

UNDERSTANDING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES FROM A SOCIAL SCIENCE APPROACH

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Abstract

Every day countless discussions occurs between senior military officers, public servants, and political representatives that shape India's foreign & domestic policy under a Prime Ministerial term. These national security professionals can maximise their effectiveness on the job appointments by taking into account academic research on civil-military relationships on perspectives from western scholars offering their insights on civil-military partnership (between military & political leadership, the military & civil society, civil society's response towards national and foreign policy) and reflecting their thought processes on current civil-military engagement.¹ In an effort to understand the Western perspective of civil-military relations to Indian professionals of national security, the author presents a case of civil-military relationship from the United States and analyses three critical relationships—between federal government & military, military & civil society, and civil society perspectives on military and federal policymaking. This enables both military and civilian partners to examine vivid perspectives (presented through this study) in an effort to enhance their operational capability in a joint domain.

Introduction

When we analyse the civil-military relations from the United States, historical moments revive our memories of multiple tussles/frictions within

the highest echelons in Washington. The firing of Gen Douglas MacArthur and a public spat with President Truman², policy disagreements between President Bill Clinton and the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Colin Powell³ (on opening doors for members of the gay community to join the military). The *General's Revolt*⁴, series of staunch criticism by retired generals on public platforms against the decisions undertaken by George W. Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld during the Iraq War. President Obama requesting the resignation of General Stanley McChrystal over an article published in the *Rolling Stone* which openly criticised civilian leadership's command capability, to name a few.⁵

Although not focusing on the aforementioned headlines (largely fiascos), the fact remains unchanged: members of the military, political representatives and federal civil employees engage in countless discussions engage at multiple levels laying the foundation of America's civil-military relationship.⁶ It is therefore critical for policymakers themselves to formulate a structure that evolves and assist vivid civil-military actors to evolve in their engagements. There are countless educational opportunities provided to US military personnel, especially in the context of civil-military relationship including special coursework customised for their professional appointments, civil policy makers are not privy to a similar educational ecosystem in the US. Furthermore, civil policy makers do not receive necessary opportunities to make themselves aware (self-paced learning) in the context of academic researches (on-going & past) in the domain of civil-military relations.⁷ Academic approaches to civil-military relations provides valuable insights and new discourses in the context of military & federal government partnership, the military with civil society, and how civil society view both the military and the federal government through the prism of foreign & domestic policy.⁸ Academic researchers (in addition to opening new debates) provides opportunities for discourses on on-going civil-military relations in current context while keeping a reality check on expected outcome versus hypothetical discourse.⁹ This literature provides more than just theory rather, a detailed analysis for Indian civil-military practitioners who are carrying critical responsibilities that involve civil-military discussions on a daily basis.

Civil – Military Relations

Civilian and Military Perspectives: Peter Feaver's Guide

	Micromanagement & Trust	Different Cultures & Demographics	The Chain of Command	Planning Options & Development	Risk Aversion & the American Way of War	Independent Military Advice
Civilian	"Military leaders don't think civilians should question their expertise or reasons for a decision, particularly when civilians don't have military experience!"	"Military leaders are old men; they're not intelligent, creative, or flexible!"	"Military leaders slow roll options they don't want and won't respond to requests if they don't agree with a policy."	"The military prefers certain policies and won't develop options it doesn't like!"	"Military leaders are reluctant to do anything unless they get everything they ask for, and they always ask for more resources and people than they really need!"	"The military uses the media and Congress to box the President in; DOD always leaks information to undermine the Administration!"
Military	"Civilians micromanage the military and won't leave DOD alone to do its job!"	"NSC Staffers are young (women), know-it-alls who lack experience and common sense!"	"Civilians call the wrong person and ignore the Chain of Command; they don't understand how complex even simple military operations are!"	"Civilians won't make up their minds about what they want to accomplish, and they expect the military to solve every problem!"	"Civilians don't think strategically; they nickel and dime us on every request, and then hang us out to dry when things go badly!"	"Civilians use the military as political props and call us disloyal whenever we disagree; they leak information to make us look bad and advance the Administration's position!"

