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Small Wars & Insurgencies

VOLUME 26

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Notes on Contributors

ARTICLES

COIN: A study of strategic illusion

AMITAI ETZIONI

COIN fights: A response to Etzioni

JOHN A. NAGL

Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, and the Taliban of Afghanistan: 'Puritanical reform' as a 'revolutionary war' program

SHIVAN MAHENDRARAJAH

Counterinsurgency and the limits of state-building: An analysis of Colombia's policy of territorial consolidation, 2006-2012

JORGE E. DELGADO

Challenges in building partner capacity: Civil-military relations in the United States and new democracies

THOMAS BRUNEAU

Past failures and future problems: the psychology of irregular war

PHIL REYNOLDS

Intelligence and intelligence operations in Romanian anti-partisan warfare, 1944-1958

ANDREI MIROIU

Transnational networks of insurgency and crime: explaining the spread of commercial insurgencies beyond state borders

OSCAR PALMA

Capacity and competence: full-spectrum counterinsurgency in the Horn of Africa

PAUL F. ROTSCHE

Army of darkness: The jihadist training system in Pakistan and Afghanistan, 1996-2001

SEAN M. MALONEY

ISIL: insurgent strategies for statehood, and the challenge for security studies

NORIYUKI KAMAGIRI

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Challenges in building partner capacity: Civil–military relations in the United States and new democracies

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The main emphasis in US security assistance is ‘building partner capacity’. To understand prospects for building capacity implies knowledge of the security sector, including the armed forces and also national police and intelligence agencies. The scholarly sub-discipline that should be useful for analysis of a nation’s use of armed forces is civil–military relations as it ostensibly directs attention to when and how civilians choose to utilize their nation’s armed forces. The goal in this article is to further refine the field of civil–military relations by focusing attention on two main concepts – democratic civilian control and strategy – and discussing their relevance in the context of building partner capacity.

Keywords: Afghanistan; Clausewitz; Iraq; civil–military relations; private security contractors; partner capacity; ROTC program

Introduction

In his 2010 *National Security Strategy*, President Barack Obama stated that ‘Our military will continue strengthening its capacity to partner with foreign counterparts, train and assist security forces, and pursue military-to-military ties with a broad range of governments.’¹ On 5 January 2012, President Obama proclaimed defense strategic guidance that emphasizes building partner capacity. As a *Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report* states, ‘The new guidance makes extensive use of the word “partnership” calling repeatedly for continued efforts to work with, and build the capacity of, U.S. allies and partners.’² The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has conducted at least two studies on the capability of various agencies in the US government to build partner capacity, and recommends best practices to achieve this goal.³ There have been hearings on this topic at the Committee on Armed Services, US House of Representatives.⁴ The 2014 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, released on 4 March 2014, uses the term partner or partnership 115 times, plus another 11 referring to building capacity in these partners or partnerships.⁵ Towards this end, of building

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partner capacity, already in fiscal year 2012 the US government appropriated more than \$529 million for a dozen programs designed to achieve this overall goal.⁶

However, while several official documents, congressional hearings, and the GAO reports invoke the mantra of 'building partner capacity', and analyze the requirements for the US government to implement it, the author has found nothing on the nature of civil–military relations and national security and defense in the partner countries that would facilitate or impede the US efforts. This information could be particularly important for the officers and enlisted personnel working in the Security Cooperation Offices in the combatant commands and in-country, who have primary responsibility to implement programs to build partner capacity.⁷

The argument in this article is that the situation of civil–military relations in the United States is unique, and the fundamental core of this uniqueness is unquestioned civilian control; meanwhile, in the vast majority of new democracies civilian control is problematic, and these countries lack the institutional bases for its effective exercise. To analyze this issue the author will use the concepts of democratic civilian control and strategy. A key element of capacity building is strategy formulation. However, strategy formulation is not the same as implementation. To assess the ability of the United States to implement a strategy, the author will look at the most important recent experience of the United States – the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq – and, drawing on several credible sources, conclude that there was no strategy. To illustrate the importance of this gap, the author will then examine the growth of the private security companies, and their negative impact on the war effort.⁸

This article is possible now as authoritative accounts have recently been published in the United States that demonstrate what is really involved in decisions on the use of the armed forces by this country. The author draws on his experience since 1974 in conducting seminars and research on civil–military relations in new democracies on four continents.

