Silent Coup of the Guardians:
The Influence of U.S. Military Elites on National Security
By

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Abstract

Understanding U.S. national security and foreign policy decision-making requires understanding the actors in the process. Extant scholarship examines the role and behavior of the President; influence of civilian elites, advisors, bureaucracies, and institutions; and, more limitedly, the impact of civil-military relations on policy. There are no investigations, however, into the role and behavior of U.S. military elites, as a well-defined, homogenous group of actors in the policy process. This dissertation contributes to filling this gap. It examines military elites utilizing an exclusive 'insider academic research' approach. In a grounded theory methodology, over 100 interviews are conducted with national security elites from the Reagan administration to the present. Elite interviews are conducted with the military, diplomatic corps, intelligence community, academia, think tanks, as well as current and past National Security Council staff and leadership. The findings demonstrate two propositions. First, military elites constitute an epistemic community and, second, as an epistemic community, they play a unique role with exceptional influence over both policy process and outcome. These findings help explain nuanced relationships between military elites, the President, and Congress; decision-making in national security and foreign policy; and civil-military balance of power relations that suggest a potential trend of praetorian behavior among U.S. military elites.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear brother, Trent Stephen Schmidt
November 25, 1975 – February 11, 2011

A loving son, a caring minister, a prolific and prophetic poet, a courageous warrior, a dedicated friend. A member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team – Sky Soldiers – and a Non-Commissioned Officer, the Backbone of our United States Army. Trent was a veteran of Afghanistan, fighting in Logar Province out of Combat Outpost Charkh – "the Charkh tank." He was a respected military intelligence analyst and interrogator, trusted by his subordinates, peers, and leadership for his exceptional skill sets. When Trent lost his best friend Matt "Matty" Hennigan on June 20, 2010 in a fire fight IVO Tangi Valley and Combat Outpost Shank, he lost a part of himself. He was designated to escort Matty home to his family, leaving a part of himself in Afghanistan that he would never recover.

I count Trent as a casualty of war – "collateral damage" – in the cold vocabulary of military conflict. I believe Trent suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. He returned home to our parents while on official leave, en-route to assignment with Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, but died in a head-on collision just a few short miles from his boyhood home in Greenwood, Indiana.

A native Hoosier, Trent was a graduate of Greenwood High School, a recognized student leader and star athlete in Varsity Football, Wrestling, and Track & Field. It would be hard to find a better, safer, more wholesome place to grow up and develop as a young man, than in Greenwood and the greater Johnson County area – nurtured by family, friends, church, and community. He graduated from both Indiana University (Indianapolis) and Indiana Bible College with concentrated studies in Political Science, Philosophy, Religion, and French.

Sergeant Trent Schmidt's awards and decorations include the Combat Action Badge, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Army Parachutist Badge, and Air Assault Badge.

He was more than a brother to me – he was a brother-in-arms. He challenged me, grounded me, and loved me. I wish, more than anything, that I could have better understood the emotional and psychological pain he suffered. I wish I could have broken through his warrior's stoicism.

Acknowledgments

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" said Alice.
"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.
"I don't much care where--" said Alice.
"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.
"--so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.
"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough"
(Carroll 1865, 75-76)

I have been and continue to be exceptionally blessed. The Army has allowed me several opportunities to broaden my experiences and education outside traditional paths. Following my commissioning as a distinguished military graduate out of Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI) and the Capital Warrior ROTC Battalion, I spent my first year on active duty in an Indiana Governor's Fellowship. A year in Afghanistan as a Battery Commander led to a year at Georgetown University. Three years in the Pentagon led to a year at the Command and General Staff College. A year and a half working throughout Gulf Cooperation Council countries led to a year at the School of Advanced Military Studies for a second master's degree. Following the incredible opportunity to serve as a Battalion Commander in both garrison and combat, I have been afforded the opportunity to pursue a PhD. Of the 23 years I will have served by the time this dissertation is complete, nearly a quarter of my career will be directed towards professional development.

It was not until writing this dissertation that I learned the history and read the extensive studies behind why the military invests so heavily in the education and professional development of its service members. Studies in the 1970s and 1980s created guideposts out to 2025. The logic behind these efforts was rooted in the military's experience during Vietnam, as well as its forecast of the future international and domestic political environments. I encourage Army leaders to know the history behind why we invest so heavily in education and do more to inform and encourage high-performing junior leaders to take advantage of the incredible opportunities open to them.

To our Army and the Soldiers and Leaders with whom I have served – thank you! Thank you for allowing me the *privilege* of serving. Thank you for trusting the leadership and care of our Soldiers and their families to me. I am thankful for a host of incredible opportunities to do things that very few people ever have the opportunity to do. I am thankful for the incredible people beside which I have served, the places to which I have visited, and the experiences that I have gained that have shaped and molded me along the way.

Thank you to several individuals that made this current opportunity possible. BG (Ret.) Don Fryc, LTG Thomas Horlander, Dr. Jeff Kubiak, Dr. Robert Davis, Dr. Dan Cox, Mrs. Candi Hamm (the Godmother of SAMS), and the leadership and staff of SAMS and ASP3. Several individuals and organizations assisted along the way. Thank you to Ambassador David Miller, Colonel (Ret.) Mike Shaler, Harvard's Belfer Center, Stanford's Hoover Institute and those that assisted in the many incredible interviews conducted during this study. Thank you to many of the Faculty across multiple Departments and Centers at the United States Military Academy at West Point; the staffs of the Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth; the Watson Library, University of Kansas; the National Defense University, Archives and Special Collections; and my local Johnson County Library on Antioch Street, Overland Park, Kansas.

A special note of gratitude to the Arthur D. Simons Center for Interagency Cooperation under the leadership of its Director, Rod Cox (COL, USA, Ret.), and Program Assistant, Mrs. Elizabeth Ditsch. The Simons Center generously provided office space at Fort Leavenworth, and

technical and administrative support throughout my program of study and research. I undoubtedly received the better end of the deal and am forever grateful.

Not many fully understand the important role of think tanks in our society and system of government. One of the many benefits they provide, particularly in times of hyper-partisanship and polarization, is a neutral ground for experts, academics, and practitioners to find solutions to our most wicked policy problems. I scoured elite think tanks for experts on national security and foreign policy and found a population of civil servants willing to share their expertise, experiences, and observations. I would like to thank the following think tanks for providing immeasurable and invaluable service to our nation through their scholars: American Enterprise Institute (AEI), Atlantic Council, Brookings Institute, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and the Center for a New American Security (CNAS).

A special thank you to all the incredible public servants and senior retired officials that provided interviews for this dissertation. The list is too long to name them all. However, there are some that stand out as having helped inspire, motivate, and conceive the study in its current form in some way. They answered all of my questions; helped to steer my efforts; facilitated access to elites I would never have been able to contact; questioned my assumptions and biases; and provided strategic guidance that helped me understand the greater purpose of this work beyond the findings. They include (in alphabetical order): Mr. Stephen Hadley, General Michael Hayden, General James Jones, Lt.Gen. H.R. McMaster, Amb. David Miller, General David Petraeus, Amb. Thomas Pickering, General Colin Powell, and General Peter Schoomaker.

To the active-duty military service members, DOD and DOS civilians, and current and former members of the National Security Council Staff, thank you for taking your very limited and valuable time to share your experiences and observations. The willingness of these public servants to give generously of their time to a PhD student in the pursuit of academic investigation restores my personal faith that beneath an exceptionally rancorous political environment, there remains a deep core of committed individuals, past and present, that stand ready to serve when called, again and again.

To the University of Kansas, Department of Political Science – thank you to Dr. Mariya Omelicheva, my advisor and Co-Chair, for your patience and faith in my efforts. I am humbled by the amount of time and work you invested in my journey. Thank you to my committee, Dr. Don Haider-Markel (a Co-Chair demonstrating gracious patience for my periodic 'drive-by'), Dr. Mark Joslyn (my graduate advisor, always ready with a smile, encouragement, and 'work around' for any bureaucratic hurdle), Dr. John Kennedy (a tremendously supportive methods coach that gave more than I deserved), and Dr. Adrian Lewis (inaugural recipient of the Pittaway Military History Professorship and the "go to" for just about every military officer that comes through KU for their PhD. RLTW!). Faculty outside of my committee and department that provided significant feedback and consultation include Dr. Alesha Doan and Dr. Jay Johnson. The training, development, methods, and feedback required to conduct this study were a combined effort of these tremendous scholars.

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I am exceptionally blessed by a wonderful family that has supported me from day one. To my parents, Stephen and Wendy – you have invested so much into my life that I will never be able

to either fathom or repay. Thank you for raising me with traditional values to guide my steps, to seek a liberal education, to think independently, to travel the world, and invite adventure and discovery…a yearning to learn, achieve, and accomplish. To my brother and sister, Trent and Tara – thank you for challenging me to be a better person, for helping to form who I am. Tara – your unconditional love and spirit bind our family and it is one of the great honors of my life to be called your brother.

To my wife Leslie – you are the best thing that ever happened to me. You saved me from myself and continue to wrap me in your love. Although it may be cliché, you make me strive to be a better version of myself each and every day. Thank you for supporting my personal and professional endeavors, for your patience and perseverance during our long and multiple geographical separations. You are the love of my life and I am very fortunate to have you as my best friend and wife. I love you and I love being your husband. I have been and continue to be exceptionally blessed.

Disclaimer

The analysis, conclusions, and opinions expressed in this dissertation are those of the author. The names of people, organizations, and institutions listed or mentioned in this dissertation are not an indication of endorsement. They have neither offered nor been solicited for an endorsement of the findings of this dissertation or my opinion related to the consequences and implications of the findings.

Additionally, the findings of this dissertation do not reflect the official position of the U.S Government, Department of Defense, the United States Army, the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, the School of Advanced Military Studies, the officer corps of the military, or the University of Kansas – Department of Political Science. They belong to the author, along with all flaws, biases, and errors.

Preface

> "Regardless of the nature of the political culture in which he lives, the modern military officer is oriented toward maximizing his influence in politics and policy. In nations with highly institutionalized political systems, the military attempts to exert its influence over the making of national security policy…ineffective governments frequently find that they are unable to control their military establishments, which come to exercise independent political power. We refer to such armies as *praetorian*." (Perlmutter and Bennett 1980, 3)

The term *coup* has several meanings. In this investigation, it is not used in the context of a hostile military *coup d'état* overthrowing a democratically elected government. Rather, it is used to signify the claiming of power and influence over a competitor, much more in the tradition of how Native Americans "counted coup" against rivals to demonstrate courage.

The term "guardian" harkens back to the writings of Xenophon and Plato; referring to guardians of the state that allow inhabitants to "live their lives in blissful security" (Xenophon 2008). Plato went so far as to commend guardians as the best rulers of the state, suggesting that "the elder must rule the younger; and the best of the elders will be the best of the guardians." But, he warned, guardians can become too comfortable in governing and with political affiliation. He stated, "when the guardians degenerate into boon companions [with politicians], then the ruin is complete" (Plato 2008). The history of Rome's "Praetorian Guard" provides an example of Plato's forewarning.

The "Praetorian Guard" were military elites within the Roman Army. They evolved under the reigns of Augustus and Julio-Claudian into political actors that were incorporated into "the overall civic administration" of Rome and its empire (Bingham 1997, 2). They were increasingly involved in matters of national security, foreign diplomacy, and intelligence gathering; as well as in domestic missions, such as aiding in law enforcement and augmenting response to domestic emergencies. By the third century, the Praetorian Guard was alternately viewed as fundamental to Rome's continuity of government, as well as a "symptom and cause" of its decline and eventual collapse (Bingham 1997, 3; Gibbon 1957, 91).

Today, a condition of *praetorianism* describes a dynamic in which military elites within a state actively participate in government. Politics has penetrated their ranks. They are political actors with political preferences that intervene in the policy process, whether to corral a novice executive, preserve and maintain *status quo*, correct and redirect policy in accordance with their preferences, dominate policy process to effect control, or a combination of these actions. The behavior of these military elites falls along a spectrum of praetorianism that ranges from moderate political actors in the policy process to dominant actors in the governing process (Nordlinger 1977).

It is well-established in the literature that U.S. military officers are increasingly conservative, increasingly identify with Republican elites, and increasingly identify as Republican voters (Holsti 2001; Urben 2010; Golby 2011). Military elites within the officer corps are not unbiased, impartial, neutral, or apolitical. Suggestions to the contrary are derisory. Military elites, like all actors in government, cannot cognitively separate their political beliefs and preferences from their behavior, role, and influence in the policy process. Rather, they inject their beliefs and biases into the policy process in an effort to achieve their policy preferences.

Facilitating this dynamic, military elites are heavily embedded and relied upon in the policy process. As a group, they constitute a powerful community in the national security policy process that is no longer effectively controlled by civilian leadership. Rather, in matters of national security, civilians are reliant and dependent upon military elites. They rely on them to inform decisions. They rely on them to establish, control, manage, and lead planning and decision-making process. Finally, they rely on them to carry out and implement policy decisions, once made. In the coming decades,

facing the international environment and rapid evolution of technology currently forecast by the U.S. National Security Strategy, this dynamic will only become more acute.

Distinguishing traits of change in the character of conflict in the 21st Century will be the speed in which both change and conflict occurs; simultaneity of multi-dimensional contests against an expanding array of threats; continual evolvement of international relationships; and the consequences and implications of rapidly changing human geography, technology, and persistent disorder and conflict (JOE 2035 2016). This global environment will be marked by interstate conflict, short of war, that is primarily non-kinetic and cyber-based. Outbreak of militarized conflict will increasingly incorporate cyber warfare and autonomous weapon systems that incorporate artificial intelligence.

In the moments that preface conflict of this character, national security and foreign policy decisions and actions will have political and military facets and consequences that require rapid decision and response. Military and civilian elites, locked in an epoch struggle for power and influence in the realm of national security policy, should consider where the balance of power falls in the context of what is best for the U.S. grand strategy and decision-making (Rumsfeld 2004a). In this global environment that is rapidly advancing and increasingly technical, how do civilian institutions, plagued by partisanship, polarization, and gridlock, and nominally led by elected officials that "can barely turn on a laptop computer," protect and guard the Republic (Sanger 2019)?

Most elected officials, particularly presidents, have no executive experience at the federal level of government. The experience they do have is mostly political and of little value in governing. They enter into a position of executive authority "deeply ignorant" of their role and responsibilities, particularly their role as Commander-in-Chief. They require significant time to reorient themselves from campaigning to governing and learning their job. Yet, many of the most important decisions they will make come "at a time when they are least capable of deciding wisely." They are often hobbled by civilian advisors with equally weak qualifications. Other than the senior military elites that serve them, presidents find themselves surrounded by strangers and, in many cases, incompetents (Hess 2002, 12-13; Cheney 2000).

Various scholarship and think tank studies across the past several decades that span the temporal scope of this study lament the partisan politicization of U.S. national security and foreign policy. This is coupled with a systematic breakdown of the U.S.'s ability "to fashion a coherent and consistent approach to the world" (Destler et al. 1984, 11; Crocker et al 2016). Lieutenant General (Retired) Brent Scowcroft noted that we continue to "have no strategy that covers the entire world," causing the U.S. to suffer from "strategic confusion…due to a failure to think ahead" (Crocker et al 2016, i). These studies typically focus on the institutions that play a role in national security and foreign policy, the structure of the organization responsible for managing the process, and the policy process itself.

In a tradition of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), as a subfield of International Relations (IR), this study investigates the behavior, role, and influence of a single group of actors in this policy process through the lens of epistemic community theory. It proposes that U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community, playing a unique role with exceptional influence. The findings of this study have consequences and implications for understanding how national security and foreign policy decisions are made.

I do not believe this dissertation to be controversial. I find it intuitive because the scholarship of several different fields creates the roadmap for the findings of this investigation. However, as a 23-year active-duty U.S. Army Colonel assigned to complete my PhD, I used my status to conduct "insider academic research" and gather unique data to test and demonstrate my propositions. I conducted this research with the approval of the University of Kansas and the Army's School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS).

I provided my findings to the leadership and staff of SAMS, as well as presenting it at a University of Nebraska-Omaha / USSTRATCOM–sponsored conference in Omaha, NE. I also emailed many of the senior military sample participants to inform them of my findings. The responses were, generally, "haven't we known this all along?" However, what previously may have been implicitly assumed, is now explicitly demonstrated. If anything, it is my opinions related to the consequences and implications of my findings that I hope may provoke healthy debate.

The evolution of military influence in national security and foreign policy is not the result of any grand, deliberate, or disturbing effort. No single individual or group of actors is directly responsible; there is no conspiring or intent and effort to conspire. Yet, the findings presented here, I believe, are a clarion call for understanding the implications of electing novice politicians, neglecting investment in and emphasis on career public service, denying resources to the institutions that govern elements of national power other than the military, and an escalating sense of entitlement and praetorianism among politicized military elites and what it means for the American polity and Republic.

Very respectfully,
Todd A. Schmidt
Colonel, United States Army

List of Acronyms

APNSA	Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
ASP3	Advanced Strategic Planning and Policy Program
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CJCS	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
CMR	Civil-Military Relations
COCOM	Combatant Commander
DA	Department of the Army
DAP	Deputy Assistant to the President
DASD	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOS	Department of State
EXECSEC	Executive Secretariat
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
GAO	General Accounting Office
HQDA	Headquarters, Department of the Army
IR	International Relations
IRB	Institutional Review Board
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JOE	Joint Operational Environment
MOC	Member of Congress
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NSC	National Security Council
NSS	National Security Strategy
OGA	Other Governmental Agency
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
OSD-P	Office of the Secretary of Defense, Policy
ROTC	Reserve Officers Training Corps
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
SAP	Special Assistant to the President
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
USAF	United States Air Force
USDP	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
VCJCS	Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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Introduction

> "The 'politicalization' of the high military that has been going on over the last fifteen years is a rather intricate process: as members of a professional officer corps, some military men develop a vested interest – personal, institutional, ideological – in the enlargement of all things military…some are zealous to enlarge their own particular domains. As men of power, some develop quite arrogant, and others shrewd, drives to influence, enjoying as a high value the exercise of power…the professional military are not inherently out for political power…power essentially political in nature may be and has been thrust upon them by *civilian default*" (italics added) (Mills 1959, 199-200).

Since the end of World War II and particularly over the past four decades, the behavior of U.S. military elites in national security and foreign policy decision-making has become increasingly influential and autonomous. It tenuously tips the scales of a delicate civil-military balance of power that affects U.S. national security and foreign policy. The elected officials and political appointees with which military elites work increasingly have little or no executive experience at the federal level of government. The experience they do have is mostly political and of little value in governing. Civilian leadership enters into a position of executive authority "deeply ignorant" of their role and responsibilities. They require significant time to reorient themselves from a national presidential campaign to governing a uniquely powerful nation. Yet, many of the most important decisions they will make come "at a time when they are least capable of deciding wisely" (Hess 2002, 12-13).

This dynamic has evolved in such a manner that finds civilian supremacy and control over the U.S. military no longer inviolate. Civilians no longer effectively control the military. Military elites now play a unique role with exceptional influence over U.S. national security and foreign policy.

Facilitating this evolution, civilian leaders and elected officials continue to delegate vast authorities to military elites, while abdicating their own oversight responsibility. They heavily rely on military elites to inform decisions. They rely on military elites to establish, lead, and manage planning

and decision-making processes. Finally, they rely on military elites to carry out and implement policy decisions, once made. A consequence of this evolution is the militarization of U.S. national security strategy and foreign policy; making national strategy that incorporates a "whole of government" approach increasingly aspirational (Schake and Mattis 2016a).

Repeated failure to integrate other elements of national power in pursuit of national security goals and objectives has led to a withered ability of the U.S. to formulate, pursue, and realize grand strategy (Locher 2010). Rather, the U.S. pursues and implements coercive, muscle-bound policies dominated by the military. It increasingly defines domestic and diplomatic issues under the veil of national security and relies on military elites to achieve desirable endstates (Milner and Tingley 2015). A second consequence of this evolution is increasing defense expenditures at the expense of other governmental agencies, resulting in trend of over-reliance on military power as rival institutions are under-funded, under-resourced, and under-manned.

These trends, combined with the current and anticipated global security environment, provide cause for examining the role of military elites that lead the military and the U.S. military's role in and relationship to the national security policy process. This examination will help answer how national security and foreign policy decisions are affected and implemented by military elites and how their influence impacts civil-military balance of power relations. This examination rests on a fundamental proposition that a dynamic community of military elites constitutes an *epistemic community*, a group of elite military officers with authoritative knowledge that play a unique role with exceptional influence on national security and foreign policy.

This epistemic community of military elites have been at war continuously for nearly two decades; working alongside a large majority of civilian leaders, elected officials, and political appointees with limited or episodic national security and foreign policy experience. The implication being that the majority of civilians in government have little "skin in the game." Given the validity of

this assumption, scholars and practitioners need to better understand the evolving role of military elites in U.S. national security and how it has come to fill a critical leadership-knowledge-power vacuum (Higbee 2010; Jenkins and Volden 2017). Understanding these trends, and the role of military elites within them, has significant theoretical implications in understanding important influences on U.S. national security and foreign policy decision-making, as well as implications for understanding civil-military balance of power relations in practice versus theory.

This dissertation explores the behavior, role, and influence of U.S. military elites on national security policy through the lens of *epistemic community theory*. It treats military elites as a unit, as a homogenous community. This unit of analysis is, in a way, *unitary*, but what makes this research different is that instead of postulating the *unitary a priori*, it interrogates what makes military elites into such a powerful unitary actor. It describes what creates the unity within this community. The result is not a faceless unitary actor, but a social actor characterized by a set of conceptual attributes and characteristics that are complex and nuanced.

Epistemic community theory posits that networks of professionals with recognized expertise and authoritative, consensual knowledge exert influence over policy process, decision-making outcomes, and implementation (Haas 1992; Cross 2011). Previous work has demonstrated the utility of epistemic community theory in analyzing international networks of experts and their influence on cross-national policies. It helps international relations scholars understand individual and group behavior in the international system and transnational policy process. It provides a more nuanced understanding of the role these actors play and the influence they exert on process and outcomes.

With the work of Haas (1992), Cross (2011, 2013a, 2013b), and others (Thomas 1997; Sugden 2006; Libel 2016), epistemic community theory has specifically demonstrated utility in analyzing the behavior of defense-sector elites in both an international and domestic environment. This dissertation extends this analysis by applying an epistemic community theoretical framework to

a specified, homogenous group of U.S. military elites. First, it proposes that military elites constitute an epistemic community, distinct from competing networks of professionals, through a detailed analysis of the conceptual attributes of epistemic communities as defined by the literature. Secondly, it proposes they play a unique role and exercise exceptional influence on U.S. national security policy by demonstrating what scholars would expect to be the outcomes of a policy process under the heavy influence of military elites. Finally, it concludes with adjustments to the theory and the implications and consequences of these findings.

Examining the behavior, role, and influence of military elites on national security and foreign policy in the context of epistemic community theory is important because there are no investigations into the behavior, role, and influence of a homogenous community of elites at the domestic level in U.S. national security and foreign policy decision-making, particularly the military. This investigation fills that gap. Additionally, it provides important expansion and modifications to the epistemic community theory framework. It illuminates additional aspects of a union of experts, accounting for their hold on knowledge and influence. Finally, it provides nuance to the conceptual attributes that characterize epistemic communities, how they are perceived, and how they behave in practice.

I argue that U.S. military elites are defined and characterized by specific conceptual attributes that empower them in the policy process. These conceptual attributes include: shared normative, principled, causal, and political beliefs; shared notions of validity; common policy enterprise; profession and ethos; internal cohesion and intra-group trust; consensual, authoritative knowledge and expertise; perception of an uncertain, complex environment; and external relationships, alliances, and resources. Despite these attributes, the influence they wield is mediated by personality, experience, political environment, and the challenges that arise related to national security.

I also argue that military elites, lawfully subordinate to and under the constitutional command and control of civilian authority, play a unique role in and possess weighted influence on

policy, process, and implementation. Simply put, the relationship between military elites and civilian counterparts has evolved and is more nuanced than past scholarship suggests. The implications of this weighted influence, evolution in relationship, and nuanced interaction challenges the reality of any *effective* principle of civilian control and meaningful civilian leadership authority. Idyllic theoretical assertions related to civilian control of the military are, in otherwords, a fanciful myth (Mills 1959; Finer 1962; Bletz 1972; Abrahamsson 1972; Korb 1979; Boggs 2005; Gibson 2008; Schiff 2009; Ackerman 2010; Shulman 2012).

A consequence of this evolution is that military elites have claimed power over rivals in the policy process. A "silent coup" of an increasingly "praetorian" military elite has occurred to the extent that military elites effectively and essentially control U.S. national security policy. Legacy theory and policy related to foreign policy decision-making, civil-military relations, and civilian control need to be revisited and reconsidered in the context of post-9/11 developments and a complex forecast future of the international environment, global politics, technological revolutions, and changes in the nature and character of militarized and non-militarized conflict.

National Security and Foreign Policy

The term "national security" was coined in the run-up to World War II and examined by E. Pendleton Herring in the context of American anti-militarism (Herring 1941; Stuart 2008). Pendleton's thesis was that American culture and its tradition of anti-militarism stretching back to pre-Revolutionary War caused America to be ill-prepared for international relations and conflict in the 20th Century. He argued that for the U.S. to be better prepared for its role in the world, it must evolve its method and approach to national security and foreign policy. He argued for greater military influence and a permanent role for military elites throughout the highest echelons of the federal government (Herring 1941).

National security policy deals with problems and challenges related to pursuing U.S. national interests and protecting those interests from political, economic, and military threats (Shoemaker 1991). National security policy overlaps with and includes elements of diplomacy and foreign policy, domestic policy, law enforcement, military and defense policy, financial and economic policy, and intelligence policy. An alternative view suggests that foreign policy is at the center of this Venn diagram.

Foreign policy is defined as the activities of government officials that influence events and relationships internationally between the U.S. and foreign governments and citizens. In this approach, foreign policy encompasses national security, economic, trade, and monetary policy (Destler 1972, 5). The terms *national security* and *foreign policy* are often used together or interchangeably in this dissertation. The rationale behind this practice is that from WWII to the present, military considerations have dominated U.S. foreign policy and they are now seen as broadly overlapping (Lovell 1974; Jordan and Taylor 1981). This matters because it relates to how policy is organizationally influenced, led, informed, developed, decided, and implemented.

In line with Herring's pre-WWII recommendations, a major evolutionary development was the intimate involvement, role, influence, and association of military elites with the formulation and implementation of national security and foreign policy. World War II also created an intimate connection between the military and American society (Sarkesian 1994). As Americans accepted the role of the U.S. on the international stage during WWII, they also accepted the increasing militarization of its national security and foreign policy. This evolutionary change continued with codification of the war's lessons through the passage of the National Security Act of 1947.

The term "militarization" or "militarism" refers to "an emphasis on military considerations…to the neglect" of other elements of national power, as well as to other national economic and social priorities (Vagts 1959, 13-14). It implies a dominant bureaucratic position and

power of the military relative to other agencies. The military becomes a dominant priority in budget allocations. Military power becomes the dominant means of realizing diplomatic objectives. Finally, military elites rise to fill dominant positions in the national security and foreign policy decision-making process (Milner and Tingley 2015).

The increasing role of military elites in the national security policy process shifted the tone and tenor of U.S. national security policy, as well as the scope and scale of policies that fall within the boundaries of national security concerns. This dynamic fueled concerns within the military, elected officials, civilian elites, think tanks and academia; resulting in continued research and investigation into the militarization and securitization of U.S. foreign policy (Bletz 1972). Shortsighted, militarized national security and foreign policy became less bipartisan and more politicized by partisan political goals and objectives. Politicization of national security and foreign policy subsequently led to an over-reliance on military means to achieve the particular agenda of the administration in power. The long-term impacts have been policy that is disjointed, destabilizing, and, ultimately, irresponsible (Lock-Pullan 2006; Crocker et al 2016).

Operationalizing Influence

The term *influence* is defined as both a noun and a verb. It is the static *capacity* to cause or produce an "effect in indirect or intangible ways," without the exertion of force or "direct exercise of command," coupled with the dynamic "indirect or intangible affect," alteration, or "condition of development" of the target of influence.[1] The military defines influence as the act or power to produce a desired outcome or end on a target audience (Joint Publication 3-13 2012, I-3). Milner and Tingley (2015) describe influence, in the policy process, as the ability to write, interpret, implement,

[1] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/influence

and administer policy. These definitions assume that being in a position to influence equates to achieving influence on policy outcome.

Measuring influence, however, is an imperfect science, because of the diversity of influences on a decision maker (Aron 1966). It is "one of the most important and elusive concepts in the study of politics," because despite data that may overwhelmingly demonstrate direct and indirect, formal and informal influences, distinguishing between the policy preferences of military elites and civilian leaders is difficult (Betts 1977, 5). This difficulty is a product of an interactive and integrated process.

Military elite and civilian counterparts interact and integrate vertically and horizontally within and across governmental institutions and federal agencies. There is an expectation that military elites and civilian counterparts are mutually responsible for informing, formulating, and implementing national security strategy. For the scholar, this makes it appear impossible to objectively detect whose influence is greatest in the policy process. Where does the influence of military and civilians begin and end? An equally daunting challenge is to differentiate the sources of influence from its outcomes, thus avoiding a tautological reasoning.

Betts (1977) argues that military influence is direct when it concerns the formal and informal recommendations made to decision-makers, as well as the control of policy implementation. Military influence is indirect when it concerns how military elites control information, agenda-setting, policy options, and the premise of civilian decisions. Influence, however, should be demonstrated in policy outcomes.

It is not enough to demonstrate that military elites predominantly establish and control the organizational structure that produces policy. It is not enough to demonstrate that military elites control the information that informs the process. It is not enough to demonstrate that military elites predominantly control the procedures and human resources staffing of the process. Finally, it is not

enough to demonstrate that military elites are predominantly responsible for controlling the implementation of policy decisions. One may argue, however, that all of these dynamics suggest a unique role and exceptional influence in the policy process.

In multiple conceptual approaches to the policy process, the role and influence of professionals with specialized knowledge and expertise is a common variable affecting decision-makers and the decision-making process. The authoritative knowledge and expertise of professionals provides them jurisdictional prerogatives over policy deliberations and implementation. Their influence and ability to protect policy jurisdiction is dependent, however, on their ability to maintain credibility with a president, political appointees, elected officials, and the American public. Assuming they maintain credibility, their influence and control of policy is essential to the process and "cannot be eliminated or significantly constrained" (Dixon 1984, 142-143).

Epistemic communities have conceptual attributes and positions of influence that provide them with elements of power or capacity to influence. This remains a static definition of influence. However, it is how these elements of power are exercised to affect policy that is, arguably, the true measure of influence, because it taps the ability of an actor to translate preferences and interests into policy. In the following chapters, this dissertation defines and explains the static elements of influence that epistemic communities possess – the conceptual attributes listed above. It follows with a demonstration of how military elites constitute an epistemic community possessing these conceptual attributes. It then demonstrates how these conceptual attributes are converted and dynamically employed in the policy process to affect policy, process, and implementation.

Military elites, constituting an epistemic community, operationalize their exceptional influence directly and indirectly, formally and informally, across the executive and legislative branches of government, as well as vertically within organizations and agencies. The real weight and measure of military elite influence is tethered to the degree to which policy process and outcomes

are altered or changed. Policy process and procedures are established and modified and policy outcomes are effectively distorted to reflect the beliefs, preferences, and views of military elites above and beyond any competing group or community that seeks to influence national security policy.

Military elite influence is operationalized in the shaping and informing of a president's national security agenda; determining the choices and courses of action a president makes; and maintaining control, as the primary tool of implementation, once decisions are made. A such, we would expect to see, broadly, the explicit outcomes of this influence in how the role of military force is emphasized in the *National Security Strategy of the United States* (NSS) in peacetime and war, regardless of the political party and preferences of the president. We would also expect to see the outcome of military elites' influence in how the President and Congress allocate discretionary federal spending to achieve strategy goals and objectives.

Justification for defense spending is "guided by" and based broadly on the "role of military force in the National Security Strategy" (DOD 2018b, 1; Arthur 2018, 15). In other words, Department of Defense budgetary requests are "strategy driven." They are "formulated around" the projected needs and requirements to "meet the objectives of the NSS" (DOD 2018b, 1).[2] A more detailed exploration of these concepts in relationships to military elite role and influence is provided in Chapter Five.