Figure 1: Civilian and Military Perspectives: Peter Feaver's Guide¹⁰

Although numerous scholars have and continue to analyse American civil–military relationship in cross-academic field¹¹, not limited to economics¹², civil society engagement¹³ and reactionary/response of civil society to military perspectives on war & peace and reactions/responses of federal government on civil-military approaches¹⁴, this research retains its focus on the social science approach¹⁵, limiting the scope of analysis on civil–military relations to national policy perspectives and political expectations keeping the Indian military audience at helm.

A Social Science Approach to Civil–Military Relations: The Western Way

As stated in the aforementioned arguments, the social science perspective of studying civil-military relations is to establish an interaction between a nation's *public or civil society*, its *government* and *civil society* and their respective interactions with the *military*.¹⁶ The informal pillars of a state, is separated to form three independent components in this research, and does not involve industries/civil owned enterprises. This segregation is made to assist the reader understand influence of civil-military relations on vivid types of regimes. Taking the case of the United States, a democratic regime¹⁷, the public makes the decision to elect

the government, which then delegates the responsibility of national/federal security to the military¹⁸. According to one political scientist, in a democratic ecosystem (style of governance) the civil society remains in control through the power to elect a federal government which is operational by experts who conduct business as tasked by elected representatives.¹⁹ To put it plainly, in the theory of democratic system, this style of governance puts civil society in-charge, even though they do not hold expertise in vivid domains.²⁰ This delegation of power lays the foundation for a fundamental challenge in civil-military relationship. According to him, this challenge is what he terms as the *civil–military problem*: identifying ways to resolve a military in doing anything the civilian leadership tasks them to do using one military subordinate who would do only what the civilian leadership authorises him to do (See Fig 1).

The theoretical gambit of civil-military relations is too broad, hence to prevent deviating from the topic it is important to separate our discussions on what we *expect out of civil-military relations*—instead keep our arguments on—discussions of what *civil military is*. Some scholars limit the aspect of civil-military relations in the United States within the gambit of individual ideology, learning trait and values.²¹ A large quantifiable empirical data could have assisted the scholar in making a distinction but in the light of limited access to existing imperial studies, the author retains his arguments on personal discussions with political scientists on the basis of anonymity, open sourced documents and existing research on civil-military relations in the context of a democratic state. Some empirical data provide significant details—for example percentage of military personnel identified as republicans or democrats on the basis of their membership²²—and some empirical data makes an attempt to study their thought processes²³—through, social gatherings, military training in an effort to identify their ideology and values. The first set of empirical data provides us with accurate details of military members as party affiliates, while the latter requires a detailed set of parameters to establish a relationship between different variables and calculative indicators. It is safe to say that in the context of civil-military relations in the US, co-relating factors are not principal actors, making the second set of data unreliable for this research.²⁴

The author makes the aforementioned statement on the basis of vivid characteristics that plays an important role in the general selection of subject's criteria in a limited scope of study, which could derail our efforts to truly understand the extent of civil-military relations in the US. As there could have more than one co-relation between multiple variables involved in the existing empirical studies while some may not hold any significance in our study at all. This means, that if we have a repository of military personnel who identify themselves as democrats than the repository of members of the civil society, we cannot make an assumption that their identity altered or attained during the course of their service.²⁵ This could also mean that they/their:

- military training or outcomes during deployment/decision making of peers and/or expected actions on federal policy matters could have motivated them to maintain an identity as a Democrat,
- identify was of a Democrat even before joining the military and their decision to join respective services has no correlation with their identity, or
- external factors (local politics, topography, voting patterns, regional influence, ethnicity, or familial influence) could have given them a sense of purpose to join the military service, without altering their identity.