The experience of the United States

To understand contemporary US civil–military relations one must focus initially on the political institutions developed over time to exercise democratic civilian control. With the founding of the American republic at the end of the eighteenth century there was indeed concern about establishing and guaranteeing democratic civilian control of the armed forces, largely based on the colonial experience. This experience included the British legacy with a standing army and the actions of a militia turned revolutionary army under the leadership of General George Washington. Consequently, there is extensive guidance regarding civil–military relations in the very succinct US Constitution of 1787. Eleven of the eighteen separate paragraphs specifying the powers of the Congress, in Article I, deal with the armed forces and security.⁹ Between the late eighteenth century and

today the United States has created a vast array of institutions, which in all cases are directed by civilians, to ensure the control of the armed forces. As President Obama invoked as necessary when he relieved General McChrystal of command in Afghanistan, 'strict adherence to the military chain of command and respect for civilian control over that chain of command'.¹⁰

Among the most basic institutions for controlling the armed forces in the United States are those concerning budgets, promotions, and professional military education. That is, the trinity of money, careers, and culture. Together they constitute the fundamental elements of democratic civilian control of the armed forces as routinely practiced in the United States.¹¹

The main institutional components of the *budget* process include, in the executive, both the Office of Management and Budget and agencies within the Department of Defense. In the Congress they include the authorizing and appropriating committees of both houses. There is extensive oversight conducted by the executive with inspectors general and by Congress with oversight committees, the GAO, Congressional Budget Office, CRS, and specialized inspectors general such as the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

The three military services have responsibility for recruiting, organizing, training, and equipping the military. Military *promotions* begin with boards of military personnel, but the recommended promotions are then vetted by the military and civilian leadership within the Department of Defense, passed on to the President, and finally approved by the US Senate. In sum, the responsibility for promotions is shared among the military services themselves, the executive, and the Congress. The 'precepts', which define the numbers and priorities for the military promotion boards, are stipulated by the civilian service secretaries of the separate services. These secretaries, down to the level of assistant secretaries, are nominated by the President and approved, or not, by the Senate.

Military *education* is also a shared responsibility, but ultimately civilians decide on everything. Each branch of the military, to include the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marine, has service academies, at Annapolis, Colorado Springs, West Point, New London, and Kings' Point as well as intermediate and senior staff or war colleges. Funding is provided in the same manner as discussed above, and the Congress can impose, as it did in the Goldwater–Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, new priorities in military education; in this specific case, joint professional military education (JPME). The individual members of Congress nominate the individuals who will attend the three service academies, which ensures both regional and political diversity. The service academy degrees are accredited by regional accreditation bodies, which are composed overwhelmingly of civilian academics. Only a minority of officers, less than 20%, attend the service academies. A majority of commissioned officers enter through the Reserve Officer Training Program (ROTC). The ROTC program is funded by way of scholarships from the US government that enable civilian institutions to

support the education of these future officers. And, even if the executive branch manages education at the academies, and the ROTC program, no individual becomes an officer, or increases in rank without the advice and consent of the US Senate.

In short, following from the basis set forth in the US Constitution of 1787, the United States has developed over the past 227 years a comprehensive set of institutions ensuring democratic civilian control that are ingrained in the thinking of the US military, and all of civil society, and foremost in the political decision-makers. The US media, think tanks, and non-governmental organizations are extremely active in highlighting any real or imagined independence of the military.

That the US population is aware of civilian control is very clear in an October 2011 Pew Research Center public opinion survey, which shows that whereas the military is the most highly regarded institution in the United States, which the study states is the only institution in the US survey showing an increase in confidence since the beginning of their surveys in the 1970s, the population doesn't hold the military responsible for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The public makes a sharp distinction in its view of military service members and the wars they have been fighting. More than nine-in-ten express pride in the troops and three-quarters say they thanked someone in the military. But, a 45% plurality says neither of the post-9/11 wars has been worth the cost and only a quarter say they are following news of the wars closely. And, half of the public say the wars have made little difference in their lives.¹²

The results of the survey validate that civilians, and not the military, make the decisions on the use of force in the United States.

In late 2013 and early 2014 two authoritative books were published which provide tremendous insights into decision-making in national security and defense in the United States, and on civil-military relations. Both of them make it abundantly clear that democratic civilian control, at the level of the executive and the Congress, is not at question in the United States. For example, in his *Days of Fire: Bush and Cheney in the White House*, Peter Baker, in discussing 'the surge' in Iraq states: 'Within weeks, the president who had boasted of deferring to the military had swept aside the leaders of the war effort.'¹³ Note that the term Baker uses is 'deferring,' which suggests that it was the President's choice to pay attention to military advice, or not. Robert Gates, in explaining why he relieved General McKiernan, Commander in Afghanistan, which was the first time a wartime commander had been relieved since President Truman fired General Douglas MacArthur, states: 'I hope that the McKiernan episode will contribute to reestablishing accountability for senior officers for wartime performance, including the precedent that personal misconduct or serious mistakes need not be required for relief.'¹⁴ The Secretary of Defense fired a senior four star general not because of any particular flaw or mistake, but because the civilian Secretary had lost confidence in the general's ability to conduct the war. Or, in Gates's discussing his developing a sense of the military's perspectives regarding 'Don't

ask, Don't tell', he states: 'the military never gets a "vote" on what it must do, and I was not advocating anything like a plebiscite.'¹⁵ And, if there remains any doubt, Gates elaborates at length demonstrating that civilian control, in this case exercised by two very different presidents, is simply not a question in the United States:

At the end of 2006, Bush overruled the field commander, the chairman and all the Joint Chiefs, and the Middle East and Central Asia regional (Centcom) commander in ordering the surge. He replaced the secretary of defense, the Centcom commander, and the field commander essentially at the same time. The war in Iraq was going badly, and he acted courageously and boldly to change course. Obama similarly acted courageously and boldly at the end of 2009 when he ordered the Afghan surge, the impetus for which came from the military. In so doing, Obama overruled the policy and domestic political concerns of his vice president and virtually all of the senior White House staff. Then, contrary to the advice of his generals, he imposed timelines to avoid the impression (and potential reality) of endless war and to sustain political support in Congress and among the public. Both presidents were willing (at least on my watch) to replace commanders they thought were not succeeding.¹⁶

In sum, based on a vast array of institutions evolving since the founding of the American republic more than two centuries ago, a culture has developed in this country in which civilians occupy all the key positions in all issues of governance, including national security and defense, and there is a large cadre of civilians who are prepared and totally comfortable in making decisions in national security and defense. Consequently, civilian control of the military and other security forces in the United States is not an issue. Lest there be any doubt on these points, since both Baker and Gates are civilians, the words of Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr, who was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, provide further support: 'In other words, like all other important decisions, those made about the nation's defense are fundamentally political. In any area where we spend such a vast amount of the common treasure, the questions are necessarily political.'¹⁷ I think it is significant that Admiral Crowe calls attention to the scale of funds committed to defense in the United States. Conceivably, if the scale of investment were very low, as we shall see below in most new democracies, it is possible (but I doubt it) that the unambiguity of civilian control in the United States would not be so clear. As it is, large sectors of the US economy, polity, and society have concrete interests in defense, and in civil-military relations. A great many of the 535 members of the US Congress are interested since they either have military bases in their districts, and/or, defense contractors are located in their districts. The contractors are very active in lobbying for and bidding on lucrative contracts, and more generally promoting a focus on issues on national security and defense. And, even if there is an all-volunteer force, resulting in only 0.5% of the population in the armed forces, there are large and active associations of retired service personnel and lobbying groups promoting interest in issues concerning the armed forces.¹⁸ In sum, national security and defense are important issues for important sectors. What is not in question is civilian control of the armed forces.¹⁹

The challenge to establish democratic civilian control in new democracies

The challenge of asserting democratic civilian control over the armed forces and security forces in new democracies is ongoing, and not only for the extreme cases of military coups, if we but recall the admonition of Samuel E. Finer in his classic *The Man on Horseback* when he states, 'Instead of asking why the military engage in politics, we ought surely ask why they ever do otherwise. For at first sight the political advantages of the military *vis-à-vis* other and civilian groupings are overwhelming. The military possess vastly superior organization. And, they possess *arms*.'²⁰ There are indeed coups including Thailand in 2006, Honduras in 2009, Mali in 2012, Egypt, Eritrea, and Central African Republic in 2013, and the takeover of Russia by Vladimir Putin and the FSB since 2000.²¹

The challenge of asserting democratic civilian control over the armed forces, and the security forces more generally, in new democracies is very difficult. That this is a relevant issue can be understood from two initial observations. First, in 1974 there were a maximum of 30 democracies.²² In 2012 according to Freedom House, there were 118 electoral democracies out of 195 countries, or 61%.²³ Second, the SIPRI Yearbook on Military Expenditure has data on 172 countries. If the total number of countries today is 195, this means that only 23 lack militaries. Only three of which (Costa Rica, Haiti, and Panama) might be considered important.²⁴ In short, most countries today are considered democracies, and the overwhelming majority of them have armed forces and other security forces.

