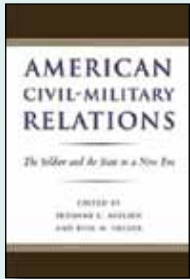


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American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era

Edited by Suzanne C. Nielsen
and Don M. Snider
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
University Press, 2009
409 pp. \$34.95
ISBN: 978-0-8018-9288-2

Reviewed by
ROBERT DANIEL WALLACE

Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* identified the critical importance of civil-military relations at the early stages of the Cold War while discussing how to balance national security requirements within the context of democratic society. He identified influencers that shape the military's role in society and that require the military to remain capable of defending the Nation while staying subordinate to civilian authorities and to conform to societal norms and ideologies. Huntington also identified two means of civilian control over the military: *subjective control*, which includes an integration of the military into civilian political spheres, and *objective control*, characterized by an apolitical and separate professional military. Over 50 years after *The Soldier and the State* was published, West Point professors Suzanne Nielsen and

Don Snider have compiled a number of essays that discuss both the relevance and shortfalls of Huntington's concepts.

This book was the result of a research project focused on creating an updated resource for civil-military relations classes at West Point and includes chapters from a number of well-known scholars. The text lends support to Huntington's contention that the relations between the armed forces and society must be examined objectively through both theoretical and pragmatic frameworks. In the first chapter, Nielsen and Snider contend that Huntington's concepts provide the basis for an examination of the relationship between America's military and political institutions that "follows the trail that Huntington blazed" (p. 2).

The first section examines Huntington's theories from a historical perspective and how his views helped shaped civil-military relations discourse over the past 50 years. Included are a chapter by Richard Betts on the state of American civil-military relations since 9/11, Matthew Moten's in-depth analysis of the Donald Rumsfeld-Eric Shinseki conflicts in 2002, and Peter Feaver and Erika Seeler's assessment of civil-military relations literature both before and after *The Soldier and the State*.

The next portion discusses Huntington's concepts of the societal and functional characteristics (imperatives) that shape the military as an institution. Michael Desch discusses Huntington's contention that the overall ideological views of the military (conservative) and those of American society (liberal) are often incompatible, while Williamson Murray discusses the need for military officer education reform. In the third part of the book, the civil-military partnership is examined from the perspective of the military's

participation and responsibilities. James Burk discusses the requirements of officers to obey civilian orders and the concept of "blind versus responsible obedience" (p. 154), while David Segal and Karin De Angelis examine the definition of the military as a profession and how it has evolved since Huntington wrote *The Soldier and the State*.

The final section includes a discussion by Risa Brooks on the hazards of military participation in politics, and Richard Kohn examines the importance of personalities and relationships in civil-military relations. The editors conclude the text with a number of overarching observations from their research and the contributing authors and clearly articulate that while there may be disagreements on the theoretical details in *The Soldier and the State*, Huntington's work remains relevant and a viable framework to consider modern American civil-military relationships.

The strengths of this book include a frank discussion of the difficulties inherent in civil-military relations. While the overall text argues that Huntington's theories and observations remain relevant, the chapters contain candid and well-supported arguments that incorporate other contending theorists, to include Morris Janowitz and Eliot Cohen, and do not hesitate to criticize the concepts presented in *The Soldier and the State*. Moten's detailed discussion of Rumsfeld's dismal relations with military leaders provides an excellent narrative of the civil-military difficulties during America's current overseas conflicts. Another excellent, albeit controversial, discussion is Brooks's logical analysis of the benefits and risks of military participation in civilian political affairs and the conclusion in favor of limiting political activities by active and retired military

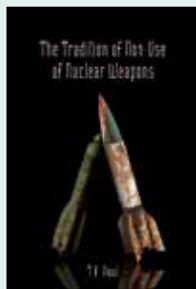
personnel. Finally, Richard Kohn contributes the most important chapter, which provides detailed guidance on how senior military and civilian leaders should participate in efforts to ensure America's national security. Kohn notes that the military is the institution with the most continuity (elected leaders will come and go) and thus the most responsibility to maintain positive relations.

At the same time, this book does suffer from a few flaws. Many of the chapters rehash the same background information on Huntington as the introduction, and the book gives the impression of a collection of distinct journal articles rather than a coherent discussion of civil-military issues. The most significant problem is Williamson Murray's critique of officer education, which is both dated and anecdotal; he describes, for example, the Joint Forces Staff College as having a "high school curriculum" without providing citation or evidence (p. 346). Murray's analysis fails to recognize that the post-9/11 American military has made significant strides in improving both its education system and combat doctrine in response to the current security environment.

