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## **Introduction to Civil-Military Symposium: *Public Administration and Management***

*The aim of policy is to unify and reconcile all aspects of internal administration as well as of spiritual values, and whatever else the moral philosopher cares to add. Policy, of course, is nothing in itself; it is simply the trustee for all these interests against the outside world. That it can err, subserve ambition, private interests, and the vanity of those in power, is neither here nor there.<sup>1</sup>*

Regardless of the government institution or issue arena under review, few serious students of policy and management would dispute the comprehensive approach to policy expressed in the above words. The author of this quote wrote extensively on policy, and in the process developed powerful insights into modern bureaucracies and their management. This observation was penned almost a half century before Max Weber, the German scholar most would associate with the study of bureaucracies. The author was Prussian Carl von Clausewitz, best remembered for stating, “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means” (Clausewitz, 1976; p. 87). History’s most over-quoted and under-read Prussian is normally associated with the study of militaries, their operational employment, and the nature of grand strategy rather than the systematic study of policy and its management.

The unique nature of the military, what Samuel Huntington refers to as its “functional imperative,” is sometimes thought to be a barrier to applying principles and practices from other disciplines (Huntington, 1957; pp. 2-3). In large part, this misperception is attributed to what Clausewitz referred to as war’s own “grammar”(Clausewitz, 1976; p. 605). Nevertheless, as Clausewitz and others have stated, there is a clear and important link between the study of policy and management and the study of defense.

Just as Clausewitz developed numerous insights with clear utility to the general study of policy and management, Weber based much of his

research on studies of the Prussian military. This reciprocal relationship still exists. It is often seen in the use of management literature to professionally educate military leaders. It is also obvious—though in far less scholarly terms—in popular management “self-help” texts that promise the management secrets of Genghis Khan and Julius Caesar.

The policy and management literature does include a considerable body of work on issues related to defense and the military, but attempts to apply these academic insights to the policy world often appear to fall short.<sup>(2)</sup> This occurs, in part, because defense policy and management studies traditionally focus primarily on the internal dynamics of institutions and their operations. What is often missed, however, is the pivotal role of civil-military relations.

Scholars of the military such as Clausewitz, Huntington, and Harold Laswell note that while war may have its own grammar, its logic is externally dictated. “In no sense,” writes Clausewitz, “can the art of war ever be regarded as the preceptor of policy, and here we can only treat policy as representative of all the interests of the community” (Clausewitz, 1976; p. 607). The articulation, strategic balancing, and defense of those interests are all the responsibility of civilian leaders, not the autonomous purview of the uniformed services. Ultimately those in the military incur much higher risks and pay much higher costs (at least in the short term) with far less autonomous control than any other government agency. Thus, the stage is set for conflict. That conflict is necessarily the key variable in any case study of defense policy and its management.

There are numerous examples from the Cold War, as efforts to explain and direct the complex dimensions of national security with formal management practices began in earnest. Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson came from General Motors to the Pentagon, determined to apply the best practices of corporate America to the nation’s defense. He met with little success and repeatedly clashed with senior military leaders.

Wilson was followed by Robert McNamara from rival Ford Motors. McNamara developed planning and budgeting procedures more suited to the public than the private sector. His efforts were initially incorporated more readily into Pentagon practices than were Wilson’s, but ultimately McNamara’s policy failures are cited far more often than any of his

bureaucratic successes. From McNamara through the current internal government debates over the planning and conduct of the War in Iraq, clear evidence exists of the importance of understanding civil-military relations when the ideal world of management scholarship confronts the realities of Clausewitz's "Fog of War" (Clausewitz, 1976; pp. 119-121).

Studies of civil-military relations have been largely the purview of political scientists, sociologists, and the occasional economist. It is hoped that the articles in this Symposium edition—addressing a range of topics from the philosophical origins of American civil-military relations to contemporary events—will lead to future contributions from scholars in the fields of policy and management. Far from an exhaustive survey of the discipline, they are presented here as an effort to bridge a significant gap in the existing literature while stimulating important, policy-relevant discussion.

The editors would like to acknowledge a number of individuals for their contributions to this journal. These include authors who submitted articles for consideration that were ultimately not selected for publication. In virtually every instance, our difficult decision was driven by topical fit rather than by quality. We encourage their continued research and writing on this topic and we are certain the authors will find appropriate venues for their work.

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Finally, we extend our deepest thanks to Dr. Robert S. Kravchuk. His patience, guidance, and professional skill were crucial to this project. Most important, this special Symposium edition was his idea. Before the tragic events of September 11 and the intense civil-military debate that followed, Professor Kravchuk recognized the significant link between civil-military issues, the formulation of responsive policies, and the optimal management of those policies. We hope this final result inspires the kind of

important debate and critical research that he intended.

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### Notes

(1) Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, editors and translators (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) pp. 606-607.

(2) James Q. Wilson draws on both Weber and Clausewitz, combining examples from both the military and the civilian world in *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*, (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

### References

Clausewitz, Carl von. 1976. *On War*. Translated and Edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Huntington, Samuel. 1957. *Soldier and the State*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.