GOVERNING & MANAGING
THE DEFENCE SECTOR

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... since it is my intention to say something that will prove of practical use to the enquirer, I have thought it proper to represent things as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined.

– Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Book XV, 1514

You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you.

– Leon Trotsky

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CHOD	Chief of defence
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency, USA
CMR	Civil-military relations
Defence HQ	Defence headquarters
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West Africa States Monitoring Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISS	Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria, South Africa
MoD	Ministry of defence
MPLA	*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola /* Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NMC	National military commander
NMHQ	National military headquarters
OOTWs	Operations other than war
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PMC	Private military companies
ROE	Rules of engagement
SIS	British Secret Intelligence Service
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SSR	Security sector reform
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNPROFOR	UN Protection Force (Bosnia 1992–5)
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Preface

My book, *Defence Transformation,* was published in 2000 by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). It has been a gratifying success. Many thousands of copies are in circulation, it is used by staff colleges and training institutions in different parts of the world, and it has been translated into several languages. I often have the pleasure of meeting readers of the book from around the world.

But like all books it has its limitations as well as its virtues. It was written in a hurry, during evenings and at weekends, and at a point where I was moving from one busy job to another. It was then cut down by about 25 per cent to fit into the ISS monograph format. But more than anything, matters have progressed in the last ten years. In some cases I see things differently and new issues have arisen that need to be dealt with.

For this reason, the ISS and I decided in 2008 that, rather than producing an update, it was time for a new book. What follows, though it covers some of the same ground as *Defence Transformation* and shares some of its broad structure, ranges rather more widely and deals with a number of new topics that take account of a number of recent developments. It also attempts to be, as the ISS put it to me, 'not necessarily Africa-centric, but Africa-relevant'. I have tried to respect this injunction.

Some of the recent developments covered in this book are intellectual in nature. The subject of security sector reform (SSR) did not really exist when the earlier book was written, but today there is a large, if not always very useful, body of literature on the subject. The development community, historically hostile to the security sector, was only just beginning to understand the link between security and development. The importance of that relationship is now acknowledged much more freely, but is still the subject of heated discussion. The subject of 'governance' has come from nowhere to be a major component of post-conflict interventions, at least at the rhetorical level. All these slippery concepts, lacking rigorous definition or agreed methods for evaluating success, are sprinkled liberally throughout the literature.

Other recent developments covered in this book are of a more practical nature. Much effort has been devoted to transformation processes in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia, with results that are at best equivocal.[1] It is not clear that the right lessons, or any lessons, at all are being learned from them. On

the other hand, there has been a growth in indigenous expertise in SSR, especially in Africa. White men descending from aeroplanes are no longer the only option. Increasingly, non-Western authors are themselves producing texts on the problems of and possible solutions to the security sector, taking local conditions as their starting points, even if most of them are still financially supported by Western governments.

I have not discussed all of these developments systematically, since that would have produced a much longer and much more negative book. But I have tried to take the main features into account wherever possible, notably in an attempt to address the intellectual confusion that still surrounds these issues, which has, if anything, become worse in the last decade.

At this point I wish to thank all those who have contributed to the making of this book in the larger sense. Chief among these are those who have continued to provide me with audiences to practice my ideas on. I would particularly like to mention Professors Gavin Cawthra and Anthoni van Nieuwkerk of the Centre for Defence and Security Management at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, who have invited me to teach a number of courses in South Africa and elsewhere in the region. They and their colleagues from the Southern African Defence and Security Management Network have been an unfailing source of intellectual and practical stimulation over many years. I have also had the good fortune to teach in a number of countries in other African regions and to be asked on occasion to provide informal advice to governments on the issues addressed in this book.

The University of Cranfield provides academic support to the United Kingdom's (UK) Defence Academy and is charged with organising training courses for students from countries in transition. I have had the pleasure for some years now of teaching on these courses organised by Dr Laura Cleary and her colleagues. I would also like to thank the Centre for International Cooperation and Security at the University of Bradford for inviting me to teach on similar courses funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK. All these courses are aimed at selected mid-career officials and military officers, who are an extremely demanding audience but a very valuable and rewarding one. Much of this book derives in the end from questions posed by my students in different parts of the world.

As well as publishing my earlier book, the ISS and its staff have continued to inspire me. Len le Roux and Naison Ngoma first encouraged me to think about producing this new book – they and their colleagues have provided much

food for thought over the years. An incomplete list of other African scholars who have helped practically or intellectually, in some cases both, would have to include Eboe Hutchful, Martin Rupiyah, Solly Mollo, Roger Kibasomba and Paulino Macaringue.

From 2005 to 2008 I worked at the French Ministry of Defence and I would like to thank my former colleagues from the *Délégation aux affaires stratégiques* for insight into a different way of thinking about the world. Among many others, I would like to thank Olivier Ghirardi, Jérôme Spinoza, Stéphanie Daniel-Genc and Alexandra Novosseloff both for illuminating conversations and for the pleasure of working together on texts and in seminars, as well as for giving me the chance to express some of these ideas to French audiences. The *Fondation nationale des sciences politiques* (Sciences Po) in Paris has been good enough to ask me to teach for the last few years on its Masters in International Affairs course. Here a number of the issues in this book have been ventilated before a group of students both francophone and strikingly international. I also benefited greatly from the seminars organised by the *Centre d'études et recherches internationales*, part of Sciences Po, and from my association with the Africa Programme of the Egmont Institute, which runs the *Observatoire Afrique* on behalf of the French Ministry of Defence.

Others have been accomplices, knowingly or not, by asking me to write or lecture on the subjects covered by this book. In particular, Dr Ann Fitz-Gerald of Cranfield University published several essays of mine in the *Journal of Security Sector Management*, Dr Laura Cleary asked me to contribute several chapters to a book on defence management published to accompany the Cranfield course, and the Folke Bernadotte Academy in Stockholm was good enough to commission a paper on SSR in peace operations for the Conference on the Challenges of Peace Operations organised as part of the French European Union Presidency in 2008. Ideas first developed in those papers have helped in the writing of this book.

There is one name missing from all of this. My friend, Rocky Williams, who published *Defence Transformation* and was a constant source of inspiration and stimulation, died tragically in January 2005. It was Rocky who, in first bringing me to South Africa in 1993, started the process that among other things ultimately led to this book. A distinguished example of the rare breed of soldier-intellectual, a brave man and a casualty of war even if not of the battlefield, it is appropriate that this book should be dedicated to his memory.

David Chuter
March 2010

Introduction

This book is about understanding, managing and, as necessary, reforming the defence sector. It does not, however, treat the defence sector in isolation, but as part of government and the security sector, as a grouping of assets that can be employed in support of overall national policy. Nor does it equate the defence sector with the military alone.

The book begins by describing the wider security sector: what it is, how it functions and how the parts should fit together. Then defence issues are covered more specifically, including the purpose and roles of the military, the internal management of the wider defence sector, and the making and implementation of defence policy. This is the relatively technical, managerial element of the subject, hence the word 'managing' in the title. But the title also talks of 'governing' the security sector, recognising that wider, non-technical issues are involved as well. The term 'governing' is not ideal and has been subject to much criticism in the last few years, but it is a useful one in that it reminds us of a dimension that goes beyond the internal management of the defence sector. This dimension includes the relationship of the defence sector with the wider government system, with external actors such as parliament, and with the democratic process as a whole.

I have included an entire chapter on the vexed subject of 'control', which continues to be misunderstood and to confuse discussion on the role and purpose of the military, in the hope that at least some of the confusion may be dispelled. I have also included a whole chapter on intelligence (not limited to the military), since writers on the subject continue to make heroic efforts to misunderstand and misrepresent it. In addition, I have included a chapter on the subjects of transparency and accountability, which are not, in fact, especially complicated, but are often presented in an unnecessarily complicated fashion.

The book is intended for various audiences. I hope it will be of value as my earlier book, *Defence Transformation,* evidently was, to those with a general interest in defence and security affairs, problems of the relationship between security and development, and conflict resolution, especially in Africa. The first few chapters have been written partly with this audience in mind. Another audience is fellow practitioners in countries around the world who will, I hope, find this distillation of decades of reflection and experience of security issues of value. Similarly, I trust the book will benefit the increasing number of professionals in international organisations who

deal with conflict and are concerned with international missions. It will, I hope, also be of interest to diplomats, policemen, intelligence officers, etc. who are part of the security sector but may wish to learn a little more about defence issues. Another audience is academic, in particular those who study and write about conflict and post-conflict situations, security and development, SSR and allied issues, and the military as an institution. I hope they will find these thoughts of a former practitioner, albeit one who has spent a great deal of time in an academic environment, of interest.

As a book by a practitioner, even if now retired from government service, such credibility as it may have rests in part on my professional involvement with the security sector in many parts of the world and at many different levels. I have drawn extensively on my own experience, as well as the experience of colleagues and friends around the world. I have also tried, in Machiavelli's words, to portray things as they are in reality, rather than as they are imagined to be. It does no one any favours to suggest that the management of some of the issues discussed in this book is any easier or less problematic than it really is.

In the decade since *Defence Transformation* was written there has been an explosion of writing, of varying quality, about the security sector and its discontents. A critical review of this literature would be hard to justify, given that much of it is political rather than scholarly in orientation, and would unbalance this book hopelessly. But I have included a few pages on the ill-defined topic of SSR since it continues to cause confusion, and I have also included a few words on various aspects of the Human Security agenda, which has come from nowhere in recent years to become a major concern of governments. Whilst I do not suggest that these subjects lack interest, I have been somewhat severe on them for several reasons. First, experience, including my own, has shown that the normative ideas behind them usually break down when confronted with reality. Secondly, most of the ideas are intellectually dubious, based as they are on arbitrary assumptions and fuzzy and often conflicting definitions. Thirdly, much of the debate relies on norms that aspire to be universal, but are in fact strongly linked to specific historical and cultural experiences, especially of an Anglo-Saxon nature.

Rather than attempting to be normative, I have endeavoured to be helpful, that is to say I have tried to explain the sort of problems that have to be addressed, the approaches that are possible and the difficulties that arise in various instances. Lecturing people on what an 'ideal' security or defence sector should look like is a waste of time, if not actively harmful. I was very pleased to be told on a number of occasions by readers of *Defence Transformation* that 'you gave us practical advice that we could use'. That is the spirit in which the present book has been written as well.

The security sector and how it works

Although this book is principally concerned with the defence sector, that sector is itself part of a larger structure – the security sector of a nation. I will therefore begin with an introductory section on the larger security sector.[2]

There is a great deal of confusion about the nature of the security sector, most of it unnecessary. This confusion results in particular from attempts to view the sector in isolation, in a normative context such as governance or SSR. There is an inevitable temptation to define the sector widely in order to accommodate the normative ambitions of as many different lobbies as possible. This process leads to formulations such as the following, which is taken from a recent report by the UN Secretary General:

> 'Security sector' is a broad term often used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country. It is generally accepted that the security sector includes defence, law enforcement institutions, corrections, intelligence services, and institutions responsible for border management, customs, and civil emergencies. Elements of the judicial sector responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force are, in many instances, also included. The security sector also includes actors that play a role in managing and overseeing the design and implementation of security, such as ministries, legislative bodies and civil society groups. Other non-state actors that could be considered as part of the security sector include customary or informal authorities and private security services.[3]

This is a mini-essay on the problems of defining the security sector, rather than a definition, but it is obviously not intended for actual operational use. In fact, the security sector is much easier to understand if it is viewed not from the bottom up, but from the top down, that is to say, if we look at it as one of the activities of government, influenced to some extent by other parts of the political system.

In principle, all political systems have three components: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The first consists of government and the permanent apparatus of the state supporting it.[4] In many political systems there is an important distinction between the political leadership, which holds office temporarily, and the permanent career officials who advise and assist this leadership. In a democracy, the former are elected, or appointed by elected leaders. In principle, they take the credit if things go right and the blame if things go wrong. The executive is supported by policy and technical advisers, as well as by those who manage government departments and the state's finances. Further support is provided by operational organisations, such as a health service, a prison service, an education service, etc., without which policies could not be put into operation.

The legislature, or parliament, is made up of elected individuals whose principal constitutional responsibilities are to debate and pass laws, and to approve government expenditure. It is usual practice for parliament to have the right to question government ministers, issue reports and debate any issue of national importance. In most cases, a government that can no longer command a parliamentary majority would be expected to resign.

The structure of the judiciary varies from country to country and from tradition to tradition. In most cases, though, there will be a constitutional court, which is able to rule on whether government activities and proposed laws are consistent with the constitution. There will also be other courts before which the government can be challenged or sued on a wide range of issues. Many societies also have special administrative law courts that will rule on issues of government behaviour. In a democracy it is accepted practice for government to respect the decisions of the judiciary.

The activities of government are normally split into sectors, and security is one of these. The definition of this sector will vary slightly from country to country, but in principle it usually includes defence, intelligence, the police, and parts of foreign affairs and the interior ministry. Functions such as border control, prisons and customs may also form part of it. The departments making up the security sector have political heads who are responsible to parliament. They also have permanent officials responsible for policy and management, and specialist advisors such as

policemen and military officers. As in other sectors, government policies cannot actually be put into operation without specialist organisations on the ground. Just as education ministries have schools, so security ministries have operational arms, principally the military, the police and the intelligence services.

Other actors will of course be involved in turning the policies of the security sector into reality. Parliaments have to approve defence budgets, in the same way that budgets are approved for all sectors, and they may be called on to pass laws to permit certain activities to take place. Parliaments may also question ministers, form specialist committees and pass motions of censure, exactly as in any other sector of government. Similarly, the courts may declare certain actions or proposed legislation unconstitutional, or they may find for or against the government in the case of a legal challenge. An additional factor as far as the security sector is concerned is that the courts are also responsible for findings of guilt or innocence in criminal cases brought by the security sector.

Finally, of course, external actors, like commercial organisations, private individuals, the media and what is rather vaguely called 'civil society', will have their own agendas, and seek to pursue them and influence government as far as the security sector is concerned, just as they do elsewhere.

So the security sector is little different from other sectors in terms of government organisation. It has its specific characteristics of course; it deals with sensitive issues of some complexity and some of its component parts have the right to use controlled violence under certain conditions. But these are really just variations on a theme, and it is unhelpful and counter-productive to treat the security sector as though it were totally unique.

WHY IS THE SECURITY SECTOR IMPORTANT?

From the perspective of a population as a whole, the security sector is the foundation of the state's stability. Security in daily life is a precondition for economic and political development and a well-functioning security sector is therefore fundamental to a country's success. If a security sector is incapable of performing its functions because of a lack of resources or because it has lost legitimacy with parts of the population, then any existing political crisis will be exacerbated and potential new crises created.

The stability that results from a well-functioning security sector is obviously not an end in itself. Its importance lies in the fact that it permits other developments to take place, but it must be appreciated that whilst stability permits

economic and political progress, it does not cause them. There are many other factors that can undermine political and economic life and so cause instability, which even a perfectly functioning security sector may be unable to cope with.

For a long time, development experts resisted the notion that security was an essential precondition for growth and development, and took a dim view of the security sector as a whole.[5] Yet the historical record of state formation and economic development is unambiguous. States that have grown economically and matured politically have without exception done so when their governments have been able to provide security. The argument has shifted in recent years, so much so that it is now common to hear that 'there is no development without security, and no security without development'. This is an understandable politically balanced formulation, but of course only the first half is observably true. History rather disproves the second half – in many parts of the world, for much of history, there have been stable states without development. Indeed, development itself can be a cause of insecurity – a good example is the problems that have arisen from urbanisation – and has been notable for encouraging crime. Even if the battle is not yet won, the current debate about security and development is now a great deal more enlightened than was the case in the past.

The security forces do of course also have an enormous political importance in any society. They are the most basic means of gaining and maintaining political power. In many societies, control of the security forces is literally a matter of life and death, and their control comes before any considerations of effective government or public acceptability. In others there is a tradition of the security forces being politicised and their use for political advantage and the harassment of opponents. In still other societies, the very importance of the security forces requires a careful balance of senior appointments between various interest groups to avoid political problems. This can result in security sectors being unnecessarily large and inefficient.

What is meant by providing security?
It is helpful to consider the requirement for the security and stability of a state as operating at three levels. In terms of classic military terminology, these levels are defined as follows:

- *The strategic level* of stability implies peace in the region and among neighbours, but also freedom from foreign interference, from the indirect effects of conflict elsewhere and from such problems as smuggling, illegal fishing and theft of natural resources. Some of this will be the responsibility of the

military, but many other actors, such as foreign ministries, intelligence services, customs and frontier guards, will be involved as well.

- *The operational level* is concerned with the stability of the country as a whole, and with threats from nationally organised crime, ethnic or regional tensions and violent dissidence, either political or separatist in nature. The police and in certain cases the military will be involved.
- *The tactical level*, namely stability in daily life, is concerned with the ability of citizens to go about their life free from crime and the threat of violence. This area is essentially the responsibility of the police, although an efficient judicial system is also important.

At each of these levels there is a need for coordination between the security services and ministries. This is the essence of a properly operating security sector, for it is not possible to carry out these three functions unless the system as a whole operates effectively. It will be noticed that I have not used the word 'threat', but have rather described a series of tasks. This is deliberate.[6] As will be explained in the next chapter, which deals with policymaking for security, the threat concept is now largely redundant, although the intellectual habits it has spawned continue to cause problems. Rather, the security sector of a country is best understood as being those elements of the state apparatus that carry out security related tasks to further wider government objectives.

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE SECURITY SECTOR?

I have already described the confusion that surrounds the definition of the security sector and have proposed that it be seen as simply one element of government organisation that is subject to the same internal logic and the same external pressures as any other sector. The following brief review the main components of the sector will clarify this point further.

The security forces

In practice, the term 'security forces' refers to the military (including any paramilitary forces), the police, the justice system and the intelligence services. What these forces have in common is that they are executive organisations, concerned with implementing policy, not making it. Like teachers, doctors or prison officers, they enable the policies of government to be put into effect. Security forces have

to do their jobs properly if the country is to enjoy stability. There is an argument for including such organisations as the coastguard and civil emergency services in the definition of the security sector.

Ministries

There is a confusing tendency to talk about government ministries (defence, interior, justice) as though they were somehow responsible for 'overseeing' the security forces of a country, which otherwise would spontaneously start wars and oppress the civil population. It needs to be stressed that ministries are not responsible for control of the security forces in the oppositional or coercive sense of the word. Both are distinct but closely related elements of the security sector. The model of control that applies here, if that word must be used, is that of the control of a car to ensure that it goes in the right direction. There has to be effective management of the security sector if stability is to be preserved and the sector itself needs to function as a coherent entity. For this reason, the organisation and function of ministries, as well as the relations between them and the bodies that coordinate them, are very important. More is said on this below.

I would therefore suggest that the operational part of the security sector can be defined as all those institutions whose primary role is the provision of internal and external security, together with bodies responsible for their administration, tasking and control. In practice, this means the military, the police, intelligence services, paramilitary forces and the government agencies responsible for them.

This definition describes the main components of the security sector itself. However, as indicated, there are also external actors whose constitutional roles overlap with those of the security sector in certain instances. The two principal ones are parliament and the courts. It is of critical importance to understand the constitutional distinctions between them. A government is elected and is expected to use this legitimacy to make and implement policy. In a democracy, however, it is taken for granted that there should be checks on the power of government. Both parliament and the courts can be sad to have a consenting role, meaning that although they do not try to make policy, still less to manage the security forces, their consent is required in order for certain things to happen.

If we leave aside extreme suggestions for membership of the security sector, for example militia groups, we are left with two other bodies that are frequently mentioned in this context, namely civil society and the media. Neither of these, of course, has any inherent legitimacy, nor is either elected. Yet each of them

aspires to have influence over the making of security policy and may indeed be able to do so.

Civil society

Even in an area where problems of definition are the norm, the concept of civil society is especially confused and opaque, and the term is often used in different or contradictory senses in the SSR debate. As the Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics notes, the concept itself is 'contested historically and in contemporary debates'. It is held to include 'a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups'. In theory, such groups represent 'shared interests, purposes and values' and should be distinct from the state, as well as from the family and from economic markets, although in practice such boundaries 'are often complex, blurred and negotiated'.[7]

This definition, which is one among many, is sufficiently elastic to include almost every actor, but two points are worth mentioning. First, even if civil society can be said to exist, it cannot have any political influence as an abstraction, but only through the activities of groups. Secondly, such groups cannot, by definition, have a role in the management of the security sector in the sense of the constitutional roles of parliament and the courts. The reason for this is that civil society groups are self-appointed and the agendas of different groups are often in conflict with each other. Moreover, even at the conceptual level it is not clear that the idea of 'civil society' exists, or would be understood outside the developed West.[8] Indeed, most civil society groups in the developing world are funded, directly or indirectly, by Western governments and this makes their legitimacy questionable in the eyes of citizens.

There are, nonetheless, two ways in which civil society groups may have influence. Some, like veterans' organisations, may be politically powerful and it may be wise to consult them. Similarly, especially in periods of transition, certain groups may have expertise that is important, or, like religious groups, have a moral standing that can assist the political process. More is said about this under Security Sector Reform below.

The media

The media will write about security issues as it writes about all other issues. It will seek to find good stories, look actively for evidence of scandals and wrong-doing, and be prepared to invent or suppress information if it is in its interest to do so. Many media groups today are linked to large commercial conglomerates that have their own political priorities and help to fund political parties. Many others are foreign-owned.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have provided a reasonably comprehensive list of actors in or with influence upon the security sector. In fact, though, the fundamental distinction is simply a bipartite one: between government and everything else. The former has legitimacy and responsibility, whilst the latter may not always have the first and often seeks to avoid the second.

Making and implementing national security policy

A security sector exists to make and implement security policy. The security sector proper – the government and its advisers – creates and seeks to implement policy. The legislature may agree or decline to fund it, or to pass the laws necessary for its implementation, while the judiciary may, under some circumstances, place legal limits on what can be done. Other non-elected groups, with varying degrees of legitimacy, may try to influence or obstruct security policies.

But what do nations need a security policy for? And what should its components be? At the most basic level, all forms of government essentially began as organised criminal enterprises. Groups sought to control territory and wealth, and fought with each other to gain or maintain power.[9] As regimes became more firmly embedded, and overt military resistance disappeared, they increasingly made use of security forces to suppress internal dissent and to preserve territorial control. Governments that have been elected legitimately generally do not face such problems, although challenges to their legitimacy may still occur from time to time. It has become customary to refer to such internal and external challenges as 'threats'.

Traditionally, the concept of a threat (though the term itself was seldom if ever employed) referred to the need to protect the physical integrity of a state from outside attack. In the period between the rise of nation states and about the middle of the 20th century, a threat was usually conceived as a foreign invasion and the solution normally involved military preparations and the search for allies and protectors. Even by the time of the First World War, the perceived consequences of the spread of modern political and economic ideas caused national

leaders much anguish. They frequently wondered whether their own populations could be relied upon.

What would happen if socialists and trade unionists, with their internationalist orientations, refused to fight? In the event, they fought anyway, but that did not prevent the French government, for example, from maintaining a secret list of thousands of political and intellectual figures to be arrested if necessary to safeguard the war effort. The coming of the Bolshevik regime in Russia, with its strident modernism and internationalism, and the subsequent spread of communist parties around the world, produced for the first time the fear that ideas rather than physical invasion could be the main threat to the integrity of a state. Thus, from the 1920s on, various political figures seized power in different countries around the world to 'save' them from communism (or from democracy – they were often unclear about such distinctions).

This is the background to the first formal adoption of the term 'national security' in the United States (US) in 1947. The concepts and structures introduced at that time remain by far the dominant model even today, and are thus worth a moment's attention. The US National Security Act of 1947 and the National Security Council it established became models for countries around the world. The US act was followed by National Security Council document 68 (NSC-68), whose direct influence was limited since it was highly classified, but whose indirect influence was enormous. The document did not attempt to argue that the US faced a conventional military threat, or any direct threat at all for that matter, but rather that the Soviet Union (USSR) represented a 'new fanatic faith' and 'seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world'. In this context, every development in every society in the world had a bearing on US security, and all possible measures had to be employed to counter Soviet designs.[10]

Thus, a 1953 document directed that the US should covertly stimulate acts of resistance in Eastern Europe, with the aim of discrediting the local political authorities and provoking Soviet intervention.[11] As far as can be judged, the Soviet Union had much the same fears, and responded in much the same way, although its actions were less influential.

Collectively, these developments, and their domestic equivalents – the spy scares and loyalty investigations – produced what one historian has described as a 'national security state'.[12] Yet this kind of thinking was by no means confined to the superpowers. It reached its acme, perhaps, in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. Convinced that the apartheid regime faced a 'total onslaught' directed from Moscow that included diplomatic, military, ideological and cultural

elements, a highly sophisticated and complex 'total strategy' was implemented under the presidency of PW Botha (1984–1989). The strategy, which took its inspiration from French counter-insurgency thinkers such as André Beaufre, was overseen by a State Security Council and supported within the country by a National Security Management System, which brought together all parts of the security sector.[13] This kind of thinking also gained influence in Latin America, where, in a complete reversal of traditional national security thinking, various right-wing regimes cooperated in what was called Plan Condor. This involved the sharing of information, the carrying out of joint operations and even the assassination of each other's political dissidents.[14]

Although the immediate ideological stress and paranoia of the Cold War have now receded, the fact remains that decades of this kind of thinking all over the world have fundamentally influenced how those who make and write about national security policy see it today, and thus still conceive the functions of the security sector. In addition, Cold War paranoia was both inspired by and has in turn further influenced two other mental habits that still have a major effect on security policy in different countries.

First, it can be argued that Cold War paranoia is only an extreme case of the application of realist and neo-realist interpretations of international relations generally. These paradigms, easily grasped, if actually rather useless at explaining actual state behaviour, appear in their popular form to depict a world of endlessly clashing interests, where states continually seek to maximise their gains at the expense of others, with conflict being normal and even welcome. This kind of perception naturally leads to a concept of a competitive security policy based on the response to threats, since other nations are also bound to act according to the same criteria. This paradigm remains extremely influential, especially if economic considerations are included under the heading of national security. Thus, the currently influential neo-mercantilist doctrine of 'competitiveness' assumes that the wealth of the world is essentially fixed (or at best increasing very slowly) and that it is for each state to grab as much of it as it can. In fact, in economic relations, as in international relations, cooperation is more the norm.

Secondly, there is the concept of a 'threat' itself. This is so much part of our intellectual furniture that we forget that it is an idea actually quite limited in time and place. With the increasing sophistication of states, developments in transport infrastructure and taxes provided by economic surpluses, it became possible in the 19th century to field and deploy large conscript armies on a permanent basis, backed by huge trained reserves. With the boundaries between

new nation states and the overlap of ethnic groups providing something to fight about, and the existence of military technology that limited the likely damage to tolerable levels, it became possible to talk about threats, inasmuch as a neighbour could plausibly threaten to invade some, or all of a country's territory and derive benefit from it.

After 1945 nobody contemplating the ruins of Europe could believe that war for territorial gain was still an option. Even the most fervent believers in a Soviet threat usually accepted that were a war to actually break out, it would probably be through accident or miscalculation. Threatism has nonetheless triumphed all over the world, even though the idea of territorial conquest has no place in the history of many regions, even in Africa. All countries now have defence forces to defend themselves against the defence forces of other states. At its worst, as in the Cold War examples given earlier, this type of thinking induces a kind of paranoia that encourages the search for a threat, any threat, to fill an existential void. And of course the prophecy can be self-fulfilling – treating a state or an entity as a threat is a good way to turn them into one.

But even when the temptation to paranoia is resisted, the mental habits of a threat remain powerful and lead to conceptions of the functions of armed forces that are at variance with reality, and sometimes with common sense. To take an example more or less at random: the Namibian Constitution in Article 119 establishes a defence force 'in order to defend the territory and national interests of Namibia'. But against whom? South Africa? Angola? What would be the point? And why would those countries wish to invade Namibia anyway these days? If the constitutional provisions were an accurate description of reality, one would expect to see regular exercises in which the Namibian Defence Force deployed to the border to practice defeating an invasion. In fact, of course, nothing of the kind ever happens.

Here, perhaps, we can see the confusion of two related but distinct issues. There is the symbolic and to some degree practical role of guarding frontiers and demonstrating independence, as described in more detail below, and there is the old- fashioned idea of the physical defence of a territory against attack. The first is a reasonable component of any defence policy, but is often confused with the second, which generally is not. As a result, whilst most countries' actual defence and security policies emphasise such things as regional security, peacekeeping, internal security and regional or local status, they are still rhetorically committed to defence against threats and are therefore tempted to seek them. Changing this mental habit, from searching for threats to the identification of tasks, is perhaps

the most important conceptual step that a state can take in the development of a satisfactory security policy.

To some degree also, defence bureaucracies are caught in a trap of their own making. Foreign threats have historically been a good way of justifying military expenditure. In the Cold War, Western governments were careful to explain to their citizens that they themselves would really love to cut defence spending radically, but could not do so as long as the Soviet threat remained a reality. It has been hard to find as convincing a justification in more recent years.

None of this, of course, means that national security policies cannot ever, or should not ever, be constructed on the basis of threats. There are regions in the world that are unstable and there certainly are countries (Syria and Iran come to mind) that have genuine reasons to fear military attack and can thus not be criticised for pursuing a threat-based security policy. But a security policy does not have to be based on this way of thinking, especially in the stable regions of the world. One of the functions of security policy should be to analyse the security environment of a country and recommend the type of policies to pursue. As will be seen below, military forces often serve wider security-related objectives and are therefore worth retaining even when they do not face a credible threat.

The multiplicity of security scenarios around the world makes it difficult to define what national security objectives might be at any useful level of detail. Beyond bromides about peace and security, objectives are going to differ radically between states. Even within a state, definitions are often contested. For example, a sizeable minority of British people have always replied, when asked, that nuclear weapons add nothing to the security of their country. Clearly, such questions have no objective answer. An alternative and better approach is to look at national security not as a product or an objective, but as a series of processes. Thus, I would suggest the following description of national security strategy:

> National security strategy is the process of maintaining, coordinating and employing the assets of the security sector so that they contribute optimally to the nation's strategic goals.

WHY NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES ARE COMPLEX

The above formulation suggests that the strategic issues (not necessarily crises) that typically arise are sufficiently complex not to be addressed by one part of the nation's security apparatus alone, but need to be looked at on a government-wide

basis. This is what security policy is for. A couple of reasonably realistic examples will make this clearer.

For several years there has been unrest and violence in a traditionally unstable neighbouring country. One faction appears to have seized power. Refugees and combatants of other factions are alleged to be crossing the border. The new government demands that armed opponents be returned. A whole series of questions arise. What exactly is going on? How secure is the new government? Are armed opponents actually in the country or are they really only refugees? Should the new government be recognised? What are other states in the region doing? Do we try to intercept armed opponents of the regime and stop them from entering? Do we support the regime or would we like to see it replaced by another? What do we do about immigration? What about the associated health and crime risks? What will the economic consequences be? Should we launch a regional initiative or join somebody else's? Should we involve the regional security apparatus or the United Nations? Are there already initiatives at that level? And so on.

In an unstable region where conflict is always a possibility, a well-meaning Western power proposes an arms control and confidence-building regime, supporting this with threats and promises. How does a government decide whether the likely benefits of such a regime outweigh the likely risks, especially since its success depends on the goodwill of other states, over which it has no control? Left to themselves, individual government departments may take rigid positions that make a compromise difficult. The foreign ministry will be in favour of negotiations. The president or prime minister may be keen on achieving a regional and international success. The defence ministry will be concerned about the time that it will take to regenerate capability if things go wrong. The finance ministry will be hungrily anticipating savings. The intelligence services will be interested in what they can find out about others, but less keen to give their own secrets away.

In such cases there is a need for a clear, government-wide policy that tries to balance the conflicting interests and achieve the best overall result. A security policy approach can achieve this, provided it is correctly organised and structured. The alternative is either paralysis, a series of inconsistent policies, or a policy that reflects what can be agreed by consensus and is therefore likely to be drained of all meaning.

As the examples demonstrate, national security issues have implications at various levels, both foreign and domestic. Even issues that appear completely parochial – an increase in a defence budget, procurement of new weapons systems, a reorganisation of the intelligence services – may spark comment and even

criticism from abroad. For example, every initiative taken by the Japanese government on defence issues will be greeted with pre-programmed criticism and spontaneous organised riots in other Asian countries. How, intellectually, do we go about creating a security policy that pursues strategic objectives and enables a sensible response to crises? There are two components: the first is analysis and the second capabilities and structures.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

If we can escape intellectually from the Threatist paradigm, our first activity is to look at what constraining factors there are on security policy, and what degree of flexibility we have. It is useful to divide influences on security policy into three types: permanent, contingent and voluntary, accepting that there are overlaps between them.

Permanent factors are factors that change very slowly, if at all, over time and are effectively fixed for the fairly limited horizons of security planning. Thus, a nation may be large or small, be an island or be landlocked, have large neighbours, small neighbours or no neighbours at all, have natural resources or not, be in a certain climatic area, have a certain ethnic mix, and so forth. Moreover, some changes in these variables may be beyond easy influence, such as an aging population, changes in ethnic balances, climate change, exhaustion of natural resources, etc.

But even if these factors are effectively constant during the planning period, our reaction to them is not pre-determined but usually contingent. For example, maritime and littoral states often have naval traditions, although there are exceptions, such as Japan. Island states like Britain may go through phases of involvement with and then isolation from their adjoining continent. States with no appreciable maritime tradition, like Germany a century ago or Korea today, may decide to invest in a navy. A wealthy state, like America after 1945, may choose to use a large part of its wealth for military purposes or, like Germany, it may prefer a lower profile. The South African government after 1994 made a conscious decision not to seek a military and security role on the continent, although it could easily have done so. It was forced eventually to alter this policy, but even now chooses to act with discretion. The new Russia could have retired into itself to try to heal the economic damage caused by the abandonment of the communist system, but chose instead to continue to play the role of a superpower and to use its gas and oil deposits as strategic weapons.

Finally, there are aspects of security policy that are entirely, or almost entirely, voluntary. An obvious example is participation in UN peacekeeping missions far from home. Countries may do this for financial reasons, to raise their political profile, to feel good about themselves, etc. It is fundamentally a voluntary activity. Defence relations are another case in point: a relationship of some kind with one's neighbours is obviously required, but the nature of this is dependent on specific decisions. Thus, South Africa has privileged relations with countries like Brazil, India and Australia, but not with Angola. Venezuela has cultivated links with Iran as the two countries have identified common interests.

How might this work in practice? A state, let us say, has a long coastline, substantial offshore mineral and fishing assets, a sizeable population and is enjoying strong economic growth. It has few ethnic problems and its neighbours are generally stable, although piracy and smuggling are a problem. A plausible security policy in such a situation would have an emphasis on naval forces and cooperation between the military, the police and the coastguard to safeguard the country's economic development. It might also promote regional maritime cooperation. In due course, the state might decide to increase its profile in the region by naval deployments (following the example of Malaysia and Korea, for example) and by contributing to multinational forces. Or it may decide quite the reverse, namely to concentrate on economic growth and to retain the minimum military forces needed to protect its coastline and economic interests.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Security policy orientation will be influenced mainly by a government's national strategic objectives. Not all such objectives will have a security component: becoming a major manufacturing nation or developing a modern transport infrastructure have relatively little to do with security, although security forces will in the end benefit from both.

But many strategic objectives do have a security implication. Developing economic resources, as we have seen, may well require military assets for their protection. Joining a regional security organisation, taking part in peacekeeping missions, helping, to stabilise a fragile neighbour, and seeking security of supply for fuels and national resources all have an obvious security component. But some objectives have a less obvious link. Imagine that, against substantial competition, a state intends to become a non-permanent member of the Security Council. A whole variety of factors will be involved, including its ability to lobby for support.

But in the end a state that wants to play a positive role in the Security Council has to be able to take part in debates on an informed basis, talk knowledgeably when there is discussion about the use of military forces and be prepared to offer its forces when the situation demands.

Like it or not, great, or even medium-power status is intimately bound up with serious military capability and the willingness to use it. Machiavelli's dictum that he who goes unarmed goes un-respected is as true as ever. As anyone who has ever taken part in international negotiation knows, there is an absolute and unbridgeable gap between nuclear and non-nuclear powers in terms of influence and political status. Likewise, possession of biological or chemical weapons gives a state special political status, in spite of the military ineffectiveness of such weapons. But beyond that, the difference between a state that has influence in security issues and one that is merely listened to politely is that the former knows what it is talking about and is ready and able to act if needs be.

Obviously, capable military forces are an important component of a strategy of influence of this kind. But by themselves they are inadequate. Some nations, for example Germany, hedge the use of their armed forces with so many caveats and so many layers of decision-making that it is often not clear whether the forces will actually be available when needed. The US with its endless warfare between Congress and government has similar problems. The influence of each is reduced accordingly, since even the firmest declaration by government can only be treated as a statement of intent. By contrast, a state with peacekeeping experience, qualified and experienced commanders, and a good intelligence capability that is also well-organised and well-prepared to talk about complex strategic issues, may well have a capability greater than its actual size. More about this later.

An effective national security strategy is not only intellectually and managerially difficult to achieve, but in addition depends on the resolution of a whole series of issues, seldom articulated, about how a nation's security interests are defined, who has the power to define them and what happens when different concepts of national interest compete with each other. Traditionally, the security interests of a state were defined by its dominant political and economic forces and did not necessarily reflect the interests of its citizens. In this situation, national security in part served to preserve the interests and political dominance of groups that had the power to define it. From the French Revolution onwards, however, the tendency has been to identify the preservation of the political and economic system of a country as an element of national security, and to seek to defend it militarily where necessary.

In modern times, this kind of politico-economic conflict over definitions of national security has become somewhat muted. Lip service at least is paid to democratic principles, although this is not always easy. Even in a developed democracy, international economic agreements, for example, are likely to have consequences that affect economic groups differently. But for many countries today the major political problem in defining national security objectives really lies in the social, ethnic and religious distinctions that exist in the society itself.