The challenge of asserting control over the armed forces and other security institutions is recognized as important in democratic transitions and consolidation, and is the focus of a reasonable body of good analytical literature. Based on this literature, and our own experience in new democracies on four continents beginning with the Portuguese transition to democracy in 1974, we emphasize in our work the creation of institutions and the slowly evolving cultural support for these institutions. There are at least three general reasons why developing institutions and asserting control over the armed forces is a major challenge in these approximately 88 (118 less 30) new democracies.²⁵

First, as Philippe Schmitter, among others, demonstrates, transitions to and consolidation of democracy, even those in which the armed forces were not *the* government, involves a pact. Transitions do not just happen. They are negotiated between and among elements that hope to gain democratic control through elections and those who have control over the means of violence; in most cases, the armed forces.²⁶ Resulting from the pacts, agreements, understandings, or similar formal or informal results of negotiations is a series of prerogatives that the armed forces retain, even as a country consolidates its democracy. This topic has been the productive focus in Alfred Stepan's work on South America, and the concept of prerogatives has also been used in a recent study by the author and a team focused on Egypt, Pakistan, and Turkey.²⁷ Very simply, armed forces, even those that are supposedly beaten and without credibility, as was the case in Argentina after the Malvinas fiasco in 1982, are able to negotiate a series of

prerogatives which obviate control by democratically elected civilians over sectors of economy, society, and specifically the armed forces. These may include a continuing role in economic areas such as civil aviation (Brazil), logging and mining (Indonesia), and the economy (Egypt and Russia). In society they may include continuing special status with unique laws and courts for members of the armed forces (Brazil). And, in specific military areas, the most common, and long-lasting, are continuing military control of intelligence and professional military education.²⁸

Second, civilian control over the armed forces is impossible without a wide variety of new or radically changed institutions whereby effective control can be exercised by civilians. In most cases, there are legacy laws and institutions from the previous non-democratic regimes. These can include laws that prevent specialization by civilians in national security and defense, as is currently the case, for example, in Argentina and Nepal. Or the lack of a career in defense, as is the case in most new democracies. Or differential pay for civilians in a ministry of defense compared to other ministries, which was the case in Colombia. Everywhere, a minimal element is a civilian-led ministry of defense. There must also be a system, such as a supreme audit institution (SAI) to 'follow the money'. Also required is a series of committees in a legislature to keep track of such issues as military recruitment and participation in international peacekeeping missions. And, also required is a set of institutions in the executive and the legislative branches to control military intelligence.²⁹ It is extremely difficult in new democracies that face resource scarcities and institutional challenges in general to create these new institutions focused on the armed forces. The tendency is to 'let sleeping dogs lie'. The superb book by Narcís Serra recounts his herculean efforts during nine years as Minister of Defense of Spain in creating the institutions for democratic civilian control of the armed forces. And, it must be noted, Serra's experience was in the context of NATO and the EU, which facilitated his efforts through external requirements for entry and ongoing funding and other support. No similar set of incentives for establishing these institutions exists in other areas of the world. Serra, who uses a comparative approach, calls attention again and again to the propensity in Latin America for institutions to be created on paper, but not in reality. The same propensity for laws without implementation is pervasive throughout most of the world of new democracies.³⁰

Third, a commonplace phrase is 'you don't know what you don't know'. In the case of the armed forces, security, and defense, it is easy to comprehend why civilians – either elected or those appointed by elected officials – would initially know very little about national security and defense. In the prior, non-democratic, regimes there was minimal scope or opportunity for civilians to become knowledgeable about these issues. And, it could have been very dangerous to express any interest in them. Then, with the transitions/consolidation, unless there is a bureaucracy, with positions and salaries, there is no motivation or incentives for civilians to learn about these issues. And, in most cases with which I am familiar, the military themselves are loath to provide this information. After all,

knowledge is power, and if the military can maintain a monopoly on this kind of information, then their relative power increases. Consequently, and I have seen this situation 20 years after transitions in all of the world but for the NATO/EU area.³¹

The combination of these three factors has resulted in a situation in virtually all of the newer democracies where real, vs. formalistic or rhetorical, control of democratically elected civilians over the armed forces and other security forces has not been achieved. There are few and weak institutions, and minimal cultural support for democratic civilian control among the civilian elites, society in general, and the armed forces themselves. In most cases, this is not particularly important domestically, however, as little is expected of the armed forces other than that they do not publicly oppose the elected civilian leaders or attempt to stage a coup.³² In the majority of cases in new democracies, the amount of funds, as measured as a percentage of GDP, is minimal. Taking an arbitrary sample of five newer and five older democracies, I found the average of 0.92% of GDP in 2013 for Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria, and South Africa vs. 1.44% of GDP for Australia, Canada, France, Japan, and the Netherlands. That is, the former are 63% of the latter, although the former countries are thought to be more important in their regions than the latter. The United States, where defense is 3.30% of GDP is excluded.³³ In contrast, and again using Jane's Defence Budgets, and examining the same five countries in each category, whereas personnel costs in the former are 65% of total defense budgets, the figure in the latter is 49%; again, for contrast, the figure in the United States is 27%. It must be recognized that there are real costs in terms of attention, political capital, and energy for civilians in seeking to achieve this control in terms of (re)negotiating prerogatives, creating institutions, and creating positions for informed and professional civilians. Civilian politicians in all but a very few countries are not willing to assume these costs.³⁴ In short, in the vast majority of new democracies, achieving real democratic civilian control of the armed forces is still very much a work in progress. With a large gap between the experience, and expectations, of the United States in this key area of democratic civilian control of the armed forces, it will be a challenge for anyone with responsibility for building partner capacity to deal with the many apparently similar but very different realities. There is simply not the fabric or tissue with which the United States in its efforts to 'build partner capacity' can relate to civilians and civilian-led institutions. Instead, lacking this fabric or tissue, and with civilian control shaky in any case, the United States in its efforts to build partner capacity tends to link with the armed forces, thereby strengthening them relative to the civilians.³⁵

