

Book Reviews

American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era¹

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Obviously, the real world is one of blends, irrationalities, and incongruities: actual personalities, institutions, and beliefs do not fit into neat logical categories. Yet neat logical categories are necessary if man is to think profitably about the real world in which he lives and to derive from it lessons for broader application and use.²

How does one write for the Soldier-scholar? Pure theory tends to impractical application; pure practice to a morass of disjointed theory. In *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, editors Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider pursue more theory than practice as they seek to “amplify . . . the remarkable contribution that Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Soldier and the State* . . . has made, and continues to make, to the study of civil-military relations.”³ The book succeeds as an academic text, blending a dozen articles from multiple disciplines into a pedagogically thorough perspective on Huntington’s classic. Somewhere between the classroom door and the chambers of Congress, however, the neatly packaged conclusions fall short of clear guidance for practitioners grappling with a new century’s realities. Despite these flaws and tedious prose, with effort the careful professional can extract lessons for improving both academically as a scholar and in the practice of civil-military relations.

To understand *American Civil-Military Relations*, one must first comprehend the work it celebrates. In 1957, Samuel Huntington advanced a bold theory of civilian-military interaction.⁴ Writing during the Cold War’s infancy, he sought to answer how a liberal democratic state could sustain the large force required to win that conflict, while remaining both militarily effective and democratically appropriate.⁵ Huntington proposed a model comprised of interdependent elements, bound together by conflicting

imperatives and methods of control.⁶ The model described civilian and military leaders as operating within different cultures, interacting with each other as well as society.⁷ He predicted continuing tension⁸ in those relationships, as liberal⁹ aspirations of American civil leaders and society clashed with the conservative realist mindset of a professional officer corps.¹⁰ Paradoxically, Huntington concluded that to preserve democracy, society should grant the military substantial autonomy in managing violence (its peculiar professional skill), in exchange for submission to civilian direction.¹¹ For his theories, critics excoriated

⁶ See HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 2, at 80–97; Nielsen & Snider, *supra* note 4, at 2–4.

⁷ See HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 2, at 143–62; Nielsen & Snider, *supra* note 4, at 4–6.

⁸ See HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 2, at 143–62; see also Michael C. Desch, *Hartz, Huntington, and the Liberal Tradition in America*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 91, 92, 108.

⁹ See Desch, *supra* note 8, at 93 (arguing that “Liberal,” as used by Huntington, referred not to the left of the American political spectrum, but rather to a “political system or set of values based on a combination of individual freedom, equality of opportunity, free markets, and political representativeness”).

¹⁰ See HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 2, at 59–79, 143–62, 456–66; Desch, *supra* note 8, at 101 (arguing similarly that “conservative Realism,” as used by Huntington, referred not to the modern American political spectrum’s right, but rather a distinct ideology). The ideology is characterized by

. . . a number of distinct tenets: the conviction that violence is a permanent feature of international relations; the assumption of the primacy of the state in international relations; a discounting of intangible factors such as intentions and ideology in favor of a focus on tangible things such as material capabilities; and reluctance to commit military force and to wage war in all save the most pressing circumstances, but then a willingness to do so without limitation of the means employed.

Desch, *supra* note 8, at 101. Desch contrasted Huntington’s view of absolutist Liberalism, which took opposite views on nearly all these tenets. See *id.* at 101–02.

¹¹ Huntington argued that a society which pursued a military democratically and ideologically representative of its citizenry did so at the risk of politicizing and thereby undermining officer professionalism and effectiveness. See HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 2, at 456–66. Three years later, the sociologist Morris Janowitz countered in an equally seminal work that the ideal citizen-soldier should aspire to civic republican values, which produce effective combat leaders firmly committed to democracy; society should therefore actively manage the military to inculcate these values. See MORRIS JANOWITZ, *THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER: A SOCIAL AND*

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¹ AMERICAN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: THE SOLDIER AND THE STATE IN A NEW ERA (Suzanne C. Nielsen & Don M. Snider eds., 2009) [hereinafter AM. CIV.-MIL. REL.].

² SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON, *THE SOLDIER AND THE STATE: THE THEORY AND POLITICS OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS*, at vii (1957).

³ Suzanne C. Nielsen & Don M. Snider, *Acknowledgements* to AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at xvii.

⁴ See Suzanne C. Nielsen & Don M. Snider, *Introduction* to AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 1; see generally HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 2.

⁵ See HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 2, at 80–97, 456–66; Nielsen & Snider, *supra* note 4, at 1.

Huntington as overly militant, students staged protests during his lectures, and Harvard fired him.¹² His work endured though, and is now considered a foundational classic in the genre of civil-military relations¹³ and a milestone in developing the American officer corps' self-conception as a profession.¹⁴

Fifty years later, a group of scholars gathered at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York¹⁵ to create a text illuminating *The Soldier and the State's* contributions for a new generation of students.¹⁶ *American Civil-Military Relations* is the result.¹⁷ The contents include twelve articles by civilian and military writers in the fields of political science, sociology, and history.¹⁸ Editors Suzanne Nielsen (current) and Don Snider (emeritus), faculty members at West Point, added an introductory chapter,¹⁹ a comprehensive index,²⁰ and a wealth of endnotes²¹ for future reference and research. Nielsen and Snider also distill the book in a final chapter,²² cataloging nine conclusions—among them that Huntington's model remains relevant despite the inseparable nature of political and military affairs,²³ and that the military should expand its

conceptualization of profession both in membership and required expertise.²⁴

American Civil-Military Relations will appeal most to its core audience: the instructor or student in political science or sociology at the graduate or advanced undergraduate level. Broad surveys by established civilian scholars such Michael Desch (path of Liberalism),²⁵ Richard Betts (evolutions in government),²⁶ Peter Feaver (development of methodology, with student co-author Erika Seeler),²⁷ and Richard Kohn (military and civilian behaviors),²⁸ place Huntington's work in context and should foster vigorous class debates. Likewise, focus pieces by active duty U.S. Army officers Matthew Moten (dysfunctional relation portrait),²⁹ Christopher Gibson (civil-military partnership),³⁰ Richard Lacquement (military professional expertise, with co-author Nadia Schadlow, Ph.D.),³¹ and Darrell Driver (military mindset)³² each challenge aspects of Huntington's model.

The work's broadest academic appeal, though, lies in its rich variety of approaches to scholarly writing. Feaver and Seeler's dissection of methodology,³³ Desch's stalking of a political theory's arc,³⁴ and Driver's quantitative modeling of conservative realism³⁵ each showcase techniques of

POLITICAL PORTRAIT (1960). For a good summary of the influence of these two works, see Peter D. Feaver & Erika Seeler, *Before and After Huntington: The Methodological Maturing of Civil-Military Studies*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 72, 85–89.

¹² Robert D. Kaplan, *Looking the World in the Eye*, ATLANTIC MONTHLY, Dec. 2001, at 68, 70–72 (interview with Huntington). Huntington published *The Soldier and the State* while an assistant professor of government at Harvard. The book was initially dismissed as propagandist by skeptical academics, and so infuriated his colleagues that they voted to deny him tenure two years later. Forced to leave, he joined the faculty at the University of Chicago. In 1962, Harvard realized its mistake and lured him back as a tenured full professor. Students on campus staged protests during his classes, so his graduate students organized details to patrol the halls so lectures could proceed. Huntington continued teaching at Harvard for the next four decades, twice chairing the same department that once rejected him. *See id.* at 71–76.

¹³ *See, e.g.*, Feaver & Seeler, *supra* note 11, at 89–90 (concluding that *The Soldier and the State* merits status as a political science classic due to its methodological advances as well as its theories).