The assumption behind the concept of national security is that the nation is sufficiently homogeneous and united for its citizens to have common interests to be protected, and common objectives to be pursued. Concretely, this means, that in a country with different ethnic groups, all of those groups are happy to live together within common frontiers and are united in resisting attempts to alter those frontiers, whether from inside or outside. Obviously, this is seldom the case in its purest form. Separatism, regionalism, independence movements, irredentism, territorial claims, etc. are facts of life in many parts of the world. In extreme cases (Bosnia, Israel, South Africa before 1994), competing groups have irreconcilable ideas about what the nation should be like, or even whether it should exist at all. In authoritarian states, such questions are usually settled by brute force, and the national interest concept that emerges is inevitably partial and needs to be enforced by violence. (Such dominance is not always by the larger group – the Tutsi minority dominated Rwanda until 1959 and after 1994, while in neighbouring Burundi the Tutsi have only recently agreed to share power.) Democracy does not make the resolution of this problem easier. Indeed, it may make it more difficult, since elections have a habit of radicalising competing groups as politicians stake out more extreme positions to garner votes, as was the case in both Bosnia and Rwanda.[15]

Any modern state has to deal with the consequences of ethnic, religious and social differentiation and must try to construct a security policy that is generally acceptable. Sometimes this is difficult, if not actually impossible. In Northern Ireland, which was a major national security issue for the British government for a generation, polls suggested that about ten per cent of the Catholic population actively supported the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) objectives of uniting Northern Ireland with the Irish Republic, while perhaps several times that number were at least partly in favour. No security approach to the problem could therefore reflect a consensus within the province as a whole. The same can be true in reverse, of course. States may deal with internal tensions less firmly than some of their own citizens would like for fear of exacerbating them further.

USING THE TOOLS

Against this complicated political and intellectual background, states have to make national security policy as best they can with the tools at their disposal. These tools, which collectively constitute the security sector, have already been referred to and are detailed in later chapters. It is therefore sufficient to note here that what makes a good security policy is not necessarily the excellence of the individual components, but rather the skill with which they are put together. There are states that underperform at the security policy level because the component parts of their security sectors do not work well together, or possibly even fight each other. There are others whose international influence is greater than one would expect because their coordination is better and they have a clear view of what they want to accomplish.

The security policy of a country is not the sum total of the various policies of the military, police, intelligence services, etc. Indeed, the situation is approximately the reverse. Security policy is a high-level, cross-governmental policy from which a series of concrete tasks emerge for various parts of the sector, including defence. This is best described in the form of a simple hierarchy:

Government policy

▼

Foreign/interior policy

▼

Security policy

▼

Defence/police/intelligence policy
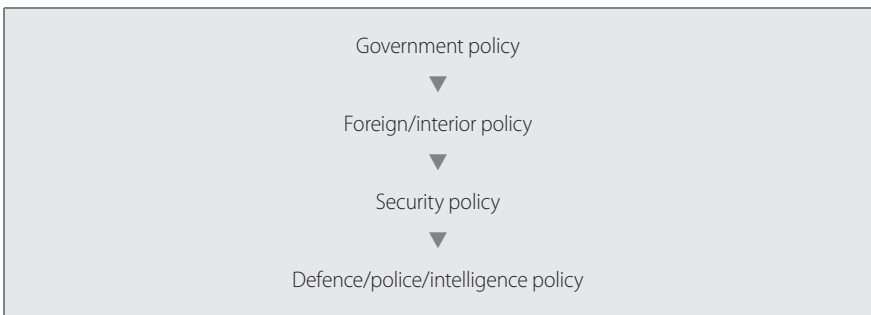
The easiest way to look at this hierarchy is as a funnel, with broader policies at the top and narrower ones below. Obviously, there are many aspects of government policy that have no bearing on the security sector. Security policy is therefore usually seen as a subset of foreign and interior policy, the mix depending on the strategic situation in which the country finds itself. In turn, however, there are many aspects of foreign policy, such as cultural diplomacy, and interior policy, such as residence permits, that are of little or no relevance to the security sector. Thus, defence policy, and similar policies for other parts of the security

sector, are essentially limited cases, deduced from higher-level policies agreed to by government.

Suppose, for example, that a government decides to play a wider role in a region where previously it has not been a major actor. Obviously, this is largely a foreign policy issue: diplomats will be asked to explain and promote the decision. The interior ministry may be asked to look at enhanced police and judicial cooperation, while the military may need to prepare for a regional security role that could be as benign as joint exercises, or as ambitious as participating in a regional force.

An important caveat is that this is not a simple hierarchy. The defence ministry does not wait around passively for a security policy to arrive in the post. Indeed, the kind of security policy a country can have is determined, in the short term at least, by the assets that are available. It makes no sense to seek a regional security role if the military is not trained and equipped to participate. In effect, the hierarchy is a dynamic one; the security policy that can be conducted is determined by the capabilities available, which are determined in turn by the kind of security policy desired.

A second caveat is that not all security policies are elective. If instability in a neighbouring country produces a flow of refugees and crime, then the situation has to be dealt with as best one can, with whatever tools available. Even then, however, analytical and intelligence services should not be taken totally by surprise, and government should have at least some idea of what it will do under the circumstances.

This concentration on tasks rather than threats is fundamental to any sensible security policy. It does not exclude, of course, the possibility that some tasks may be threat-related. As indicated previously, threats do exist, but remember that a security policy based on threats has historically encouraged the search for them, with unhappy outcomes in many cases. A security policy that recognises that all threats are tasks, but that not all tasks are threats, will be much better founded.

ORGANISING SECURITY POLICY

The point has been made that security policy involves the interests of many groups and requires contributions from these groups if it is to be carried out effectively. By way of conclusion to this chapter, it is necessary to add that such collaboration does not happen easily or automatically, and that structures and processes have to be set up to make it possible. The way in which this is achieved

will vary from country to country because of differences in political cultures. A state that is highly centralised will probably establish powerful central machinery; a state with a tradition of weak central government, perhaps with a history of political coalitions, may introduce a much looser system based on compromise and bargaining. Experience suggests that the most effective solution will be based on the highest degree of centralisation reasonably achievable, given the political system.

In any event, there will usually be some kind of formal structure controlled by the staff of the president or prime minister. Whether it functions as a simple clearing-house, as a kind of glorified committee chair, or plays an executive role will depend very much on the political culture of the country. But because national security policy is an issue of great importance and complexity, some kind of a central organisation of this kind is inescapable to avoid confusion and rivalry.

A degree of central organisation will also make it possible to construct linkages with other elements of policy that are related to security proper in a peripheral manner. Economic policy is both an enabler and a weapon in international relations, although its actual effectiveness is often questionable. Education and health are major elements of the reconstruction of society after a conflict, but neither is worth pursuing unless a climate of security already exists. Judgements of this type are fundamentally strategic in nature and should involve government as a whole, not least because such decisions are often part of a multinational approach to a problem and need to be considered in all their aspects.

Development ministries are now increasingly being involved in the management of post-conflict situations, thereby taking the load off the military, which is often pressed into service because it is all that is available. More ambitiously, it might be possible in future to integrate economic aid and security policy in the absence of conflict. Not even their greatest defenders would claim that international economic assistance policies towards Africa in the last generation have actually increased stability and prevented conflict.

In essence, a state will have a security policy whether it realises it or not. The dangers, however, are that the policy will either be completely uncoordinated, with different parts of government doing their own thing, or dominated by one group, often the military and intelligence services. There are better ways of doing these things.

Armed forces and what they are for

In the previous two chapters I have attempted to describe the security sector and the making of security policy, as well as showing how armed forces and defence policy fit into this wider context. I argued that armed forces are executive organisations with special capabilities that exist to support the security policy of the state.

Strangely, most writing about the management of armed forces and their relationships to the state, often described as Civil-Military Relations (CMR), has historically begun from an entirely different perspective. It has been assumed that rather than the armed forces being of use or value to society, they are a threat to it. CMR, then, in the works of well-known writers like SE Finer[16] and Samuel Huntingdon,[17] consist in making the military as powerless and useless as possible. This is a strange thing to ask taxpayers to spend their money on. I reject this approach, which is, in any case, a product of 1950s political-science theories applied to an area of which the authors have no personal knowledge or experience. Given the confusion this approach has caused, I will discuss its weaknesses in some detail in the next chapter. This chapter is concerned with the most basic questions of all: why do we need the military and what are we going to use it for?

WHY DO WE NEED THE MILITARY?

If CMR were only about the reduction of military power, then the sensible thing would be to abolish the military altogether. The fact that this is hardly ever proposed suggests two things, namely:

- That the military must have some useful role to play.
- That questions of defence management cannot therefore be limited to the means of minimising military power.

What, therefore, do we want our military forces to do? Clearly, it cannot be as simple as 'to fight and win wars'.[18] Not only would many, including most of the military, argue that its role is to prevent war, but by this definition the militaries of, say, Fiji and Botswana are wasting their time, since they would be most unwise to fight another country as they would be virtually certain to lose. And how, at the time of writing, would we explain the role of military forces operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)? Obviously, there must be a more complex answer.

Defence is, of course, more than the military, but let us take the military first. I suggested previously that the military has a special contribution to make to the implementation of security policy and that it partly determines what kind of security policy a state can have. In essence, we can say that the primary function of the military is to underpin the domestic and foreign policies of a state with force or the threat of force.

Some readers may be upset by this emphasis on force. It is true that many in the military do not actually use weapons, and also that many military skills are used in non-combatant contexts, such as disaster relief. But these skills and tasks are essentially secondary and are distinct from, and ancillary to, the primary function described above. If one wants to concentrate on tackling natural disasters, it is better to set up a civil defence organisation, and if one's navy is mainly occupied with the rescue of victims of marine accidents one would probably need a coastguard instead.

This is not to say that the military is just about fighting and winning battles, let alone wars, and indeed it never was. The most basic function of the military has always been to retain that monopoly on the use of force that Max Weber saw as one of the defining characteristics of the state.[19] A state that loses this monopoly soon ceases to be a state and is no longer able to offer security to its citizens. Even in the most impeccable democracy, therefore, the existence of the military is a signal of the state's determination to retain that monopoly.

Whilst wars obviously were fought in the past, the military was used for many other purposes as well, including the garrisoning of territory, the protection of trade routes, the enforcement of colonial rule and even the performance of police duties. With variations, many of these functions are still carried out today.

The most basic military role remains the control of terrain. In the past, this often meant fighting for it. These days, whilst international forces have fought battles (in Sierra Leone and the DRC, for example) the main use of the military is less to fight than to be an ever-present reminder that a violent option exists, thereby making the achievement of political objectives easier. At the highest level, a well-armed and properly led military force can strategically dominate a country and deter, through intimidation, any resumption of hostilities. But note that the mere presence of military forces is not enough – they must actually be able to out-intimidate and, if necessary, outfight a potential adversary. In the post-Cold War euphoria of the 1990s this was not immediately obvious. We are a little wiser now and a couple of examples will make clear why this is so.

The UN Protection Force in Bosnia (UNPROFOR) from 1992 to 1995, although theoretically rising to a strength of 20 000 at one point, never had more than 2 000 to 3 000 deployable troops, and they were massively outnumbered by the forces of the warring factions. The 400-men strong Dutch battalion in Srebrenica in 1995, for example, was incapable of influencing, let alone controlling, the 28th Muslim Division stationed in the town, which was about 5 000 to 6 000 strong. For the tiny and dysfunctional UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in 1995, the position was even more desperate. Outnumbered perhaps 20 to one by the better-trained, better-armed forces of the two sides in the dormant civil war, it was ignored by both. In each case, the sense of powerlessness felt by the international community was related to their inability to deploy highly-trained troops in very large numbers, as well as the absence of a clear strategic objective, which alone would have provided a chance of political progress. Only the large-scale deployments of Western forces in Bosnia after 1995 gave the international community strategic dominance and made it the main enabler of the modest political progress that was possible.

There is obviously no strict mathematical relationship between the size of forces and their ability to help attain political objectives. For one thing, training, leadership, equipment and organisation all have a massive effect on the fighting capability of units and the deterrent effect they can produce. (Some contingents for UNPROFOR arrived in the middle of a Bosnian winter with only summer uniforms and personal weapons. They were effectively useless to commanders.) A combination of numbers and effectiveness, together with clear objectives and strong leadership, can provide the possibility, although not the certainty, of creating a stable environment in which progress is possible.

Control of terrain, including sea and airspace, is also important for national governments in times of peace. The ability to protect against piracy, large-scale smuggling, theft of natural resources, violent separatist or ethnic protest, and the formation of private armies and militias is fundamental to the integrity of a state. By contrast the inability of a state to protect itself and its population against such threats undermines its legitimacy in the eyes of the population and can indeed put its very survival in question.

In some cases the military carries out a role that is entirely symbolic, even if it is couched in traditional terms of territorial defence. The pageantry associated with the military – flags, uniforms and the like – can be powerful political symbols. A unified army is one of the major objectives of post-conflict reconstruction, for symbolic as much as for practical reasons. Military forces, even small ones, also send a political statement about the willingness to defend national territory and preserve national interests. Sending a military force on a mission abroad, no matter how limited and peaceful, is a major statement. International missions are also a good symbol of regional or continental cooperation, even if their practical effectiveness is not always of the best.

Mounting operations outside the country is an important rite of passage for nations wanting to increase their visibility on the world stage. For example, South Korea and Malaysia, both states that are highly dependent on the sea, decided to invest in modern sophisticated frigates and destroyers capable of long-range operations to replace their previous coastal navies and take part in UN operations. The political effect of procurement choices can be quite profound – in this case it was obvious to all that the world balance of military capability was moving slightly away from the West. This is even truer in Africa, a continent that has long been assumed to be militarily insignificant on the world stage. The possession by an African state of even a limited military capacity invites unease in the West.

Thus, the Nigerians were rebuked for purchasing '150 Vickers Mk3 and 50 T-55 main battle tanks, various MiG and Alpha fighter jets … and Roland surface-to-air missiles, yet the primary threat was from low-intensity ground conflict. No neighbour of Nigeria possessed any significant mechanised army or jet fighter capability…' Worse than that, Nigeria did not accept the equipment and training the US believed it needed.[20] Some of this criticism was certainly valid, even though the Alpha Jet is, in fact, not a fighter, but a trainer/ground attack aircraft that performed well in support of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) operations in Sierra Leone. Nigeria also never had more than a handful of MiG-21s, which are 1950s vintage jets available

for almost nothing second-hand. Nonetheless, the political symbolism of black men in jet aircraft was not lost on anyone. With the South African defence equipment package now in service, the world will have to find a way of coping with black men in supersonic aircraft, not to mention frigates and submarines.

The military can also be used in an attempt to limit the options of other states by sending a political message. Traditionally, small states made defensive preparations not because they expected to defeat a larger invader, but to provide that invader with a disincentive and to strengthen their political position by showing that that they were prepared to fight if necessary. A variant of this behaviour continues today even in benign environments: capable military forces are a good way to secure influence with a large ally or in a regional security organisation.

There are of course still cases where something like the traditional use of military potential continues. A number of countries in the world fear military attack by the US, and the actions they take vary. For example, North Korea, whose conventional manoeuvre forces are now effectively useless, nonetheless has a large arsenal of long-range artillery and short and medium-range conventional missiles. These have some capability against US forces, but, more importantly, are able to cause devastation in every major conurbation in South Korea and Japan, a price the North Korean leadership estimates the US will not be prepared to pay. Without the need for any overt statement by either side, the strategic relationship between the two countries has adapted to take account of the status quo.

The case of Iran is slightly different, because its conventional forces are better equipped. Opinions differ on whether they would actually hope to defeat a conventional invasion by the US, but that is not really the point. Iran's military strength makes the country simply too tough a nut to crack in this fashion, which is why even the most hawkish US commentators rarely raise the idea. Once again, certain policy options are quietly ruled out.

Uncertainty is, in fact, a major factor in the defensive postures of smaller countries. Only specialists with access to sensitive information will know whether North Korea actually has a nuclear capability or not.[21] But the point is that a potential aggressor can never be absolutely sure and might thus not take the risk of finding out. Similarly, as far as one can judge, the Iranians have contented themselves with developing the capacity required to create a nuclear capability in a few years if the political situation deteriorates, especially to the point where a nuclear attack by the US or Israel seems a possibility. But the essential message that is being conveyed is political, namely an attempt to avert a conflict by demonstrating a willingness to fight if necessary.

The same logic applies elsewhere. China's main international political priority is the reincorporation of Taiwan, which it regards as a province in rebellion against central authority. With a well-established dislike of overt conflict, the Chinese would wish this to happen peacefully, as was the case with Hong Kong in 1997. The build-up of Chinese forces in the Pacific is intended to intimidate Taiwan into accepting reunification without conflict. The complicating factor is the US, which has maintained from the start that it will not accept reunification. For this reason, recent Chinese equipment programmes, including the acquisition of anti-carrier missiles and anti-satellite weapons, are designed to dissuade the US from trying to intervene. Although addressed to the US, the political message is in essence directed at Taiwan to persuade it that reliance on US assistance is a waste of time.

In other words, far from just being about 'fighting and winning wars', a nation's armed forces can be used to achieve a whole range of objectives, some direct and military, others subtle and political, and with many combinations in between. In later chapters I will look at the consequences of this for the structure and organisation of defence policy-making.

WHAT THE MILITARY IS NOT

Popular and even elite understanding of the military's role is often very confused. On the one hand, emphasis on the military's capability for violence makes many people uncomfortable. This discomfort has grown with the legacy of the Nuremberg Trials at the end of the Second World War, where the defeated Nazi defendants were charged with, among other things, waging an aggressive war. The death penalty was sought and was implemented in a number of cases. Before the Second World War, aggressive wars were very common and were regarded as part of international interaction. Although Nuremburg did not change the behaviour of states very much, it did profoundly change the rhetoric used by them. The term 'war' rapidly fell from favour – what we think of as the Korean War was described at the time as a 'police action' – and nations generally refer to aggressive military operations today as 'self-defence' or even 'peacekeeping operations'. Similarly, states today are 'liberated' rather than being invaded, and no doubt feel much better for it.

To many nations, especially those with no immediate enemy to fight, 'defence' seemed a useful term to adopt. Ministries of war or of the armed forces changed their names to ministries of defence in almost every state. And today the military

is described almost universally as being for the 'defence of the nation', even if that defence actually involves actions that would have been described as 'war' in the past. Given the contradictions contained in this definition, it is not surprising that the term 'defence' has proved to be an extremely elastic concept and the military has, for example, been described as defending a nation's vital national interests, its way of life, the constitution, common values, etc.

But these are only rationalisations. You cannot, in fact, defend values or a way of life with military forces, any more than you can attack them in this way. You can only kill people whose values you suspect may be different from yours. National interest is an even shakier argument historically, not least because two countries will often define their national interests in ways that conflict with each other, which may lead to tension and even violence. These descriptions can also be dangerous in other ways. If a nation's constitution prescribes the separation of church and state, then the army could legitimately act against a religious political party that has won a free and fair election.

Nonetheless, the taxpayer is much more likely to fund military forces that are described as being for 'protection' against a 'threat', rather than as providing governments with additional foreign and interior policy options, which would be more honest intellectually.

The use of he term 'threats' can lead to a desperate search for such threats, potential threats or situations that, who knows, might one day develop into threats. It can also lead to mealy-mouthed arguments about 'risks' and 'uncertainties' against which military forces seemingly need to be deployed. Defence White Papers now increasingly talk about such undeniable problems as global warming, migration and national resources before leaping, without any intervening argument, to the conclusion that force structures and defence budgets will be needed to deal with the as yet unidentified consequences of these problems.

It is a fair criticism to call this intellectually dishonest, but at the same time it has to be recognised that political reality is such that it is much easier to scare a population into funding 'defence' than it is to persuade it of the complex realities of why military forces are useful. As suggested earlier, however, military planning should not be conducted on the basis of a 'threat' or need for 'defence' except in the unusual circumstance of a threat actually existing.

Given all this, it is unfortunate that the Anglo-Saxon tradition of writing on the military and CMR has tended to emphasise the less subtle, more combat-related uses of the military. The kind of analysis offered earlier in the discussion of Korea and China, for example, is seldom if ever found in the Anglo-Saxon

tradition. Accordingly, the idea that an army can fulfil a vital political role without fighting, though obvious enough, tends to be absent from Anglo-Saxon concepts of the use of the military. There is thus an important disconnect between a willingness to contemplate war and aggression (including one's own) and a reluctance to call things by their real names, especially when one's own actions are involved.

WHY THE MILITARY POSES A PROBLEM

Once we understand that the military's role is to provide force, or the threat of it, to support the wider policies of the state, it becomes clearer why civil society, especially in a democracy, has a potential difficulty with the military. Simply put, the military cannot be run like a democracy, and civil society must not be run like the military. The military needs to be able to train for and, if necessary, perform its violent tasks in a manner that is not only effective, but is also acceptable to public opinion. At the same time it must not compromise the political process. Modern military forces are very expensive and the voter and taxpayer therefore expect the military to do a good job. But the way in which the military acts cannot accord to the norms of civil society, even though it should not contradict such norms and its actions should rest on a clear political mandate.

There have been various unsuccessful attempts to pretend that this problem does not exist, as is reflected in the following statements:

- Our military forces exist only to deter war, and should never be used.
- Our military are citizens in uniform.
- Our military exists to defend the constitution.
- Our military is a source of stability for the region.

But these are really ways of disguising the problem. A better option is to recognise that the problem is a real but manageable one. Essentially, the military exists and has legitimacy because in all societies most people think that the use or threat of violence is acceptable in certain circumstances. But the use or threat of violence, even on a small scale, can have catastrophic practical and political consequences if it goes wrong. For this reason, all aspects of planning and the carrying out of military operations, as well as all necessary training, equipping and organising of the forces, should be handled with care and in a manner that combines practicality with acceptability. Military officers, but also politicians, diplomats

and civilian officials somehow need to work together to produce a defence policy that makes sense and is affordable. Military forces have to be structured, equipped and trained and, if necessary, be utilised in a context of general public acceptance. How the various actors work together successfully will differ from country to country since there is no magic overall formula. The formulation of defence policy and its link with foreign and security policy is covered in more detail later.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

As tends to be the norm, my discussion has so far referred to the military as though it is the same all over the world and it always works in the same political context. Yet closer observation will confirm that, in spite of the literally uniform appearance of military forces and the superficial similarities of behaviour and doctrine, militaries vary from each other at least as much as nations do. This is partly because military forces occupy very different places in the security communities of individual countries, and because each country has different experiences in war and peace. It is for this reason that the management and, if required, the reform, of defence sectors has to begin with the particular situation of each country. Some of the applicable factors follow. The list is not exhaustive, but rather an indication of the kind of factors that produce differences. In general, the factors are the consequence of the different sorts of strategic orientations discussed in the previous chapter.

Geography

The military forces of most nations are based on either a maritime or a continental tradition, or on a tradition of isolation. These traditions are not, of course, immutable, and in some cases have changed quite sharply over time. But geography in the widest sense, including the power and position of one's neighbours, will have an important influence on the policies to be adopted. Islands and littoral states without an isolationist tradition frequently develop navies for protection of trade and have small armies only. Conversely, a landlocked state will concentrate on territorial defence by its army. There are anomalous cases, such as Japan. Although an island state, it did not develop a navy until the late 19th century, partly because of a policy of deliberate isolation and partly because of dangerous seas and limited trading opportunities in the region. The development of its army

coincided with a desire to copy Western imperialist practices. It was the army that dominated Japanese politics in the 1920s and 1930s, with disastrous results.

Size or isolation can confer effective immunity from attack, so military planning in, say, Australia has always emphasised the meeting of threats at as early a stage and as far removed from Australia as possible, preferably before they even arise. Such an orientation implies a small but high-quality force that is able to operate far from home and able to maintain a technological edge. It requires a considerable investment in intelligence and surveillance assets.

Size and power

Small and weak nations are generally more peaceful than large and powerful ones, even though the latter seldom face threats of any kind. For large nations, an overseas defeat may be a nuisance, but it is not disastrous, and there is a relaxed attitude to the use of violence among the population as a whole. Military operations tend to be seen as a component of foreign or economic policy. Some small nations, like Canada and New Zealand, that do not feel threatened and have small standing forces, tend to devote themselves to providing limited but high-quality contributions to regional or global security.

History

The Anglo-Saxon military tradition, which is the basis of experience of most writers on this subject, does not apply to most of the world. The place of the military in the life of a nation will be affected by the following factors, amongst others:

- Its involvement in domestic politics in the past.
- Its employment as an internal security force.
- Its past status and the use it has made of that status.
- Its success or otherwise in foreign wars.
- Its regional or international reputation.

In some cases, the military, especially the army, is seen as the founder or saviour of the nation. In Vietnam, for example, the army wields considerable influence, largely because of its successful engagement against the Japanese, Chinese, French and Americans over time, and its role in the unification of the country in 1975. In much the same way, the Chinese military is still referred to as the People's Liberation Army

(PLA), although it did its liberating more than half a century ago. Conversely, the Japanese military has little influence or social standing today. After the disastrous experiences of the 1930s and 1940s, the military is a low-status profession, resented or ignored by most Japanese, and un-feared by every other country in the region.

Without wishing to be too schematic, it may be useful to divide the militaries of the world into a few basic categories, as follows:

- *Traditional national militaries*. The western European tradition, in which the national militaries were originally the private armies of rulers. They were mercenaries in the best sense of the term, politically indifferent and professional. In most cases their loyalties were transferred to elected governments, although not always without difficulty.
- *Nation-building militaries*, which were intimately involved with the foundation of their states and their subsequent development. The US is the best known example – its army was engaged in the extermination of the indigenous inhabitants and subsequently suppressed a separatist rebellion. There are also many Latin American examples where the military was so intimately involved in the founding, development and running of countries that it is doubtful whether, in the abstract, the phrase 'civil-military relations' makes much historical sense. The same is true in parts of Africa.22
- *Militaries of national liberation*. Here, militaries trace their origins back to anti-colonialist struggles and often see themselves as having a special role in their countries' history. Examples would include Indonesia and Namibia.
- *Revolutionary militaries*, which have often fought civil wars against ideological opponents as well as colonial powers, and can be the military forces of the main political parties, rather their countries. Examples would include the Chinese PLA and the militaries of Angola and Mozambique.
- *Post-colonial militaries*, namely military forces of states that achieved independence peacefully and which are often based on both imperial models and indigenous traditions. He militaries of most former French and British colonies in Africa come under this heading.
- *Western-influenced militaries*, which would include the militaries of countries such as Japan, Thailand and Korea. They adopted Western models for their armies as part of their modernisation strategies.

None of these categories is exclusive and many militaries retain elements of more than one model. There are also variations within the same general model.

Cultural factors

Few societies are inherently militaristic. All societies seem to pass through stages in reaction to the kind of factors listed above. But there are certain cultural factors that have an impact on the place and influence of the military in society. War was originally the business of the aristocracy and societies where the aristocracy retained political and social power, such as in Britain and to a lesser extent in France, have tended to give the military a larger place in society. There are also cultures that are not necessarily aggressive or warlike, but where the traditional military virtues of courage and discipline are well regarded and often anchored deep in history. It is not uncommon to be told by a Nuer, a Basotho or an Ashanti of their long and glorious military traditions. This does not make such groups any more violent or aggressive than others, but it may mean that their members are more likely to join national military forces.

There is also the tendency, much stronger in some societies than in others, for retired military officers to go into politics. In most cases, as we shall see later, the military is not very good at politics and tends to shun it. But individual officers may come to power, often in conditions of crisis, and be accepted as interim rulers that are above politics, even if their rule is not democratic. Certain countries have a history of attracting such individuals, and provided their interventions are generally thought to have been useful, this enhances the status of the military.

Of course, everyone who is not a complete pacifist is prepared to admire the military for some things. Militaries that have kept out of politics and won wars without attracting opprobrium, that have gained the respect of their country's citizens and can be sent overseas without embarrassment, will have a stronger role in society as a result.

In addition, the last 20 years have seen a major cultural change in the attitude of parts of Western society to the role of the military. Given the influence of Western attitudes on the thinking of the rest of the world, this is an important development. The military has always evoked our fantasies and our fears and in many ways the military is the collective Freudian Id of our society, embodying our darkest and deepest emotions and the wish for violence and revenge. Indeed, the whole debate about 'control' of the military can best be seen as a reflection of a psychological struggle within individuals to control the violent and destructive urges that all of us feel at some point of time.

During the Cold War the military in the West represented our fears of annihilation in some global apocalypse. Since the end of that war, groups that

previously feared and distrusted the military have come, if not to admire them, then at least to see their usefulness, and to want them used against those they dislike. The despatch of military forces to intervene in crises abroad is now a routine demand by liberal and humanitarian thinkers, despite the very mixed history of such interventions and the suffering and death that usually accompanies such actions. Indeed, liberal militarism has largely replaced traditional militarism in the discourse of major Western states.

PROFESSIONALS AND CONSCRIPTS

For the politician, civil servant, diplomat or journalist, the military can be a caste apart, the object of ignorance and even fear. In turn, the military is often in-grown and stands separate from society, not realising how it is generally perceived. This rest of this chapter is concerned with the military as it is today and how best use can be made of its strengths.

For the sake of simplicity, I have so far assumed that the military is equivalent to military officers. In fact, the vast majority of armed forces – up to 90 per cent – does not consist of officers, but of soldiers, sailors and airmen. Whilst it is understandable why enlisted men generally do not feature in books on the military and politics – few coups have been carried out by them[23] – there are a number of important civil-military issues that flow from the fact that the non-officer classes make up the vast majority of the military.

The most important of these is the balance between national service and professionalism. Whilst the idea of arming the population has always made national leaders nervous, there was a long period, roughly from 1850 to 1950, when modern war in Europe and Asia, with its requirement for very large numbers of infantry, made sheer mass and therefore conscription inevitable. Even today, states that believe they face a major conventional threat will probably have a national service system of some nature to produce the large numbers of trained soldiers needed in times of crisis. But conscription has seldom been popular politically, least of all with those called up.

The increasing tendency today for the military to be employed on international peace-support operations is putting the idea of national service more and more in doubt. Conscripts cannot easily be sent on operations abroad as they often lack the training and can in many countries not be forced to serve beyond the country's borders. Conscription implies a bargain: young people will give up an important part of their lives to the military to defend their national territory,

but not to be placed in the same kind of complex and dangerous situations as professional soldiers. It was this kind of reasoning that prompted the French to abandon their over-100-year tradition of military service when they moved to a professional military in 2000.

Some societies, however, still see powerful arguments in favour of conscription, as it avoids the risk of creating a professional military caste that becomes distinct from society as a whole. It also brings together young men from different social and regional backgrounds. The 'school-of-the-nation' argument for conscription in certain societies leads to the military performing a whole series of social and educational roles.

Even in the days of massive conscription there was never a simple antithesis between professional officers and conscripted other ranks. All military forces have depended for much of their effectiveness on non-commissioned officers, the career soldiers at corporal and sergeant levels who provide the glue that keeps a military unit together and will in many cases go on to become officers themselves. Attracting and retaining such individuals, even in an army where conscription is the standard, is a very important objective of any military force. One of the major weaknesses of the Soviet Army was its almost complete lack of an NCO corps and the consequent massive misemployment of officers in jobs that would normally have been undertaken by NCOs. In modern times, navies and air forces have become largely professional, even in states that formally retain conscription, in view of the complex nature of the work involved.

A modern military force is therefore a complex and varied organisation. Increasingly the modern officer, usually a graduate, commands a group of well-educated professionals who are there because they want to be and who, within reason, have the right to resign. Such issues as pay and allowances, education and training, posting policy and family welfare increasingly preoccupy the modern officer. If one wants to retain a skilled and motivated military force, such issues become important considerations in the management of defence

The military today, even the officer corps, is also no longer a self-sufficient caste, separate from society as a whole. Increasingly the military comes into contact with civilians from all walks of life. These include not only diplomats and civil servants, but also scientists and engineers, salesmen and even journalists. Recent moves to downscale armed forces have led to the employment of civilians in jobs that used to be filled by military personnel. This new labour force, comprising mostly poorly paid and untrained casual workers with low motivation, constitutes an especially large problem for the traditional military ethos. In any

event, a military career is not what it used to be. In most countries retirement is at 55 and may be earlier. Many officers do not even wait that long. Once the last guaranteed command appointment (a ship or regiment, for example) has come or been withheld, many leave anyway.

THE MILITARY AS A PUBLIC SERVICE

The most important characteristic of any military force is that it is part of the *public service*. The nearest analogues of the soldier are therefore the diplomat, the civil servant, the teacher and, in some societies, the doctor. Public service occupations tend to have a number of distinguishing features in any society, including the following:

- *Vocation*. The public servant has an interest in the job for itself, believing it to be a worthwhile occupation. Job satisfaction is usually high and is more important than material rewards, which are often modest.
- *Collectivity*. The public servant is part of a larger, similarly motivated group of people pursuing the same broad objectives.
- *Continuity*. The public servant generally makes a long-term commitment to the same organisation.
- *Rationality*. Public service organisations try to behave in a rational manner. Recruitment, promotions and postings are generally carried out according to some reasonably rational criteria. The kind of nepotism and irrationality that typifies the private sector is less common.
- *Predictability*. Public services are generally governed by rules and regulations. Whilst these may limit individuals in some ways, they also protect them and generally ensure uniformity of treatment.
- *Hierarchy and structure*. It is generally clear who is responsible for what tasks, and work will tend to find its own level naturally. Personal power plays a lesser role than in the private sector and the mixture of fear and sycophancy found in that sector is much less common.

These characteristics, which generally result in reasonably effective organisations, are not the product of chance. They are the kind of pragmatic rules that sensible people make for themselves as they observe what does and does not work. This is characteristic not only of many public sector organisations – the Roman legions and the Chinese civil service appear to have worked much like this – but of large, successful private-sector organisations as well.

Which brings us to question of ethos. Here we may make use of the helpful distinctions made by Francis Fukuyama between high-trust and low-trust societies.[24] Low-trust societies are atomised structures where individuals trust no-one outside their immediate family and seek to maximise their personal wealth and power, often to the detriment of others. High-trust societies are those where bonds exist between individuals who are part of groups. Those individuals are socialised to pursue the good of the group in preference to their own good. In all areas of life, and with great predictability, high-trust structures are more successful than low-trust structures.

High-trust societies have three particular characteristics that are relevant to any discussion on the military, namely:

- *Personalisation.* In any structure, even the smallest, everyone depends on everyone else. Structures work best when this co-operation is instinctive and far-reaching. Military organisations have always known the value of personal bonding at all levels and have learnt centuries ago that people work far harder for the approval of their peers than for any amount of money. This in turn produces, as indeed does the traditional public-sector culture in most cases, a sense of obligation and fellow-feeling to co-workers and a willingness to get the job done. This enables arrangements within the military, and for that matter the public sector as a whole, to be much less bureaucratic and legalistic than in the private sector.

- *Non-financial ethos.* Military institutions have always realised that in an effective organisation, personal reward must not be linked to personal effort, except in the obvious sense that successful people obtain promotion. Once performance and reward are linked, people become obsessed with their own situation and cease to trust others. It is interesting to note that in military forces where senior officers are exposed to the opportunity of substantial earnings and even corruption, the cohesion, morale and fighting ability of the force declines. In China, for example, the PLA were encouraged to supplement the defence budget by setting up business ventures. This inevitably brought corruption with it. The problem became so severe that in 1998 the PLA had to abandon the policy.[25]

- *Dedication.* Military commitment to the job is absolute, even more so generally than in the public sector. In certain cases, grievous bodily harm or even death can result from this commitment. The officer has no contract that enables him to cease work if things get too rough. In turn, of course, the

officer expects the same treatment, not only from his immediate colleagues, but also from the organisation as a whole. He knows that his parent service will not look for exclusion clauses or fine print as an escape from obligations to its members.

It is worth saying in parentheses that these characteristics are primarily those of modern, professional armies as they have developed in recent times. They are not exclusively Western in nature, although they are associated with effective, modern, Western-style armies. Ineffective modern armies, even if based upon Western models, do not necessarily have these attributes.[26]

Throughout history there have also been other organisational models. Mercenaries, for example, have always been part of warfare and entire mercenary armies were once common. The line between professionals and mercenaries was often blurred, as in non-Roman contingents, which made up the greater part of the Roman army. Mercenary forces were also used extensively by the colonial powers, who often recruited locals to fight against and to oppress their own people. The *Force Publique* in the Belgian Congo is perhaps the most notorious example. Colonial powers used locally recruited forces abroad in both world wars.[27] Most anti-colonial wars also had an element of civil wars, with native contingents fighting on the side of the colonialists for money, out of conviction, or both. The best-known example is the Algerian *Harkis,* who fought with the French forces, while a hybrid example is 32 Battalion of the old South African Defence Force, which was made up of Angolans opposed to the regime in Luanda and fought in Namibia under white South African officers. The effectiveness of these forces varied enormously.

Certain mercenary forces have become famous and have gained distinguished military reputations. The French Foreign Legion, founded in 1831, which recruited only foreigners into its ranks (although its officers were and remain French), had a distinguished combat record and seems to have been at least as effective as any other French unit. The Spanish Legion, founded in imitation shortly afterwards, accepted some foreigners, although it mainly recruited Spaniards. Both were solutions to the problem of fighting 19th century colonial wars in which it was difficult to employ conscripted armies.

The French and Spanish legions can be described as 'standing' mercenary forces in that they owe their allegiance to a single country and fight as part of its military forces. By contrast, there have been mercenaries in the true sense of the term, working for whoever pays them and ready to switch allegiance for profit.

Such people were probably last recruited in large numbers in the 1970s during the fighting in Angola, although a few sad individuals worked as mercenaries during the troubles in the Former Yugoslavia. These days, mercenaries have mutated into private military companies (PMCs) and, with the exception of Iraq, where mercenary forces seem to be engaged in actual combat, most of their work seems to be in training and logistic support. Whilst the activities, and for some even the existence, of PMCs are controversial, they have given governments the opportunity to carry out training and even SSR projects at arms length.