In the context of American civil-military relationship, the most accepted argument in the academia is that of civilian influenced military.²⁶ In military circles, most define civil military relationship as that of military as a subordinate arm of the federal government.²⁷ There are other notions too but are too controversial to deliberate in this research gambit. Is there a line that military leaders should not cross unknowingly and make the civilian government insecure? Should military function under an autonomy? Is there a warrior clan, an ethnic society or a caste that should be called for undertaking military action for civilian led government? Is military subjective to society's influence, ethnic based values and inclusivity? These are some of the key unanswered, undiscussed issues underlying with academia that may not have hold significance

to a US audience but in the context of India as a nation of diversity and multi-ethnicity, holds immense importance in the context of civil–military relations in India which members of the academia must analyse.

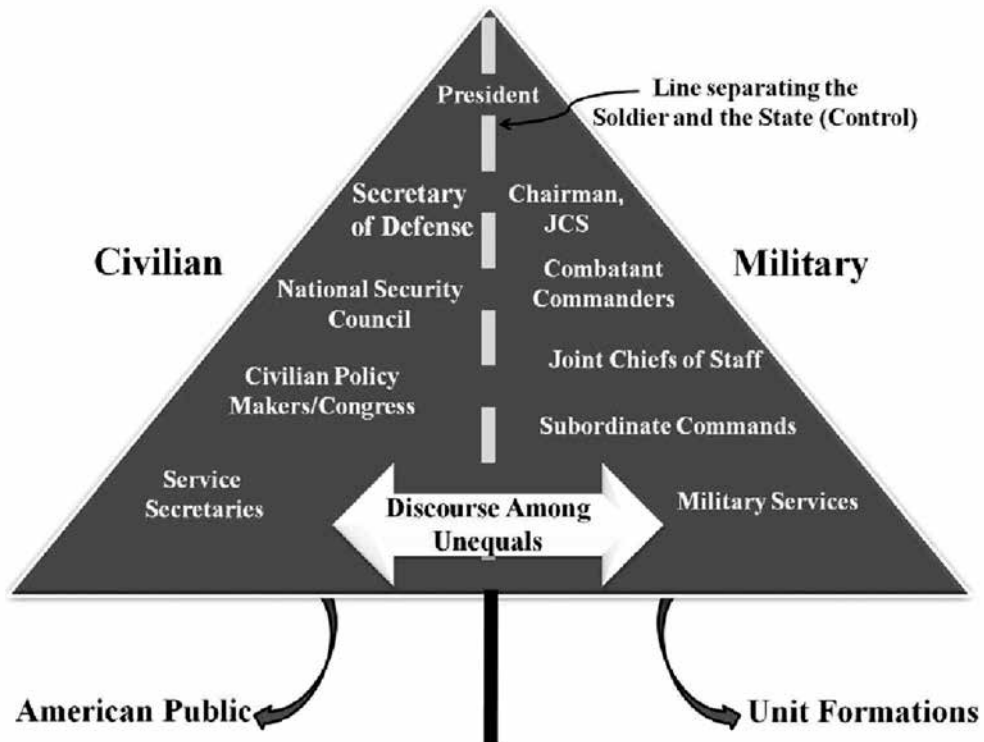


Figure 02: The Civil-Military Triangle²⁸

Examining the Relationship: When Military Interacts with the Civillian Government

As seen from the aforementioned diagram (Refer Figure 02) the relationship between the civil government and the military has received maximum attention from members of the academia in the west.²⁹ Most scholars have conducted some of the exhaustive studies to identify answers for the following questions:

- How do higher echelons at the highest levels, interact?

- What are the possible points of contention and agreement between political representatives, civilian leadership, and military commanders at the highest levels?
- Do the civil-military interactions affect the balance between the civil & the military echelons? What are its implications on civilian control and how does it affect military's efficiency and effectiveness?