Developing national security and defense strategies

While democratic civilian control is not at issue in the United States, what is at issue is strategy. And, since developing and implementing national security and defense strategies is part of building partner capacity, this is a relevant topic in this article.

In the United States, and formalized in the Goldwater–Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, there is an explicit legal requirement that the executive annually publish a National Security Strategy (NSS). However, once the rationale of the Cold War disappeared, the urgency, and the political implications of publishing a NSS changed radically. Between 1987 and 2000 an NSS was submitted every year except in 1989 and 1992. During the eight years of the George W. Bush administration there were two, and so far, in the five years of the Obama administration there has been one with another promised later this year.³⁶

Following in the tradition of Clausewitz, there are several brilliant and exciting books on strategy. That is, there is a great intellectual basis for developing strategies. In my view, the gold standard in defining strategy and civil–military relations is summarized in the following short quote by the British expert on strategy and military history, Hew Strachan.

In the ideal model of civil–military relations, the democratic head of state sets out his or her policy, and armed forces coordinate the means to enable its achievement. The reality is that this process – a process called strategy – is iterative, a dialogue where ends also reflect means and where the result – also called strategy – is a compromise between the end of policy and the military means available to implement it.³⁷

The comments of Robert Gates, on accepting the offer of the position of Secretary of Defense by President Bush in October 2006, are telling: ‘Personally, I don’t recall ever reading the president’s NSS when preparing to become secretary of defense. Nor did I read any of the previous National Defense Strategy documents when I became secretary. I never felt disadvantaged by not having read these scriptures.’³⁸ And, it is abundantly clear from reading the books of both Baker and Gates, that there was no political strategy in fighting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As Strachan states with regard to the United States: ‘Arguably, strategy has been absent throughout the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In part this is because the political objects have been unclear, or variable, or defined in terms too broad to be deliverable in strategic terms. Because there has been no clear relationship between the ends and the limited (and often inappropriate) means, strategy is simply not possible.’³⁹

There are, I believe, three main reasons for the lack of ‘real’, which here means implemented or better implementable, national security and defense strategies in the United States. Two reasons for the lack of strategy have been well analyzed by Robert Jervis in an article, entitled appropriately enough ‘U.S. Grand Strategy: Mission Impossible’ where he emphasizes the following.⁴⁰ First, the absence of an existential threat now that the USSR is gone. As Jervis states: ‘... it will not be possible for the United States to develop and follow a coherent grand strategy over the next decade or so. Fortunately, one is not needed, although its absence will annoy scholars, confuse other countries, and make military planning extremely difficult.’⁴¹ Second, the great difficulty of developing a strategy, grand or not, in a pluralistic political system subject to the give and take of multiple and competing interests. Third, and closely related to the latter point, which is more specific, if an

elected official, a president or prime minister, develops a strategy that is in any way specific as to implementation and measurement, he or she will be extremely vulnerable politically if the goals are not achieved; and, as all observers from Clausewitz to Churchill to Gates note, war, and security matters short of war, are unpredictable.⁴² This author's question is, then, along the same lines of Finer's quote above regarding democratic civilian control, not why countries are loath to develop national security and defense strategies, but why any country would? It requires a huge amount of agreement, consensus, across the whole political spectrum on the issues that might be included in such a strategy.

If developing strategy is difficult, if not impossible, in the United States, what role can the United States play in building partner capacity regarding strategies? My reading of the GAO report by Janet A. St Laurent, Managing Director Defense Capabilities and Management, emphasizes three main categories of 'best practices'.⁴³ They are: setting clear goals and defining terminology; coordinating activities and sharing information; and sustaining efforts and evaluating progress. These three together are equivalent to saying, at least for me, that there is no strategy, not even in promoting building partner capacity.

