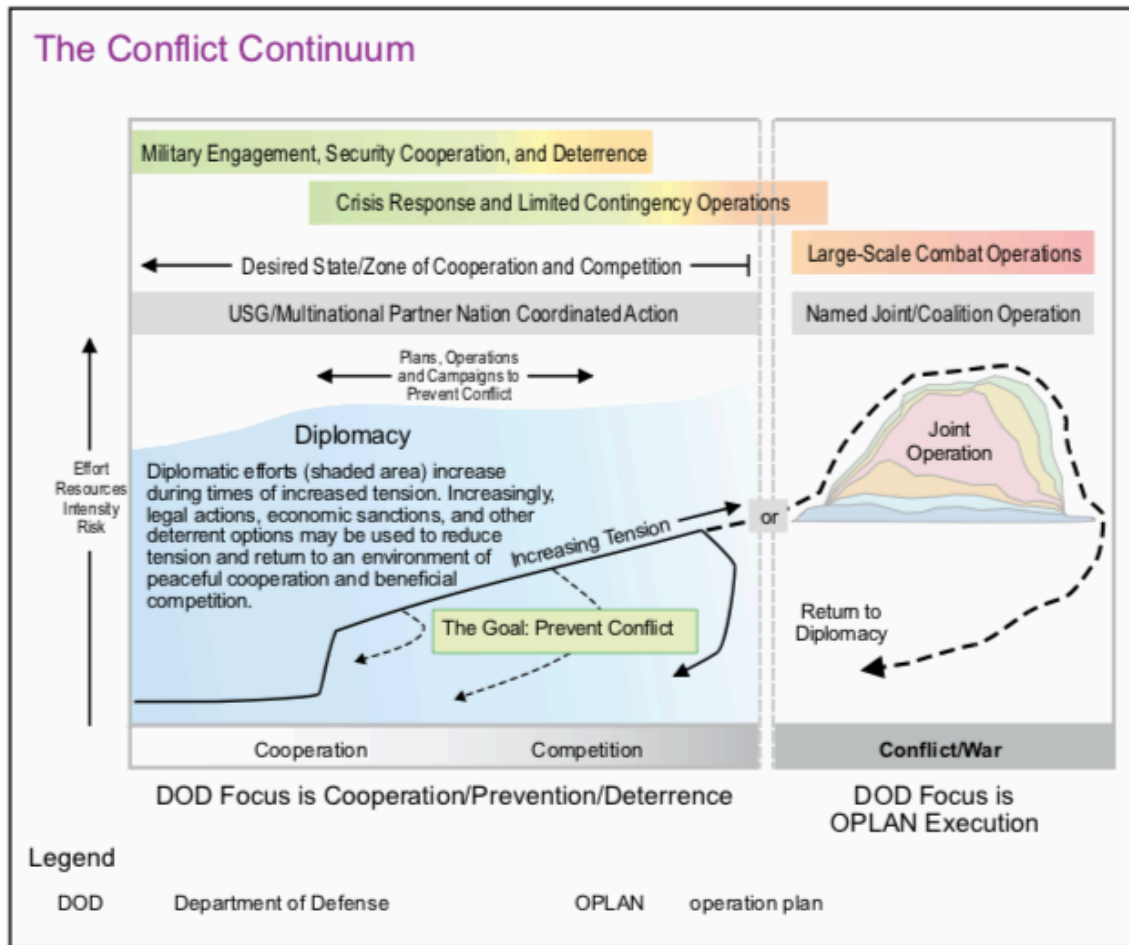
R&D: Research and Development

RMA: Revolution in Military Affairs

ROMO: Range of Military Operations

WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction

B. Range of Military Operations



C. “Great Deal” or “Quite a Lot” of Confidence in an Institution

Institution	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
Military	66%	82%	74%	69%	82%	78%	76%	72%	72%
President	48%	55%	44%	25%	51%	35%	36%	33%	32%
Congress	26%	29%	22%	14%	17%	12%	10%	8%	12%
Supreme Court	50%	47%	41%	34%	39%	37%	34%	32%	40%
Criminal Justice System	22%	29%	26%	19%	28%	28%	28%	23%	27%
Church	60%	50%	53%	46%	52%	48%	48%	42%	41%

Source: Author’s portrayal of “Confidence in Institutions,” Gallup News Poll, Online:
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/Confidence-Institutions.aspx>

Resume: This paper examines the bond between the American people and the military of Clausewitz' Trinity, which is the basis for civil-military relations. The civ-mil gap is being widened by the use of an All-Volunteer Force, engagement in limited war, and reliance of technology. Each variable, in turn, increases the need for the others, which perpetuates the civ-mil divide.

Key Words: United States, Civil-Military Relations, Clausewitz, Huntington, Janowitz, All-Volunteer Force, Limited War, Remote Warfare