For western scholars, most researches are based either on two extreme military characteristics and rarely focus on the research areas existing between them.³⁰ Either the military is too weak to deter against an adversary and collapse in the battlefield, fending the civil society to defend itself.³¹ Or the military is too powerful that it successfully overthrows the elected civil government.³² Although there are numerous scenarios/possibilities that exists within the two extreme characterises³³, but one US based scholar³⁴ argues that since, the military has the capability to face any adversary in any/all conditions, it develops coercion to retain power and potentially challenge the legitimate government.³⁵ As coercion gives the ability to the host to hold on power (as long as it fulfils civilian expectations), the traditional argument comes into account on the military's capability to use coercion against the people, while exposing new risks to the society:³⁶

- Rise of tyranny through military dictatorship helm bent on cultivating new societal norms (by destroying existing social structure) and drain resources, or
- A rogue faction influencing certain military actions to facilitate or maximise benefits through politicisation of war and conflicts based on individual interests, or
- The military decides to pursue separate interests and forfeit larger civilian population on their own

The Civilian 'overwatch'

For political scientists in the US, the term *civilian control* refers to the civilian government's ability to extort to desired military policies with expected outcomes, understanding the fact than the civilian government is inferior

to the military in the context of its exposure to numerous instruments of violence.³⁷ But in the case of US, many scholars forfeit the idea there is no need to worry on a military coup occurring within the United States.³⁸ This is largely true because in US all federal & state machineries have a common understanding of *who controls whom*.³⁹ The extent of control exists beyond one particular individual or a political representation and largely exists on the foundation of governance, democratic values, and principles of law. Hence, in the context of the US, it is safe to say that: civilian authority lays the foundation of an institution that has the *real* authority to issue orders, without any external or internal influence during the formulation of those orders, with the expectations from all other subordinate institutions to duty fully comply and fulfil.⁴⁰

Although elaborated in theory, this relationship (between military & civil) is much complicated in practice. Both the sides have a tenacity to disagree on all matters. The military can evade options or provide multiple recommendations for a policy framework (with an effort to confine the impact of similar recommendations from civil establishment) or tailor/predict severe consequences to actions (exaggerating scenarios)⁴¹:

- by using veteran associations and former Generals as lobbyists to influence the Congress or the opposition (using various indirect forms of communications); or
- by reaching out to the public for support, indirectly. They can delay in implementing critical decisions, or create unexpected hindrances to derail the policy.

That said, the coup is simply out of the question, and so does the illegality or unethical characteristics; the moot issue is who takes the call (in terms of military action) among the higher echelons today.⁴²

The aforementioned statements strike a firm contrast between the theoretical concepts of the civil-military relations and the tussle between civil-military echelons *in practice*.⁴³ Let us now understand/examine who truly exercises civilian control in practice, and how the civil government employ assertive measures to retain that control.

