

Most contributors aim to elucidate some aspect of Clausewitz's thinking before either directly indicating its relevance to modern conflict or inviting the reader to think more deeply about contemporary violence in the light of their analysis. Daniel Moran examines the idea of war as an instrument of policy, suggesting that it is more complex and more difficult to realise today than in Clausewitz's time. Christopher Bassford provides a close analysis of what he translates as the 'fascinating trinity' of violence, reason and the play of chance and probability which he sees as the concept that ties together all of Clausewitz's ideas into a meaningful unity. Jon Sumida offers a perceptive analysis of the idea that defence is the stronger form of war, claiming that this is the concept that unifies Clausewitz's thinking. Ulrike Kleemeier argues that emotions play a large part in Clausewitz's account of war and that for him intuition is more important than deductive reasoning. (She also asks pointedly why 'obedience' is not to be found among Clausewitz's moral forces.)

There are also rich seams to be mined in references to the 'war on terror' offered by various contributors. Daniel Moran argues that US policy is conducted without any 'strategic interaction' with the adversary, a *sine qua non* of true warfare. Is Clausewitz then irrelevant in the age of terrorist and other non-state actors? The fault, Moran suggests, lies more with the US than with Clausewitz. In fact, as Antulio Echevarria observes, Clausewitz refers more than once to eras in which the modern state was absent; what is important is the existence of any 'personified intelligence' that seeks political goals by violent means (no matter whether it is motivated by religious fervour or private greed). Relevant, too, is Christopher Daase's commentary on Clausewitz's analysis of 'small wars' which can become a 'competition of outrage' as states contend with insurgents with few, if any, bounds.

As Hew Strachan points out, the fact that Clausewitz offered few fixed conclusions helps account for his longevity. But the simple fact is that no-one has analysed war better or more comprehensively. Clausewitz remains the mother lode of thinking about war and will be mined for many years to come. This valuable book will not be the last to dig over the Prussian general's writings. I doubt we have reached 'peak Clausewitz'.

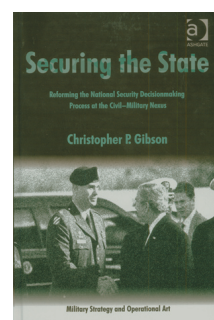
## SECURING THE STATE: Reforming the National Security Decisionmaking Process at the Civil–Military Nexus

Christopher P. Gibson

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Reviewed by Associate Professor Ian Wing

Colonel Christopher P. Gibson is the current Director of Operations and Plans (G3) of the US Army's 25th Infantry Division. He is a highly-decorated veteran of the First Gulf War, NATO peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Operation *Iraqi Freedom*—where he commanded a battalion in Mosul. He was previously the Distinguished Honour Graduate of his Command and General Staff College class and holds a PhD in Government from Cornell University. Earlier

in his career he taught American Politics at West Point, served as a Congressional Fellow, and was most recently a Hoover National Security Fellow at Stanford University.

Gibson's dual backgrounds, as both a military professional and a distinguished scholar, provide the qualifications to write this impressive study on civil–military decision making. Gibson states that: 'Civil–military relations are the delineation of duties among top-level civilian and military leaders as found in existing US legal *structure* (provisions of the US Constitution and US statutes) and in the *norms* that guide behavior in view of how these leaders contribute individually and collectively to the national security decision-making process...' (p. 5).

Gibson introduces his thesis with the war planning processes that preceded the Coalition invasion of Iraq and which failed to prepare for 'Phase IV' post-invasion security operations. He finds that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld completely dominated the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Richard Myers, and that military advice was consistently ignored. As a result, he describes Rumsfeld, Myers and the Commander of Central Command, General Tommy Franks, as 'jointly culpable for this flawed process' (p. 2).

From this starting point, Gibson examines four periods of American war leadership and draws lessons on the workings of the 'civil-military nexus' at the highest levels. The four case studies are:

- General George Washington and the Continental Congress, during the Revolutionary War;
- General George C. Marshall and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, during the Second World War;
- General Earle Wheeler and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, during the Vietnam War; and
- General Richard Myers and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, during the war in Iraq.

Gibson finds that the first two examples provide role models for how top military leaders should conduct themselves when representing the profession of arms at the highest levels. Washington and Marshall showed strength in their dealings with appointed civilian leaders, cooperating and conceding ground where appropriate, but vigorously disagreeing at times. Both were loyal to their elected civilian leaders but also fiercely loyal to the needs of their troops.

In stark contrast, the latter two examples show military leaders who were effectively dominated by civilians. McNamara's team of civilian experts, the so-called 'whizz kids', were better educated and more articulate than their military counterparts and the Vietnam War was run more like a civilian business than a military campaign. The next generation of military leaders, who planned the invasion of Iraq, were far better educated than their predecessors but still disinclined to disagree with civilian officials. Where disagreement did occur, for example when Army Chief John Shinseki criticised the lack of US troops being committed to the fighting in Iraq, his reward was early retirement. Another example occurred when General Myers was not consulted on the important decision to disband the Iraqi Army. Myers was reported to have said that 'at times he wondered why he was even needed' (p. 51, p. 63).