Yet these issues are minor and do not diminish the overall value of this book to a wide audience of scholars, military and civilian leaders, and even the general public. While Huntington's text began as an effort to provide a resource for teaching civil-military relations at the university level, it resulted in a useful examination of the enduring relationship between the American political and defense institutions. For decades, his theories have been central to scholarly discussions of civil-military issues; this book clearly demonstrates that the concepts presented in *The Soldier and the*

State are still relevant for modern civil-military relations. **JFQ**

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The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons

By T.V. Paul

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009

319 pp. \$29.95

ISBN: 978-0-8047-6132-1

Reviewed by JASON WOOD

Why have nuclear weapons not been used since their debut over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945? For some time, this question has occupied the high-minded musings of deterrence theorists and strategists alike. In truth, the question of non-use has so occupied the academy that those who think about its antithesis—use—have come to prominence if for no other reason than their willingness to “think the unthinkable”—an adventure upon which Herman Kahn established his legacy.

In the ongoing effort to explain nuclear non-use, two competing schools of thought have emerged: rational/materialist and normative/ideational. The former rejects the idea of a strict non-use ethic, while the latter espouses a stringent taboo-like prohibition against the use of nuclear weapons based on

social constructs that go beyond rational considerations. TV. Paul's *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons* articulates a highly nuanced and eclectic middle ground between these opposing paradigms. A professor of international relations at Canada's McGill University, Paul argues that non-use can be explained by the emergence of an informal social norm, or tradition, that recognizes both the rational/material arguments against nuclear use and ideational factors such as culture and international norms.

In proposing a tradition-based framework, Paul's book stands out among several recent contributions to the academic literature on the topic. In *The Nuclear Taboo* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), Nina Tannenwald's argument falls squarely in the constructivist paradigm. While not entirely dismissive of material factors, “she provides very little, if any, discussion of what material factors contribute to the creation and persistence of the taboo-like prohibition,” as Paul points out. In contrast to Tannenwald, Paul attempts to firmly delineate linkages between material and ideational factors, rather than offer a cursory acknowledgment of the interplay between the two. Other current contributions serve as valuable complements to Paul's argument. Maria Rost Rubble's *Nonproliferation Norms: Why States Choose Nuclear Restraint* (University of Georgia Press, 2009) addresses the question of why states with the motive, means, and opportunity to produce nuclear weapons choose not to—a sort of non-acquisition tradition. On the other end of the spectrum, Mark Fitzpatrick's recent *Institut Français des Relations Internationales* Proliferation Paper *The World After: Proliferation, Deterrence, and Disarmament if the Nuclear Taboo is Broken* considers the impact of violating that prohibition.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the book is Paul's thorough parsing of the word *tradition* in contrast to other non-use terminology such as *taboo*. Such attention to semantics and clear delineation of the precise implications of a particular term is uncommon but nonetheless important. The greater debate over nuclear policy has suffered immensely from such a lack of specificity. For example, scare-tacticians frequently refer to the U.S. arsenal as being on “hair-trigger” alert. Though intended to conjure up images of Strangelovian madmen with a blinking red button under their finger, the operational reality is in fact much different. Regrettably, Paul's specificity is applied incompletely. Though the implications of *tradition* are clearly understood and delineated, one could argue that it may be equally important to parse the term *use*. Indeed, many rationalist strategists, in rejecting the idea of a non-use taboo, would assert that U.S. nuclear weapons are used every day for deterrence and assurance.

As Paul writes in chapter 9, “There is also the question about how deeply ingrained the tradition is among new nuclear states as well as the aspiring ones.” A weakness of the book is that Paul dedicates only one short chapter to Israel, India, and Pakistan and devotes comparatively little analysis to the question of Iran or North Korea. Taboo or tradition aside, few would argue with the fact that Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) nuclear weapons states have stridently abstained from using nuclear weapons and that current non-NPT nuclear weapons states have shown respect for non-use to date. The burning question is whether rogue states with ideological zealots at the helm would share a similar appreciation for the non-use framework that Paul describes. The relatively minimal analysis dedicated to rogue states stands in

sharp contrast to Paul's voluminous criticism of U.S. policy in the years immediately following 9/11.

Several recent events stand to shape and reflect perceptions on the non-use tradition in the post-George W. Bush era, providing a ready audience for *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons*. Recent policy guidance from the Strategic Posture Commission directly addresses the issue of strategic ambiguity regarding U.S. nuclear use. Additionally, the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review alongside the negotiation of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty follow-on has reinvigorated debate over force structure and the role of nuclear weapons in the 21st century. Of particular significance, the 2010 NPT Review Conference provided a multilateral forum for states to debate the issue of binding negative security assurances versus informal non-use declarations. Policymakers and analysts following these consequential proceedings will find Paul's book of interest.

In light of the significant events ahead, Paul's framework is a timely and important contribution to the nuclear debate that incorporates valuable perspectives from both the rationalist and ideational perspectives. As the issues of arms control, force structure, and disarmament inevitably become mired in political trench warfare, creative and eclectic thinking on nuclear issues will be at a premium. *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons* stands to provide an example of the rigorous scrutiny to which classic paradigms must be subjected in the search for real-world policy solutions. **JFQ**

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