Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations

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The purpose of this article is to contribute to a better understanding of the contemporary importance for democracy of the relationship between elected leaders and the security forces. It attempts to present a conceptualization and framework to help comprehend what security forces actually do and how they interface with democratic governments. The article aims to extend the conceptual breadth of the literature on civil–military relations beyond control to include two further dimensions – effectiveness and efficiency. The research is based on the authors’ experience in conducting programmes for officers and civilians throughout the world in line with at least six different roles and missions of security forces. The conceptualization draws on literature in comparative politics, organization theory, and defence economics, as well as civil–military relations, and security sector reform.

Key words: civil–military relations; security sector reform; security and democracy; trinity of control; effectiveness; efficiency

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to contribute to a better understanding of the contemporary importance for democracy of the relationship between elected leaders and the security forces. While there is relatively abundant literature on the role of the armed forces in democratic transitions (since in much of the world the transitions were from military-dominated regimes, including those where the military was the government), there is much less on the armed forces in democratic consolidation, although several prominent scholars highlight the importance of this issue.¹ Virtually all of the literature on the armed forces and intelligence agencies in established democracies is concerned with democratic civilian control over them. In the newer democracies, the literature on these two security instruments usually focuses on how to achieve the control supposedly already existing in the more established democracies.

There are a number of major lacunae in this literature. First, there is normally little attention paid to the police, which in most of the newer democracies are national police forces, at times undertaking military-like roles. Second, and more seriously, there is little attention in the literature on democratic consolidation and civil–military relations, especially in relation to what security forces do, and at what cost, that is,
their effectiveness and efficiency, and the implications of their roles and missions for democracy. And third, there is often little attention to what they do beyond national defence. This is surprising, as today very few militaries are primarily trained, resourced, and prepared to wage combat with other armed forces; armed combat is probably the least likely role among the six that militaries, and other security forces, are currently carrying out. These we will discuss later in the article.

In September 2007, there were 83,445 military and police personnel from up to 114 countries engaged in peace support operations (PSO) in 16 countries with conflicts. In Afghanistan in late 2007 there were 40,000 troops under the control of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), including 14,000 from the US, as well as another 12,000 American troops under American national control. Some of these 52,000 troops and police were fighting the Taliban, but most were engaged in ‘nation building’. In early 2007, international peacekeeping forces in Haiti were fighting street gangs, which is more typically a police function. In many regions, military forces either support or, currently in the case of Mexico, supplant police forces in operations to combat drug-trafficking and street crime. On the other hand, in countries such as Bolivia, Colombia, Pakistan, and the Philippines, the police fulfil military functions. And, since threats span a spectrum from global terrorism, through national and international drug cartels, to street gangs, militaries and police forces rely heavily on intelligence agencies to identify threats and plan missions. There is, in short, a great variety of activities that incorporate different instruments of state security to deal with contemporary threats, opportunities, and challenges in both national and international environments. This combination of activities, and the resulting mixing of armed forces, police, and intelligence agencies, are the issues that democratically elected policy makers must deal with to meet domestic and, increasingly, global expectations and standards.

Most conceptual literature on security focuses on armed conflict, most often in the established democracies, usually with a heavy historical focus. Various scholars, including Risa Brooks, Stephen Biddle, and Stephen Van Evera, make important contributions to our understanding of the dynamics involving civilians and soldiers, but only in the context of national defence. Today however the armed forces undertake a variety of roles, as the following quotation from Paul Collier emphasises: ‘this is what modern armies are for: to supply the global public good of peace in territories that otherwise have the potential for nightmare’. For analysis of the military and security forces more generally, we would anticipate that the conceptual literature that should assist scholars and policy makers to understand the instruments states may utilize is the sub-discipline of civil–military relations (CMR).

However, our argument in this article is that the almost exclusive focus on civilian control in this literature is a significant impediment to understanding the larger and more complex relationships concerning democracy and security forces, particularly when we consider the very wide spectrum of roles and missions. We must remember that even when civilian control is unquestioned, as in the United States, civilian control by itself is no guarantee that the policy-makers will make good decisions, or implement policy in such a way as to result in military success. The conceptual
literature on other security instruments and democracy is also problematic. Most of the studies that do exist are not analytical but rather about tradecraft, intelligence failures, or advocate policy positions. 6

Rather than rejecting CMR as a concept relevant to democracy, we need to extend its conceptual breadth. We develop our argument through several stages. First, we review the most relevant conceptual literature that deals with security in a democracy and the instruments nations use to achieve it; these will be CMR and security sector reform (SSR), a concept that emerged in Britain and continental Europe as a reaction to shortcomings of the old CMR concept, but which is little known or used analytically in the Western Hemisphere. Second, as we find both CMR and SSR in some ways lacking, we develop a new conceptualization with three dimensions: democratic control, effectiveness, and efficiency. Third, we discuss these concepts as they apply to: (1) the analysis of security forces and the six major roles and missions we identify; (2) what military and other security forces do, and (3) the implications for democracy. In this section we also elaborate on the control mechanisms that can be used for roles and missions beyond strictly national defence. Finally, we highlight some of the main tradeoffs democratic leaders are likely to face as they seek to balance democratic control, effectiveness and efficiency. 7