Clearly not all forces involved in armed conflict are organised state-run military forces. The great age of liberation movements is over, but dissident groups continue to fight in different parts of the world, sometimes for independence or autonomy, like the Chechen rebels or the Tamil Tigers, sometimes against foreign occupation and domination, as with various groups often described as 'Islamist'. Obviously the motives of such fighters are political in the widest sense of that term, but interviews with those who fought in Afghanistan over the last 30 years, or in Iraq more recently, reveal a more complex pattern of idealism mixed with the desire for travel and adventure, and the prospect of fighting for a cause they believe to be just.

Finally, there is what are usually called 'militias'. These groups, most often found in Africa, are normally linked to political parties, or at least the ambitions of political leaders. They are mostly organised along regional, ethnic or religious lines and generally have a low level of military skills. Their function is to control territory and resources, and if necessary to terrorise members of opposing groups into leaving the area. As in the DRC in recent years, these groups essentially have personal loyalties and split, merge and fight each other in a bewildering array of combinations.

The various types of military organisation described here are significantly different from each other and several interesting points emerge when comparing them. First, the boundaries are often blurred. Unpaid soldiers of weak African states, with low levels of training, have behaved in ways indistinguishable from the militias they are fighting. Militia groups themselves may ally themselves with government forces or even with invaders for tactical reasons, as has happened in Iraq. Ethnic or tribal differences and jealousies may lead to surprising realignments, as when Nuer fighters under Riek Machar allied themselves with the government in Khartoum to fight John Garang's Dinka-dominated Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), although both groups are from the same region. Sudan, indeed, is an example of a conflict where the creation and manipulation of

militias is a virtuoso art, and a recognised part of the fighting. The link between militias and organised crime is often also blurred: The Kosovo Liberation Army and the Kosovar Albanian Mafia were effectively the same thing, which seemed normal to the locals but puzzling to Westerners.

Secondly, the advantage does not always lie with government forces. The Tigre Peoples' Liberation Front, which fought the Dergue regime in Ethiopia for 15 years, was impressively organised and trained, and finally achieved a conventional military victory. The Rwandan Patriotic Army, which invaded Rwanda from Uganda in 1990, for all its brutality to the Hutu population, was probably better trained and led than the government forces it eventually defeated.

Thirdly, recruitment to all these organisations often takes place for very similar reasons. For most of human history young people have been attracted by the possibility of adventure, travel, comradeship, danger (in small doses) and a change from everyday life. They have also often sought to escape unemployment and poverty, or lack of opportunity to better themselves. One consequence is that demobilised ex-combatants, far from welcoming peace, often find it boring and turn to crime or mercenary activities.

This attitude is difficult to understand in the context of current ideologies about war and peace, which are mostly of Western devising. As one would expect, these ideologies are inconsistent with one another, but the dominant one, drawing on centuries of Western liberal thinking, sees war as nothing but random episodes of senseless violence and brutality, often directed against the civilian population and fought by traumatised soldiers often kidnapped and forced into conflict by entrepreneurs of violence. (This image somehow coexists with the image of war, when called humanitarian intervention, as a necessary and noble activity.)

Obviously some of these negative elements are true and do occur. But veterans of armed conflict generally join up or remain with military forces very much for the reasons described earlier, and not to engage in senseless killing. Indeed, in most modern armed conflicts the majority of the participants never see action or fire a weapon. Although pitched battles in African conflicts are not unknown (as in Rwanda from 1990 to 1994), more usually a side that can establish a local superiority will take a town or village with little opposition. The same was true of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, where, especially towards the end, troops were too tired, demotivated and poorly trained to fight set-piece battles, and would often withdraw if attacked. Thus the flight of Bosnian Muslim forces from Srebrenica in July 1995 in the face of an attack by a much smaller force of the

Bosnian Serb Army has puzzled many, but was in fact quite typical of the conflict as a whole. In other words, the experience of armed conflict is extremely varied and not necessarily what Western experts would expect.

As already indicated, this book is not narrowly conceived as a textbook on SSR, but it is worth interjecting here that the factors discussed above are extremely relevant to SSR activities conducted by Western experts, who are often unaware of these issues and of the particular combination of factors that may exist in a given society. Nations on the receiving end of SSR should not be surprised if Western experts arrive with preconceived notions, including those discussed above, that are very different from the actual situations existing in their countries.

INSTITUTIONALISING EXCELLENCE

The strength of any effective organisation is not so much excellence as institutionalised excellence, which is to say the expectation of a continuous high standard of performance. To repeat, most writing about the military is produced according to Anglo-Saxon cultural assumptions. Important among these is the heroic concept of leadership. This sees leaders in politics, war and even business as fundamental to the success of any organisation, giving them enormous prestige and in some cases enormous amounts of money. But in reality, of course, even the most wonderful leader can only directly affect a small part of what goes on in an organisation as a whole. Far more significant is the everyday competence and consistency displayed by people much lower down the organisational ladder, whom the charismatic leader has perhaps never even met. What is important is the excellence with which an organisation as a whole conducts itself, since mediocre people can be brought on by a good organisation, but a mediocre organisation will probably overwhelm even the most capable individual.

In general, successful organisations have preferred the route of institutionalising excellence rather than cultivating heroic leaders. This has been especially true in the military. In the 19th century, genii like Napoleon, Wellington and Shaka could command an army of 50 000 to 100 000 troops. They could get a general idea of what was going on, issue orders and even appear on the battlefield at a critical moment. But quite obviously, overall success depended on having subordinates of good quality, who would not only do sensible things, but also know what was in the commander's mind. This last point is critical. As armies have increased enormously in size, and the density of troops on the battlefield has reduced with the increase in firepower, so the subordinate is increasingly on his

own in situations where he must make urgent decisions. Under this scenario the question is not simply 'What do I do?', but rather 'What would the commander expect me to do?' and even 'What would my colleagues expect me to do?'. In this way, a military force can act as a reasonably articulated whole, even when central direction is not possible. This does not come about by telepathy, of course, but by careful training and long experience in working together. This is the process of institutionalising excellence, which is fundamental to understanding how the military works.

The extent to which this does happen is critical to the military effectiveness of units. Militia forces can often be defeated quickly by professionals or those with substantially more training because, confronted by the unexpected, militias often fall apart or at best do nothing. Of course, even professionals need clear guidance – if one does not know the strategic intent, one is hard pressed to responds effectively.

Different militaries have different traditions, which often depend on where their senior officers were trained. Militaries trained by the former Soviet Bloc tend to be good at pre-programmed drills and standardised tactics, but much less effective in coping with the unexpected. Indeed, because it is easy and quick to teach this kind of behaviour, it is typical of conscript armies.[28]

ACTING ON ORDERS

This brings us to a characteristic of the military that is placed before all others by some, namely obedience. Here I refer to internal obedience; questions of obedience to civil authority are discussed later. Military obedience is usually presented in rather extreme terms by outside commentators. It is often conceived as machine-like obedience to orders, procured by threats of terrible punishments for dissent. Each level of the military owes 'explicit and peremptory obedience to the orders of its superior'.[29] Well, yes, but there are some significant qualifications to be made.

First, obedience is never absolute and has seldom been, even in the days of illiterate mercenary armies. The concept of 'lawful order' is deeply enshrined in codes of military law, but in practice an order must meet at least the following three criteria before it can be regarded as acceptable:

- An order must be *legal in terms of the laws of the state*, since an order to break the law is by its nature invalid. Sometimes the law of the country in which one

is stationed also needs to be taken into account. In the Gulf War, women in the military could not be ordered to perform driving jobs since a local Saudi Arabian law prohibits this.

- An order must also be *consistent with military law*, which on occasion is more restrictive than civil law. For example, a soldier cannot be ordered to go absent without leave.

- Finally, an order must not be *repugnant to the spirit of the military,* i.e. it must be for what is often described as 'military purposes'. Orders should not be given trivially and it would thus be unacceptable for soldiers to be ordered to exercise the commanding officer's dog.

It is worth adding that there is a presumption in most jurisdictions that orders that are given will be legal. A subordinate will not usually be faulted for obeying an order unless it is obviously illegal. But equally, ignorance of the law is not an excuse, and obedience to orders is no longer the defence it was in the US Army until 1944, for example. That said, one of the assumptions in the armed forces of a democratic country is that both the giving and the implementing of orders is legal and that, all things being equal, the givers of orders have the greater responsibility.

Secondly, obedience is not a cult in itself. Its purpose is to produce good operational performance in circumstances where there is seldom time or opportunity to debate whether an attack on a particular hill makes sense or not. And because battles of true annihilation are very rare, victory usually goes to the force that keeps its discipline and coherence the longest. But victories are not won by automata. Indeed, there is evidence that military forces which encourage initiative at all levels succeed much better than those that require unquestioning obedience to orders. It is not hard to see why. 'No plan,' as the Prussian General Von Moltke said, 'survives contact with the enemy'. As a result, prescriptive orders will rapidly cease to have any connection with reality and a military force that does not know what to do next, will do nothing. A sense of initiative is even more important in today's peace operations, where small units led by young commanders can be left isolated to cope with highly sensitive situations.

The military has learned by experience that individual initiative is not only essential for success in battle, but also that such initiative will not arise spontaneously in a difficult situation if it has not been practised in easier ones. Thus, initiative, rather than blind obedience, is sought in everyone, not just in officers. Modern military thought has canonised this type of thinking as 'mission-oriented orders',

which is to say that a commander will be told what his objective is – 'Take that hill' – but it will be left to him, within certain limits, how he goes about it.[30]

One of the secrets of military discipline is the legitimisation of the process of giving orders. In a properly regulated military the giver of orders has some advantage of ability, training or experience over the receiver of orders, which results from the general rationality of the system in which both the giver and the receiver work. In theory, the superior officer can do, and probably has done, the job of the junior officer. The junior officer knows that with training and experience he or she will be able to give these orders too.

The other secret, and perhaps the most important single aspect of military obedience, is the institutionalisation of the process. It is not individual obedience that counts, but the efficiency of the system in turning directions into practical results. Military organisations, like the public sector in general, are mainly geared to action, and thus systems are set up for the primary purpose of transmitting instructions to get things done. This way of working, generally described as 'bureaucratic' by outsiders, is in fact extremely efficient in ensuring that things happen. It usually also contains a degree of redundancy to allow for things not happening – for 'disobedience', if you like.

Clear control and organisational effectiveness are critical. Although the virtues of superior organisation claimed for the military are often true, it is not always like that, however. Everyone who has worked in a large organisation knows that unpopular orders somehow never get carried out. Papers are lost, promises are not kept, meetings are not held, etc. The military, like every other organisation, does not have the resources to track the progress of every order and to see that it is followed up. Much relies on trust and the sense of legitimacy. When these are lacking, the problems for a military force can be acute. In most failed military campaigns, command and control problems are implicated somewhere.

To summarise, the military exist to provide the government with options it would not otherwise have for implementing its security policy. The available capabilities range from the flagrantly violent to the subtly political, and need a sophisticated system to make the best use of them. Militaries are both quite similar and very different. Similar, in that they are part of the public sector of every country and have that sector's characteristics and strengths. Different, in that their origins, as well as their political, cultural and historical backgrounds vary enormously.

Politics, the military and 'control'

The military and its relationship to the political process is an important topic in any democracy. It is especially important in periods of transition, whether from war to peace, from an authoritarian system to a democratic one, or in the much more complex environment of post-war reconstruction. It was widely studied in the past under the heading of CMR. Nowadays it is the fundamental issue of SSR, a discipline that has blossomed in ambition and content, if not necessarily in profundity, in recent years. Although this chapter is not about SSR as such, it does cover some of the issues often discussed under that heading and will, I hope, be useful in dispelling some misunderstandings.[31]

There is no simple model for the relationship between the military and the political process, especially during transition. The nature of transition will itself vary. In some cases the change may be from a system where the military had the decisive voice in defence and security policy. In others, the military may have dominated the entire political process. In still others, the military may have been the servant of a political, ethnic or religious group now out of power. Whatever the case, the objective – the 'end-state', as the military usefully call it – is one where the military plays a correct and useful role in the political process.

The problem is complex enough in itself, but is made even more so by the slipperiness of the terminology used. Thus, by 'the military' we generally mean officers, usually of a rank above colonel. 'Politics', of course, can mean many things, ranging from debates and elections to power politics and the process of government. If we consider the totality of the political process, however, most people would agree that the military should be involved in certain technical aspects

of policy-making and implementation, but that they should not be involved in fundamental decisions about how the country is run. The military's proper role would include the following characteristics:

- A full and appropriate part in the policy-making process.
- The appearance by military officers before parliamentary committees to explain technical military issues.
- The appearance by military officers at press conferences and presentations of
- government policy in support of ministers.
- On or off-the-record briefings to the media on military issues.

However, the militaries of many countries have at times had much larger roles than this, and some still feel entitled to a larger role today. Many nations have a legacy of this kind to deal with. How do we understand the motivation of the military in such situations?

THE ROOTS OF MILITARY INTERVENTIONISM

Although there have been many brutal and disastrous military interventions in political processes, the vast majority have been for reasons believed to be good or even praiseworthy. And although there have been cases where desire for power or wealth has prompted military involvement, these cases are not numerous. More often, the military has seen their intervention as safeguarding the country in one form or another. But what gives an officer the idea that he has the right, let alone the duty, to intervene, even in a situation of great national danger?

The first point to make is that generals seldom make such decisions on their own. True military governments, in the full sense of that term, are almost non-existent. As far as I am aware, there are no actual examples. In practice, the military, or more usually factions within a military, act in support of a political grouping during a political crisis. Even where the military seizes strategic control of the nation, as in Algeria or Pakistan, it does not rule alone and, indeed, could probably not have done so. Most so-called 'military regimes' are in fact civilian regimes with the inclusion of a number of military officers that rely on the support of the existing apparatus of the state to govern. Intervention may be on the side of reactionary forces (i.e. Chile in 1973) or the reverse (Portugal in 1974).

Even then the military seldom acts as one. For example, the French army split badly over the question of the future of the French colony of Algeria, and some

of its most famous units staged a mutiny. Militaries that contemplate involving themselves in politics usually undergo wrenching internal divisions before they do so, and invariably do so afterwards.[32] Many attempted military coups have been put down by loyal officers, while coups staged by one part of the military against another are not unknown. It appears to be an invariable rule that military intervention in the political process follows or results from a breakdown in the political process itself. Unfortunately, democracy, or at least the holding of competitive elections, is not a remedy, but frequently makes things worse. Why is this?

By its very nature, democracy is divisive. Political parties survive and seek power by emphasising their differences. Even within parties, groups or individuals seek to distinguish themselves. Particularly during times of political conflict, there is space at the fringes for a more extreme party or grouping. Politicians who move to the centre, or seek openings with political opponents, will find that they lose clarity and definition, and are elbowed aside by more extreme and less scrupulous colleagues.

This kind of development is containable in a society where the differences between parties are mainly of an ideological nature and there is a reasonable orderly political structure incorporating all views. But this is not the case in most countries. Political parties are often the product of personal, family or local loyalties, or they may give expression to religious or ethnic groups. In such instances the interests of one party may be impossible to reconcile with the interests of another. Particularly when the electoral process is not perfect, losing parties may well cry foul and either refuse to accept the poll result, or work to overthrow the government by extra-parliamentary means. In a family or clan-based political system, the successful party will often feel the need to reward its supporters with jobs and contracts, thus opening the way to charges of corruption.

Moreover, parliamentary democracy, admirable in itself, contains a number of covert assumptions that must be met if it is to function as intended. Politics has to be seen as a process in which losing, unpleasant as that may be, is tolerated. A candidate may have said in public that a victory for his opponents will be a disaster for the country, but that must be seen as rhetoric, rather than being a genuine belief. One would rather have won, of course, but must now settle down with good grace to being the opposition. But what if one really believes that the opponents' rule will be a disaster? One may be from an ethnic group that greatly fears for its safety under the new government, or from a religious party that regards some of the policies of opponents as sinful. Or there may be the simple

fear that one's opponent will use the resources of the state to destroy one not only politically, but personally as well.

This is a particular problem in Africa where leaders are very insecure, irrespective of how fairly they have come to power. One survey from 1991 suggested that the 485 post-colonial African rulers faced a 59,4 per cent chance of coming to a sticky end.[33] Even if that seems a little over-precise, it is clear that, both then and subsequently, losing power in Africa can mean rather more than the comfortable demotion to the opposition benches common in the West. It can include being tortured to death on video as a political object lesson, as happened to Samuel Doe in Liberia in 1990. Personal survival will therefore always be a priority, even if it is, as Christopher Clapham notes, 'not normally regarded as a legitimate basis for political action' and therefore tends to be ignored in theoretical writing.[34] It hardly needs adding that in such circumstances, control of the military may be a fundamental aid to survival. Some so-called 'military regimes' are simply regimes where the military decides who stays in power.

Similarly, there is an assumption that, in some form at least, parliament is putting into effect what the people want. But even a functioning parliament may not actually represent public opinion effectively. Politicians may confine themselves to squabbling and manoeuvring for advantage as the nation falls apart, agreeing on little except the need for higher remuneration. The divisions in the country and in parliament may be so deep that there is no chance of putting together a workable government. The danger of political disunity provides a semi-intellectual underpinning for intervention by the military.

Most work on military intervention has been done, one must recall, in the comfortable West, where it is normal to see the military a bit like a rather expensive insurance policy, necessary perhaps, but not very welcome when the bill has to be paid. With a few exceptions, Western states run reasonably well and have not disputed their boundaries by force very much for 50 years. Classical liberal economics, moreover, finds the military an expensive nuisance, which pre-empts resources that could be used more productively, or for tax cuts. The military forces of such states will generally be as small and as inexpensive as the finance ministries can get away with.

It is necessary to insist, though it should not be, that the status and position of the military varies greatly from this model in the rest of the world, not only in terms of history and culture, but in the functions performed. The military may have a role in development, it may have a large civic action programme, it may own and run factories, or it may even be the only organisation in the country that

has any real legitimacy with all ethnic and religious groups. The military may be more acceptable than a discredited police force and may be admired more than a corrupt government. For all these reasons, the situations in which militaries find themselves, even before a crisis develops, can vary greatly from country to country and are unlikely to conform to Western liberal-democratic norms. It is this complexity that produces an almost infinite variety of types of military involvement in politics.

Few would defend such involvement in politics in principle, but neither is it useful to consider it as a kind of ultimate evil. In fact, blanket condemnation of military involvement in politics incorporates hidden assumptions about the government being intervened against that are seldom justified. Assumptions often include the following:

- The government has an effective majority in the legislature and is able to carry out its programme.
- The government is at least passively accepted as legitimate by all its citizens.
- The government is minimally popular with the electorate.
- The government is minimally competent.
- All interest groups in the country obey the laws promulgated by the government.
- Political opposition and dissent is able to express itself without fear.
- The government is reasonably united within itself.
- Government ministers are regarded as honest.

This is a demanding list and one that perhaps not even every Western country could confidently claim to fulfil. But the roots of military intervention frequently lie precisely in the inability of governments to satisfy many or any of these criteria. This can be a comment on the quality of government or the political class. It can also be the result of the sheer impossibility of maintaining a working democracy in a situation of great ethnic and religious diversity, or in a state whose infrastructure is not advanced enough to tolerate the stresses that democratic functions place upon it.

Another frequent cause of military intervention has been a dispute about the legitimacy of the government. Several hundred years ago the position was fairly clear-cut. The army was, in effect, the private property of a country's ruler, to be used in that ruler's wars. The loyalty of the Egyptian, the Zulu or the Chinese army was to its ruler, and that was all. The democratisation of the past couple of

centuries has complicated this position greatly. It is easy enough to agree, in the abstract, that the military owes its loyalty to the government of the day. But this incorporates the assumptions that the government, i.e. the party or coalition in power, is not merely accepted, but that the type of government is regarded as legitimate as well. There will clearly always be a minority that is unhappy with the system of government it lives under, but they will not usually challenge it openly.

But problems have arisen where there is a fundamental division at the heart of a society about what kind of a government is legitimate, and thus uncertainty about which government or party the army ultimately gives its loyalty to, or, indeed, whose army it actually is. The general tendency of the 19th and 20th centuries was to replace authoritarian monarchies with democratic republics. Yet, if today we regard this transition as a positive one, it was not always thought so at the time. There have been recent cases of army intervention because there was genuine belief that democracy was a threat to the nation itself, not least by making its citizens inferior soldiers.

THE THEORY OF DANGERS

There is room for a good comparative study of military interventions in politics around the world. Space is not available to do so in this book, but in the following pages I will deal briefly with two subjects, namely frequent assumptions about the roots of military intervention, and why this theorising in my view fails to define the problem correctly.

Literature on suspicion of the military, and fear of what it may do unsupervised, has three basic sources. The first is Anglo-Saxon political theorising about the place of the military. From the complex and varying body of this theory we can distinguish two main strands of argument. For the rising middle classes in Britain and in colonial America the military was identified with the aristocracy and the power of the monarch. As a result, fear of a powerful standing army appears to have plagued both British thinkers and their counterparts in American who were influential in the founding and development of the US. This fear remained an influential factor in Britain after American independence. It is curious that, whilst for the US and indeed for most democracies 'the central problem of civil-military relations has not been the most fundamental one, that of preventing a military takeover of the state was'.[35] British and American writers on these issues have nonetheless identified it precisely as the major problem.

Secondly, liberal concepts of peace and war, as held by these same middle classes, dismissed war as bad for commerce, soldiers as stupid and bloodthirsty, and war as a state that rational human beings would do everything to avoid. It was further believed that war was often caused by armies that were too large and influential, or by arms races between states. Because theories of CMR were first formulated by Anglo-Saxons, this theory, the second strand in the fear of the military, was heavily influenced by these ideas. The theory arose from the interest political scientists, especially in the US, started to take in the military as an institution after the Second World War. By that stage, military involvement in Latin American politics was proverbial and military regimes existed all over that continent. Unsurprisingly, relations between politicians and the military became a major theme, albeit one that was difficult to investigate empirically. As a result, much of the work had to be done by inference, through the careful reading of legislation and government statements, and through the application of theoretical models often derived from the operation of the US political system.

When newly-independent states in Africa began to fall under military control as well, it seemed to some that there was a world-wide tendency for the military to seek power, an impression strengthened by the rise of military governments in places as varied as South Korea and Pakistan. Thus emboldened, non-specialists began to wonder whether there were, in fact, things of general applicability that could be said about the military, and a rash of books in the 1950s and 1960s argued implicitly that there were.[36] Although it is important not to minimise the real differences in approach between these books, they do share some common features. The armies portrayed in them noticeably resemble those of Britain and the US, as well as those written about by Latin American CMR specialists. They were large, powerful, well-trained and well-disciplined and so it was a mystery 'not that this force rebels against its civilian masters, but why it ever obeys them'.[37] Most armies in the world, then and now, are not like this, of course. Furthermore it was argued that the military was always 'pessimistic, collectivist, historically inclined, power-oriented, nationalistic, militaristic, pacifist and instrumentalist in [its] view of the military profession'.[38] In fact, real military officers are rather different from this image, and they are different from it in different ways in different places.

This type of analysis was very simplistic. It assumed only two actors – the military, often in practice the army, and civilian politicians – and it saw their relationship as adversarial, such that there is a constant battle by civilians to 'control' the military. This meant that the two played a zero-sum game in which

'the essential premise for any system of civilian control is the minimisation of military power'.[39] Since this power varies with 'the proportion of the national product devoted to military purposes and … the number of individuals serving with the armed services',[40] then logically civilian control is enhanced by reducing defence budgets and manpower levels. It also assumed that there were only two possible states – civilian democracy or military rule.

All this seemed relatively simple in the 1950s and 1960s, but when the Cold War ended military regimes began disappearing rapidly, not only in Latin America, but also in Africa, and there were few coups to replace them. So what had happened? Had civilian control been triumphantly asserted everywhere? Had the military undergone a mysterious collective political evolution? In any event, it soon became clear that post-military regimes came in all shapes and sizes and that there were few common features. In many cases, budgets and manpower were savagely cut, yet scholars found that there were relationships between the military and new civilian regimes of unsuspected complexity, and that 'control' was a much more slippery concept than had been assumed. Even in the relatively homogeneous area of Latin America it was not clear whether civilian 'control' had been enhanced or reduced, or even if the concept had much meaning. As J Samuel Fitch noted, all this uncertainty was –

> troubling in a field that aspires to be treated as a serious social science. The lack of even minimal consensus on seemingly basic questions undermines our authority as scholars to speak on policy issues that are crucial.[41]

The third and final strand in fear and distrust of the military was economic theory, which once more drew largely on Anglo-Saxon traditions. Historically, international donors had not had much to do with the security sector.[42] Increasingly, however, they began to try to play a role, initially concentrating on 'the reduction of military expenditure for development purposes', but subsequently becoming involved in other areas as well.[43] For many in the development community, every penny spent on weapons and soldiers was a penny less for development, healthcare and education. As more and more complex UN operations were launched in the 1990s, and as post-conflict reconstruction schemes were implemented in places as various as Kosovo and East Timor, the role of donor organisations increased. In most cases they continued to have a wary relationship with the security sector. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank also increasingly intervened in CMR issues, not

always helpfully, since both organisations were 'dominated by neo-classical economists', who have historically considered military expenditure to be 'pure waste'.[44] It is only recently that donors have begun to acknowledge the importance of the military and other security forces.[45]

THE DANGERS OF THEORY

The three loosely linked approaches discussed above remain the dominant ones both in the literature of political analysis and in attempts to transform the security sectors of states under the rubric of SSR. Elements of these theories are taught in staff colleges and political science courses, and are found in policy papers and international declarations on the security sector. Yet, as will be obvious, there is no pragmatic foundation for such views. Indeed, few writers in this area have attempted to argue from the basis of real events. Rather, the community influential in this discourse has sought to impose theoretical interpretations drawn from Anglo-Saxon political thinking on all sorts of situations. Whilst it is true that some of these theories are underlain by real historical incidents, it is less clear how middle-class sensitivities about standing armies in 18th century America are transferable to, say, Africa today.

To be fair, theorists writing between the 1950s and the 1970s probably had little choice. In those days, foreign news came slowly, by teleprinter and telephone, and by expensive and cumbersome 35 mm film. Little serious analysis was available on the militaries of, say, Indonesia or Paraguay, at least not in English, which was the only language most researchers knew. Field trips were difficult, expensive and sometimes dangerous. It was natural, therefore, to construct theories on the basis of what was believed to be known and to apply them liberally to other situations.

It thus seemed to many analysts that the common factor in many sudden and violent regime changes was the military, usually headed by generals or colonels, one of whom would often appear as the new ruler. It was this functional similarity among developments around the world that was stressed, rather than the political backgrounds of the countries involved, which would have been very much more complicated and difficult to analyse. It came to seem, therefore, that there was something odd about the military as a whole, which seemed to have an institutional hunger for power. CMR were therefore essentially a question of keeping the military out of power. It was proposed to do this partly by reducing military numbers and budgets, and partly by promoting something called 'professionalism', which in practice meant the marking out certain areas as the

exclusive preserve of the military and forbidding them to involve themselves in others.

What should these areas be? One American writer bravely proposed a pattern of 'military advice' on 'force levels, weapon systems, expenditures' and of 'political, civilian advice as to diplomacy, budget and tax policy and political acceptance'.[46] But no democratic regime could possibly allow so much military influence, even if it were clear what was meant by 'advice'. In practice, as will be discussed in the next chapter, there are no areas that are purely military and, for that matter, no areas that are purely civilian either. Such are the perils of discussing the relationship between politics and the military without having experience of either.

The much greater volume of experience and comparative analysis now available should enable us to construct a theory of military interventionism that is much more subtle and useful. But before plunging in to such a task, we might pause and reflect if any general theory of military interventionism is in fact necessary. The current thesis, a little battered but still powerful, holds that the institutional military appetite for power is such that CMR in any country, or at least in the vast majority of countries, largely consist of minimising and controlling the power of the military. But this only holds true if all cases of military interventionism are similar, or at least share many common features. If this is not true, then the problem does not really exist, which is in fact what I am suggesting here.

IS THERE REALLY A PROBLEM?

We can begin by agreeing that there have been many examples of seizure of power by the military, or at least by individual officers, as well as cases where the military has clashed with elected or un-elected civilian politicians, or where they have tried to wield undue influence. The question is what, if any, collective significance we give to these events and whether any general conclusions can be drawn from them. The idea of some kind of worldwide competition for power between politicians and generals is frequently encountered in the literature. Professor Finer lists, with relish it seems, all the occasions in 1958 when the military took power in different countries, citing with apparent approval the judgment of *The Times* of London that it had been an *'annus mirabilis'* for the generals. One could be forgiven for thinking that there had been some world-wide football match going on between the generals and the politicians, in which the latter, by poor defensive play, had allowed the former to rack up a number of goals.[47]

How similar, in fact, are these episodes? Let us start with the two events in 1958 that most excited *The Times* and Finer, namely the taking of power in France and Pakistan by generals De Gaulle and Ayub Khan respectively. De Gaulle is perhaps the least convincing example of military power-hunger one could think of. To begin with, he was not a serving general. He had left the army nearly 20 years earlier and was appointed Deputy Minister of War in the last weeks before the French defeat in 1940. Unlike almost all his military colleagues, he turned his back on the collaborationist military-led government of Vichy and went into exile in Britain, where he became the political leader of the Free French. He did not seek a military role and returned to France in 1944 to be the first political leader of the Fourth Republic, but left politics in disgust several years later.

When the Fourth Republic was intimidated out of existence by the military, he returned to power in 1958. But the military must have been gravely disappointed. De Gaulle not only gave independence to Algeria, which had been the catalyst for the army's involvement, but faced down an attempted military coup against him. He proceeded to reduce the military's power massively and to build a large and powerful presidential staff, which put control of the military, as well as military operations firmly in the hands of elected civilian leaders for the first time in French history. Some of this was not immediately obvious perhaps, but there was no excuse, even in 1958, for not taking into account that De Gaulle had been a civilian politician for almost 20 years, and was a Republican and a democrat.

At first glance, General Ayub Khan is a more persuasive example. He was a professional soldier and he seized power in 1958. But he did so after the president, Iskandar Mirza, who was worried about losing the forthcoming elections, had already declared martial law. Mirza was replaced bloodlessly and sent into exile. Khan's coup seems to have been generally welcomed by a people tired of a decade of political instability. He restored the constitution quickly and introduced a number of progressive measures to promote development, crack down on corruption and increase the rights of women. But he was not really able to address the country's problems. Despite winning an election of dubious honesty in 1964, he was obliged to hand over power in 1969. Although defence preparations against India were a constant concern, Khan did not do special favours for the army, nor was his government a military one. He was a good example of a figure supported less for his own virtues than in reaction to the defects of the previous government. Ayb Khan began a long tradition of army involvement in Pakistani politics, a situation that usually arises when the population as a whole tires of the endemic corruption, factionalism and mismanagement of the political system.

A similar set of events took place in 1961 in South Korea. From the end of the Second World War that country was run by Rhee Syng-man, a virulent anti-communist who had the backing of the US. His rule was corrupt, ineffective and brutal, and after one rigged election too many, he was driven from power by a student-led national uprising in 1960. A year of political chaos followed before General Park Chung-hee took over in 1961. The coup seems to have been popular enough with a people exhausted and angry about political instability and corruption. Park was a curiosity. He had served in the army of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo and underwent several years of training in Japan. He had been a member of a Marxist party and had taken part in an abortive mutiny in the late 1940s. As president for almost 20 years, winning a series of heavily-manipulated elections, he turned his country into an economic powerhouse in emulation of Japan. Development, rather than the military, was his preoccupation, and the military, as a group, was not particularly influential, despite the technical state of war with North Korea.

When the first CMR studies were undertaken there were as yet few independent African countries and therefore few coups to include in the studies. But two coups, in the DRC and in Nigeria, rapidly established Africa's reputation as a coup-prone continent. Yet neither case was simple. The DRC's Joseph Mobutu was not even really a soldier, but a journalist and an aspirant politician who had done military service in the colonial army as a punishment. But when Congolese troops of the new national army rebelled against their Belgian officers, Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba turned to Mobutu, appointing him as head of the army. Mobutu subsequently overthrew Lumumba and President Joseph Kasavubu with Western support and encouragement, and effectively became the country's dictator. This was not a military coup in the real sense. In fact, Mobutu actively set out to destroy the army to rid himself of a possible threat to his position. He staged a second coup in 1965, which was also supported by the West since he was considered a good anti-communist.

The Nigerian coup of 1966 in fact consisted of several coups. The first, led by Majors Emmanuel Ifeajuna and Kaduna Nzeogwu, which ultimately installed Major-General Aguyi-Ironsi as head of state, was initially extremely popular as it replaced a corrupt and ineffective civilian government. But because the leaders of the coup and the new regime were Igbos from the south-east of the country, other groups felt threatened, especially when non-Igbos were imprisoned and executed. So the counter-coup later that year by Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from the centre of the country, was as much about ethnic

politics as anything else. It led directly to the slaughter of thousands of Igbo and indirectly to the Biafran war of secession. Gowon led the country until 1975 and presided over a period of economic growth and development.

A last example from the same period is the 1967 coup in Greece. This was a complex and deeply confused affair, about which uncertainties remain even today. Ultimately it was the product of the civil war that began in 1944 between the forces of the resistance led by communists and right-wing politicians returning from exile, as well as pro-German collaborators. With Western help, the right-wing won and the country was ruled by a series of anti-communist governments. When it looked as though more moderate forces would win the 1967 elections, a variety of plots were hatched to retain power. A group of colonels in the army struck the first blow and persuaded King Constantine to appoint a civilian figurehead as prime minister. The military accepted the new government as the legitimate authority.

Not all the military took part in the coup and some senior generals were arrested. The navy and air force, both strongly royalist, supported the king when he tried to stage a counter-coup. The navy subsequently tried a coup of its own in 1973. The colonels claimed to have carried out a 'national revolution' to save the nation from a communist takeover and developed and largely implemented a complex nationalist, anti-communist and anti-modern ideology until they fell from power after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. By that stage the junta itself was disintegrating and one of its hard-line members staged his own counter-coup. Although the course of events may seem complex as presented, these accounts barely scratch the surface.

It is possible to find some points of similarity between the coups discussed. In a number of instances, anti-communist, traditionalist ideologies provided elements of commonality, while others were brought about by the disintegration of political systems and public discontent with corruption and mismanagement. A larger selection of military interventions would provide other interesting comparisons. But that is not really the point. What is important is what is missing, namely the institutional hunger for power by an organised and disciplined military moving to overthrow a civilian government. I have deliberately confined this selection of cases to ones that would have been known to early CMR theorists, but even this small sample makes it clear that such institutional hunger for power is nowhere to be found. Instead, the picture is confused and contradictory, with the military fighting among itself and factions of the military allying themselves with civilian politicians and other interests. No general

conclusions about relations between the military and the state can be drawn from such episodes.

Part of the problem is that we make an artificial distinction between sudden changes in political regimes that involve the military and those that do not. Not all military interventions are violent and some, in Peru for example, have notably safeguarded human rights. By contrast, the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 and the attempted coup by the Nazis in 1923 both involved violence. There is also some confusion about what military involvement means. De Gaulle had been out of the army for 18 years when he came to power. Hitler, by contrast, had been a soldier less than five years before the 1923 coup attempt, which was supported by a militia consisting largely of discharged veterans and which used the aged Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg as a figurehead. Yet historians do not describe this as an attempted military coup. That is a correct judgement and similar judgements should equally be applicable to many other supposed cases of military interventionism.

Even when part or all the officer class of a military act collectively to over-throw civil power, the reasons are frequently complex and confused, and different parts of the military and specific individuals may well have different agendas. Samuel Decalo's comment that motives for military coups in Africa 'have always been complex and include personal considerations' applies to most other regions of the world as well.[48]

The most that can be said is that during sudden political transitions, individuals or groups from the military may, for a variety of reasons, play a political role. A military or ex-military figure may emerge as the leader, supporter or figurehead of a new political dispensation, and some or all of the military may cooperate with it. This military involvement almost always takes place at a time of crisis when normal political solutions do not seem possible. Military involvement may come about for political, ethnic, religious or financial reasons, or because some in the military genuinely believe that only they can save the country from political disaster, corruption, communism, Islam, civil war or another threat.

In none of the above cases did the militaries try to rule on their own and in every case they had at least the tacit consent of the government apparatus. Civilian politicians often benefited from military rule and even if they did not they still believed that the policies the military was pursuing were correct. When military governments fail, it is usually because this passive acquiescence has been exhausted and a disillusioned population is prepared to give civilian politicians

another chance. Abstract arguments about democracy and authoritarianism seldom play a role.

This strongly suggests that the problem of CMR – a military institutionally hungry for power – as suggested by authors such as Finer, Huntington and Janowitz may not exist or, to be more precise, there is no empirical evidence that it has ever existed. That is a flimsy base on which to attempt to build any kind of theory. This does not mean, of course, that relations between the military and the civil power are uniformly excellent, or that militaries do not at times create grave problems. The remainder of this book is devoted to a discussion of these very problems.

Apart from what may be termed the 'strong' statement on the CMR problem, as discussed above, there is also a 'weak' version. This concerns an apparent struggle in 'the corridors of government, far removed from the usual ambit of scholars' [49] where the daily zero-sum game between the military and civilians for power and influence is said to take place. It is not like that in practice of course. Two things are being confused here.

First, in all governments and large bureaucracies, and for that matter in university politics departments, there will be disagreements and struggles over all sorts of large and small issues. This is unavoidable. Issues are seldom clear-cut and there may be fundamental and powerful disagreements. The military may want a force embarking on a peace mission to be more heavily armed than civilians think is politically acceptable. The air force may want to buy a plane from abroad, only to be forced to support local industry. But in a democracy the basic rule is that elected politicians have the last word since they are the ones to take responsibility if things go wrong. In any case, the military does not necessarily form a united bloc – military tribalism is legendary – and civilians in a defence ministry may well agree with their military colleagues rather than their opposite numbers in the ministry of finance.