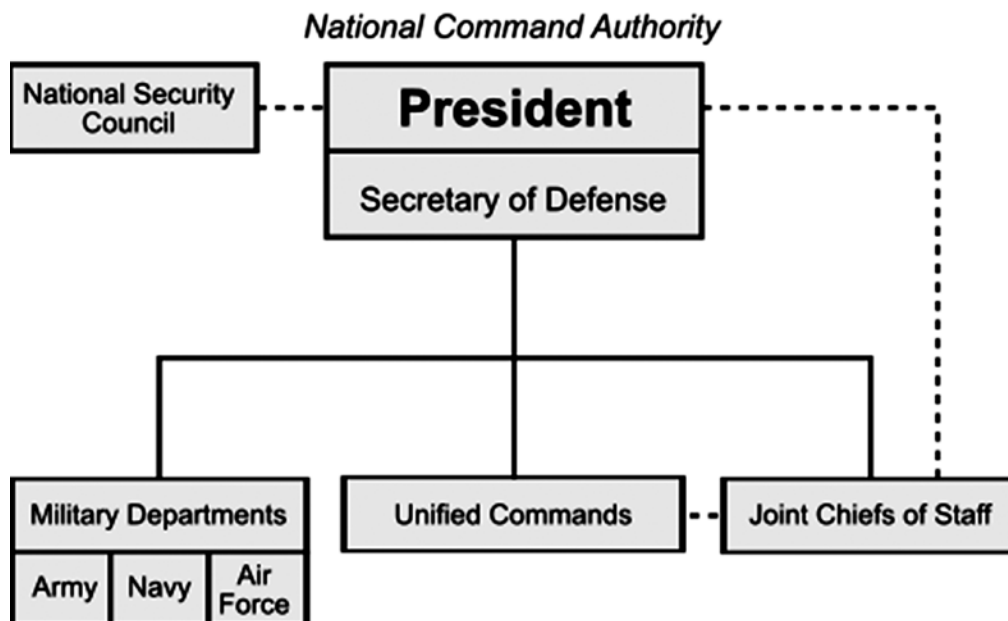


Figure 03: Command Structure in US⁴⁴

Taking the case of the US, civilian authority is complex because of the separation of powers between the executive and the legislative.⁴⁵ What does it mean for a subordinate military when a divided civilian government disagrees on military policy? As the US President and the Secretary of Defence is in control of the military when it comes to kinetic action, military strategy and rules on engagement, Congress is in direct control over the entire manpower of the force, their equipment, and the organizational structure as a whole (command authority), and exercise indirect control over doctrines and personnel management.⁴⁶ The Senate confirms the Presidential appointment that impacts the selection on military higher echelons, as President's tend to appoint senior leadership who agrees with their ideology and choice of command style in an environment when the President's affiliated political party is in control of the Senate.⁴⁷ But in the context of disagreement, the military leadership intends to take a side that favours with their line of thoughts, without directly or indirectly disobeying the orders of the Commander-in-Chief.⁴⁸ While making a comparison between the US and the Indian military decision-making ecosystem, the author finds that disagreement among

civilian leadership significantly affects military's capability to fulfil civilian expectations and drastically impacts military's capability to implement certain policy.⁴⁹ Taking the note of vivid studies, the author argues that disagreement between civil echelons over policy implementation (in the context of military planning) results in more repulsion from military commanders on the context of their mission outcomes.⁵⁰

While the author negates the possibility of a military coup in the US today, the aforementioned arguments have pointed out certain challenges where the military had and will continue to challenge civilian government's capability to implement policy, as and when it deems fit.

Impact of Civil-Military Relations on Military Effectiveness

As evident from the aforementioned statements, the civil-military relations have two prong challenges emanating from this relationship; in addition to a subordinate military (against civilian control), the civil society also expects a strengthened military to protect them from adversaries.⁵¹ Thus, another important segment of civilian control is its ability to contribute in making the military strengthened and operationally effective.⁵² To this end, how does civil-military relations impact military's effectiveness? Taking one of the extreme pillars (discussed above), it is in the interest of civilian control to have an inferior military survivable enough to function on minimum arms and limited ammunition, in an effort to deny any expectations of coming to power.⁵³ According to western scholars, many would state this to be the truest stature of the military in the United States.⁵⁴ But more bluntly, this pattern of civilian control may adversely affect the states capability to maximise the military's operational capacity with political goals intrinsically connected to military objectives.⁵⁵ One such example is the inherent nature of political leaders to hold appointments within vital/sensitive national security institutions—such as the National Security Council and the Joint Chiefs of Staff—to exercise political control over military matters rather than focussing attention on maximising their ability to implement better federal policies, in the interest of the people.⁵⁶

During the author's interaction with a US based civil-military relations expert⁵⁷, he contradicted Huntington's theory of civilian control⁵⁸ by

stating historical incidents of numerous civilian leaderships during wartime (Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln among others) who were actively engaged in numerous strategic, tactical and operational decision making.⁵⁹ He further argued that civilian *trenching* military decision-making did result in positive exercised outcomes, and which negates the general thinking of the civilian/political control as demoralising military's performance and operational effectiveness, and illustrate the fact that civilian control does not always prove to be a hurdle in military operational effectiveness, and may rather provide an alternate nuisances in some cases to the military leadership which it may have missed at the planning stage.⁶⁰ Rather civilian interference may bridge the military's operational excellence with that of state's policy, which in turn makes the war *just*.⁶¹