Civil–Military Relations in Historical Perspective

The classic literature on CMR, now dating back 50 years, is closely associated with the books of Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz. 8 This literature still largely defines the field today. These authors focus on the more established democracies, especially the United States, and are mainly concerned with the issue of reconciling a military strong enough to do what civilian leaders want it to do, with a military subordinate enough to do only what civilians authorize it to do.9 Or, as Dale Herspring has recently written, ‘As I surveyed the literature on civil-military relations in the United States, I was struck by the constant emphasis on “control”’. 10 This conceptualization, used exclusively by US authors, assumes a democratic political context, and is overwhelmingly associated with the Cold War military stand-off between the ‘West’ and the ‘East’. There are two main concerns in this literature. First is fear of the threat a large standing army poses to a democracy and the need to keep it subordinate – that is, under civilian control.11 Second are the implications of a trade-off between security and liberty. The work of the most prolific current analyst and critic of this idea, Peter D. Feaver, seems to fit well within these two parameters.12 His most prominent books begin with a well-established and unchallenged democratic context, and then examine the CMR issues that arise and the institutions these democracies employ to manage relations between a civilian government and the armed forces. For these reasons, while the amount of attention given to the ‘crisis in US civil–military relations’ during the presidency of William J. Clinton might make sense in the US domestic political context, it is not relevant for analytical purposes in other parts of the world.13 Huntington’s formulation may also be problematic, as it is closely linked to the US democratic experience, of questionable relevance elsewhere in the world, especially in democratizing countries. For analysis
of how to achieve this democratic civilian control in the context of political transitions we turn to the next body of literature.

Civil–Military Relations in the Context of Democratization

Since the beginning of the third wave of democracy, which started on 25 April 1974 in Lisbon with the military coup that became a revolution and gradually evolved into a democracy, the focus of civil–military issues shifted.\textsuperscript{14} Even though neither Portugal nor Spain, whose transition began upon the death of Francisco Franco in late 1975, were military dictatorships, their militaries played key parts in the transitions to democracy.\textsuperscript{15} This was even more the case as the third wave spread to include explicitly military regimes in Latin America, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Even the transitional governments of the former Marxist-dominated states, although never under military rule, had to learn to deal with their armed forces once the Berlin Wall came down and a new political environment began. In Romania, for example, the army was a central actor in the transition to democracy from the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu and his nefarious \textit{Securitate} (secret police). Many analyses of democratic transitions and consolidation since 1974 include, of necessity, a discussion of CMR. The major contribution by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan on Southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe includes a focus on different military groups, or CMR, as a central variable under the category of ‘actors’.\textsuperscript{16} As noted above, highly regarded analysts of transitions and consolidation, such as Adam Przeworski and Philippe Schmitter, call explicit attention to the ‘military variable’ or CMR.\textsuperscript{17} There also are some excellent case studies of CMR in the context of transitions and consolidation, or, in the case of Venezuela, what some see as democratic ‘deconsolidation’.\textsuperscript{18}

These works evaluate the role of the military, including in some cases the intelligence services, in democratic consolidation. Some of these authors also take into account the institutions involved in CMR. Overall, what these works demonstrate is that, in contrast to their authoritarian pasts, whether military- or civilian-dominated, the emerging democracies of South America, post-communist Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere emphasize democratic security over national security. In other words, these new regimes focus on how to control the armed forces, which in many cases were themselves previously in control of – or even constituted – the government. In most, but not all, of the literature there is yet again a single focus on control, its achievement and exercise by civilians over the military. Most of this literature, with some important exceptions, ignores what the militaries or other instruments of security actually do, as well as the overall implications for democracy of different sets of roles and missions.\textsuperscript{19}

Security Sector Reform

Security Sector Reform (SSR) was developed as a reaction to the limitations of CMR.\textsuperscript{20} It is now being utilized by governments and international organizations to further their abilities to develop effective ways of delivering security assistance.\textsuperscript{21}
Its proponents conceptualize SSR to include, on the one hand, a more comprehensive ‘security community’ in the process of democratization, civil–military relations, and conflict prevention rather than only the traditional military and police forces. On the other hand, they also hope to inspire a more thorough understanding of today’s security environment. Proponents of SSR argue that, because human security and development matter as much as defence against external and internal threats (of both a military and non-military nature), armed forces cannot, alone, deal with these challenges. They further argue that ensuring security requires a collaborative approach among a wider array of military and civilian institutions, which they term the ‘security sector’. It should be noted that the focus in SSR is overwhelmingly on the instruments of security themselves, and their control, and for all but a few of the proponents, only marginally on roles and missions.

For its advocates, at a minimum the security sector encompasses ‘all those organizations that have the authority to use, or order the use of force, or the threat of force, to protect the state and its citizens, as well as those civil structures that are responsible for their management and oversight’. These include: the military; specialized peace support operation (PSO) forces; intelligence agencies; justice and law-enforcement institutions; the civilian structures that manage them; and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the mass media. At the maximum, the security sector includes all of the above, plus other militarized non-state groups that play a role, even negative, in security issues, such as guerrillas or liberation armies.

The Utility of SSR

SSR has made conceptual contributions as it fills in some of the gaps in the traditional concept of CMR.

First, the SSR agenda moves away from considering the military to be the sole security provider of a nation, and proposes a broad concept of a uniformed/non-uniformed ‘sector’ or ‘community’ whose members must work together to achieve security.

Second, it takes into account the contemporary interchangeable roles and missions of the security sector components. These include, for example, armed forces performing police and diplomatic tasks, as well as social development work, while police and other law enforcement bodies perform military tasks to safeguard society against external threats, in particular after terrorist attacks. The concept also includes the internationalization of the security agencies (international/multinational peace support operations and/or police forces; international anti-terrorism cooperation among intelligence agencies).