That the lack of strategy is important can be seen with reference to the private security companies (PSCs, also called private military companies). The lack of a strategy is highlighted by what Robert Gates has to say about the rise of the PSCs. According to Gates, 'As the contractor presence developed in Iraq after the original invasion, there was no plan, no structure, no oversight, and no coordination. The contractors' role grew willy-nilly as each US department or agency contracted with them independently, their number eventually climbing to some 150,000. Out of some 7,300 security contractors Defense hired, nearly 6,000 did some kind of stationary guard duty. The State Department, however, hired a large number to provide convoy security for diplomats, other government officials, special visitors, and some other civilians, and it was those hires that caused most of our headaches.'⁴⁴ That is, 'no plan, no structure, no oversight, and no coordination = no strategy'. 'The contractors' role grew willy-nilly...' Willy-nilly is another way of saying without a plan; without a strategy. This is important as the numbers displayed in Table 1 demonstrate that there were almost as many contractors as uniformed personnel in Iraq.⁴⁵

In my research and writing on the use of PSCs, mainly in Iraq, all of the central points I make that resulted in the large numbers and negative impact of the PSCs – lack of service doctrine, lack of coordinating institutions, lack of integration with the uniformed services, and lack of mechanisms for controlling the PSCs – can be explained by the lack of strategy.⁴⁶ However, to avoid the criticism of using self-serving arguments based on my own writings, I can draw on the Final Report to Congress of the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks* of August 2011. The Commission was specifically created by Congress to study the issue and make recommendations. In the 'Executive summary' after stating that 'at least \$31 billion, and possibly as much as \$60

Table 1. Presence of contractor personnel during US military operations.

Conflict	Estimated personnel (thousands)		Estimated ratio of contractor to military personnel ^a
	Contractor ^a	Military	
Revolutionary War	2	9	1 to 6
War of 1812	n/a	38	n/a
Mexican-American War	6	33	1 to 6
Civil War	200	1000	1 to 5
Spanish-American War	n/a	35	n/a
World War I	85	2000	1 to 24
World War II	734	5400	1 to 7
Korea	156	393	1 to 2.5
Vietnam	70	359	1 to 5
Gulf War	9 ^b	500	1 to 55 ^b
Balkans	20	20	1 to 1
Iraq Theater as of early 2008 ^c	190	200	1 to 1

Source: Congressional Budget Office (CBO), 'Contractors' Support of U.S. Operations in Iraq', based on data from Epley, 'Civilian Support of Field Armies'; Zamparelli, 'Contractors on the Battlefield'; Department of Defense, Report on DoD Program for Planning, Managing, and Accounting, 12.

Notes: n/a = not available.

^a For some conflicts, the estimated number of contractor personnel includes civilians employed by the US government. However, because most civilians present during military operations are contractor personnel, the inclusion of government civilians should not significantly affect the calculated ratio of contractor personnel to military personnel.

^b The government of Saudi Arabia provided significant amounts of products and services during Operations 'Desert Shield' and 'Desert Storm'. Personnel associated with those provisions are not included in the data or the ratio.

^c For this study, the Congressional Budget Office considers the following countries to be part of the Iraq theater: Iraq, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

billions, has been lost to contract waste and fraud in America's contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan',⁴⁷ the Commission offers 15 recommendations for remedying the problem. Virtually all of these would be obviated if there were a strategy; if the United States had in fact followed a strategy in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁴⁸

Evidence of a lack of national security or defense strategy regarding the PSCs is provided not only from the analysis in my book and the recommendations of the Commission, but also by what is not included in accounts of principal players in the war or wars. The books of three very well-respected journalists are particularly useful in this regard. First, Suzanne Simons builds her book, *Master of War: Blackwater USA's Erik Prince and the Business of War*, on over 100 hours of interviews with Blackwater founder and CEO Erik Prince and her access to Blackwater's top offices and facilities over 18 months.⁴⁹ Simons repeatedly notes a total lack of coordination between one of the largest PSCs in Iraq and the military commanders who were responsible for pursuing US goals in Iraq. Second is Linda Robinson's *Tell Me How This Ends: General David*

Petraeus and the Search for a Way out of Iraq. Her focus is on the development and execution of the US military campaign termed the 'surge' that took place in 2007–2008 to end the escalating internecine violence that had spread across Iraq. In 363 pages of text she makes perhaps a half-dozen brief references to PSCs, but none are mentioned in the list 'Principal Cast of Characters (as of February 2007)', or in the extensive acknowledgements. Third, in Peter Baker's *Days of Fire*, which focuses on the White House and the war in Iraq, there is a brief mention of Blackwater and the death of four of their contractors in Fallujah, but nothing beyond, nor in the Index is there any reference to private security or private military contractors. This is at a time when the CBO report of August 2008 that is displayed above puts the ratio of contractors to military personnel at about one-to-one. In short, the reliance on PSCs was not integrated into any plan, or strategy. Based on the very negative experience of the United States in the two most recent wars, with specific evidence from the rise of the PSCs, any objective observer must question the ability of the United States to build capacity elsewhere to develop and implement strategy, even in the unlikely event that the democratically elected civilian elites had the incentive to do so.