In the course of this study, an interview participant suggested that the surge in military elite influence is more recent, tied to an effort to correct a perceived over-stepping of boundaries by civilians into a military policy enterprise and guarded prerogatives (W1-I49). However visible military

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[2] The requirement to submit strategy driven budgetary documents to Congress is a statutory requirement mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.

influence may be today, the unique role and exceptional influence of military elites evolved over time. The rising tide of military influence has a much richer and deeper context when considering the historic role of the military in American society and the history of U.S. civil-military relations.

The Military in American Society and U.S. Civil-Military Relations

> "One of the chief forces behind a national establishment was a specific group of men: for the most part, veterans of the Continental Army, believers in a far stronger central government, and founders and leaders of the Federalist Party and the [U.S.] Government after 1789…the military establishment was intimately involved in nearly every one of the great events and struggles which have…attracted the attention of historians…And at no other peacetime period in American history, with the exceptions of 1865-1877 and the post-1945 years, did military affairs exert more influence on national life than during the twenty years after independence" (Kohn 1975, xii).

American government has always been well-seeded with and much influenced by military elites from its founding. Still, American society, culture, and history have historically been cast in a narrative and tradition of 'anti-militarism' (Lewis 2012). Oyos (2018) and Yarmolinsky (1971) argue that the roots of military influence and the waning of anti-militarism can be traced to the increasing professionalization of the military's officer corps under the direction of President Theodore Roosevelt and in the aftermath of World War I. Indeed, up until World War II, the existence and size of a standing army was the principle debate in U.S. civil-military relations (Ekirch 1956; Bletz 1972; Kohn 1975). Ambrose writes,

> "In 1939, the United States had no military alliances and no troops stationed in any foreign country. Except on the high seas and within North America, the nation had no offensive capability at all…The single most important fact about American foreign policy…was that the great bulk of the American people felt little need to become involved in foreign wars. American security, the *sine qua non* of foreign policy, was assured, not because of American alliances or military might, but because of the distance between America and any potential enemy" (Ambrose 1972a, 3-4).

Post-WWII, the tradition and sentiment of anti-militarism in the U.S. began to evolve and change rapidly and dramatically (Jackson 1965; Yarmolinsky 1971; Sarkesian 1994). Indeed, WWII was a catalyst, vaulting military elites into a position of preeminent power. The military became the

principal executor of U.S. foreign policy, a role with profound influence, power, and authority on a global scale (Hudson 2015).

Moreover, the technological revolutions of warfare during WWII and its implications changed the way Americans began to think about the military, military conflict, and the development and exercise of military power (Lauterbach 1944; Laski 1949; Ambrose 1972a; Barber 1972; Lewis 2012). Subsequently, the image of military elites in American society began to evolve (Mills 1959; Kemble 1973). In the aftermath of WWII, military elites were well-aware of the prestige and high regard with which they were now held in American society as members of an honored profession (Pogue 1973). They used this political and social capital to influence significant organizational change that would control U.S. national security policy moving forward.

The creation of the National Security Council (NSC), an organization essentially run by military elites,[3] was a codification of lessons learned during WWII and the leadership of President Franklin Roosevelt (Jackson 1965, 95-106). The Joint Staff, created simultaneously with the NSC, became a powerful influence on national security policy, forming a "miniature State department," and ensuring "military considerations and military logic" dominated the national security policy process (Yarmolinsky 1971, 34-35).

Concerned with the post-WWII international environment, military elites began drafting national policy documents almost immediately. They formally and informally proposed policies of nuclear deterrence in 1945 and Soviet containment in 1946, long before the State Department and Kennan's "long telegram" (Bletz 1972). A 1953 presidential committee report found that "military professionals are the makers of national policy," not the State Department (Jackson 1965, 80).

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[3] An assertion made by Admiral Sidney Souers, the first Director of the Central Intelligence and EXECSEC of the NSC, in testimony before the Jackson Committee (Jackson 1965, 106).

Civilian leadership, elected officials, and the State Department, in particular, lacked a "take charge" mentality in the aftermath of WWII; were not doing enough to assert leadership in foreign policy; lacked respect for and attached too little importance to future strategy and planning; and were "wedded to a philosophy of reacting to problems as they arise" (Jackson 1965, 69).

The absence of guidance and instruction following the war created a leadership vacuum. Military elites, particularly the Joint Chiefs, understanding the threats now faced with a nuclear world and Soviet power, considered civilian leaders to have abdicated their responsibilities and failed to fulfill their responsibilities related to national security policy. To fill this vacuum, the Joint Chiefs welcomed increased delegation of authority and aggressively usurped power from civilian leaders and their diplomatic counterparts (Bletz 1972; Holsti 1972).

Military and defense expenditures during and post-WWII reached unprecedented levels, composing over half of the federal budget and over 40% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Ambrose 1972a; Clotfelter 1973; Higginbotham 2017). "By the end of the war…the United States was the strongest military power in the world" (Barber 1972, 302-303). A standing military with global commitments and presence became the new norm as the U.S. implemented the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and a policy of containment towards Russia and international communism (Lewis 2012).

This tremendous growth in resources was accompanied by the continued ascendency and appointment of military elites to a growing number of positions of power and influence (Raymond 1964; Clotfelter 1973). Historically, the military and military elites acted as advisors and agents to the President in matters of national security and foreign policy. During and post-WWII, however, military elites began to serve in the role of Presidential Envoys, Ambassadors, leadership positions in the State Department, CIA, and other federal agencies and commissions, such as the Immigration

and Naturalization Service (INS). They had primary responsibility for formulating and implementing decisions on both domestic and foreign policy issues (Ambrose 1972b; Bletz 1972; Clotfelter 1973).

Retired and active-duty military elites filled government positions typically reserved for civilians (Vladeck 2018).[4] Military influence and control over national security and foreign policy was perceived to be as vast as its military commitments and responsibilities at home and abroad. Caution against and fear of an increasingly exclusive reliance on military power in U.S. foreign policy was real. Military encroachments in civilian and private sectors was seen as a subtle and silent *coup*, as military elites dominated diplomacy because of their institutional size, resources, crisis orientation, and a civilian cohort of counterparts that readily acquiesced (Ekirch 1956; Ackley 1972; Ambrose 1972a; Clotfelter 1973).

WWII and the growth of military power and influence was also a catalyst for the growth of an increasingly powerful and influential elite military caste (Kemble 1973). As Mills noted in his description of this growing class of military elites:

> "Since Pearl Harbor, those who command the enlarged means of American violence have come to possess considerable autonomy, as well as great influence, among their political and economic colleagues. Some professional soldiers have stepped out of their military roles into

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[4] Act of July 15, 1870, ch. 294, § 18, 16 Stat. 315, 319. This prohibition also appears as Section 1222 of the Revised Statutes and was made part of the United States Code in the 1925 edition as 10 U.S.C. § 576. See Rev. Stat. § 1222 (1st ed. 1875), 18 Stat. pt. 1, at 215 ("No officer of the Army on the active list shall hold any civil office, whether by election or appointment, and every such officer who accepts or exercises the functions of a civil office shall thereby cease to be an officer of the Army, and his commission shall be thereby vacated."); 10 U.S.C. § 576 (1925). The United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit ruled in *Riddle v. Warner* (1975) that the principle concern of the Congressional Act of 1870 "was to assure civilian preeminence in government, i.e. to prevent the military establishment from insinuating itself" into government positions that would, over time, allow it to become "paramount" to civilian leadership and control. Nearly a decade later, in 1983, the Reagan administration, working with Congress, amended the 1870 law allowing Vice Admiral John Poindexter to serve as Reagan's Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs while remaining on active duty with the U.S. Navy. Although some restrictions remain, the general prohibition of active-duty military and veterans serving in positions in government intended for civilians was essentially repealed and precedent for further exceptions to this policy have been set.

> other high realms of American life. Others, while remaining soldiers, have influenced by advice, information, and judgment the decisions of men powerful in economic and political matters, as well as educational and scientific endeavors...they are now more powerful than they have ever been in the history of the American elite; they have now more means of exercising power in many areas of American life which were previously civilian domains; they now have more connections; and they are now operating in a nation whose elite and whose underlying population have accepted what can only be called a military definition of reality…Although the generals and the admirals have increasingly become involved in political and economic decisions, they have not shed the effects of the military training which has moulded their characters and outlook…we must not forget the self-confidence that is instilled by the military training and career: those who are successful in military careers very often gain thereby a confidence which they readily carry over into economic and political realms. Like other men, they are of course open to the advice and moral support of old friends who, in the historical isolation of the military career, are predominantly military" (Mills 1959, 198-200).

Observing the state of the international environment in 1941, Political Scientist Harold Lasswell proposed the probability of a "future course" in politics that predicted a developing dominance and supremacy of military elites as "the most powerful group in society" (Lasswell 1941, 455). His article, "The Garrison State," became the foundation for the first wave of post-WWII Civil-Military Relations scholarship, particularly, the works of Samuel Huntington (1957) and Morris Janowitz (1957, 1960).

What defines "Military Elites"?

Historically, the term "military elite" has been defined broadly and with little precision. Janowitz (1957, 1960) and Huntington (1957) refer to "military elite" as "the officer corps," or "career officers." By this definition, military elites would constitute 17.6% of our armed forces' personnel end-strength (DOD 2018a). Feaver, Kohn, and Cohn (2001) and Feaver and Gelpi (2004) define "military elite" as officers with potential for advancement, attending professional military education appropriate for their rank in residence, and likely to be promoted and emerge as future leaders.

These aggregations remain too broad. Junior officers, having served less than 10 years in the military, are not, as a whole, "elite."[5] The logic of this broad definition applies in large-*n*, institutional studies such as the Triangle Institute for Security Studies (TISS) Project of 1998 and a YouGov study funded by the Hoover Institution in 2016. These studies rely on survey data; measuring, for example, the political preferences, opinions, and beliefs of the officer corps.

Finally, the Department of the Army defines "military elite" as those "world class" officers that have attained the grade of rank Colonel (DA PAM 600-3 2017, 16). Military elites, in the context of this study, are not, simply, active duty military officers or, for that matter, any senior military officer at the rank of Colonel or higher. There were approximately 10,940 Colonels (4.7% of the military's officer corps) and 939 Generals and Admirals (0.41% of the military's officer corps) in the military as of August 2018 (DOD 2018a). For purposes of this study, the term "military elite" is more restrictive.

Military elites are a dynamic group of senior officers, Generals and Admirals (commonly referred to as "flag officers," because of the flag that accompanies and reflects their senior rank) serving in nominative command and staff positions at the three-star level and higher. They are active-duty *and retired*, and directly interface with and advise senior civilian leadership, elected officials, and foreign governments as participants or close observers of the national security policy process in their current assignment or by nature of their advisory role and responsibilities (see Table 1). Additionally, military elites routinely engage and interact with key influencers in the national security process, such as think tanks, academia, the media, and the general public on a regular and routine basis.

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[5] Junior officers typically have less than 10 years in service and are at or below the rank of O-4 (Major / Lieutenant Commander).

Table 1: Military Elites			
Status	Rank	Assignment History	Routine Responsibilities
Active duty / Retired	3- and 4-star flag officers (Generals and Admirals)	Service Chiefs, Combatant Commanders (COCOM), Joint Staff, OSD, NSC, the White House, and other governmental agencies	Advise, engage, and routinely interact with the President, Congress, Foreign Heads of State, Cabinet Secretaries, Ministers of Defense, Ambassadors, Foreign Military, other governmental agencies, senior civilian political appointees, think tanks, academia, the media, and the general public
Pool of potential Military Elites			
Active duty	1- and 2-star flag officers (Generals and Admirals); Colonels /Navy Captains; Select Field Grade Officers	Board-select Command positions; Board-select broadening opportunities; Nominative positions; and special professional development assignments such as aide de camp, executive assistants, and fellows	Advise, engage, and interact with Congress, Foreign Heads of State, Cabinet Secretaries, Ministers of Defense, Ambassadors, Foreign Military, CJCS, Service Chiefs, COCOM, NSC, Joint Staff, OSD, other governmental agencies, senior civilian political appointees, think tanks, academia, and the media

This community of military elites is generally populated from a select pool of one- and two-star Generals / Admirals, Colonels / Navy Captains, and Field Grade Officers at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel / Commander and Major / Lieutenant Commander that consistently perform in an exceptional manner, above and beyond their peers. They are repeatedly selected for command positions at progressively higher organizational levels, nominative positions, competitive programs, and special professional developmental assignments.[6]

[6] These officers are in the top .5% of their cohort. They are routinely selected to attend public and private universities in pursuit of graduate degrees, followed by unique utilization assignments in which they interact with civilian elites across the federal government, think tanks, and academia. Examples of these programs include several "war college" fellowships at Harvard, MIT, Council on Foreign Relations, Brookings Institute, CSIS, and many more. Additional programs include the White House Fellowship, Congressional Fellowship, OSD/JCS Internship, Harvard Strategist Program, Olmstead Scholarship Program, Rhodes Scholars Program, RAND/Arroyo Center

These highly sought-after positions and assignments provide opportunities for this pool of officers to work inside and outside of traditional tactical and operational assignments. They are selected to work at strategic levels in the highest echelons of the U.S. government. Their jobs, experiences, and resulting professional networks provide them with routine access to senior officials and civilian elites where they build relationships based on a foundation of trust and confidence. These relationships often influence future assignments and potential early promotions.

Highly sought-after assignments are typically nominative and commonly referred to as "black book" jobs (Ossad 2017).[7] Officers that fill these assignments and fall into this category do not necessarily remain in this elite class or status. Successive assignments, life choices, career paths, health, discipline, and performance determine whether they remain in or revisit classification as military elites.

Finally, military elites should be in a career field and on a career trajectory that provides them with experiences, training, education, and professional development that develop in them characteristics for which civilian elites deliberately seek out. These characteristics generally include the ability and capacity to communicate with and provide best military advice to National Command Authorities, Congress, foreign leaders, and the public with credibility, candor, and discretion,

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fellowships and more. Many serve as an aide-de-camp or executive assistant to senior flag officers and political appointees. Officers selected to these types of positions and programs are routinely selected at a higher rate for early promotion, as well as selection for command and leadership positions at successively higher organizational levels. Note that a cohort or "year group" is determined by the year an officer was commissioned into the military.

[7] "Black book" assignments are named for a legendary practice by which General George C. Marshall tracked talented officers with strategic potential. Referring to Marshall's "black book" list of future strategic leaders, Ossad (2017) quotes Marshall as stating, "I'm going to put these men to the severest tests which I can devise in time of peace. I'm going to start shifting them into jobs of greater responsibility than those they hold now. Then I'm going to change them, suddenly, without warning, to jobs even more burdensome and difficult…Those who stand up under the punishment will be pushed ahead. Those who fail are out at the first sign of faltering."

particularly in times of crisis. Civilian leaders seek to appoint military elites with broad and successful operational backgrounds that include leading major commands in large-scale, and global contingency and combat operations.

Military elites should exhibit an exceptionally strong and wide-ranging intellect that demonstrates a grasp of international relations, geography, and history; as well as a sophisticated understanding and comprehension of national politics, bureaucratic politics, and interagency process. These officers should be ethical, trustworthy, innovative, and adaptive; possessing the ability to lead and manage peers that are of equal caliber. They should understand the roles and responsibilities of the military services, Service Chiefs, Combatant Commands, and the Joint Staff. Senior military elites should demonstrate a willingness to disagree with the President and Secretary of Defense in private, while providing support and effective leadership of military forces once decisions are made. Finally, they should possess strong character and a healthy respect for civilian control of the military, coupled with compatibility with the leadership of the Secretary of Defense and the President (W1-I14; Rumsfeld 2001).

Why Study the Influence of Military Elites?

Welch and Smith (1974, ix) state the reason succinctly, "No political group is more influential and less studied." Or, as Juvenal stated in 127 AD, "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes*?" – who will guard the guardians? To this point, understanding the process of formulating national security policy in the U.S. remains an under-studied area of scholarship in international relations (IR) and foreign policy analysis (FPA). The omissions are substantive.

Much of the FPA literature focuses on crisis decision making, including the initiation of war, imposition of sanctions, and other salient issues, while "foreign policy decision-making in the absence of crisis-related factors has gone largely unexplored" (Asterino-Courtois and Trusty 2003, 359; Wharton 2018). Subsequently, we know much more about how one-time foreign policy

decisions are made under conditions of time pressure and situational exigency, than about continuity and changes in national security and foreign policy. Additionally, studies of foreign policy related to specific countries and regions have been prioritized over research on broader foreign policy strategy.

The omissions are also theoretical. First, as previously mentioned, current theory related to the military is predominantly institutional and unidirectional. Secondly, literature related to understanding the behavior, role, and influence of U.S. military elites in the policy process at the domestic level is largely non-existent.

Influences that shape U.S. national security policy are many. External influences include the international political and economic environment, inter-state relationships with adversaries and allies, and the role of international institutions. Internal influences include the domestic political and economic environment; the role of government institutions; and a president's personality and relationships with political adversaries, allies, and elites. The influence of civilian elites on policy, process, and implementation is generally well-documented in the literature (Neustadt 1960; George 1980).

All policy arenas have resident elites that may influence each respective policy field. For example, the Secretary of State represents a community of senior Foreign Service Officers, diplomats, and foreign policy elites and stakeholders that may act as an epistemic community in relationship to foreign policy. Likewise, intelligence community elites may constitute an epistemic community. Past literature has relied on the general assumption that military elites may contribute as actors in the policy process, but only as a subcomponent of a wider epistemic community.

The difference, this dissertation argues, is that U.S. military elites are not a subcomponent of an epistemic community, but constitute a unique and exceptional epistemic community in their own right. It examines each of the conceptual attributes of epistemic communities, as described in previous studies; demonstrating how military elites exhibit each characteristic in nuanced detail. It

also demonstrates how they are able to operationalize their conceptual attributes to influence policy willfully and systematically in the policy process. Epistemic community theory has remained silent on this until now; leaving the consideration of U.S. military elite influence ripe for further investigation.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this chapter, important domestic trends related to military elites, national security strategy, defense spending, and policy have been identified. They are the impetus for inquiry into how U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community in relationship to the national security policy process. These trends also beg questions of how national security and foreign policy decisions are affected and implemented by this epistemic community, and how these dynamics impact civil-military balance of power relations. Finally, historical context and key terms have been explored and defined, all in the context of introducing the theoretical framework that will be used to investigate two propositions.

> **Proposition One** – *U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community.*
> **Proposition Two** – *U.S. military elites, constituting an epistemic community, play a unique role with exceptional influence on national security and foreign policy.*

In the next two chapters, I discuss the extant literature and epistemic community theory, respectively. In Chapter One, I discuss how the fields of Presidential Studies, International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis, and Civil-Military Relations consider and treat military elites and their role in national security policy decision-making. The literature review provides a road map of the scholarly terrain related to national security and foreign policy decision-making and civil-military relations that gives greater context to the dissertation. In summary, the review demonstrates how specific literature and theories fall short of painting a full and clear picture of behavior of military elites; their influence on national security policy decision-making and implementation; and how these dynamics impact civil-military balance of power relations. Chapter Two focuses solely on

epistemic community theory and the conceptual attributes that characterize and constitute an epistemic community.

Chapter Three explores the research design and methodological approach in detail. I describe, step-by-step, the "grounded theory" approach taken; the interview process, sampling, and population; capturing, coding and analyzing data; and other considerations and limitations to the study. Chapters Four and Five present the findings of the study by proposition. Chapter Four focuses on the conceptual attributes that constitute an epistemic community. Chapter Five looks at the unique role and exceptional influence of U.S. military elites in the context of national security strategy and defense spending.

The final chapter discusses conclusions, consequences, and implications of the findings. It suggests adjustments to the theoretical framework of the theory, particularly in how epistemic communities exhibit conceptual attributes and how these determine influence. It encourages scholars and practitioners to revisit and expand consideration of the behavior, role, and influence of military elites, diplomats, intelligence community professionals, and other groups of experts in the context of epistemic community theory in order to provide for a more nuanced understanding of national security and foreign policy decision-making. Finally, it suggests Civil-Military Relations scholars relook current theory based on the reality of the current American polity. In a complex, future environment wherein national security and foreign policy decision-making require much more rapid response, a future research agenda examining the evolution of civil-military balance of power relations is proposed, particularly a growing trend of praetorianism among military elites.

Chapter One: Summary Synthesis of the Literature

> "Politics and ideology do not necessarily control a nation's policies or even determine the nation's interests. Those policies and interests are often shaped, if not fundamentally determined, by subordinates making decisions in the immediacy of events and guided by doctrine and policies that reflect a particular agency's outlook and culture" (Hudson 2015, 9).

The study of how U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community in relationship to the national security policy process, how national security and foreign policy decisions are affected and implemented by this epistemic community, and how these dynamics impact civil-military balance of power relations lies at the intersection of multiple social science disciplines. These research questions fall primarily at the nexus of scholarship in Presidential Studies, International Relations (IR), and Civil-Military Relations. These fields, in themselves, draw from and are cross-fertilized with a number of subfields, such as Political and Social Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), Public Policy, and Public Administration (Neack et al 1995).

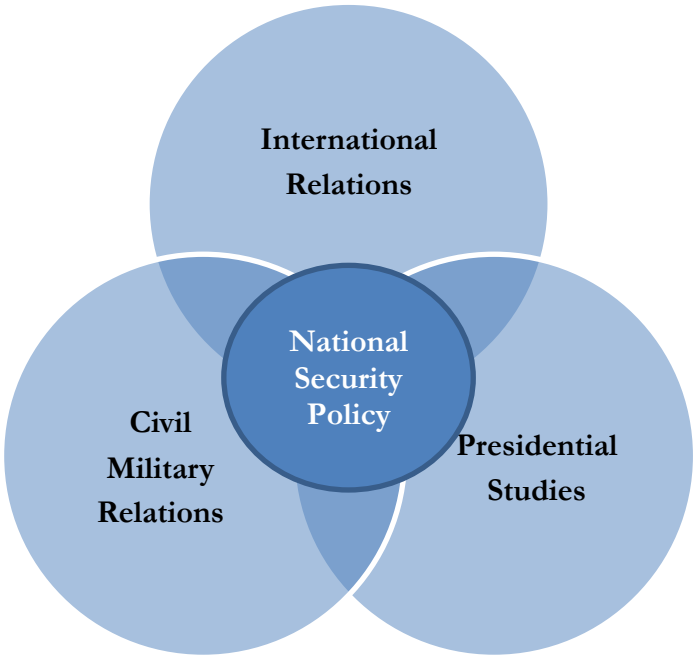
National security and foreign policy decision-making can be considered at the state-level, institutional-level, and at a group and individual level of analysis (Jervis 1997; Rose 1998; Telhami 2002). This dissertation's focus is on the group level of analysis because, "The state is its decision makers" (Snyder, Bruck and Sapin 1962, 65). Hudson (2005, 1) echoes this sentiment, stating that "All that occurs between nations and across nations is grounded in human decision makers acting singly or in groups."

In the context of this approach, the dissertation probes internal influences on the external behaviors of the state (Rosenau 1971). It assumes that individuals and groups of individuals shape and influence policy decisions, actions of the state, and, indeed, the course of history. Subsequently, individual and group psychology, personalities, perceptions, preferences, beliefs, values, and

character motivate and influence national security and foreign policy (Hudson 2005; Breuning 2007; Cottam et al 2016).

The dissertation broadly navigates Presidential Studies, International Relations, and Civil-Military Relations scholarship to demonstrate how each contributes to understanding national security and foreign policy process. In the Venn diagram of literature that I review (see Figure 1), I demonstrate how each field contributes, yet falls short. They leave a gap in understanding how a specific, homogenous group of military elite actors behaves, the role they play, and the exceptional influence they wield.

Figure 1: Literature Overlap



The Role of the President in National Security and Foreign Policy Decision-Making

The vast responsibilities of the presidency can limit a President's ability to exercise his power and authority effectively. Extant scholarship suggests that presidents have little direct control over

procedure and process. They are heavily dependent on expert advisors for information and rarely have time to think for themselves. They have divided authorities that they share with Congress that dilutes their power, causing them to be reliant on their abilities to bargain and negotiate (Neustadt 1960; Jordan and Taylor 1981; Nathan 1983; Nathan and Oliver 1994; Hess 2002; Burke 2000, 2009).

Assisting the President in his responsibilities are the institution of the presidency and the federal bureaucracy that make up the executive branch of the government. Studies of the presidency investigate this institution and its complexity, specialization, and the ebb and flow of presidential power. They examine its tendencies related to growth, bureaucratization, politicization, centralization, and control of information, staffing and organization, and decision-making in pursuit, control, and attainment of political goals and objectives (Burke 1990, 2016). Presidential studies also consider the individual holding the office. These studies investigate and assess the individual, theorizing that it is a President's character (Barber 1992; Hargrove 1974), personality (Neustadt 196, 1980; Hargrove 1966; Simonton 1988), operational code (George 1980; Walker, Schafer and Young 1999), leadership style (Greenstein 1982; 2009; Hermann , 2002, 2003) or leadership strategy (Nathan 1983) that matter most in their decision-making and ability to govern effectively. A president's actions and decisions are influenced both by his personal characteristics and qualities as a leader, but also by individuals that advise him, the process that facilitates decision-making, and the institutions and individuals that implement and administer his decisions.

Under these conditions, Waltz (2000) argues that an assumption of rationality and "nicely calculated decisions" on the part of elite decision-makers, particularly in the context of international relations and foreign policy, is not valid or, as Simon (1945) states is "preposterous." Rational decision-making is bounded by cognitive limitations, as well as external constraints (Lindblom 1959; Sprout and Sprout 1965; Smith 1968; Brecher, Steinburg and Stein 1969; Steinbruner 1974; Jervis

1976; George 1980; Steiner 1983; Simon 1985; Mandel 1986; Skowronek 1993; Mintz and DeRouen 2010).

In other words, presidents do not have perfect knowledge. They are only able to decide and act on incomplete information; assuming risk in uncertain environments. Subsequently, their decisions are influenced by their individual (and in many cases group) psychology, personality, perceptions, preferences, beliefs, values, and character (Cottam et al 2016).

Theories of behavior, rational or otherwise, are either normative or descriptive. They either *prescribe* how actors should behave or they claim to *describe* how actors behave in practice (Simon 1972; Milner and Tingley 2015). Cognitive models of decision-making provide insight, considering behaviors related to decision-making, relevant actors, level of information and expertise, how information is analyzed and utilized, perceptions of given options and how each option is evaluated. In otherwords, they focus on the behaviors of actors in the policy process (Simon 1957; Sprout and Sprout 1965; Tetlock 1998; Breuning 2007). These cognitive models require two steps. First, they require a determination of choices and, secondly, doing so in the context of the decision-maker's knowledge and capability to make the most optimal decision (Breuning 2007).

Cognitive models of decision-making take into account imperfect human reasoning; need for power; cognitive complexity; level of expertise and prior policy experience; perception and misperception; information gathering; incomplete, dynamic information and ambiguity; uncertainty and complexity; time pressure and stress; personality traits and emotions; memory, mental shortcuts and heuristics the human mind utilizes to process information; predispositions, beliefs, biases, and errors; as well as organizational structures that influence the decision-making process (Jervis 1976; George 1980; Mandel 1986; Vertzburger 1990; Preston 2001; Mintz and DeRouen 2010). A potential implication of these limitations is that presidents, motived by need, insecurity, and personality, may

affiliate themselves with or become increasingly dependent on and influenced by trusted, expert advisors (Preston 2001; Winter et al. 1998; Hermann 1986; Browning and Jacob 1964).

For example, presidents need and seek expert advice in policy areas in which they have little or no experience, particularly at the beginning of a first administration. Additionally, motive and need for affiliation are amplified in politicians with less cognitive complexity. Politicians with less cognitive complexity are less affected by information and context, and have little interest in ambiguous, complex problems, conflicting information, contradictory viewpoints, and multiple options. Their preference is for distinct, well-defined, "black and white" options with little deliberation in the decision-making process (Preston 2001, 10).

They seek the advice and counsel of experts as a cognitive shortcut in making decisions. They naturally rely on elites that have day-to-day responsibilities for running the subordinate organizations within the executive branch to which they were appointed to lead. They delegate presidential authority and provide autonomy that, once given, is rarely rescinded (Pieczynski 1985). Often times, they are insecure in their decision-making ability, particularly in matters of national security and foreign policy, creating "strong incentives to associate themselves closely" with military elites. They appoint military elites to high profile positions in an effort to bolster trust and confidence in their leadership (Schake 2017).

Generally, expert advisors and advisory groups that possess high levels of professionalism, specialization, division of labor, stability, continuity, procedure, and resources will exercise greater influence in the policy process (Huntington 1965; Polsby 1968). In the specific context of national security and foreign policy, individuals or groups that possess greater expertise, authoritative knowledge, and specialization are particularly influential when the international and domestic political implications of policy decisions are perceived as particularly complex and uncertain (Holsti 1976; George 1980; Simon 1985; Preston 2001; Schafer and Walker 2006). Presidents should accept,

however, that elites that lead and work within governmental institutions, bureaucracies, and agencies are also political actors with their own interests (Neustadt 1960). This includes military elites (Wilson 1991; Zegart 1999). As Clausewitz (1832, 87) argues, if war and conflict are acts of policy, the military is a political instrument, and, by extension, military elites are political actors.

Indeed, military elites are not and cannot afford to be apolitical observers of the policy process (Powell 1989; Kupchan 1994). In accordance with their organizational culture, military elites are self-interested, aggressive, hyper-competitive, and ambitious political actors (Kupchan 1994; Pierce 2010). However, the role of the President as Commander-in-Chief and the role of military elites in the policy process has not received systematic treatment in Presidential Studies, typically appearing in limited descriptive analyses of the NSC.

Because military elites are sophisticated political actors, they should be examined as such. They are not impartial, neutral, or apolitical (Abrahamsson 1972; Holsti 1998; Davis 2001; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Szayna et al 2007; Urben 2010; Golby 2011). Control of vast resources and budget inherently make the military an incredibly powerful political interest group able to place exceptional pressure on presidential administrations. The military's process of socialization and professionalization encourages politicization rather than insinuating affective neutrality into the professional military ethos. In other words, the likelihood of politically active military elites increases with increased professionalization and expertise (Nordlinger 1977). Military elites are not obedient, reactive observers and advisors. They make every effort to "anticipate, influence, and regulate" their environment, consistent to their policy preferences and organizational interests (Abrahamsson 1972, 13-17).

There are, however, fundamental differences between civilian elites and military elites. For one, incumbent politicians have an "electoral connection." They place domestic and electoral politics and maintaining power and position as a top priority. These domestic political

considerations can mute military influence and motivate elected officials to act, at times, irresponsibly and at the expense of governance, as they survey a political environment and weigh political risk (Mayhew 1974; Jacobson 1987; Zegart 1999).

Military elites within the U.S. do not have an electoral connection. They are less inclined to calculate domestic electoral politics in the process of national security and foreign policy decision-making. However, they do have limited or narrow interests that motivate them. These interests include seeking advantage for themselves, their parent organization, maintaining professional norms and prerogatives, "propagating self-serving strategic conceptions" of the international environment and threat, and advancing policy preferences, regardless of presidential administration, presidential political agendas, and political timelines (Kupchan 1994, 34; Weber 1964; Wilson 1991; Zegart 1999).

Over time, advantage in this civil-military struggle and balance of power relationship can become problematic as it relates to historical expectations of "civilian control." The tilted balance of power places military elites at a distinct advantage over their civilian counterparts in the context of national security and foreign policy. According to Weber, these advantages include *information* and *expertise* (Weber 1946). Zegart (1999) and Brooks (2008) both suggest additional advantage comes from the inherent *role* military elites play in the policy process. The role of military elites is unique from other elites when considering the level of *embedment* of military elites in the policy process, as well as the level of *reliance* on military elites by their civilian counterparts. These concepts are discussed later in the dissertation.

The literature in Presidential Studies has implications for International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis scholarship. These dynamics, in the context of national security and foreign policy decision-making, fuse studies of the presidency and presidential decision-making with International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis. Yet, there is a distinct seam in knowledge between the fields

of literature that begs questions related to behavior, role, and influence of those individuals or groups of individuals in position to advise presidents. Relatively few political scientists and historians study national security and foreign policy, process, organization, and administration (Jordan and Taylor 1981; Shoemaker 1991; Stuart 2000; Watson 2002). This is due to the perception of national security policy being "too domestic for students of international relations and too foreign for students of American politics" (Zegart 1999, 3).