Dr. Richard H. Kohn is a leading authority on civil-military affairs in the United, who taught at the U.S. Military Academy, The National War College, The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, and held the Omar N. Bradley Chair of Strategic Leadership at the U.S. Army War College. He continues to analyse the impact of civil-military relations on state's ability to formulate military strategy. During discussions with the author, he argued that strategic assessment at the higher echelons involves information exchange and multi-level coordination within civil-military ranks, along with a competent military to analyse their capacities while bringing clarity in decision-making and in necessary authorizations.⁶² He further argued that the divergent arguments between the civil and the military will further enhance the quality of a military operation without hampering the existing structure of their balance of power.⁶³ He further stated that, strategic planning would be of a poor quality if the military does not put up a fight and the civil-politico leadership solely dominate this relationship.⁶⁴ It will be a disaster if a consensus points towards an equal share power between military and the civil-politico actors without a clear dominant in this relationship. The strategic assessment will be of *moderate quality* if the military leadership dominate the equation.⁶⁵ He further argued using the case study of strategic assessment conducted by the higher echelons during the post-conflict period of the Iraq War.⁶⁶ He argued that this case brought out *poor* results as the strategic planning ecosystem

was dominated by civilian-politico leadership, but it could have resulted in a strategic disaster if the military wouldn't have resisted against further altercation to existing military plans.⁶⁷

By now you may have noticed that the article significantly discusses military-government relationship with an emphasis to military responsibilities and statutory code of conduct (compulsions). The article refrains on discussing the responsibilities of the civilian-politico leadership, not because it has been categorically side-lined or ignored but reasons pertaining to unavailable data on civilian-politico responsibilities in the open source. The author made up a case (role of civil-politico responsibility and implications on civil-military relations for the United States) during his discussion with Dr. Patrick Paterson, the author of *Civil-Military Relations: Guidelines in Politically Charged Societies*, and the professor of practice of national security studies in the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies at the National Defense University, who argued that the larger responsibility for advising political leadership rests on civil servants, who must be thorough on the context of national security policy and must be prepared to engage in deliberations.⁶⁸ It is safe to say that the *civilians* in the civil-military relations cannot be segregated as *not military*.⁶⁹ Instead, the experience, insight, skill and knowledge that civil echelons demonstrate in their politically-nominated responsibilities provide the necessary backbone to the military profession of arms, laying the foundation for them to prove their expertise.⁷⁰ Prof Paterson further contradicted one expert's argument on civilian control (which was discussed in the aforementioned sections) where he argued that a competent and confident civilian leadership strengthens civil-military relations during national security/strategic planning.⁷¹ He further argued that strengthening civilian leadership will not only result in a strong civilian control but simultaneously strengthens military's effectiveness.⁷²

Disagreement is Dissent or Disobedience?

As stated in the aforementioned discussions, military echelons play the critical role of advising and assisting political leadership on critical decisions, and execute actions based on orders they may not agree

with.⁷³ This may look *clean* in theory, but there exists a thin line that separates disagreement with dissent and disobedience, which is all the more complex in definition and *murkier* in practice.⁷⁴ From those actively studying the US model of civil–military relations, Prof Mackubin Thomas Owens argued of an existing divide between military supremacists, (who argue for more adequate military vice within the higher echelons and limiting civilians from micromanagement, rather mismanagement of affairs suitable only for the military) and civilian supremacists (who argue on the vitality of strategically sound civil echelons who provide strategic guidance to the political leadership that helps shape critical policies, even when the military echelons does not seem to agree with it).⁷⁵ One professor described this is a multilateral engagement that exists between the civilian and military echelons who sometimes present their arguments aggressively, repeatedly with the final authority laying with the political leadership.⁷⁶

Taking the aforementioned argument into account, one cannot consider the point of disobedience or moralistic autonomy without taking into account the entire context, without making a clearer distinction as to whether the order was disobeyed as it was challenging the autonomy of the mission commander, or the order was in its truest sense inherently immoral (not moralistically illegal), and if the order obeyed would have reflected political affiliation or personal inclination or devoid of state's interest.⁷⁷ Many scholars agree that military officers must exercise tactical judgement and moralistic principles before planning an operation, but remains silent on whether military officer should put up his papers for resignation due to disagreement in strategic planning.⁷⁸ Should the military officer resign if the operation fails to fulfil national interest, or the officer is not convinced of its tactical value? is a question too controversial to receive clarity from the academia. While it may tempt military officers to disobey a decision on the basis of the aforementioned context influencing its take between professional action and personal morality, it brings great consequences in the context of disobedience with larger and deeper ramifications.⁷⁹ For US military officers' the idea of performing as an apolitical military actor may cloak greater political ramifications of their actions: a military leader may speak its mind, in the

context of national interest or security or personal conscience, but it may fail to truly understand the larger political picture in play.⁸⁰