However, because such bureaucratic battles do indeed take place away from the eyes of enquiring researchers, it is hard to understand them correctly, and as a result there is a tendency to extrapolate from what is known or is assumed. Typically, extrapolations derive from what is popularly understood about the workings of the vast, cumbersome and fragmented US system, where political appointees bitterly contest key issues. But in fact the US system is highly atypical and most other systems working quite differently.

The second element is much more fundamental and concerns the involvement of the military in the normal political process itself. This is not as rare as it may

sound to Anglo-Saxons, nor is it always seen as a bad thing. Much, as always, depends on history and culture. In the old Yugoslavia the armed forces were known informally as the 'ninth republic' because of their political influence. This arose from the military's partisan heritage and the fact that many early leaders of the country were veterans of the Second World War. Far from resenting this military intervention, the Communist Party fostered military participation in government, partly because the armed forces were a genuinely multi-ethnic organisation. Similar traditions are found in parts of Africa where indigenous populations fought wars of independence. By definition, this kind of CMR can only exist in a one-party state, where the army is the military wing of the ruling party. Transition to a multi-party system can therefore be disastrous, as in the case of Yugoslavia. A variant is where the military supports not a political party, but a socio-economic group, as with the Burundian Tutsi, or is heavily associated with a dominant clan or ethnic group, as has often been the case in Africa.

Tradition may also give the military a large political role. Part of the Latin American problem was the inheritance from imperial Spain of the idea of the army as the ultimate guardian of the national interest. As a result, the very idea of military subordination to the elected government 'is false for the civic culture that is predominant' and most ordinary people accept that the military should play a major role in politics.[50] By contrast, the very concept of CMR is redundant in traditional cultures, such as many in Africa, where every adult male was a warrior. What you believe the problem of CMR is depends very much on where you start from.

'CONTROL' OF THE MILITARY

We noted earlier that minimisation of the power of the military was not the only question of interest in CMR and that, by implication, the military did have a useful role to play. Clearly, such a role cannot be limited to actual military operations. You cannot take an army out of cold storage and send it off to war. But neither would you want to, because the existence of the military is always an important domestic and foreign political fact and influences the formulation of many government policies.

So the military, and indeed the whole bureaucracy of defence, has to be brought into the general process of government. But how should this be done? The place to begin is with the question of the overall position of the military, which will bring some clarity to the confused and confusing issue of civilian control.

CIVIL CONTROL AND CIVILIAN CONTROL

There are two separate but related concepts that lead to confusion in this regard, namely:

- *Civil* control of the military.
- *Civilian* control of the military.

By civil control is meant the obedience that the military owes to *civis*, the state. The military is one of a number of instruments of state, including the police, the fire service, the diplomatic service and, in many countries, medical services. All these bodies have a duty of loyalty to the state, which employs them on behalf of citizens and taxpayers. In almost every society it is likely that the individuals to whom a military reports – a president, for example, or a minister in a government – will be a civilian. But this is really a technicality, for the important issue here is that the military accepts that it is the servant of the nation of which the state is the agent. It takes orders from the state, in practice from the government of the day, in the same way that the police or the fire service does. The essential question is whether the military obeys the state or whether it tries to usurp the functions of state. In the latter case the consequences cannot only be serious for CMR, but disastrous for the state.

As we have seen, in practice it is likely that the agencies of state being obeyed by the military will be staffed wholly or mainly by civilians. The military's owes obedience not because a civilian determines the direction, but because he represents the state in its entirety for this purpose. In the event of a minister of defence (MoD) being a serving officer, which is quite common in certain parts of the world, the military's obedience to him would be in his capacity as a minister, not as a serving officer.

The idea that civilian control of the military is necessary, good and effective is so widespread that it has become something of a truism. In the rest of this chapter, I will address four questions, namely:

- Whether civilian control has any real meaning.
- Whether it is necessarily always a good thing.
- Whether there are practical ways of bringing it about.
- What benefits it actually provides.

One American theorist argues that the key issue of civilian control is the 'setting [of] limits within which members of the armed forces, and the military

as an institution, accept the government's definition of appropriate areas of responsibility'.[51] This is, in fact, what I have described as civil control, i.e. the government, rather than the military, rules on questions that affect the military. Professor Huntingdon argues that civilian control, described as 'objective civilian control', exists when 'a highly professional officer corps stands ready to carry out the wishes of any group that secures legitimate authority within the state'.[52] Effectively, this is also a definition of civil control, with the added stipulation that the state must be represented by civilians.

However, authors, even the authors quoted, clearly have something else in mind as well, in essence the control of individual officers by individual civilians. There are just three cases where something vaguely like 'control' could be said to exist. First, ministers are by definition the political heads of their departments and can reject any proposal put to them by the military. In a well-run bureaucracy, however, as we shall see later, things should not reach that stage. Secondly, civilians, including diplomats and officials outside the ministry of defence, can tell the military that a certain proposal is contrary to express government policy and that it should therefore be withdrawn. And lastly, in most political systems, the permanent head of the ministry – the secretary, the permanent secretary or the director-general – is responsible to parliament for his department's budget. He is thus able to refuse sanctioning expenditure if he thinks it is improper.

Apart from these cases, it is doubtful whether it makes much sense to talk about civilian as opposed to civil control of the military. Not drawing a distinction is also helpful in avoiding the common assumption that civilian control is the same as democratic control, since the two can be quite different. Moreover, it depends on which civilians are to do the controlling.[53] In Germany between 1933 and 1945, civilian control was the problem, rather than the solution, as was the case under Stalin, Pol Pot and Saddam Hussein. Indeed, there is some evidence that abuse of the armed forces for the conduct of widespread atrocities is actually far more common under civilian, albeit undemocratic, regimes than under military regimes. On the whole, military leaders are less likely to practice this kind of behaviour, since it contradicts their professional self-image and is bad for morale.

Given these complexities, and even if civilian control of the military could be defined, how can this desirable state of affairs be brought about and maintained? More pertinently, perhaps, how would we know that the military is actually subject to civilian control? A number of indicators have been suggested, but they share the general weakness that they address process rather than substance,

and effects rather than causes. A typical list, which I will not deal with in detail, includes the following:

- Constitutional constraints.
- Social or other ties binding civilians and the military together.
- Party-political controls.
- Restrictions on size.
- Delineation of spheres of responsibility.[54]

It is clear that this list mainly relates to what I have called 'civil control', i.e. the general health of relations between the military and the state. But there is confusion in this list between evidence that CMR are good, which implies co-operation by the military, and attempts to coerce the military into behaving acceptably, which implies the opposite. This in turn reflects the confusion about the nature of civilian control described earlier. It could be argued that all of these factors, except perhaps the one under the third bullet, are signs that the military is reconciled to its position and does not wish to challenge it. Of course, all of these factors, including the third, will only have any effect if the military are prepared to co-operate. A few examples will make this clearer.

Many authors have argued that a constitution is the basic document that keeps the military in its place by including among its provisions something that places it firmly under 'civilian' control, usually that of the president. In reality, this is the basic principle of civil control and has little to do with 'civilians' as such. But in practice, the wording of the constitution, or any other law, is to some extent dictated by the correlation of political forces at the time of drafting. (Clearly, no-one who has written on this subject intends us to imagine a group of worried officers thumbing through the constitution, trying to work out whether they are allowed to stage a coup or not.) But, even when a constitution specifies a satisfactory degree of 'civilian' control, this will have no meaning unless the military agrees to abide by it, meaning its acceptance of its duty to *civis*, the state. In the final analysis, constitutional provisions of this nature are beside the point. Moreover, military coups are often justified, as was the case in Chile in 1973, by the argument that the government had itself violated the constitution, with the military presenting itself as the defender of this law.

Another, superficially more useful way of coercing the military is that which has often been adopted by political dictatorships, namely of building up a parallel force or forces to keep the military under control. The example most frequently

cited is that of Germany under Hitler, when the National Socialist Party developed a formidable apparatus of oppression answerable only to the party. As a means of controlling the civilian population, this policy was certainly effective, but in practice it failed to control the German military in any meaningful sense. From 1938 onwards, the army was plotting to assassinate Hitler and take power. Although this was an open secret and very high-level officers were involved, the Nazi apparatus failed to discover them.

What these examples, and others like them, have in common is an assumption that the military needs to be controlled at all times since it will otherwise burst out of its chains and take over. Again, there is little historical evidence to suggest that this happens. In general, the problem is much more complex and subtle. Depending on the overall political situation, the real task is either (or both) to:

- Bind the military to society and civil power in such a way that it never develops into a separate group with its own agenda, and is therefore accepted by civil society as legitimate, or
- Demonstrate in practical and symbolic terms the subordination of the military to civil power.

Thus, to return to the example of the constitution, a clause that the president is the head of the armed forces has no prescriptive force unless they themselves accept this situation. But a clause of this kind is nevertheless a helpful reminder and public symbol to both the military and civil society of what the relationship between the military and the civil power (*not* 'civilians') should be.

There has been far too much concentration on formal and institutional methods of control, no doubt because these are easy to understand and document. Far more effective are informal methods, which vary greatly between countries, but are especially strong and important in consensus-based societies such as many in Africa and Asia. These informal methods include the penetration of military and civilian elites, the involvement of civil society in policy-making, frequent contacts between the military and civil society groups, a closer working relationship between military and civilians, etc. Such methods are difficult to document and might not always be apparent, but, as will become clear in the remainder of this book, they are the heart of *civil* control in the best sense of the term.

We also have to recognise that the nature of relations between the military and the state varies greatly from country to country. In countries with developed

political cultures, CMR is often a matter of fine-tuning. In countries where this culture is less developed, the problems can be much more fundamental and their resolution can be critical to the future of the country itself. There are cases where a civilian government follows a brutal, dictatorial or corrupt military, and where the new government will be concerned with ensuring that the fragile democratic regime stays in place. This is one of the few situations where it is legitimate to talk of 'control' in the adversarial sense. The process will require a mixture of formal and informal approaches which will be unashamedly drawn from the world of practical politics, rather than from textbooks, and could include the following strategies:

- *Normalisation therapy.* Militaries are acutely aware that they are members of an international brotherhood that has norms and standards. The military of a previously isolated regime will look for acceptance by its equals and would be disappointed not to get it. A military that has not given up political ambitions will find itself unwelcome or frozen out of the military tourist circuit of staff colleges, conferences and defence trade fairs. Adoption of international norms thus offers considerable rewards for those who might otherwise be tempted to return to the old ways. In addition, the importance of exposure to new ways of doing things that foreign travel and contact with foreigners tend to produce is a significant factor as well. Quite often, unacceptable behaviour by a military is the product of ignorance and isolation, rather than anything more deep-seated.
- *Doctrine therapy.* As I have suggested already, a military that has no proper role will often turn to politics instead. A new democratic regime should devote time and effort to defining roles and missions for the military aimed at making it more professional. Again, contact with other militaries will be helpful here.
- *Patronage.* A government should have no scruples to make use of the natural ambition of individuals. Promotion should be restricted to those who demonstrate a commitment to democratic politics. Whilst genuine change at the deepest level will take time, much can be achieved by identifying able and ambitious officers at middle rank, and making it clear to them that their careers have great potential provided they play according to the government's rules.
- *Intelligence.* For the reasons given in my discussion on intelligence below, this is an area the military should not dominate. A new democratic government

quickly needs to build up a civilian intelligence capability, not only to infiltrate the military, but also to provide a non-military analytical capability to help avoid domination by military thinking.

The problem of how to deal with a corrupt military is more complex. Solutions will vary to some extent on whether corruption is endemic in society or whether it is confined to the military, or at least is very much worse there. It is unusual for the military to be more corrupt than the norm (usually it is less so), but it can happen where the military has had its hands on the levers of power for too long. Everyday corruption is best seen as a kind of tax or levy on a society that is unwilling to pay for an adequate level of public service through taxation. State officials who are underpaid and overworked will often feel justified to accept bribes as a way of getting back at a system. The first remedy, therefore, is to ensure that the public sector is adequately paid and staffed. This does not mean that salaries need be as high as in the private sector, since few of those who work for the public good expect to be as well-rewarded as those who work for their own enrichment. But salaries should not be so much lower that cynicism and corruption set in. The second remedy is not to place temptation in peoples' way. For example, the privatisation or contracting-out of services is a bad idea as it generally leads to corruption.

There are of course things the state will always have to procure from outside, such as major defence equipment. But at this level, scrutiny and oversight are seldom effective. Greed tends to distort peoples' perceptions of the risk they are taking, while investigators themselves can simply become another target for bribery. A reasonably transparent process will help, of course, but the only long-term answer is to have a procurement system that is complex, lengthy and involves so many people that suppliers could not possibly bribe everyone who could influence the decision. It also helps if the process has to pass through a number of committees, especially if these committees are made up of members that do not have narrow sectional interests to pursue and includes representatives from outside the ministry of defence.

CONCLUSION

In summary, I would suggest that civil control is a potentially valuable concept in that it reminds us, including those in the military, that the latter owes a duty of obedience to the state. By contrast, the concept of civilian control, popular as

it is, adds little in clarity and indeed confuses the issue in a variety of ways. As a term, it would be better to drop it. This is true especially in countries where CMR have been poor in the past and where the military is, in effect, being asked to get used to a less powerful or influential position than they used to have, even if at the end it is more professionally satisfying. Nothing is more unwise in such a situation than to tell a general that he is henceforth going to be subject to civilian control.

Moreover, the word 'control' itself is potentially unhelpful since it implies a relationship of power and superiority, and evokes the scenario of a rabid military desperate to grasp the reins of power, held back only by some finely-judged constitutional phraseology. It should be unnecessary to repeat that this is not an accurate picture of how things are in reality and that a policy based on it will almost always produce negative results. If control is really an issue, then it is to be understood in the sense of controlling a sensitive piece of equipment like a car or an aeroplane, not controlling a disobedient child. It is a theme of this book that relationships of power and subordination do not work very well; in the end they encourage resentment, non-co-operation and circumvention, and may well create exactly the conditions they are designed to avoid. The rest of this book is therefore devoted to ways in which the best use can be made of the military's talents.

The making of defence policy

The nature of security policy and the relationship between security and defence policy have already been covered in some detail. In this chapter, therefore, I will look at the organisation and structure of defence policy-making, and the larger context into which it must fit. I will go on in the next chapter to discuss the respective roles of civilians and the military in this process.

Defence policy is usually situated at the bottom of the government policy hierarchy, not because it is unimportant, but because, as with the policies of all operational departments, it is effectively about execution. It is one of the practical ways in which security policy is implemented. As long as the ends of security policy determine the means of defence policy, the relationship is a healthy one.

It is important to understand that defence policy is not made exclusively by a defence ministry. Much of the detailed work takes place there, of course, and the ministry is largely responsible for it implementation, but many other actors are involved, which is why this chapter is about defence policy-making across the whole of government.

I am deliberately not saying much about the actual content of defence policy, which is covered elsewhere to some extent and in any event differs greatly from country to country and situation to situation. Here, I am concerned more with generic processes.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT CLAUSEWITZ

The primacy of political aims in war is a doctrine generally, and rightly, associated with the great Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831).

Since Clausewitz is very often misunderstood, it may be worth a brief section on what he actually meant. Clausewitz is popularly supposed to have said that war 'is the continuation of politics by other means' and this has impressed some people as shameful and others as inaccurate. Clausewitz made a number of general statements of this nature, but we may take his discussion in Book I of *On War* – the only one to be fully revised – as definitive. Whilst it is true Part 24 of Book I is headed 'War is merely the continuation of policy by other means', he goes on to say that the following:

> ... war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means ... The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.[55]

Two things obscure what this means. One is language: English is unusual in having separate words for policy, which is defined as deciding and implementing a plan, and politics, the activity carried on by politicians to get power and win votes. In this regard a 'political instrument' might be better expressed as 'an instrument of the policy of the state'. What Clausewitz is *not* saying is that war is just a continuation of normal political life: today a vote in parliament, tomorrow a press conference, on Wednesday we invade Russia. Furthermore, Clausewitz speaks to us from the pre-Nuremberg era, when states could, and did, contemplate aggressive wars to further their foreign-policy goals. It is better, perhaps, to say something like 'the use of military force' if we want to avoid confusion today.

Put like that, all that Clausewitz is really saying is that it is pointless to make use of military force without a wider political object in view. The means (i.e. the military) must never be allowed to dictate the ends. The corollary, of course, is that military planning and operations must always be carried on in a wider political context and that defence policy must always serve the overall policy objectives of the government. Although this seems logical enough, it is surprising how frequently it has been ignored. Usually, the reason is that the military, whose approach to war is of necessity technocratic in nature, has too powerful a voice in what is to be done. It is not enough, of course, to declare that you have a larger aim in view before conducting military operations, and it is unlikely that many operations have been launched with no idea about what they were intended to achieve. But there are two important criteria that have to be met before there is any chance of success, namely:

- The measures must be appropriate, i.e. there must be some logical connection between the military action and the political objective.
- There must be an understanding of how the one is to affect the other, and some means of measuring progress towards it.

How is this to be done? It takes place at the operational level. This lies between the strategy, which is mainly the concern of politicians, and the tactics, which is mainly the preserve of the military. The operational level is the hardest to get right, whether in a major war or in a peacekeeping operation. Failure usually occurs because civilians and the military do not really understand enough of each other's business to have a sensible conversation. As a result, the two sides become separated from each other. No-one is looking at where military operations and policy objectives actually overlap. The problem has been exacerbated in recent years with the mounting of peace operations, where the objectives are not only political, but are also objectives to which the military cannot directly contribute. The military can secure the terrain, but they cannot force people to vote in elections, still less to vote for the right people.

An example of successful operational-level practice is the management of the Vietnam War by the government in Hanoi. There was a clear political goal, namely unification of the country under Hanoi's control. This could not be accomplished until the Americans went home, so that had to be achieved first. In turn, this implied a long, patient, but low-level military campaign designed to convince the Americans that they could not win, fought in such a way as to negate, as far as possible, American superiority in numbers and weaponry. It also dictated a policy on the use of force to achieve what were mostly political rather than military ends. Tactics were developed accordingly. By contrast, the Americans were stuck with ill-defined objectives, a disconnection between political and military policies, and a tactical doctrine that stressed the defeat of the enemy through superior firepower. Once the Americans had left, the emphasis shifted to a conventional war against Saigon.

DEFENCE POLICY AND SECURITY POLICY

At this point, a few more words on the relationship between defence policy and security policy may be helpful. As part of its foreign policy, for example, a government will have a series of relations with states or groups of states that have a defence and military component of some kind. The desire to join a regional

security structure will be partly political – to heighten profile or build a closer relationship – and partly defence based – to make use of other nations' experience or to achieve concrete security gains, for example. Likewise, the management of this membership, once it has been gained, will involve a great deal of work that is partly political and partly military. There are a whole series of aspects, such as joint exercises or the procurement of foreign equipment, where there is a foreign policy dimension that has to be respected.

Take, for example, the first deployment of a new class of ship in an expanding navy. It is necessary to decide which countries the ship will visit, for how long and what the programme will be. Obviously, there are some essentially naval objectives in such visits, such as gaining operational experience, practising deployments away from home and learning how to cope with unfamiliar ports. There will be wider defence objectives as well, such as getting to know other navies in the region, promoting defence contacts and raising the profile of one's own military forces. There may be valuable public relations and recruiting benefits. Equally, there will be major foreign policy concerns. Some nations may welcome a visit, others not. Ambassadors in several countries will be lobbying. The ship's visits could coincide with visits by the president or a trade show. None of these objectives by themselves will be decisive and the final programme will be an amalgam of all of them. What this implies is that few defence policy decisions are entirely autonomous. All take place in a larger context and involve what it is helpful to call a 'policy community'.

THE POLICY COMMUNITY

Institutions are bound to disagree with each other from time to time. Any policy that makes sense, and any position that is robust and commands respect, will in the absence of a strategic genius be the product of more than one hand, in a way that resolves these disagreements. But this is not to say that the resulting policy must be a simple compromise, or that it must represent a victory by one institution over another. Nor is it necessarily the result of some complex bargaining process among interest groups.

Depending on the administrative traditions of the state, there are, broadly speaking, two ways in which such disagreements can be resolved. In a hierarchical bureaucracy of specialists having powerful leadership from the top (the kind of bureaucracy that Max Weber assumed was normal), policies will tend not to be discussed outside the immediate hierarchy until they have been agreed to by

those at the top. And, indeed, in a system where power flows downwards and initiative comes from the top, senior people often become personally committed to ideas and positions early on. By contrast, in a less hierarchical and more informal bureaucracy, ideas can be road-tested at a lower level first without the necessity of first endangering the egos of powerful individuals. It is a question, really, of where you have your inevitable arguments and when you resolve them. Human nature being what it is, the sooner the issues can be resolved, the easier the process of decision-making will be. Although in the discussion that follows it will be apparent that I am recommending elements of the second type of bureaucracy, this is only because in practice some systems seem to work more effectively than others. I recognise that these characteristics are deeply-ingrained in societies. The German and Australian systems, although each will no doubt change, are unlikely ever to resemble each other closely.

Yet even in the most apparently hierarchical system, such as many in Asia, there is actually a great deal of informal, lower-level consensus building taking place. A development of this practice is the *policy community*, which I would define as all those with knowledge of the problem and an interest in solving it. The second element is crucial since it enables people to step outside their narrow roles and look for solutions without their egos being affected. There are, of course, people you need to consult as of right, or because they demand it. But they are not the people you speak to privately and say to 'What do you think of this as an idea?', or 'One possible solution might be ...' To repeat, the farther up a hierarchy positions go before being modified, the sharper will be the differences with other hierarchies. The answer, therefore, is to develop the widest consensus at the lowest level, which is a point I will return to in the next chapter. It is impossible, in fact, to have a sensible defence policy without the involvement of a wider policy community.

In practice, policy communities are indispensable to the solution of practical problems and tend to exist in even the most rigid of structures, whether or not they are acknowledged openly. The less common they are, the more individual ministries or other hierarchies will have a private discussion, uninformed about what other people are thinking, and will take an inflexible position, often without realising that it is very different from the position of others. If political figures are involved the resulting struggle can become very personal, and even if not, the status and dignity of hierarchies can become involved. Decisions made under this system are usually bad ones, because compromise has become difficult and there will be seen to be clear winners and losers. If this kind of system works

at all, it is usually because a strong figure, often a president, intervenes, but of course that individual is most likely to choose from among several options rather than trying to find a consensus that serves everybody's interests.

The issue of how departments and ministries interested in defence and security issues work together is a complex one. It is not really a question of dominance, but of management. How does one utilise the resources one has in the most productive manner? It is not, of course, possible to divorce this question from the question of the organisation of the state itself, since the organisation of defence and security is only a particular example of a general policy.

In general, there are two basic organisational models of government co-ordination, and two procedural ones. In each case, the distinction is between a top down and a bottom up approach. The two organisational variants are as follows:

- A strong central organisation, working for the head of state or government that can try to initiate policy and involve itself in a degree of detail. Such an organisation will often chair inter-departmental committees and working groups and cover thematic issues affecting several departments, security being an example.
- A system in which power is distributed to departments, with only a small central organisation that probably only has a co-ordinating role.

As always, these are tendencies rather than absolute models. Most European systems feature a strong central staff of some kind, although its ability to initiate policy as opposed to just blocking decisions it does not like can be limited. Whilst this system will generally produce a definite answer, this often only happens when a president's foreign affairs adviser has finally got that far down in his in-tray. The penalty is usually lost time and an outcome that favours one ministry, usually the foreign ministry over another. On the other hand, the absence of a strong centre creates problems as well, since arguments can often go on for ever. The Japanese system, for example, always takes a long time because of the need to find inter-departmental consensus. This reflects the generally distributed nature of power in Japanese society as a whole. The two procedural variants are as follows:

- A system that makes a clear division between policy decided by the minister and his advisors, and execution decided by officials.
- A system where officials assist with the formulation of policy and carry it out.

The first system makes co-ordination between departments rather more difficult, because, until the minister or his cabinet has spoken, officials cannot be sure of the line they should propose to others. These things are obviously easier when officials themselves originate policy, since departments can work together on something that they jointly present to ministers.

These variants will greatly affect the mechanics of the way in which policy is made. An extreme case perhaps is that of the US, whose policy-making system is large and complex, and which finds it difficult to reach consensus on many issues. A further complication is that the higher levels of the American administration will be dominated by political appointees, many of whom are mainly interested in making a reputation for themselves so that they can further their careers when they leave government. The usual response is to set up a policy co-ordinating committee to produce a compromise position, which, like most compromises, is so complex and fragile, that US representatives then have almost no margin to manoeuvre.

Given the inherent complexity of defence and security issues, the large number of interests involved, the degree of control exerted by allies and neighbours, and the difficulty of the co-ordination process, it is reasonable to ask whether there are any steps that can be taken to make the process run more smoothly. To begin with, there is no doubt that sharp demarcation lines and institutional rivalries cause problems. In many administrative systems the responsibilities of government departments and even their offices are set down in writing and have force of law. In this kind of system it is difficult to share power and a department, usually the foreign ministry, will, in theory, have charge of security questions. But in practice the help of the defence ministry is going to be needed if sensible policies are to be adopted. One of the weaknesses of a system like this is that important defence decisions, because of their political element, are made by people in the foreign ministry, the cabinet or the president's office. The military will then be given a fait accompli, arrived at for political reasons, and be asked to make it work.

If there is a solution to this kind of problem, it is to exploit any flexibility the system will allow to the maximum. It is helpful if those who work in one department have at least some experience of the work of other departments and some understanding of what their priorities are. It is not necessary, however, to transform yourself into a mini-diplomat or a mini-officer. But an awareness of how your opposite number thinks prevents a dialogue of the hearing-impaired and increases trust so that when someone says something that sounds reasonable

but cannot be verified by you from experience, can generally be accepted. So, whilst it is customary for foreign ministries to speak on behalf of a delegation at international meetings, it would be odd indeed if they did not have colleagues from other departments next to them.

On more institutional level, it is a good idea, if the system will permit it, for positions on any issue that may involve co-operation between departments to start to be agreed from the bottom up, preferably by people who already know each other. The alternative, which is separate analyses followed by negotiations between two or more ministries, tends to result in a victory for the more powerful ministry (or minister), rather than reflecting the best idea. Sensible human beings ought to be able to put together a position that makes sense from a variety of angles.

That process is assisted if there are a fair number of civilian defence officials. I shall have more to say about this point later, but here it needs to be stressed that experience suggests that relationships between diplomats and military men, without intermediaries of some kind, are often difficult. There are politically aware officers and there are diplomats who know something about defence, but probably not enough of either. Diplomats are members of an international freemasonry dedicated to smoothing relations between states and sometimes believe that agreements and good relations between states are really ends in themselves. This combined with the special language used and baroque arrangements under which negotiations take place, make life very difficult for the average officer whose last job may have been commanding an infantry battalion under somewhat simpler circumstances. It is the job of the civilian bureaucrat to understand both sides and to help the consensus-forming process. The bureaucrat will be used to working with both sides and will tend to deal with the diplomat more easily. Their backgrounds and training, as well as the type of work they do, will be similar and they can, by taking on the political side of the ministry of defence's involvement, leave the military to concentrate on its own areas of expertise.

I have so far concentrated on the idea of a policy community within government. There are many states where this is the norm and where there is limited interest outside government in defence and security policy. These are often settled states, whose militaries are widely regarded as legitimate. But there are many other states where the situation is quite different. For example, there are some states where the constitution provides for a separation of powers and may give parliament an active role, even if only the negative one of being able to refuse to vote funds or permit a deployment. The US is an extreme example of the latter.

More generally, electoral systems with proportional representation, which tend to produce coalitions, will move the balance of power to parliament, because of the need to secure agreement from the parties and keep the coalition together. There are also states whose recent history of CMR has been bad, or where the military have played too strong a role in politics. In many cases it will be right to deliberately bring civil society into the policy-making process as a way of restoring confidence in the military. Finally, there will be states where the military has a mainly internal focus, or where there are major political issues, such as conscription, that are of interest to the general public.

It is doubtful whether there are any general rules about the best way to involve institutions outside government in defence issues. Perhaps the only fundamental one is the need to avoid confusing functions. It is right for government to originate proposals since it has the mandate and generally the resources to do so. If parliament turns itself into a second centre of decision-making, the result is frequently chaos and paralysis as the two can cancel each other out and nothing gets done (i.e. in the US). Parliament represents the interests of the voter, the citizen and the taxpayer, and does its job best when it requires the government, of its officials, to appear before it and give a reasoned explanation of what has been done in its name. I shall have more to say about this later.

The military and the management of defence

I now want to move the focus away from wider issues of co-ordination and government policy to the way in which civilians and the military can work together in the formulation and implementation of defence policy. I will consider the roles and tasks appropriate to the military and then look at the influence of different types of government structures and practices. This is one of the most difficult areas of defence organisation. It has to be recognised that achieving a proper integration of civilian and military functions and personnel is not easy and may take time.

In theory, the position is straightforward. In the words of one writer, it is the role of the government to 'define appropriate areas of responsibility' for the military to operate in.[56] But what are these appropriate areas? How do we define them? As we have seen, many writers consider that all that really matters is that the areas of responsibility should be as limited as possible, thus constraining the military and ensuring that it will be prevented by 'professionalism' from seeking too great a role. That seems a strange way in which to get the best out of an expensive group of individuals whom the state has selected, trained and equipped. I shall revert later to how historical and cultural factors have affected the situation in different countries, but first it is worth referring to two areas generally accepted as not really falling within the responsibility of the military.

The first is *foreign policy, wars and alliances.* At the highest strategic level, governments are jealous of their right to declare war and make treaties. Parliaments, particularly those as strong as the American Congress, can obstruct declarations of war and refuse to ratify treaties, but they do not usually have the right to propose either of them. Far less should the military, as a servant of the state, possess initiative or even influence in these areas.

The second area is *finance*. Except under conditions of absolute military control, states are very unlikely to allow the military to set its own levels of defence spending. In almost all systems of government, expenditure, including defence expenditure, has to be accounted for to parliament, as it is this body that votes the money to be spent by government and the taxes needed to raise it. Spending decisions are political decisions and permanent officials (not politicians and certainly not the military) have to defend the propriety of the way the money was spent. This tends to be the case even where the military is very powerful. In addition, the finance ministry, and probably some interdepartmental committee, will have to approve major budgetary and spending decisions. It is of course entirely legitimate for the military to point to the practical effects of budget cuts, and it is also normal for different services to defend their financial position vis-à-vis that of others.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

If it is accepted that the military will seldom be involved in decisions on foreign policy, declarations of war and defence budgets, how are we to decide what areas are appropriate for them? Part of the problem lies in the way the question is formulated, since the involvement of the military is usually assumed to be exclusive. Writing in an American context, one writer has implied a pattern of 'military advice' on 'force levels, weapon systems, expenditures', and of 'political, civilian advice as to diplomacy, budget and tax policy and political acceptance'.[57] But no democratic regime could possibly allow so much military influence, even if it were clear what is meant by 'advice'. Equally, there is the valid question put to me by a South African Defence Force officer in Pretoria in 1994: 'If I as a military man tell you I need a piece of equipment, then on what basis do you as a civilian tell me I shouldn't have it?' We can address this kind of question more easily if we keep the following principles in mind:

- There are no important questions that are either purely military or purely political.
- Neither civilians nor the military constitutes a homogeneous group.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY QUESTIONS

The requirement to divide things into piles labelled 'political' and 'military' seems to me to be a mistake, and not to conform very much to reality. It might be better

to put the issue as follows: in any question that arises about the formulation or implementation of defence policy there are some aspects where the skills of the military are needed and some where the skills of civilians are needed.

Certainly, attempts in history to try to categorise things as neatly as this have generally failed, since to agree to give up control of an issue is to reduce one's power. As a result, there is a contest to define questions as 'political' or 'military', and thereby to increase one's own power. But surely some questions can be dealt with by the military alone? Not necessarily. Take, for example, a decision to make the selection test for a commando force more realistic and stringent. Soon after it is introduced, several trainees die in a bad-weather exercise. Whilst regretting this, the military argues that the trainees are being selected for dangerous work. But the trainees have families, and the families have access to local and national politicians and the media, and the minister may then be faced with a problem. It is doubtful that he will be amused if he first hears of the incident via the media, nor will he wish to tell parliament that this is a military matter on which neither he nor parliamentarians should have a view. A similar problem exists in many countries when air forces carry out low-level flying training: the military need for training often conflicts with the desire of local residents for peace and quiet. These types of problems need to be brought to the attention of ministers before they arise, not afterwards.

But does this mean that every single decision that might possibly have a political dimension must be scrutinised by a minister? Clearly, this would be impossible. The answer lies in abandoning this unworkable distinction between political and military issues, and concentrating on what needs to be done. In examples like the above, there are basically three considerations, namely:

- The military should be aware that much of what it does has a political dimension and ensure that its civilian colleagues know what is going on, consulting them as is necessary.
- Civilians should consider the political dimension, warn ministers and obtain their approval if it is believed to be necessary.
- Civilians should take the lead in helping ministers to explain and defend what has occurred, suitably advised by the military. Ministers will of course be more willing to defend a position they have been consulted on in advance.

It is worth pausing for a moment to consider what the civilian role actually is. In particular, there is a need to avoid confusing the quite different roles of

the politician and the civilian official. When we use the word 'political' in this context, we are talking about a dimension to the formulation and administration of defence policy that, for example, may:

- Involve public money, for which, as we have seen, the permanent head of the department is usually responsible.
- Attract criticism or presentational problems, nationally or abroad.
- Require the consent of parliament or negotiation with other nations.
- Involve negotiations or compromises with other government departments.

With exception of the first point,[58] these are subjects on which ministers (i.e. civilian politicians) are expected to comment in public or among their colleagues. The skills that are needed to support them are, by and large, skills that civilian officials should possess by virtue of their aptitude and training. Briefing another government or the media, or negotiating with the finance ministry, are by and large not matters the military is particularly good at, or is even keen on doing. It is not, in other words, a question of corralling the military into an area of responsibility where they can do no harm, but rather of using the joint resources of the military and civilians to achieve the best results.

THE ILLUSION OF HOMOGENEITY

Although some militaries are more homogeneous than others, and all will tend to show a united front in the face of outsiders, they are in fact as riven by faction and jealousy as most organisations are. An example is the tension that often exists between officers from the combat arms, like pilots and infantry officers, who tend to monopolise the top jobs, and technical specialists, who feel underappreciated in spite of their greater training and specialist skills. Similarly, because the military profession includes the possibility of combat, injury and death, its ethos places special emphasis on the development of leadership and trust among those who may be invited to risk their lives together. In such a situation, in peacetime as much as in times of conflict, the temptation is to trust only those you know, who wear the same uniform and may even have the same speciality as you do.

These tribal tendencies make the very idea of neutral military advice hard to conceive. There are, of course, issues at such a high-level of abstraction that general military advice will have some meaning, and there are also issues, such

as pay and conditions of service, where the interests of the various services tend to coincide. But in general the more difficult the issue, the harder it is to produce collective advice that has some meaning and does not simply reflect the balance of power in the military itself.

A couple of examples will illustrate this. Imagine that a littoral state has a problem with smuggling and gunrunning along its coast. There is a small amount of money to spend on equipment to counter the threat. What should be the advice of the military? In practice, something like the following will happen. The navy will argue that fast-patrol boats, or corvettes carrying naval helicopters, are the answer. The air force will point to the greater endurance and carrying capability of fixed-wing aircraft. The army will believe that it makes more sense to allow the miscreants to land and then to pursue them with high-mobility vehicles. Each will have a persuasive argument why it should be in charge of the overall command of the operation. A little later I will discuss ways in which this kind of problem can be minimised.

The point here is not simply that factions in the military will seek to advance their own causes. It is also that, in most of these cases, there is no single right answer. At one extreme there are propositions that are militarily senseless, while at the other ideas that command general agreement. But most defence policy questions fall into the large grey area in the middle where there is no unchallengeable wisdom and thus no hope that something called 'military advice' will arrive neatly packaged and available for immediate use.

If the military is not homogeneous, neither is there such a single group as 'civilians'. In writings on CMR there is persistent confusion between control by politicians and control by civilians. The former are almost always the latter, but the latter are by no means always the former. Indeed, whilst one of the jobs of civilian officials may well be to help the government put its policies into action, it may be the case that they will side more with their military colleagues on certain issues, at least privately, than with the politicians. Tensions between politicians and permanent officials can be just as great as between politicians and the military. The fact that not all civilian officials are alike is not only self-evident at an individual level, it is also true institutionally, because officials are employed to support and defend various positions. Different departments in the same ministry may have radically different views on the same proposition, even though all of those involved are civilians. In the case of a proposed new equipment project, for example, scientific advisors, economists, international relations experts and budget managers may have sharply different views.

But of course they will not be the only civilians involved in such a decision. When discussing a project, for example, the officials from the defence ministry will be lobbying for the proposal on the table, those from the industry department will be concerned about the implications for the industrial base, the foreign ministry will be considering the international implications and the finance ministry will support the least costly solution.

All of this makes the idea of parcelling up the work of defence management into blocks labelled 'political', to be dealt with by civilians, and 'military', to be dealt with by uniformed officers, ridiculous. The fact is that no system will ever work unless those responsible for it agree to co-operate and make it work. This requires the forging of individual relationships across institutional boundaries and a willingness to treat those in other disciplines as colleagues rather than enemies.

OFFICERS AND BUREAUCRACIES

So far I have considered generic questions about the roles the military can play in the management of defence. In practice, however, such involvement takes place within a defined social and institutional context that differs, often very substantially, from country to country. In all cases the military is taken out of its natural habitat – its base or its headquarters – and placed in an alien environment where the rules are made by others. What is the bureaucratic context in which military officers work in different countries? While there are common features, the context can differ considerably. I have already noted the influence of cultural and historical differences. The same applies to the bureaucratic and government structures in which the military works, as shown in the examples below.