International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis

Understanding how one-time national security and foreign policy decisions are made under crisis conditions, time pressure, and situational exigency is well-trod ground in International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis literature. There are numerous analyses that explain specific dynamics and micro-foundations of policy and decision-making, using individual decision-making events to uncover generalizable knowledge and weave together "strands of IR theory" to make sense of state policy in the context of international politics (Hudson 2002, 11). They investigate a host of micro-level determinants to explain the decision environment, psychological factors of the decision-makers, and international and domestic influences (Brecher, Steinburg and Stein 1969; Hudson 2002; Mintz and DeRouen 2010). The role of the military as an institution is also mentioned in Foreign Policy Analysis literature in both the Organizational Process Model (Wildavsky 1964) and the Bureaucratic Politics Model (Allison 1971). Yet, there is no systematic examination of military elites as a distinct group of actors.

Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (1962) provided a foundational contribution to International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis when they identified individual decision-makers as the key to understanding the actions and policies of a state (Hudson 2002). In the context of national security and foreign policy decision-making, individuals that participate in the policy process and administration, and their individual personalities, beliefs, and preferences, matter (Snyder, Bruck and

Sapin 1962; Vertzburger 1990; Rosati 2000; Hudson 2005; Schafer and Walker 2006). Decision-making and dynamics at the group-level, such as in the National Security Council, also matter in understanding how policy is determined and implemented (Halperin 1974; George 1980; Janis 1972; Burke and Greenstein 1989; Maoz 1990; 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius 1997; Mintz and Wayne 2016). Understanding how individual actors and groups of actors influence foreign policy is critical to understanding decision-making, process, and implementation.

Theories of individual predisposition and operational code (Lasswell and Lietes 1949; Lietes 1951; George 1969; Holsti 1969; Walker and Schafer 2006), as well as understanding the psychological and leadership traits of leaders and advisors (De Rivera 1968; Hermann 1970; Cottam 1977) provides insight into the nuance of national security and foreign policy decision-making. Theories of groupthink (Janis 1982; Kowert 2002; Schafer and Crichlow 2010) and polythink (Mintz and Wayne 2016) seek to explain group dynamics that affect national security and foreign policy decision-making. Understanding the nuanced interplay and influence among and between political institutions, individual personalities, advisory groups, interest groups, and government bureaucracies requires dissembling the process and understanding the decision units, their size, composition, behavior, and influence on the final policy decisions and actions taken by a state (Halperin 1974; Vertzburger 1990; Mearsheimer and Walt 2009; Mintz and DeRouen 2010; Brooks 2013).

The role of organizations and bureaucratic politics has been explored by Huntington (1960), Weber (1964), Allison (1971), Halperin (1974), and more recently by Rhodes (1994) and Marsh (2014). Allison's (1971) landmark case-study of the Cuban missile crisis investigates high-level, group decision-making dynamics, theorizing how organizational structure and bureaucratic influences drive the behavior of political elites. Rosati (1981) describes bureaucratic influences on policy as pluralistic in nature with multiple actors engaging one another in the policy process. It is a politically competitive environment wherein bureaucratic elites form fluid and changing coalitions; bargain,

negotiate, and position themselves to protect policy turf; and expand organizational influence (Mintz and DeRouen 2010).

Studies of decision-making and debate by small groups in relationship to policy outcomes demonstrate a complex and, many times, unpredictable process. Yet, understanding the composition of these small groups, dynamic interactions of the actors, and the role of leadership provides a "bridge between impersonal and institutional forces on the one hand, and concrete decisions and actions by political leaders on the other ('t Hart et al. 1997, 6; Vertzberger 1990). International Relations' scholarship, much like Presidential Studies, finds that administration officials and political elites that advise presidents and lead government agencies, bureaucracies, and institutions have differing and competing interests, identities, images, and national role conceptions as it relates to the role of the U.S. in the international community (Holsti 1970; Walker 1987; Breuning 1997).

Domestic role contestation, in the context of role theory, provides insight and understanding of the national security and foreign policy behavior of states in the international system. Generally, role theory asserts that the national role conception, image, and identity adopted and shared by a society decisively determines state behavior and national security interests and policy (Holsti 1970; Halperin 1974; Kaplowitz 1990; Browning 2006; Harnisch 2011). It links state national role conceptions, image, and identity to state foreign policy and behavior in the international arena (Breuning 2011).

Role contestation is a clash between competing, heterogeneous societal groups, both internal and external to the state. Role contestation can occur vertically between societal "establishment" elites and the populist masses within a state. Role contestation can also occur horizontally between competing societal elites within a state (Holsti 1970; Cantir and Kaarbo 2012, 2016). Horizontal role contestation between governing elites considers the influence of competing principled and causal beliefs within small advisory groups and elite decision-makers, and the competing roles and interests

of bureaucratic agencies (Hirata 2016; Cantir and Kaarbo 2016). However, this research agenda, as well as the FPA literature generally, falls short in addressing the behavior, role, and influence of distinguishable, homogenous societal elites, particularly as it regards military elites in relationship to state behavior, presidential decision-making in national security and foreign policy, and their extensive power and influence across international and domestic policy domains (Boggs 2005).

Civil-Military Relations literature generally addresses the behavior, role, and influence of the military in a state polity. Studies related to militarism, images of the military in American society, and idyllic civil-military relations and balance of power are voluminous. The next section focuses on the contest between civilians and the military in the policy process. It addresses military elite behaviors, competing roles and interests, and the dynamic nature of influence of each group in the context of national security and foreign policy.

Civil-Military Relations Theory

Civil-Military Relations scholarship historically offers an *institutional approach* that focuses predominantly on an *idyllic, unidirectional, and textbook* relationship between civilians and the military as a unitary actor. It relies on a fundamental assumption and bedrock democratic principle of *civilian control*. Whether in the context of American Politics or Comparative Politics, there is an ever-present normative bias that consistently focuses on prescriptive *control of the military*.

This normative bias, coupled with questionable assumptions, creates a scholarly blind spot. This blind spot is caused by a romanticized history of the military and an institutional persona of conformance to a seemingly inviolable constitutional principle of civilian control of the military. Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution states, "the President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States." A natural consequence of this contextual foundation and the

assumption of its inviolable nature can minimize the military's role as an institution and military elites as influential advisors to the president.

The civil-military *problematique*, as Feaver (1999) calls it, is the epic national security dilemma of democracies on which scholars have focused their investigations. This dilemma hinges on understanding how a 'hierarchy of authority' that places civilians in a position of control over a 'hierarchy of power' that favors the military is the underlying puzzle of Civil-Military Relations scholarship. The underlying question in Civil-Military Relations literature focuses on reconciling a military organization powerful enough to undertake any mission civilian authorities may require with military elites disciplined and subordinate enough to restrain themselves to the limits imposed by its civilian authority (Feaver 1999). Two strands of literature flow from this problem. One strand of literature generally argues that a professional military is *a priori* subordinate, apolitical, and civilians should restrict their interference in the military's domain. A second strand of literature generally argues that a professional military is *ipso facto* political and not dependably neutral.

Huntington's (1957) cornerstone work, *The Soldier and the State,* defends the separation of military elites from civil society and argues for civilian restraint that provides the military with expansive autonomy. This is a view widely favored by the U.S. military. He argues that in matters of civil-military relations, political elites, prone to political motivations, should demonstrate *objective* deference to a politically neutral, professional military. The level of objective control ceded to the military is dependent upon on the military's level of professionalism. The more professional the military, the more objective control and deference should be given by civilian leadership.[8]

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[8] Huntington's work is considered required reading for all officers and is regularly listed on Service Chiefs' recommended reading lists. It is noteworthy that the inventory of the military's premier research libraries maintain roughly four to six times or more the number of Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* on the shelf than any other CMR book in the CMR genre.

Huntington assumes professionalism equates to political neutrality (Huntington 1977; Snider and Carlton-Carew 1995; Feaver 1999). Deference to the military, he argues, is justified because it achieves a desirable equilibrium along the spectrum of protecting liberty and providing security. Secondly, it is justifiable because professional military elites are motivated by a "sense of social obligation" and beneficence towards the society they serve (Huntington 1957). Although the principle of civilian control is clear and inviolable, its application and practice in reality is complex (Goodpaster 1977).

Revisiting his work post-Vietnam, Huntington and General Andrew Goodpaster (1977) address the complexity and difficulty in the application of civilian control over the military. The complexity of its application is rooted in the reality that military elites possess a "vast, diverse, and intricately interwoven body" of knowledge and expertise that is indispensable. Civilian "amateurs," as Goodpaster references them, are ill-suited to advise in matters of national security and war. He clarifies this assertion, stating that military professionals do not have a monopoly on wisdom. Civilians can and do possess academic knowledge. The difference between civilians and military professionals that justifies objective deference is the military elite's vast and career-long training and experience in the application of force, combat, and national security affairs (Goodpaster 1977, 32).[9]

Huntington also underspecifies the concept of professionalism. He describes the term as measured by expertise, responsibility, and corporate-ness; asserting that a professional military is *a priori* subordinate to civilian leadership (Huntington 1957, 6-9). He ascribes to the military professional an ethic of conservative realism; describing the military, *writ large*, as a conservative

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[9] Note that four-star General (Retired) Andrew Goodpaster served as a former Supreme Allied Commander of Europe (SACEUR), as well as a close advisor to Presidents Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon, and Carter. He was a former Director of the Joint Staff, Commandant of the National War College and Superintendent of the United State Military Academy at West Point, NY.

institution that exists on the periphery of liberal society as its guardian. While an idealist, liberal society is concerned with democracy, equality, and peace, a realist military provides protective overwatch with a primary focus on authority, hierarchy, obedience, force, violence, and war (Huntington 1977, 6-7).

Janowitz (1960) offers an opposing theory and takes a competing view to Huntington. He argues that as war and militaries become more technologically advanced and conflict becomes more constant, the military, vitally and necessarily, becomes more professional. Military professionalism, however, does not conform to Huntington's traditional description of the concept, but is more pragmatic.

With increased professionalism and capability comes increased influence and politicization. This implies a risk of military influence capable of supplanting civilian leadership and control. He concludes that increased professionalism of the military requires increased subordination. Subordination or subjective control of the military is dependent on its level of meaningful integration with civilian values and civil society (Janowitz 1960; Snider and Carlton-Carew 1995; Feaver 1999).

Janowitz warns of "unanticipated" militarization and securitization, metastasizing from a democratic ideal to Lasswell's (1941) concept of a "garrison state." This evolution springs from a dynamic wherein political leadership is constrained by environmental and cognitive limitations to exercise effective control over the military. As Mills (1959) writes,

> "Politicians thus default upon their proper job of debating policy, hiding behind a supposed military expertise; and political administrators default upon their proper job of creating a real civilian career service. Out of both these civilian defaults, the professional military gain ascendency. It is for such reasons, more than any other, that the military elite – whose members are presumably neither politically appointed nor politically responsible – have been drawn into the higher political decisions"

The Huntington—Janowitz debate forms the predominant foundation of Civil-Military Relations literature in the United States. By the 1970s, however, the image of the military in

American society had changed. Resentment by civil society towards the U.S. military was a consequence of societal divides caused by the Vietnam War and changing generational attitudes towards the military and military service (Goodpaster 1977, 34). The experience of Vietnam drove the military to become increasingly introspective. Extensive internal studies focused on how to improve training, education, and the professional development of the force. Particular focus was put on improving the professionalization of the officer corps, coupled with the end of conscription, and a transition to an all-volunteer force (Bletz 1972; Goodpaster 1977; Menard 1977; Bagnal 1985; Bacevich 2005).

Abrahamsson's (1972) critical, post-Vietnam work in *Military Professionalism and Political Power* extends Janowitz' theory. He investigates the belief system of military elites, finding that military professionalism produces political conservativism. The common belief system of military elites begins with the selection process (self and institutional) for those that join the military and continues with the socialization process, education, training, and combined career experiences of military elites. His conclusion is a rejection of Huntington's assertion that professional military elites are apolitical.

Military elites commonly and errantly perceive themselves as impartial, neutral, and apolitical servants of the state. Military elites are not impartial, neutral, or apolitical. First, the military's vast resources and budget make it "one of the most important political pressure groups" in the nation. Secondly, the military's process of professionalization fuses military and political roles. The beliefs and values that embody the military profession do not insinuate "affective neutrality" into the professional military ethos. Professional military elites are not impartial and neutral observers. Professional military elites do not just react to their environment. They make every effort to "anticipate, influence, and regulate" it, consistent to their policy preferences and organizational interests (Abrahamsson 1972, 13-17).

Despite public animosity, and alienation of the military in the shadow of the Vietnam War, military elites remained "intimately involved" in domestic politics and foreign policy (Clotfelter 1973, 5). Several Cold War-era Civil-Military Relations studies focused on the dynamic role and influence of the military on national security and foreign policy, finding military elites continued to serve in key and powerful positions with authority to make fundamental policy decisions. They continued to be embedded in the policy process with unmatched influence in policy formulation and decision-making. Once policy decisions were made, civilians continued to empower military elites to administer and implement policy (Clotfelter 1973; Cimbala 1995; Stockton 1996; Johnson 1996; McMaster 1997).

Relative stability in the civil-military balance of power throughout the Cold War teetered with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and fall of the Berlin Wall. This led to a "post-Cold War renaissance of interest in civil-military relations" scholarship in the 1990s. This dynamic is the central argument of Michael Desch's theory of civil-military relations – that the stability of civil-military relations is dependent on the level of external and internal "threat" (Desch 1999, 2). Greater external threat correlates with increased stability in the relationship, while internal threat and domestic tension correlates with a turbulent relationship. Desch suggests that considering civil-military relations in the context of whether or not there is potential for a military coup that forcefully or violently takes over a government misses the point. Rather, it is the nature and dynamics of the relationship between military professionals and civilian elites, and the level of influence each exercise on national policy and who prevails in the debate that is the key indicator of balance of power in civil-military relations (Huntington 1957; Desch 1999).

Post-Cold War scholarship also focused on a potential "crisis" in civil-military balance of power relations as internal, domestic politics took precedent over national security, foreign policy, and international affairs (Kohn 1994). The absence of an external, existential threat and an increase

in domestic political pressures increased conflict between civilian and military elites and challenged the stability of the relationship. The external, international environment had changed drastically with the fall of the Berlin Wall (Cimbala 1995). Civilian leaders pushed for a rapid, expansive drawdown of military forces in an effort to realize a peace dividend (Bracken 1995). A liberal U.S. societal culture began pushing for change in its conservative military institution (McIsaac and Verdugo 1995). Romanticized and historical expectations and images of military utilization in the next big war gave way to increased deployments and military action in support of nontraditional military roles such as peacekeeping missions, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief efforts (Gilroy 1995).

By the mid- to late-1990s, more scholars were asserting that civilian control of the military faced an uncertain future; a new military ethos had evolved; "effective" civilian control was increasingly ill-defined; and changes in the normative conceptions of civil-military relations required "much more research" (Snider and Carlton-Carew 1995, 16). Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, was warning of "a chasm" growing between the military and civil society, and author and journalist Thomas Ricks wrote of a "widening gap" between the military and the society it is sworn to protect (Cohen 1997; Ricks 1997). Civilians and elected leaders increasingly lacked military experience, understanding of the military, the application of military force in pursuit of political ends, and the role of the military in national security and foreign policy (Bianco and Markham 2001). Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Colin Powell's published editorial in the *New York Times* warning of expansive civilian 'use of force' policies and his related tense exchange and chastisement of Secretary of State Madeline Albright are often used as anecdotes in support of Cohen's warning (Powell 1992, 1995).[10]

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[10] Powell describes Albright as viewing the military as "toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global game board." The exchange angered and frustrated him because he felt obligated to

By the end of the 1990s and the turn of the century, Civil-Military Relations scholarship was focused on the growing gap. Scholars investigated attitudes and beliefs of both civilians and military elites (Holsti 2001; Gronke and Feaver 2001); attitudes and opinions within the officer corps (Davis 2001); the differing cultures between the military and civil society (Weigley 2001; Burke 2001); and the decline in military service and experience among members of Congress (Bianco and Markham 2001). Studies focused on the differences of opinion between civilians and the military; the political preferences, voting behavior, and political activities of the military (Holsti 1998; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Urben 2010); and the growing isolation of the military from civil society (Eitelburg and Little 1995; McIsaac and Verdugo 1995). Scholars sought to understand the changing nature of civilian control, policy preferences, and decision-making in the context of the size and use of military force during war and peace (Desch 1999; Bamford 2002; Feaver and Gelpi 2004). Finally, political economy scholars contributed with studies related to domestic and international politics and the influence of defense spending (Gold 1990; Whitten and Williams 2011).

Despite scholarly interest, investigation into and public debate on the state of civil-military relations remains hampered for several reasons, many of which have been outlined by Desch (1999, 2-3). First, elected officials do not want to appear to be the weaker partner in the relationship. Secondly, military elites, indoctrinated with the constitutional principle of civilian control, shy away from portraying civilian leaders as weak, ineffective, or unqualified. Closely coupled with this dynamic, the military may be in denial of its own collective and changing attitudes towards civilian authority (Powell 1995; McMaster 1997; Cohen 2000; Feaver 2003; W2-I25). Thirdly, the U.S. public

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explain a brief history of military operations and planning and the importance of asking civilian leaders tough questions related to conversations surrounding military 'use of force' (Powell 1995, 576-577).

has a short attention span and generally reveres the military. Public opinion approval ratings of the military consistently dwarf that of elected officials, governmental institutions, big business, the media, and, more recently, organized religion (Gallup 2019). Fourthly, prominent scholars may be disinterested or take a comparativist perspective, believing that warnings related to civil-military relations and balance of power in the U.S. are overstated. They suggest it is only a problem in under-developed and non-democratic countries with a history of violent military *coup d'états* (Desch 1999; W1-I38). Finally, there is a challenge in gaining access to data and interviews due to the confidential nature of national security policy decision-making, classification of records and documents stored in archives, and executive privilege.

With the U.S. military nearing two decades at war in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, across the Horn of Africa and in the Philippines, Civil-Military Relations scholarship continues, but a new theme appears to be gaining increasing interest and momentum. The fundamental, constitutional principle of civilian control is being contested, even questioned as a popular myth. Likewise, the military is increasingly skeptical of the American public, popular culture, and liberal societal trends (Ricks 1997; Holsti 2001; Gronke and Feaver 2001).[11] There is a growing view among the military that governing elites are ill-equipped to make decisions related to national security and are ignorant of the military they are meant to control (Hillen 1999; Murchison 1999; Kitfield 2000).

Two years in the aftermath of 9/11, military officers increasingly believed that in matters of war, civilian leaders no longer had the right to be wrong. Feaver (2003, 300) states,

> "We may be seeing the emergence of a norm among American military officers that civilian control does not mean civilians have the right to be wrong…officers see no inconsistency

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[11] Holsti (2001, 57-74) finds that military service members, generally, and large segments of the officer corps are "disappointed" with American civilian culture; finding it to be corrupt, materialistic, greedy, self-indulgent, undisciplined, and dishonest. In contrast, they find themselves to be "honest, disciplined, loyal, and free of materialism, corruption, or self-indulgent tendencies."

> between endorsing civilian control and endorsing an 'insist' role for the military, where 'insist' implies 'accept our advice or else"'

A RAND study found that civilian leadership is viewed as increasingly irrelevant to the national security and foreign policy process (Szayna et al 2007). Civilian control of the military is conditional. It is contingent on the fundamental premise that civilian leadership demonstrate the cognitive complexity and intellectual curiosity to assert themselves in military matters, ably and knowledgeably questioning and probing military elites regarding national security and military strategy (Cohen 2002; Holtzclaw 2016).

In recent literature, the language and definition of "civilian control" has evolved, as has the role of civilians in relationship to the military. Gibson (2008) argues there is no longer parity between civilians and military elites as it relates to military professional preparation and expertise in national security and foreign policy. The lack of a countervailing force in the policy process creates an imbalance of power in civil-military relations that favors the military. Gibson, a former senior military officer and Member of Congress, insinuates that military elites should prop up civilian leaders serving in titular positions and avoid giving "the appearance" of directing policy, so as not to take advantage of novice administrations, political appointees, and elected officials (Gibson 2008, 125).

Schiff (2009) asserts that previous Civil-Military Relations literate related to the U.S. deliberately tried to preserve the myth of military subordination to civilian control. This created a dilemma for scholars studying national security and foreign policy decision-making because of the gap between the literature and reality. Not until scholars remove the presumption of civilian control can the "dearth of appropriate theoretical frameworks" be filled (Schiff 2009, 12). To check and control U.S. military intervention domestically, military elites should be viewed as co-equal participants in the policy process with shared responsibilities, requiring less direction and more consultation, cooperation, and collaboration (Gibson 2008; Schiff 2009).

By 2016, data and findings related to the 1998 TISS Project begged to be revisited. Schake and Mattis (2016) led a study that found civil-military balance of power relations in turmoil. Findings in this study suggest that the U.S. government is incapable of long-term "whole of government" approaches to national security and foreign policy challenges because of a manifest lack of capacity and capability outside of the military (2016, 11). Military elites are reportedly embarrassed to be associated with the amateurism of novice administrations that lack, in their view, any strategic planning or military experience (Owens 2016, 70). In contrast, elected officials and senior civilian leadership with little or no military experience feel they lack the moral authority to manage the military. Instead, they rely heavily on military elites, hoping to stand in the shadow of the military's credibility with the American public. Civilian officials fail to realize that this dependency on the military erodes their own credibility, public standing, and public trust.

The American public, meanwhile, has come to trust and revere the U.S. military, holding it "in such high regard" that the civilian government has allowed resident "strategic thinking to atrophy" (Schake and Mattis 2016b, 302-315). The military is seen as the last fully functioning federal governmental organization and military elites are increasingly seen as the last remaining pool of trusted leadership capable of dependably and successfully navigating congressional confirmation (W2-I6; W1-I4; W1-I30). This over-reliance on the military has made U.S. national security and foreign policy flimsy and inadequate to the challenges of the international environment. Politicians, lulled into a sense of complacency by military elites, now face far-reaching consequences tied to their failure to balance military influence (Schake and Mattis 2016b).

Summary Synthesis of the Literature

Treating the military as a political institution and military elites as individual political actors and advisors creates a thread of concordance between Presidential Studies, International Relalations, and Civil-Military Relations literature. The theoretical frameworks and approaches discussed above

are helpful. Yet, they all have a mix of shortfalls. Generally, terms, definitions, and concepts are underspecified. Motive is not clearly explained or differentiated between individuals and groups. The unidirectional and normative nature of civil-military relationship is called into question. Validity of foundational assumptions is questionable and requires renewed investigation.

Because the military is generally treated as an institution, the role of military elites at an individual- or group-level of analysis is left unexplored. Current Civil-Military Relations and International Relations literature fails to provide systematic treatment to military elites and question their influence in a manner that is grounded in theory. If military elites are identified separate from the military as an institution, they are either aggregated with a broader, heterogeneous group of elites or the population is ill-defined and lacks exclusivity.

These shortfalls cause a failure to account for the role of military elites as a homogenous group and the nuances of their influence on policy, process, and administration. Finally, the literature does not investigate the nuances of their influence. It ignores important dynamics that bind networks of elites together and determine how and why individual or group policy preferences may prevail.

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature related to presidential decision-making, international relations and foreign policy analysis, and civil-military relations. Presidential Studies and Foreign Policy Analysis literature provide broad explanations of how policy decisions are influenced by an array of actors that participate in the policy process, while Civil-Military Relations literature provides theoretical constructs for how civilians and military elites should interact in the policy process. Despite scholarship from across these fields, gaps remain in understanding the 'real world' behavior and role of military elites and how they influence national security policy decisions despite theories surrounding the myth of civilian control. The next chapter

focuses on epistemic community theory, explaining the framework and defining key terms and concepts, and providing a roadmap for how this identified gap may be filled.

Chapter Two: Epistemic Community Theory

> "As a coherent group of men the military is probably the most competent now concerned with national policy; no other group has had the training in coordinated economic, political, and military affairs; no other group has had the continuous experience in the making of decisions; no other group so readily 'internalizes' the skills of other groups nor so readily engages their skills on its own behalf; no other group has such ready access to world-wide information. Moreover, the military definitions of political and economic reality that now generally prevail among the most civilian of politicians cannot be said to weaken the confidence of the warlords, their will to make policy, or their capacity to do so within higher circles" (Mills 1959, 2000, 199).

Mills' (1959) observation related to military elites echoes throughout the literature of multiple disciplines. Investigation into the emerging role of issue networks (Heclo 1974), advocacy coalitions (Sabatier 1988), bureaucratic agencies (Allison 1971), and communities of practice (Wenger 1998; Adler 2008) acting in concert towards the achievement of policy objectives and political agendas has its roots in classic Greek philosophy.

Xenophon (2008) relates a dialogue in which Socrates, in the context of civil-military relations, describes warriors and generals as having possession of special knowledge – *epistêmê*. Civilian rulers without special knowledge of war and warfighting are reliant on military elites to govern. Fleck (1935, 1979) and Kuhn (1962) resurrect the concept and term – *epistêmê* – in the 20th Century in the context of the natural sciences and sociology. Fleck's original work (1935) investigates the role and characteristics of "thought collectives" that exemplify and are conditioned to think within a specific paradigm and thought style (Fleck 1979, xiii). Kuhn (1962) describes "scientific communities" with shared beliefs, methods, techniques, and standards that define their trade.

Ruggie (1975) and Haas, Williams, and Babai (1977) bring the concept of "epistemic communities" into international relations scholarship in the 1970s. Ruggie describes epistemic communities as being bound together by shared behaviors, norms, and knowledge (Ruggie 1975, 570). Haas, Williams, and Babai investigate the role of an international scientific group, described as

an epistemic community, consisting of "a network of individuals and groups" that influence policy based on "shared specialized knowledge." Members of an epistemic community use their knowledge and beliefs to influence policy. "Their expertise entitles them to be heard in discussions of public policy *in preference to* other interest groups because their knowledge is held to be less self-interested;" it is more comprehensive and offers "special insight," particularly in issues related to environmental policy and national security policy (Haas, Williams, and Babai 1977, 38).

The concept and theory of epistemic community influence on policy was not more fully developed, however, until Peter Haas (1989) explored its role and influence in the context of international environmental policy. In Haas' findings, an epistemic community, made up of ecologists and marine biologists, were "granted formal decision-making authority in national administrations." This epistemic community was intimately involved in the policy-making process, as well as the implementation, supervision, and enforcement of policy decisions (Haas 1989, 380).

Haas found that epistemic communities exhibit like-mindedness, similar core beliefs, and political values. An epistemic community's influence is exceptional when it gains, retains, and sustains bureaucratic power and "control over a substantive policy domain." This influence and control is enabled when its members populate and participate in national-level decision-making forums and government officials are uninformed, uncertain, and inexperienced in the relative policy domain. These dynamics provide an epistemic community the ability to control policy, "convert their interests into new national policies," consolidate power, and "promote its own preferred vision" and policy agenda (Haas 1989, 380-389).

Epistemic community theory remains, however, an under-utilized framework in international relations literature and understanding national security and foreign policy decision-making. Cross (2013b) attributes this lack of development of the theory to its original conceptualization and a number of limited case studies related to the influence of groups of scientists early in its

development. Epistemic communities are not, however, solely comprised of scientists acting in transnational networks (Haas 1992). They may be made up of like-minded sub-groups within a profession, such as diplomats (Cross 2011), bankers (Kapstein 1992), and economists (Ikenberry 1992). They exist and act at both the international and domestic levels.

Epistemic community theory has been widely applied to investigate and understand the development, evolution, and integration of European security and defense policy (Howorth 2004; Webber et al 2004; Faleg 2012; Cross 2011, 2013a). At the domestic level, epistemic communities can emerge as well (Haas 1992). Epistemic community theory has been employed to understand nuclear arms control policy (Adler 1992) and public management and interagency cooperation in the U.S. (Thomas 1997). Outside of the U.S., epistemic community theory has been utilized to understand reform in the United Kingdom's national security sector (Sugden 2006) and paradigmatic shifts in national security policy in Israel (Libel 2016).

In this dissertation, epistemic community theory and framework are employed to provide greater fidelity in understanding how a homogenous group of U.S. military elites behave in a manner that provides them a unique role with exceptional influence on national security and foreign policy. I develop and further define the theory at the domestic level, providing it greater utility in understanding how domestic epistemic communities work, particularly within the nuances of national security and foreign policy decision-making.

An epistemic community is generally defined as possessing,

> "(1) shared normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for action; (2) shared causal beliefs, which derive from analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which serve as basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes; (3) shared notions of validity, meaning intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and (4) a common policy enterprise, meaning a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which professional competence is directed out of conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence" (Haas 1992, 3).

These four elements of an epistemic community – shared normative and principled beliefs; shared causal beliefs; shared notions of validity; and, a common policy enterprise – differentiate it from other groups, such as interest groups, advocacy coalitions, bureaucratic agencies and coalitions, social movements, academic disciplines and professions (Haas 1992, 18).

Cross (2013b) reconceptualizes and expands upon the attributes of epistemic communities defined by Haas. She argues that "epistemic communities do not simply exist or not exist" (Cross 2013b, 148). Rather, to better understand the role and influence of epistemic communities, it is more productive to consider the varying degrees of influence they may have over policy and process. To understand degrees of influence, it is "necessary to examine their internal dynamics" that provide a better gauge of an epistemic community's strengths and weaknesses. These internal dynamics include: professionalism; internal cohesion; authoritative knowledge; perceptions of uncertainty in the political environment; and relationships with government.

Based primarily on the work of Haas and Cross, this investigation establishes that U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community based on the data and related findings presented in the following chapters. However, in the following sections of this chapter, greater specification in defining these conceptual attributes and internal dynamics (see Table 2) is provided. Secondly, Cross' internal dynamics are expanded upon to provide a richer understanding of how they determine the level of influence an epistemic community possesses. Thirdly, because of the considerable overlap in the conceptual boundaries of these attributes, greater clarity is provided in an effort to demonstrate how each attribute is unique and different, while remaining interdependent on one another. Finally, explanation is provided as to why

Table 2: Conceptual Attributes of Epistemic Communities	
1.	Shared Normative, Principled, Causal, and Political Beliefs
2.	Shared Notions of Validity
3.	Common Policy Enterprise
4.	Profession and Ethos
5.	Internal Cohesion and Intra-Group Trust
6.	Consensual, Authoritative Knowledge and Expertise
7.	Perceptions of an Uncertain, Complex Environment
8.	External Relationships, Alliances, and Resources

these conceptual attributes and internal dynamics matter in the context of both the theoretical framework and proposed epistemic community under question.

Shared Normative, Principled, Causal, and Political Beliefs

Haas (1992) argues that epistemic communities possess shared normative, principled, and causal beliefs. An internal dynamic of military elites, as has been demonstrated in Civil-Military Relations literature, is that they also predominantly share political beliefs. I add the element of shared political beliefs for three reasons. First, it applies to military elites. It is a distinguishing feature of this group and cannot be ignored. Second, it is directly related to the concept of causal beliefs and how community members see the world. Finally, it provides nuance to the conceptual attribute that should be explicitly considered in future investigations.

The conceptual attribute of "shared normative, principled, causal, and political beliefs" is an element of a broader contemporary military culture. The term *culture* is defined by Lewis (2012) as the total pattern of human behavior, thought, speech, and action. Military culture is "essentially how things are done in a military organization," and consists of military belief systems, values, philosophies, traditions, and customs that create a shared professional ethos (Dorn et al., 2000, 7). The shared beliefs of military elites are composed of the normative, principled, causal, and political.

Normative and principled beliefs provide a value-based rationale for the behavior and actions of community members (Meyer and Molyneux-Hodgson 2010). Normative beliefs relate to how the conduct of military professionals align with the concepts and core values of honor, courage, integrity, commitment, selfless service, loyalty, duty, and respect. These values are common across the military services. Principled beliefs relate to cause-effect relationships, such as a belief that hard work and determination result in success; promotion and advancement are based on merit; attention to detail ensures excellence; competition is critical to team-building and builds unit *esprit d'corps*; and physical fitness is a foundational trait of a warrior.

Causal beliefs are derived from a community's collective experience and how they perceive linkages between problems and solutions and how this informs beliefs related to linkages between policy action and desired outcomes (Meyer and Molyneux-Hodgson 2010). Huntington (1957) generalizes that military elites share common causal beliefs as it relates to international relations, describing them as conservative realists. He suggests that military elites ascribe to beliefs that international relations and politics are governed by a Hobbesian human nature that is constant and unchanging. They tend to focus on the military security of the state; unrelenting, immediate, and existential military threats; and the continuous likelihood of war. They tend to think of states as unitary, rational actors that act rationally in their self-interests; that states exist in an international system of anarchy wherein they continually seek power and advantage in order to provide security and self-preservation. Finally, they are inclined to define power primarily in material terms, favoring a strong military (Carr 1945; Waltz 1959; Niebuhr 1960; Abrahamsson 1972; Morgenthau 1973; Feaver 1996).