¹⁴ *See* Nielsen & Snider, *supra* note 4, at 6–7.

¹⁵ The setting was *apropos*: *The Soldier and the State* famously concluded by referring to the Academy as “a gray island in a many colored sea, a bit of Sparta in the midst of Babylon[.]” in contrasting its military values to prevailing national sentiments of Liberalism. HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 2, at 464–66.

¹⁶ *See* Nielsen & Snider, *supra* note 3, at xvii–xviii.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *See Contributors* to AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 391.

¹⁹ *See* Nielsen & Snider, *supra* note 4, at 1.

²⁰ *See Index* to AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 399.

²¹ *See Notes* to AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 309.

²² *See* Suzanne C. Nielsen & Don M. Snider, *Conclusion* to AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 290, 291.

²³ *See id.* at 290–93.

²⁴ *See id.* at 295–301.

²⁵ Desch, *supra* note 8, at 91.

²⁶ Richard K. Betts, *Are Civil-Military Relations Still a Problem*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 11.

²⁷ Feaver & Seeler, *supra* note 11, at 72.

²⁸ Richard H. Kohn, *Building Trust: Civil-Military Behaviors for Effective National Security*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 264.

²⁹ Matthew Moten, *A Broken Dialogue: Rumsfeld, Shinseki, and Civil-Military Tension*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 42.

³⁰ Christopher P. Gibson, *Enhancing National Security and Civilian Control of the Military: A Madisonian Approach*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 239.

³¹ Nadia Schadlow & Richard A. Lacquement Jr., *Winning Wars, Not Just Battles: Expanding the Military Profession to Incorporate Stability Operations*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL. *supra* note 1, at 112.

³² Darrell W. Driver, *The Military Mind: A Reassessment of the Ideological Roots of American Military Professionalism*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 172.

³³ *See* Feaver & Seeler, *supra* note 11, at 72. Co-authored by a graduate student, this exquisite piece merits close examination by aspiring professional writers, both for adroitly navigating a large body of theoretical literature, and cleverly discerning that Huntington's methods (rigor, ecumenism, and pragmatism) presaged a larger shift in social science research that may outlive his theory.

³⁴ *See* Desch, *supra* note 8, at 91. For those addressing charged debates or seeking broader meaning in disparate fact patterns, this article deftly separates policy from theory, tracking Liberal absolutist traditions across several presidential administrations from opposing political parties and arguing convincingly while controversially that Liberalism remains a dominant and surprisingly bipartisan movement.

³⁵ *See* Driver, *supra* note 32, at 172. This short survey report strikes an empirical blow to Huntington's stereotype of military conservatism through a simple sorting exercise. *But see* Desch, *supra* note 8, at n.64 and

academic persuasion. Conversely (perhaps unintentionally), some chapters fall short of ideal, and may profitably be studied as examples of how *not* to plead a case. Risa Brooks's abrupt conclusion,³⁶ Williamson Murray's generic call to action,³⁷ and even the editors' introductory illogical leap³⁸ all show that the best writers sometimes falter.

Thus, *American Civil-Military Relations* provides the greatest benefits to those in an academic context, critiquing Huntington's model and teaching scholarly writing techniques. At some point, though, the student must leave the classroom for the wider world. It is here that the book fails to reach a larger practice-oriented audience. In fairness, some chapters suggest useful expansions to the military profession's boundaries, or propose thoughtful distinctions between types of political behaviors; these merit a close look. However, reliance on inaccurate historical evidence and failure to explore future trends both counsel that readers proceed with caution.

Military members at all levels may profit from two chapters challenging traditional professional boundaries. Schadlow and Lacquement argue that, given the wide variety of unconventional and nonkinetic operations, the military professional's peculiar expertise must expand beyond managing violence to succeed long-term.³⁹ Further, David Segal and Karen De Angelis propose expanding the concept of a military profession to include reservists, senior noncommissioned officers, and perhaps even civilian and contractor employees, who now share far more responsibility, corporateness, and expertise than in Huntington's day.⁴⁰ These areas constantly evolve:

accompanying text (citing opposing study). While his understanding of conservatism differs from Desch's (quoted at note 8 *supra*), Driver's article provides an elegant template for statistical analysis of human elements, and of brevity in persuasion.