The top-down approach

The bureaucracy that has been most influential on the military is that described by Max Weber (1864–1920)[59] who like most others who have written about organisations, never worked in one. He made some valid points about the nature of bureaucracy, notably its essentially rational underpinning that replaced the previous haphazard systems of rule. But Weber, whether he realised it or not, was in essence always describing the bureaucracy of Prussia up to 1918. This was a socially exclusive and politically conservative force, which saw its role as helping to maintain the authoritarian regime of the day. Its loyalty was to the king, rather than to the people. In addition, as we can see from Weber's emphasis on

administrative regulations and rigidity of organisation, it was a type of bureaucracy that is common in certain parts of Europe, but much less so elsewhere. States that practise this kind of administration tend to have the following features:

- A history of political absolutism.
- A heritage of Roman and Napoleonic law.
- A system of administrative law laying down legal responsibilities for different elements of the bureaucracy.

This type of system is still found in its purest form in European states such as France and Germany today. Its origin lies in the concept of absolutism, which maintained that the monarch held all the powers of the state. Under democracy, the monarch has simply been replaced by the people, leaving the following essential features of the system unchanged:

- The explicit and exclusive delegation of powers, often by legislation, to specialist groups.
- A strict distinction between the formulation of policy and its implementation.
- Initiative from the top down.
- Low value placed on consensus.

The first of these characteristics involves the concept of *compétence*, a word found in various forms in a number of European languages, but not, except by importation, in English. It is hard to translate exactly, but has as its main practical consequence the tendency to parcel up work into self-contained parts, each to be dealt with solely by a nominated department. There is no greater sin in this kind of system than exceeding one's *compétence*.

The second characteristic dictates the structure of bureaucracies of this type. At the top of the department is the minister who is responsible for the formulation of policy. Yet even the initiative of ministers is limited in practice, as they are assisted by a *cabinet*,[60] another untranslatable word that refers to a group of individuals, including some from outside government, working personally for a specific minister, who are usually replaced upon the appointment of a new minister. There is a strict formal distinction between ministers and their *cabinets*, and permanent officials, whose primary function is to implement the policies.

This kind of structure has, of course, to work in a more flexible way than is implied by the model above if anything is to get done. Politics by its very nature involves

compromise and officials are bound to be involved in the formulation of policy in some way, rather than waiting for inspiration to be handed down from above. But in this kind of system, with national variations, there are significant obstacles to consensus since loyalties tend to be vertical and hierarchies will negotiate with each other almost like sovereign states. This is to be expected, given the tradition of the delegation of powers to be exercised by one group alone. As a result, a superior figure, such as a chancellor or president, will often be called on to make a decision, and that decision will most likely be a straight choice between sharply different positions.

How does the military fare in such a structure? Any system based on *compétence* will tend to make the kind of artificial distinction between political and military issues .The military will be charged with the implementation of defence policy and will largely be left to get on with it, without large civilian input. At least formally, this places the military in a powerful position. However, in practice it is always subject to being overruled by the *cabinet* and often by the foreign ministry as well. The position of the latter will always be stronger in a system of government that has few civilians working on defence issues. The foreign ministry supplies a large number of *cabinet* members, not least in ministries of defence and, except where the military is powerful for other reasons it would be unusual for them or their minister to win a trial of strength with a foreign ministry.

The bottom-up approach

The other main type of governmental system is generally the opposite of the top-down approach. It is typical of states that do not have a tradition of Roman or Napoleonic Law. For example, even though Thailand's absolutist monarchy lasted several hundred years longer than that of France, its system of administration is very different. We should also not confuse an attachment to procedures with legal definitions of activities. In a number of Confucian cultures, for example, ritual and the following of prescribed procedures are very important, but this is because of tradition and social etiquette rather than any legal requirement. The characteristics of this kind of approach are as follows:

- Fuzziness of administrative boundaries and widespread consultation on issues of common interest.
- Permanent officials as originators of policy.
- The initiative generally from the bottom up.
- High value placed on consensus.

There are more variants of this system than in the top-down one and the origins are different. One variant is found in Great Britain and there are similarities to its system in a number of northern European countries, such as the Netherlands and Sweden. But similar systems are found in many Asian and African countries as well, although their origins are quite different.[61] What these countries have in common is:

- A pragmatic culture.
- A respect for tradition and convention as much as for written law.
- A preference for consensus.

By using the word 'pragmatic', I am not making an Anglo-Saxon value judgement. Rather, I am using the word in something close to a technical-philosophical sense, i.e. the drawing of conclusions from sense-data, rather than a priori reasoning, which is common in top-down systems. Without an extensive legal structure determining everything, ideas will tend to be considered on their merits. Similarly, a number of such societies (Japan is a good example) draft laws and government documents in such a way that no single definitive interpretation is possible, thereby allowing them to mean different things to different people.

This kind of system tends to pursue its objectives by permitting the development of consensus at a low-level. As a rule, officials will try to sort out problems at the lowest level possible and reach a consensus before passing the issue upwards. Decisive intervention from above, although easier in some countries than others, is not considered ideal as it implies a loss of face for one of the parties. As a result, in many such systems, especially Asian ones, the roles of officials become increasingly ceremonial as they move up in seniority. A ministerial meeting to settle an issue is often prepared with great thoroughness and is very formal, but in practice it will be little else than a ceremonial recognition of a decision already arrived at.

Societies that value consensus also tend to dislike public conflict, so even where there are disagreements, a 'cool heart', as the Thais call it, is required of all. This kind of system makes rigid distinctions between functions less common and provides more scope for consultation and the reaching of consensus between hierarchies. Finally, such systems generally manage without *cabinets*, and officials therefore have the right and the responsibility to propose ideas to ministers, provided of course that these are in line with overall policy, or can be presented as such.

The weaknesses of this kind of system are an undue concentration on short-term ad hoc issues and a constant temptation towards sterile managerialism. By

their nature, top-down systems tend to pursue longer-term strategies, whereas bottom-up systems are mainly concerned with tactics and often move, via a series of sensible, ad hoc compromises, to a position that is eventually the opposite to the one started from.

The position of the military in this type of structure is formally weaker, but practically stronger than in top-down systems. Civilians are often employed in large numbers, including in positions of power, which tends to have the effect of relieving the military of tasks for which they are less suited. This makes the department as a whole more effective in fighting wider political battles. The absence of a *cabinet* increases the influence of the military in that their interlocutors are the permanent officials, usually defence experts, who are well known to them.

Of course, only the naïve would believe that organisations simply function according to their formal structures. Networks of all kinds are found in large organisations, and governments and the military are cases in point. Those who have attended the same elite university, passed out of a diplomatic academy or a staff course in the same year, served in particular posts abroad together or have taken part in particular overseas operations, as well as members of elites, such as special forces or speakers of difficult languages, may well have their own informal networks. Similarly, the political, ethnic or religious backgrounds of members of the armed forces, political classes and even civilian officialdom may count for a great deal. In the case of Africa, 'informal links and structures of power based on such factors as ethnic, family and political connections count for much more than formal hierarchy and lines of command'.[62]

With variations, this is true in much of the rest of the world as well. In some Asian countries, for example, the year of graduation from the military academy is more important than the rank currently held. As with most things, these kinds of links and networks can be good or bad, depending on the wider context. They can unblock problems in more formal systems, but they can also impede the smooth running of organisations. For an understanding of how organisations work in practice, they cannot be ignored.

It is worth adding that, whilst civilian officials are not a homogeneous group, anymore than the military is, and their roles can vary between political systems, certain general principles apply to them. Their training and experience makes them best suited to brief ministers, deal with parliament, handle the media and provide political advice. Constitutionally they are generally the right people to manage and account for national expenditures. Most scientists, engineers, accountants and economists employed by government will fall in the civilian category as well.

The functions, organisation and working methods of a ministry of defence

No one who visits or works with defence ministries in different countries can fail to be struck by the very considerable differences between them. This is strange, since government departments the world over often show many similarities. For example, foreign ministries will generally have both regional departments and departments dealing with general issues. Similarly, finance ministries will have economic policy sections and units devoted, some would say, to stopping other ministries from spending money. In contrast, defence ministries vary enormously in size, scope and organisation.

A RANGE OF DEFENCE FUNCTIONS

Differences between defence ministries occur largely because of the considerable range of functions involved in defence, greater, almost certainly, than any other area of government. In addition, there is a large variation in the manner in which these functions are performed. The following, I would suggest, are the most important generic defence functions, although they will by no means all be carried out by a ministry, and there will be some overlap in any case:

- Formulation of defence policy.
- Implementation of defence policy.
- Intelligence analysis, including the collection of intelligence.
- The command and control of operational forces.
- Operational planning and exercises.
- Contingency planning.

- The peacetime recruitment, training and administration of military personnel.
- Equipment research and development.
- Equipment procurement.
- Administration of the organisation itself.

Two questions need to be asked regarding each of these functions, namely:

- Should they be part of the ministry of defence in a geographical sense?
- More importantly, are they organisationally part of the ministry?

The answers, as always, will partly depend on factors outside the control of those responsible for organisation. Some governments will concentrate functions in one place or alternatively move functions out of the capital city, in each case to save money. Small nations often decide to collocate all functions, while large nations may split them. The arguments will be different in each country. Here, as in the remainder of the book, I will mainly discuss the options that are available, rather than making recommendations.

More than any other government department, ministries of defence depend on individuals who are not functionally part of it, namely military personnel in operational units. The most important question to answer, therefore, is where the boundary falls between operational activities and administration and training. There are two basic functions a government expects the military, individually and collectively, to fulfil, namely:

- Planning for and conducting operations in pursuit of national interests – the command function.
- The provision of military advice on defence policy issues – the advisory function.

The first of these is the responsibility of the national military commander (NMC),[63] and the second the responsibility of the chief of defence (CHOD). These terms are functional descriptions only as the actual names given to the posts vary enormously from country to country. In many cases the functions are combined.

The NMC is the commander of the nation's armed forces in times of war and the command authority for military operations short of war, such as peacekeeping operations. He has responsibility for the operational deployment of military units and for exercises in peacetime, and will operate from a national military headquarters (NMHQ), the organisation of which will differ from country to country. Countries

that face a land threat, or expect to conduct operations just across the border, will probably have a simple organisation of this type, while countries that face no land threat, or whose military activities are often conducted at a distance, may have several different NMHQs or they may improvise depending on the circumstances. The important thing is that the function has to exist in some form.

The CHOD, sometimes known as the Chief of Defence Staff, is the professional head of the national military forces and also the chief adviser on military affairs to the ministry of defence and government as a whole. This function exists, under one name or another, in nearly all defence ministries. The biggest single reason for the differences in organisation between defence ministries is the separation or integration of the NMC and CHOD functions. An important consideration to be taken into account when a particular model is decided on is the potential for over-control and micro-management of military operations by the ministry, when the two functions are combined.

In the command and control structure of a military operation away from national territory there are usually three levels of control, namely:

- *Strategic*. This concerns overall political direction and military policy, which includes issues of interest to ministers.
- *Operational*. This is the level at which strategic objectives are turned into military ones, and operational directives are given to the commander. This level involves the country's military and its civilian advisers.
- *Tactical*. This involves the planning and conduct of the operation itself.

The strategic level of control resides in the ministry of defence and involves other ministries, as required, whilst the operational level is carried out at an operational headquarters. It is quite important to preserve this distinction and to avoid a situation where ministers and senior military personnel outside the command chain find it possible and tempting to involve themselves in operational planning. Clearly, ministers need to be briefed about significant operations, but they should and must not want to involve themselves in the detail. This requirement argues for a geographical separation of some kind between the two functions.

There are also other commonsense ways of isolating functions that belong in a ministry of defence. The simplest differentiation is between policy and implementation, although in practice this is often more difficult than it sounds and depends to some extent on the country's national defence organisation. The real criterion, I suggest, is political interest. To go back to the earlier example of flying

training, there are obviously some issues that will attract political interest, such as training given to foreign students, accidents, low-flying incidents and political pressure to accept female pilots.

Ministers will need to be briefed on such issues in order to make the right judgements and to defend their policies in parliament. For this reason they will need to have access to civilian and military personnel who are familiar with such issues. Once policy has been decided, however, its implementation should be left to air force headquarters, which will organise a training programme, and the flight training organisation, which will carry it out. Exactly who sits where is less important than a full awareness among personnel on the issues the ministry needs to be informed about. Thus a competent system that becomes aware of an aircraft accident during a training mission will ensure that the basic facts are relayed to the ministry. The minister will most likely wish to make a statement to the media, which will want to have such information as the name and age of the pilot, how long he has been in the air force and why the accident occurred. Such facts, rather than technical detail, are what the ministry needs to be briefed on.

STRUCTURE

There are many influences on the structure of a defence ministry, some of which are beyond the control of those who decide what the structure should be. Before going on to a more detailed examination of these influences, however, I must stress the principle of *institutional integrity*. By this is simply meant that the organisation should be structured in such a way as to assist in the achievement of objectives. This sounds obvious, but it is surprising how frequently this principle is ignored. Thus, the purpose of an Anglo-Saxon business concern is to generate wealth from the company's operations and to reward its investors with a healthy return. In other societies, a company's purpose may be to have the largest market share, or the biggest output, or to win prestigious orders. Company structures should reflect these objectives. In the case of government, most people would expect its objectives to be honesty, fairness and effectiveness, and departmental structures need to facilitate their achievement. It would be very unusual for a government to imitate the structures of the private sector.

There are many reasons why the principle of institutional integrity is ignored. A frequent one is outside influence. In many parts of the world the public service is patterned on the practices of the previous colonial power. Many African, South American and Asian nations thus use the British, the Spanish or the French

model. Sometimes this is appropriate – the British model works well in Australia and New Zealand, for example – but sometimes difficulties are created when a colonial legacy is grafted onto a society that has historically functioned in other ways. The Indian defence ministry, for example, was influenced initially both by the system inherited from Great Britain and by the recommendations of Lord Ismay, a former British military officer on the staff of Lord Mountbatten, Viceroy of India.[64] But the system soon had to be changed. In South Africa, the system adopted in 1909 was modelled in great detail on the then British War Office, but did not suit the rather different political climate of that country.

Some influences will operate at the level of government generally. For example, there is little point in a defence ministry operating a *cabinet* system if the rest of government does not, or vice versa. In Sweden, the defence ministry is quite small, as per the standard departmental practice in that country, where many functions are discharged by agencies responsible to parliament. Reorganisations of public sectors tend to be pervasive where they occur. Some nations set their public service organisation in stone, whilst others go chasing after every trendy management theory. Indeed, the very concept of a professional, neutral, career bureaucracy may not exist in some countries. A spoils system may operate at the highest levels, or there may be a habit of bringing people from business into government, which obviously has its own dangers and difficulties.

Apart from these general limitations, the main restraining factor on freedom of choice in structures will be the extent to which there is a substantial civilian cadre in the ministry. Obviously, if few civilians are employed some of the structures I describe below will not be possible. But even if the political will then exists to create a large civilian input to policy, it is not a process that can be rectified overnight, as South Africa has found since 1994. It takes years, if not decades, to grow a cadre of civilian defence experts who have the confidence of not only the military, but also the political leadership. The three examples that follow assume that a large civilian cadre is either available or being planned.

Parallel structures

This is where the defence function is divided in the following manner:

- A defence headquarters that deals with technical military issues.
- A defence ministry, largely staffed by civilians, that handles political and financial issues and supports the minister.

There is a degree of superficial logic to this arrangement, but it seldom works well in practice. Even if the two functions are located together, as is the case in Norway, which is one of the few countries where it seems to work, there will be communication problems. Two centres of power will always compete with each other, especially if they work for the same master who must, in practice, choose between their advice. The motivations of an MoD and a defence headquarters (Defence HQ) will be quite different, and often opposed to each other. Moreover, if there are cases, such as India, where proposals have to go from Defence HQ to the MoD for approval, this gives the bureaucrats a very powerful position, which the military will resent.

In general, initiatives on various subjects will most often come from the military since they have the technical knowledge and probably the greater number of staff officers. Under the circumstances, the defence ministry can often do little more than object or criticise. Unless it has its own military staff, it will not be in a position to generate many ideas on issues such as operational concepts or procurement. If it does indeed have a military component, it will be seen by Defence HQ as competition. This will create a tendency for the two organisations to take up rigid positions, and the minister will, time after time, be put in the position of having to judge between the advice of his secretary and his CHOD or NMC.

Parallel hierarchies

Under parallel hierarchies the defence function is divided as follows:

- A Defence HQ responsible only for the implementation of policy.
- A ministry of defence in which there are separate military and civilian organisations, arranged by functional area.

For this system to work well it is important that the responsibilities of the military and civilian divisions are clearly distinguished from each other to avoid competing hierarchies, second-guessing and competition. There will be a number of military divisions that ultimately report to the CHOD, and a number of civilian divisions reporting to the secretary of the ministry of defence. The CHOD and the ministry will deal with different aspects of the same issue. In practice, the system will be more flexible than it seems at first sight. For example, the CHOD may well ask for advice on the handling of some political or bureaucratic issue. Such advice would sensibly come from civilians. More important, however, are the working practices used by the organisation as a whole. There has to be constant contact

between military and civilian staffs and it should be a fundamental principle that there is a single source of advice to ministers, and that such advice reflects both the military and civilian views. The importance of this cannot be overemphasised. No matter how intensely civilians and the military may argue, they need to come to a joint position that can be presented to ministers.

Consider, for example, a study into a national contribution to a UN peacekeeping mission. Overall co-ordination will probably fall to the CHOD, but part of the work will have to be done by civilian staff. A possible distribution of work could be something like the following:

- The military works with the NMHQ to draw up a list of available forces and put together an outline package.
- The military looks at the practicality of transporting the forces where they are needed and their support.
- The civilians and the military instruct embassies abroad to discover what other troop contributors are doing.
- Intelligence staffs do a rapid assessment of the situation in the country.
- Civilian and service personnel look at issues of welfare, leave, special pay and so on.
- Civilians liaise with the foreign ministry, which will no doubt demand the largest national contribution to the mission feasible, and the finance ministry, which will insist on the smallest force possible.
- Civilians consider the wider public relations and political aspects of the operation.
- Civilians consider the financial aspects of the operation.
- The final presentation to ministers will be led by the CHOD, but supported by his civilian colleagues.

An integrated hierarchy

This is where the defence function is divided into:

- A Defence HQ that is responsible only for the implementation of policy.
- A ministry of defence in which there are mixed military and civilian organisations, arranged by function.

This is the most advanced form of organisation of defence ministry and probably the most efficient. But it does require that civilians and military officers are

happy to work for and with each other, a requirement that is a little beyond where most bureaucracies are normally prepared to go. It should be noted that there is no need for a 50/50 split, or any other kind of prescriptive limitation. In each case, the test should be whether a given job can be done more effectively by a civilian or by a military person. In some cases, such as operational planning, most or all of the personnel will be military. In others, such as responsibility for civilian personnel, the opposite will apply. An integrated structure, then, is one that takes the principle of civilian and military cooperation as far as it can sensibly be taken. Special arrangements will need to be made to ensure that each has a reporting line to a senior officer of the same background. It also needs to be clearly understood that civilians cannot give military orders and that they are not under military discipline.

AN INTEGRATED DEFENCE STAFF

Whichever of the above models is chosen, there will be a need for military staff divisions in each service to provide advice on policy and to plan and conduct operations. We have already seen that the military seldom function as a single block and that it can be extremely difficult for civilians to obtain integrated and objective military advice since the institutional characteristics of the military tend to put obstacles in the way. Yet, in practice, governments do need integrated military advice, and there are basically three ways in which they can obtain this, namely:

- A Chiefs of Staff Committee with a pro forma chairman.
- A CHOD with a small co-ordinating staff.
- A CHOD with an integrated defence staff.

The first is the traditional method, still in use in many countries. It relies on consensus, and the chairman, who may be appointed by rotation, will have little personal influence. His role will be to represent the views of the service chiefs to the political leadership and to try to find consensus. Inevitably, inter-service co-ordination will be poor and the services are likely to have separate and over-lapping equipment programmes. This can be less of a problem when one service is so large that it dwarfs the others, but the system seldom operates well.

The second is a developed version of the first. Here, the CHOD will have a dedicated staff that does more than arrange meetings. He will be charged to look

for consensus and will probably be asked to brief the political leadership directly on policy issues. His staff will primarily act as co-ordinators across the services on such issues as pay and conditions of service, military advice on security policy issues, etc. in situations where there is a reasonable chance of getting a productive consensus. But the individual services will largely control their own size and shape, and their own equipment programmes.

The final option has a CHOD at the head of an integrated defence staff, which could include civilians and which provides collective advice on military aspects of policy, planning, resource management and equipment programmes. The individual services would not give advice directly. However, it is very important to avoid the defence staff from becoming just another layer between service departments or service headquarters and the political level, which would add little. Rather, it should take over certain defence functions that would henceforth only be done collectively, on a multi-service basis. Examples include the following:

- The military input to defence policy.
- The size and shape of each of the services.
- The defence programme.
- Major equipment projects.
- Operational planning.
- Intelligence.
- Logistics and personnel policy.

The individual service staffs or HQs would not, of course, lose all of their functions. They would remain responsible for such things as:

- The efficiency and operational readiness of the services.
- The implementation of centrally-decided policy.
- Management of issues which affect only one service.
- Most recruiting and training issues.
- Generation of lower-level operational requirements.

How should an integrated defence staff be structured? There are a number of options, but the main point to consider is distinction between functions that necessarily involve more than one service and functions that are handled by a single service, but are of interest to all. For example, arms control is an issue that affects everyone and therefore its military aspects would probably be handled within a

military defence policy department, staffed by officers drawn from every service. The air force equipment programme is of interest to everyone as well, partly because it interlinks with other programmes and partly because the resources desired by the air force have to be balanced with the resources needed by others. A reasonable compromise would be to have an integrated defence staffed by air force officers, but for it to report to the CHOD rather than the head of the air force.

There will, of course, have to be a separate division responsible for pulling together and enforcing a collective military view on equipment priorities, which cannot just be a process of seeking a consensus. This provides an opportunity for an analysis of competing solutions to provide the required capabilities, which can only be done by an integrated staff. In practice, many of these solutions will involve elements from more than one of the service programmes. The CHOD will then be able to present a military view of where the overall programme priorities should lie.

In practice, of course, this will not be easy. All institutional forces will tend to work against it. A naval officer, after all, joined the navy to do the best for his service, not for the air force, no matter how conscientious he may be. And everyone has to please their superior officers. There will therefore be a tendency by the services not to post their best people into a central defence staff and to try to exercise control over them while they are there. But there are a number of things that can be done to tackle these problems, namely:

- It should be made clear that the defence staff is the place where decisions are taken, so that there is an incentive to send your best people there.
- Service in the defence staff should be a prerequisite for promotion to higher ranks.
- A large civilian presence in the defence staff can help to give it a corporate identity since civilians generally transfer their loyalty more readily than military staff.

WORKING METHODS

I have already said, both directly and indirectly, a fair amount about working methods. The success or failure of a defence ministry will ultimately depend on the way in which its staffs decide to work together. Organisational charts are dangerous things (and you will not find any in this book), because they conceal

the most important aspects. Behind the formal diagrams of power and accountability lies the virtual organisation, the real, unwritten system by which an organisation actually works. This virtual organisation is essentially a web of social and professional relationships. The better and the closer these are, the better the organisation will function. Indeed, it is likely that if any large organisation were obliged to function exactly, and no more, than implied by its organogram, nothing much would get done. So all the characteristics I have described above, all the relationships between groups and departments, provide only a framework that needs to be filled in. Organisations are like flowing water: they find their way around obstacles.

The most important characteristic of a successful and complex organisation like a ministry of defence is mutual respect, or failing that mutual tolerance. The military frequently finds politics off-putting and frustrating, but that is the nature of politics. Politicians have their own objectives, but they also have their own problems and fears. Politicians, especially those who like to project a facade of total certainty, are often insecure people and are highly sensitive to criticism and unpopularity. Much of the character of politics, in any event, derives from us, the electors, whom the politicians are trying to appeal to.

Civilians, if they are wise, will respect military judgement without allowing themselves to be overwhelmed by it. Military officers are almost always experts, with considerable training and experience, and can contribute a great deal to the management of defence. Civilians can make best use of them not by simple acceptance or rejection of their proposals, but by engaging in dialogue from an informed but neutral position. Although many military issues are complex, few are so complex that they cannot be explained to the intelligent layman. Indeed, one of the functions of civilians is to stand in for the political leadership, the electorate and the taxpayer in whose name the military proposes to act. The argument of military necessity, or the argument that 'You wouldn't understand it, you're only a civilian', must be resisted.

It is doubtful whether such an attitude actually benefits the military in the long term. In almost all societies today, the military requires political approval for its plans, and civilians are much better placed to help the military get it, provided they are convinced the plans are right, than the military would be itself. In addition, each of the communities must respect the advice the other gives. In a climate of mutual respect, an assurance that something is 'militarily impossible' or 'politically unthinkable' need not be accepted without demur, but ultimately has to be taken, after reasoned discussion, as a professional judgement to be respected.

The days when the military could present itself as an arcane priesthood with a privileged insight into deep mysteries have long gone. Political reality dictates that if it wants the respect and understanding of the population and the political system, it has to be able to present its arguments in terms that ordinary people can understand. After all, these ordinary people are voters and taxpayers.

THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENCE

Irrespective of the exact working methods chosen, any defence ministry structure with a civilian component will have a figure variously called the secretary, permanent secretary, secretary general or, occasionally, director general. This individual will have made a career in the civil service, generally in the ministry of defence, for most of his career at least, and will be the professional head of all of the civilian officials in the department.

In this sense, the secretary of the MoD is no different from any other head of any other department. His functions are similar and will probably include such matters as co-ordination of policy advice and management of the department. In many systems of government it is normal for the secretary to be accountable to parliament for the department's expenditure. Whether all civilian staff work directly for the secretary, or whether they are scattered throughout the department, they perform collectively what is known as the functions of the secretariat, which are, simply stated, all those functions that are required to support the minister in the running of a government department. The obvious ones are the following:

- Handling of the budget.
- Dealing with parliament.
- Dealing with the public.
- Dealing with the media.
- Dealing and negotiating with other departments.
- Handling defence relations with other countries.

Not all of these functions are exclusively civilian, but they are all functions where civilians will play a dominant role. Often, however, they will make use of military advice. An example of this interaction may be useful.

The finance minister writes to the defence minister urging that the squadron of C-130 transport aircraft should be disbanded, and that the capability should be provided from leased civil aircraft. He argues that significant savings will result.

Handling this correspondence is obviously a function of a government department, i.e. by civilians. They will know how to draft a reply from the minister, and the kind of language and tactics that will be effective to fight this type of inter-departmental battle. The military will be approached for its view on the operational consequences of the suggestion, and will advise on such aspects as the availability of civil aircraft that are able to land on improvised runways, and the difficulty in providing them with support far from home. Civilians, in the mean time, will produce a counter-argument on the financial aspect. A senior civilian official will convert this into a draft for the minister, which the military will be invited to look at. If the draft is inaccurate, the military will seek to correct it, although they will ultimately give way to the civilians on issues of style and structure. The draft will then be submitted to the minister as the collective advice of the department.

In principle, this process is no more complex than in other departments. Thus, the health ministry will have medical advisers, the transport ministry will have engineers, and so forth. The administrative civil servants will deal with their advisers in much the same way as their colleagues in the defence ministry deal with the military officers attached to the ministry. Although there are practical differences when it comes to defence, both of type and degree, it is helpful to bear this essential similarity of principle in mind.

In particular, it should be clear to all that the departmental secretary is the head of the department and does therefore have a position of authority over the military staff working for him. A military officer posted to the ministry is, for that term of office, a servant of government, the minister and the secretary. Whilst he will continue to fall under the military chain of command as regards pay and administration, he is for all purposes a temporary civil servant. Thus, if he were to be accused of a security breach or a corrupt act, the secretary, rather than the CHOD, would investigate. However, if the breach related only to military law, or had occurred before he joined the ministry, then the matter might be handled by the military chain of command.

Designing a well-functioning ministry of defence is probably more difficult than designing any other type of government department, given the huge range of tasks and the wide range of actors involved, as well as the difficulties of coordinating them. Some elements are effectively universal: clarity of roles and functions, minimisation of overlap and duplication, clear reporting lines and unity of effort and purpose. But in the defence area there are in addition some specific questions to be asked, notably:

- Which functions will be carried out in the ministry and which elsewhere?
- To what extent is it realistic to have integrated military advice?
- Have the respective roles of the military and civilian staffs been sorted out?
- Can a single, harmonious working culture be created?

Differences between ministries, and indeed relative success and failure, have a great deal to do with how these questions are answered.

Intelligence

I have so far largely concentrated on issues of technique and organisation. However, the purpose of the decision-making process in any defence and security system is to develop and implement polices. In the next few chapters I will cover some of the areas that require policy development and implementation.

Nothing is more fundamental to the development of a national security policy than accurate information and assessment, particularly as regards the intentions and likely actions of foreign states and other actors. Indeed, there is probably no single capability more valuable to a state than the skill of predicting the likely responses of other states to a given course of action. Most wars in history have been the result of miscalculations in this area. A classic example is the rather naive Iraqi assumption in 1990 that Western support given during the Iran-Iraq war would continue once that war was over. This inevitably brings us to the issue of intelligence.

Logically, this chapter should largely be confined to defence intelligence issues and how defence policy and planning make use of intelligence. This was, indeed, the original intention. However, so much sheer nonsense has been written about intelligence that it is necessary to go back to first principles before moving on to the larger issues. Since the orientation of this book is towards defence, I have structured the discussion towards intelligence about the outside world. In a democracy it is unusual and probably unacceptable for the military to be involved in domestic intelligence collection and analysis, and a military counter-intelligence organisation is probably not very effective in any case.

Intelligence is nothing more than a subset of information. Indeed, many languages use the same word for both. Governments need information as cars need

petrol if they are to react to events and attempt to determine what could happen in the future. Some of this information will be available from open sources, some from the normal relations between governments, some from privileged relations between specific governments, some from external sources, and so forth. But there is usually an irreducible minimum of information that cannot be acquired in this way and will have to be acquired by covert means if considered important enough. Thus, we can say that –

> Intelligence is the process of acquiring and making use of information from an entity (not necessarily a state) that does not want you to have that information and which does not realise that you have acquired it.

Two logical consequences flow from this definition, both very important. First, intelligence is basically nothing more than information collected in a covert fashion and is inherently no more or less reliable than information found in open sources. National security policy planners have to make use of intelligence without giving it a status it does not deserve. As the *Butler Report* noted sagely –

> Intelligence merely provides techniques for improving the basis of knowledge. As with other techniques, it can be a dangerous tool if its limitations are not recognised by those who seek to use it.[65]

Secondly, intelligence should only be collected when it is both important and relevant, and adds significantly to what is already known. This qualification derives basically from the fact that, by its nature, intelligence tends to be difficult and expensive to collect and can seldom be collected without political risk of some kind. This risk may be of the traditional kind (a human intelligence source exposed), but it can also be of a subtler nature. Intelligence is a game that everybody plays, but everyone denies; it is a form of organised collective hypocrisy. I spy on you and you spy on me, but we each pretend not to. If it becomes known that I have been monitoring your communications as we both prepare for a goodwill summit you may have no political alternative but to cancel the summit, even if the leak simply confirms what you had already assumed – that I was spying on you.

Clearly, therefore, intelligence is the ultimate national security policy subject, where government-level coordination is required, both for reasons of targeting and for control. The targeting of intelligence services has to reflect strategic information priorities at national level, that is to say the kind of information that

the government as a whole requires. Thus, whatever the defence ministry may feel, the military forces of a neighbour may not be the most important target. Indeed, they may not be very important at all in comparison to its plans, for example, to join a free-trade bloc or to send its leaders on a politically important visit. There is thus a need for a system of central coordination of targeting and a way of de-conflicting competing priorities, and this has to be done by agreement and negotiation between departments.

There is, understandably, a certain political queasiness about acknowledging these things too openly. Nations do not like talking about intelligence issues and there remains, at least at the rhetorical level, the idea that 'gentlemen do not read each other's mail', or at least cannot be seen to be doing so.[66] This leads to public presentations of intelligence capabilities that can be actively misleading, and which often make use of discredited threatist paradigms.

I will take the case of South Africa, not to criticise that country, but because it is one of the few non-Western states to have published useful material on the subject. Very soon after the 1994 transition, the new government published a White Paper that defined intelligence as follows:

> The product resulting from the collection, evaluation, analysis, integration and interpretation of all available information, supportive of the policy and decision-making processes pertaining to the national goals of stability, security and development. Modern intelligence can thus be described as "organised policy related information", including secret information.[67]

The problem with this approach, which is also found widely elsewhere, is that with the removal of the word 'secret' it could equally well describe the activities of a research NGO hoping to influence government policy. But there is of course a fundamental difference and whatever the political difficulties involved, some honesty about the centrality of covert methods of collection is healthy. Concentration on the purely analytical side – important as that is – gives a misleading picture of the sensitivities of the subject. Your immediate neighbour will protest if it becomes clear that you have been reading his communications, rather than because you have been making use of them in analytical exercises.

The same squeamishness is visible in public descriptions of the purposes of intelligence and their targets. Thus, an act promulgated by South Africa in the same year as the White Paper was issued, defines 'foreign intelligence' as intelligence on –

> any external threat or potential threat to the national interests of the
> Republic and its people, and intelligence, regarding opportunities relevant
> to the protection and promotion of such national interests …[68]

Here, we are back in the world of threatism. The problem, of course is that attempts to use intelligence assets against threats, let alone 'potential threats', are fraught with difficulties and are ultimately almost entirely subjective. If you are on very good terms with your larger neighbour and a long-standing border dispute has been relegated to being a minor irritant, should you make that neighbour a major target in case one day it wants the disputed territory back? Supposing a small but vocal nationalist party is formed demanding return of the territory? Does this mean there is a potential threat? And anyway, how potential does potential have to be?

Threatism is even more dangerous in a domestic context. Clearly, in a democracy, legitimate political opposition cannot be construed as a threat. But supposing a government is involved in an unpopular regional war. There have been demonstrations and some have turned violent. Are these violent demonstrators a threat? What about their friends and relatives? What about a media critical of the war? What about people who at the moment support the war, but later might not do so? What about people with relatives in the country being fought with? Once you start looking for potential threats there is in theory no limit to where you can end up.

On the other hand, a task-based approach to intelligence ('what is it that we really need to know that we don't know already and can't find out any other way?') produces simple answers to the questions above. In the first case, all that is needed is to keep a gentle eye on the activities of nationalist groups across the border. In the second, it is necessary to look for hard evidence of crimes being committed or being planned.

Part of the problem lies in the assumption that the intelligence services will be regarded with fear and suspicion by the population, and that their work therefore needs to be described as being altruistic in nature and essential to protecting that same population. Now obviously there can be cases where this is so, but even in authoritarian states people seldom have any direct contact with the intelligence services unless they oppose the regime or, more usually, are its informers. In a democracy, the intelligence services normally have a mysterious, even glamorous allure, which carries its own dangers. But some would go further, arguing that the powers of intelligence organisations enable them to –

> Infringe civil liberties, interfere in lawful political activities and favour or prejudice a political party or leader, thereby compromising the integrity of the democratic process. They can intimidate the opponents of government, create a climate of fear and fabricate or manipulate intelligence in order to influence government decision-making and public opinion. They are also able to abuse intelligence funds and methods for personal gain and to promote private commercial interests.

And that –

> (g)iven these dangers, democracies are confronted by the challenge of constructing rules, controls and other safeguards that protect rights and freedoms and prevent misconduct by the intelligence services, but do not restrict the services to such an extent that they are unable to fulfil their responsibilities.[69]

We now, once again, evoke the 'Theory of Dangers', the idea that intelligence services will, unless carefully controlled, start misbehaving. But experience suggests that intelligence services very rarely act in an undemocratic manner on their own initiative. Indeed, they seldom act collectively at all. The extreme compartmentalisation and secrecy required by an intelligence organisation means that it is quite normal not to know anything at all about what the person in the next office does. This makes conspiracies difficult.

It is of course also true that the kind of things mentioned above do happen on occasion. Indeed, they happened, or were alleged to have happened, in South Africa under the apartheid regime. But occurrences in the past are not in themselves an adequate basis for policymaking for the future. It is also important to distinguish between allegations of personal misconduct and allegations of institutional misbehaviour. The first is not unique to intelligence services and needs to be dealt with by the same methods as misconduct is treated elsewhere in the public sector.

As the same report subsequently acknowledges, intelligence organisations very rarely interfere in the political process on their own initiative. Rather, 'the intelligence crises that have rocked various countries over the past two decades have frequently been a consequence of mischief, manipulation or outright illegality by politicians at the highest level of the state'.[70] This was certainly the case in South Africa, but is true elsewhere as well. It leads to the paradoxical but

interesting conclusion that 'political control' is actually more of a problem than a solution, and that it is the politicians who in fact need to be controlled, not the intelligence agencies.

There are two qualifications to this analysis. First, intelligence agencies under military control may act in support of the political objectives of military commanders. This appears to have been the case with the Inter Services Intelligence organisation of the Pakistan Armed Forces, which is widely believed to have attempted to manipulate elections to produce victories for certain candidates.[71] But this is an unusual case and in any event the problem, assuming the reports are correct, lies with the military and its relations with the civil power, not with the intelligence community itself. The second qualification is that these sorts of activities in Pakistan, like those of the Directorate of Military Intelligence in apartheid South Africa, were not really intelligence at all, but covert action techniques, which I will briefly discuss in a moment.

'Control', in the coercive sense of the term, is thus not really the issue and is in any case probably impossible in practice. Erecting more and more complex legal frameworks is pointless and can even be counterproductive. Most intelligence problems other than those which arise from political interference occur not because of a lack of control, but a lack of direction, i.e. the intelligence services are not told what they are supposed to do. Or, as in the South African case, their formal mandate bears little relationship to the work the government expected them to perform.