Understanding the belief system of military elites is important for two reasons. First, it provides a window into understanding their political beliefs. Second, how the belief system of military elites aligns with their civilian counterparts and elected officials impacts the level of influence they have in the policy process. In the work of Haas (2001) and Cross (2011), both scholars argue that epistemic communities strive to be politically untainted and impartial in a critical effort to be embraced and respected by political leaders. This is a difficult, if not impossible, task because of the challenges of separating one's core internal beliefs from one's external behaviors. As it regards the political identity and beliefs of military elites, it is well-documented that military officers tend to self-identify as politically conservative (Holsti 1998; Davis 2001; Feaver and Kohn

2001; Szayna et al 2007).[12] In the past, the term "political conservativism" has historically referred to an aversion to rapid change, strict interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, federalism, Judeo-Christian norms and values, free-market capitalism, limited government, low taxes, low national debt, American exceptionalism, democratic evangelism, non-interventionism, and a realist approach to international relations.[13]

Shared Notions of Validity

The conceptual attribute of "shared notions of validity" is inter-subjective, internally defined, and co-constituted within a community and among its members based on a shared belief system and common experiences. Shared beliefs and common experiences create a social construct in which every day life within an epistemic community can tend to weight and validate a group's internal beliefs and behaviors. Over time, the unique structure of military life, in particular, imposes, weights, validates, and legitimizes military institutional, community, and individual beliefs, values, knowledge, and practices. Shared notions of validity are gained by recurring, shared, collective experiences within their professional domain, core competencies, and common policy enterprise (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Haas 1992; Meyer and Molyneux-Hodgson 2010).

For example, if a community lives, works, and socializes together on a routine basis over time, it creates a unique experience relatively insulated and isolated from other segments of society.

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[12] Military elites' conservative beliefs tend to relate to economic, national security and foreign policy issues, while they tend to hold more liberal views as it relates to social issues (Holsti 1998; Davis 2001; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Szayna et al 2007).

[13] Three major studies in the past twenty years demonstrate that political identity and beliefs within the military officer corps grow increasingly conservative with time spent in military service. Military officers with moderate and liberal political beliefs become less likely to identify as moderate or liberal over time. They also tend to exit the military at a higher rate than their more conservative counterparts. Moderate and liberal military officers that do remain in the military for a career tend to hold less moderate and less liberal political beliefs as a group as they reach more senior rank (Holsti 1998; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Urben 2010; Golby 2011).

This insularity norms members over time, rewards conformity, and creates an in-group dynamic that creates a strong identity and can construe reality (Adler and Bernstein 2005). This self-reinforcing, environmental "bubble" nurtures shared notions of validity, a sense of community, and in-group identity based on shared experiences, personal relationships, and a professional network (Deaux et al. 1995). This is important to the theoretical framework because it relates to and reinforces the consensual nature of the community's knowledge and expertise, the internal cohesion and intra-group trust within the community, as well as the level of entitativity outside of the community.

Common Policy Enterprise

Military elites share a set of common policies and practices that are a guarded jurisdiction. Policies that govern leadership, management, and administration of the military institution, bureaucracy, and operations fall within this jurisdiction. These policies and practices are captured in an extensive library of service-specific and joint doctrine military elites utilize to select and promote community members, govern behavior, standardize personal appearance and training, regulate business operations, and guide planning considerations for an array of missions, operations, and problem sets.[14] Collectively, military elites believe these practices to be validated through historical, collective experiences. They share conviction that policy outcomes that result from shared practices better serve their mission. Understanding this conceptual attribute is important, because it helps provide explanation for how military elites may approach the national security policy process.

A specialized and rigorous selection process, career-long investment in professional education, indoctrination of common values centered on service to and defense of the nation, and an assignment process that provides progressive experience and growing responsibility are intended

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[14] A specific example is the "military decision-making process" shared jointly by all the services to confront tactical, operational and strategic issues and challenges.

to develop senior officers that possess expertise and corresponding recognition and prestige in matters of service-oriented and joint warfighting, defense policy, national security and foreign policy at tactical, operational, and strategic levels. The military education system for officers is modeled to achieve this progressive understanding both within their particular military service and as a joint force.

Profession and Ethos

Epistemic community theory refers to a conceptual attribute of professionalism and professional ethos in relationship to groups of experts in a policy domain. Sarkesian (1975) defines the military profession as having a well-defined organizational structure; administered by professional military officers with special knowledge, expertise, and education; self-regulating membership through strict selection and promotion criteria; and individuals imbued with a calling and commitment to serve their nation. They are a "conscious and coherent group operating within but largely apart from" the government (Sarkesian et al 1995, 15).

Being a member of a profession has implications. Membership is not granted or solely based on education level, time in service, or rank. It implies that members work together formally and informally to continually improve the profession. They contribute and share knowledge and best practices, ceaselessly reviewing, refining, and endeavoring to establish and improve upon the profession's vision, mission, values, role, conduct, and standards (Larson 1977). A profession operates within a code of ethics and manifests a professional culture with shared norms and values (Greenwood 1957).

Professions are more than just occupations. They possess purpose presumably linked to providing altruistic services to serve the public good and public need (Cogan 1953). They are motivated by professional ethic, morality, and a "sense of social obligation" and beneficence towards

the society they serve (Sarkesian 1981; Huntington 1957). Professions are also characterized as possessing authoritative and systematic body of consensual knowledge.

Based on these defining characteristics, an increasing number of elite, post-WWII senior military professionals began viewing themselves less in the tradition of civilian-soldiers and more as members of an educated profession of arms (Hackett 1963; Bletz 1972). Being a military professional required a shared, unique, and "special knowledge" derived from the accumulated experiences of the organization. The "special" nature of shared knowledge relates to the state-sanctioned "management of violence in the service to the state" for the purpose of fighting and winning in combat (Sarkesian 1981, 7-9; 1995, 15).

This unique nature of shared knowledge defines the military profession. Its professional status is objective, granted only by the authority of the state. It is subjective in that it encompasses unique characteristics not typically found in other professions, including a sense of honor, allegiance, duty, and commitment to serve the state (Bradford and Brown 1973; Janowitz 1960). It can be measured at the individual level through attitude and conduct in accordance with and conformity to a body of institutional values and ethics.

At the institutional level, the military establishes rules of conduct and performance criteria that reinforce its values and ethics across the profession. At a societal level, the values and ethics of the military are, or should be, linked to the society it serves. This linkage of values and society's assessment of the military's performance in accordance with these values results in society granting the military profession legitimacy, trust, confidence, and prestige (Sarkesian 1981, 13).

Internal Cohesion and Intra-Group Trust

To actors outside of the military community, the out-group, the elements of internal cohesion and intra-group trust provides the in-group with greater legitimacy and reinforces the perception of their authoritative knowledge. The greater the familiarity, similarity, and likeability

among an in-group, the greater the level of perception, referred to as entitativity, by out-group actors of the level of coherence of a group or community (Dasgupta et al. 1999; Lickel et al. 2000). This attribute allows a community to overcome internal differences, speak with one voice, and increase its outward influence and ability to persuade (Rothstein 1984; Cross 2013b; Tsingou 2003).

An example of how internal cohesion and intra-group trust develops within an epistemic community made up of elite, senior military officers is the early professional development, indoctrination, training, and education that military cadets experience in military academies, such as the U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and respective military service Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) departments and programs. This socialization and enculturation process continues through the comprehensive education, training, development, and mentorship that young military officers receive at the beginning of their career and continues throughout it.

Apart from education and training, internal cohesion and intra-group trust develops from the insular experience of military personnel interacting formally and informally on military bases and garrison communities in which they and their families both live and work closely, secluded from civilian life. They eat and share meals in the same dining facilities, as well as conduct physical fitness training together. Their children go to the same schools and participate in garrison-sponsored activities and sports leagues. Their spouses socialize together in hobby clubs, neighborhood associations, and support groups. During wartime and operational deployment, these informal and formal interactions are intensified by the stress of separation, operational risk and uncertainty, shared sense of sacrifice, and, in expeditionary environments, even closer living and working quarters.

Internal cohesion and intra-group trust are a product of these shared experiences. It nurtures a shared world view and political ideology. It validates a perception of authoritative knowledge with

both in-group and out-group through professional development, experiences, and socialization (Adler and Bernstein 2005; Tsingou 2003). These social attributes of an epistemic community shape its members' behavior and reinforce their beliefs and ethos within the military profession (Wendt 1992, 1994).

Consensual, Authoritative Knowledge and Expertise

The concept of consensual, authoritative knowledge and expertise is rooted in an experience-knowledge-policy enterprise relationship. Rothstein (1984) quotes Ernst Haas' definition of consensual knowledge, defining it as "a body of beliefs about cause-effect and ends-means relationships among variables (activities, aspirations, values, demands) that is widely accepted by the relevant actors, irrespective of the absolute or final 'truth' of these beliefs" (Rothstein 1984, 736). However, this definition confounds and overlaps with the attribute of shared beliefs previously defined.

Rather, the *consensual* nature of epistemic community knowledge is rooted in the shared experiences of community members that validates and legitimizes experiential knowledge *inside* the community. The *authoritative* nature of epistemic community knowledge is rooted both in the doctrine that undergirds their policy enterprise, as well as the recognition provided from *outside* the community by civilian authorities and decision-makers that perceive military elites as possessing authoritative knowledge to which they defer in the policy process. When civilian leaders, elected officials, and political appointees "rubber stamp" military recommendations, delegate decision-making authority, and allow military elites to initiate, ratify, monitor, and implement decisions in the policy process, they have effectively recognized the authoritative nature of military knowledge and expertise (Szayna et al. 2007).

Outside recognition is the *sine qua non* element determining whether military expertise and knowledge are authoritative or not. This is important because Brooks (1965) and Suleiman (1984)

observed that as governments evolve and progress, bureaucracies expand. This creates a fundamental need and "policy role of the knowledge elite" (Nelkin 1979, 107). The complexity of policy challenges the cognitive limitations of decision-makers. It creates a dynamic that "tests the limits of human understanding" (Haas 1992, 13). This complexity creates a dynamic of uncertainty, coupled with inadequate information that challenges rational decision-making and the ability to attach ends and means (George 1980; Rothstein 1984).

In this complex and uncertain environment, members of an epistemic community can assist decision-makers in understanding cause-effect relationships, issue-event linkages, action-inaction consequences, political-state interests, and related policy options and alternatives (Haas 1992, 17). Epistemic communities, fulfilling this role in a state, possess "the supreme instrument of power" in governing (Schattschneider 1960, 66). They provide clarity in a decision-making process, share their consensual knowledge with decision-makers while, alternatively, defining, limiting, and controlling the policy options and choices decision-makers consider.

Perceptions of an Uncertain, Complex Environment

> "The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, most of them imaginary" (Mencken 1954, 29)

Perceptions of an uncertain, complex environment fraught with mortal and existential danger are "baked into our DNA" (Preble and Mueller 2014, 1). These perceptions compel us towards alarmism. Alarmism is a psychological component of our human "fight or flight" instinct. Cross (2013b, 147-148) finds that an environment of uncertainty and complexity, real or perceived, magnifies the influence of epistemic communities in related policy fields. However, the terms are ill-defined. They are assumed to be a "constant feature of the international system." Yet, it is left unclear why this feature is important to theoretical construct of epistemic communities. George (1980) defines uncertainty in the context of the policy process as a condition in which decision-

makers lack adequate information and available knowledge to make quality decisions related to national security and foreign policy. Walker and Malici (2011) connect the elements of uncertainty and complexity to the mistakes made by decision-makers because they are unable to adequately determine risk of error and the consequences of decision.

Clausewitz describes this international environment in which military elites operate as a "realm of chance" (Clausewitz 1977, 90-123). The uncertainty regarding policy and decisions related to national security are a constant (JOE 2035 2016, 2-39). This doctrinal insinuation suggests that the military, as an organization, and military professionals, specifically, should develop qualities of agility, adaptability, responsiveness. They should be capable of thinking critically and acting decisively in developing solutions that achieve tactical, operational, and strategic organizational and national objectives (JOE 2035 2016; TRADOC G2 2017a; TRADOC 2017b. TRADOC 2014). As the findings will demonstrate, there is an overwhelming perception that other communities and professions participating in the national security policy process do not prepare or develop elites to operate in this environment to the extent that the military does. Military elites in the policy process are trained and experienced to a greater degree than their civilian counterparts to lead national and multinational efforts on a global scale.

Understanding the realities of an uncertain and complex international environment is, by no means, monopolized by military elites. It is also not meant to imply that military elites have a monopoly on providing desirable quality in both inputs and outputs to the policy process. The realities of the policy process are that there are far more civilian experts, academics, diplomats and analysts that have a deep and profound knowledge of countries, regions, and global affairs. They also have expertise in a variety of substantive issue areas related to national security. What makes an epistemic community of military elites exceptionally influential relates to how the strength of their shared beliefs and values, in comparison to other elites, help them navigate uncertainty and

complexity, and guide their behavior and actions (Holsti 1976; Simon 1985; Schafer and Walker 2006).

In a broader context, the perception of or discursive construction of an uncertain, complex environment, particularly by civilian leaders, is reinforced by, if not a product of, the influence of military elites. Military leaders convincingly present, discuss, train, prepare, and request resources for a strategic and operational environment they have constructed and in which other stakeholders believe. Thus, the military's knowledge and experience with security matters is unique and "superior" to other ways of thinking about and experiencing security-related issues in that it has come to be associated with how the very notion of security is construed.

To put it differently, the way we understand security is often colored by the fact that military power is both the source and outcome of a state's security. The notion of security has been "broadened" and "deepened" to include environmental, developmental, and other aspects of security. It also stresses individuals as the subjects of security (Wæver 1995; Buzan et al. 1998), the traditional understanding of security zeroing in on state actors and military capacity continues to dominate practice and theory in international relations. Thus, the reason that a military's knowledge and experience are so valued is because it comports with a narrowly defined notion of security.

External Relationships, Alliances, and Resources

A final characteristic of epistemic communities that determines their influence in a policy domain are their intergovernmental relationships, alliances, and resources (Cross 2013b, 147-148). To wield influence effectively in a policy domain, epistemic communities should build, maintain, and cultivate strong inter-governmental relationships and alliances, as well as extra-governmental relationships and alliances. Initiating regular, recurring interactions with interagency civil servants, elected officials, civilian leadership, key influencers, and elite decision-makers facilitates this cultivation of relationships. Advising, assisting, and working closely with key stakeholders inside and

outside of government builds and strengthens relationships. These external relationships and alliances are imperative because they signal and reinforce epistemic community influence within the government, outside stakeholders, as well as the general public.

Access to and control of resources are a final character feature explaining how an epistemic community exerts exceptional influence in a policy domain. It is not to say that poorly resourced epistemic communities cannot influence policy. They may. However, access to and control of resources is particularly relevant in a national security policy process wherein policy decision timelines are measured in minutes, hours, and days, versus longer timeframes.

Access to and control of exceptional resources encompasses human resources, capital resources, and budgetary resources. It also includes knowledge and informational resources and networks that encompass knowledge networks, informational databases, and the ability to provide and communicate assessment in a rapid fashion. A well-resourced epistemic community carries greater clout in policy discussions and debates, because they have access to and the ability to control critical information and intelligence in the policy process. Additionally, they possess the material resources to implement the policy positions and decisions for which they advocate. Well-resourced epistemic communities possess an asymmetric advantage in influence, persuasion, and bargaining power in policy discussion, providing them with exceptional *gravitas* in the policy process.

Military Elites as an Epistemic Community

Epistemic community research and scholarship alludes to the military as having, possessing, or manifesting traits of an epistemic community. Adler (1992) and Cross (2013a) both include military professionals in broad epistemic communities that include defense experts, senior military officers, scientists, and diplomats. However, the proposition that military elites act as a homogenous group and constitute an epistemic community has not been systematically examined and empirically tested. Previous scholarship examines heterogeneous groups that come from diverse professions

and different countries of origin. This dissertation differs, focusing solely on a homogenous group of individuals within the U.S. military.

In the previous two chapters, I have provided a comprehensive review of literature related to the presidency, international relations and foreign policy analysis, civil-military relations, and the nature and role of epistemic communities in the policy process. This review provides a synthesis of literature and theory that establishes the theoretical foundation and thread of context for the remainder of the dissertation. In the next Chapter, I present a research design and methodology that outlines my propositions and establishes the methodology by which I will investigate and empirically demonstrate my claims.

Chapter Three: Design & Methodology

> "There is no neutrality. There is only greater or less awareness of one's biases" (Rose 1985, 77).

The following chapter provides a precise, step-by-step application of the methodology utilized to understand how U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community and how they fulfill a unique role with exceptional influence over the national security policy process. I discuss in detailed description the procedures and issues related to the approach, method, process, sampling, data, coding, analysis, protection of the data, and role of the researcher. The resulting study is "an empirical investigation through description and structural analysis of the ways in which social relationships, in fact, influence thought" (Mannheim 1951, 239).

Scholarship investigating national security actors, policy, process, and implementation can be difficult without direct knowledge or practical experience (Jordan and Taylor 1981). The sensitive nature of the national security work amplifies the challenge. Important and valuable current data is likely classified. Current and former participants in the process may not be willing to discuss sensitive information, relationships, and events that provide important empirical observations. Historical data can be difficult to trace and gather because it is not centrally located and must be gathered from geographically dispersed, individual presidential libraries and national archives. Finally, current data that may not be approved for public release may be frustrated by long, drawn-out Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

There are additional reasons these sorts of studies are novel and sensitive, as well. As Desch (1992) outlines, in addition to difficulty gaining access to data, scholars tend to have little interest because they may think questions related to U.S. civil-military relations are long settled. This is not the case. Secondly, the public finds little interest because of the complexity of the issues involved, short attentions spans, and significant deference to the military. Third, the military has little interest

in such studies because of an acclaimed indoctrination with the principle of civilian control and a collective denial of the import of changing attitudes towards civil authorities. Finally, both military and civilian elites have nothing to gain from making democratically elected civilian leadership potentially appear weak to either domestic or international observers.

To negotiate these challenges, I conduct qualitative "insider academic research" to break through bureaucratic hurdles and understand the complexities of a social phenomenon ill-suited for quantitative methodologies.[15] The nature of my "insider" status allows me to provide a window into a unique military culture and social group, and share critical, analytical observations that incorporate personal knowledge and judgment (Adler and Adler 1987; Asselin 2003; Dwyer and Buckle 2009). This methodological approach is controversial in the social sciences (Morse 1998).

Insider academic research is defined as research conducted by an organizational or community member, not as academic research conducted by a scholar that has temporarily joined an organization or community for the purposes of research (Adler and Adler 1987; Kanuha 2000; Brannick and Coghlan 2007; Unluer 2012). My rank and position provided natural access to sample participants (Alvesson 2003). I come from the same common organizational cultural setting as many of my interview subjects and intend to continue my career in the military upon completion of my research.

Insider academic research has its critics and defenders. The criticism of insider academic research is noteworthy. Morse (1998, 61) counsels against insider research, stating, "It is not wise for an investigator to conduct a qualitative study in a setting where he or she is already employed and

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[15] Qualitative methods are better suited for theory development, describing and interpreting process, and behavior, role, and influence of actors in the process. Qualitative methods contribute to and prepare issues for future quantitative study (Bitsch 2005, 76).

has a work role." The role of investigator and employee are incompatible and "may place the researcher in an untenable position." Insider research is considered "problematic…frequently disqualified because it is perceived not to conform to standards of intellectual rigor," because of a lack of objectivity, lack of neutrality, lack of detachment, personal stakes, conflicts of interest, and "substantive emotional investment" (Brannick and Coghlan 2007, 60; DeLyser 2001; Hewitt-Taylor 2002).

Many social science scholars find, however, that insiders that are native to an organization or community they are investigating have unique insight and knowledge "from the lived experience" that enhances the data-gathering process (Brannick and Coghlan 2007, 60; Bonner and Tolhurst 2002). This provides the insider with an ability to take tacit knowledge and articulate and reframe it as contextually embedded, theoretical knowledge. Insider research provides rich and complex knowledge because of intimate familiarity, not because of a context-free, detached neutrality (Evered and Louis 1981; Bonner and Tolhurst 2002). Insider academic research results in a valuable creation and transfer of knowledge between practitioners and academics (Rynes, Bartunek and Daft 2001).

Notable dynamics of insider academic research that will be addressed in the design and methodology include access, preunderstanding, role duality, and organizational politics. There is also an important issue of bias and partiality. To address this challenge and prevent or reduce the inherent bias associated with insider research, it was important that I identify and bracket assumptions, conduct detailed reflection at each stage of the investigation, explore themes and messages that may run counter to expected findings, and consult regularly with outside experts to provide a check on methods in progress. This is critical because complete neutrality is impractical (Dwyer and Buckle 2009, 55).

The term "access" refers to "the ability to get into the organizational system and to be allowed to undertake research" (Brannick and Coghlan 2007, 67). This description of "access" is

broken into two parts – primary access to the organization and secondary access to conduct research. Undertaking research includes organizational consent to access restricted information or privileged information, data, and people that outside observers would not otherwise have access (Herrman 1989; Tetlock 2000; Coghlan 2003; Rouney 2005).

The dynamic of "preunderstanding" refers to "people's knowledge, insights, and experience before they engage in a research program" (Gummesson 2000, 57). It is the lived experience of the native researcher, their knowledge of "everyday life" within an organization or societal group (Nielsen and Repstad 1993). Researchers with insider knowledge are familiar with the jargon and language of their organization. They know how to navigate the organization's bureaucracy to gain access to information, data, and people (Smyth and Holian 2008). Insiders know the "taboo phenomena of what can be talked about and what cannot" (Brannick and Coghlan 2007, 67), know the formalities to extend, the *faux pas* to avoid, and can discern the nuances in the language, objectives, and agenda of people within the organization. In an interview scenario, the interviewer knows how to best frame questions, follow-up on replies, participate in discussion, and obtain richer, relevant data while building trust, rather than creating anxiety or suspicion (Smyth and Holian 2008).

"Role Duality" refers to the role of the researcher within the organization opposed to their role as researcher. These opposing roles of organizational member and native researcher can create conflicts related to loyalty, values, and role identity (Stephenson and Greer 1981; Gerrish 1997; DeLyser 2001). Insider researchers may harbor motives to change or influence the organization of which they are a member. Additionally, they may face a dilemma that causes conflict and friction with superiors and influences how they characterize their findings. The friction between these roles is more likely to occur when research is being conducted covertly or when the researcher wants to

continue and progress in the organization and must manage the aftermath of their report and related organizational politics (Nielsen and Repstad 1993).[16]

Organizational politics plays a role in all insider academic research (Brannick and Coghlan 2007). In the military, despite an institutional respect for academic freedom, a superior's encouragement and approval of insider research in an academic environment may be interpreted as controversial or subversive by superiors outside the military academic environment. An example of how organizational politics impacts this dissertation relates to how I attribute the thoughts, ideas, and opinions of interview subjects. Out of professional courtesy, interview excerpts in this study are unattributed. Sample participants are described in a manner so as to provide context to their opinion, demonstrate variance in background experience, keep identities anonymous, yet coded for historical reference and analysis purposes.

In the Preface, I provide context for this dissertation and a description of the work as "insider academic research." As previously noted, I am an active-duty military officer, an U.S. Army Colonel, competitively selected by a centralized board to attend Senior Service College, commonly referred to as "war college." I was further selected in a highly competitive secondary process to participate in the Army's Advanced Strategic Planning and Policy Program (ASP3), and assigned to the University of Kansas to pursue my PhD. I viewed all aspects of my work as being within the scope of my official duties. Thus, I sent all solicitations for interviews and access to data from either

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[16] No covert research was conducted during this dissertation. Each interview and all access granted was solicited with full disclosure that I was conducting research for a doctoral dissertation pursued in the course of completing a U.S. Army-sponsored, fully-funded PhD Fellowship program while serving on active duty. Additionally, the dissertation topic was approved by both the University of Kansas IRB and the Director, U.S. Army's Advanced Strategic Planning and Policy Program (ASP3) at SAMS, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Each individual chapter was provided to ASP3 and an abridged version of the study was provided to SAMS leadership.

my official government email account or on University of Kansas, Department of Political Science letterhead with a military signature block that contained my rank and military service affiliation.

I had significant assistance from mentors, advisors, and a personal and professional network that provided the impetus for the formulation of research questions, conceptualization of the role of military elites in the policy process, and as a starting point for data collection. The advantages to this "insider" approach provided ready access to senior officials for the purpose of conducting elite interviews. Initial credibility and trust came with my rank and professional affiliation. Rapid response resulted, absent any or very little personal vetting of me and my research. A comfortable rapport with senior officials was rooted in my career of military service and an understanding of a common language and vocabulary that can be hard to understand for those unfamiliar with the military and national security establishment.

Note that I am not a member of the "military elite" as defined in this investigation. I am a "peripheral member," as described by Adler and Adler (1987). Although I have observed military elites closely in a professional environment, I have never engaged in or participated in their core activities or responsibilities. This is noted because it relates to an ability to conduct insider research with a higher level of impartiality, as previously discussed.

A Grounded Theory Approach

A "grounded theory" and "ground truth" approach in the context of this dissertation refers to inductive and deductive processes utilized to systematically gather and analyze data close to or "on the ground" with the process or phenomena under investigation (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Bitsch 2005). The decision to utilize the concept and theoretical framework of epistemic community theory informed my decision to utilize a grounded theory approach to data collection. A "ground truth" approach informed the research questions asked.

Grounded theory is increasingly recognized for its utility in investigating and understanding contextual, process-oriented systems, such as the National Security Council, to describe and explain specific phenomena (Myers 1997). Additionally, it emphasizes the personal and professional experience of the investigator, making it well-suited for "insider" research. The investigator's experience and "insider" status provide a level of "theoretical sensitivity" that allows for incorporating insight, and comprehending and giving meaning to relevant, pertinent data (Glaser 1978; Strauss and Corbin 1990, 42).

Qualitative research is not a linear process. "Data collection, analysis, interpretation, and theory development" are iterative, interdependent, and occur with overlap and simultaneity (Bitsch 2005, 77). A grounded theory approach provides for inductively developing an existing theory, while a "ground truth" approach is a deductive method that provides for testing and validating an existing theory with additional data and under different conditions, new environment, or, in this case, level of analysis.

Elite Interviews as a Method

To understand whether military elites constitute an epistemic community the investigation relies on semi-structured elite interviews, oral histories, archival documents, and memoirs to determine whether the evidence supports the causal process informed by epistemic community theory (George and Bennett 2005, 6). Elite interviews are well-poised to investigate the complex behaviors, motives, and beliefs of military elites because they help investigators understand the diverse experiences, knowledge, and opinions, as well as the role of relationships, alliances, and access to resources play in military elite communities (Minichiello et al. 1995; Valentine 1997; Dunn 2005; George and Bennett 2005; Tansey 2007; Cross 2011). In the context of national security and foreign policy, elite interviews are highly relevant as critical sources of information and data regarding a highly political process at the pinnacle of state policy making (Tansey 2007).

The use of elite interviews necessitates a certain measure of subjective weighting as it relates to evidentiary significance. Scholars should also be cognizant of the role that cognitive dissonance plays in utilizing these methods. Bias in how interviews, histories, or documents support "pre-existing or favored interpretation and, conversely, downplay the significance" of opposing evidence, creates "a double standard in weighing evidence" (George and Bennett 2005, 99).

Additionally, investigators should remain skeptical and guard against becoming "star struck" in the elite interview process. Left unchecked, it can influence the analysis and interpretation of data. In the interview process, scholars should be fully cognizant of *what is being communicated by who, to whom, for what purpose and under what circumstances* (George 1973; George and Bennett 2005). In this investigation, it is assumed that elites work to shape public perceptions of their role in the policy process and in history (George and Bennett 2005, 101).

The Interview Process

Interview subjects (n=105) were contacted via email or letter, soliciting an interview. As previously mentioned, because the dissertation was within the scope of my primary duties and responsibilities, the interview solicitation came in an official government email or university letterhead bearing my name, rank, and military affiliation. Additionally, I included a brief description of my study; referenced, provided or offered IRB approval documentation; and offered additional information and safeguards to assure their informed consent to an interview. See Appendix G (Institutional Review Board Approval) for documentation related to the approval of this study.

Senior officials were eager to share their experiences and observations, as well as facilitate, in a "snowball effect," further interviews with elite contacts.[17] They seemed to have deep respect for

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[17] For example, an interview with a former APNSA, originally planned, "snowballed" into additional, unplanned interviews with a former CIA Director and Senior Director in the NSC Staff. A planned

and interest in facilitating scholarship. In the vast majority of interviews, senior officials were humble, patient, accommodating, and exceptionally transparent. Those who were further from their time in service were less guarded, discussed triumphs and mistakes with equal measure, and had no detectable agenda.

Some elites were interviewed while currently serving on the NSC staff. Others previously served on the NSC staff or remain close observers of the NSC. For those interviewees who were not currently serving on the NSC staff, they remain intellectually engaged, working within the private sector, influential think tanks, public and private universities, and U.S. military academies, service schools, and war colleges and universities (see Appendix B: Sample Population).

Interviews with younger, mid-career professionals with the potential to serve in future presidential administrations were not as forthcoming in discussions. These interviews (n=21) were explicitly agreed to be "not for attribution." Those who were still in position or fresh from their time in service were very cognizant that their history has yet to be written. Some have unfulfilled political ambitions, while others hope to return to public service in the future. Some want to write their own narrative and shape public opinion and perceptions of their role and the part they played in history. These interviewees were detectably motivated and in a relatively strong position to influence how scholarship records their actions. This dynamic created a personal agenda on their part that was recognizable in the narrative they provided.

No two interviews were the same. Location, questions, rapport, and personal chemistry varied with each subject. The majority of interviews (n=67) were conducted on the telephone and

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visit to conduct archival research of a collection of a former CJCS's papers, evolved into an unanticipated hour-long telephonic interview with the subject CJCS. Although sampling decisions evolved, the systematic technique of how interviews were coordinated and conducted did not change.

occurred at all times of the day or evening from a home office in Overland Park, Kansas, or from the departmental graduate student lab on the grounds of the University of Kansas in Blake Hall. Likewise, several interviews were conducted "in person" in Washington, D.C.

Interviews in person (n=37), were conducted in several venues that included noisy coffee shops on the outskirts of the Pentagon, as well as in private dining rooms inside elite, private, cosmopolitan clubs. Some were in offices along Massachusetts Avenue's "embassy row," while others were conducted at an interviewee's favorite bar or restaurant in Alexandria, VA. Some were in the Pentagon cafeteria while others were in more secure facilities.[18] A few significant interviews were conducted in impressive, well-appointed board rooms and high rise, corner offices blocks away from the White House.

Some interviewees spoke in anxious, hushed whispers while sitting at a remote think tank cafeteria table, furtively glancing around the room. Others spoke with bombast and strong conviction, jovially welcoming a debate of ideas. Some were eager to talk with no pretext of a question, while others were keen to listen to the theoretical context of my study and ask questions before responding thoughtfully.

Several interviewees did not allow recording (n=21), while the majority (n=84) welcomed it. My digital voice recorder was sometimes viewed with askance and skepticism. On request, a few subjects stipulated a copy of the interview transcript be provided for their personal records. When a telephonic or "in person" interview was not feasible, one subject agreed to provide written answers

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[18] Interviews conducted in private Pentagon offices, by Department of Defense regulation, did not allow cellular or recording devices. However, each senior military officer I interviewed in the Pentagon provided oral consent to take and record hand-written notes with the explicit intent to utilize them in this study.

to interview questions through a facilitator at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

A significant portion of time was spent at the beginning of each interview gaining trust and building rapport. Answers were sometimes exceptionally guarded and vague. Younger, less experienced civilian interview subjects tended to ask my opinion at times, to which they would provide their concurrence. Additionally, the wording of questions may have influenced answers, giving the perception of telling me what they thought I may have wanted to hear. I account for this in my findings.

Although every interview was different, each sample participant was approached in a similar manner with prepared questions. Questions were provided prior to an interview engagement and were approved by a panel of experts and through the IRB process. The questions were designed to be broad, mutually independent, avoid leading the participant, and elicit wide-ranging responses that would allow for follow-up questions as needed. Although the same questions were asked of each participant, the order of the question may have been altered based on how a conversation flowed or out of the interest of the participant. Interview questions are provided in Appendix A (Semi-Structured Interview Questions).