From the aforementioned arguments it is clear that US audience (members of the academia) should be subordinate to both civil and political leadership and continue to provide their valuable insight in matters of national security, it remains silent on numerous issues.⁸¹ The friction while delivering advice for critical policymaking continues even today. Today, the friction stands on how much military advice is required on a policy decision and to the level of push military echelons must give in an effort to exert control over policy recommendations.⁸²

Public Perspectives to Civil-Military Relationship

Let us now analyse public's relations with that of the federal government and the military. Since the relationship between the two are intertwined, in this research we will analyse it together. Military personnel are members of the civil community, and share an intimate relationship with the general public. This is the same public which in turn also hold the federal government responsible for the state's national security policy, and have the power to bring in new change through electoral ballots.⁸³ Many scholars argue that their emotions are connected deeply with that of the military which may influence their choice of leadership through the electoral ballots.⁸⁴ The military too play a critical role in bridging the public perspectives with the federal government directly through public relations initiatives and active involvement of political representatives associated with critical appointments, indirectly with the public.⁸⁵

To that context, we aim to identify answers to the following questions, in this section.

- Who gets to serve in the military?
- With what perspectives does the public perceive members of the military?
- Does an altercation in existing military policy makes an impact on public's perception towards national security?

Serving in the US Military

The US military, since its inception has been an all-volunteer force, and maintains significant numbers of active-duty personnel during peace time since the end of the Cold War.⁸⁶ According to scholars, the nature of an all-volunteer force shares a unique representative structure from all members of the society in greater aspects than conscription.⁸⁷ By that account, if the military has unequal distribution of youth with predominantly male population at large, the ethnic/racial distribution of the force will still have members of other communities which would reflect participation from the society (even marginal groups) at large.⁸⁸

That said scholars argue that in a volunteer-based recruitment system, ideally a society, through the federal representatives must decide on keeping the maximum size of the military, eligibility criteria of individual services, the length of service for enlisted ranks, and the pay per service rules or pre-release minimum service bracket.⁸⁹ On the contrary, conscript based service can involve certain period of mandatory service for some sections of the population, or a draft criterion for a select members of a community to be eligible for recruitment within the ranks.⁹⁰ Many scholars continue to promote the idea of standing reserves, who would only be needed to reinforce traditional military numbers in case of an active conflict.⁹¹ They further argue that to make the military resource centric (for all skilled manpower) the federal government must maximise the 'National Guard Concept'—focussing recruitment opportunities to scientists, scholars, linguists, political representatives, through lucrative remuneration and benefits (a lucrative career option for members of the academia/technical expertise groups providing vital skills to the US Military).⁹²

But, in US public perception for who should serve in the US Military rests majorly on:

Civil Service, the Controlling Authority. Extending the argument from the aforementioned section, scholars argue that the military has more representation of the society which automatically incline their interests towards civil service members, though bridging the civil-military gap but a diminishing military voice during decision making. But in the light of

serious disagreements between the civilian leadership and the military, the civilian may control the narrative and win the discussions because the military does not have anything (individual interests or conflicting arguments) to challenge them.⁹³ This further means that joining the military institutions will have no impact on individual interests. This further retains the American interpretation of a civilian-soldier.⁹⁴

Diversity Impacts Military's Effectiveness. The choices between the military service, service durations, and vividness of ethnic/racial civil members joining the military greatly impacts military effectiveness.⁹⁵ Scholars argue that voluntary service is more effective and efficient than conscription based.⁹⁶ Taking the US military (which operates with superior technology) rapid deployment of short-term conscripts would greatly impact military's operational readiness which will pave the way for private military companies as secondary manpower.⁹⁷ The author argues that, with liberalistic principles seeping in the US society including the greater emphasis on individualistic rights, may soften the military's approach and appearance, challenging the leadership to either adapt to the growing liberalistic principles or wither which may prove disaster in a long-drawn war, such as the Cold War or the incumbent Russo-Ukraine War.