³⁶ See Risa A. Brooks, *Militaries and Political Activity in Democracies*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 213, 237. In six rapid-fire lines and with little explanation, the article takes an unexpectedly strident position, abandoning twenty-five preceding pages that developed a more nuanced understanding of political behavior.

³⁷ Compare Williamson Murray, *Professionalism and Professional Military Education in the Twenty-First Century*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 133 (nonspecific exhortation to seek professional education), with Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Bovarnick, *Read Any Good (Professional) Books Lately?: A Suggested Professional Reading Program for Judge Advocates*, 204 MIL. L. REV. 260 (2010) (detailed advice on encouraging and pursuing professional reading, with recommended techniques and beginning book lists).

³⁸ See Nielsen & Snider, *supra* note 4, at 2–7. Discussion of Huntington's model jumped without warning from elements to impacts, leaving the reader to interpolate the crucial middle steps of his logic. Those not steeped in the jargon may struggle to connect the dots, or to see the articles introduced in the context of a broader debate.

³⁹ See Schadlow & Lacquement, *supra* note 31, at 112.

⁴⁰ See David R. Segal & Karin De Angelis, *Changing Conceptions of the Military as a Profession*, in AMERICAN CIVILIAN MILITARY RELATIONS, *supra* note 1, at 194.

provincial reconstruction teams,⁴¹ new fiscal authorities,⁴² and composite units⁴³ all exemplify recent shifts towards increased professional membership and scope.

In addition, military and civilian leaders, as well as their respective staffs, should ponder any of four chapters on appropriate and effective political behaviors. Moten's piece—the gem of the bunch—intimately explores the disintegration of civil-military relations (or sadly, even civil speech) between then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and General (GEN) Eric Shinseki. The real treasure lies in his “what-if” analysis, which emphasizes that personalities play an underappreciated role in Huntington's theoretical model. Also, though not an attorney, James Burk ponders the justification for finding culpability when following illegal orders, relevant both to the Law of War and moral principles of delegation and accountability.⁴⁴ Lastly, the Brooks⁴⁵ and Kohn⁴⁶ articles each propose categories of political behavior and evaluate their impacts. While their conclusions are debatable,⁴⁷ the defining and weighing of such categories and impacts is perhaps this book's greatest theoretical *and* practical contribution.⁴⁸

⁴¹ See, e.g., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams Fact Sheet*, U.S. EMBASSY, BAGHDAD, IRAQ (Sept. 15, 2009), http://iraq.usembassy.gov/iraq_prt/provincial-reconstruction-teams-fact-sheet.html (describing PRTs in Iraq, a combined military and civilian initiative to promote stability and development).

⁴² See, e.g., U.S. DEP'T. OF DEFENSE, REG. 7000-14.R, DOD FIN. MGMT. REG. vol. 12, ch. 27, para. 270104 (Jan. 2009) (listing uses for which newly appropriated Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds “may be used to assist the Iraqi or Afghan people” including water and sanitation, food production, agriculture/irrigation, and electricity generation and transportation).

⁴³ See, e.g., *Units*, 116TH AIR CONTROL WING, <http://www.116acw.acc.af.mil/units/index.asp> (last visited Sept. 14, 2010) (describing the 116th ACW, a Total Force Wing comprised of nine distinct categories of personnel).

⁴⁴ See James Burk, *Responsible Obedience by Military Professionals: The Discretion to Do What Is Wrong*, in AM. CIV.-MIL. REL., *supra* note 1, at 149 (arguing that autonomy implies accountability, not blind obedience).