Sample Method and Population

This study incorporated a "theoretical sampling" method to determine interview samples. This is a dynamic process. Sample decisions evolved during the research process based on emerging and developing opportunities, themes, and concepts that were relevant to developing epistemic community theory in the context of military elites. Although an initial course of action for sampling was planned, the plan, once in action, changed (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 176-193). Although sampling decisions evolved, the systematic technique of how interviews were coordinated and conducted did not change.

Sample participants came from diverse backgrounds that include the military, diplomatic corps, intelligence community, academia, think tanks, and current and former members, leadership, and staff of the NSC. For academic experts, sample interviewees were drawn from leading scholars in the field with national and international reputations. Practitioner experts were selected based on both direct experiences with the NSC staff, and indirect experience, which includes working in support of the NSC process (see Appendix B, Sample Population, for details).

To develop an effective interview technique capable of maximizing data collection during a time-constrained event, as well as test and refine questions prior to approaching senior elites for interview, I conducted interviews in two waves. The first wave of interviews typically lasted 45-90 minutes with a significant amount of time spent providing context, explaining the study, and building rapport. Wave One sample participants (n=75) were from a sample of mid-level elites and national security experts. The experience of a mid-level expert was typically at or below the "Deputy Assistant" level within a cabinet agency. Mid-level "General Schedule" (GS-level) experts typically held the rank of GS-14 through Senior Executive Service (SES) III. Within the National Security Council staff, mid-level experts typically served at or below the rank of "Special Assistant" and "Senior Director." For active duty and retired military, mid-level experts typically held the rank of O-5 (Lieutenant Colonel) through O-8 (Major General). See Appendix C (Wave One) for details on Wave One sample participant demographics.

Wave Two interviews (n=30) were with senior, exceptionally experienced, and high-ranking national security and foreign policy elites. These more senior elites were identified by national reputation and having served in nominative positions, confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Interviews were typically limited to 30 minutes, sometimes taking several months of lead time to coordinate. In addition to coordinating a day and time for the interview event, coordination of interviews with some elites may also have included providing the list of questions days or weeks in advance of the

interview for legal review by lawyers and public relations representatives, and provision and legal review of the dissertation prospectus and IRB approval documentation. See Appendix D (Wave Two) for details on Wave Two sample participant demographics.

There was little room for error in conducting senior elite interviews and rarely time for follow-up questions or opportunities for second interviews. Senior experience was as the head of or at the most senior executive ranks of a cabinet agency, National Security Council, intelligence community, or in the military. Within cabinet agencies, they held the rank of "Secretary," "Deputy Secretary," "Under-Secretary," Ambassador, and SES I-II. Within the National Security Council, they included "Deputy Assistant to the President" (DAP) and "Assistant to the President." Within the CIA, they included both Directors and Deputy Directors. Military elites, as previously described, typically include active-duty and retired flag officers at the rank of O-9 (Lieutenant General/Vice Admiral) or O-10 (General/Admiral).

Senior elite interviews in this study represent the combined experiences of a former Secretary of State and eight U.S. Ambassadors; a Deputy- and Under-Secretary of Defense; two Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; two Vice Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; three Army Chiefs of Staff; one Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps; four Directors of the Central Intelligence Agency; five National Security Advisors and three Deputy National Security Advisors. Four-star level general officer experience also included seven Combatant Commanders and five Army Command/Service Component Commanders. Multiple three-star flag officers interviewed had held cabinet-level or ambassadorial rank.

All interviews provided first-hand experiential accounts of the national security and foreign policy decision-making process. They provided for the reconstruction of events or a description of scenarios that explicitly stated or inferred specific behavior, role, and influence of key actors or communities within the policy process at the presidential level. Finally, the data from these

interviews expanded upon, authenticated, corroborated or, in some cases, disputed, previous data collected.

Capturing Data

Field notes were taken with the oral consent of each interview subject. Notes provided a personal log of memos, events, follow up questions, answers, specific quotes, descriptive coding, and new themes or lines of query. The notes also facilitated concept mapping, and self-reflection related to each interview, as well as reflection regarding intangible elements related to the interview that I found noteworthy (Kane and Trochim 2006; Watson and Till 2010; Cope 2016).

Of the 105 interviews conducted, 84 were recorded and transcribed. Recorded interviews were conducted with a small handheld digital voice recorder with the oral consent of the participant. Following an interview, the digital file was coded and downloaded onto two hard-drives to make the file easily identifiable and to create a duplicate copy. The file was then erased from the handheld digital voice recorder device to protect against loss, damage, or theft of data. Hard drives containing research data were secured in a passcode protected safe.

Transcriptions were verbatim, minus notating pauses and word-fillers, such as "ums" and "ahs." Transcriptions were printed in duplicate hard-copy to provide a working volume. Interview transcriptions were then descriptively and analytically coded in a systematic and iterative process to prepare the data for exploration and analysis.

Coding and Analysis

Upon completion of data collection, working copies of transcripts were coded using a grounded theory approach. The approach calls for an iterative, descriptive, and analytical coding process that involves "open coding," "axial coding," and "selective coding" (Strauss 1987; Corbin and Strauss 1990). This process reduced and organized the data, preparing it for exploration and

analysis (Cope 2016). Reducing, abstracting, and organizing data "is a scientific procedure designed to deal with the complexity and chaos of brute observations" (Lefebvre 1984, 105).

Open coding began with the initial data collection, recognizing that "analysis begins as soon as the first bit of data is collected" (Corbin and Strauss 1990, 419). Data gathered at the beginning of the process provided cues for data gathered throughout the remainder of the process. For example, it provided for adjusting question verbiage; dismissing irrelevant questions and asking questions that were more relevant; or, in the case of additional data sources, how oral histories and personal memoirs were selected, and which archival documents were targeted, pulled, and analyzed.

A second round of analytical coding, or axial coding, occurred after data collection was complete. Analytical coding further organizes data, providing the ability to identify relationships, patterns, and connections, and are often incorporated, interwoven, or insinuated into interview questions (Cope 2016). In this study, the process involved identifying thematic patterns in the verbal utterances of sample participants. Identified themes were mapped to the conceptual attributes of epistemic communities to determine the extent to which military elites exhibit these characteristics, as well as the nature of their role and influence on the policy process.

The final third round of coding, selective coding, involved identifying specific quotations that were representative and gave a sense of the whole. Each verbal utterance identified and coded in this iteration provided the investigator the ability to develop a sense of meaning in the patterns. The process was also deliberately used to test for remaining variation and clarify remaining questions (Bitsch 2005, 79).

Sample Size

The interview sample included 105 participants. This sample size was justified on the basis of determining that gathered data provided valid content in answering the primary research questions and supporting the propositions of the investigation. Content validity is achieved when

"theoretical saturation" has been reached (Corbin and Strauss 1990). This dynamic is also referred to as "data saturation."

Data saturation is a term often used in relationship to qualitative studies that utilize semi-structured interviews as a primary methodology. Data saturation is reached when no new additional data is found. In other words, evident and consistent themes, patterns, and concepts were mentioned and shared by two or more sample participants. Idiosyncratic themes, patterns or concepts cease to be mentioned. Once this occurs, an adequate sample size has been achieved (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Guest, Bunce and Johnson 2006; Francis et al. 2010).

Specifying data saturation relied on meeting three standards. The first standard was the specification of an "initial analysis sample" numbering 50 participants. The second standard was the specification of a "stopping criterion." This criterion was met when four consecutive interviews from a category of expert participants failed to reveal any new themes or patterns. The third standard required review of the methods by three outside experts for evaluation and concurrence with method, procedure, and the determination of data saturation (Francis et al. 2010).

Sample Demographics

Sample participants were predominantly male (n=93). Nearly all participants (n=103) had a master's degree or higher. Terminal degree participants (n=49) made up a significant portion of the sample. Military service (n=71) was a common attribute for participants with 29% serving on active-duty (n=30) at the time of their interview. Of those with military experience, 65% were combat veterans (n=68). Additionally, 60% of participants had worked on the NSC staff or served as a principle member of the NSC (n=63).

Besides experience in the military or with the NSC, participants had additional experience outside of government. For example, 33% held current or emeritus teaching positions in academia (n=35), 32% held fellowship positions at major think tanks (n=34), and 19% had worked in the

State Department (n=20). In addition to working across multiple agencies, participants had worked across multiple presidential administrations; 13% worked in the Reagan administration (n=14), 14% under the Bush (41) administration (n=15), 18% under the Clinton administration (n=19), 40% under the Bush (43) administration (n=42), 49% under the Obama administration (n=51), and 32% under the Trump administration (n=34).

Wave One participants were predominantly military (n=47) with 36% serving on active duty (n=27) at the time of their interview and 47% having NSC experience (n=35). Wave Two participants were also predominantly military (n=25) with 10% serving on active-duty (n=3) at the time of their interview and 93% having NSC experience (n=28).

Oral Histories and Archival Research

To augment the interview process, I relied on oral histories, archival research, and personal memoirs. Population and sampling procedures remained the same. Categorization of sources and coding procedures remained consistent. This provided for combining results of analysis, despite variance in the method of data collection.

In interviews and oral histories, subjects often referred to their memoirs, the memoirs of their peers, as well as to public documents or information that could only be verified through FOIA requests. In each of these cases, memoirs, public documents, and FOIA requests were utilized for corroboration and authentication. These sources add further context, nuance, and supporting facts.

The oral histories I rely on are predominantly from three sources, the Presidential Oral Histories collection at the Miller Center, University of Virginia; The National Security Council Project: Oral History Roundtables collection at the Brookings Institute; and a special collection of oral histories, yet to be released to the public, conducted by Dr. Peter Feaver, Dr. Tim Sayle, and Dr. Jeffrey Engle, in the course of their work on behalf of the Southern Methodist University, Center for Presidential History. Extensive archival research was conducted at the National Defense

University, Special Collections, Archives, and History Office on the Washington, DC campus at Fort McNair. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also made a significant collection of his personal papers available to the public in the Rumsfeld Archives online. Mr. Paul Schott Stevens, former EXECSEC of the National Security Council under President Reagan, made available his collection and archive of personal papers during his time on the NSC staff. Finally, I rely on memoirs, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, and open source reporting, documents, and data.

All data gathered was viewed as purposeful. Regardless of source, it was viewed as an intentional effort to influence public perception and history (George and Bennett 2005, 101). As such, the data contains flaws. It contains human error. It represents flawed memory, a *post hoc* description of the past. It describes impactful and important events and dynamics of which interview subjects were intimately involved and emotionally invested. It is flawed in that experiential knowledge is not inherently objective or factual. It is a version of truth. It is biased. There is an agenda (Doan, Candal, and Sylvester 2018).

Protecting Sample Participants and Data

Conducting the investigation and protecting sample participants required abiding by strict protocols and regulatory requirements outlined and approved by the University of Kansas Institutional Review Board (IRB). There were no deviations from these protocols. Regarding attribution, the dissertation follows an amended "Chatham House Rule," no attribution of comments, but limited affiliation is provided for context.[19] Additionally, the protocols for handling and coding the data ensured that there was neither loss nor contamination of the data.

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[19] Chatham House Rule - participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

Role of the Researcher

As an inside researcher, I am a product of the profession and culture that I describe at length throughout this dissertation. Therefore, I make the axiological assumption that this dissertation is value-laden and my personal biases influence my scholarship. Indeed, I chose the topic of this study exactly because it explores ideas, concepts and relationships about which I am keenly interested and passionate. As with all scholarship, there is personal bias inherent in my own work. I endeavor to recognize and avoid it in the Findings. However, personal bias becomes evident in Chapter Six as I discuss my opinions related to consequences and implications.

Regarding interviews, I assume, ontologically, that the subjects in my interviews, as well as the data gathered in oral histories, archives, and memoirs, are truthful. They are relating and sharing their independent reality. These realities are socially constructed and, in some cases, vary widely. I also assume and recognize, epistemologically, that dynamics within the interview process influence both the subject and the interviewer. I proposed the same set of questions to each sample participant. However, variance in each interview related to my deliberate effort to build rapport, pursue lines of thought, have in-depth discussion, explore concepts, and gain a full picture of what a subject believed, observed, and experienced in relationship to a historical period in their life. This variation results in a unique and dynamic influence between both interviewer and subject in each engagement.

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https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule. The full list of names, my interview notes, and transcriptions of recorded interviews will be maintained for a period of 12 months post-defense.

Chapter Four: Findings – Conceptual Attributes

> "Every assertion, no matter how objective it may be, has ramifications extending beyond the limits of science" (Mannheim 1951).

Before presenting the data and results, it is important to review the original research questions. The first question was to determine whether military elites constitute an epistemic community. The second question was to understand how and why national security decisions are affected by this epistemic community. The final question was to understand how these dynamics impact civil-military balance of power relations. These questions drove the formulation of the two propositions under consideration.

> **Proposition One** – *U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community.*
> **Proposition Two** – *U.S. military elites, constituting an epistemic community, play a unique role with exceptional influence on national security and foreign policy process and administration.*

The findings substantiate that military elites do constitute an epistemic community. In other words, they conform to and exhibit the conceptual attributes defined in Chapter One. These conceptual attributes are listed here, again in Table 2, for convenience. Many of the findings also support related extant literature that is incorporated in the narrative below.

Table 2: Conceptual Attributes of Epistemic Communities

1.	Shared Normative, Principled, Causal, and Political Beliefs
2.	Shared Notions of Validity
3.	Common Policy Enterprise
4.	Profession and Ethos
5.	Internal Cohesion and Intra-Group Trust
6.	Consensual, Authoritative Knowledge and Expertise
7.	Perceptions of an Uncertain, Complex Environment
8.	External Relationships, Alliances, and Resources

For five of the conceptual attributes (1-5), sample participants agreed that the attributes strongly and accurately characterized the behavior of military elites. The findings further specify these conceptual attributes in relationship to military elites, as well as to epistemic community theory, more generally. For two of the conceptual attributes (6-7), there is notable support for military elites exhibiting these conceptual attributes. However, there is

interesting variance and nuance that demonstrates the impact of domestic politics on epistemic community influence and the ability of epistemic community members to convincingly propagate conceptions of the policy environment that support their policy preferences.

The final conceptual attribute, *External Relationships, Alliances, and Resources (8)*, sets military elites apart from competing epistemic communities and is fundamental to the unique role and exceptional influence exhibited by military elites in the policy process. Cross (2013b) identified *relationships* as important to gaining access to decision-makers. However, as this investigation demonstrates, strong relationships, internal and external to the community, international and domestic alliances, and access to and control of resources, provide exceptional asymmetric advantage in influencing policy. Appendix F (Military Elite Conceptual Attributes and Theoretical Implications) provides an abbreviated roadmap of the findings below and a description of the nuanced theoretical implications of the findings related to Proposition One.

The raw data samples presented below are select quotations coded and extracted from individual interviews according to six criteria (see Table 3). They are long enough to provide context but abridged to omit language that would identify the sample participant. They demonstrate and represent themes in response. They incorporate similar and common words, phrases, sentences, and passages found throughout the data set. They are clearly related to a proposition, as well as to one or more attributes that reflect the theoretical construct.

It is important to note that sample quotes sometimes depart from the substantive idea of a particular attribute the study seeks to demonstrate. Mapping and matching quotations to concepts was not a perfect process. This is to be expected when conducting interviews with practitioners and academics unfamiliar with the framework and technical definitions of conceptual attributes within epistemic community theory. Indeed, not a single sample participant was familiar with epistemic community theory.

The selected quotations exemplify the data set and provide a sense of the whole, or, to avoid biased sampling, they present important contradiction, dissent, and divergence that bring forward unexpected themes and variance. This provided valuable, nuanced understanding of epistemic community behavioral characteristics. Variation is critical to analysis because it provides for understanding differences of opinion among sample participants from different backgrounds, affiliations, and levels of experience. It also provides for important, novel development of epistemic community theory by identifying conditionality and consequential nuance in the theoretical construct. Finally, it adds to the body of knowledge and understanding in the how and why of national security and foreign policy process and administration work in practice.

Table 3: Criteria for Selection and Presentation of Raw Data
Support and substantiate proposition OR contradict, dissent, and diverge to demonstrate variance and highlight nuance
Exemplify data set (Provide a sense of the whole)
Substantiated and supported by extant scholarship and literature
Support conceptual attribute and directly related to findings
Demonstrate general patterns in response (Describe and develop the meaning of the related Conceptual Attribute in context)
Provide variation and novel development of theory by identifying conditionality and consequential nuance in the Conceptual Attribute

Conceptual Attribute One: Shared Normative, Principled, Causal, and Political Beliefs

> "The military ethic is thus pessimistic, collectivist, historically inclined, power-oriented, nationalistic, militaristic, pacifist, and instrumentalist in its view of the military profession. It is, in brief, realistic and conservative" (Huntington 1957, 79).

The idea that epistemic communities share common normative, principled, causal, and political beliefs springs from and is co-constituted with the common profession and ethos that will be discussed below. Both derive from the common training, education, experience, and professional development members of an epistemic community undergo. These beliefs are explicitly centered on core values that are common across the military services. Normative beliefs relate to how the

conduct of military professionals should align with the values of honor, courage, integrity, commitment, selfless service, loyalty, duty, and respect. These are values held in common across the military services. Examples of shared principled beliefs include the ideas that hard work, determination, and merit bring excellence and success; that competition is healthy and builds *esprit d'corps*; and physical fitness is a foundational trait of a warrior.

To understand causal beliefs in the context of military elites, Huntington (1957) generalizes that, as it relates to international relations, military elites are conservative realists. He suggests that military elites ascribe to beliefs that international relations and politics are governed by Hobbesian human nature that is constant and unchanging. They tend to focus on the military security of the state; unrelenting, immediate and existential military threats; and the continuous likelihood of war. They tend to think of states as unitary, rational actors that act rationally in their self-interests; that states exist in an international system of anarchy wherein they continually seek power and advantage in order to provide security and self-preservation. Finally, they are inclined to define power primarily in material terms, favoring a strong military (Carr 1945; Waltz 1959; Niebuhr 1960; Abrahamsson 1972; Morgenthau 1973; Feaver 1996).

Although military officers may identify as *conservative*, there are no studies demonstrating that military officers uniformly understand what *conservatism* entails. Some find the characterization of military elites as conservatives as being overly broad. They speculate that military elites may possess more liberal beliefs regarding global politics (Mahoney-Norris 2001). Others find contradictory opinions among military elite related to what they think their current belief system is, versus what it ought to be (Pierce 2010).

The following three interview excerpts provide a sense of the whole as it relates to the sample population in this study and what military elites believe about themselves today, as well as how they are perceived by others. A senior military officer and former college Professor stated,

> "In both my scholarly work and in my personal experience, I find that we tend to draw individuals into the officer corps that have shared belief systems and a shared world view. This is something we have in common before we join the military. That belief system is then codified in the socialization process we experience throughout our military career...and, as a whole, we tend to become more conservative the longer we serve" (W1-I17).

A current Foreign Service Officer stated,

> "I think the stereotypes are generally accurate. The military tends to lean conservative. The State Department tends to lean liberal. Those leanings are apparent in our respective cultures, too. Military culture is very hierarchical and rich with tradition and has a high *esprit d'corps*. State culture is very individual-centric. There is no *esprit d'corps*. We tend to be liberal academics, bookish, and wonky" (W1-I64).

A former NSC staff official, think tank fellow, and college Professor stated,

> "Military elites have always tended to be conservative. They know that at the end of the day, the military are the ones that have to implement policy, carry out missions, and put the lives of men and women on the line" (W1-I7).

Finally, General John Hyten, Commander, U.S. Strategic Command, described the military's conservatism in his keynote address to the 2019 Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance Conference and Workshop in the following way, "We in the military don't get to look at the world the way we wish it was. We have to look at it the way that it is" (Hyten 2019).

The socialization process referenced above takes place over decades in which shared normative, principled, and causal beliefs of individuals and the military community are mutually constituted (Atkinson 2014). It is a process of social interaction, cultural transmission, indoctrination, and training. Individual members are incorporated into the community as they learn, accept, and reflect the identity, beliefs, values, norms, values, practices, and language of the community (Dawson and Prewitt 1969; Pitkin 1972; Johnson 2001; Atkinson 2014).

These interview excerpts also demonstrate the complex and difficult nature of disentangling normative, principled, and causal belief systems from opinions related to the political beliefs of military elites. Haas (2001) and Cross (2011) argue that epistemic communities strive to be "politically untainted" and impartial in a critical effort to be embraced and respected by political

leaders. However, the responses highlight a consensus of opinion among sample participants that military elites are politically tainted. They are not apolitical, impartial, or neutral.

These excerpts and findings support and align with three major studies conducted over the past twenty years. These studies demonstrated that beliefs, worldview, and political identity within the U.S. military's officer corps have grown increasingly conservative over time, as well as with time spent in military service. Military officers with moderate and liberal political beliefs become less likely to identify as moderate or liberal over time. They tend to exit the military at a higher rate than their more conservative counterparts. Moderate and liberal military officers remaining in the military for a career tend to hold less moderate and less liberal political beliefs as a group as they reach more senior rank (Holsti 1998; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Urben 2010; Golby 2011).

This is not to say that military elites all identify with a particular political party or that they all agree on the policies meant to achieve national security goals and objectives. The number of retired military flag officers that increasingly endorse presidential candidates from both parties demonstrates that they do not. However, it is well-documented that military officers, as a population, tend to self-identify as politically conservative,[20] and increasingly identify as Republican (Holsti 1998, 2001; Davis 2001; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Szayna et al 2007; Urben 2010; Golby 2011).

Military elites that lack impartiality and exhibit biased, political behavior may be favored when political preferences align with decision-makers. However, their influence is muted when political preferences are not in alignment with decision-makers. Ultimately, they risk long-term

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[20] As previously noted, military elites' conservative beliefs tend to relate to economic, national security and foreign policy issues, while they tend to hold more liberal views as it relates to social issues (Holsti 1998; Davis 2001; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Szayna et al 2007).

diminution of their collective influence because politicians and the public will increasingly view them with skepticism and diminished respect (Schake and Mattis 2016).

Military elites, according to the findings of this study, have become increasingly politically tainted and it affects their unique role and influence according to the political party and policy preferences of the presidential administration in which they serve. This dynamic is discussed further in Chapter Five, but roughly translates into the skepticism they may encounter under Democratic presidential administrations, and the policy preference alignment they may experience under Republican presidential administrations.

Finding: There is a strong finding that military elites definitively share normative, principled, causal, and political beliefs. This finding is supported by the data of this investigation, as well as by previous scholarship. This supports the proposition that military elites constitute an epistemic community and reaffirms Huntington's assertions related to a military ethic. More importantly, despite whether an epistemic community demonstrates this conceptual attribute, what matters most is how they are perceived by decision-makers. In the short-term, politically tainted epistemic communities may have strong influence when policy preferences align with decision-makers. However, they lose influence as policy preference alignment shifts. In the long-term, politically tainted epistemic community members are viewed with skepticism and distrust by the public at both ends of the political spectrum.

Conceptual Attribute Two: Shared Notions of Validity

The conceptual attribute of *shared notions of validity* in epistemic communities refers to whether military elites demonstrate "intersubjective, internally defined, and co-constituted criteria for weighing and validating expertise" within their profession, policy domain, and enterprise (Haas 1992, 3). In other words, weighing and validating the expertise of military elites can be subjective

and difficult to define and measure. Internal to the community, validation of expertise and knowledge is demonstrated in three broad ways.

First, validation is gained through a promotion system that objectively measures *merit*; determining whether military service members merit promotion through observation and performance. To merit promotion objectively, military members attend military schools, civilian graduate degree programs, and have their personnel files reviewed by specially convened selection and promotion boards that certify their professional development and preparation for increased rank and responsibility. At relatively more junior ranks, they also attend tradecraft schools that teach specialized skillsets that prepare service members to perform technical tasks related to tactical leadership and combat.[21]

More subjectively, military members validate their expertise and knowledge internal to the community by demonstrating commitment, character, and competence. This is accomplished over time by being selected for and serving successfully in multiple leadership positions at increasing levels of responsibility within the organization. It is demonstrated by maintaining a record and reputation of conforming to military values and standards related to moral and ethical behavior, maintaining a professional appearance, and demonstrating a high level of physical fitness. The ability to perform successfully over time, in multiple assignments, increasing levels of responsibility, varying geographic locations, in garrison environments, contingency operations, and combat, builds an officer's reputation within the community that tacitly validates their expertise and knowledge.

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[21] Professional "Military Education Level" (MEL) or "Joint Professional Military Education" (JPME) – level schools determine qualification and certification to serve at a military officer's current and future ranks. Technical schools, such as "Airborne School" or "Ranger School," teach tradecraft skillsets, such as how to safely exit an aircraft while in flight, as well as leadership training and how to conduct simulated combat missions under stressful conditions.

Finally, as military officers become more senior in rank, their expertise and knowledge is validated externally. As they increasingly work with senior civilian leadership, elected officials, and political appointees, their expertise and knowledge is tacitly validated by the trust civilians place in them. Trust is gained internally and externally by demonstrating the ability to discreetly communicate and convey advice and institutional needs and interests. Military elites should be sophisticated enough to ensure they are seen as being less central to public narratives, allowing civilian politicians to receive positive credit and political capital for policy decisions, despite how decisive military elites were in the ultimate policy outcome (Shulman 2012). Civilian leaders demonstrate trust through the access they grant military elites as advisors and confidantes and through a willingness to delegate decision-making authority.

In the interview process, this particular conceptual attribute was unfamiliar to sample participants. However, after defining and describing the term, it immediately provoked comment, as it was related to the process of professionalization that military elites undergo throughout their career. A senior military officer with NSC experience and serving as a Professor stated,

> "This idea that military officers are different from their civilian counterparts and how this is reinforced by shared notions of validity is really critical, because it's a deliberate process. It's the process of professionalization. It's how we socialize and professionalize our officers unlike any other governmental agency. We do it by building a shared identity through shared experiences. We do it by enforcing and conforming to values and norms of behavior. By holding ourselves to a higher standard" (W1-I6).

Shared social identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1981, 255). Those that self-identify as being a member of a social group validate the salience of being recognized as a member of the group by society, as well as the salience of the authoritative knowledge possessed by the community. They deliberately behave in accordance with and conform to group norms and values and rely on the

group to guide and validate their behavior (Brewer 1991; Terry and Hogg 1996; Tropp and Wright 2001).

Interviewees made frequent and common references to the effective indoctrination and validation of military values and norms achieved through a deliberate and career-long enculturation and socialization process. This process involved how the military selects and promotes officers within its ranks; the progressive professional development programs officers experience; and, the progressive assignments and broadening opportunities available to officers that reinforce and validate military values, norms, beliefs, identity, and experiences. The effect, observed a second college Professor with extensive NSC experience, was that,

> "Notions of validity intensify over time and the longer you serve. Military officers are exposed to and immersed in a very unique culture. They progress through and endure a number of unique and common experiences in what may often times be a very intense environment. This can be in their military schooling or maybe in combat. And it would be impossible for these experiences to not shape their worldview or validate their sense of having a very unique identity that is recognized and honored by society" (W1-I47).

Several participants, particularly from the State Department, contrasted their experiences with military community members. They recognized and acknowledged the unique role military culture has in validating beliefs, identity, experiences, expertise, and knowledge. It is not common across the U.S. government.[22] For example, a retired Ambassador noted that the State Department had a rigorous selection process, referring to the Foreign Service Exam. However, once selected to work at the State Department,

> "There is no enculturation process, and no one gets weeded out for a failure to perform. There is an orientation, however, 'State 101,' and tradecraft and language training. But, there's no formalized, career-long, professional development program. The assignment

[22] Multiple State Department studies have been conducted that support the views of sample participants in this study. For example, see Bedford et al (2017), "State Department Reform Report," and Boyatt et al (2003), "Secretary Colin Powell's State Department: An Independent Assessment."

> process is *ad hoc*. It is not merit-based. Assignments are more determined by your 'corridor reputation' and are very 'free market.' Professional development opportunities exist, but there's very little incentive…there's no value placed on continuing education" (W2-I29).

There is a noteworthy *caveat* that *shared notions of validity* may result in a rushed, sometimes rigid, thought process or approach to problem-solving. It was very evident in primary resources and interview responses that military elites view themselves as professional problem-solvers with a sense of urgency. They tend to believe that they gain a firm grasp and rapid understand of the realities of strategic and operational situations, while simultaneously holding a critical or skeptical view of civilian counterparts overly willing to engage in time-consuming philosophical debate and discussion. Military elites tend to have confidence in their approach to national security crisis and challenge. This confidence is rooted in the validation of their experiences, training, knowledge, and expertise.

General George Casey communicates this dynamic in his reflections on leading the war in Iraq. He describes urgently crafting the central tenets of his campaign strategy from public statements of the president, because "the higher up you go, the less guidance you receive" (Casey 2012, 6). Politicians are challenged in articulating what they want to accomplish or how they envision the operationalization of strategic policy. They can lack a sense of urgency and shy away from giving too much guidance for fear of being perceived as micromanaging. They sometimes flinch from asking questions that may reveal their ignorance. A college Professor and retired senior military officer confirms this dilemma, describing civilians in the NSC process as displaying "a baffling incompetence in not knowing what questions to ask" when consulting with military elites in relationship to national security policy and planning (W1-I16).

At times, particularly in war, aggressive military elites can usurp civilian prerogatives and authority. Retired Lieutenant General Michael DeLong, former Central Command, Chief of Operations in the lead up to Operation Iraqi Freedom described elite, highly educated civilian

counterparts in the State Department with no sense of urgency. Civilians at the State Department were more concerned with protocol and using proper channels of communication that wasted precious time. DeLong describes a process in which diplomats were ultimately pushed aside. In time-constrained, chaotic crisis, military elites decided who to talk to and what should be said. They did not have time to waste in academic discussion. They knew what they wanted, when they wanted it, and how to get the answers they needed to achieve the political and military objectives of the President (DeLong 2004).

A civilian member of President Trump's NSC and current think tank fellow observed that,

> "Military elites are driven to lead and find solutions. State and the [Intelligence Community] are thinkers, not problem-solvers. Leading and problem-solving are not their mission and its not an integral part of their organizational culture" (W1-I54).

A fellow civilian colleague that had worked in both the Obama NSC and Trump NSC echoed these sentiments, stating,

> "The military culture makes it a well-oiled machine. Its emphasis on planning and contingencies result in a level of preparedness that other agencies lack. They are able to bring 'off the shelf' solutions to policy issues for presidential consideration in a very rapid process. They beat other agencies to the punch because they've planned for so many contingencies and scenarios. The State Department is more *ad hoc* and free-flowing, which causes it to become paralyzed in a rapid decision-making process because of their lack of preparedness" (W1-I68).

Both of these quotation demonstrate the implications of *shared notions of validity*. It can serve to enhance the influence of an epistemic community. However, it can also have negative impacts on the policy process that must be noted.

Finding: There is a strong finding that military elites do have shared notions of validity. This supports the proposition that military elites constitute an epistemic community. The validation process that military elites endure throughout their career is objective and subjective, internal and external; strengthened and intensified through career-long educational experiences, graduated professional development, and experience. However, there is a *caveat*. The process of socialization,

professionalization, and the gaining of experiential knowledge does not mean, particularly at the strategic level, that every challenge or crisis can be handled with a "playbook" of 'off the shelf' solutions, standard operating procedures, and well-oiled planning process. The history of U.S. military conflict is littered with hard-fought, costly victories gained through brute strength, human casualties, and strategic endurance – not critical thinking.

It is important to note that military elites, as well as epistemic communities more generally, imbued with this conceptual attribute, may rush the policy process out of a sincere sense of urgency that can constrain critical thinking and hinder a civilian leaders' ability to gain adequate or full situational awareness. This has the potential to exacerbate a dynamic of 'group think' within an epistemic community and create vulnerabilities, politically, strategically, or otherwise. Elected leaders may delegate authority, but they cannot delegate responsibility. Over-extended trust and delegation of decision-making authority allows powerful military elites to pursue policy and strategy that ultimately and inherently pursues self- and institutional- interests and equities; propagates self-serving strategic conceptions of the international and operational environment; and subordinates national interest to more narrow interests that, in the long-term, jeopardize national security (Kupchan 1994).

Conceptual Attribute Three: Common Policy Enterprise

Military elites share a *common policy enterprise*. It is a military policy enterprise and it is considered *key terrain* in the parlance of the military. It is a guarded jurisdiction and prerogative of military elites that affords them advantage. Interference by civilians is met with resistance, recalcitrance, contempt, and selective obedience; perceived as an intrusive endeavor unaligned with military interests (Bacevich 2007). The military policy enterprise encompasses leadership, management, and administration of policies that regulate the military's vast institution, bureaucracy, and operations.