Third, a SSR conceptualization explicitly links security sector reform directly to broader efforts toward democratization, human-rights promotion, conflict prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction. It seeks to connect to wider political, economic, social, and cultural transformations that accompany democratization, as well as taking into account civil society which is expected to be more involved in influencing policymaking, violence reduction and conflict prevention.
Problems with the SSR Conceptualization

Despite the claim that SSR better suits the contemporary security and political environment, it is still analytically flawed. First, there is the lack of consensus and understanding among SSR proponents about what the security sector encompasses. According to Timothy Edmunds, an early and leading proponent of SSR, a security sector that is too broadly defined jeopardizes understanding of the security sector and hence what is needed to reform it. For example, to include non-military bodies (such as the health care system) which, although it may undoubtedly play an important role in the provision of a nation’s security, takes us beyond the key responsibility of the security sector which is the legitimate use of force. In addition, conceptualizing the security sector so that it includes all the organizations that use force, whether or not they are part of the government (for instance, guerrillas or liberation armies) also jeopardizes the utility of SSR as they have no affiliation with the state.

Second, there is no general understanding of what SSR stands for, or what its agenda, features, challenges, and effects are. In our research on SSR, we have found a huge variety of definitions, at least 15, ranging from ‘the provision of security within the state in an effective and efficient manner, and in the framework of democratic civilian control’ to ‘the transformation of security institutions so that they play an effective, legitimate and democratically accountable role in providing external and internal security for their citizens’, which ‘requires broad consultation and includes goals such as strengthening civilian control and oversight of the security sector; demilitarization and peace-building; and strengthening the rule of law’. In the view of one critical SSR proponent, Mark Sedra, the ‘variances in interpretation of the concept have contributed to a significant disjuncture between policy and practice’. In this sense, while the SSR concept has been formally adopted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and various states in their official foreign policy documents, the ways countries implement it differs greatly. In addition, although several security programmes were implemented as part of a SSR agenda, they dealt with only limited SSR components (e.g., police or armed forces reform), while not embracing its claimed holistic characteristics, thus failing to comply with a crucial element of the SSR normative model.

Third, and most importantly for our purposes in this article, SSR lacks a consistent conceptualization, which is undoubtedly due to the diverse definitions. It is instead put forward as either a long ‘checklist’ that countries’ security agencies need to complete for policy reasons (such as strengthening the armed forces, police, and judicial bodies’ capabilities; improving civilian management and democratic control of the security sector; and promoting respect for human rights and transparency); as a ‘context-depending’ situation (for example, developmental, post-authoritarian or post-conflict); or as different, but possibly overlapping, ‘generations’ (the first generation of reforms that focuses mainly on control, or the second generation of reforms that includes effectiveness and efficiency). Of all the many conceptualizations we reviewed, the approach Timothy Edmunds proposes, which also analyses the interdependency of control, effectiveness, and efficiency, is both most useful and similar to what we propose in our reformulation of CMR.
Civil–Military Relations in Our Revised Framework

We have found from our experience with the Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR) in working with civilians and military officers in consolidating democracies, that the analytical focus exclusively on civilian control and on armed forces in national defence is not adequate either empirically or, for the purpose of developing comparisons, conceptually. Militaries have long been engaged in humanitarian assistance such as disaster relief, or to back up the police in domestic upheavals and riots. Peacekeeping became increasingly critical in the former Yugoslavia, parts of Africa, East Timor and elsewhere; more and more countries opted to provide peacekeepers. Attacks by international terrorists in Bali, Nairobi, New York, Washington, Madrid, London, Amman, and elsewhere, and the launch of Washington’s ‘global war on terrorism’, have compelled militaries everywhere to become involved in fighting terrorism to a greater or lesser extent. Thus, leaders must pay attention to matters both of control and outcomes, and with instruments beyond the armed forces; they must provide for security that today is both domestic and international, with the latter including at least PSO, as in providing troops to NATO in Afghanistan, and cooperation in intelligence to counter the threat of international terrorism. In short, the challenge today is not only to assert and maintain control, but also to develop effective militaries and other security instruments to implement a broad variety of roles and missions. In our conceptualization, therefore, while civilian control is considered a fundamental aspect of democratic consolidation, and is not assumed to exist in any particular case, it is only a part of the analysis. Analysis of how effective security forces are and at what cost is also necessary to understand the contemporary importance for democracy of the relationship between elected leaders and the security forces.

Democratic Control, Effectiveness and Efficiency

In order to capture the priorities and requirements of both democratic consolidation and contemporary security challenges, we analyse CMR according to the three dimensions of control, effectiveness and efficiency.

Democratic Civilian Control

At a basic level, what elected leaders are concerned about in most of the newer democracies, and scholars in the established democracies, is how to achieve and then to maintain the armed forces under democratic civilian control. Why are these leaders and the literature on civil–military relations so heavily focused on control? The answer is captured in the classic dilemma, ‘Who guards the guardians?’ Any armed force strong enough to defend a country is also strong enough to take it over. This is, of course, the formulation behind most analyses of civil–military relations, not only leading into military governments but also out of them. The issue is all the more important in those states where the military was the government and still enjoys prerogatives it negotiated for itself during the transition from authoritarian rule. Control is the fundamental concern with regard to the intelligence apparatus, which works in secrecy, while the very foundation of democracy rests
on accountability and transparency. This becomes clearer in the case of most non-democratic regimes, military governments or former Soviet bloc countries, where intelligence served state security, protecting the authoritarian regime against its own citizens.