⁴⁵ See Brooks, *supra* note 36, at 218–24 (with chart at 219). The five categories are public appeals, grandstanding, politicking, alliance building, and shoulder tapping. *Id.*

⁴⁶ See Kohn, *supra* note 28, at 274–89 (discussing numerous behaviors by both military and civilian leaders that inspire trust, as well as pressures to resist).

⁴⁷ For instance, Brooks and Kohn take strong positions that almost any political behavior by military officials threatens democracy. See Brooks, *supra* note 36, and accompanying text; Kohn, *supra* note 28, at 274–84. However, Nielsen & Snider conclude Huntington was wrong: it is impossible to separate political activity from military action, particularly at the highest levels. See Nielsen & Snider, *supra* note 22, at 290–93; see also MARK PERRY, *FOUR STARS* (1989) (listing myriad political activities intertwined with military action by the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1945–86); Betts, *supra* note 26, at 11 (arguing that military political activity may look messy but is part of American democracy and poses little threat). *American Civil-Military Relations* leaves this theory-practice disconnect open for debate.

⁴⁸ Hence the introductory quote to this review. See *supra* note 2 and accompanying text. Ethics officials, legislative liaisons, and civil-military relations specialists might fruitfully compare these categories with current guidance on political activities by military personnel, e.g., U.S. DEP'T OF

Sadly, this review does end not on that happy note. Aside from dense prose, two major flaws should serve as warnings to practitioners relying on *American Civil Military Relations*. First, the historian-reader might keep the pitchfork handy, as some articles rely on ignored, incomplete, or inaccurate understandings of past events. For example, to prevent domination by another Rumsfeld, Gibson proposes elevating the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to a “Commanding General” (CG) position, giving this CG plenary authority over combatant commands, and assuring the CG access to the President as equal as that of the Secretary of Defense.⁴⁹ Such a position sounds suspiciously like that occupied by GEN Maxwell Taylor under President Kennedy in the 1960s, which his fellow JCS members claimed Taylor often used to constrict information flowing to the President.⁵⁰ To borrow Eliot Cohen’s phrase, the proposal resolves one “unequal dialogue”⁵¹ by creating another.⁵²

In addition, Brooks classifies the 2003 congressional testimony by Army Chief of Staff GEN Eric Shinseki as political behavior.⁵³ While she later demurs in her analysis,⁵⁴ she ultimately concludes in general that such political behavior is destructive to democracy.⁵⁵ In reality, Moten’s detailed review of hearing transcripts and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) records suggest that GEN Shinseki showed constraint, agreed with known CENTCOM estimates, and testified under oath before Congress—as the law requires.⁵⁶

Even Kohn’s work does not escape criticism. Addressing how military leaders must avoid civilian

manipulation, he cites the departing words of GEN Matthew Ridgway, whom he praised as providing a model exemplar of “professional behavior” in trying circumstances, after he was “not renewed” as Army Chief of Staff by President Eisenhower.⁵⁷ Kohn next contrasts military resignation or retirement, solely for political effect, as wholly unprofessional as “there is no tradition of resignation of any kind in the American military.”⁵⁸ However, at least three accounts suggest Ridgway deliberately resigned or retired early for political effect, refusing to carry out policies he deemed dangerous.⁵⁹ Those well-versed in history may spot other miscues, but these three doubtful arguments caution against relying too heavily on this book.

Finally, this work neglects a substantial opportunity to look toward the future. Though the subtitle reads, “in the New Era[.]” most articles remain retrospective, glancing only briefly to modern challenges.⁶⁰ They miss the chance to address a generation of all-volunteer officers, during a steady decrease in congressional military representation;⁶¹ the proliferation of non-state threats and rising prominence of counterinsurgency doctrine;⁶² increased domestic military operations such as disaster relief; the post-Cold War era; information transparency and availability; and increased judicial scrutiny of government action.