The potential for civil-military conflict regarding military and national security policy is greatest during election cycles and administration transitions. This can be caused by (historically successful) attempts to politicize military elites, particularly retired flag officers; turbulence in shifting civilian leadership; as well as by the political agenda of a new administration that may be out of alignment with military interests (Szayna et al, 2007). When a new administration comes into office, military elites view themselves as the continuity in government; guarding against the "sheer incompetence of political appointees who were successful campaigners but fail to know how to govern" (Ackerman 2010, 24).

Any perceived interference by civilians endeavoring to interject influence or assert authority over the military policy domain of planning, directing, and executing strategy, operations, and control of military organizations, force design, personnel, use of force, and resources results in immediate friction and backlash (Szayna et al, 2007). Military elites prefer that civilians "should remain within their areas of professional expertise" (Herspring 2013, 3). When they do endeavor to affect military policy, they rarely offer effective change in the interest of military elites or in alignment with institutional preferences (Hudson 2015).

The conviction of military elites to protect the jurisdiction of military policy enterprise is justified, in their opinion, because of their extensive professional preparation, experience, and expertise in military matters. Former CJCS, General John Shalikashvili, signaled his feelings on the matter, stating,

> "My feeling is that [the National Security Advisor] must always be conscious, when it comes to making military decisions on the use of military power, that the President has not served and that he has not served" (quoted in Feaver and Gelpi 2004, 64).

The implication of Shalikashvili's comment is that civilians who have not served in the military lack the professional expertise and judgment to adequately consider decisions related to military policy.

Military elites, by contrast, gain extensive professional expertise through a deliberate process that has developed and evolved through internal review, as well as from legislative requirements. To become a military elite, they must matriculate through a decades-long, rigid, relatively uncorrupted, "meritocratic and technocratic" winnowing process (Cohen 2016, 85). As one former senior naval officer and senior civilian executive with NSC experience noted,

> "Unlike any other governmental organization, military elites are promoted primarily through merit for the first 20 years of their career. After that, your relationships and your personal network play a bigger role in your promotions and assignments. There are also a few that are "legacy," that got their stars because of their daddy and their last name, but for the most part you promote on merit" (W1-I60).

The career-long educational and professional development process is systematic and progressive in its approach. It validates and promotes military professionals indoctrinated with institutional values, moral qualifications, standards of integrity and fitness, and abilities to perform at increasing levels of rank and responsibility (U.S.C. Title 10 2017, § 385-386).

This career advancement process is meant to ensure that military elites are "educated, trained, and experienced in joint matters to enhance the joint warfighting capability and lethality of the United States through a heightened awareness of joint requirements, including multi-service, interagency, international, and non-governmental perspectives" (DOD 2018c, 5). It also ensures expertise and qualification in planning, organizing, developing, coordinating, synchronizing, and implementing expansive national-level policy that achieves national security and military goals and objectives (DOD 1985). This process is unique across the U.S. government. No other agency or institution develops its elites in such a deliberate and expansive manner.

Documents provided by the Joint History Office demonstrate how General Shalikashvili, admonished Service Chiefs to promote and support professional development programs that develop strategic leaders. These programs provide opportunities for high-performance, high-potential officers to "experience, first-hand, the national security policy process with agencies like

the White House, CIA, Justice Department, and Capitol Hill." Officers in these programs bring back an appreciation for the "magnitude and scope of military operations," as well as "a fresh perspective and renewed energy." They "return to their parent Service more experienced and able to assume increasing leadership positions" (Shalikashvili 1994).

A review of 59 senior flag officer resumes reveals that by the time an officer reaches the rank of Lieutenant General / Vice Admiral (O-9), they will have led organizations and service members at nearly every tactical and operational level within their respective service. They will have attended, on average, at least three accredited institutions of higher education, typically attaining two master-level degrees. They will have served in an average of five operational assignments overseas and four joint assignments, working with sister military services or other governmental agencies such as the NSC, State, and the CIA for extended periods of time (DOD 2018c).

At the terminal rank of General / Admiral (O-10), military elites will have led multi-service, multi-agency, and multi-national organizations in expeditionary environments and in contingency operations ranging from war to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. They will have worked closely with National Command Authorities, Members of Congress, foreign leaders, and the leadership of international organizations and corporations. They will have served in an average of six joint and operational assignments, respectively. Unlike any other U.S. governmental agency or institution, this developmental assignment process is required by law (U.S.C. Title 10 2017, § 662-664).

Admiral James Stavridis, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), relates in his memoir that the professional development and broadening assignments afforded him by the U.S. Navy provided him with opportunities to learn the interplay of politics, economics, finance, business, culture, language, and security. He gained a greater understanding of international affairs and how relationships, partnerships, friendships, and alliances were critical to personal and

organizational success. His assignments, education, and unique opportunities developed his strategic-mindedness; gave him experience in leading and managing an immense organization; developed his ability to engage key stakeholders to influence policy at home and abroad; and prepared him to interact with and influence international and domestic counterparts, ministers of defense, and heads of state (Stavridis 2014).

At the national-strategic level, however, the military policy enterprise increasingly overlaps with policy areas that are less military-centric, more political and economic, and increasingly contested. At this level, military elites should be able to straddle and navigate a military-political environment and landscape. Some military elites are confident and think they are well-prepared to engage at this level. Others signal that, at the national-level, military elites begin to find themselves significantly challenged by other actors, as well as by their own capabilities. As one retired Combatant Commander reflected,

> "As I came up through the ranks, my assignments and experience made me an excellent Division Commander. Beyond that, I was always out of my comfort zone because my engagements were more outside of my parent organization and increasingly with civilians. This is a difficult adjustment for one- and two-star general officers. Fraught with missteps. Thrust into an inter-organizational environment, ill-prepared for engaging with the media, think tanks, industry and Congress. No traditional professional development experiences prepare generals for this…We continue to try to address these shortcomings" (W2-I3).

In an oral history conducted by Daadler and Destler (1999b), former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD), Ellen Frost, described the imperative of understanding policy outside of a military-centric context, "international stability in a national security sense has a direct bearing on the economy," she noted. Military actions in the Taiwan Straits provide a cogent example. She describes military elites as struggling to understand economic globalization and the role of military force in it, warning of potential "tunnel vision" by military elites and "stove-pipe divisions" in the national security process that can "often disregard the national security implications," political and economic risks, that should be addressed by the NSC (Daadler and Destler 1999b, 42).

A retired, senior flag officer with extensive operational and political experience across multiple presidential administrations explained,

> "Imagine the players…in the Situation Room during the decision-making process. The only ones who are there with a professional preparation…are the uniformed military. Most of the rest of them are…from a political experience, or a legal experience, or a commercial, a business experience. So, the only ones that really come with professional training for what they're doing at that moment…are typically the military officers. This breaks down as issues are considered in a broader political context where that military dimension of a question, a national security question overlaps, and intersects other dimensions of national power, such as political, economic, diplomatic, and so forth. Frankly, many civilian colleagues will have a broader experience, because of their political expertise…but regardless of their civilian experience, military experience typically dwarfs what they can contribute and bring to the table. Military officers come in numbers to the table. They bring with them a level of prestige civilians don't have or haven't yet earned, and there is deference. Deferential treatment. Deferential consideration of their advice" (W2-I9).

A retired, senior military officer and former SES stated,

> "Civilians don't fully understand and appreciate the implications of policy. And, generally, they know this and are unwilling to contradict military advice. Civilians tend to be younger, inexperienced, but they are highly educated. They tend to lack organizational skills and are less systematic in their approach to policy. The military tends to send its best and brightest to engage in the policy arena. They're mature. They understand structured thinking, problem-solving, how to plan, and they are typically the gatekeepers of information that informs the policy process. They use that information to drive the process and, if they are talented, they make civilians feel a part of the process" (W1-I23).

These responses demonstrate that military elites take ownership of both a military policy enterprise, as well as the national security policy enterprise. Their jurisdiction is recognized by civilian counterparts. However, as military policy begins to overlap with other policy domains, military elites are conflicted about their role and challenged to adapt and adjust to the politics and resistance they encounter from other actors.

A highly respected academic and former Army War College Professor noted that military elites possess the greater advantage in this contest of wills, stating,

> "Civilians have much greater expertise and knowledge as it relates to national security strategy and foreign policy. We just don't understand and know how to operationalize it. And the military is conflicted on how involved it wants to be in the formulation of strategy and policy. Their priority is operations and tactics. Military elites are caught up in a tension

> regarding their identity as 'muddy boots' leaders, versus politically astute, cosmopolitan Washington, DC insiders" (W1-I10).

A retired four-star officer agreed, emphasizing the claim of jurisdiction by military elites over the military policy enterprise, stating,

> "Civilians are more conceptual in their thinking. They have neither the work ethic, knowledge, or experience required to understand how to operationalize strategic concepts. The military understands strategic concepts and we excel in understanding how to operationalize strategy and policy. If a political appointee or President attempts to tweet out a policy, expecting it to magically become reality, the Chairman [of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] pretty much says, 'fuck you!' We don't jump to tweets here. We have a process" (W2-I19).

These excerpts, collectively, demonstrate that military and civilian elites recognize the divide in policy expertise, as well as the limitations of military elites and civilians. They also demonstrate that military elites are influenced by a professional culture that, at the strategic level, creates tension related to their identity. They have worked for decades, in many cases starting from the lowest ranks, enduring and succeeding in a career that requires frequent geographic relocations, extended spousal and family separations, and challenging, sometimes life-endangering or life-threatening conditions and circumstances. Because of this unique, career-long professionalization process and the extraordinary experiences they have endured to reach the ranks of the elite, they are, in many ways, like a blue-collar worker that now finds themselves in the boardroom. This adjustment, challenging to most, insurmountable to some, may find them comparing, measuring, and judging their experience and path to the pinnacle of government against that of their civilian counterparts. The conclusions they draw from this reflection may influence their disposition toward civilian leadership and civilian control.

As it relates to how involved military elites want to involve themselves in the policy process, it is evident that they may attempt to skirt the edges in an effort to find a "Goldilocks" solution, also known as 'satisficing' (W2-I2; Simon 1956). Too little involvement and influence can lead to unfavorable policy outcomes. Too much involvement can lead to "ownership" of the policy and its

potential consequences. The results can be frustrating. Military elites do not want to be in a position where they are blamed and "left holding the bag" for poor policy, while elected officials do not want to feel "boxed in." A former Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs described his approach in the context of his extensive experience at the national level and bringing on a new administration stating,

> "Military elites must be willing to engage in political dialogue and make political arguments to help a president make good decisions. Presidents often come into office with little or no experience. The first weeks and months of an administration are very chaotic and take time to settle down as the president and political appointees learn their new jobs and understand how to exercise power. Our job is to safeguard the system, safeguard the process, safeguard the government. And, when I was serving, we made sure that the president was allowed to be president." (W2-I21).

A former Combatant Commander describes his experience working with a Democratic president in his first administration stating,

> "Politicians have short attention spans. They need military elites to guide them. Generals need to be able to tell a president, 'time out,' when it comes to their national security ambitions. We have to coach them to ensure there is clear political guidance, adequate resources, a clear strategy, clear lines of responsibility and command, and clarity of purpose and mission" (W2-I25).

A second former member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff describes his approach to providing counsel to a president stating,

> "I would sit down and give it to him [the President] behind closed doors, and say, 'Here's the plus, and here's the minus. I understand where you're coming from. As long as you stay inside these boundary conditions, we can probably live with a solution anywhere in this area.' Military elites are a guardrail. We help civilians work through policy issues, crisis planning and management, understand issues, understand a process by which to find solutions. But then you need to back out, and you let them run it. Civilians need constraints on their activities to ensure their actions are reasonable and responsible" (W2-I2).

These interview excerpts describe how three retired four-star officers managed their interactions with the President. They describe how they navigate between maintaining jurisdictional control over military policy and action, national security, and providing presidents flexibility in policy

decision-making. Each flag officer viewed their role as being a safeguard, guide, and guardrail, protecting *status quo*, guiding decisions, and guarding against irresponsible action and recklessness. **Finding**: There is a strong finding that substantiates that military elites do have a common military policy enterprise in which their expertise is recognized and respected. The policy enterprise encompasses leadership, management, and administration of policies that regulate the military institution, bureaucracy, and global operations. Additionally, the selection, promotion, training, and development of military elites is governed by law with practical impacts that substantiate and strengthen this conceptual attribute. The result is that civilians extend a high level of deference to military elites and recognize their authoritative knowledge and expertise in their common policy enterprise.

Military elite influence goes beyond the military policy enterprise with increasing overlap with national security and foreign policy. However, as policy discussion and debate shifts away from purely military matters and overlaps with other policy domains, their knowledge and expertise may be increasingly contested by policy advisors and elites with competing knowledge, expertise, and policy preferences. Finally, military elites may restrain their explicit involvement in the policy process; attempting to realize a balance that achieves policy preferences, while ensuring civilians remain responsible for policy outcomes.

Conceptual Attribute Four: Profession and Ethos

> "West Point and ROTC both socialize and enculturate Cadets for military service. We ensure they are able to conform to the culture and perform. There is a formal process to weed out those that don't exhibit the professional ethic and level of professionalism to be commissioned. Cadets are steeped in the leadership ethos of our culture, our professional ethic, our Army Values and high standards through a rigorous assessment, selection, and training process to ensure they have the character and good judgment we expect, even at the entry level. By holding them accountable, we reinforce our culture in a deliberate norming process" (W1-I26).

This introductory quote from a two-star flag officer and the conceptual attributes described above demonstrate the components of a distinct military culture, profession, and ethos. A distinct

military culture is weaved through several conceptual attributes of epistemic communities. It is defined by "prevailing values, philosophies, customs, traditions, and structure, that over time, have created shared individual expectations within an institution about appropriate attitudes, personal beliefs and behavior" of its members (Dorn et al, 2000). The culture of a profession governs much of the ethos and behavior of its ever-changing membership (Jans and Schmidtchen, 2002).

Professions are distinct from vocations in that they link purpose to providing altruistic services to serve the public good and public need (Cogan 1953). Professionals are motivated by a professional code of ethics, norms of morality, and a "sense of social obligation" and beneficence towards the society they serve (Greenwood 1957; Huntington 1957; Sarkesian 1981). Military professionalism is exceptional, however, because it requires a defining "special knowledge" related to the "management of violence in the service to the state" (Sarkesian 1981, 7-9).[23]

The military profession has additional, distinct characteristics that separate it from other professions. First, membership and promotion in the profession is granted by the authority of the state. Secondly, the profession is characterized by virtues not typically found in other professions, such as honor, devotion to duty, allegiance and service to nation, perseverance, self-sacrifice, and subordination to rank and state authority (Janowitz 1960; Bradford and Brown 1973; Sarkesian and Conner 1999; Herspring 2013; Cohen 2016).

The professionalism of military elites can be measured at the individual level through attitude and conduct in accordance with a body of "pure, crystallized, and coherent" institutional values and ethos that make up the "military mind" (Abrahamsson 1972, 155). Established rules of conduct and

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[23] This differs from law enforcement officials in that the military's mission is to fight and win war by engaging in combat. It is not trained, or authorized by law, to engage in community policing and enforcement of local, state, or federal law.

performance criteria reinforce values and ethics across the profession. These values and ethics are linked to the broader American society it serves. This linkage of values and society's assessment of the military's performance in accordance with these values results in society granting the military profession legitimacy, trust, confidence, and prestige (Sarkesian 1981, 13).

A profession can also be measured by how individual members work together formally and informally to continually improve the profession. Members actively contribute and share knowledge and best practices. Finally, members of a profession are committed to ceaselessly reviewing, refining, and endeavoring to establish and improve upon the vision, mission, values, role, conduct, and standards of the profession (Larson 1977).

For the military as an institution, the formal pursuit of professional expertise at the strategic level grew out of the failures of World War One (W1-I14; W1-I62; Pappas 1967; Schifferle 2010). Military services, reflecting on WWI, came away with a "deep feeling of professional incompetence," and recognized a lack of strategic preparedness (Schifferle 2010). Military elites had no experience, knowledge, or comprehensive understanding of how to mobilize a nation for war.

Overcoming these shortfalls required an overhaul of the military's training and education programs. The military service colleges were "the critical link" to improving the professionalism of the military's officer corps and building a proficient group of military elites capable of mobilizing the U.S. for World War II and leading an alliance of nations in a global campaign. The objective was to train and indoctrinate future generations of professional officers that shared a common ethos, language, and attitude toward problem solving (Schifferle 2010).

It was, "specially apparent," that military elites advising at the highest levels of government and leading U.S. forces, "should have broader knowledge," beyond purely military duties. The military was directed to develop a "full comprehension," of all elements of the national government,

economy, and industry necessary to mobilize, coordinate, and implement national policy as it relates to national security and the conduct of war (Pappas 1967, 89-90).

World War II led to a further realization of shortcomings in the professional development of military elites. If the U.S. were to be involved in global conflict as a global superpower, the military profession required of its elites extensive professional development, training, education, and experience in two key areas. Military elites should understand how to lead and manage joint service warfighting. Secondly, it was imperative that the military continue broadening the focus of military elites beyond military matters and markedly improve development of politically astute military officers capable of acting and advising at the national level (Pappas 1967).

As the Cold War commenced, military elites began viewing themselves less in the tradition of civilian-soldiers and more as members of an educated profession of arms (Hackett 1963; Bletz 1972). This transformation in military elite mindset and self-image was a product of increased study, exposure to, and expertise in domestic and international affairs, political-economic affairs, and the development and implementation of national security policy at the highest levels of government (Pappas 1967).

The war colleges recognized that to appreciate the political objectives of war required more than military expertise. Military elites needed dedicated time to think about developing national security and foreign policy. They also needed to pursue opportunities, assignments, and experiences related to participating in the national security policy process and implementation of national policy (Pappas 1967). The results of these deliberate initiatives were that, post-WWII, American military elites became the principal executor of U.S. foreign policy with profound influence, power, and authority on a global scale (Hudson 2015, 1).

Military elites today, as previously noted, are highly professionalized, educated, exceptionally experienced, and confident in their interactions with civilian counterparts. Kohn states that "We

have created a separate military caste" of warriors; a designation that brings with it deference, prestige, and reverence (Kohn et al., 1994, 24). To Kohn's claim, a young political appointee, former DASD, and current think tank fellow describes an experience during his orientation at the beginning of the Trump administration,

> "[Secretary of Defense] Mattis said in front of a large group of us, all political appointees, one of the key messages he sent is, 'You need to be at the top of your game every single day.' It was almost like a challenge. It was kind of an interesting way of putting it. 'Because the uniforms that you're dealing with have been,' something to the effect of, 'steeled by 15 years of combat and are deadly serious about what they're doing,' or something to that effect. It was almost like, 'You need to know the mettle of the people that you're dealing with because it's going to be a struggle.' Several military elites express similar feelings behind closed doors. It's kind of like, 'We've been fighting, therefore we have a better sense of what the broad political-military policy should be.' Certain parts of the Pentagon, particularly the Joint Staff right now, have a much more constrained vision of what the role of civilians should be. And, at the end of the day, I do believe that civilians should defer to military professionals in how policy is implemented. Very few political elites actually understand policy. We tend to be generalists. Frankly, political appointees have a stereotype. I'll admit it. First of all, we don't really have any "skin in the game." We are the guys that are in and out of think tanks, going to cocktail parties, consulting, or teaching in a university. We come into the government when our side wins, we stay for about two years, then we leave and try to figure out how to monetize our experience. Meanwhile, military professionals and their families are bearing and internalizing the costs of war and policy" (W1-I49).

A former Deputy Secretary of Defense echoed similar sentiments, stating,

> "Military elites are the professionals. They speak with a very well-informed authority on issues and they are willing to engage civilians in debate in ways a political appointee may not have anticipated… Political appointees also find themselves at a disadvantage in policy debates because military elites have an asymmetric information advantage, meaning they have historical knowledge and personal, practical experience in many policy matters that civilians lack. Unlike military elites, civilian political appointees are not continually engaged in government and national security policy matters. They come and go. They spend significant time in the private sector where their only 'knowledge' (air quotes) comes from the internet, Fox News, or CNN. The weaker a civilian's knowledge-base, experience, and leadership – the more influence military elites will have on policy outcomes" (W2-I30).

Both excerpts are from political appointees, one from a junior DASD and the second from the second highest-ranking civilian in DOD. Both communicate respect, deference, and reverence for the profession, ethos, and prestige of military elites. They also signal recognition of a moral

authority and expertise military elites bring to the policy process because of their experience "in the trenches" and "on the frontlines" of national security policy implementation.

Finding: There are strong findings in the data, scholarship, and history substantiating that military elites exhibit the conceptual attribute of having a distinct profession and ethos. Military elites periodically and routinely reinforce their professional ethos through 'cradle to grave' professional development that strengthens and reinforces this attribute. Additionally, the more connected members feel to their community and profession, the greater sense of *esprit d'corps* within the community and entitativity from outside observers.

The evolution of military elites increasingly operating in the political sphere is a natural outgrowth of its professionalization. The military recognized the need for military elites to be "professionally trained and educated to make political appraisals," particularly when advising presidents and political appointees about the political implications of the use and employment of military power and forces (Abrahamsson 1972, 155). The result is a highly professional corps of military elites heavily embedded and relied upon throughout an inherently political process.

Conceptual Attribute Five: Internal Cohesion and Intra-Group Trust

When asked about the *internal cohesion and intra-group trust* among military elites, a current Professor and senior military officer with exceptional experience observing and assisting four-star military flag officers as a military *aide de camp* reflected in his interview,

> "Something interesting about military culture is that we know each other's families. We know where each other lives. We workout together. We work together. We eat together. We socialize together. We shop together. Our kids go to school together. And when we're deployed, our wives and kids rely on this close-knit community for support" (W1-I8).

Common beliefs, shared notions of validity, and a common policy enterprise are all characteristics that build upon one another to create a distinct social identity, personal relationships, and a sense of community that defines a group member's concept of self and how they view their role and influence on the policy process (Marsh and Rhodes 1992). The socialization,

professionalization, relationships, common experiences, and organizational (selection, promotion, training, and development) processes described above determine the strength or weakness of an epistemic community's internal cohesion and intra-group trust (Cross 2013b).

As described above, military elites place high value and emotional significance on their military-social identity and status as a member of the military-social group. Membership implies several dynamics. It implies that individuals consider themselves members of the group; the group collectively considers each individual a member; out-group observers recognize membership; interactions between members are morally binding; and interactions with the out-group are not held to the same standard (Haas and Drabek 1973; Tajfel 1981).

Even if there are substantial disagreements, robust social cohesion can enable an epistemic community to overcome internal differences and thus be more externally persuasive. As a retired senior military officer and college Professor stated,

> "The military has a powerful culture and sense of identity. There is exceptional internal cohesion, and this creates a powerful incentive to conform. Any resistance comes with a price. Those that fail to conform aren't promoted. So, there is absolutely a sense of internal cohesion, shared beliefs, shared preferences, and shared values. This does not mean that military elites always agree on everything. They most definitely do not" (W1-I16).

Exceptional internal cohesion refers to the value and emotional significance military members place on their group identity. It relates to the core nature of military service and the decisions that military elites are called to make. Military service and decisions made by military elites can be uniquely stressful in that the inherent risk and cost associated with military service and decisions can be measured in the loss of human life (Nielsen 2010). If it is not the life or death decisions related to service members in combat, it is "life and death" decisions related to the survival of a military service in the bureaucratic and political contest for resources (W1-I22).

Given these conditions, it would be natural for military elites to have robust debate and substantive disagreements regarding risks and costs related to policy options. As one retired 3-star

flag officer with extensive NSC experience reflected, "There is no such thing as unanimous military advice" (W2-I22). Regardless, their differences do not dissuade them from meeting frequently, formally and informally, to discuss their differences and exchange ideas (Atkinson 2014). The strength of internal cohesion allows military elites to "overcome internal differences," remain externally persuasive," and reinforce their legitimacy as a defined, homogenous community (Cross 2013a, 11).[24]

The perception of military elites as being members of a distinct social group and community is strong internally, as well as externally. The strength of the perception regarding a distinct group or epistemic community is referred to as "entitativity." The higher the entitativity of a group, the higher the level of coherence of the community (Dasgupta et al. 1999; Lickel et al. 2000).

The implication of being recognized as a strong, defined, coherent community allows military elites to extend influence externally and increases their ability to persuade and bargain with other groups and communities (Rothstein 1984; Cross 2013a, 149; Tsingou 2003). Additionally, the strength of internal cohesion and intra-group trust that develops from a strong network of relationships provides them with unrivaled access to information and knowledge across the military domain.

The following excerpts from two senior civilians with extensive NSC experience demonstrate how military elites exhibit internal cohesion and intra-group trust. A former senior military officer, NSC official, and think tank fellow stated,

> "You don't have to look any further than the NSC and the military officers that are detailed to it or interact with it, representing the Joint Staff, to find an embodiment of internal cohesion and intra-group trust. These guys come prepared. They come empowered. There's

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[24] Homogeneity refers to the profession and ethos of military elites. It is well-documented that military elites come from diverse backgrounds, have intellectual disagreements, and personality conflicts.

> a huge imbalance. And its intimidating, sometimes, to civilians. And, I think it's hard for civilians to go against it because, for one thing, the military community does a pretty good job of equipping them with facts and figures and charts and slides, you know, stuff that they can bring to bear on a conversation in a much more robust way then a lot of civilian agencies can and do" (W1-I18).

A former senior civilian official from the Reagan administration and NSC staff member stated,

> "The military has an identity now that gives it a 'praetorian guard' status in our society. They're placed on a pedestal. From Reagan forward you see the public confidence levels in the military, as an institution, go from 50% to consistently above 70% in the last several years. First, it's because Reagan made a deliberate and concerted effort to restore prestige and regard for the military, post-Vietnam, because it had become so tarnished. Secondly, there was also a concerted effort by the military to improve its brand. From Goldwater-Nichols to the present, senior flag officers without four or five operational and joint assignments and probably two or three graduate degree became an anomaly. If you see GOs without this level of experience and education now, it's probably because of something political. Regardless, now we have this super-cohesive community, exceptionally trained and educated, forged in nearly two decades of combat, and revered by a society that they are becoming more and more distant from" (W2-I13).

Internal cohesion and intra-group trust are a product of shared experiences. It nurtures a shared world view and shared beliefs. It validates a perception of authoritative knowledge with both in-group and out-group through professional development, experiences and socialization (Adler and Bernstein 2005; Tsingou 2003). These social attributes of an epistemic community shape its members' behavior and shape and reinforce their beliefs and their ethos within a shared profession (Wendt 1992, 1994).

Finding: There are strong findings in the data, backed by extensive scholarship, substantiating that military elites possess internal cohesion and intra-group trust. This conceptual attribute is strongly recognized internal to the military, as well as externally by non-military sample participants. Strong cohesion and intra-group trust are a product of shared beliefs, socialization, professionalization, and experiences. A recognizable, strong, well-defined, coherent epistemic community allows members within the community to extend influence externally and increases their ability to persuade and bargain with other actors and stakeholders. If an epistemic community is defined too broadly, its influence can be diffused or muted. Finally, although there may be substantial disagreement

regarding policy within a community, this does not diffuse their cohesion and trust, if they maintain regular, periodic, formal, and informal meetings and interaction.

Conceptual Attribute Six: Consensual, Authoritative Knowledge and Expertise

The concept of "consensual knowledge" or authoritative knowledge is rooted in a knowledge-policy relationship. Ernst Haas' defines consensual knowledge among elites as "a body of beliefs about cause-effect and ends-means relationships among variables (activities, aspirations, values, demands) that is widely accepted by the relevant actors, irrespective of the absolute or final 'truth' of these beliefs" (Rothstein 1984, 736). As governments evolve, bureaucracies expand, and the demand for authoritative knowledge and policy expertise proliferates, it creates a unique role and fundamental need for knowledge elites (Brooks 1965; Suleiman 1984; Nelkin 1979). Military elites fill this unique role in the context of national security and are a repository of specialized knowledge that civilians rely upon "to identify salient issues, define national interests, and formulate policies" (Atkinson 2014, 46).

With each of the previous conceptual attributes that characterize epistemic communities, sample participant response overwhelmingly substantiated that military elites, as a social group, embody the respective characteristic. This is not the case with this particular attribute. There is a noteworthy nuanced divide that breaks down along distinct lines related to experience, profession, and politics.

Military elites within the sample were either self-critical or self-serving. Self-critical remarks tended to come from Wave Two participants with more experience. Self-serving comments tended to come from Wave One participants with less experience. Academic professionals tended to concur with the self-critique provided by Wave Two military elites. Their concurrence rested on philosophical differences and an academic definition of "expertise." Finally, respondents indicated that when military elites ventured into advising on issues that had a significant political component,

their knowledge and expertise were more likely to be contested. As one retired senior officer and think tank fellow stated, "The only thing that overrides military influence is electoral politics" (W1-I29).

Despite nuanced disagreement, there were strong perceptions among the majority of sample participants that acknowledge, accept, and defer to the idea of military elites possessing consensual, authoritative knowledge and expertise that provide them with special jurisdiction over the military policy enterprise. Philosophical and semantic disagreement regarding military knowledge and expertise weakened when put in the context of real-world practice, signaling that presidents, political appointees, and practitioners have a bias towards military elites with a resume that includes decades of experience at the tactical and operational levels of the military, war, and the policy process, versus an academic resume demonstrating scholarship about underlying theories related to that experience.

The interview excerpts below come from two military officers and a mid-level civilian policy director, respectively. All were detailed to the NSC in different administrations, but their observations are interestingly similar. A senior military officer and college Professor stated,

> "There is an enormous amount of respect for their [military elites] expertise. I cannot think of a single instance when I saw any civilian official question a senior officer's expertise. The fact of the matter is that the military is the 800-pound gorilla in the room, and there's usually more than one or two of us in the room. And we are perfectly capable of crafting, planning, and executing policy without wanting a lot of guidance. It's not the same for other agencies and institutions" (W1-I6).

A senior military officer and think tank fellow stated,

> "Typically, military elites are the most prepared participants in a room because they have to be. I call it 'over-prepared squared.' They will typically have the most current facts, data, and intel all wrapped together in experience and historical context" (W1-I59).

A former NSC political appointee and current think tank fellow stated,

> "When you see the principals sitting around the table in the Situation Room, when a four-star speaks, everybody quiets down and listens…They can come with outsized personalities and reputations that over-whelm civilians that have limited bandwidth and limited experience in national security matters. The result is that civilians will only push military elites so far. There is a line they won't cross" (W1-I32).

Wave Two participants respond differently. They are more reflective of their experience, describe the conditionality of their knowledge and expertise, and how the military's identity and image play a role in influencing civilians. A retired, former four-star Service Chief highlights the nuanced differences between military knowledge and expertise, and the perception and insecurity of civilians in the process.

> "We do a great job of preparing leaders at the tactical and operational level, but we do a lousy job of preparing them to be leaders at the strategic level…As I look at the last several presidential administration transitions, at least from Bush 43 to the present, what you have is a bunch of civilians elected by the American people coming in who have no experience fighting in our wars since 9/11 and their dealing with a bunch of military leaders who have been at this since 9/11. So, there's a huge difference in knowledge about what's going on. You have all these civilian folks that are smart, intelligent, capable people. But, they haven't been involved. Yet, they're now sitting around the table involved in making decisions. I think that's an integral factor in civilian willingness to defer to military elites" (W2-I11).

A retired, former four-star Commanding General echoed the Service Chief's observations. He reflected that one of the most dramatic steps in a military officer's career is entering into the world of being a flag officer and potentially serving as a military elite involved in matters of national security. He stated,

> "They've done an exceptionally good job in their career to this level, but just find it very difficult when they pin on a star because up until this point, they've been doing a lot of things that they've been doing all along, just on a larger scale. And some officers just aren't intellectually prepared to make the transition. They aren't prepared for it. If you look at the one-star promotion board, we promote maybe 40 out of 4000. In that group of 40, you'll have maybe one or two that are capable and intellectually equipped to think and perform at the strategic level. You may not have any. And, not every great Division Commander is meant to be promoted either. They just don't necessarily see the world strategically…We still promote GOs to four stars that are 'frozen in time' as great brigade commanders" (W2-I12).