There are three main instruments that governments use to achieve security: the military, police, and intelligence services. Each of these in turn can be subdivided. Militaries are divided into services, typically army, navy, marines, and air force; then further into communities such as infantry, artillery, aviators, surface warfare, etc.; and into active or reserve branches. Police forces can be divided into paramilitary units, such as carbineer or gendarmerie; national police forces, as in Colombia, El Salvador, and Romania; by state or municipality, as in Brazil and the US. Intelligence agencies can be divided into military, civilian national, and police intelligence, to name just a few.

The next question is how are these three main instruments of state security controlled by democratically elected leaders? There is a wide spectrum of possible control mechanisms. Most countries, and especially newer democracies, however, are characterized by the paucity in the number and robustness of these controls. It is not sufficient to focus only on the mechanisms for democratic control of the armed forces in external defence as this would encompass few of the contemporary roles and missions in which the security forces are engaged. Rather, we should broaden our approach to encompass both the six contemporary roles and missions we review below and the three instruments of security. Democracies should consider control over all instruments of security in implementing the spectrum of roles and missions. While at the local level these may be easily conceptualized, at a more global level things are much more complicated. Any discussion of multinational efforts such as countering terrorism and organized crime, or supporting peace operations, must include the umbrella organizations that are charged with carrying out specific missions. These include, for example, NATO, the United Nations, European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the African Union. While each of these organizations has its own policies and bureaucracy, national executive branches do not cede control over their own security forces that participate in coalition operations. States maintain control through mandates that are further qualified by caveats.

Our position is that democratic control depends less on the roles and missions that are assigned, such as the armed forces doing police work, than on the mix of security instruments and how the control mechanisms are institutionalized. Our main argument, building on past work, is to conceptualize control in terms of authority over the following: institutional control mechanisms, oversight, and professional norms. The first set of mechanisms – institutional control mechanisms – refers to the institutions in place to control the three instruments of security. These include a wide spectrum beginning with a clear legal basis, ministries of defence, committees in parliaments with authority over policy and budgets, national security councils, and officer-promotion processes. The next mechanism – oversight – means whether the civilians actually keep track of what the armed forces or other security forces do; are they in fact following the direction and guidance they receive? This mechanism,
and the elements determining whether it works or not, includes not only the formal oversight mechanisms, and their staffing, in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, but also the media, NGOs, and think tanks. The third mechanism – professional norms – means whether the security institutions have been recruited, educated, trained, promoted, and the like to have internalized the previous two control mechanisms, and thus to indeed act in accord with the goals of the civilians. These three sets of mechanisms are, in the best of circumstances, utilized by democratically elected civilians to exercise control over security forces. But, there is much more involved in security and democracy. We must also consider effectiveness and efficiency.

**Effectiveness in Fulfilling Roles and Missions**

What are the current major roles and missions of security forces? What should the services be effective and efficient in implementing? We have determined from a review of the literature and conducting our CCMR programmes globally, that they fall into six major categories: 1) fight, and be prepared to fight, external wars; 2) fight, and be prepared to fight, internal wars or insurgencies; 3) fight global terrorism; 4) fight crime; 5) provide support for humanitarian assistance; and, 6) prepare for and execute peace support operations.

While there are some cases in which effectiveness in implementing roles and missions can be demonstrated, we believe that generally effectiveness is best determined by whether or not a state is prepared to fulfil any or all of the six roles. Success is very difficult to measure in many, or even most, instances. When countries prepare to fight wars against external enemies, the greatest indicator of success in most cases is avoidance of armed combat, whether it is due to the perception of overwhelming force on one side, success in the use of diplomatic tools, integration into NATO or the like. The best recent example is probably the Cold War, which never did become hot directly between the United States and the Soviet Union, arguably the result of a credible mutual nuclear deterrence. In the case of internal wars, with recent cases including Colombia, Nepal, and the Philippines, there are economic, political, and social causes behind the conflicts and the security forces alone cannot resolve them. Fighting tends to drag on, and it is all but impossible to ever declare ‘victory’. The fight against global terrorism can be considered successful when no attack occurs. It is impossible to know, however, if there was no attack as a result of effective security measures, or because the terrorists simply chose not to attack. Fighting crime is ongoing, as is the provision of humanitarian assistance. Neither criminals nor natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and the like, are ever going to disappear. These are a matter of preparation and mitigation, keeping the level of crime or loss of life and property within acceptable limits (leaving aside the question, acceptable to whom?). With regard to peace support operations, the issue is similar. If conflicts between parties arise due to religious, ethnic, or political differences and require intervention by foreign security forces, in some cases without the agreement of the government in place in a capital, the troops’ presence in itself will not resolve the fundamental causes behind the fighting. Rather, they may provide some stability, separate the antagonists, and allow space for negotiations.
While we may have much to say about what is required for security measures to be effective, we must nevertheless be realistic about our ability to measure effectiveness. Based upon our studies of what is necessary to be effective in fulfilling any of the six roles and missions we suggest three basic requirements. First, there must be a plan in place, which may take the form of a strategy or even a doctrine. Examples include national security strategies, national military strategies, strategies for disaster relief, doctrine on intelligence, counter-terrorism doctrine, and the like. We find that the formulation by a prominent student of strategy, Hew Strachan, captures our meaning well.