Conclusion

While democratic civilian control is not at issue in the United States, it is very much so in most of the newer democracies. In the latter, they are still in the preliminary stages of developing and staffing institutions, and inculcating, in both the armed forces and among civilians, a culture that assumes civilian control as both normal and desirable. To think that the unique experience and model of the United States in civil–military relations can be duplicated elsewhere is misleading and short-sighted. One cannot assume the civilian decision-makers are in fact decision-makers in the areas of national security and defense, that they are interested in being partners with the United States, or that they have any incentives to deal with the armed forces beyond keeping them from staging coups. As a key element of building partner capacity must include developing and implementing strategy, the United States has demonstrated that it has not been successful since the end of the Cold War. In addition to evidence of a lack of strategy in the poor results of the wars, the author specifically focuses on the rise of the PSCs as a manifestation of the lack of a strategy. At a minimum, the evidence and argument in this article should encourage civilian officials and military officers in the United States to think through the implications of using the mantra of building partner capacity as a justification for security assistance.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this article are the author's alone and do not necessarily represent the views of either the US Navy or the Department of Defense.

Notes

1. Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 11.
2. Dale and Towell, 'In Brief', 7.
3. St Laurent, 'Building Partner Capacity: Key Practices' and GAO, *Building Partner Capacity: Actions Needed*.
4. Statements for the Record by The Honorable Michael A. Sheehan, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, Lieutenant General Terry Wolff, Director for Strategic Plans & Policy J5 Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Janet A. St. Laurent, Managing Director Defense Capabilities and Management, GAO, to Committee on Armed Services United States House of Representatives First Session, 113th Congress, on Building Partner Capacity for 21st Century Challenges, February 14, 2013.
5. See at http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf (accessed 4 March 2014).
6. Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Estimates Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) available at <http://comptroller.defense.gov> (accessed 21 January 2014) and <http://www.dsca.mil/programs/building-partnership-capacity-bpc> (accessed 21 February 2014). It is, however, difficult to know what is, or is not, included of prior security assistance programs under the rubric of building partner capacity. It should also be noted that these sums are small in comparison to overall US support for democracy promotion. Citing OECD data, Nicole Bibbins Sedaca shows that this figure was almost \$5 billion in 2012 (Sedaca, *Holding Steady?*, 15).
7. For the Planners' Handbook, including on security assistance, see [http://www.almc.army.mil/ALU_DOCS/Planners_Handbook_Master_Final%20Draft%202002-22-12%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.almc.army.mil/ALU_DOCS/Planners_Handbook_Master_Final%20Draft%202002-22-12%20(2).pdf) (accessed 5 March 2014). In the section on 'Country Planning', pp. 14–16, there is an unspoken assumption that civilian decision-makers in the recipient countries are in agreement with the premises of building their capacity. On p. 14 in this Planners' Handbook there is a suggestion that the planners can use the DOTMLPF framework, which on closer examination, is focused on warfighting capability gaps. See ACQuipedia, 'DOTmLPF-P Analysis' at dap.dau.mil/acquipedia/Pages/ArticleDetails.aspx?aid=d11b6afa-a16e-43cc-b3bb-ff8c9eb3e6f2 (accessed 6 March 2014).
8. This effort deals with the institutional and process levels of the United States and new democracies. It has minimal quantitative pretensions. For quantitative analyses of some of the issues dealt with here, see two recent RAND reports: Mc Nerney et al., *Assessing Security Cooperation* and Paul et al., *What Works Best?*
9. Kohn, 'The Constitution and National Security'.
10. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/24/us/politics/24mcchystal.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed 21 February 2014).
11. I have reviewed these in Chapter 3, 'The Institutions of U.S. Civil–military Relations,' in my *Patriots for Profit*, 50–76.
12. Pew Research Center, *The Military–Civilian Gap*, 2. See also, for public opinion data on the very high regard of the general population for the military, *Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project*, 11 July 2013.
13. Baker, *Days of Fire*, 521. Baker was White House correspondent for the *New York Times*, and later interviewed the main protagonists of the two George W. Bush administrations.
14. Gates, *Duty*, 346. Secretary Gates had already fired the civilian secretary of the Air Force, Wynne, and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Moseley, due to errors regarding the handling of nuclear weapons (*Duty*, 243).
15. *Ibid.*, 433.
16. *Ibid.*, 574.