In other words, the intelligence services have to be firmly directed and tasked in order for them to deliver that which policy-making departments want, rather than collecting what is easy or is of interest to them. This, rather than suspicious 'control', is what is wanted in the main. Nonetheless, as indicated, 'control' by central government is required in two senses. First, intelligence organisations are far more likely than most other institutions to get government into trouble, and for this reason clear rules have to be laid down about what can and cannot be done, and when or when not approval has to be sought. It is seldom possible to conduct intelligence gathering against external targets without breaking the law somewhere, and this needs to be clearly articulated when operations are being approved. Secondly, there needs to be central direction about who does what, who is allowed to collect which intelligence and so on to stop needless competition and expensive duplication. In particular, there needs to be a common understanding about areas of operation, i.e. which organisations should work locally and which overseas.

In practice, it is normal to have laws that deal with these issues in a coherent fashion, setting out, for example, the responsibilities and mandates of various intelligence organisations. This can be helpful, not least in reducing duplication and making it more difficult for the political leadership to abuse the intelligence services for its own ends. But as with all laws, the real issue is not what they determine, but whether they are obeyed. A political culture in which politicians have always used the intelligence services to harass their political opponents will not change overnight just because a new law says they should not.

So far, this chapter has concentrated on the collection of intelligence since it is the most difficult and the most frequently misunderstood area of operations. But information of any nature is worthless unless it is put to use. If one's neighbour is considering a high-profile reconciliation with a previous enemy, then it is important to have as much relevant information as possible, properly organised and evaluated, so that sensible decisions can be taken. Apart from the inherent difficulty gathering the material, the main obstacle to the right conclusions being drawn from the information is very often rivalry between different analytical organisations. The solution lies in a mix of two principles. First, intelligence information should be circulated for analysis as widely as possible so that it can be commented upon by a range of experts. Secondly, competing analyses should be avoided by insisting on the provision of a single joint assessment that is binding on all. This may be obtained by discussion and compromise, or by appointing a single central producer of analysis. The objective, in security policy terms, is that intelligence information should take its place seamlessly with other types of information so that decision-makers can have a proper picture.

The argument can be summarised by defining three stages of the intelligence process, as follows:

- *Intelligence collection.* As indicated above, this is the raison d'être of intelligence organisations, and the best known and understood function. If no intelligence is collected, there can be no outcome. In the collection process we include information made available by friends and allies.
- *Intelligence analysis.* This is the process of making sense of what one has learnt, both in its immediate context and more broadly in terms of what else one knows about the subject.
- *Intelligence exploitation.* This is the process of getting intelligence into the hands of those who can make practical use of it in the development and implementation of defence and security policy.

THE KIND OF QUESTIONS INTELLIGENCE SHOULD ADDRESS

All states have a legitimate curiosity about each other. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, one's own country is affected profoundly by what happens elsewhere on the globe, both next door and further away. To conduct a sensible foreign policy, a defence policy and even a trade and economic policy, one needs to know the answers to such questions as the following, amongst many others:

- How stable is the government of my neighbour?
- Will the regional superpower raise interest rates or devalue its currency?
- Is it true that my neighbour is buying new jet fighters?
- Are foreign troops going to exercise in the region?
- Will a major multi-national company be investing in my country or another?

As already noted, a vast range of information is available to governments without it having to be collected through intelligence. However, it is most unlikely that a state will tell another government everything the latter might wish to know. All states have secrets, and even the most open ones are unlikely to tell you that, for example, the position of minister X has been weakened by the latest devaluation, or that general Y is considered dangerously activist and will therefore probably not be made CHOD after all. Many states also have onerous secrecy laws, making the discovery of even routine information difficult.

Moreover, states are increasingly interested in the activities of non-state actors, ranging from multinational corporations to organised crime, arms traffickers and warlords. Such bodies are seldom transparent about their activities, or even about their existence, and covert methods may be the only way of finding out what the government needs to know. Thus, mafias and organised crime networks that practice political violence, may be based on clan and village structures, may speak obscure languages and may be impossible to penetrate by ordinary means. It is these types of organisations intelligence services have to direct their activities at as well.

MEANS OF COLLECTING INTELLIGENCE

There are two broad tendencies in the collection of intelligence, which I will call the 'active' and the 'passive'.[72] The first involves a conscious decision to take an

active role in the gathering of intelligence. Methods may embrace the cultivation of agents, surveillance, bribery, blackmail and burglary. In general, this method involves people in some form. The passive variety includes the use of technology in a covert fashion, such as communications interception, illegal over-flights or satellite reconnaissance.

I have divided intelligence collection in this way because the first category involves political risk and the second generally does not. The cultivation of agents, forcible entry and intelligence overflights all have the potential to go wrong, and have indeed often done so. In political terms, such actions would also be regarded as unfriendly acts by the recipient power, in a manner that passive electronic surveillance, say, would not. This political dimension makes it especially important that the intelligence services of a state are under firm political direction and that the government as a whole is able to make sensible judgements about whether the potential for damage outweighs the potential benefit of the information obtained.

What is clear is that intelligence gathering is complex, expensive and often politically risky. It may be that all one reasonably needs to know about a target is readily available and it would therefore make more sense to direct effort at more difficult targets elsewhere. Intelligence collection is never an activity to undertake for its own sake, even though this often happens.

TARGETING

Obviously, there needs to be discipline involved in the selection of intelligence targets. Collecting intelligence just because it is easy to obtain is pointless. Intelligence agencies themselves are also seldom the best people to decide on priorities. Too often, their priorities will reflect what is easily available, or what is of interest to the agencies themselves. To be effective, the intelligence community of any state will need guidance on the following issues:

- The most important targets.
- The permissible methods to be employed.
- The questions to be referred for political approval.

Here, we need to remember once again that intelligence should only be collected if there is a chance that it will make a real contribution to policy. This does not exclude the need to make available information that has come in unexpectedly

and that is clearly important, even if the subject is not a major priority at the time. The information may genuinely be about a new crisis or a sudden and unexpected development, although in a properly-run system such information should, of course, not come as a total surprise.

Any strategy for providing the kind of guidance listed above will need to be agreed by government as a whole. The office of the head of state or government, and the foreign and defence ministries need to be involved in particular, but so also will the trade and finance ministries. The questions that will be put to intelligence services will fundamentally be those that interest government as a whole, and they will of course change over time. Intelligence agencies should, in effect, supply intelligence to government departments on order, under circumstances where the information cannot be obtained any other way. No collection work should be carried out that does not have an agreed justification somewhere, although information that comes to hand spontaneously need not, of course, be ignored.[73]

MAKING SENSE

The key test of intelligence is whether it is useful in the process of making and implementing policy. To become so, it needs to be interpreted in a way that makes it useful. Because intelligence is only information, it is subject to all the uncertainties of information and may not be more reliable than a rumour overheard in a bar. History suggests that intelligence sources work for all kinds of reasons, including the desire to influence history, to feel important, to exact revenge and to have lots of money. Even when there is no conscious attempt to mislead, an intelligence report may amount, at the end of the day, to no more than an account of how source A told officer B that general C recounted a conversation he had had with minister D about policy towards country E.

A user of intelligence in a defence ministry or elsewhere needs some method of interpreting and assessing what has been provided in order for it to have use. This must be the case both in the immediate context of the report and on a wider basis For example, if, as an official in the finance ministry, I were handed a report that says that a large neighbour, with whom our economy is linked directly, is intending to allow its currency to fall heavily, I would be foolish to react too quickly. Not only will I have my own views on the report's credibility, based on what I know, but I will also expect some analysis to have been done by the originator. What kind of source is this and how reliable is it? Does it square with previous reports from the same source? How well placed is the person to know? And so on.

This is particularly important because of what I call the Red Folder Effect. It seems to be pretty universal for intelligence information to be passed around in strikingly-coloured files, often with some ceremony and usually with important-looking but cryptic words printed on the cover. If these markings mean anything, they refer to the sensitivity of the methods of collection, not the reliability of the information. But the ceremony and secrecy surrounding the distribution of intelligence can result in the information, rather than its origin, impressing the reader most.

This brings me to the heart of the intelligence analysis process. If intelligence is to be useful, then it must not only be put in context piece by piece, but also in terms of what else is known. This is what we can call an intelligence assessment, which is an authoritative statement on an issue, which makes use of but is not limited to the intelligence material. It may be very general, such as the political stability of a state, or very particular, e.g. who will be the next army commander of a neighbouring country, or very technical and detailed, namely the output of another nation's armaments industry. It may also be very topical – what are the chances of a coup next week? This assessment is offered for the use of the government as a whole to assist the decision-making process. I noted earlier the need to ensure that tasking is done in such a manner that the customer gets what he wants. The same is obviously true of assessments, which should only be requested because there is an information gap somewhere. There may also be recurrent tasks, often technical in nature, which need to be updated continually, such as the following:

- The order of battle and training standards of neighbouring countries.
- Exercises conducted by states in the region.
- Arms deliveries to the region.

I suggested earlier that it is bad practice to have competing streams of political advice going to ministers. The same is true for intelligence. There should be only one agreed assessment per topic, subscribed to by all. Intelligence assessments should therefore not be the sole product of a single agency.

An agency that produces an intelligence assessment of its own frequently does so in a 'black-box' fashion, by which I mean that there is no information on the kind of intelligence used and how much is based on intelligence and how much on other sources. An agency can, indeed, get an entirely unreasonable reputation for brilliance just be re-packaging current wisdom in a bright, shiny cover and calling it 'Secret'. The situation becomes even worse when more than one

competing agency is involved, since each agency will make similar claims and decision-makers will have to choose between them.

The process of producing a single assessment is not easy and requires some administrative machinery. Many countries have found it useful to set up a committee, perhaps in the president's or prime minister's office, charged with producing agreed assessments. Committee members include not only representatives from various intelligence agencies, but also representatives from the user departments. It is generally helpful if the individuals concerned are seconded by their departments for relatively short periods of time. Here, the usual cautions against drafts produced by committees have to be remembered, in particular that there is always the tendency by a committee to use cautious compromising language. It is often said with justification that committee assessments can be too vague to be of use. The following example demonstrates this:

> There is no unambiguous evidence of the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. However, it would be wrong to rule out the possibility altogether.

In this statement the problem is not with the system, but with the fragmentary and conflicting nature of the evidence and the assumption that lack of evidence can itself be significant. 'We don't know' is a reasonable translation of the above, and may well reflect the reality of the situation. It nevertheless remains true that any peer review process, where intelligence experts have to submit evidence and conclusions for comment by others, is likely to produce a better result than the work of a single authority, no matter how skilled.

WHY INTELLIGENCE IS NOT ALWAYS BELIEVED

Although history is full of so-called 'great intelligence failures', it usually turns out that the failure lies with the analytical process rather than with a lack of information. The main failing has been, quite simply, that those doing the analysis, or those receiving it, have been so convinced that they know what the truth is that they have accepted or rejected intelligence according to their preconceptions. This is a typical example of what is called *cognitive dissonance*.

There is a natural tendency for intelligence organisations to tailor their reports to what they believe the customer wants to hear. This was spectacularly the case in the Vietnam War, when battalions of analysts, even at the often sceptical

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), produced estimates for an impending victory during much of the late 1960s.[74] This also appears to have been the case before the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The danger here is that a subtle process of intellectual corruption may begin. Agencies unconsciously start to select or shade information and analysis to fit what the political leadership expects. No one likes to be unpopular or disregarded and, given that most intelligence is never passed on and most of what is passed on is never sent to customers, selection of the small percentage of information that is judged to be useful and is in fact disseminated is critical. It is easy to fall into a subconscious process of removing potentially awkward material.

In fairness, it must be added that there are cases where a forecast that eventually proves to be accurate could not have been justified analytically at the time because of a lack of hard evidence. For example, any respectable process of analysis should have concluded by about 1987 that something fundamental had changed in the Soviet Union and that the Cold War was in its terminal stages. The fall of the Soviet Union was unpredictable precisely because it came about as the result of unforeseen decisions by a small number of individuals. By 1989 one could perhaps have said that President Gorbachev had started a process he could no longer control, but it was impossible to say how it would turn out.

There are also cases where factual intelligence turns out to be correct even though it is hard to believe at the time. An example is reports in July 1995 of the massacre of Bosnian Muslim soldiers and others at various sites north of the town of Srebrenica, whence they had fled after failing to defend the town from the numerically-weaker Bosnian Serb attackers. The reports were hard to believe as nothing remotely similar had happened during previous fighting in Bosnia. Prisoner exchanges, from which the Bosnian Serbs benefited most, were normal. Indeed, evidence introduced in The Hague during the trial of General Radislav Krstic, the commander of the operation, included voice intercepts of him reminding his subordinate commanders that the Muslim men were to be treated as prisoners of war. Why he was overruled by his commander, General Ratko Mladic, remains a mystery to this day.

Even when the facts are not in dispute, there can be disagreement about what they mean. Such was the Western fear of communist penetration of Africa in the 1960s and 1970s that links between various African liberation movements and the Soviet Union and China were assumed to mean that such movements were controlled and directed by Moscow and Peking. In fact, it was the West itself, through its opposition to such movements, which brought about this unlikely

relationship. As British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is alleged to have said in the 1980s: 'Don't confuse me with facts, I know what I think.'

DISSEMINATION

Having reviewed the collection and analysis of intelligence material, let us briefly look at its exploitation. I have insisted all along that intelligence is pointless if it is not useful. There is probably no greater challenge than that of taking intelligence assessments and turning them into useful support to policy. The essential, if unglamorous, need is for good liaison and a degree of mutual respect. Relations between intelligence agencies and those with whom they work abroad are often strained: professional diplomats often regard intelligence officers as dangerous cowboys; sometimes, it has to be said, with justification.

Government will generally accept specialist advice if it is couched in a form that is useful and comprehensible. This applies to intelligence advice just as much as it applies to advice from scientists or accountants. Intelligence has to be disseminated promptly, it has to be combined with other information in the form of assessments, and it has to be offered as part of the debate rather than the whole truth. Most government systems greatly limit the distribution of intelligence material and while this is no doubt necessary for security reasons, it does make it more difficult to get maximum value from such material. In practice, however, the sensitivity surrounding intelligence information is, as we have seen, much more a question of the protection of sources and techniques than of the information itself, which may be incomplete or even wrong. There is, in fact, everything to be gained by widespread dissemination of the essence of intelligence material.

That said, there needs to be a clearly understood mechanism for disseminating intelligence that neither under or overvalues it. Readers of such material have to understand its limitations, while agencies must avoid selective or competitive dissemination of intelligence to influence policy-makers. A controlled and centralised process of intelligence evaluation and dissemination is essential if the material is to be genuinely useful.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF DEFENCE

It may seem strange that I have dealt with so many other issues before coming to defence and the involvement of the military in intelligence. After all, the words 'military' and 'intelligence' are directly linked, are they not?

In fact, they are not. The association is largely a historical one, and partly accidental. For much of history, armies on campaign have collected intelligence about each other's dispositions and whereabouts. As armies became more organised and nation-states more common, it became ever more important to collect information, not only about the military power of a potential adversary, but about the terrain that might have to be traversed and the kind of weapons that might have to be faced. As usual, the Prussians were there first with their foreign armies' sections in the general staff. Soon, as warfare became more complicated, there was interest in dockyards and factories, in mobilisation plans and new equipment under development. And there was a growing, parallel need to know more about the political intentions of other states.

Although much of this intelligence gathering was done by the military in former days, they were always amateurs. The careful cultivation of weak individuals, who might in time spill secrets, is not a skill one necessarily expects the military to have. While some nations, such as the French, still entrust much of their intelligence-gathering to the military, it is now more commonly undertaken by civilian organisations, for example the CIA or the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). Indeed, there is a danger, borne out by historical examples, that the military, because of its background and ethos, will tend to take a too robust approach to the gathering of intelligence, and may gravely embarrass the government later. Moreover, the active involvement of the military tends to bias intelligence targeting too much in a specific direction. In practice, a nation's main concerns about other countries may not be of a military nature at all. The hierarchical briefing structure of the military has also not been very helpful in guarding secrets, nor is the military always politically aware enough to know how best to deploy the information.

With these caveats, then, what should the role of the military in intelligence be? First, we need to bear in mind the existence of defence intelligence as a separate function. Scientists, engineers, economists and so forth working for the ministry of defence will be involved in the production of intelligence analyses. In countries where these posts are held by military officers, these officers will, of necessity, be heavily involved in areas of study that are related to defence, but are not necessarily of a military nature. Beyond this, there are three broad areas where military expertise, in the narrow sense, can often be extremely useful, namely:

- The military will often operate assets for the collection of intelligence by technical means, since many of the targets of this kind of intelligence-gathering will be of military interest in any case.

- Defence attachés in different countries are invaluable sources of information on defence and military affairs. Their behaviour and their employment in intelligence-gathering will vary in accordance with the political relations between the countries concerned, but everything they report will add to the general picture.
- The military will often be of great value in intelligence analysis. They are the best people, for example, to analyse the comings and goings of senior officers in other countries. They will produce analyses of orders of battle and training patterns. But they need not be involved in every area of defence. For example, if a large neighbour is building a secret factory, possibly to produce missiles under licence, military experts will try to interpret information about what may be in production. But if information can be obtained from inside the factory, civilian scientists and engineers will be the people to comment on such matters because of the manufacturing process, the type and provenance of the machine tools, etc.

It is worth adding that the defence sector is itself a prime target for hostile intelligence activities, including those of notional friends and allies, and needs to take steps to protect itself and its information. It is normal, therefore, to have small specialist security and intelligence sections within the defence sector. Often, their main task is to evaluate the threats and risks to defence personnel, to installations and to national information. Since this is essentially a specialist function, it is normally coordinated by a civilian counter-intelligence organisation working under the auspices of the interior ministry.

THE POLITICS OF INTELLIGENCE

This chapter would be incomplete without some mention of the politics of the collection and use of intelligence. Curiously, intelligence is a subject on which everyone has an opinion and claims to be an expert, in spite of the fact that only a tiny proportion of the population has first or even second-hand experience of it. This combination of ignorance and certainty, fuelled by a media obsessed with scandal and revelation, creates a number of political difficulties. In general, the larger and more powerful one's intelligence apparatus, the greater are these kinds of political problems. There are several reasons for this.

To begin with, the popular, romantic understanding of intelligence organisations attributes to them almost God-like powers of omniscience and understanding. It is commonly assumed that intelligence agencies know everything and understand everything, and should therefore never be taken by surprise. When a genuinely

unexpected development occurs, and a government is indeed taken by surprise, the immediate thought is that there has been an 'intelligence failure' and that those responsible should be punished. It will already be clear that the situation is much more complicated than this. Information may not have been available, or if it was, it might have been incomplete, and could in any case have been interpreted in different ways. The media and other actors outside government are frequently the cause of their own disappointment: in treating intelligence agencies rather like Father Christmas, they are naturally upset when the requested presents fail to arrive.

A related problem is that, precisely because of the often fragmentary nature of intelligence, it is frequently hard to draw firm conclusions from it. Governments have a responsibility to act on the best information and not to act until they are sure they know what they are doing. This is the real world, after all, in which the consequences of incorrect decisions can be very serious. The level of information available to even a medium-sized government today is so greatly in excess of anything publicly available that it is hardly surprising if a government comes to a different conclusion than the media. Moreover, capable governments have trained analysts whose job it is to weigh evidence and produce authoritative conclusions – something that few media organisations and NGOs can do, even should they wish to do so.

And, of course, the professional motivations are not the same. The media and NGOs have motives that are broadly commercial. In addition, they are not held responsible if what they say turns out to be wrong. Typically, a media report at home of a massacre at a certain village in a country far away, based on an unverified report by an NGO, will be treated as fact. One's own government may then be criticised for inaction if it does not 'do something' instantly. Later on it may well become clear that there was no such massacre and perhaps no such village either, but by then public attention will have moved on. It is true, of course, that individual journalists can be right and that governments can be wrong. It is also true that experts writing for NGOs can produce reports of great value. But penalties for media failures are effectively non-existent and this encourages a culture of hyperbole and fake certainty about incidents that are at best complex and at worst may never have happened.

COVERT ACTION AND SPECIAL FORCES

Finally, something needs to be said about covert action and the use of special forces. Covert action is often confused with intelligence, partly because in some

countries the tasks are carried out by the same organisation. In any security sector there is generally an irreducible overlap in that the gathering of sensitive tactical intelligence in difficult and dangerous situations is often carried out by special forces, who have the skills to do it safely and without being detected. By definition also, the operations are unlikely to be announced, and can thus be considered as covert operations.

Covert operations are not necessarily carried out by the military. For example, covert surveillance of organised crime syndicates is normally done by the police. But covert operations outside the country or in situations of danger and difficulty are most likely to be carried out by the military, In spite of what is often assumed by the media, the point of covert operations is precisely that they should be secret – in principle they should leave no trace behind once completed.

In general, we can say that both covert and special operations – the difference is not worth arguing about here – are unconventional security operations carried out discreetly by small groups and intended to have an effect out of all proportion to the forces involved. Normally, to be effective, they require a high level of training and preparation, the use of operatives who are intelligent and resourceful, and a good level of surprise. These skills and a high level of preparedness are probably more important than the exact uniform the participants wear, or the type of force used. If we take hostage rescue as an example, the French and Germans, who have heavily-armed paramilitary forces, use specially trained members of these forces for such missions. The British, with no similar tradition, have tended to use specially-trained military forces.

In either case, the political management of such operations is complex and difficult. In general, operations of this kind are approved at the highest political level. Partly this is because they often attract a great deal of attention – hostage rescue is a good example – and any mistake will be exploited mercilessly by critics. Partly also it is because such operations are inherently difficult and the possibility of failure is always present. This has potentially grave consequences, as in the case of the ill-fated US mission to rescue hostages in Iran in 1979. Even when the planning is properly conducted and the operation is successful on its own terms, there may still be major political damage, as happened with the French destruction of the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior* in 1985. This suggests that the political leadership should be very careful about demanding covert and special operations, and should be realistic about what can be accomplished. As special-forces personnel will be the first to tell you, they are not supermen and cannot be expected to do everything.

It is true that, the larger the role played by the military in covert intelligence-gathering, the greater the tendency is for these same forces to take on covert action roles. In fact, it is probably better to keep these two activities functionally separate, even if there are obvious cases where intelligence organisations and covert and special forces work in cooperation.

It is perhaps wise for governments to think carefully before developing special-force capabilities. One reason is that, as with every new capability, its very existence creates pressure to use it, and not always in appropriate situations. Another is the fact that the very people who tend to apply for service in such units, namely experienced and intelligent NCOs and officers, are likely to be the backbone of the regular forces. This could result in regular forces being starved of talent for the sake of creating a unit that is politically attractive, but for which there may not actually be much of a role. It has been argued, for example, that the profusion of special and elite units in the British armed forces during the Second World War is one explanation for the generally poor performance of line infantry units. Too many natural leaders were diverted to glamorous units, whose influence on the outcome of the war was, in the event, marginal.

Intelligence is a difficult area for defence planners, as for others, although perhaps not as difficult as outsiders tend to think. Intelligence is a whole-of-government issue and its purpose is to give government the information it needs to make the best decisions. Defence is a customer of the intelligence services and a contributor to the analytical process, but does not usually have a predominant role. The close association of defence and the military with intelligence is more of a historical accident than anything else, and is no longer really relevant. Indeed, too much reliance on the military, especially for intelligence-gathering, can be dangerous.

Military operations

After all the strategy and preparation, after all the theory and analysis, comes the moment when the military has to be deployed on operations. A military that cannot perform well, or a system of command and control that does not function properly, is a waste of money and effort, no matter how neatly it may demonstrate civilian control, or what other theoretical virtues it might possess. In this chapter I look at military operations of all types and address two questions in particular, namely:

- What roles should be played by the military, the political leadership and other actors.
- Whether the military on operations is merely the blind instrument of the politicians.

PROPER ROLES

It is not difficult to list what are, at least in theory, the roles of the different actors in military operations, whether these operations are peacekeeping deployments or actual war situations.

- At the strategic level, the political leadership should set the overall goals for military operations in political terms. In doing so, they will of course need to consider what is practicable, which means that they should call on the advice of the military and civilian officials.

- At the operational level, the political objectives have to be translated into military ones. The operational commander has to draw up a campaign plan that takes political realities and constraints into account. He will need the advice of civilian and military experts in this regard.
- At the tactical level, the force commander will take the military objectives and devise a plan to achieve them, but with due regard for the constraints that have been placed upon him.

Assuming that all goes to plan, the military on the ground will deliver an outcome that will meet the operational objective. This in turn should mean that the political objective has been met. Although it is not always easy to stick to this paradigm in practice, it is important to bear it in mind as the ideal to which military operations of any kind should aspire.

SEPARATION AND DIFFERENTIATION

In feudal times in most civilisations the political and military leaderships were closely linked. In fact, they usually resided in the same person, with the ruler leading his forces into battle. If the battle was lost he might be killed, wounded or captured in the same manner as any retainer. Aristocrats were almost always military leaders, either in their own right or as royal advisers, and there was therefore little distinction between political and military issues. The Samurai of Japan, for example, were both military commanders and the emperor's political advisers. Similarly, warfare in the African tradition was the business of all adult males. There was no real distinction between soldiers and civilians until colonial powers introduced the idea.

The increasing complexity and specialisation of war began to undermine this unity. It began in the West, but did not happen everywhere at the same speed since it was linked more than anything to the spread of new military technologies. But as mass armies with modern weapons became the norm in many parts of the world from the 19th century onwards, military commanders, even if they happened to dabble in politics, started to become a separate caste, distinguished by professional knowledge and training.

In a democratic society, or even one in which public opinion is represented indirectly, political leaders can only really survive by doing popular things. Victories in war will generally boost a leader's popularity, but easy victories are not always achievable. It tends to be the political leadership, rather than the

military one that pays the price of an unsuccessful military operation, and this leads politicians to demand undertakings from military commanders that they cannot necessarily provide. It could also result in direct political interference in the purely military aspects of an operation. This could even extend to the actual conduct of the operation. Political leadership could, for example, interfere by vetoing operations that might involve heavy casualties.

DISTANCE AND CONTROL

The development of technology has complicated the relationship between policy and military factors in a campaign in the following ways:

- It produced massive increases in the size and sophistication of forces, the distance over which they could be deployed and the complexity of the operations they could conduct.
- It also made it possible for information about military operations to be transmitted rapidly throughout in the world.

The development of modern armies resulted in military operations beginning to cover such large areas in time and space that centralised control became impossible. Even if political leaderships wanted to be with 'the army' in the 19th and early 20th centuries they would in practice be hundreds of kilometres distant from some of the army's elements and have no chance of communicating with them. The technology of communication lagged far behind the technology of mobilisation and deployment, and in practice there was little that the political leadership could do but wave the troops goodbye and hope for the best. In the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, for example, it is unlikely that anyone in Tokyo, still less anyone in St Petersburg, had any idea of what was going on at the front. However, from the First World War onwards it became steadily easier for national leaderships to communicate with their commanders. This imposed a new layer of complexity on military operations since it required the military leadership in the field to constantly justify and explain its actions to anxious political leaders back home.

One of the most important reasons for this political nervousness was the greatly increased quantity of information available to the ordinary citizen back home. Growing literacy and the spread of democratic practices in the 19th century gave public opinion an important new voice in politics. This was particularly

awkward at a time when the carnage on the battlefields at a time when the technology of killing had massively outstripped the technology of healing must have been particularly awful. Thus, reports of the slaughter on the battlefields of Lombardy in 1859, rather than the slaughter itself, were largely responsible for the establishment of the International Red Cross in 1864. The technology of news distribution continued to grow, often in advance of the capability of governments to receive and process information themselves. In recent times, this has often led to a primacy of political over policy factors in the direction of a war by national leaderships.

Public opinion in many nations, whilst it may be ready and even eager to contemplate death and destruction in the abstract, is often unprepared for the reality. Such realities may be brought home by heavy troop losses, with the names of the dead being published in the newspapers, or even by the realisation that the enemy, no matter how professionally it is vilified, consists of ordinary people like themselves. Media overage of wars and atrocities is often episodic and even random, with the availability of editorial material usually taking precedence over the importance of the event itself. The first televised massacre of a civil war, for example, will generally establish in the popular mind who are the heroes and villains, and it may be extremely difficult for a government to pursue a sensible policy thereafter. Moreover, few people enjoy seeing television footage of atrocities and the public's demand will too often be to 'do something' in the war zone that removes offending images from the television screen, even if the wisdom of a specific action is debatable and could result in a greater bloodbath.

REASONS FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS

Military operations tend to be undertaken for one of a fairly small number of reasons. Each of these implies a different relationship between the policy/political and military considerations. Some of the most common motivations for war are the following:

- Defence of national territory against attack.
- Support for wider economic and political interests.
- Protection of borders and economic assets.
- Internal security and counter-terrorism.
- Playing a part in regional and international operations.
- Improving the nation's international or regional profile.

The first of these does not, strictly speaking, amount to a motivation, since the only choice open to a country under attack is to surrender or to fight. But even here, political factors will tend to dominate. For example, the military may want to withdraw to a more defensible line, which would involve giving up the capital, but the government does not allow the military to do this.

As motivations for the use of military forces become more complex and have less to do with national survival, the political constraints on the use of force become greater. What makes sense militarily can easily sabotage the whole operation from a political point of view. In 1982, for example, the Argentinean government recognised that if its troops inflicted any casualties on the tiny British military contingent on the Falklands during the invasion, international, especially British, reaction might be strong enough to undermine the advantage gained. Similarly, the British decided not to mount an attack on the Argentinean mainland since, despite the considerable military advantage to be gained by, for example, destroying enemy aircraft on the ground, international support for the British cause, which was limited at best, could dissipate. In each case, short-term military gains had to be subordinated to long-term political advantage.

As the level of anticipated violence reduces, so the level of policy and political complexity frequently increases, even though this seems to be a contradiction. For example, all nations patrol and protect their air and maritime borders, but the forces that do so are under the strictest orders about the use of force. Even military aircraft that violate a country's airspace are likely to be shepherded away rather than being shot down, since everyone is aware of the violent and far-reaching repercussions the latter action would have.

As we have seen, there is also a long tradition of using the military for non-combatant, or at least non-lethal operations, such as disaster relief and low-level operations like internal security. Some nations also provide contingents for what have traditionally been called 'peacekeeping operations'. After the end of the Cold War the tendency was to call these actions 'operations other than war' (OOTWs), but these days they tend to be referred to as 'peace operations', or 'peace support operations'. The latter term especially is often preferred to 'peacekeeping operations', not least because of the recognition that there is seldom a peace to keep.

These operations often involve violence, or occur in violent situations, but the violence is generally sporadic and uncoordinated. Nations may join such operations for political rather than strategic policy reasons. For many countries they are important in that they demonstrate a continuing utility for their armed forces after the end of the Cold War. This is particularly the case for countries that have

overinvested in threat-related concepts. In addition, peace support operations are fashionable and generally uncontroversial, since they have a humanitarian gloss to them. A number of nations, notably in Asia, find peace operations a useful way of reminding others that they are regional or global actors, and it assists them to gain deployment experience beyond their borders.

They are nonetheless operations that are extremely difficult to carry off successfully and they pose particular problems of co-ordination between the military and political leaderships. The urge to take part is often stronger than the ability to provide the resources. Even quite sophisticated nations participating in such operations for the first time experience all sorts of unexpected logistical, doctrinal and command problems. The military objective is often unclear. It usually flows from the political need to 'do something'. A common scenario is that of a multi-national force being despatched into an environment where the various combatants have been persuaded, by threats, bribery or both, to stop fighting temporarily. In essence, the national contingent's task is to fulfil a political rather than a military objective. It may be to:

- Demonstrate that a nation is, or nations are responding to a crisis.
- Demonstrate that an international organisation is responding to the crisis.
- Respond to domestic or international pressure.
- Gain international attention and credibility.
- A mixture of the above.

In singling out selfish and political motives, I am not being cynical. Rather I want to stress the practical difficulties that arise when, as is common, nations deploy troops abroad for these kinds of reasons. In such situations the political objective as provided to the contingent commander is often as simple as ensuring that:

- Lots of good publicity is generated.
- No one gets hurt.

Sometimes, however, motives can genuinely be mixed. Deployments of Japanese forces on UN missions since the 1990s, for example, have certainly done no harm to that nation's ambition to have a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. But there are wider policy issues as well, such as showing the Japanese public and other nations that Japanese troops, in spite of their country's recent history, can perform a valuable international role.

OPERATIONS

The modern tendency to use military forces in a complex and very political situation, in operations that are not warlike in any real sense of the word, raises acute issues of CMR. All modern military commanders recognise that the political leadership will, for good reasons or bad, place restrictions on the plans they might make and the way they conduct an operation. In fact, intelligent military commanders have always realised that campaigns and victories mean very little in themselves. But the military, preoccupied as it is with technique, and with a practical and quantitative outlook, is occasionally inclined to overlook this fact. In reality, military victory may lead to political victory, but it just as possibly may not.

I have argued elsewhere that the process of converting military success into political benefit is complex and difficult, and is seldom accomplished in the way intended.[75] A fixation on the means of success, often found in the military or among those who are too influenced by it, can come at the expense of the intended end result. This happened to the Americans in Vietnam, where technique and the statistical measurement of battlefield success became ends in themselves and largely overtook the debate about the running of the war. It is no wonder that one US general described his army's military doctrine as 'more bombs, more shells, more napalm ... til the other side gives up'.[76] This is what is often called 'attrition warfare', which is seldom successful unless a smaller and weaker enemy tries to play the same game. Attrition warfare is the default mode in the military mindset, whereas politicians, interested in final results rather than transitory victories, and wanting them now rather than later, are more open to ideas of manoeuvre warfare, which emphasises the achievement of the objective, rather than the destruction of the enemy by firepower.

In modern military operations, attrition warfare is especially dangerous. Indeed, once an operation becomes a firepower contest, the objective will almost certainly not be met. In such conflicts, military defeat, even if it can be accomplished, is unlikely to cause the opposition to give up, since they will not usually see themselves fighting a military force, but a political battle. Military defeat or heavy casualties may be acceptable, even welcome, if they produce international sympathy.

Take a generic example. A UN multinational force is sent in to supervise elections and protect aid convoys in a country wracked by civil war. The side that was winning, but expects to lose the election, has accepted the UN force grudgingly,

while their opponents have welcomed the force. Each side hopes to exploit the presence of the UN for its own purposes. How should a responsible state plan and conduct a peace operation? The first thing to bear in mind is that perceptions of what the force is intended to do can be very different, both among the states agreeing to the mandate and those contributing the troops. There may be divided sympathies for the combatants and a variable degree of willingness to get involved and suffer casualties. The mandate, the outcome of a lot of bargaining and compromise, will reflect this. Domestically in some countries the enthusiasts for 'doing something' may have assumed, without reading the mandate in detail, that the force will be carrying out operations that it is not actually mandated to do. To avoid such a situation, it is very important that at the strategic level the government has a firm idea of what it wants to accomplish or help to accomplish. If this is not in place, reaction to unexpected events and to 'mission creep', the tendency for forces to imperceptibly become involved outside the original mandate, will be hesitant and confused.

At the operational level the most important requirement is for well thought-out rules of engagement (ROE). These should provide general guidance to the force as a whole about how it should conduct itself and under which circumstances force can be used. ROEs are unlikely to be drawn up by the military alone, since they are steeped in politics and will reflect many of the same hesitations and differences of view that will have emerged in discussions about the mandate. ROEs are essential because of the potential for disaster and misrepresentation when, for example, a wrong decision is broadcast around the world and sets off an international incident.

ROEs may at times not make much sense from a military perspective. For this reason military experts should, where possible, be involved in the drafting of the rules to guide civilians as to what is practical. A simple example is an ROE that sets out what is to be done if a force protecting an aid convoy comes under fire. This is part of the complex issue of what kind of escort force to send. If the concept is that the force should retire and return to base with the aid convoy if opposed by an armed group, then a few men in a jeep with orders not to open fire will be adequate. For a company of armoured vehicles to turn tail after a few shots could be politically disastrous. Alternatively, if a muscular ROE that allows the option of fighting through is adopted, then adequate and properly equipped forces must be made available to enable this rule to be followed.

In today's world, where the actions of a single soldier can be seen on the news that evening, a misstep can derail the whole operation. The commander of a

national contingent therefore needs to ensure that at the tactical level the NCOs have a good grasp of the limitations they are working under. Whilst they need to know what the mandate and the ROE say, the important thing is to ensure that they are told, in simple language they can commit to memory and recall under stress, exactly what they are to do. Nations with much experience in such operations have generally learned this lesson the hard way. Where, for example, an ROE allows the force to return fire if attacked, a commander could give each of its soldiers a card with something like the following written on it:

You may return fire if
- you come under armed attack and
- your life or that of a comrade is threatened and
- you can identify without doubt the source of the attack

You must
- fire only single, aimed shots
- cease firing once you have hit the target

You must not
- look for other targets
- fire if it will endanger bystanders.

It should, of course, be part of the professionalism of the soldiers concerned to be able to maintain discipline under fire and not shoot back unless authorised to do so. Indeed, the difference between trained troops and irregulars, however brave, is that the former can be ordered not to shoot back, even at risk to themselves, with the confidence that they will follow orders.

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND MILITARY OBEDIENCE

I have so far emphasised the primacy of the political objective and the importance of the military following the orders of politicians, even when such orders do not necessarily represent the best militarily course of action. For this reason, questions will inevitably arise whether there are any limits to obeying the orders.

There is no straight answer to this question, but if the matter is considered carefully it will be realised that the question is effectively answered by referring back to the roles allotted to the different actors in military operations at the beginning of the chapter. Healthy CMR depends on the roles laid down being performed largely as intended. This means that each actor must understand the

limits of his expertise and learn to value the expertise of others. The military should get the job done in a way that is consistent with the policy objectives, while the civilians should allow them to do so. When these roles are not respected, proper CMR will be violated and, more importantly, the task will not be carried out correctly.