Adapting to a New Mindset. Many scholars argue, that the impact of civilian control or the diversity on military's effectiveness, brings a positive change as it covers the larger gambit of society's value and ideological principles, or the enlistment of vivid members of the community (referring to LGBTQ joining the ranks of the military).⁹⁸ While interacting with civil members, the author found many vocal for specialised ranks being available for gay service members and greater participation of women.⁹⁹

Civilian Perspectives Towards the Military

Why should leadership in uniform focus much on public perspective about the military? The main reason being, the public perception (which understand military vs federal government from a distance), their distance may aggravate existing tension between in the military-government relationship, which the author elaborated above.¹⁰⁰ It will always be difficult and more challenging for federal officials to

push aside the advice rendered by the military echelons because of the existing persona-driven relationship (fondness for uniform and dedication to service of the nation) military enjoys has with the public.¹⁰¹ Similarly, factions with inclination to a certain party further diminishes the neutral character of the military, further complicating the relationship between military echelons and federal government (either Democrats or Republicans, whosoever's administration it may be) in power.

Civilian Attention to Government Policy Making

In case of the US, it rests on the citizen of the nation (which is directly represented by the federal government) to assess the military's role in its society and in the context of US foreign policy (through State Department).¹⁰² The military exists to maintain national security, but is that all in theory? How should a nation use its military? Should the public have a say on how its military be employed, and should they hold the government accountable for any action that caters to military's direct involvement? Numerous scholars have opined that, in US, the *soldiery* is a *family affair* creating a dedicated warrior legacy for those that runs in their families for generations.¹⁰³ That said, it is common for *soldiery* to exist within numerous families with a legacy but how does it impact the functioning of a society and how does the society view this is a debatable never-ending argument. One section of scholars promotes the idea of a voluntary force, while others call it a special treatment to the *warrior clan*, discreetly supporting their arguments for conscription.¹⁰⁴ How should the US military recruit and retain its military personnel? It is for the US policy makers to decide.

Conclusion

While deciphering the quagmire that exists in the civil–military relations within the United States, the author presented in-detail arguments (taking both the academic and practitioners' perspectives) with an intent to give an idea to Indian military leadership through this academic literature. In his examination of multiple perspectives within the civilian-military relations, the author tried to make sense of the existing quagmire within the civil-military relations to Indian military leadership keeping them at the driving seat throughout this research. While deciphering the existing

tension within civil-military relations, the author made a conscious effort to first dissect the two pillars of this relationship and then bring in a third pillar i.e., the role of public at large to take into account their perspectives on military and civil leadership and with that of the society as a whole.

To conclude, the author seeks to present three critical findings from this research:

- Civilian leadership controlling the military has more to offer than preventing military leadership from achieving absolute power (from the fear of a coup) or simply noncompliance (with an intent to control discussion outcomes). That said, it is equally important for civil service echelons and political representatives to heed to military's advice and accept opposition even during policy discussions (civil matters) involving general public.
- Establishing a relationship between the idea of a military, its composition/architecture for an acceptable positive exercised outcomes and its apprehension/perspectives towards bureaucratic control, its impact on military's operational readiness/effectiveness and state's external policies, sum of all within the background of principles of democracy and individualistic liberty, is too complex and needs serious research.
- Those with reserve status (other than active military) especially employed in public service, and those who do not wear a uniform but continue to serve the public in vivid public appointments, share vivid perceptions, contradicting each other at times but in complete contrast to the general public perspective who see both the categories as *special civilians*. This is also reflected in their perceptions towards the state's security/defence and foreign policy, which may, in a broader sense, reflect the state's mindset.

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Endnotes

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