A retired senior military officer and senior corporate executive stated,

> "The military has a lot of two- and three-star senior leaders that were confident, charismatic commanders at the O-6 level. But that's the end of the story. One in 50, maybe one in a 100 truly have what it takes to operate successfully at the strategic level and make a real difference for their service. The problem is that they all tend to think that since they have stars on their shoulders, they're the one. They quickly forget the good fortune, grace of God, and relationships that got them to where they're at" (W1-I36).

Sample participants overwhelmingly agreed that military elites possess authoritative knowledge related to military tactics and operations. Although military elites inspire deference and respect for their practical knowledge, deference in the political sphere is conditional, personality dependent, and generally unexceptional. Of the 16 sample participants that were four-star flag officers, only three were universally recognized by both military and civilian sample participants as exceptionally gifted in their ability to think and operate at the strategic level in both military and political spheres of the policy process.

This nuance is captured in the literature, as well. Bruscino (2010) and Cohen (2016) find that there is a military-academia divide on the definition of "expertise" and "strategic thinking," respectively. Bruscino argues that it is impossible for military elites to become experts "in an academic sense" of the term, because "of the myriad subjects with which they contend on an everyday basis." Military elites should "understand policy, politics, diplomacy, economics, culture, and communication" within the context of national security and military strategy. Knowing and understanding are not necessarily the same as having expertise. Expertise, in Bruscino's opinion, is the "stock and trade" of academics (Bruscino 2010, 144-147).

Cohen's critique of military elites relates to their ability to operate and think at the strategic level. He excoriates the senior military education system embodied by service war colleges as "a necessary tick mark" in the career of a rising military elite of which one-third will become flag officers (Cohen 2016, 83). Senior officers do not apply to these institutions and are not denied because of poor academic records. It is "virtually impossible to flunk out" and "being selected for attendance is more important" than academic performance. Cohen finds that academic standards are low relative to civilian institutions and faculty and administrators are "not necessarily chosen for any academic expertise." Military school administration positions are "good but usually terminal jobs" in a military career (Cohen 2016, 83-84).

A retired Service Chief weighed in on the military-academia divide, comparing and contrasting the two professions' weaknesses, stating,

> "The services tend to develop leaders more in the context of 'what to think,' not 'how to think.' We train leaders to think in a linear fashion, not holistically, and it hurts our flag officers when they reach three- and four-star level. On the other hand, academic and theoretical expertise without practical experience is dangerous. Academics don't understand the consequences of policy. They don't understand the resources required. They have no clue and they're not really interested. They're more interested in testing a theory, writing a book, and turning their 18-24-month experience into a better paying job when they leave government" (W2-I8).

A final theme of civilian "insecurity" came forward in sample interviews related to this conceptual attribute. It suggests that novice presidents and inexperienced civilian leaders are timid, passive, and insecure in making decisions related to national security. This creates a leadership void. "Military elites will naturally fill a void and vacuum of leadership," state a retired senior military officer and senior corporate executive (W1-I36). As one senior flag officer with NSC staff experience described it,

> "Civilians want the military to lead the policy process. Presidents can be insecure in making decisions related to national security. They know they're dependent on the military and it frustrates them and can cause suspicion and distrust. They want to know that the Joint Chiefs and their Combatant Commanders are 100% on board. They can feel like they're boxed in by the military. But to say a president is 'boxed-in' is really to say that a president is forced to face reality. Presidents can hope for options that meet their political needs, but it rarely happens in the realm of national security. Reality and 'best case political scenario' rarely agree" (W2-I26).

A retired, former CJCS echoed these sentiments and suggests that besides being insecure, politicians can also be cognitive misers.

> "Civilians leaders can be lazy. They tend to accept the recommendations of the services blindly. Most presidents and Secretaries of Defense defer to military elites because politicians can often be insecure in their decision-making capabilities and the decisions they do make are based on politics and political ideology, versus the reality of our capabilities, needs, strategy, and threat" (W2-I24).

In an interview with a former APNSA from a Republican administration, he expressed significant frustration with the administration in which he served. Venting about civilian inexperience and timidity, he stated that,

> "Educating an inexperienced President is really difficult, particularly in an extremely chaotic political environment. Having to educate a new NSC staff full of political appointees that lack experience on how to plan, at the beginning of an administration adds to the difficulty…They have no idea how to govern. It was exceptionally disorganized. There was no cohesion…Then reality sets in and it's scary. It's intimidating. They don't want to be responsible for making decisions" (W2-I6).

A retired four-star Combatant Commander and CJCS offered context for dynamics that can cause civilians leaders to be insecure, stating,

> "Too often, at the highest levels, military elites develop a strong sense of entitlement based on how long they've served and their experience. They come to believe that they are indispensable. That they deserve certain treatment and certain positions. They believe that it is their time. They have earned their perks, incredible privileges, and prerogatives. They can become impatient with politicians, patronizing and, sometimes, openly condescending or disrespectful…Most politicians defer to military elites because they can often be very insecure in their decision-making capabilities" (W2-I24).

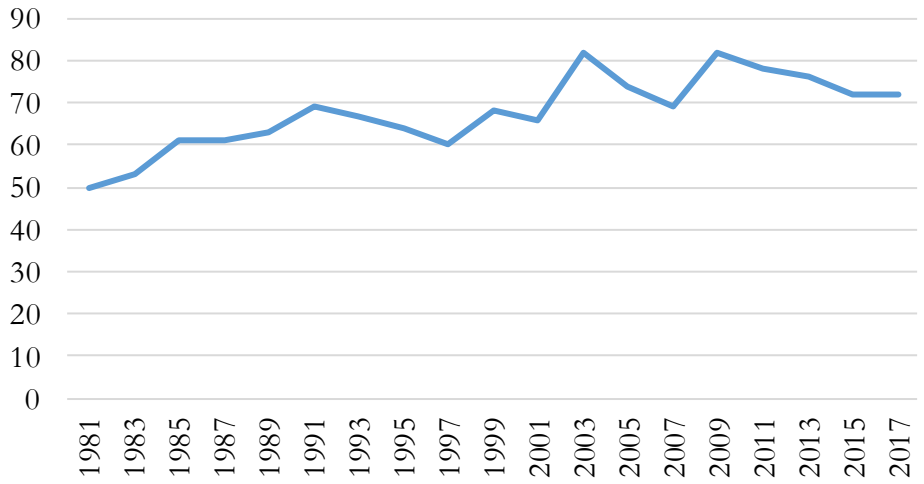
The idea that presidents, political appointees, and elected officials are timid, passive, and insecure in making national security decisions is nuanced and requires explanation. Politicians behave in this manner for several reasons. They may be timid, passive, and insecure because of their inexperience (Higbee 2010). Domestic policy missteps can be corrected, whereas national security policy missteps can have permanent, irreversible, and existential consequences. Additionally, the President and Congress may both be unable to master national security and foreign policy issues and provide effective civilian control and guidance because "the technical details often seem impenetrable," the "mystique" of national security issues can be intimidating, and the influence of military elites providing expert advice can be overwhelming (Warburg 1989, 278).

It may be that politicians are indifferent and disinterested because they are focused on a domestic agenda that is more likely to benefit electoral politics and reelection. (Warburg 1989). If they lack military, national security, and foreign policy experience, they do not want to be labeled

"soft on defense" or appear unpatriotic by opposing the interests of military elites. It is a "guns versus butter" debate that yields passive leadership that can be easily co-opted (Warburg 1989, 276; Abrahamsson 1972).

Data gathered from Gallup polls related to confidence in public institutions from 1981-2017 demonstrates that public approval of the military is consistently above 60% - 70% from 1987 to 2017 (see Figure 2). With this level of public confidence and trust, politicians will rarely, if ever, risk expending political capital and paying unnecessary electoral costs by resisting military influence. Regardless of whether this dynamic compromises effective civilian control and constitutional checks and balances, civilians rarely cross or countermand military elites. If they do, it is because they have support and reassurance from competing military elites (Galbraith 1969).

Figure 2: Confidence in the Military as an Institution, 1981-2017 (Gallup 2019)



The conceptual attribute of an epistemic community possessing consensual, authoritative knowledge and expertise is a signature characteristic, because it sets the community apart from other actors. An epistemic community with recognized expertise can claim recognized jurisdiction over a policy arena, giving it power and influence over policy outcomes. In the context of an environment characterized by commitment to ambiguous, permanent conflict requiring persistent monitoring,

overwatch, and involvement by military elites, Foucault's knowledge-power nexus model suggests the role and influence of military elites is unavoidable and exceptional (Foucault 1979).

Finding: There are notable findings substantiating that, despite discordance related to philosophical differences between military elites and Academics regarding the definition of "expertise," military elites are perceived by decision-makers (and the public) to possess recognized consensual, authoritative knowledge and expertise. When epistemic community members advise on policy issues that are technical and within their policy enterprise and jurisdiction, their knowledge and expertise are well-recognized by out-group observers. Contrastingly, policy issues with significant political components are more likely be contested by competing advisors and stakeholders. An institutional record of performance and strong, positive personal reputation, established through extensive practical, real-world experience, builds public standing (trust and confidence) and amplifies an epistemic community's influence. Additionally, novice politicians may rely on epistemic community members, because they are insecure, passive, disinterested, and/or indifferent to national security and foreign policy issues that may have less salience than domestic politics. Accordingly, domestic politics and electoral issues can mute epistemic community influence.

Conceptual Attribute Seven: Perceptions of an Uncertain, Complex Environment

Perceptions of uncertainty and complexity related to the international environment and subsequent national security and foreign policy challenges creates a dynamic that "tests the limits of human understanding" (Haas 1992, 13). Coupled with inadequate information, politicians have the additional hurdle of making rational decisions that connect ends and means, strategy and action (George 1980; Rothstein 1984). In this complex and uncertain environment, members of an epistemic community assist decision-makers in understanding cause-effect relationships, issue-event linkages, action-inaction consequences, political-state interests, and related policy options and alternatives (Haas 1992, 17). They provide clarity in a decision-making process, share their expert

knowledge with decision-makers while, alternatively, defining, limiting, and controlling the policy options and choices decision-makers consider (Cross 2013b).

In 2012 and 2013, journalist Micah Zenko quotes General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declaring before Congress, "I can't impress upon you that in my personal military judgment, formed over 38 years, we are living in the most dangerous time in my lifetime" (Zenko 2012). A year later, Dempsey declared before Congress, "I will personally attest to the fact that the world is more dangerous than it has ever been" (Zenko 2013). A year later, in 2014, General James Clapper, testifying before Congress declared that he could never "recall a period in which we've confronted a more diverse array of threats, crises, and challenges around the world" (Clapper 2014). The context of these comments were in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, House Budget Committee, and the Senate Armed Services Committee, respectfully. The federal government was under a budgetary sequestration. Skeptics may wonder if this alarmism is "motivated by political or institutional self-interest" (Preble and Mueller 2014, 2).

Military service and joint doctrines consistently describe and propagate a narrative of the international environment as uncertain and complex. The uncertainty regarding policy and decisions related to national security are a constant (JOE 2035 2016, 2-39). This doctrinal insinuation demands that the military, as an organization, and military professionals, specifically, should develop qualities of agility, adaptability, responsiveness, and capabilities to think critically and act decisively in developing solutions that achieve tactical, operational, and strategic organizational and national objectives (JOE 2035 2016; TRADOC G2 2017a; TRADOC 2017b. TRADOC 2014). It also provides a foundational justification for resource demands, particularly when military descriptions of the strategic international environment provide the context for national security policy. Militarized conflict only amplifies the uncertainty and complexity of the international environment. Clausewitz describes it as a "realm of chance" (Clausewitz 1977, 90-123).

Despite recognizing the international environment for what it is, sample participants from all backgrounds responded with two overwhelming themes. First, military elites, despite their experience, have room to improve their ability to operate in uncertain, complex environments. Second, as uncertainty and complexity increase, so do the efforts of military elites to plan and mitigate associated risks. War only complicates a complicated environment and planning becomes an obsession (Pappas 1967, 2). The following quotes demonstrate varying degrees of the perception of an uncertain, complex environment and focus on the ability of military elites to navigate its challenges. A retired four-star reflected on the current professional development of military elites, stating,

> "Professional development programs now are much more focused on seeking to prepare general officers for that uncertain, ambiguous, 'inter-organizational environment' in which general officers find themselves. But I'm not sure that we're quite yet where we need to be" (W2-I3).

A political appointee reflected on his observations of military elites working in the NSC, stating,

> "Military officers seek operational certainty. Civilians seek political certainty. Military officers are less able to judge the political consequences of their conduct and will take political risks to avoid operational risk. And, likewise, civilians are less able to judge the military consequences of their conduct and will take operational risks to avoid political risks" (W1-I23).

A senior war college administration official relayed his observations working with war college students over the past several years, stating,

> "Military elites are great tacticians that operate in a strategic environment. We have made a continuous effort to evolve the profession, to train and build strategic leaders that can deal with uncertainty and complexity, but it's an imperfect process and strategic thinkers tend to get weeded out in favor of great tacticians" (W1-I14).

A senior military officer observing the performance of military elites interacting at the national-strategic level, particularly in the context of interfacing with Congress, stated,

> "Most of our military leaders lack the ability to really operate and engage in uncertain, complex environments, particularly when politics is involved. They are ill-suited for political engagements. They don't possess a strategic perspective. They don't know how to engage

> political leaders, build rapport, communicate, and build relationships in a political environment" (W1-I12).

A former NSC political appointee and current think tank fellow stated,

> "The White House and the NSC require working insane hours with a brutal work load. Military officers are better-suited for the pace and the stress than their civilian counterparts, but there is still a lot of room for improvement in developing military elites to think strategically about complex matters of state" (W1-I5).

A senior military officer and former college Professor stated,

> "An unfortunate by-product of our current wars is that they have cemented this idea into the minds of the officer corps that the military, because of its size and its proficiency in planning, can bring order out of chaos. That we are the only organization that can tend to these complex, asymmetric challenges, and civilian organizations simply can't do it. The problem is that the military looks at time horizons differently than their civilian counterparts. Senior officers get very frustrated when they don't see immediate, tangible results. They want to show what they can accomplish when they are in command, even if the results are temporary and reversible" (W1-I17).

A former four-star commander stated,

> "Civil-military relations are inherently challenging. War makes it even more complicated. Issues are complex. Stakes are high. Actors have varying degrees of knowledge and expertise. It requires constant communication, direct interaction, balanced perspective, managed expectations, and understanding the consequences of decisions. Regardless of whether I was ever accused of 'boxing in' the President, I was doing what I told them I was going to do. It may have not been what they wanted me to do in the end, but the fact of the matter is that they had never told me what they wanted. You see, part of the complexity is trying to figure out what politicians are trying to achieve, because they really don't know. If they do know, they don't want to tell you. They want you to figure it out, tell them, and then they'll agree or not, but it gives them some distance in case things go south" (W2-I11).

A former CIA official and NSC detailee stated,

> "Four-star level commanders can be ill-prepared. They sometimes just don't understand; they have no empathy. They don't have an inkling for the breadth of issues that are in the President's inbox, and they tend to think the issues in their jurisdiction are the national priority" (W1-I65).

This series of excerpts demonstrate that military elites perceive and propagate strategic conceptions of an uncertain, complex environment for which they prepare and train. This uncertainty and complexity are amplified during periods of militarized conflict. Kupchan (1994) describes this as self-serving because it can have the effect of increasing the salience of militarized

policy solutions to national security challenges and provide justification for resources in the budgetary process.

Finding: The literature plainly recognizes that military elites operate in a perceived and discursively constructed uncertain, complex environment for which they plan, prepare, and forecast required resources. However, as these observations demonstrate, understanding the realities and nuances of an uncertain and complex international environment is, by no means, monopolized by military elites. They also fall short of a monopoly on providing the advice and recommendations politicians require to make decisions, particularly when domestic politics outweighs military policy preferences.

The realities of the policy process are that there are far more civilian experts, academics, diplomats, and analysts that have a deep and profound knowledge of countries, regions, and global affairs. They also have expertise in a variety of substantive issue areas related to national security. What makes the military's knowledge and experience with security matters unique and "superior" to other ways of thinking about and experiencing security-related issues is that it has come to be associated with how the very notion of security is construed.

To put it differently, the way we understand security is often colored by the fact that military power and influence is both the source and outcome of a state's security. Although the notion of security has been "broadened" and "deepened" to include environmental, developmental and other aspects of security and stresses individuals as subjects of security, the traditional understanding of security zeroing in on state actors and military capacity continues to dominate practice and theory in international relations (Wæver 1995; Buzan et al. 1998). Thus, the reason that a military's knowledge and experience are so valued is because it comports with a more narrowly defined notion of security.

Conceptual Attribute Eight: External Relationships, Alliances, and Resources

A final characteristic of epistemic communities that determines their influence in a policy domain are their *external relationships, alliances, and resources*. To effectively wield influence in a policy

domain, epistemic communities should build and maintain strong external, intergovernmental and inter-organizational relationships and alliances within a national government (Cross 2013b, 147-148). They should have regular, recurring formal and informal interaction with interagency civil servants, elected officials, civilian leadership, and elite decision makers. They should advise, assist, and work closely with key governmental stakeholders in specific policy domains. Strong intergovernmental relationships and alliances are imperative as it relates to epistemic community interactions and influence with the government and corresponding relationships to civilian leadership, elected official, and other civil servants. Beyond relationships and alliances, however, epistemic communities must have material and budgetary resources.

This investigation adds *access to and control of resources* to this conceptual attribute of epistemic communities and to the epistemic community theoretical framework for three primary reasons. First, it is well-established in the literature. Second, it is a major theme in the data provided by the interviews. Finally, it is related to Proposition Two's assertion that military elites play a unique role, exercising exceptional influence. I do not argue that a poorly resourced epistemic community cannot play a unique role and exceptionally influence policy. I argue that a well-resourced epistemic community plays a unique role, exercising exceptional influence and their influence is amplified because of their resourcing.

Relationships

Military community members, regardless of rank, will build exceptionally strong networks of relationships inside the military community. Military elites, however, deliberately work to cultivate and build external relationships with key leaders and influencers across federal government agencies, Congress, the media, think tanks, academia, multinational corporations, international organizations, allied militaries, and foreign governments. Relationships provide access to key influencers and decision-makers. They also ensure military elites retain a "reach back" ability to a network of

contacts that can keep them informed. Both dynamics create potential for influence, as well as social capital that can be exploited and mobilized in an unrelenting effort to achieve policy preferences.

Military officers that build strong, external networks of relationships are often disingenuously criticized as being politicians, a pejorative term inside the military community. Yet, a former military elite and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs stated,

> "To become a successful flag officer, to make it to Lieutenant General or Vice Admiral, requires building strong personal and professional relationships across the services and outside of the military. It starts when you're a Colonel gaining an appreciation for joint warfighting, learning and understanding the function, capabilities, and limitations of your sister services" (W2-I21).

General Colin Powell stated it plainly in a talk with students at the U.S. Army War College. He challenged war college students to evolve how they think and transition a "muddy boots" mentality to a military elite capable of engaging in strategic political-military affairs. He described how most military officers think inside the boundaries of their profession, because that is how they have been taught and mentored (Powell 1988).

To be successful, however, the majority of their time should be spent thinking, acting, and interacting outside the boundaries of their profession, analyzing the domestic and international environments, sensing opportunities and risk, understanding politics and public relations, and shaping the environment to achieve advantage (Powell 1988). In an address to students at the National War College, he reinforced his talking points and explained that understanding the domestic and international political environment and the American public are essential. Despite the excessive and overt political nature of this approach, he stated, "The fact of the matter is there is not a general or admiral in Washington who is not political…it's the nature of our system…It is the way in which we formulate policy. It is the way in which we get approval for our policy" (Powell 1989).

It is important to understand how external relationships are created and sustained over time, as well as how they provide advantages in the policy process. The following excerpts shed light on this process. A former four-star Combatant Commander remarked,

> "Certainly, the more senior you become, the more important relationships are, but the network of relationships changes. For the most part, as you're growing up in the Army, most of your relationships are within the Army. You have a joint assignment, then you'll probably expand that a little bit. As you become a general officer, then it starts to expand a little bit beyond the military" (W2-I3).

A former four-star Service Chief stated,

> "It's all about the personal relationships we build, particularly as a Colonel and moving forward. It's about frequency of contact. It's about formal and informal contact. It's about building trust, confidence, and a reputation. Civilians look to the military…we have a reputation as the 'doers.' We tend to be the doers among the other agencies. The other agencies are better equipped for writing white papers, briefs, policy papers, talking points, and cables. But when it comes to planning, there's deference. They know that it's okay to let the military lead the planning process, because no other agency or institution knows how to plan like we do. We know how to articulate what needs to be accomplished and how to navigate towards achieving policy goals and objectives. How to understand, visualize, describe, and direct over time" (W2-I11).

A former political appointee, NSC staff, and think tank fellow stated,

> "It's the experiences and relationships that military elites have built over a career that give them such advantage in the policy process. Their experiences cause those outside of the military to hold them up in reverence. They bring a level of prestige that civilians lack. You'll see civilians defer to them on policy matters almost subconsciously…Then there's the relationship thing. Their relationships give them tremendous social capital and 'reach back' ability both inside and outside the military" (W1-I32).

A former Foreign Service Officer with NSC staff experience stated,

> "You [military] guys are great at investing in and cultivating relationships. You're taught in your doctrine to set conditions and shape the environment, and you apply that in the policy world. The generals I've observed and worked closely with routinely reached out to think tanks, the media, and other key influencers and stakeholders to get buy-in, maintain close connectivity, and monitor and maintain situational awareness. You know how inform and influence. You approach it like an information operation" (W1-I67).

The reference to "reach back" capability refers to military elites being able to leverage their parent organization to provide data, information, and knowledge to support policy debates and gain

favorable outcomes. The following excerpts explain the "reach back" dynamic in more detail. A former Foreign Service Officer with experience on the NSC staff stated,

> "They are able to reach back to the Joint Staff or their service for information that no one else can access. It's a huge advantage, because it's efficient and it provides context in policy discussions that can sway decisions" (W1-I67).

A former CIA official, NSC staff, and State Department senior policy advisor stated,

> "Military detailees are 'forward observers' in the policy process. They keep the military hierarchy informed. They reflect the perspective of the military and they never really leave the reservation, unless they have political aspirations. There's exceptional reliance on them, too, particularly now, because so many civilians have backed away from the current administration. When information is the 'coin of the realm,' having a 'reach back' capability to support your position is critical" (W1-I61).

A retired senior military officer and former SES stated,

> "Military elites determine the left and right limits of policy discussions and, ultimately, policy outcomes. We are the gatekeepers of information and that 'reach back' capability we have allows military influence to balance the agendas of ambitious political appointees" (W1-I23).

There was a repeated theme that relationships provide access to influential actors across the U.S. government, particularly with Congress. Three senior military officers from three different military services, all with extensive experience working with Congress stated,

> "Those that are strategically-minded also have an appreciation for politics, an appreciation for creating partnerships and relationships with elected officials that give them access and can be used to inform, provide context, persuade, and help 'move the needle' in a direction that achieves their purpose" (W1-I12).

> "Relationships are built over time through deliberate engagement opportunities that help build rapport, keep legislators informed and create mutual respect, credibility, continued frequency of contact, and honest communication. Deep relationships develop that can be exploited on both sides, but military elites must always remember that political interests always outweigh any relationship and suppress their influence" (W1-I35).

> "Effective military elites cultivate close, personal, and persistent relationships with Members of Congress. These relationships are used to affect and influence policy changes favorable to the military. We, all the services, are in a continual struggle and competition for resources, and the relationships we build give us access to advocate – not lobby – advocate for our policy interests and resource needs" (W1-I72).

Collectively, these excerpts demonstrate the exceptional value of both internal and external relationship networks that military elites cultivate. First, it provides them a sophisticated and beneficial reach-back capability to support their efforts to influence policy. Secondly, it amplifies their influence through strong, persistent network of relationships with key stakeholders, influencers, and actors in the policy process that support their policy preferences.

Alliances

The alliances of military elites in epistemic community literature refer to international alliances that influence transnational policies and activities, such as the "Common Security and Defense Policy" in Europe (Cross 2013b). Transnational alliance formation is a deliberate outcome of the exercise of soft power achieved through diplomatic outreach and military exchanges (Atkinson 2014). Military-diplomatic initiatives enable the convergence and cultivation of international military members and are an integral part of the programming at military academies and schools in the U.S. They provide opportunities for shared experiences with international military members and the exchange and dissemination of shared norms, values, and beliefs in a common military culture (Cross 2013b; Atkinson 2014).

This investigation argues that military elites also pursue and cultivate domestic alliances. These alliances exist between the military and various related advocacy groups, such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Association of the United States Army (AUSA), Air Force Association (AFA), Navy League of the United States, Marine Corps League, Military Officer's Association of American (MOAA), and many more. Alliances are also cultivated across a spectrum of additional organizations and institutions.

These alliances are formed through programs that place nearly 3000 high performing, high potential military officers from all military services with academia, think tanks, and other governmental agencies and institutions, as well as with the private sector and major corporations

(Rumsfeld 2001b).[25] For example, a survey of current and past industry fellowship opportunities placed senior military officers with Apple, Microsoft, Cisco, Dell, Oracle, Hewlett Packard, Shell, ExxonMobil, Caterpillar, FedEx, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific, Bloomberg, CNN, Blackrock, Morgan Stanley, Deutsche Bank, Johnson & Johnson, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, and many more.[26]

A retired four-star Service Chief reflected on the alliance between the military and industry, suggesting it was a symbiotic relationship that trades access and lucrative contracts for high-paying consulting jobs after retirement.

> "All you have to do is walk the floor of an AUSA convention to understand the alliance and marriage of the military to industry. It's a powerful alliance. Eisenhower knew then. Don't get me wrong, retired military elites are essential to influencing policy – look at your Keanes, McCaffreys, and other GOs that are addicted to DC – but the biggest trades at an AUSA convention are access to decision-makers, contracts, and resources in return for resumes and post-retirement employment opportunities. Don't think for a second that industry doesn't know that their capital rises and falls with the number of retired GOs they have in their stable. You'll hear them brag about it like it's a…contest" (W2-I8).

Fellowships across all military services place senior military officers and elites in universities across the U.S., including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, Tufts, Johns Hopkins, Vanderbilt, University of Virginia, Purdue University, Georgetown University, George Washington University, George Mason University, and over 30 additional land-grant and private academic institutions. Fellowships with major, prestigious think tanks include the

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[25] In 2001, over 2000 non-reimbursable military officers from all services were detailed in support of the White House and across the federal government. There are two classifications for detailees – reimbursable and non-reimbursable. Reimbursable detailees are paid for and managed by the gaining agency. The majority of detailees fall under the classification of non-reimbursable. They are "out of pocket;" paid and managed by the parent agency. Non-reimbursable detailees are authorized by statute and execute duties that generally relate to matters of concern to their parent agency wherein their assignment accrues a greater or preponderant benefit to their parent agency (DOD 2013).

[26] For a full description of the Defense Fellows Program, see http://www.defensefellows.org/

Council on Foreign Relations, Belfer Center, Atlantic Council, Brookings, Center for Strategic and International Studies, RAND Corporation, American Enterprise Institute, and others. Senior military officers also serve fellowships and assignments with other governmental institutions, departments, and agencies, such as with Congress, State, Homeland Security, Justice, Transportation, CIA, FBI, DEA, and others. As a retired senior military officer and war college Professor noted, this sort of activity is made possible by the military's exceptional manpower and financial resources. He stated,

> "The military has the manpower resources to allow 5-10% of the force to remain in a constant rotation through professional development and education programs. How many departments in the federal government have a funded manpower account where they can send someone to train with industry, think big thoughts, and drink cocktails at a think tank in New York City, work in a Congressman's office writing legislation, hang out at the CIA tracking bad guys, or attending school for their master's degree or PhD for two to three years and not have a hole in their organization that's unfilled for that period of time?" (W1-I11)

A senior military officer and think tank fellow described the benefits of the relationships and alliances built with industry, academia, think tanks, and other governmental agencies stating,

> "These broadening opportunities have additional benefits other than the experience gained. In addition to providing an opportunity to expand their internal network of relationships, these opportunities expand their external network of relationships. They interface with civilian counterparts from other agencies and organizations as 'ambassadors' of the military and are able to influence the influencers, educate different publics regarding the military's interests, and make strides in shaping the political environment and public dialogue" (W1-I25).

Domestic alliance building is not constrained to sending military officers to external organizations. It also includes sponsoring programs that bring external civilian representatives to visit and attend military installations, events, schools, seminars, and programs. Civilian representatives from federal departments and agencies; major corporations and small businesses; state and local government; and federal, state and local law enforcement routinely participate in military sponsored and co-sponsored outreach programs that build relationships, and provide awareness, education, training, and resources to improve coordination of efforts for contingencies

that require support to law enforcement, disaster and emergency response, hosting special events, city planning, improving commerce, and advocating for mutually beneficial policy and legislation with elected officials at all levels.

A great example of this particular domestic alliance is the partnership between senior military officers and local civilian leaders in Lawton-Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The Lawton-Fort Sill alliance brings together local military, business, and government leadership to socialize, coordinate, and advocate during events that include recurring, co-sponsored sport and entertainment events, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and coordinated visits to the Oklahoma State Legislature and the U.S. Congress. These events provide for frequent formal and informal contact and strong, symbiotic relationships that allow for coordination and advocacy of mutually beneficial policy and legislation.[27]

Resources

Well-resourced epistemic communities possess asymmetric advantage in influence, persuasion, and bargaining power because they control the resources required to execute policy decisions. Access to and control of resources may encompass human resources, people, and capital resources, equipment and infrastructure. It also includes knowledge and informational resources; encompassing intelligence networks, informational databases, and the ability to provide and communicate strategic, operational, and tactical assessments in a rapid fashion. These resources provide military elites with clout and *gravitas* in policy discussions and debates because they show up to meetings exceptionally well-informed with the most current information, context, and intelligence. Once a policy decision is made, military elites control the manpower and material resources to implement the policy decisions for which they have advocated. This capability is

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[27] For further information and a complete review of this alliance, see http://lawtonfortsillchamber.com/government/government-military-affairs/

amplified when a national security crisis calls for policy decisions to be executed along a timeline measured in minutes, hours, or days, versus a longer timeframe.

The military's significant asymmetric advantage in resources is the product of its exceptional budget. Ultimately, access to and control of budgetary resources can be the catalyst for decisions that favor one policy over another, one epistemic community over another. The following excerpts explain this dynamic. A former four-star Service Chief stated,

> "Access and ability to mobilize resources is most important. Resources give you relevance. Poor resources signal waning relevance…The President's budget is submitted. So, what? That is the front end of negotiations. There is a constant pressure on Congress for more resources. Have resources that you need to shift? Go to Congress to reprogram. But you have to have a narrative that justifies the resources and that's where risk comes into the equation. The need for resources has to be coached in terms of risk and specific threats to national security" (W2-I16).

A former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Policy with NSC staff experience stated,

> "Military elites provide seasoned experience that civilians lack. They have the ability to clearly explain the mechanisms, timelines, and logistics required to understand the reality of what it means to execute policy decisions. State will say, 'here's what we need to consider.' The military will say, 'here's what we can do.' In crisis, presidents want action, not drawn out discussion. So, they get fascinated with anyone that actually takes action when they say they want something done. So, the military is looked to, to carry the weight, to do the heavy lifting. The result is that the last resort is now the first option" (W1-I13).

A former Foreign Service Officer and senior corporate executive stated,

> "The military's influential because it's the biggest actor at the table. Look at their budget versus any other federal agency. It's crazy! The budget imbalance and the general imbalance of resources is the biggest issue. Anyone that harps about wanting or expecting a "whole of government" approach has no sense of reality. Saying we want a 'whole of government' approach is never directive or binding. It's aspirational" (W1-I66).

A former Office of the Secretary of Defense, Policy Director and current think tank fellow stated,

> "Take the Ebola outbreak, flooding in Pakistan, or even 'whooping cough' in the mountains of Oruzgan, as examples. The principle driving factor behind the militarization of foreign policy that I always identify is the fact that the military is so resource rich. That something so unambiguously not a military mission, the Ebola crisis, becomes the military's mission…Access to and control of resources make the military 'the only game in town' in dealing with crisis situations. Many times, you have resources already 'in country,' whether that's people or equipment. If you don't, you have the people and equipment rapidly available to get people and equipment to the crisis" (W1-I70).

The foregoing quotes related to resources demonstrate that access to and control of resources by military elites provide them with exceptional influence. Military elites control capabilities that inform the policy process in real-time. This augments their advocacy for policy preferences. Once decisions are made, military elites control resources that allows them to implement policy solutions to the required scale of a mission with immediacy and urgency across the globe, a capacity and capability that other agencies generally lack.