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.44

Second, there must be structures and processes both to formulate the plans and implement them. These include ministries of defence, national security councils or other means of inter-agency coordination. Third, a country must commit resources, in the form of political capital, money, and personnel, to ensure it has sufficient equipment, trained forces and other assets needed to implement the assigned roles and missions. Lacking any one of these three components, it is difficult to imagine how any state would effectively implement any of these roles and missions.

Efficiency in the Use of Resources

This dimension is, of course, complicated initially by the wide variety of potential roles and missions, and the difficulty in establishing measures of effectiveness for any one, let alone a combination of them. We must first clarify the conceptual distinctions between effectiveness and efficiency, as we often find the terms used interchangeably, and a review of the literature on organization theory, political transitions and defence economics shows that the terms effectiveness, efficiency, efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and the like are not used in a consistent manner. We find most agreement on the definition of ‘effectiveness’. Chester Barnard, in his 1938 classic The Functions of the Executive, states: ‘What we mean by “effectiveness” of cooperation is the accomplishment of the recognized objectives of cooperative action.’45 The comparative politics scholar Juan Linz defines effectiveness in a way similar to Barnard’s: “Effectiveness” is the capacity actually to implement the policies formulated, with the desired results.46 We thus find support in the literature for our conceptualization of effectiveness as the ability to actually achieve stated goals.

Efficiency as a concept is strongly associated with physics, economics, and organization theory. In 1961, Herbert Simon stated: ‘The criterion of efficiency dictates that choice of alternatives which produces the largest result for the given application of resources.’47 Arthur M. Okun writes: ‘To the economist, as to the engineer, efficiency means getting the most out of a given input . . . If society finds a way,
with the same inputs, to turn out more of some products (and no less of the others), it has scored an increase in efficiency. In reviewing the literature, we have not found a more useful definition. In the field of defence economics, the term used is ‘cost-effectiveness’, in recognition of the absence of the market and the political monopoly status of a government in a given territory. While there is general recognition that the concept must be limited in the public context, governmental agencies still should make efforts to determine the most efficient use of resources.

As this third aspect is even more complicated to conceptualize and evaluate than effectiveness, the discussion here is necessary not only to fill out the concepts for analysis, but also to deconstruct the facile ‘solutions’ often used to supposedly measure efficiency in national security and defence. While it may generally be said that efficiency means getting ‘more bang for the buck’, there are serious problems with both conceptualization and measurement. First, because security is a public activity, where the so-called bottom line does not apply, there is no market mechanism to assign a value to whether an activity is being done efficiently – that is, making a profit, or not. Second, competition, in the form of a peer government within the same territorial boundaries, is not at work. There is, then, no objective criterion for efficiency; nor, for that matter, are there incentives to achieve it. Thus the literature on private enterprises, and their efficiency measures does not apply.

There are further considerations that must be noted. As anyone who works in government is aware, public agencies and funds can be utilized as a ‘jobs programme’ to employ specific categories of people. This can run from keeping people off the dole to ensuring congressional or personal prerogatives are satisfied to outright nepotism. Along the same lines, government agencies are required to buy from certain suppliers, where neither cost nor quality are the major considerations. Such acquisitions range from purchasing furniture made by prison inmates to contracting for technical support from organizations that provide money for election campaigns. All lucid persons know how these externalities function, and no conceptualization of efficiency that we have seen can adequately account for them.

In some sectors of the public realm, education or transportation, for example, efficiency can be measured to some degree by kilometres of roads laid, numbers of bridges or schools built, or percentage of students who graduate, per tax dollar spent. In security, with regard to the six roles, these rudimentary measures of efficiency do not apply. How, for example, can we measure the deterrent value of the armed forces, of a nuclear capability, of submarines vs. aircraft carriers vs. squadrons or divisions? How should we assess the value of a ‘hearts and minds campaign’ over ‘military force’ in an internal war? Or how, in fighting terrorism, should we rate the efficiency of intelligence when success means nothing happens? What is the best way to determine whether engaging in PSO is good for a country such as Brazil, or is useful mainly to demonstrate to the global community that the country has assumed its international responsibilities?

In short, the conceptualization and measurement of efficiency in the area of security is extremely problematic. What can be measured are the so-called hard data, such as numbers of tanks or airplanes produced, or number of troops trained or equipped, for a given cost. What these indicators tell us generally in
terms of security and force effectiveness, however, is at the least limited and probably even misleading; policymakers nevertheless may rely on them to make, or more likely rationalize, decisions, when almost any imaginable issue in national security requires a broader, more strategic view than simple cost analysis. The field of defence economics, in which the Hitch and McKean text noted above is still the main reference after 30 years, makes some contributions, but only at the margins; on issues that can be quantified, which are not normally as important as issues of politics or strategy. The important decisions are made on the basis of political calculations, even though policymakers might embellish them with some kind of pseudo-scientific bow to efficiency.