Interference in military matters is a constant temptation for politicians in war or in crisis. Since they will be the first to suffer if anything goes wrong, they are compulsively inclined to want to fiddle with things they do not understand. Before India's 1962 war with China, for example, prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian defence minister Krishna Menon 'directly supervised the placement of individual brigades, companies and even platoons, as the Chinese and Indian forces engaged in mutual encirclement of isolated outposts'.[77] Equally, there are cases where the political leadership has shirked its responsibility and has in effect allowed the military to usurp the political role.

In essence, the system will work best if the military concentrates on military issues, the politicians on policy and the two know the difference. This should not be a case of rigid separation, but rather an awareness of where one's own type of expertise must give way to someone else's. One of the themes of this book is that if the background structure of CMR is right, the behaviour of the actors involved will tend to be right as well.

Clearly, the political leadership should not give detailed operational and tactical orders to the military. The leadership operates properly at the strategic level and it should not involve itself in or dictate military aspects of an operational plan. However, its civilian advisors should be involved in the work, and the leadership should have the plan presented to them in outline so that they can be sure that it has observed the political limitations they have placed on it. If a particular unit is chosen for a particular task, then politicians may query its use on political grounds, but they should never query military plans. The leadership should also never demand something the military clearly cannot do. There may be cases where the danger to the nation is so extreme that even hopeless expedients have to be tried, and under these circumstances the military must do its best to deliver. At the same time it has a duty to be honest with their leaders about the chances of success. In the end, the military has a duty to put into effect any operational order of a duly constituted government, whatever they may feel about its chances of success.

There is, finally, the very involved question of whether all operational orders given to the military should be obeyed, even if they appear to run counter to

moral or ethical principles. In theory, the position is clear enough. A government is bound by the international principles the country has adopted and signed. It may, therefore, not order its troops to carry out operations that violate the Geneva Convention, or any other provisions of international humanitarian law, any more than it can order the military to break the domestic laws of the land. Indeed, in such a situation the military would not only have the right but a duty to disobey. In practice, however, the situation is a little more complicated.

Practical difficulties arise because almost all military conflicts involve incidents that take place in moral and legal grey areas. While it is accepted, for example, that soldiers who have surrendered are legally protected, the use of force, even lethal force, to prevent them from escaping, is permissible. It is also accepted that those who fight without uniforms or are involved in terrorist or guerrilla activity, cannot take for granted that they will get the same protection as soldiers in uniform. Yet it is obvious that both of these situations can be, and have been, misused to excuse atrocities and the violation of legal norms.

The problem arises largely from the fact that orders to commit atrocities are seldom if ever framed in those terms. Politicians and wiser senior commanders know better than to have any permanent record of some of the more dubious orders they might give. It is also true that there are certain informal rules of engagement that have operated from time to time. Mercenaries, snipers, operators of feared weapons like the flame-thrower and soldiers who have surrendered too late, can and are sometimes despatched violently even after having surrendered.

It is important to add, though, that we are concerned here with the activities of individuals and groups on operations. We are not dealing with legal or moral justifications for the operation itself. That is the business of the political leadership and it is very dangerous for military commanders to start trying to second-guess the political leadership in these areas.

Budgets, plans and programmes

I have already stressed that defence policy is partly a series of accommodations to the inevitable and involves respecting immovable forces where they exist. The greatest of these immovable forces is the scarcity of money, while an important secondary problem is the inevitable opposition that arises to spending the money one does in fact get.

Ultimately, defence preparations can never be entirely rational. Defence differs in this regard from, for example, education and health, whose planning can be carried out on a rational, statistical basis. These departments know how many children will be aged, say, 11 in five years time, because they have already been born. They also have a good statistical idea of how many people will need treatment for a particular disease in the coming year. The scope of uncertainty in defence is obviously much greater. Psychologically, too, defence preparations are difficult because they are partly based on fear – fear of the known, fear of the unknown and fear of one's own weakness.

For this reason, there has never been a budget or a force structure big enough for its proponents. Indeed, as with addictive drugs, more money, more manpower and more equipment feed the appetite rather than sating it. However, I do not wish to imply by this that all defence planning is conducted irrationally, still less that it should be. In fact, most of the rest of this chapter is devoted to ways in which planning can be made more rational. But it is clear that the process at the end of the day is always a subjective one. No scientific method to determine force structure has ever been invented, and it would be unwise to expect one to appear in the future. For this reason, what follows is essentially a political and

procedural analysis of how budgets and programmes are decided, and how the process can best be carried out. It differs substantially from the accountancy and management-based analysis that is most often seen.

BUDGETS

Everything starts with the availability of money. Indeed, defence planning is often little more than finding the least bad way to use the inadequate funds available. The first difficulty is that there is no logical way of deciding how large the defence budget should be. There is a long-established and widely adopted tendency for annual defence budgets to take up an average of two to three per cent of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Why this is so is not entirely clear, but it does seem that few economies can sustain a level of expenditure much higher than this over many years before the country suffers in some way. The position is complicated, however, by three major factors: the lack of a standard definition of defence expenditure; the fact that the relationship of defence spending to GDP is a dynamic one, between two changing figures; and the existence in some countries of special funds for defence purchases outside the normal defence budget.

Normally, however, the percentage of GDP is not a factor in determining the size of the defence budget, except as a rhetorical device. Defence budgets are, in fact, usually determined by a political trial of strength, based on the amount spent or budgeted for the previous year and any special factors that may have intervened since. Because of this, the resulting programmes are like a very old house: some parts have been modernised and added to, others abandoned halfway through, and any particular overall shape or plan has long been abandoned. The process by which the defence budget is arrived at is a reflection of the way in which most countries handle public spending decisions, namely as a trial of strength between finance ministries and spending departments.

In practice, governments are forced into contradictory policies on public spending. On the one hand they exist to do things and are judged partly on their achievements. On the other, doing things costs money and they generally try to avoid spending money. The latter concern could be underlain by one or more of a variety of reasons, such as the pursuit of an economic ideology, a need to please foreign lenders, a desire to introduce tax cuts or respect for the paradoxi-cal wishes of electorates, which, although happy to have decent public services, are seldom prepared to pay for them. In theory, the defence budget, and for that

matter every other budget, should be determined on the basis of what the nation can afford. In practice, however, there is no way of determining a level of affordability. In the end, budget judgements are political rather than economic, and reflect what is considered important by those in power. A generation or more ago, for example, many governments preferred to pay for increased economic activity and employment rather than funding high unemployment. Recently, the opposite has more often been true, and now there are signs that things may be on the turn again.

The process is complicated by today's fixation with financial rather than real outcomes. By that I mean that financial control practices have been imported from the private sector in the hope that they will solve the problem of inadequate resources in the public sector. It is important, though, to understand the fundamental difference between the two sectors.

The private sector, at least in the Anglo-Saxon world, is essentially concerned with profits, i.e. it is obsessed with the difference between costs and revenues, and seeks every method to increase this difference, usually by reducing costs, or at least by appearing to do so. The reality of the company's operation is relatively unimportant compared to a good financial presentation. Cost reductions will be pursued irrespective of their implications for the future, and all sorts of financial wizardry will be employed to make revenues look bigger than they really are. At the time of writing it is clear that such procedures are disastrous beyond the short term: they encourage dishonesty and even criminality, whilst undermining the viability of the company.

It is obvious that, even in principle, the same techniques cannot be used in the public sector, which is essentially concerned with real, not financial outcomes. Few taxpayers would be pleased to learn that their tax calculations have been outsourced to a private company thousands of kilometres away in a country that does not speak their language. Few parents of school-aged children would be impressed to hear that the education ministry had a surplus in its budget thanks to its aggressive policy of school closures. At their best, such techniques amount to little more than shuffling money around to make the situation look better than it really is. They do nothing to resolve underlying problems, and may well make them worse by giving the comforting illusion that things are under control. For these reasons, financial management as such is not mentioned further in this chapter.

In essence it can be said that there are two management processes going on at the same time in a defence ministry, namely:

- The construction and implementation of a balanced programme.
- The struggle to spend as much, but not more, than allowed in the current budget.

These two imperatives are in conflict with each other, but the second is far more powerful than the first. It is more easily quantified than the former, which is really a matter of judgement. Moreover, a force structure carries many fixed costs. In general, equipment projects take time to complete, infrastructure tends to be fixed and armed forces cannot be run on a hire–and-fire basis to please accountants. Whilst the exact figure will vary from country to country, it is normal for around 75 per cent of defence expenditure to be committed before the financial year even begins. Any cuts that need to be made will therefore have to come from the remaining 25 per cent of the budget, whether or not the results make sense. Whilst exact practice varies, 30 to 40 per cent of a typical defence budget will be devoted to personnel costs. The higher percentage will be typical of a professional army. Perhaps another 30 to 35 per cent will be devoted to procurement and capital works, with the scope for savings in this area obviously being very limited. Recruitment can be frozen temporarily and the awarding of contracts can be delayed, but most of the manpower and capital costs will still have to be incurred. Thus the brunt of short-term savings will have to come from the remaining 25 to 30 per cent of the budget, which in essence covers current operational costs. This is almost always the wrong area to save. Cutting training, recruiting or the provision of spares is unlikely to do any good, or even save any money, in the long run. It is worth adding that, in general, the smaller the defence budget, the higher the proportion allocated to manpower costs, which limits the room for manoeuvre even more.

To repeat, an obsession with financial management is bad for a well-organised defence programme. In effect, the concern is with measuring numbers rather than with doing things. Nonetheless, these are the limitations under which defence planners have to work, and the rest of the chapter will be concerned with how to make the best of the situation. The following three possible approaches can be considered:

- Cost-effectiveness calculations.
- Greater balance between commitments and resources.
- Improvements to structures and processes.

Only the second approach really has the capability to affect the programme dramatically, but I will now discuss each one in turn.

INPUTS AND OUTPUTS

The 'value for money' concept is often raised at this point. It is a useful idea to bear in mind, so long as it is not taken too seriously. The concept itself assumes that the both the money that is spent (the input) and the results of spending it (the output) are known. By examining the alternatives, the best input/output ratio can, in theory, be identified as providing the best value for money.

There is little doubt that the idea of trying to relate inputs and outputs is sound, and that this must be the basis for comparative examinations of proposals to spend money. The problems lie in the application, as outlined below.

- *Lack of knowledge.* It is sometimes possible to be fairly certain of the inputs. But any ambitious project, any foreign purchase, or anything that has not yet been produced always costs more than anticipated. Moreover, some cost savings only show up over long periods of time. A modern aircraft will probably cost three to four times as much to support and maintain during its life as it costs to buy, while savings made in one area, for example by closing a naval base, often show up as costs elsewhere, such as in social security payments. Even so, the uncertainties involved in predicting output are even greater, since it is impossible to know how equipment will perform until it is actually used.
- *Financial dominance.* It follows from the above that since cost is not easy to define and effectiveness is essentially an unknown, 'value for money' is never a precise measure and may in fact be next to useless. In practice it is tempting to assume that the cheapest solution is the most cost-effective, and this is often the way the decision is taken.
- *Hidden assumptions.* Governments do not produce financial outputs,[78] so the benefits of investment are almost always theoretical in nature,[79] whereas changes in financial inputs are not only very visible, but also politically important. In practice, therefore, cost-effectiveness tends to be a way of cutting jobs and services under cover of a rational-sounding process.

In spite of these limitations, there are some by-and-large ways of comparing inputs ands outputs, as discussed later in this chapter.

COMMITMENTS AND RESOURCES

The usual reason for continual crises in a defence programme is an imbalance between commitments and resources. This occurs for one of two main reasons:

- A political desire for a defence posture that cannot be afforded with the money made available.
- A political desire to hang on to defence roles and tasks that are no longer affordable.

Such imbalances will produce periodic crises until they are corrected. Financial measures will not solve the problem, any more than haemophilia can be cured by Elastoplast, and are in fact likely to make it worse. Intelligent use of resources can ease the problem, but is not a long-term solution.

There are, of course, powerful incentives to try to take on, or retain, roles that cannot be funded adequately. Giving up capability or a presence abroad are often politically awkward things to do, and there may be powerful regional or international pressure not to do so. Equally, there may be strong political reasons for becoming involved in a new area of operations, even if the capability is not really there, It is awkward to explain to people that one would like to play a role in UN peacekeeping, but cannot afford to do so. The usual response is to ask the military to do more with less, the result of which is a slow degradation of capabilities across the board.

STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Successful planners have a clear focus on what they are trying to achieve and are determined that the defence programme should help them achieve it. This sounds obvious, but there are any number of countries around the world where force structures have evolved haphazardly and responsively, and where as a consequence budgets are not being spent as effectively as they should be. On the other hand, there are countries that produce a great deal of defence capability (output) from a relatively modest input. Examples include Sweden and Singapore, whose focus on a limited range of tasks, which are then adequately funded, has brought them a substantial capability in the areas where they need it. By contrast, it is still not clear where the huge amounts of money added to the American defence budget in recent years has actually gone. Some of it was spent haphazardly on

programmes that were later cancelled, while much simply disappeared into huge and ill-defined logistic support contracts for the private sector.

The usual method of force planning is by crisis management, and by patch and mend. Busy civilian and military officials spend all their time trying to cope with the latest financial cuts, with the result that, once the blood has dried, nobody really knows where the defence programme itself is going. Perversely, however, this kind of panic exercise often increases costs to the defence budget. Stretching out procurement, for example, a good old standby in situations of this kind, generally increases the total cost of the project over time.

The traditional method of defence programming might be described as the arbitration method. The various uniformed interest groups will put forward their wish lists, which, in total, will exceed the overall funds available. In spite of posturing and claims of grave damage to the interests of the nation if a single project is cut, something must go to balance the budget. The eventual appropriation will owe more to force of personality and lobbying power than to logic, and there will have to be at least an attempt to apply equal misery to each functional area. Moreover, the cuts usually fall in the realm of the possible, rather than the desirable. This course is generally a recipe for continual problems, since nothing is done, from year to year, to bring the programme into better balance.

A better method is to go deep into the structure of the programme itself, to take away control of its formulation from the services, and to give it to the defence ministry staff to sort out. The services will, of course, continue to submit their requirements, but only the central staff will have the responsibility of putting the programme together. This should make the task of keeping commitments and resources in balance with each other much easier.

Assuming that this course can be followed, the missing ingredient for running a successful defence programme is that the policies and programmes must be decided together, and by the same people. This may seem obvious, but there is a great tendency for the two to be separated from each other. The connection must also not only be a general one, but should be imposed at every level of detail. What is needed is a set of planning assumptions, formulated by an inter-service staff and by its civilian advisers, and agreed to by ministers. Thereafter a document is circulated with strict instructions that everything that is in it, and only that, must be costed. The simplest way of representing the underlying process is as follows:

- Policy has to be translated into a series of practical tasks for the defence structures to perform.

- These tasks require certain capabilities to be developed if they are to be carried out.
- These capabilities need to be translated into specific force structures charged with carrying out the tasks.
- These force structures need to be equipped for their missions by means of a coherent procurement programme.

Two qualifications are applicable here. First, the process is not a one-way street. Realities such as the funds available, the wider political picture and the forces and capabilities already in existence need to be taken into account before the exercise starts. Secondly, this process is not entirely concerned with developing operational capabilities for the military. It is perfectly possible that it might throw up a need for an enhanced intelligence analysis capability, for more defence attachés abroad, or for more experts to handle the media.

One incidental benefit of this type of approach is that it reveals inconsistencies and duplication among the services. It is quite possible, for example, that both the air force and the navy involve themselves in offshore protection tasks, and that as a result rather more is being spent on these tasks – which may have never been defined and defended against scrutiny – than can be justified. It is also unlikely that each service is fully aware of what the other is doing. A neutral central staff, with a strong civilian component, can test the validity of proposals made: 'And just how often, General, do your aircraft practice over the sea? And how many have you lost that way in the last five years?'

Once these tasks are agreed and the level of effort involved has been assessed, they can be costed in the knowledge that money is not being spent on anything that has not been fully justified. (There will, of course, be less precision concerning certain costs in the support and training area, but even here it should be possible to get a good idea of what is going on.) At that point, one can reasonably give approximate costs for maintaining and enhancing areas of capability, which, rather than the size of the budget of a specific service, is what decision-makers need to know. It is not possible to move resources from border protection to peacekeeping deployment unless one knows, roughly at least, what is being spent on each.

CHOICE OF WEAPONS

These same considerations apply in particular to the procurement of new defence systems. Defence equipment is so unbelievably expensive these days that there

is no excuse for not having a cool appraisal of what is wanted, and when. This objective, however, is always being obstructed by two fallacies that are found everywhere among those who write operational requirements. They are the follow-on fallacy and the like-for-like fallacy.

The follow-on fallacy is that equipment now in service must be replaced by something similar, but better. Often this is true, but it is not necessarily true and must not be assumed. Since the real cost of equipment increases steadily, a full replacement of everything would obviously be unaffordable. The usual result is the steady shrinkage of the inventory, with old equipment having to last longer. The like-for-like fallacy is that equipment in the inventory of a neighbour or potential enemy has to be met with similar equipment. Again, this can be true, but there are many cases where, for small nations in particular, it is often difficult or impossible.

Both of these fallacies are the result of starting in the middle of the argument instead of at the beginning. If the logic set out above is followed, then it is clear that three stages have to be gone through before equipment is selected. They are:

- Deciding on the task.
- Deciding how the task will be carried out.
- Deciding on the capability to be acquired.
- Deciding on the equipment to be procured.

The task will flow from agreed policy and the resulting planning assumptions as set out previously. The issue of capability is much more difficult. For example, if a nation is becoming involved in peacekeeping activities, it may be argued that the air force should replace its current short-range transports with longer-range ones. But it may actually be concluded that, given the type of operations envisaged, it would be more sensible to lease ships and aircraft as required.

The process of deciding how to carry out a task does not have to be especially complex. In a case above, one would ask questions such as the following:

- How much of the task can the existing aircraft cope with?
- Do the existing aircraft need to be replaced in any case?
- Are there other reasons why larger aircraft might be needed?
- Are there other options for carrying out the task?
- How likely is it that ships/aircraft can be leased and what would the cost be?

It will usually be possible to make some by-and-large assessments of the financial and operational implications of each course, but it will also immediately be apparent that such comparisons can only really be made by a neutral body since otherwise the process will just degenerate into one of competitive lobbying.

Once the 'how' is clear, the question of equipment selection can begin to be answered. This can be dauntingly complex, but is not impossible if approached in a logical way. The point of departure, clearly, is the requirement. This needs to be viewed realistically to avoid over-specification, so-called 'gold-plating', which is always a temptation. Committees are a useful way of encouraging such realism. As informed but detached observers committee members and their staffs can test some of the proposals put forward for robustness. ('You say you need a radio that hops frequencies 500 times per second. But they are much more expensive than radios that hop only half as often. Explain what the practical operational difference is.')

Logically, the ideal way to meet a requirement of any kind is to manufacture it oneself, in facilities under one's own control. In that way one can get exactly what is wanted, when it is want and in the quantities required. This also avoids protracted and expensive competition, and all the added costs of publicity, marketing, private jets and chairmen's expenses, all of which have to be paid by the taxpayer. But few countries can now afford the infrastructure required to achieve this. And, even if it were feasible, it is not the current political fashion. So, in practice, except for a few exceptions, nations have to put up with the vagaries of the market.

What this means in practice is the requirement to choose from among the systems on offer, whether they meet one's exact requirements or not. The number of major defence equipment producers is declining, and in many areas the choice of systems is declines every year as well.[80] Moreover, few companies can afford to develop systems specifically for export, which means that what is on offer is frequently similar to that used by the exporting nation's own armed forces. Such has been the pace of military technological development over the years that the gap between what producer nations themselves use and what is suitable for a new nation venturing into a new capability continues to grow. The natural desire of nations to buy the best they can afford frequently leads to procurement and logistic disasters as equipment is delivered that is too complex and expensive to maintain.

It is particularly important to keep a sense of proportion about equipment performance. If one has a requirement for a transport aircraft with a range of

1 000 km, there is no point in paying more for an aircraft with a range of 1 500 km, unless there is absolutely certainty that it can be used. It often happens that the military gradually edges into new and expensive roles simply because they have acquired a new capability. On the other hand, it can be attractive to buy a proven system, even if it has a lesser capability. For example, if the Mk1 positioning system will tell one's position to within 5 m, is it really worth buying the Mk2, which is still in the design stage and which will reduce the error to 1 m? Unless one intends to go into ICBMs, then the answer is almost certainly no.

In most cases a nation will be offered a variety of competing products, the cost and performance of which will be very different from each other. Choosing between them is hard enough for experienced nations, but for those coming fresh to the task it can be overwhelming. Some pointers have already been offered and this may be a suitable moment to bring them all together. A possible series of priorities could be as follows:

- Be very sure of the capability required.
- Look at various ways of satisfying the requirement.
- Do not be dazzled by promises of superior performance.
- Make sure that one's defence force is capable of using and training on it.
- Pay attention to support and maintenance costs and problems.
- Be aware that whatever is bought will have to last for a long time.

There are a variety of ways, some very sophisticated, of comparing the prices and performances of equipment. The problem is that, to some extent, all comparisons depend on assumptions. However, professional judgement can often help to reduce the uncertainty. Broad-order assessments of costs and capabilities are always possible and this should result in some sensible judgements. If, for example, two anti-tank systems are offered, one of which has greater penetrating power than the other, the first question to ask is: 'Does it make a difference?' If the less powerful system will not defeat the armour of your enemy's tank, then it is a waste of money to purchase this system no matter how cheap it is. If both will do the job, then buy the cheaper one. If a radio set offers superior performance at double the price it would be wise to try to quantify the performance difference in some way. It may be hard to be exact, but either the performance difference is substantial, in which case the more expensive equipment is worth considering, or it is not substantial, in which case it should not be considered further. Notice that a formal definition of 'substantial' is not needed for this kind of comparison.

Given that military equipment is generally expected to last a generation or more, the up-front acquisition cost may not be so important anyway. So-called through-life costs, which take the costs of maintenance and upgrades into account, are often a much better basis for decisions.

I have so far talked only in terms of operational capability. But procurement decisions need to take many other factors into account. The procurement of defence systems is one way for small states to exercise a great deal of leverage. If a number of systems will meet the requirement, then the decision should be based on other factors, such as the following:

● Offset and licence manufacture.
● The availability of financing.
● Linked political and industrial benefits.
● The possibility of counter-trade.

A nation that does not have a strategy to cover these factors is weakening its bargaining position in a market that is now, and will be for some time, biased significantly in favour of the purchaser. Of course, integrating all of factors can be a challenge, especially as it is not really possible to do so scientifically. In the end, systems for weighting various factors are dependent on subjective judgements. But a clear and logical process that involves all of those with an interest in the matter will very often throw up a winner.

Part of the difficulty is that nations buying defence equipment often do not realise how strong their position is. A small country ordering six helicopters may be overwhelmed by attention from companies and governments, and may feel intimidated into making the wrong decision. But in the end the customer has the final say, and some time spent preparing for the purchase can yield enormous savings later, and also ensure that the right equipment is obtained.

The most important question is that of defining what one wants. Some guidance has already been given in this regard, but it needs to be stressed once more that setting and maintaining an objective is the main requirement of any procurement programme. Something may be offered with far less capability than is needed, but at a rock-bottom price. The temptation to buy it needs to be resisted, in the same way that the temptation should be resisted to purchase something with more capability than is affordable, and which may perhaps also be too sophisticated to operate easily. Supplier nations may make threats and promises in an attempt to get you to change your mind.

The secret of success, here as elsewhere, is to maintain the initiative. If you have already decided what you want, then see what concessions you can extract from the supplier nation's government. If either of two alternatives will do, then try to manoeuvre the two governments into a bidding contest to see who will give you the best deal. Above all, decide what it is you want in addition to the equipment itself. Is it preferential financing, free training, local manufacturing, offset and counter trade, or political favours? A nation that decides what it wants and sticks to that decision can achieve a remarkable amount.

CONTRACTING OUT

Finally, something needs to be said about the fashion of moving work out of the defence sector and into the hands of private companies. Whereas much of the defence sector, as with government as a whole, developed for the practical reason that the private sector was unable or unwilling to perform the tasks required, the later idea of contracting services out was based essentially on ideological principles. It was argued that the private sector was inherently more efficient than the public sector and that cost savings would inevitably result by outsourcing certain tasks. The actual argument was complex and theoretical, and need not detain us here, but it was certainly not an argument based on experience since there was no experience to base it on.

A generation later, the kindest judgement that can be made is that the evidence is inconclusive, not least because we do not know what would have happened if the outsourcing course had not be followed. It is easiest to see the policy of outsourcing as a reflection of a political mood, which is now waning, rather than a serious exercise in increasing efficiency. Nonetheless, those states that are considering going in this direction, or are wondering whether the steps they have already taken were wise, it is worth keeping the following caveats in mind:

- *Supplier capture*. In general, governments run services cheaply and efficiently in comparison to the private sector. They are subjected to constant and severe cost and staffing pressures and generally pay their employees less than the private sector. It is therefore unlikely that a private company, with its lush headquarters, its well-paid executives and its need to make the highest possible profits for its shareholders, can absorb all those costs at the same time as providing a cheaper service of the same standard. Companies normally employ one of two strategies, or even both, to come out ahead. The first is to

take the contract at cost or below and then to ratchet up the price when the contract is renewed. The second is to take over the existing infrastructure, including the personnel, and to reduce the standard of service, wages and working conditions. Neither of these strategies is particularly beneficial to the customer, but as the client has become dependent on the supplier by this time, it is easier to continue with a service that may be substandard or expensive, rather than admitting to a mistake and starting the whole process over.

- *Loss of flexibility.* A related problem is that the usual reason for contracting out services is to reduce one's wage bill by getting rid of one's staff. But loss of staff by definition involves loss of expertise. This is known as the *intelligent customer problem*. For example, if you hand over all your computer systems to an outside organisation, then either you get rid of your own computer experts, which means you do not have much idea what your supplier is doing or if he is doing it properly, or you keep them on and make no savings. In certain operations the loss of expert staff may be acceptable. For example, the outsourcing of the catering function should be safe enough most of the time, until you find yourself in a crisis and your department moves onto a 24-hour working cycle. At best this will be very expensive and at worst it could turn into a political disaster as soldiers have to queue at the local McDonald's. To return to the computers example, a number of Western defence sectors have handed over the support and administrative functions of their operations to private companies, which in most cases own the infrastructure and employ their own staff. If such companies go bankrupt, or lose interest because the contract ceases to be profitable, those organisations that have outsourced their capabilities to this firm will be unable to conduct operations.

- *Corruption.* When money is involved, there is always an attendant risk of corruption. Consider the following scenario. A nation has a gendarmerie force of 10 000 deployed in company-strength units throughout the country. Each unit has a support cell, which, amongst others, buys and cooks the food. The sums of money involved are minimal and the opportunities for corruption almost non-existent. A decision is taken to contract out the whole catering service to one organisation. This is a large contract and a new office has to be set up to manage it. But with large sums of money changing hands and the attendant possibility of corruption, an anti-corruption office will also be required to police the office administering the contract. Three new organisations are therefore involved in doing something that was previously done informally with no organisation at all.

Much of the above arguments come down to two contrasting philosophies of management. The first, popularised by the private sector, is that of the Core Function. The idea here is that companies should concentrate on areas where they have a competitive advantage and contract out other services to companies with a competitive advantage in those fields. There is logic in this process as far as the private sector is concerned, although on the whole it seems not to have worked very well and many companies are starting to bring functions back in-house again. It is debatable whether this kind of 'core function' logic is really applicable to governments, who seldom compete to provide services, but it has been hugely influential in many countries nonetheless. The second philosophy is the Mission Critical approach, which simply asks whether it would matter if a function is not carried out. If it does matter, then the function should be kept under the control of the organisation concerned. Most government functions fall into this category and therefore most functions should be retained in government, as recent experience has tended to demonstrate.

A FINAL WORD ON CORRUPTION

Defence procurement is often associated in the public mind with corruption. This is not necessarily true and in any event the definition of what is honest and what is not varies considerably from society to society. But it is certainly the case that in societies that are themselves deeply corrupt, public sector procurement, including that of the defence sector, will most likely also be affected.

The knee-jerk response to such a problem is to demand more transparency and parliamentary oversight. In practice, as with other formal control initiatives, this is largely a waste of time. Of course, any democracy, or any well-run state, must have procedures for auditing contracts and defending expenditures to parliament. But such procedures are not the reason for good financial management, but a symptom of it. If we consider the construction of the modern British state in the 19th century, we find that the move from wholesale corruption to good management, which took several generations to complete, came about because of a fundamental culture change, not an increase in oversight procedures. It had to do with the creation of a proper administrative system, reasonable pay for staff, recruitment and promotion on merit, and a high-minded vision of government's role.

Corruption is most often rife in poorly paid and managed organisations, or among those who feel they have been neglected or undervalued. Corruption in

government is justified as a kind of revenge against political elites who are feathering their own nests and do not care about the ordinary people. Thus, a general with 40 years of faithful military service, looking forward only to retirement on a miserly pension, may well not only be tempted to try to sell his expertise and contacts for hard cash, but may feel justified in doing so. The recent ideological tendency to denigrate the state and its servants, and to exalt the methods of private sector with its inbuilt corruption, has not helped either.

There are several reasons why formal controls are not very effective. Increasing the number of actors increases the opportunities for corruption. Politicians are notoriously easy to bribe, especially in the many political systems around the world where the political class makes no distinction between their political and business interests. This helps to explain the apparent paradox of the US, which with its massive oversight apparatus and micromanagement of the defence programme by Congress, nonetheless has a very high level of corruption, much of it institutionalised. Moreover, individuals who decide to exploit their knowledge or their position for gain obey the same psychological rules as others who speculate in the hope of becoming wealthy. That is to say, they become greedy and dazzled by opportunities, and take little heed of the possibility of discovery and failure.

The answer, if there is one, is to create a culture that frowns on dishonesty and in which institutional pressures are strongly against corruption. This does not come about rapidly and requires the kind of well-paid, highly motivated and professional government service that most countries have been busy dismantling in recent years.

The military and society

In the days when armies existed to fight the wars of their kings, they might have been composed entirely of slaves, criminals and foreign mercenaries. In a democracy and in any society based on the principle of popular sovereignty, this is no longer acceptable. Military forces have to be, in some sense at least, representative of the society that recruits, pays and deploys them. But if the principle is clear, the practice is somewhat more complicated. This chapter is concerned with what the relationship between the military and society should be.

ORIGINS

For obvious practical reasons, the military can never be a precise mathematical reflection of the society from which it comes. Whilst a military career should be open to all, regardless of origin, the armed forces can only recruit those who actually present themselves. Even conscript forces require career officers and NCOs, and those attracted to a military career will not necessarily be any more representative of society, in the narrow sense, than will aspirant doctors, bankers or musicians. Few pacifists, and few of those who for one reason or another feel estranged from the general political culture of the country, will wish to join the military. These are also minority social, ethnic and religious groups that may for a variety of reasons feel that the military is not for them. On the other hand, there are military families and regions that have traditionally produced soldiers or sailors.

Moreover, the military does not necessarily want everyone who hopes to join. Certain groups represented in society – habitual criminals, the mentally ill, those

with extreme views and prejudices – will tend to be frowned on by any competent organisation, the military amongst them. The military generally looks for individuals with a rather special combination of attributes. Some of these have been mentioned already, and here I wish to look at some attributes that are the most difficult to find.

Human beings are not naturally violent. In everyday life, it requires stress factors such as fear, hatred or intoxication to produce high levels of violence. Yet the military, even if it manages to socialise recruits into the acceptance of violence, still has to find those with a basic tolerance for seeing, and if necessary using, violence in the first instance. Whilst hand-to-hand fighting is not as common as it was, a soldier still has to be willing, if necessary, to run across a field and stick a bayonet in a fellow human being. And whilst most civil violence is directed against individuals who are known to the culprit, the soldier, sailor or airman knows that in war the killing of total strangers, with whom one has no personal quarrel, is a requirement. It is, in fact, a far greater problem for the military to get soldiers to fight than it is to contain their aggressive instincts.

Everyone who has been on a battlefield has reported that it is a place of terror and chaos, a place from which any normal individual would want to run as quickly as possible. Yet the military will not function unless individuals can be trained, not merely to stay on the battlefield, but to operate in quite complex and difficult ways under the extreme circumstances of battle, to leave the relative safety of a trench or a building and move, on command, into an environment of greater danger.

The particular contribution of the military is that of *controlled* violence, which is about as far removed from the sporadic and ad hoc violence of civil society as one can imagine. The military may be ordered, for example, to take casualties without retaliating, to stand for hours under a hail of rocks and bottles without shooting, or to co-operate militarily with a group they have previously been trying to kill.

It is true that the training and socialising systems of the military are designed to mould recruits into approved patterns of behaviour. But it is also true that certain characteristics are sought in soldiers, and more so in officers, that are not necessarily better or worse than those in society in general, but are certainly different. It is for this reason that it is not practicable to expect to find a cross-section of society in an infantry platoon. Nor, for that matter, can one expect to find a cross-section of ethnic or religious groups. Whilst some societies have, for good reasons, tried to use quotas or other systems to ensure that all ranks are at

least broadly representative of the societies they serve, it is accepted that the end result can only be an approximation.

However, this does not remove the need for a society to ensure that its military welcomes all those who wish to join, whatever their origins, and to treat them equally thereafter. Any other policy will, in the end, weaken societal support for the military. In other words, there is a distinction to be drawn between the inherent differences that will always exist between the average soldier and the average member of society, about which only little can be done, and the organisation and behaviour of military forces, including their arrangements for recruiting and promoting their personnel.

ATTITUDES

Much the same can be said about the military's views on things, although here there is a further complication. Everybody understands that the military's views and opinions will not necessarily be the same as those in society at large. On average, for example, the military of most countries tends to be more socially conservative than the society it represents. But at the same time, the military's behaviour should not place it in conflict with the norms and values of society in general. The difficulty comes when one tries to analyse what these values are. It would be absurd to argue, for example, that if racial prejudice is common in society, the military should be required to be racially intolerant as well. Yet there is no logical reason why in that type of society the military should be encouraged to be racially tolerant instead. That tolerance is more acceptable than intolerance is widely thought to be true, especially among educated people, but it remains a subjective judgement.

Indeed, the argument that the military should reflect the values of its society is a dangerous double-edged sword, since, if the values of a society are themselves suspect, the military, as a microcosm of society, is not likely to be much different. Whatever complaints can be laid against the German military in the Second World War, failure to reflect the values of their society is one of the few that cannot. The same has been the case more recently in the republics of the former Yugoslavia which fought between 1991 and 1995. In each case it is clear that, whilst those who did the killing may have been more willing than their compatriots to perform the deed, they carried out the atrocities with at least the tacit approval of the majority of their own communities. Indeed, evidence suggests that in most wars, populations will generally support even the harshest

measures adopted by their governments, and sometimes demand more. This is particularly true in conflicts remote from the European and American norm of a limited-liability organisational struggle. The worst atrocities have been committed when an entire nation or community has felt itself in deadly peril from an outside force, and considers itself obliged to fight with every means at its disposal, whether these are ethical or not.

What we are dealing with here, therefore, is the suggestion that militaries should not reflect the actual values of their societies, but rather the values that these societies ought to hold. Most people who talk about norms and values are really saying that they would like the military to adopt the same values they themselves would like society as a whole to adopt. The debate is therefore prescriptive rather than descriptive. The problem is that there is no way, apart from subjective judgement, in which some values can be pronounced to be better or worse than others. Most of us believe that our educated, liberal values are superior to those of others (Genghis Khan's, for example), but we have to recognise that there is no way in which we can ever prove this. Moreover, there are cases where it can be argued that a military's values are superior to those of civil society, such as when that military maintains a higher degree of honesty in a corrupt society.

Yet one has to ask how much this really matters in practice. The military is after all an instrument of the state and it should do what the state wants it to do. This not only includes carrying out the orders of the legitimate government, but also not acting, even privately, in a way that would undermine that which the government is trying to achieve. Even more, the military should not act, individually or collectively, in a way that affronts the values of the society it serves. The most obvious case is that, whether or not the military likes the political system it serves, it should refrain from criticising it, not just openly, of course, but also privately to conscripts and others they could influence. A military that is unconvinced of the virtues of democracy, for example, will be a problem, but will not be a direct threat as long as it keeps its views to itself and does not try to impose them on others.

When I have made this argument to various audiences in the past, it has sometimes been criticised as being the argument of a comfortable middle-class white male from a developed democracy. Surely, it has been argued, one needs to go further and implant the norms and values of society in the soldiers themselves, so that they will, if necessary, disobey orders that transgress these values? It is true that, where the military acts in the role of the school of the nation, these issues can be important. In the case of countries with military service, civic

education should arguably form part of the curriculum. In certain cases, this has been formalised, such as in France, where even today French military personnel describe themselves without embarrassment as 'soldiers of the Republic'. By this they not only mean that they will defend their nation and its interests, but that they also will defend a series of values that are very clearly defined, such as secularism, popular sovereignty, social solidarity, and so on. Of course, these are very specific values, forged from a long and bitter domestic struggle against reactionary forces, and do not necessarily travel well internationally.

But to return to the fundamental problem: there is no objective way of deciding which values are supposed to be taught, and whatever values are chosen will in any event change over time. The greatest danger lies in trying to offload onto individuals the kind of ethical judgements that really should be made and implemented by society. Those who advocate the instilling of norms and values in soldiers are not saying that a soldier should be able to decide for himself what to do in a given, ethically ambiguous situation. They are advocating that the soldier be taught values – theirs, in fact – that will determine his attitude.

We may admire a young soldier who refuses an order to take part in the killing of prisoners because this conflicts with his ethical values. But logically, there is no difference between this and the situation where a soldier who has been ordered not to harm prisoners nonetheless kills them, because he believes it is the right thing to do. In the end, it is unfair and unreasonable to expect soldiers to act as independent ethical judges in this way. When the military acts in an unacceptable fashion it is usually because either there is something wrong with the state, with CMR or with the system of command and discipline in the military itself. It is these problems that have to be addressed, not the individual responsibility of the soldier. If the political system is healthy and CMR is good, then these problems will not, in general, arise. But if the political system is unhealthy and CMR is not good, then no amount of harping on individual responsibility is going to help.