17. Crowe, *The Line of Fire*, 234.
18. For the percentage of the population in the military see Pew, *The Military–Civilian Gap*, 8.
19. If the point regarding unambiguous civilian control in the United States is so obvious why am I going into such detail on it? It is necessary as there is a body of literature in the United States that begins with the assumption that civilian control is challenged, is an ongoing issue. This is dealt with under the term of ‘normal’ theory in Cohen, *Supreme Command*, ‘Appendix’, 225–48.
20. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, 5.
21. While the coups are clear, the issue in Putin’s Russia is less obvious. See Soldatov and Borogan, *The Restoration of Russia’s Security State*, which demonstrates the takeover of the Russian state by Vladimir Putin and the FSB (successor to the KGB) and Walther, ‘Russia’s Failed Transformation’.
22. Arend Lijphart analyzed 21 democracies in 1984 and 36 in 1999 (Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, x).
23. In their more general terms of ‘free’, ‘partly free’, and ‘not free’, in 2013 Freedom House ranked 90 (46%) ‘free’, 58 (30%) ‘partly free’, and 47 (24%) ‘not free’. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2013#.Uvqg90JdUmQ> (accessed 14 February 2014).
24. http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database (accessed 14 February 2014). The other countries, without armed forces, include Andorra, Samoa, Vatican City, etc.
25. For a good review of these issues, see Croissant et al., *Democratization and Civilian Control in Asia*, especially Part I, ‘Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives’, 21–56. We make a distinction between the NATO, PfP, and EU countries, and the rest of the world. See Bruneau and Trinkunas, ‘International Democracy Promotion’.
26. Schmitter, ‘Consolidation of Political Democracies’.
27. Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics*, Chapter 7, 93–127. We use this approach in analyzing three problematic cases. See Bruneau et al., ‘Civil–Military Relations in Muslim Countries’.
28. For information on Peru, Ecuador, Indonesia, and Nigeria, see Jaskoski, ‘Private Financing of the Military’.
29. We deal with some of these issues in Bruneau and Tollefson, *Who Guards the Guardians and How*. The how is key to my argument here.
30. Serra’s book is fundamental to anybody interested in what it takes to establish institutions, and to make them work in the areas of national security and defense. See Serra, *The Military Transition*. I have dealt with the difference between real and façade institutions in my ‘Civilians and the Military in Latin America’.
31. We have provided case studies comparing the NATO, PfP, and EU region with other parts of the world in our Bruneau and Matei, *Routledge Handbook of Civil–Military Relations*.
32. This has been dealt with extremely well in the Latin American context in Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas, ‘Attention Deficits’.
33. *Jane’s Defence Budgets* (accessed 13 February 2014).
34. In ‘Civilians and the Military in Latin America’ I attempt to explain why civilian political elites in Chile and Colombia behave differently due to different incentives.
35. It seems to us that this is one of the main reasons for the military coup in Mali on 22 March 2012 by a junior officer who had received extensive training by the United States. Unfortunately, the civilian leaders did not receive similar training. See Bruneau and Matei, ‘The Military Coup in Mali’.
36. On these requirements, see Dale, ‘National Security Strategy’. On adherence to the law, see p. 3. For an analysis of how countries formulate national security

- documents, but with no attention to implementation, see Stolberg, *How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents*.
37. Strachan, *The Direction of War*, 45. Other excellent discussions are Freedman, *Strategy* and Mahnken and Maiolo, *Strategic Studies*.
 38. Gates, *Duty*, 144.
 39. Strachan, *The Direction of War*, 218. This is not to say that there were no operational or campaign plans by the military, but rather no national security or defense strategy.
 40. Jervis, 'U.S. Grand Strategy'.
 41. *Ibid.*, 23.
 42. For Gates's comments on this point, see *Duty*, 589.
 43. St Laurent, 'Building Partner Capacity'.
 44. Gates, *Duty*, 224.
 45. The number of specifically PSCs in Iraq in 2009 was 25,500. See Bruneau, *Patriots for Profit*, 116. In Afghanistan in 2013 the number of PSCs was 18,000 out of 108,000 DoD contractors. See Schwartz and Church, 'Department of Defense's Use of Contractors', 2.
 46. Bruneau, *Patriots for Profit*.
 47. Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Final Report to Congress*, 1.
 48. *Ibid.*, 3–13.
 49. Simons, *Master of War*, 5.

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