Even so, the use of public funds in a democracy demands that government agencies carry out systematic assessments of programme results and their costs. Sharon Caudle, formerly of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), researches and writes on homeland security, which encompasses all three of the security instruments included in this article. She has identified seven different approaches to what we call efficiency and she terms ‘Results Management’. The one Caudle most strongly recommends is ‘capabilities-based planning and assessment’, which she describes as ‘planning under uncertainty to develop the means – capabilities – to perform effectively and efficiently in response to a wide range of potential challenges and circumstances’.52 This formulation is attractive to us as she incorporates two of our three dimensions, effectiveness and efficiency. She argues that institutions are necessary to implement such planning or, for that matter, any of the seven approaches she reviews. While this observation is obvious in the context of the United States, it might not be elsewhere; therefore we find it worthwhile to highlight some of the institutions necessary even to begin to consider efficiency. Since the concept of efficiency is mainly about the use of resources, institutions must deal with the allocation and oversight of these resources. These can include what Feaver terms ‘police patrols’, institutions whose purpose is to track and report on the allocation of resources in other agencies of the government.53 In the United States, such institutions include the Office of Management and Budget and inspectors general, and in the legislative branch, the GAO which reports to both the legislative and executive branches, the Congressional Budget Office and congressional oversight committees.54

This process is not unique to the US. For example, Romania’s legislature exercises control over the budget, which is ensured in various ways: parliament approves the budget for the security institutions; annually it revises and adopts the Law on the State Budget, governing allocations to the security institutions; legislative committees assess draft budgetary allocations for the intelligence agencies; parliament requires annual reports, usually during the drafting of the following year’s allocations; and the Court of Audits, an independent body with budgetary responsibilities, functions in support of the parliament. Brazil has both an executive branch Secretaria de Controle Interno da Presidência da República (Presidential Secretariat for Internal Control) which oversees the executive’s budget in general, and the Tribunal de Contas da União (National Audit Board) which oversees budgets for the judicial branch.

It should be obvious that the three elements of CMR must be assessed as interdependent parts of a whole in a democratic context. Each of the three is necessary, and
individually none is sufficient. Civilian control is basic and fundamental, but is irrelevant unless the instruments for achieving security can effectively fulfil their roles and missions. And, both control and effectiveness must be implemented at an affordable cost or they will vitiate other national priorities. While the focus by the scholars working in CMR and by most proponents of SSR is exclusively on control, the other two sides of the triangle must be included as well to assess the wider impact of roles and missions, and the instruments of security, on democracy. Democracy is not only about institutions; legitimacy is also necessary.

The debates in Canada and several Western European countries in 2007–2008 on sending troops to serve with NATO’s ISAF in Afghanistan no doubt have an impact on how citizens view the responsiveness and credibility of their governments. We have seen that, despite initial resistance by segments of the populations, the governments of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, in sending security forces (military, police, and carabineer) for PSO in Haiti, have generated pride in and increased support for the governments and security forces. In short, how effective and efficient the government handles defence and security issues can influence its legitimacy. The main intellectual and even policy challenge seems to be to recognize that of the six possible roles and missions, external defence is the least prevalent today, yet it is the one most militaries still prefer and the one most civilians focus on, possibly because it is so unlikely they don’t have to provide many resources for the security forces.

Tradeoffs

Democratic Control and Effectiveness

Although it may seem counter-intuitive, increased democratic control can improve effectiveness in military, intelligence, and police forces. Based on historical research, Deborah Avant concludes, ‘Having more civilians control the army made it easier, not harder, for the army to maintain its focus.’ While too much direction and oversight obviously can hamper security services’ capabilities or reveal sources and methods in intelligence, implementing ‘good’ control, i.e., instituting control and oversight in a way that provides top-level direction and general oversight guidance, as opposed to malfeasance or cronyism, leads to improved effectiveness. For example, one of the few acknowledged successes in US civil military relations, the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, both reinforced democratic civilian control and mandated ‘jointness’ for the military services in the United States. Although some interoperability issues certainly remain, US forces have been more effective at fulfilling their various roles and missions since this level of democratic control was enacted. Operation Desert Storm, operations in the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, and the initial combat success in Iraq bear witness to these improvements.

Romania provides a good example of how democratic control can improve effectiveness in an intelligence organization, which is positive for legitimacy of the government (and facilitated NATO membership and European Union accession). As Romania made its transition to democracy, its intelligence structure consisted of
as many as nine agencies with little oversight, direction or clear roles and missions. As both the executive and legislative branches implemented control mechanisms, the intelligence community in Romania began to improve. For example, the executive branch created the National Supreme Defence Council (CSAT), which organizes and coordinates all intelligence activities. The CSAT monitors and validates national security and military strategies, as well as intelligence products from the agencies. Similarly, legislative control and oversight of intelligence agencies is exercised through specialized parliamentary committees. Together, the CSAT and parliament have reduced the Romanian intelligence community from nine organizations to six; improved recruitment, training and professionalism; and clarified the mission of each agency. As a result of these measures, the Romanian intelligence apparatus is both more effective and more efficient.

Colombia is also an interesting case. When the Colombian Armed Forces were left to their own, based on an understanding during the return to democracy in 1958, with minimal civilian control, they emulated the US, with whom they served in the Korean Conflict in the 1950s, and bought equipment and trained as though they were the US, rather than a developing country confronting violent domestic insurgents. Meanwhile the guerrillas, especially the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), increasingly took control over large sections of the country, stimulating the emergence of a competing body of paramilitary organizations, which resulted in a spiral of violence that made Colombia all but ungovernable. With the election of President Alvaro Uribe in 2002, and his taking strong personal control over the armed forces, police, and intelligence organizations, they were forced to confront the internal conflict with the result that security has greatly improved, the legitimacy of the government increased (with President Uribe re-elected in 2006), and development promoted.

Democratic policing involves the executive (including mayors, and governors in the case of federal systems) and judicial branches, from within the police forces and, in particular, from civil society, where there is naturally a greater emphasis on the direction and oversight of police activity than on the military. Case studies in Colombia, Brazil, and Chile show that the institution of democratic reforms and control mechanisms produces more professional, trusted, and effective police, with more public support.