In summary, if you are interested in political science or military sociology, I recommend this book. If you are

DEFENSE DIR. 1344.10, POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES (Feb. 19, 2008).

⁴⁹ See Gibson, *supra* note 30, at 239.

⁵⁰ See PERRY, *supra* note 47, at 125–30. For instance, Perry quotes General Curtis LeMay, then U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, as saying, “[w]e in the military felt we were not in the decision-making process at all . . . [the JCS] did not agree with Taylor most of the time, so we felt that the president [sic] was not getting . . . unfiltered military advice.” *Id.* at 127 (internal citations omitted).

⁵¹ See ELIOT COHEN, *SUPREME COMMAND: SOLDIERS, STATESMEN, AND LEADERSHIP IN WARTIME*, at 209 (2002).

⁵² Moreover, elevating the Commanding General to cabinet-level rank, as Gibson proposes, begs the question of where this General would fall in the line of succession to the Presidency—a tangible and weighty potential diminishing of civilian control.

⁵³ Compare Brooks, *supra* note 36, at 214, with Moten, *supra* note 29, at 54–56 (recounting in detail, that after much grilling, GEN Shinseki grudgingly offered a higher troop estimate for Iraq than the prevailing Bush administration number).

⁵⁴ See Brooks, *supra* note 36, at 230–31 (finding Shinseki’s behavior did not fit neatly into her categorization scheme, but his obligation to speak out was uncertain—the fact that history later proved him right overshadowed the question of propriety).

⁵⁵ See *id.* at 236–39.

⁵⁶ See Moten, *supra* note 29, at 54–71.

⁵⁷ See Kohn, *supra* note 28, at 280–81 (applauding Ridgway’s 1955 valedictory address).

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ See PERRY, *supra* note 47, at 58–64 (citing Eisenhower’s Staff Secretary and Defense Liaison Officer, (later GEN) Andrew J. Goodpaster, as recollecting that the President threatened the JCS that if they did not agree with his policies, they could leave—Perry ultimately concluded that Ridgway deliberately retired early as a way of resigning in protest); accord RUSSELL F. WEIGLEY, *HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY* 521–22 (enlarged ed. 1984) (suggesting Ridgway and other senior generals resigned to protest Eisenhower’s policies) and ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, *A THOUSAND DAYS: JOHN F. KENNEDY IN THE WHITE HOUSE*, at 310 (2002 ed.) (winner of the Pulitzer Prize, this memoir by a noted historian observed that GEN Ridgway and two other senior Army generals purposefully resigned to “carry their fight to the public”). A year after resigning/retiring, Ridgway published a book questioning Eisenhower’s policies. See HAROLD H. MARTIN, *SOLDIER: THE MEMOIRS OF MATTHEW B. RIDGWAY* (1956).

⁶⁰ Notable exceptions include the articles by Schadow & Lacquement, *supra* note 31, and Segal & De Angelis, *supra* note 40. See notes 40–43 and accompanying text *supra*.

⁶¹ See JENNIFER E. MANNING, *CONG. RESEARCH SERV., R40086, MEMBERSHIP OF THE 111TH CONGRESS: A PROFILE*, at 9–10 (2010) (noting continued decline in percentage of congressional members with prior military service).

⁶² For instance, the new Counterinsurgency Field Manual departs substantially from the tenets Desch identifies as central to Huntington’s concept of conservative military Realism. Compare Desch, *supra* note 8, at 101 (block quotation above), with U.S. ARMY FIELD MANUAL 3-24, COUNTERINSURGENCY paras. 1.2 to 1.4, 5.11 to 5.13, and appx. D (Dec. 2006) (noting the prevalence of non-state threats, counseling that both intangible and tangible approaches must be pursued, and embracing several legal and practical restrictions on means in warfare).

studying political science at West Point or another military academy, it is a must read. However, if you are a practitioner, I recommend cautious sampling: the second

coming of a bold new Sam Huntington must wait for another day.