All that said, it needs to be remembered that it is through the military, as an institution of the state, that a government can and should put some of its policies into action. Here I am not only talking of defence policies, but, more importantly, polices relating to social, economic and even environmental issues. For example, if a government legislates to try to ensure the better treatment of racial or ethnic minorities at work, then it must apply these new rules to its own workforce, including the military. Similarly, greater tolerance of minority sexual orientations may well lead government to passing anti-discriminatory laws, which it should

then also expect its military to obey. Indeed, much of government legislation will have an impact on the military. For example, environmental protection is now a major part of the management of military-owned land.

From time to time, military leaders have objected to specific government policies, often on the grounds that fighting efficiency will be undermined. This argument has been used, for example, against the recruitment of homosexuals and lesbians, as well as the widespread employment of women in combat roles. In each case, however, it is likely that what is really at stake in most instances is the masculine, almost macho image of the military, rather than military efficiency. What is more, this kind of argument tends to be self-defeating in the long run. If the military does not make at least some attempt to adjust to changing social patterns and increasing tolerance, then it risks marginalising itself, losing public and political support and failing to attract the best people, which can hardly be good for military efficiency. Therefore, although the military cannot be a freeze-frame impression of society as a whole, it should be representative of it in the widest sense, as governments generally require them to be.

IMAGES

One reason for the complex nature of the relationship between the military and society is that the military's importance is at least as symbolic as it is practical. Our attitude to the military often tells us more about ourselves than it does about that organisation. The military is best seen as the collective Id of a society. It does the things we wish to have done, but would rather not do ourselves. It acts out our fantasies of destruction and incarnates our fears of domination and anni-hilation. It speaks to that part of us that is prepared, even eager, to contemplate violence against those whom we dislike and fear. Militarists give this part of us a dangerously important place, while pacifists refuse to acknowledge it altogether. And it is not only violence that is symbolised by the military. Organisation and discipline, efficiency and bravery are all deeply ambiguous qualities that we may approve of or not, depending on circumstances.

Militarism comes in many forms, and these days, as we have seen, it is as likely to come from the left as from the right. The defence or the promotion of vague normative ideas through violence is the most common reason for arguing in favour of the deployment of military forces today. Many media commentators, NGO officials and politicians not currently in government are convinced, or say they are, that violence is the solution to many of the world's problems and that

intervention, especially by Western forces, will serve to halt or prevent human rights violations. This argument, which discouraging experience does nothing to qualify, is a difficult one to counter politically ('So you're just going to let them die, are you?'), even though it is often wildly unrealistic in terms of what military forces can achieve. It conceals a primitive desire for revenge and the punishment of those who do not share the values of the proponents of intervention. Government can find itself in a very difficult position, trapped between the scepticism and lack of interest of the general population and the moral urgings of elites who are confident that they have identified a moral imperative which government should respect.

In addition, anyone who has been involved in politico-military affairs knows that there is almost no overlap between the armed forces of the popular imagination and those of reality. Factual presentations and careful qualifications are, in practice, largely wasted. The popular image of the military, mainly fostered by an inventive media, folklore, and popular fears and fantasies, is altogether more powerful than the mundane reality. It is likely, indeed, that the image of the military in most societies is largely created by the mass media, while books and films further distort and complicate it. In societies that have large-scale military service this is less of a problem, although the popular view may not be very up-to-date. In countries with professional armed forces, however, the gap between assumptions and reality can be very wide.

I have tried so far in this book to give helpful and practical examples of ideas that have worked elsewhere. But in this case this is not really possible. Clearly, anyone concerned with defence policy, anyone working with or in the military, including politicians, need to accept that there will always be a gap between reality and public perception. This is true in many other areas of government as well; public opinion is seldom well informed about education, health and the economy, even though everyone has experience of education, everyone gets ill and everyone is a consumer. But as the vast majority of people have little involvement with the military, the gap between theory and practice is probably at its widest here. As a result it is quite possible that genuine measures taken by government to bring the military closer to some of society's accepted norms will be blamed as too radical by some, damned as too little by others and ignored by the majority.

What the French call the *lien armée-nation*, or the link between the military and the people, has to be maintained, even in a society that faces no threats and has a professional military. The more the military can be demystified and interact with the general population, the better. Open days and visits to military

establishments are a simple but surprisingly effective device for bringing the military closer to society. People often take their views of the military from elites, and for this reason the military should make every effort to keep elites close to it. The two should interact through debates and other formal activities. There are other practical steps that a military administration should take to explain itself and its activities, including the following:

- *Keep it simple.* Nuances and qualifications will be lost if explanations are too involved. No initiative, no matter how well intended, will be understood unless it can be summarised in a sentence.
- *Do not expect to convince everyone.* It is impossible to please all of the groups one addresses. Attempts to promote greater ethnic tolerance in the military, for example, will be deeply unpopular with some sections of society, but there is little that can be done about that in the short term.
- *Don't worry about it.* Trying to convince everyone, or trying to get across every last nuance of policy, is a wasted effort.

In summary, the relationship of the military to society as a whole is a complex issue, but one whose success is important in ensuring that the availability of goodwill and support for the military is maintained. Goodwill may not have the same high profile as money for the defence budget, for example, but ultimately it is just as important in retaining credible military forces in the long term.

Transparency and accountability

I have already mentioned several times that the military is responsible to the society that employs it and that pays not only its wages, but all of the many other costs associated with maintaining and developing a defence capability. How the military and those who make and implement defence policy should account for what they do, and to whom, and what this means, are the themes of this final chapter.

In a sense, this could be a very short discussion. Few would quarrel with the idea that defence policy should be as transparent as possible in a democracy, or that defence should be accountable to voters, taxpayers and parliaments. For this reason most treatments of this subject are relatively brief, for example simply listing mechanisms for consultations with civil society and parliamentary committees. But as this book is intended, among other things, as a guide for practitioners, I will cover in some detail the practical implications of and problems caused by adopting a policy of openness and transparency in the defence area. These are sensitive political issues and there is no point in being naïve about them. Let us first look at some general principles.

Neither accountability nor transparency has any meaning in the abstract, except as part of a wider political process. It is clear that, in theory, the population of the country, the taxpayer and the electorate, are owed an *account* of what the military has done and what it has been used for, hence the use of the term. They should also be informed about the making and implementation of the policies the military has helped to put into practice, and the way the budget has been spent. The difficulty arises with the fact that the public does not have the ability

to demand such performance collectively and in its own name, but has to leave this matter to intermediate political bodies.

Information of this nature can be and is often made available through the media and government publications. In a properly run democracy such information should always be reputable, but the fact remains that the same information can be presented in a number of different ways. Information supplied by government will naturally stress the points it finds convenient to emphasise. This is part of government's wider policy to gain support for its views, and only a fool would expect to find transcendental truth in a White Paper or in a minister's speech to parliament. For reasons that are entirely understandable, government initiatives in this regard are part of the information warfare that takes place in every political system. For the same reason, opposition parties, NGOs and the media will reflexively accuse the government of distorting the truth, suppressing information or even downright lying. That said, however, a healthy political system is one in which the government of the day feels that it should be as open as possible about all aspects of policy, defence policy included. And there is little doubt that a system in which information is made available is better than one where things are hidden.

But such an open approach brings with it practical problems. The first is that information is not neutral. Information is power, and the balance of power between a government and an opposition, whether in or out of parliament, will be greatly affected by how much information a government makes available. The parliamentary opposition and other groups who differ from the government naturally want to criticise government policy as effectively as they can and, with luck, even change it. To do this they need access to information. In fact, the more information they have, the more effective they will become, and the more difficult life will be for the government. It follows that opposition demand for transparency and accountability is not, however it may appear, an altruistic one, but one designed to increase its own power. Needless to say, the same opposition, once in government, very quickly becomes aware of disadvantages of transparency that had apparently escaped them previously.

It is an unfortunate fact that any government which embraces transparency as an objective will have to accept that it will sustain political damage as a result. Information made available, whether accurate or not, will be dismissed as propaganda and misdirection, and will never be sufficient to satisfy the critics. Details of defence contracts, for example, will be used as the basis for sensationalist media stories on corruption, and the opposition will call for

a criminal investigation of the minister as a matter of course if it thinks it will benefit thereby.

A large part of the problem lies in the fact that transparency is essentially an elite cause, mainly espoused by those who think they will benefit from it. In most countries there is in fact remarkably little public interest in information about defence matters in the wider sense. Certain defence-related issues do of course stir up controversy, but information about defence policy is not one of them. It is normal for any factual information released by government to be ignored or dismissed. Sometimes, this is because the image of the government is poor, but often it is because of an understandable assumption that information issued by government has been massaged, or at least selected, for political effect. Alternatively it is because the facts of the case do not correspond with the public's prejudices and assumptions. When it comes to pressure groups the situation may be even worse. Their objective is to obtain publicity for themselves and to advance their causes. They therefore have a vested interest in ignoring or disparaging information that does not support this cause.

This problem has become more severe in recent years with the rise of a conspiracy mindset, which is associated with such TV and film productions as the *X-Files*. The message of these productions, and of any number of best-selling books, is that the world is run by secret conspiracies, that nothing is what it seems and that governments routinely engage in vast, murderous plots to protect terrible secrets. Information provided by governments, even if logical and supported by evidence, is automatically assumed to be false.[81] In contrast, evidence produced by others, even if utterly incoherent, tends to be believed.

The image of governments not being truthful has seeped deeply into popular culture since the end of the Cold War. Even the most earnest and serious campaigner for openness will have been affected by it. It is not surprising, for example, that when the UK government introduced the Freedom of Information Act of 2005 by far the most common request in the defence area was for access to files detailing the (assumed) relations between the government and alien visitors in flying saucers since the 1940s. Government's inability to produce any such files was taken as further evidence that it had something to hide. Even in its more respectable form, the mindset of mistrust tends to start from the assumption that government is hiding something and that it is the duty of journalists, campaigners and opposition figures to root it out.

Popular culture conditions the way government works to a far greater extent than is often realised. Whilst governments do have secrets, they are generally

very aware that it is seldom good politics to tell lies and deceive deliberately, for the simple reason that the consequences of discovery can be disastrous. By contrast, there are few if any sanctions for journalists or NGOs found to be telling lies. However, the widespread assumption among the educated middle classes in many Western countries that governments are concealing things and misleading them is ultimately destructive of the political system itself. The comment of US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis that 'sunlight is the best disinfectant' is dangerous as well as stupid. Whilst it is true that the comment was made in the context of a particularly adversarial and dysfunctional political system, which has never scrupled to lie and deceive, the idea has been taken up by campaigners all around the world. These people always consider governments to be wrong and believe (or say they do) that only fierce and continuous public scrutiny, preferably by themselves, will stop governments from getting away with all sorts of crimes.

In fact, attempts by governments to impose a culture of transparency have frequently had perverse negative effects. One is that governments retreat further into secrecy, as officials assume that anything they say or do on record could be used against them personally. Meetings are not minuted and decisions are only taken orally, to the detriment of policy and management. Or, efficiency suffers as a result of those who are supposed to be making policy spending all their time answering questions and attending to information requests.

At this point of the discussion it is often argued that 'scrutiny' should improve performance by government and that 'openness' should produce a more effective system. However, experience in all areas of life suggests that watching, measuring, evaluating and criticising the work that people do reduces the level of performance in organisations. This is not surprising – people become defensive and nervous, spending more time justifying themselves and defending their position in case there is a dispute later on. Similarly, time spent on producing regular statistics on, for example, the government's efforts to make the military more representative of the population is time that cannot be spent on implementing that policy. However, inviting outsiders into discussions, testing hypotheses on informed audiences and publishing as much information as is feasible for general interest and comment are good things in themselves and may well help policy-making.

It will be evident that the mindset behind the distrust of government and the reflexive demand for openness is a diluted form of our old friend the Theory of Dangers, which shares a common ancestry with 18th century Anglo-Saxon liberal

distrust of government power. How relevant this is to today's world is not immediately obvious. What is needed, in fact, is a completely different concept.

Transparency is best seen not as a weapon to tame governments or an aid for crusading journalists, but as a democratic obligation owed by government to the citizen, the voter and the taxpayer. Transparency can be expensive and time-consuming, disruptive and efficiency sapping, with much of what is laboriously produced being ignored or dismissed by critics in any case. Those who work in government must at a minimum be expect to be accused on a routine basis of concealing inconvenient truths, and at worst of lying. The ambiguity of much information in such a complex area as defence does not help either. This is, however, part of the price that has to be paid in a democratic system, and one of the ways in which government recognises that it serves the people and deals with them in good faith. And, being part of the democratic process, it also has to be recognised as an element in a political game.

The same general considerations apply to the idea of accountability, which is often code for greater access and influence by those who wish to criticise and even reverse government policy. We need to distinguish carefully between the valid and important function of, on the on hand, opening up debate on policy-making, which allows people to see what is going on and, on the other, simply enlarging the magic policy-making circle to members of elite groups. It is doubtful whether in any country today there is any real public pressure for widespread discussion of wider defence issues in public, as opposed to issues like the employment of women pilots, or alleged procurement scandals, which are more interesting politically. Agitation by opposition politicians and interest groups as part of the political process should not be mistaken for interest by the public in greater accountability.

ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT?

In spite of what I have said, accountability is indeed normally perceived in the abstract, as a type of relationship that exists between the framers and implementers of policy on one hand and various outside groups on the other. What governments should be accountable for is not usually discussed in any depth, partly because demands for accountability tend to come from interest groups whose intention is to secure more influence for themselves. Because of this, they will dismiss any practical moves towards greater accountability as inadequate. How does this reconcile with democratic processes?

Democracy only works because a section of a country's citizens are prepared to go along with governments they do not like and did not elect. It presupposes that people who have voted for the losing party nonetheless accept that the winning party has a mandate and that they cannot object if that mandate is put into effect, however much they may dislike the resulting policies. It is true, of course, that some electoral systems have more support and credibility than others, but here I am assuming that a governing party has, either individually or in a coalition with another party or parties, secured more than 50 per cent of the votes in an election. But under the rules of politics it is quite legitimate for opponents of government, whether inside or outside parliament, to try and disrupt, and even reverse, a new government's proposed policies. This is particularly the case where individual policies on which the government was elected prove to be unpopular or unworkable, or where a policy adopted by the government was not in the election manifesto, possibly because the issue had not yet arisen. The policies of government are thus not entitled to any special status. Neither, however, can those who are critical of government claim any special status or higher moral ground just because they are not the government, and certainly not just because they use the vocabulary of accountability.

Nobody would want to live in a country where the government has total power, and where there are no balancing or countervailing forces. There are a number of areas where controls are necessary, and the three most important are the following:

- *The law.* An independent organisation (the courts) must have the freedom to question and overrule government actions that are contrary to the law or violate the constitution.
- *Administration.* An organisation is needed to protect citizens (and government servants themselves) from arbitrary and unfair acts, even if these are not necessarily breaches of the written law.
- *Finance.* There needs to be an organisation capable of independently scrutinising government expenditure, since there will always be a strong temptation to abuse spending powers.

This is the basis of accountability. But it should be noted that these are balancing or countervailing powers to the powers of the government. Those wielding them are not superior to the government in any general sense, nor do they occupy some kind of higher moral plane.

THE ROLE AND LIMITATIONS OF PARLIAMENT

I have not so far said very much about the role of parliaments in transparency and accountability. The problem here is that while no-one would argue that parliaments should be excluded from decisions on defence matters, the temptation is to run to the other extreme and to suggest that 'accountability to parliament', however it is defined, is always a good thing. The fact is that a parliament reflects the political system of which it is part. Although a system with parliamentary scrutiny is obviously better than one without, one should not fall into the trap of assuming that parliament, just because it is parliament, has any automatic claim to moral superiority. Politicians want to be re-elected and have to please their electors to do so. In any constituency-based system this will mean, among other things, promoting the social and economic interests of their constituency and lobbying for investments in their electoral area. Almost by definition, such politicians are incapable of taking a wider view, and the sum-total of a series of narrow views taken by legislators is unlikely to be very edifying.

The most difficult and dangerous situations arise where capital expenditure is involved. In a system where, for example, parliamentary committees have to scrutinise the awarding of major contracts, the scope for corruption is enormous. Sometimes the impact of this may be relatively limited, amounting only to lobbying in favour of a solution that will favour the economic interests of a particular constituency. But it may be far more serious. It is a fact that whereas government decisions often involve large numbers of people, which provide an element of safety against corruption, the votes of a committee are much easier to influence with a clutch of brown envelopes.

At their best, of course, parliaments do an important job, but they should not consider themselves a surrogate government or try to second-guess government decisions. For this reason, the vague and confusing way in which the role of parliament with regard to the security sector is often described, especially by the use of words such as 'control' and 'management', is actively unhelpful. Below I present some suggestions on how the role of parliament is best carried out in practice.

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

Having been rather negative in this chapter up to this point, it is important to say something more helpful about how transparency and accountability can be made to work. Throughout this book I have criticised what I see to be naïve or

misleading assumptions about what the relationship between the security sector and the political process should be. I have been critical of some of the common assumptions in this regard since I believe that they emphasise too greatly the element of conflict and control and, in the end, do not achieve very much. As I have suggested elsewhere, a policy of control is not easy to implement and seldom effective. Indeed, while talking to enthusiasts promoting different types of oversight, I have sometimes wondered whether they have sufficiently considered that no system will work unless there is something to oversee. Oversight, in other words, is not an end in itself, but a contribution to an end.

This essential point was made by the traditional Hermetic saying: *'As above, so below'*. The objective must be to have an effective system in the first place. A system that is founded on democracy and the rule of the law, in which the military plays a role with which it and others are content, is likely to be such a system. Of course, this will not remove the requirement for transparency and accountability, but it will, in fact, make that process rather more effective and useful. This is an important point, because a confrontational style of oversight, which considers the government guilty and then seeks out the proof, is actually doomed to fail. There are two reasons for this, namely:

- It creates an adversarial culture where, instead of oversight being identified with the public interest, its advocates simply become another enemy to be fought.
- Because governments are always more powerful than organisations on the outside, they will simply hide things they do not want to be seen.

A workable approach to transparency and accountability, in fact, recognises that no amount of oversight can do much to improve a society that is politically-deficient in the first place. The virtues of accountability and transparency are not things that are forced upon a reluctant government by an altruistic group of crusaders, but are part of what good government should be about in any case. Accountability and transparency should be practised by government because this is the right thing to do, not because it is forced into it.

A WORKABLE SYSTEM

One of the themes of this book has been that better decisions are generally taken if a large number of people are involved in the decision-making process. Indeed,

a closed style of personalised decision-making is almost always a recipe for poor decisions and bad government. A collegiate style of decision-making makes it much more likely that bad ideas will be spotted early. Whilst many of those involved in the decision-making process will be part of the governing system, those affected by new policies and who will finance the outcome deserve a say as well. This should apply generally provided the process does not duplicate what has been done elsewhere.

What parliament does, in the defence field as elsewhere, is to represent the citizen, the voter and the taxpayer. The best type of relationship is where the executive is obliged to come to parliament to outline and seek approval for its policy plans. Any valid programme, well articulated, should receive the support of a sensible parliament or parliamentary committee, although partisanship, especially in an adversarial political system, may make the process more difficult. The real virtue of parliamentary scrutiny, ironically, is less to enhance the role of parliament than to oblige the executive to think through its policies, to explain them to non-experts, and to be prepared to defend and amend them if necessary. The questions that parliamentarians will ask are likely to be closely allied to the concerns of the average voter. The discipline of having to satisfy such concerns is an extremely healthy one.

The issue of extra-parliamentary lobbies is more complex. There is an important difference between NGOs and academics that produce studies on serious issues, and campaigning organisations seeking to change policies. Most NGOs will make policy suggestions as a matter of course, but the test lies in whether it is their primary purpose. Many have expertise in particular areas and employ retired government officials as specialist advisors. Such NGOs can play a useful role in introducing new ideas and influencing the thinking of government. On the other hand, campaigning organisations, especially those that focus on a single issue are analogous to political groupings since they are often more interested in power and influence than in objective facts.

The problem is that the establishment of an NGO, whether for analysis or for lobbying, takes time and money. Ordinary people in most countries do not have these luxuries and often do not have the skills to be professionally employed by NGOs either. In practice this means that such organisations are dominated by the educated middle classes, whose interests and priorities in the security area may be quite different from those of ordinary people. The ordinary citizen, for example, is much more likely to be worried about street crime than about computer fraud. In addition, in most parts of the developing world, NGOs are funded

from abroad, usually directly or indirectly by foreign governments. This does not necessarily mean that such NGOs are simple lobbyists for foreign governments, though locals may often think so, but it does rather undermine any pretensions they may have of speaking for civil society as a whole.

On the other hand, there is a great temptation in government to develop a kind of omniscient arrogance by virtue of which the views of ordinary people are dismissed as uninformed and of little interest. The fact that public views may be uninformed, however, is no excuse for dismissing the people's concerns. Government does, in fact, not only have a narrow technical duty to explain and defend its policies, but a much wider responsibility to clarify the facts with as much objectivity as possible. In the end, the quality of the debate in a country depends more on the attitude of government than on any other factor.

INFORMATION AND SECRECY

This brings me to the question of the type of policy to be pursued by government with regard to information supplied on the defence sector. Clearly, the general ethos of a country and the development of its political system will be the greatest influences on policies of this kind, but in every system there are choices to be made. To begin with, everyone would accept that in certain instances defence information needs to be protected, unlike the situation that generally applies to, say, agriculture, or for that matter culture. On the other hand, there is much evidence that too much secrecy damages a government's interests, since a lack of official information will simply lead to information being invented. Indeed, bad information usually drives out good, in the sense that the popular media and dedicated pressure groups usually tell a story that is much more colourful and attractive than the sober truth. I would suggest a distinction between two kinds of secrecy, namely:

- Fundamental secrecy, under which everything to do with defence and security is considered secret and is never be revealed.
- Incidental security, under which everything is considered on a case-by-case basis, usually according to certain guidelines.

In practice, the concept of fundamental secrecy is usually not feasible as it is impossible to keep everything secret. Moreover, a system of fundamental secrecy ends up devaluing the concept of secrecy, for when everything is secret then, in effect, nothing is secret. The areas where secrecy is justified will be obvious and

will not vary greatly between countries. However, one area that will differ from country to country is the degree to which parliament and outside agencies are involved. It is hard to generalise, but it does seem that if a legislature or an outside organisation is approached on a sensible basis, such an organisation is likely to respect the confidence and protect the information provided. This is not surprising when human psychology is taken into account. Most people would prefer to be part of an 'in-group' than an 'out-group'.

Some types of information requiring protection are not necessarily obvious. Personnel records may contain details that would be unfair to reveal and may even be inaccurate. Certain commercial information, for example that concerning equipment purchase, may be very sensitive and require protection. There is also information that other governments ask to be protected, as well as the kind of frank advice to ministers that would be very embarrassing if it were to be come out. This could include the assessment of the objectives and the negotiating positions of other nations.

As I have noted, there will always be those who believe that governments by their very nature have something to hide. The conspiratorially-minded, those who hold strong views and the single-issue campaigners will be deliberately dissatisfied with any information released by a government as this conforms to their assumptions and their needs. Accepting that one cannot please all of the people all of the time, there are strong practical advantages for a government to adopt a policy that is seen to be sensible, that maximises the information that can be released and clarifies why certain other information cannot be made available. In part, the issue is one of attitude as much as anything else. A government that makes an effort to be as open as possible and provides sensible explanations when it cannot is likely to find favour with most people. But to argue, as did one apocryphal British official, that 'if it's in an official file it's an official secret' is not only silly, but self-defeating.

Finally, in the experience of those who have worked in the security sector, the idea of a 'culture of secrecy' – a frequent complaint among campaigners for 'transparency' – is often wide of the mark. Secrets impose their greatest burdens on those who work with them. For a journalist, the fact that a document is classified is a nuisance and an occasion for complaint. For a government official or military officer, it means that the document requires special protection, has to be kept behind lock and key, has to be signed out and carefully indexed, and involves many other tedious and time-consuming rituals. Those who work daily with 'secrets' often have a realistic and somewhat sceptical view of them.

Conclusion

Since the end of the Cold War we have seen huge changes in the organisation and structure of security forces around the world. Both in practice and in the literature there has been an understandable focus on reform and transformation, as much at the intellectual and doctrinal level as at the practical one.

The process of transformation, necessary as it has been in some cases, was never the whole story and never could have been. After all, security sectors and defence forces have a practical job to do. They require organisation and management, as well as constant adaptation and fine-tuning as circumstances change. Unfortunately, most writing on the security sector in the last decade or so has been normative, teleological and prescriptive, setting out what a 'transformed' or 'reformed' security sector should look like, on the basis, presumably, that it will not then need to change any more.

But even the most normatively impeccable security sector actually has to work. If it does not, it is a waste of time and money. It needs to be managed in a flexible and efficient way so that it is able to respond to changing circumstances. Of course, there are things that, once changed, are unlikely to revert to their previous state. So, for example, it is improbable that a country that has moved from an authoritarian to a pluralistic political system will revert to having a security sector that is secretive and unaccountable. Nonetheless, changes, even including reversions to earlier models, are always a possibility in any political system and theories that ignore this dynamic are doomed to misunderstand reality. As this text is finalised, there are, for example, reports that the South African government is considering reversing many of the changes made to its police force post-

1994. It apparently intends to reintroduce the previous system of military ranks in a more paramilitary and disciplined force. The reason appears to be that some of the normatively based reforms introduced over the last 15 years have been ineffective in reducing crime. Similar situations have occurred in other countries.

This book has been concerned less with an ideal structure for a security sector than how a properly functioning security sector actually works, and the place of defence within it. Such issues are becoming progressively more important as reform and transformation efforts reach finality in many countries. It is clear that issues such as the relationship between the state and the security sector, relations with parliament, and transparency and accountability all have an important role to play. But none of them are objectives in themselves, and none of them, alone or taken together, actually tell us much about how to manage a security sector and its defence component for the good of the nation as a whole. That is what this book has attempted to do.

Notes

1   For an entertaining, and in places terrifying account of the misadventures of donor nations trying to export 'good governance', see: Kate Jenkins and William Plowden. *Governance and Nationbuilding: the failure of international intervention*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2006.

2   The current move to describe it as the 'security system' seems to me to be a distinction without a difference, if not actively harmful.

3   Securing Peace and Development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform. *Report of the Secretary General*, New York: United Nations, 2008, 21.

4   The distinction was first made in Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* (1748)*,* in the section discussing England.

5   See: Michael Brozoska, Development donors and the concept of security sector reform, Occasional Paper No. 4, Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2003.

6   I have said rather more about this issue in David Chuter, From threats to tasks: making and implementing national security policy, in *Journal of Security Sector Management*, Vol. 5 (2), 2007.

7   See http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/ (accessed 14 June 2009)**.**

8   For example, on Africa: Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz. *Africa works: disorder as political instrument.* Oxford: James Curry, 1999, 18. On the Balkans: Catherine Götze, Civil society organisations in failing states: the Red Cross in Bosnia and Albania, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 11 (4), Winter 2004. And on China: Thomas A Metzger, The Western concept of the civil society in the context of Chinese history, in S Kaviraj and S Khilnani (eds), *Civil society: History and possibilities*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

9   See: Charles Tilly's well-known essay, War making and state making as organised crime, in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds), *Bringing the state back in,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

10   A copy of NSC-68 can be found at http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc- 68.htm (accessed 14 June 2009). The ideas were not, of course, new, having been common currency on the political right since the 1920s. They did not represent a consensus in Washington at the time, but became dominant with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1953.

11   See: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/episode-7/01-01.htm (accessed 14 June 2009).

12   Daniel Yergin. *Shattered peace: origins of the Cold War and the national security state.* London: Penguin Books, 1980.

13   Kenneth W Grundy. *The militarisation of South African politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.

14   A large online archive of documents on and analyses of Plan Condor, in English and Spanish, is found at http://larc.sdsu.edu/humanrights/rr/Latin%20America/PLA.html (accessed 25 September 2009).

15   The distinctions between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi are not, of course, ethnic but socio-economic in nature, rather like the distinction between the aristocracy and the peasantry in pre-modern Europe. If anything, this made the conflicts more difficult to resolve. An analogy would be a negotiated end to the French Revolution in 1790.

16   SE Finer. *The man on horseback: the role of the military in politics.* London: Pall Mall Press, 1962, 6.

17   Samuel P Huntingdon. *The soldier and the state: the theory and practice of civil-military relations.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957, 90.

18   Ibid. 7.

19   See Max Weber, Politik aus Beruf (Politics as a Vocation), in HH Gertch and C Wright Mills (eds), *From Max Weber: essays in sociology,* London: Routledge, 1991, 77-128. Weber did not argue that this was the only characteristic of a state, but saw it as one of the most important. Equally, he did not believe that the state necessarily had to be the sole legitimate user of force, but rather to have the say over which force was legitimate and which was not.

20   Herbert M Howe. *Ambiguous order: military forces in African states.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001, 41.

21   An *actual* usable nuclear capability system includes guidance systems and delivery vehicles with an acceptable degree of accuracy. Here, I am concerned with essentially political issues.

22   On Latin American military traditions see, among others, Kees Konings, Political armies, security forces and democracy in Latin America, in Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham (eds), *Governing insecurity: democratic control of military and security establishments in transitional democracies,* London: Zed Books, 2003; and Brian Loveman, Historical foundations of civil-military relations in Spanish America, in David Pion-Berlin (ed.), *Civil-military relations in Latin America: new analytical perspectives,* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. A pioneering work on the different traditions of African militaries is: Martin Rupiyah (ed.), *Evolutions and revolutions: a contemporary history of militaries in Southern Africa.* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2005.

23   Although one should not forget Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe of Liberia.

24   Francis Fukuyama. *Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity.* London: Hamish Hamilton, 1995.

25   See, for example, James Mulvenon, To get rich is unprofessional: Chinese military corruption in the Jiang Era, in *China Leadership Monitor*, 6, Spring 2003.

26   They have indeed been conspicuously absent in some non-effective armies. The old Sierra Leone Armed Forces, for example, were notorious for just being another group trying to make money, albeit armed and often violent.

27 Around two thirds of the French troops who helped liberate the country in 1944 were from the colonies, a fact that had rather dropped out of public awareness until the release of the 2006 film *Indigènes* about the experiences of soldiers from the Maghreb.

28 Christened *Befehlstaktik* by German military theorists (literally 'order tactics'), although there is no real equivalent in English.

29 Finer, *The man on horseback*, 7.

30 This is an American formulation. The German Army practised the same idea very successfully in two wars as A*uftragstaktik*.

31 See instead David Chuter, Understanding security sector reform, *Journal of Security Sector Management*, 4(2), April 2006.

32 The Argentine military's involvement in the 1955 ousting of President Peron ultimately produced 'a near civil war among opposing military factions'. See: J Samuel Fitch. *The armed forces and democracy in Latin America.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, 18.

33 John Wiseman, Leadership and personal danger in African politics, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 31(4) (1993), 657-60.

34 See: Christopher Clapham. *Africa and the international system.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 5.

35 Eliot A Cohen. *Supreme command: soldiers, statesmen and leadership in wartime.* New York: The Free Press, 2002, 225. Emphasis in original.

36 Samuel P Huntingdon, The soldier and the state: the theory and practice of civil military relations, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957; Finer, *The man on horseback*; and, somewhat later, Morris Janowitz. *The professional soldier: a social and political portrait*. New York: Free Press, 1971.

37 Finer, *The Man on horseback*, 6.

38 Huntington, *The Soldier and the state*, 68.

39 Ibid. 122. Cited – approvingly – by Ernesto Lopez, Latin America: objective and subjective civilian control revisited, in David Pion-Berlin (ed.), *Civil-military relations in Latin America: new analytical perspectives*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, 91.

40 Ibid. 88.

41 J Samuel Fitch, Military attitudes towards democracy: how do we know if anything has changed? in Pion-Berlin (ed.), *Civil-military relations*, 60.

42 Michael Brzoska, Development donors and the concept of Security Sector Reform, 3.

43 Ibid. 5.

44 Ibid. 6.

45 A notable recent example is the *OECD/DAC handbook on security sector reform.* Paris: OECD, 2007.

46   Harold Millis, Reorganisation, in Millis, with Harvey Mansfield and Harold Stein, *Arms and the state,* New York, Twentieth Century Fund, 1958, 35.

47   Finer, *The Man on Horseback,* 2.

48   Samuel Decalo, *Coups and army rule in Africa: motivations and constraints*, 2nd edit., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, 29.

49   Claude E Welch Jr., Civilian control of the military: myth and reality, in Welch (ed.), *Civilian control of the military: theory and cases from developing countries,* Albany: State of New York Press, 1976. 9.

50   Luis Tibletti, Armed forces mission and the strengthening of democracy in the Americas, in Donald E Schultz (ed.), *The role of the armed forces in the Americas: Civil-Military Relations for the 21st century,* Conference Report, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 1998, 77.

51   Welch, Civilian control of the military, 2.

52   Huntingdon, The Soldier and the state, 84.

53   Ibid. 81.

54   Welch, Civilian control of the military, 6-34.

55   Carl von Clausewitz. *On war.* Michael Howard and Peter Paret (eds). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, 99. Everyone even remotely interested in the subject should read Clausewitz himself, but a good modern commentary is also necessary. See Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz,* London, Pimlico, 2002.

56   Welch, Civilian control of the military, 2.

57   Harold Millis, Reorganisation, in Millis, with Harvey Mansfield and Harold Stein, *Arms and the State,* New York, Twentieth Century Fund, 1958, 24.

58   Ministers will still, of course, have to present the defence budget to parliament, and in many cases secure agreement for individual programmes within it.

59   Max Weber, Bureaucracy, originally published as Part III, Ch. 6 of his epic *Wirtshaft und Gesellschaft.* An English translation is given in HH Gerth and C Wright Mills (eds), *From Max Weber: essays in sociology,* London: Routledge, 1991, 196-244.

60   Variants of this system are in use in Francophone Africa and in much of Eastern Europe. The French word *cabinet* originally just meant 'office' and is still used, for example, for a doctor's or lawyer's practice, or a consultancy firm.

61   Formal and informal decision-making systems often exist together. Africa is a case in point, where formal structures inherited from the colonial era frequently coexist with traditional, informal ones.

62   Eboe Hutchful, Understanding the African security crisis, in Abdel-Fatau Musah and J Kayode Fayemi (eds), *Mercenaries: An African security dilemma*, London: Pluto, 2000, 212.

63　I am concerned here with military functions. Many constitutions make provision for the country's president to be appointed the head of the armed forces. However, this is a way of underlining that the political leadership has the final say on issues of war and peace, not a description of a day-to-day command relationship.

64　Chris Smith. *India's ad hoc arsenal: direction or drift in defence policy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 65.

65　Review of intelligence on weapons of mass destruction. Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, London: The Stationery Office, 2004, 28. The whole report is well worth reading.

66　This remark is attributed to the American Secretary of State Henry Stimson at the time he was closing down the US code-breaking facility in 1929. He changed his mind later.

67　White Paper on Intelligence, Government of South Africa, 2. To be fair, elsewhere in the White Paper, and in other more recent documents, the covert nature of intelligence collection is more fully acknowledged.

68　Section 1 (xii) of the National Strategic Intelligence Act, Republic of South Africa, 1994.

69　Ministerial Review Commission on Intelligence, Intelligence in a constitutional democracy, Final Report, South Africa, September 2008, 10.

70　Ibid. 99.

71　See, for example, 'Pakistan's spies "quit politics"', in http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7747400.stm (accessed 12 September 2009).

72　I am not employing here the technical vocabulary of HUMINT (human intelligence), SIGINT (signals intelligence), etc. because I am more concerned with political than with technical distinctions.

73　In all of this, I am making the assumption that the intelligence agencies of a country are under such a degree of control that rational planning as outlined is possible. This is not always the case and agencies may work for different masters with different agendas.

74　To be fair, another problem was the tendency, noted earlier, to elevate what can be measured to that which cannot. The Americans thought they were fighting a war of attrition, which was not the case as far as the Vietnamese were concerned. Because of this assumption and the fact that they were measuring the wrong thing, American assessments were bound to be as flawed. See, for example, Larry Cable's *Unholy grail: the US and the wars in Vietnam 1965-8*, London: Routledge, 1991.

75　See David Chuter, Triumph of the will? Or, why surrender is not always inevitable, in *Review of International Studies*, 23 (1997), 381-400.

76　Cited by D Michael Shafer in his book *Deadly paradigms: the failure of US counterinsurgency policy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, 244.

77　Stephen P Cohen. *The Indian Army: its contribution to the development of a nation.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990, 176.

78 Although in recent years they have started to pretend that they do.

79 Almost, because energy efficient measures, for example, do save money in the long term.

80 Although a number of new nations (for example, Israel, South Africa, Singapore and Korea) are establishing themselves in certain niche markets.

81 Opinion polls generally show that around one-third of the American population believes that its government maintains regular contact with extraterrestrials and is covering up the fact.

A well-functioning security sector is recognised as the foundation of any stable and prosperous society. Defence, properly integrated into government-wide security structures, is an essential component of this stability, and also an important tool of foreign policy. The fruit of more than thirty years of professional experience, research and teaching around the world, *Governing and Managing the Defence Sector* provides a thorough discussion of how to organise and manage so as get the best out of the defence sector, as well as the management of resources and the conduct of military operations. Specific chapters also address intelligence, the making and implementation of national security policy, roles of civilians and the military, and the democratic obligations of transparency and accountability. Throughout, the emphasis is on practical problems and possible solutions, drawn from the author's wide international experience. The book is a sequel to *Defence Transformation* (published in 2000 by the Institute for Security Studies), which was translated into several languages and is used in staff colleges, universities and training institutes in many parts of the world.

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