Democratic Control and Efficiency

While we believe that improved democratic control generally improves effectiveness, efficiency is not always a by-product of increased democratic control. In most countries, there are several different branches of the military, along with various intelligence organizations. This diversity fosters improved democratic control in that no single security apparatus monopolizes all government knowledge or power; yet it often leads to duplication of effort and bureaucratic competition among various entities vying for government resources. The reality is that direction and oversight are costly. If security services never had to testify before legislative committees, provide data to oversight organizations, reform their institutions when problems are uncovered, undergo time-consuming audits, or improve professional
standards, then all resources might be used to obtain the best military equipment, provide the most intelligence product or increase the number of police on the streets. Despite this, it is not always the case that increased democratic control will reduce efficiency. Police reform, in particular, has improved efficiencies when a comprehensive approach to democratic control is adopted. In the Chilean and Brazilian cases, community policing efforts, while initially difficult and costly, have helped create efficient policing in the long term because citizens worked to support their own security.

Probably most important is for democratically elected decision-makers to have a realistic understanding of efficiency in the roles and missions of security forces. Applying a simplified business model to this area is inappropriate and can lead to disaster. An example of disaster was President Berger of Guatemala’s decision to cut the military by some 50 per cent on taking office in early 2004 to 15,000 men. The result was a wave of violence by street gangs and organized crime, resulting in the decision by the recently elected President Alvaro Colom to double the size of the military in early 2008 to counter the violence.

**Effectiveness and Efficiency**

Improvements in management and leadership that increase effectiveness may yield positive results in efficiency, as fewer resources are consumed. But it is more often the case that an operation may be effective while being quite inefficient. Launching numerous expensive missiles at a single target and destroying it ‘multiple times’ is clearly effective but not efficient. Similarly, a ‘just in time’ supply chain works well for Costco and Target, but not for a warship at sea or a brigade in combat. They require redundancy and self-sufficiency for effectiveness, but this is not efficient in the normal use of the term. Further, allocating a large police force in response to a spate of crime in a certain area may cause crime to go down, but costs may disproportionately go up.

**Conclusion**

Our purpose in this article is to synthesize conceptually what we have learned in our experience with CCMR programmes globally on the relationship of three instruments of security employed in six different roles and missions on democracy. Through our teaching and review of the literature we have found that the overwhelming focus in the classical literature on civil–military relations is on civilian control over the armed forces, and at the national level. The literature on military power and military effectiveness is all about armed conflict and war, and is very historical. We have found a need to expand analysis and programmes on at least six different roles and missions to include three factors that we believe constitute contemporary civil–military relations: control, effectiveness, and efficiency. We also find support in the more analytical research on security sector reform by Timothy Edmunds and his colleagues, and a similar concern and development of concepts based on their experience in support of our conceptualization of a trinity. To achieve its purpose, each of the three aspects requires particular institutions responsible for control and implementation.
Although we consider the common applications of indicators of efficiency to be something of a ‘red herring’ in the field of security, there is a need for a set of institutions to allocate and oversee the application of resources as part and parcel of democratic accountability and transparency.

While there is still concern in many of the newer democracies with achieving democratic civilian control over the armed forces, there is generally little awareness of the institutions necessary to achieve and exercise this control, and minimal political will to create them once their potential importance is recognized. In addition to institutional control mechanisms, we include oversight and the inculcation of professional norms. There is increasing awareness today, however, that control, in and of itself, is not much use if the instruments of security – military, police, and intelligence – are not effective in achieving the roles and missions assigned them by the civilian leadership. This is particularly important as the contemporary spectrum of domestic roles and missions, such as fighting crime and providing humanitarian assistance after natural disasters receives increasing scrutiny; international roles that include fighting against terrorists or providing capable peacekeepers also raise considerable expectations of effective security forces.

Democratic civilian control is necessary; all of the literature in CMR and democratic consolidation recognizes this fact. But we also believe that democracy, which requires legitimacy beyond institutions, also necessitates that governments, including the security sector, be seen as both effective and efficient. Increasingly, populations are aware that their security forces must not only be under control, but can also implement the assigned tasks at a reasonable cost. If the only role of the military were to fight and win wars, this point is moot since few wars are fought and if the country loses the government collapses in any case. But, citizens are aware if the security forces are effective or not in fighting organized crime, participate in PSO with other respected states, and provide humanitarian assistance when disasters occur. From our experience we see successes at implementing the trinity in several countries. One such example is El Salvador, with fighting against street gangs and sending troops to Iraq resulting in huge influx of resources from the US. An example of failure is the US over Hurricane Katrina and the seemingly unending wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Other examples can be given, on both sides, but what is most important is that democratic decision-makers better understand what is necessarily best to prepare their countries, and their security forces, to implement the roles and missions they assign them. We hope this article will bring a new perspective on the relationship between the democracy and security arenas; moreover, we hope that this effort at conceptualization and integration will stimulate others’ interest in the broader impact on democracy of different elements of civil–military relations and a productive ongoing cross-fertilization with security sector reform.

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NOTES


5. See, for example, Thomas Ricks, Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), for a well-researched account of the poor planning and implementation of US security in Iraq, which has had serious consequences for the administration of George W. Bush and indeed, for the United States’ global prestige.


7. Much of the material, and most of the insights, for this article come from the authors’ experience over 12 years’ of programmes with the Center for Civil–Military Relations. CCMR delivers approximately 120 short courses, or seminars, a year all over the world on all imaginable topics involving all sectors of security forces. Through these seminars the authors have access, normally for a week, to approximately 40 civilian decision-makers and military officers. The authors have turned these seminars into research opportunities in addition to communicating information and ideas on the security issue which is the focus of the seminar.