In looking for solutions to these weaknesses, Gibson's research finds a dearth of relevant normative approaches to our understanding of the civil–military nexus. He points to the works of military sociologists Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (1957), and Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (1960), both of which are well-known to military scholars, but finds that these propose normative models that are either too theoretical or out of date. Huntington argued for 'objective control' in which the military would be apolitical and kept completely separate from any issues involving politico-strategic policy. Janowitz argues for 'subjective control' in which civilian thinking would infiltrate the military to 'tame' it. Gibson claims that attempts to implement these methods contributed to poor military campaign planning and execution including 'the two most unsuccessful military ventures in US history—Vietnam and Iraq' (p. 11).

Following on from its consideration of these celebrated theorists, the book reviews the work of more recent commentators, such as Richard H. Kohn and Eliot Cohen. These men have argued for an even more diminished role for military leaders within the civil–military nexus. Gibson finds that their ideas, which basically echo Clemenceau's quip that 'war is too important to be left to the generals', would relegate military leaders down to the operational sphere, leaving strategy entirely to civilians. Gibson once again rejects their work citing the experiences of Vietnam and Iraq as clear demonstrations of the need for increased intellectual input from the military.

Ultimately, civilian control of the military means that elected leaders control the armed forces but this fundamental concept has been misinterpreted to mean that *civilians rather than generals* should control the military. Such misinterpretation is exemplified in Donald Rumsfeld's quip that 'the Constitution calls for civilian control of the military and I'm a civilian' (p. 128). Gibson states that contrary to the prevailing thinking under Secretary Rumsfeld, well-thought-out disagreement with departmental policy does not amount to disloyalty. Gibson argues persuasively that the intimidation of generals to make them unwilling to express professional disagreement can, and does, lead to dysfunctional outcomes.

To redress these issues, Gibson advocates the adoption of a 'Madisonian approach' which would follow the example of James Madison, a founding father of the US and its fourth president. Madison favoured countervailing forces within government in order that no single part would dominate the others. If adopted, the approach would create a balanced, collaborative partnership between civilian and military leaders.

The final chapter of the book describes how the Madisonian approach could work in practice by providing a series of examples of decision-making processes. These include civil–military management, the development of strategy, campaign planning, force development and budgeting. Within each, Gibson states that a 'rough parity' of civilian and military advice is required (p. 116).

The lack of effective normative constructs has increased the challenges for civil and military leaders who frequently work in a very dynamic political environment. This can lead to domineering personalities wielding exaggerated levels of power within a system that was instead designed to recognise professional mastery. Gibson is calling for further study of this issue within the US Armed Forces and the academic sphere.

The Australian civil–military nexus has reportedly experienced imperfect decision-making processes, most notably in defence procurement. It seems likely that the further study of the Australian civil–military nexus is also likely to prove fruitful.

Despite its rather dry title, this is a very readable book which covers a wide variety of subject matter in an accessible way. It is highly recommended for military scholars and civilian bureaucrats who are interested in improving the most senior levels of decision making involving the use of armed force.

The book is the latest in the Military Strategy and Operational Art series from Ashgate Publishing. It features an extensive bibliography and is fully-referenced.

## THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

Sea Power Centre/Peter Ryan  
Navy Video Unit, 2008



**Reviewed by Air Commodore (Retd) Mark Lax**

This excellent in-house video production presents the first two episodes of a planned seven which will cover the hundred years of the Royal Australian Navy's illustrious history. Narrated by well known Australian actor, John Waters, the production is historically accurate, professionally produced and for a military history buff like myself, highly entertaining.

Both episodes on volume one run for about 40 minutes and each covers a short chronological period, starting with the first European settlement and the settlers' demands for military protection. Their growing fear of seaborne invasion by enemies such as France, Russia and later, Japan lead to pressure on Britain to provide a naval force. But British efforts were not enough, and the new Federation of Australia went on to form its own navy in July 1911. Episode two covers the tumultuous years of World War I and sets the scene for what follows. For that I, and viewers alike will have to wait.

In constructing the storyline, the producer, Peter Ryan, has used much rare footage together with clever use of still photographs and news cuttings. This effect combined with an easy flowing script, makes for an excellent education and training tool.

Peter Ryan of the Navy Video Unit is to be congratulated on a very professional video production. If the next five episodes are as good as the first two, then the RAN is onto a winner. Highly recommended.

Because of copyright issues, the video is only available for training purposes from the Navy Historian at the Sea Power Centre. Interested readers should contact Dr David Stevens at [David.Stevens3@defence.gov.au](mailto:David.Stevens3@defence.gov.au).