17. Przeworski (note 1); Schmitter (note 1).


20. The concept of security sector reform was first put forward to a larger public in a 1998 speech by Clare Short, first Minister for International Development in Britain’s newly created (1997) Department for International Development. It also emerged from the development assistance programmes conducted by several European donor countries and UN agencies, as well as other international organizations. See Michael Brzoska, ‘Development Donors and the Concept of Security Sector Reform’, available at http://se2.isn.ch/serviceengine/FileContent?serviceID=DCAF&fileid=A841CB08-A6E3-5A37-5EF6-5F0E6735CCF7&lng=en; and Timothy Edmunds, ‘Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Implementation’, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF); available at http://www.dcaf.ch/cfs/ev_geneva02_papers_edmunds.pdf#search=%22%22SSR%20has%20emerged%20as%20a%20key%20concept%22%22.


29. Ibid.

30. Ibid. These are called ‘partial programmes’.


35. We are pleased to see the importance of effectiveness is forcefully advocated in a recent article by the British scholar of strategy, Hew Strachan. See his ‘Making Strategy: Civil–Military Relations after Iraq’, Survival, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Autumn 2006), pp. 59–82, especially, p. 66. In addition, the foremost British scholar of SSR, Timothy Edmunds, also looks to these issues. See Timothy Edmunds, ‘What are Armed Forces For? The Changing Nature of Military Roles in Europe’, International Affairs, Vol. 82, No. 6 (2006), pp. 1059–75.


38. A similar point is made by David Pion-Berlin and Harold Trinkunas, Democratization, Social Crisis and the Impact of Military Domestic Roles in Latin America’, in Journal of Political and Military
Sociology, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 5–24. One expert forcefully states ‘When one includes consideration of the possibilities offered by foreseeable security environments in Latin America the suggestion of completing divorcing the military from domestic law enforcement activities appears unworthy.’ Geoffrey B. Demarest, ‘The Overlap of Military and Police Responsibilities in Latin America’, Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Autumn 1995), p. 252. This position is in stark contrast to an important US-based NGO. In ‘Blurring the Lines: Trends in US Military Programs with Latin America’, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) criticizes the military undertaking missions that the police are expected to conduct in established democracies. ‘[H]aving the military carry out crime fighting or other roles that civilians can fill – risks politicizing the armed forces, which in turn leads the military to use (or threaten to use) its monopoly of arms whenever it disagrees with the civilian consensus.’ WOLA, September 2004, p. 1, available at: http://www.ciponline.org/facts/0410btl.pdf.

39. See Thomas Bruneau and Scott Tollefson (eds), Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil–Military Relations (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006.)

40. On different formal oversight mechanisms see, e.g., Feaver, Armed Servants (note 8), p. 2, Table 3.1, p. 86, ‘Summary of Oversight Mechanisms in Ascending Order of Intrusiveness’. For a comprehensive listing of all imaginable legislative oversight mechanisms see Frederick Kaiser, Walter Oleszek, T. J Halstead, Morton Rosenberg, and Todd Tatelman, ‘Congressional Oversight Manual’ CRS Report for Congress, Washington, DC, updated 2 January 2007. This listing is 149 pages long. It should be noted that this inventory was published after the Democrats took control of Congress following the November 2006 elections. When the Republicans controlled both the executive and the legislature, from 2001 until these elections, legislative oversight was virtually nonexistent.


42. For a discussion on roles and missions, and the mixes in different countries, see Paul Shemella, ‘The Spectrum of Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces’, in Bruneau and Tollefson, Who Guards the Guardians and How (note 39).

43. Some successes in military effectiveness can, however, be identified and they include the following: Goldwater–Nichols Defense Reform Act of 1986, which resulted in US military forces working more jointly and thus more effectively; President Alvaro Uribe’s Democratic Security Strategy, 2003–present, which has resulted in increased security in terms of a wide variety of variables; Romania’s successful transition to a smaller and professional force, which operates in Afghanistan and Iraq, among other conflicts, and an effective and reformed intelligence system; and Mongolia’s transition from a territorial defence strategy during the Cold War to being able to deploy effective peace-keeping forces in Iraq and Sierra Leone.


50. See, for example, Jeanne Giraldo, ‘Defense Budgets, Democratic Civilian Control, and Effective Governance’, in Bruneau and Tollefson, Who Guards the Guardians and How (note 39), for a discussion on the perils in over-simplification of the issue of allocation resources to defense, at pp. 179–81.
51. One typical example: ‘The most successful contractors are not necessarily those doing the best work, but those who have mastered the special skill of selling to Uncle Sam. The top 20 service contractors have spent nearly $300 million since 2000 on lobbying and have donated $23 million to political campaigns’. Scott Shane and Ron Nixon, ‘In Washington, Contractors Take on Biggest Role Ever’, New York Times, 4 February 2007, p. 24.


53. Feaver, Armed Servants (note 8), p. 2.


57. The CSAT consists of: the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Administration and Internal Affairs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Industry and Resources, the Minister of Public Finances, the Director of the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI), the Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SIE), the Chief of the General Staff of the Romanian Armed Forces, and the Presidential Adviser on National Security. On invitation by the president, the chairman of the two parliamentary chambers, the governor of the National Bank, the heads of the other intelligence agencies (including departmental heads), and the chairmen of the special parliamentary committees may participate in CSAT meetings.


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