Finding: The findings related to this conceptual attribute are exceptionally strong. The data clearly substantiates that military elites exhibit the conceptual attribute of possessing external relationships, alliances, and resources that support their constitution and behavior as an epistemic community. Access to and control of resources provides asymmetric advantages by providing epistemic communities the ability to inform, as well as implement policy decisions. Sample participant responses related to this conceptual attribute were consistent and robust. The data reveals how relationships are formed, cultivated, and exploited to inform and influence policy decisions with specific discussion of information 'reach back' and congressional relations. The formation of domestic alliances was explored, noting targeted institutions, agencies, and organizations, and the symbiotic nature of the relationship.

Variance in response related to the purpose or characterization of relationships, alliances, and resources. For example, military community members frown on the characterization of their external relationship behavior as being political. To say military elites exploit relationships for gain comports with military doctrine, however it goes against their self-perception and sense of identity.[28]

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[28] Military elites are trained "to establish, maintain, influence, and exploit relationships," in the course of civil-military relations (Joint Staff 2018, vii).

Yet, as Powell states, it's the nature of the system. The image of military elites as 'muddy boot' warriors is romanticized and nuanced. The warrior image they may have embodied for the first two decades of their career morphs into Abrahamsson's (1972) image of sophisticated and cosmopolitan political actors that act in the interest of their military community and military service.

Summary

This chapter demonstrates that U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community in accordance with Proposition One. Previous scholarship investigated the behavior of defense policy elites as an epistemic community in the context of international affairs, transnational influence, nuclear weapons policy, and national security policy, but never in the domestic context with a homogenous community, and never within the U.S. Additionally, the conceptual attributes of epistemic communities identified and broadly defined in the scholarship have been further specified in this investigation.

In the process of expanding on the definitions of these conceptual attributes, this investigation also demonstrates how military elites exhibit each conceptual attribute. This process, coupled with extensive interviews with in-group members and out-group observers, uncovered important nuance with generalizable, theoretical implications (see Appendix F). In general, military elites exhibit strong conceptual attributes of an epistemic community with equally strong support from extant literature related to each attribute.

Despite debate by Academics related to whether military elites possess authoritative knowledge and expertise, it is the attitude, trust, and confidence of political leaders and the public that matter. Politicians are willing to cede policy jurisdiction and decision-making authority to military elites in national security and foreign policy. Finally, the perceived and propagated uncertain and complex strategic environment discursively constructed by military elites and communicated in

national security policy documents provides justification for resourcing controlled by military elites that gives them asymmetric advantage in the policy process that may be insurmountable.

The next chapter explores the second proposition that military elites, constituting an epistemic community, play a unique role with exceptional influence on national security and foreign policy. It explores how military elites, given the characteristics of an epistemic community, exercise authority, make decisions, and fulfill roles in the policy process that are deeply embedded horizontally and vertically across the government and within organizations and process. They are heavily relied upon, above and beyond competing actors and stakeholders; possessing exceptional capacity and power to influence policy. However, it is the outcome of this power influence that is fully explored to demonstrate influence in action.

Chapter Five: Findings – Role & Influence

"He who molds opinion is greater than he who enacts law" (Lincoln 1858)

The following chapter provides investigative findings related to Proposition Two:

> *U.S. military elites, constituting an epistemic community, play a unique role with exceptional influence on national security and foreign policy.*

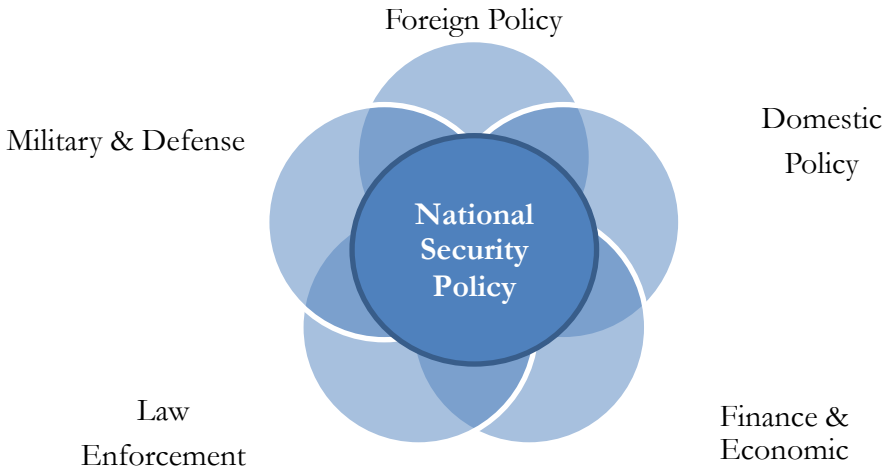
The findings demonstrate the validity of the proposition by revealing that the internal workings of the national security policy process are heavily influenced by military elites, as are the primary policy outcomes. The level of embedment and reliance upon military officers, horizontally and vertically across the government and within organizations and process, ensures that process outcomes have been shaped and calibrated to fall within a spectrum of policy options from which politicians are constrained to choose and to which military elites will *ipso facto* adhere. It is important, however, to begin with historical context related to the unique role of military elites and how they came to dominate the structure, procedure, and staffing of the process that governs national security and foreign policy.

The term "national security" was coined in the run-up to World War II and examined by E. Pendleton Herring in the context of American anti-militarism (Stuart 2008, 8). Pendleton's thesis was that American culture and its tradition of anti-militarism stretching back to pre-Revolutionary War had caused America to be ill-prepared for international relations and conflict in the 20th Century. He argued that for the U.S. to be better prepared for its role in the world, it should evolve its method and approach to national security and foreign policy. He argued for greater military influence and a permanent role for military elites throughout the highest echelons of the federal government (Herring 1941).

National security policy deals with problems and challenges related to pursuing U.S. national interests and protecting those interests from political, economic, and military threats (Shoemaker

1991). National security policy overlaps with and includes elements of diplomacy and foreign policy, domestic policy, law enforcement, military and defense policy, financial and economic policy, and intelligence policy (see Figure 3). An alternative view suggests that foreign policy is at the center of this Venn diagram.

Figure 3: Policy Overlap



Foreign policy, in contrast, is defined as the activities of government officials that influence events and relationships internationally between the U.S. and foreign governments and citizens. In this approach, foreign policy encompasses national security, economic, trade, and monetary policy (Destler 1972, 5). The view that one takes related to whether national security or foreign policy is at the center matters, because it can determine how policy is then organizationally led, developed, decided, and implemented within the Executive Branch. A national security policy centric view will tend to rely on the National Security Council as the executive agent. A foreign policy centric view will tend to rely on the State Department as the executive agent.

Evolutionary Decline of the Department of State

> "There is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected" (Darwin 1859, 13).

Evolution has not favored the State Department. The conception of a foreign policy-centric view and an assertion of the State Department's preeminence is dated and no longer applies. It may have been an accurate depiction from the founding of the State Department up until the 1970s when it was the organizational center of gravity for U.S. national security and foreign policy. During this period, the State Department was responsible, by textbook definition, for the foreign policy of the U.S., representing the U.S. government abroad, conducting negotiations on its behalf, and reporting to and advising the President in matters of foreign policy. Indeed, serving as the Secretary of State was historically viewed as a stepping-stone to the presidency.

However, the period from World War II thru the 1970s saw a gradual shift in influence towards the military in influencing national security and foreign policy and the waning influence of the State Department – a consequence of the National Security Act of 1947. The National Security Act of 1947 signaled the end of an era for the State Department. By the 1960s, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), an advocacy group representing the interests of Foreign Service Officers, reported that the State Department was "scrambling just to maintain its position" of influence relative to advising the president on national security and foreign policy (AFSA 1968, 51).

Presidents were increasingly dissatisfied with the State Department and compelled to assert more control over their agenda. Former Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, observed that "The attitude that presidents and secretaries may come and go but the Department goes on forever has led many presidents to distrust and dislike the Department of State" (Acheson 1987, 157). President Kennedy derided the State Department's bureaucratic culture (Schlesinger 1965, 365) and Ted

Sorenson, a Special Assistant to Kennedy, described it as having a "built in inertia which deadened initiative," making it unresponsive to a President's needs (Sorenson 1965, 287). Kissinger, who would later become Secretary of State, describes the Department as "hollow and formalistic" (Kissinger 1979, 42). More recently, President Bush (43) described the State Department as intransigent, unsupportive, and unwilling to support the administration's agenda (Bush 2010, 90). Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described "a tendency for Foreign Service Officers to regard the President and his political advisors as a passing phenomenon without the deep expertise that they, the professionals, bring to diplomacy" (Rice 2011, 16-17).

The evolutionary fall of the State Department and its continued downward spiral was caused by changes in the policy process springing from the National Security Act of 1947, lack of responsiveness and resistance to change, and under-investment in the State Department as an institution. The department was reluctant to follow orders, unable to lead, disorderly, and disorganized. It provided poor staff work, poor analysis, and proposed few policy options for the president. Finally, it had organizational culture issues. State Department officials were viewed as being more concerned with prestige, protocol, cocktail parties, and fancy pants (Hoover 1949, 142; Destler 1972, 156-163). By 1988, "Funds available for operating the Department of State," and U.S. embassies and consulates around the world had been "cut to an unprecedented" level (Reagan 1988, 38). By 2016, the State Department was starved for resources and leadership (Bedford et al.). The diplomatic power of the U.S. had been denigrated and ignored to a point of crisis.

Multiple internal and external reports find that the State Department has changed very little to date. It continues to have organizational infrastructure and management issues causing it to remain unresponsive to a president's needs. Its diplomatic corps lacks imagination and initiative. Core professional development and language training is increasingly inadequate. Its facilities are decrepit. Its information management and communications technology are outdated, obsolete, and

inadequate, hyper-magnifying the department's dysfunctional and vulnerable operations. Its workforce is hollowed out and it remains critically under-manned.[29] The organizational culture of the State Department has led to poor talent management, risk aversion, individualism, and a perception of elitism and arrogance. The department struggles to remain relevant to the president and the interagency. It has been poorly led, poorly resourced, and poorly managed. Presidents and Congress consistently neglect it while other governmental agencies raid its workforce talent and chip away at its core mission and responsibilities (GAO 1998; Carlucci et al., 2000; DOS 2001; GAO 2002; Boyatt et al. 2003; Bedford et al 2017).

Although the State Department failed to adapt, evolutionary change was occurring in other areas of the government. From World War II to present-day, two major developments occurred. First, presidents increasingly pursued an administrative strategy, seeking to centralize control of national security and foreign policy within the White House. This is important, both academically and practically, because where national security and foreign policy is controlled, how it is controlled and who is controlling it matters. If a subordinate organization and its cabinet-level leadership are unable to achieve and exercise control over a President's expressed political agenda and policy preferences, the Chief Executive will, necessarily, implement an administrative governing strategy and organizational structure that is responsive to his policy and agenda needs (Destler 1972; Nathan 1986).

In line with Herring's pre-WWII recommendations, a second major evolutionary development was the intimate involvement, role, influence, and association military elites have had

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[29]As of June 26, 2018, State Department senior vacancies numbered 105. These are positions with a protocol equivalent to a general officer in the military. By comparison, these vacancies would translate into over 15% of the general/admiral positions in the military being vacant (DOS 2018; Schoen 2018).

with the formulation and implementation of national security and foreign policy. As Americans accepted the role of the U.S. in international relations, they also accepted an increasing militarization of its national security and foreign policy. The increasing role of military elites in the national security policy process shifted the tone and tenor of U.S. national security policy, as well as the scope and scale of policies that fall within the boundaries of national security concerns (Bletz 1972).

In a textbook description of the NSC that evolved out of the experiences of WWII, the role of intelligence community representatives was meant to describe and assess the international and operational environment. Department of State representatives' traditional role was to provide decision-makers with policy options that conformed with and supported U.S. national security strategy. Finally, military elites, represented by the CJCS, advised on military capabilities and resources that could affect and assist in implementing policy decisions (W1-I65).

A textbook description and the reality of the process were and are far different. The unique role of military elites results from how they inform and influence the policy process, as well as their outsized role in the implementation of policy. As the remainder of this chapter demonstrates, the influence of military elites is not limited to the Executive Branch. It extends to and includes a unique role played in Congress, as well.

The National Security Council

> "I believe urgent need exists for bringing closer together all the departments and agencies of Government concerned with our national security; for unification of our foreign policies, our military policies, and our economic policies…But I also believe that such unification must be achieved under positive civilian control, and that Congress must exercise the greatest care lest it enact legislation which may permit military or authoritarian forces at some future date to dominate our Government… In its various potentials, H.R. 2319 reaches into almost every field of Government and every walk of life…It surrenders control of the foreign policy of the United States to a bloc of individuals within the proposed National Security Council who are captive and beholden to the Military Establishment…" Congressional Testimony of Major General Merritt A. Edson, USMC (HR 2319 1947, 453)

Military elites have historically dominated the NSC organizational structure. At its genesis, the NSC, based on the legislative language and the congressional record, possessed a significant

military component and has historically been dominated by military influence. As pre-WWII academic studies called for an overhaul of the U.S. national security policy-making process, so did internal government sponsored studies come to the same conclusion. The Brownlow "Committee on Administrative Management" laid the groundwork for the future establishment of the NSC, a formal organization with statutory members and advisors, non-statutory attendees, and formal operating procedures that would meet regularly to advise, as well as constrain, a president (Daalder and Destler 2009, 2-8). However, once WWII commenced, President Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) was hesitant to change and adapt his leadership style, organization, and familiar process.

During the war, outside Allied observers found FDR's handling of war-time planning and operations appalling and lacking any "orderly procedures" (Larrabee 1987, 17; Stevens 1989). At its worst, the national security and foreign policy decision-making process was antiquated, backward-looking, haphazard, confusing, and chaotic. It was rife with personal and institutional conflict and prone to alarming error (Sherry 1995, 42-43). At best, it was personality driven, *ad hoc*, and disorderly, with FDR and his military service chiefs forming a *de facto* war council (CRS 2017; Daalder and Destler 2009).

Internal military studies echoed similar findings, some describing the process as belonging "to the days of George Washington" (Larrabee 1987, 17).[30] A post-war Senate report found that under FDR's leadership, "Our slow and costly mobilization, our limited intelligence of the designs and capacities of our enemies, our incomplete integration of political purpose and military objectives…our prodigal use of resources, all demonstrate convincingly that our national existence

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[30] Chief of Staff of the Army, General George Marshall's attempts improve the national security policy process and to unify the armed services in an effort to gain synergy and efficiencies were rejected by FDR. Marshall did, however, find support from a Missouri Senator and future President, Harry Truman (Stuart 2000).

would be imperiled were we to ignore the costly lessons of war and fail to reorganize our national security structure" (U.S. Senate 1947, 1488-1489). Integrating the elements of national power at the executive level to ensure better policy coordination was imperative.

The National Security Act of 1947 helped replace a FDR's flawed personality-driven process in an effort to cope with a challenging post-war international environment. It was intended to have a strong military component and has been historically dominated by military elites (Shoemaker 1991). It established the National Security Council (NSC), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and a National Military Establishment that reorganized the military services under one organizational umbrella led by a Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and their subordinate Joint Staff. A consequence of this organizational evolution would be, as discussed above, the waning preeminence of the State Department.

In a twist of irony, the unification of the military services and overhaul of the national security policy process advocated by General Marshall while serving as the Army's Chief of Staff was soon considered from a different perspective. As Truman's Secretary of State, Marshall warned that the NSC would "dissipate the constitutional responsibility of the President for the conduct of foreign affairs…and at the same time markedly…diminish the responsibility of the Secretary of State" (Bock 1987, 12; Daalder and Destler 2009, 8). The Hoover Commission, studying the organization of the Executive Branch, would confirm Marshall's fears, adding that the NSC had diluted the authority and influence of the President and civilian leadership, and transferred it to the military, leaving it "free from civilian control" (Hoover 1949, 189).

The National Security Act of 1947, as amended, defines the function of the NSC to be "to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security so as to enable the military services and other departments and agencies of the Government to cooperate more effectively in matters involving national security"

(HR 2319 1947, 6 [Title II, Sec 201(a)]). Additionally, it grants the Secretary of Defense and the CJCS statutory membership and an advisory role, respectively. This institutionalizes the military's participation in the NSC and its advisory role for the President.

The scope of NSC responsibilities includes all "matters that are of the nature of international relations, as well as military matters, and the interplay between those two fields" (HR 2319 1947, 94). It is directed "by law to consider our international commitments and risks, upon the basis of which the Joint Chiefs of Staff should prepare strategic plans and evaluate their requirements in terms of weapons, supplies, and manpower" (HR 2319 1947, 168). Finally, of the 27 National Security Advisors that have held the position, 20 have had significant military experience. This includes serving in position as retired military elites or as military elites that remain on active duty.[31]

The consequence and implication of this historical context is that although the President is the titular head of the NSC and the final decision-making authority, the organizational structure, day-to-day leadership, and staffing of the NSC are heavily influenced by the military. Military elites disproportionately control the NSC through a staff and committee structure that meets, coordinates, informs, and determines a president's national security and foreign policy agenda and related initiatives, policies, and proposals for consideration, discussion, and decision.

In an oral history related to President Bush's (41) NSC, a Special Assistant to the President (SAP) describes his frustration with the control of the military over the policy process related to information and decision-making, stating,

> "one aspect of the process that I think broke down…had to do with the military. There certainly was a feeling in other parts of the system…that the military had made up its mind…the civilian leadership in the Pentagon…was not about to overrule the military…we

[31] Four APNSAs have served on the NSC Staff while on active duty – Vice Admiral John Poindexter, Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, Lieutenant General Colin Powell, and Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster.

> didn't have any transparency…We didn't have access to the same kind of information…I could ask for something, and somebody would say, 'No, you're not getting that information until the CJCS signs off on it" (Daalder and Destler 1999a, 24).

A Clinton-era senior military officer, now serving as a college Professor, described his experience on the NSC, stating,

> "The military had remarkable autonomy to craft policy and they were better prepared, more responsive and had a sense of urgency that is not shared by their civilian counterparts" (W1-I6).

A former Deputy Assistant to the President and current senior flag officer described the militarization of the national security policy process in more detail, stating,

> "The entire process has been militarized, deliberately, and in a good way. We do it the way we're trained…We determined our vital national interests, our desired end-state, our strategic objectives, our lines of effort, our strategic implementation plan, and our assessment metrics…Then we had to norm the group participants and force them to think a certain way. It can be a little like herding cats at first…But we imposed a process and methodology that provides tremendous influence on how policy is formulated. We had to define terms, for instance. We ensured that we used military doctrinal terms to ensure definitions were clear. We had to define the structure that we wanted people to use in the documents that are generated…We knew how to do it military style and we compelled people to do it our way. In the end, it was for the best because it allowed us to translate a political agenda into policy that was actionable and operationalized with measurable objectives" (W1-I44).

Current and former members of the NSC staff waivered little from these accounts. It was generally accepted that the policy staffing process of the NSC was hierarchical and favored a military style. A former Deputy Secretary of Defense with significant experience working on and with the NSC staff described the dynamic this way,

> "Military influence is both subtle and extraordinary…senior military officers are typically embedded as Executive Assistants and Senior Military Advisors to political appointees. They manage their time. They manage their schedule. They manage their travel. They manage their meetings. They are a sounding board for information and ideas. They translate military-speak into plain English. They answer the dumb questions that civilians may sometimes have. They help us understand the impact and consequences of policy. There's significant trust and confidence that develops and a high degree of dependence and reliance because these senior officers provide institutional knowledge and continuity between administrations. If you end up with weak civilian leadership or civilians who don't have the needed expertise, implementation of policy defaults to the military who does have the expertise, and that only serves to strengthen the military's role and influence. If you end up, like we've seen recently,

> with an administration that doesn't have a deep bench of people to draw from, we depend on the military to fill the gap. The military can't say no. If there's a civilian leadership vacuum, which there often is, the military fill it" (W2-I30).

The NSC Staff

Military elites have historically dominated the NSC staff. Current day-to-day operations of the NSC are executed by an NSC Staff ranging between 300-400 people (McInnis 2016b; W1-I4). The mission of the NSC Staff is to coordinate development of policy options for the president, "using the most effective application of U.S. diplomatic, economic, military, and intelligence resources" (Crocker et al 2016, ii). It should "incorporate and harmonize" the recommended policy positions of the NSC's principal members, as well as ensure presidential decisions are executed and implemented by federal government agencies (Crocker et al 2016, ii).

The NSC Staff is led by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (APNSA), commonly referred to as the President's National Security Advisor. Beneath the APNSA are multiple Deputy Assistants to the President (DAPs) leading major policy areas and several more Special Assistants to the President (SAPs) leading more narrowly focused policy areas or serving as Senior Directors leading core national security directorates.[32] Directorates are typically regional, functional, and issue-related. Within a directorate, beneath a Senior Director are subordinate Directors and Staff members (Crocker et al 2016).

As it relates to personnel, the NSC Staff includes political appointees, professional staff members, direct hires, and detailees. Political appointees typically fill the APNSA, DAPs, and SAPs positions, although there are multiple occasions when these positions are filled by departmental detailees that receive a presidential commission. Detailees fill these senior positions because civilian,

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[32] The Homeland Security Council, which was made subordinate to the NSC under President Obama, may also be led by an "Assistant to the President."

political appointee turn-over tends to be extraordinarily high within the NSC regardless of administration. Total turnover in the current administration is reportedly as high as 120-140% annually with many political appointees serving 12 or less months in position (W1-I4; Tenpas 2019).

Professional staff members serve throughout the NSC Staff in multiple roles. They have historically fulfilled administrative duties, such as working in the Executive Secretariat or manning the White House Situation Room, but their role is dynamic and evolving. Professional staff are typically permanent, full-time government employees, and a significant proportion are retired military veterans (W1-I4). Direct hires are typically from academia, think tanks, and the private sector, having special regional, functional, or issue-related expertise that fill a need or gap within the NSC. Political appointees, professional staff members, and direct hires are funded from within Executive Office of the President's budget. These staff categories fluctuate with each administration but recent numbers are reportedly between 180-220 personnel (W1-I4).

"Detailees" to the NSC make up the remaining 50-75% of the NSC staff. Of this population of the NSC staff, 25-33% are active-duty military elites (W2-I15; W1-I5; W1-I51; W2-I10; W1-I66; W1-I50).[33] The remainder are assigned from the State Department, Department of Homeland

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[33] Military detailees are assigned across the federal government, not just to the NSC. The most accurate accounting that is easily available to scholars of the number of military detailees from all military services comes from Secretary Rumsfeld's archives. During his time as Secretary of Defense, military detailees numbered approximately 2,100 serving across the federal government (Rumsfeld 2001; W2-I21). Military detailees are heavily embedded across the Executive and Legislative Branches, augmenting the staff of multiple departments, agencies, to include working in the personal offices of MOCs. Attempts to collect accurate, current data are difficult. Gathering data through OSD internal procedures, a process that took several months, ended with no progress. After submitting an official request through military channels with a General Officer letter of support, as well as a FOIA request through the DOD website, multiple OSD personnel directly responsibility for maintaining the data called me and stated they do not track the data directly and there was no effort or intent to gather it. The official request and the FOIA were both closed with no action. I was encouraged, however, to submit individual FOIA requests to each military service.

Security, Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, Department of the Treasury, Department of Energy, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and others, as needed. They are managed and their salaries are paid by their parent organization. Length of assignment is typically one year with a potential option to extend.[34] Departmental policy regulating detailees may differ, but generally follow similar guidelines.[35]

The major crises and focus of the NSC determines the employment of military detailees. As one former senior congressional aide stated,

> "If the NSC is focused on…counter-terrorism and managing two wars, military detailees will be heavily embedded and relied upon…There's no real talent management with civilians on the NSC, particularly those who aren't veterans. They are working there because of their political connections. The get no professional development. It's OJT [on-the-job training]. Civilian detailees and political appointees lack planning experience and have little or no experience with national security, conflict, and war. Plus, sadly, civilians lack enduring commitment. They're part-timers, in and out of the process" (W1-I37).

The scope of the mission of a directorate also determines the number of military elites assigned. For example, a former Director of the CIA described that "some directorates in the NSC that deal with arms control or NATO, for instance, are at least 50% military" (W2-I19). Another senior military officer concurred, jokingly describing working in a directorate in which "You can't swing a dead cat…without hitting a Colonel or [military] retiree" (W1-I4).

Military elites have, at different periods within administrations, made up as much as 50-66% of the detailee population (W2-I13; W1-I54). Reliance on military detailees in the NSC staff is

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[34] In the case of DOD, up to four years.

[35] As described earlier, there are two classifications for detailees – reimbursable and non-reimbursable. The majority of detailees fall under the classification of non-reimbursable. Non-reimbursable detailees are authorized by statute and execute duties that generally relate to matters of concern to their parent agency wherein their assignment accrues a greater or preponderant benefit to their parent agency (DOD 2013). By internal policy, OSD approves the assignment of detailees and is required to maintain accountability. In practice, OSD acts as a "rubber stamp" and accountability of military detailee programs is delegated to the military services.

greatest during transitions periods, because the military is regularly viewed as the continuity between administrations in the area of national security (W2-I23; W1-I4; W2-I30; W2-I2; W2-I22; W1-I39; W1-I49; W1-I51; Tyson 2008). In contrast, political appointees are at their weakest at the beginning of an administration, when they are learning to govern, and at the end of an administration, when "they are assumed to be on the way out" (Hicks 2016). If turnover of political appointees is high, as it tends to be in the NSC, this increases reliance on military elites and, subsequently, increases their influence over policy (W2-I13).

Regardless, as a former Director of the CIA explained, military elites are an exceptional resource within the NSC. He stated,

> "Presidents want the 'best athlete available.' Often, it is a uniformed military officer. The armed forces are about the only place either party can go for somebody they know who will be professionally competent. Not to mention that the safe haven for getting a new cabinet member confirmed is generally getting a retired general to take the job, rather than someone who's been in the political process" (W2-I19).

A former APNSA from a liberal administration described the participation of military elites as detailees to the NSC in the following manner, stating,

> "Military elites have the right experiences, education, culture, and work ethic to be successful in the NSC. They come to work to contribute, to get things done. They want to work hard and help an administration achieve its policy goals. They also know where they come from. They may not be representing the military on the NSC, but we're all a product of our environment. We have a natural bias…Military detailees are an essential component to getting anything done in the NSC" (W2-I23).

If the accountability of personnel in the NSC seems fluid, a former SAP in the current Trump NSC described the process in the following manner,

> "The NSC does 'creative accounting,' so it can get weird. Accounting for the total number of NSC staff is difficult…The majority of the NSC staff are detailees. Of the detailees, 25% or more are active-duty military. Despite messaging to the contrary, because of the 'never Trumpers,' the current President is severely challenged in getting qualified political appointees capable of getting a security clearance…Military detailees pick up the slack. I mean, right now, you have a Coast Guard Major serving as a DAP" (W1-I4).

These excerpts identified a theme in the investigation that is supported by an earlier study conducted by the Atlantic Council. The ability to get qualified political appointees capable of getting a security clearance is a common critique across administrations. Appointing politically loyal people with episodic, little, or no experience can have costly consequences. Yet, "campaigning gets you on the team" (Crocker et al 2016, 10).

The NSC is "no place for on-the-job training of bright, young, but inexperienced people" (Crocker et al 2016, 9). Political appointees "do not have the necessary coordination skills" or temperament to adequately support a president's agenda (Crocker et al 2016, 10). Alternatively, the current administration has "overloaded" the NSC with active-duty and retired military, at one point placing military elites in over half of the senior leadership posts of the NSC (Schulman and Schafer 2017). Structure and procedure within the NSC are important but it is the people that man the process that is most important (Rodman 2009).

Retired Lieutenant General James Dubik at the Institute for the Study of War challenges the assertion that actors in the process are the most important determining factors on policy. He argues that procedures are most important because they "govern the way information is gathered, analyzed, and presented" to elite decision makers (Dubik 2018). Regardless of whether an epistemic community resides and plays a significant role in the national security policy process, procedures can "matter more than the final act of decision itself" (Sorensen 1963, 3-41). In other words, it is the role military elites play in the process, not whether they hold a majority position. Their potential to influence policy is more heightened by their access to and control of information, determining what information and analysis informs civilian elites, as well as their ability to affect time management, agendas, resources, priorities, issues, and options that are presented to decision-makers. The following sections demonstrate that military elites are active and powerful participants in the NSC

process, but also demonstrate active participation across the federal government, DOD, and Congress, both horizontally and vertically.

The National Security Policy Process

With notable exceptions, military elites have historically dominated the NSC process. Critics will argue that, despite an organization and staff that clearly reflect military influence, at its core, the NSC process reflects the needs and preferences of the president and presidents will use the NSC as they wish. NSC organizational models fall along a continuum of control and the roles played by the personalities of the President and the APNSA. Different models, however, merely demonstrate tinkering with flow charts rather than substantive changes to the inner structure and workings of the NSC. Truman held the NSC in relatively low regard until the outbreak of the Korean War. Although he remained predominantly reliant on an inner circle of trusted advisors, he increasingly attended NSC meetings and used the new organization to coordinate interagency recommendations and policy (Stevens 1989).

Eisenhower preferred organization, clear process, and consensus. His intent for the NSC was to develop it into "a corporate body composed of individuals advising the President in their own right, rather than as representatives of their respective departments and agencies." He wanted an NSC that sought solutions on behalf of the President, rather than "solutions which represent merely a compromise of departmental positions" (Ambrose 1984, 469).

Other presidents have been more comfortable with less organization, such as Kennedy and Clinton. They had a greater reliance on close, collegial relationships within a small group of advisers, regardless of their level of experience in national security affairs. It was under Kennedy, however, that the NSC achieved Eisenhower's intent, gaining its own voice and identity as an independent staff (Endicott 1984; Bock 1987; Inderfurth and Johnson 1988; Shoemaker 1991).

Some presidents and their National Security Advisors preferred centralizing operations within the White House with controlled, compartmentalized NSC operations, such as President Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Kennedy and Ford preferred open debate and played a very personal role in the NSC. Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan, preferred written memorandums with a choice of policy options from which to pick and choose. President Lyndon Johnson preferred his "Tuesday Lunch Group" and a more *ad hoc* decision-making process. President Reagan preferred to stay at the strategic level of the policy process, while President Carter was known to get into the details of a policy proposal (Bock 1987; Shoemaker 1991; Rumsfeld 2011).

Despite these historical idiosyncrasies determined by presidential needs and preferences, the NSC Staff is the "institutional guardian" of the process (Lord 1992, 144). Each administration will appoint and embed political appointees into the NSC, tweak the process, and make minor adjustments in an effort to achieve their purpose. However, policy proposals, initiatives, and courses of action are routinely developed in a military-dominated interagency process (Crocker et al 2016).

As one former CIA analyst with NSC staff experience described the process stated,

> "Yes, military elites have too much influence. The NSC process is a reinforcing mechanism. It norms the group to a military-centric, Napoleonic process. It's very formulistic. The system is set up in a fashion that is biased towards military solutions to crisis. The military are exceptional at driving decision-making and planning processes. And if you look at our federal budget, you'll see a reflection of our national values. You don't have to look any further. The military is heavily resourced and the President, Congress, and the American people expect a return on that investment" (W1-I65).

Critics may ask about the ability of NSC principles and staff members from other organizations to influence the NSC organizational structure and process. A former Director of the CIA suggested that, "Influence can be driven by intellectual argument – who's providing the most comprehensive context and making the most compelling, persuasive argument" (W2-I28). This argument relates to how information can potentially be operationalized to influence policy process and decision-making. If military elites have an asymmetric information advantage, it potentially

provides them with "the supreme instrument of power" in governing; enhancing their influence and control over policy choices (Schattschneider 1960, 66; Milner and Tingley).

Having significant control over the information provided to decision-makers, is "the most critical aspect of decision-making" (Kahneman, 1982). If this is the case, the CIA Director (W2-I28) quoted above noted that of the 16 intelligence agencies that inform the national security policy process, eight fall under DOD and are historically led by military elites. The remainder are routinely led by military elites and incorporate military elites in the upper echelons of leadership.[36] He stated,

> "Don't forget that the military's been heavily embedded in and relied upon by the CIA since the 1990s. We consistently have three-star flag officers at the highest levels of our leadership. Over half our Directors were active-duty or retired senior military. The military has the resources to provide that level of support" (W2-I28).[37]

A think tank Fellow and former DASD summarized that,

> "Military elites are unique in that they essentially have, for all practical purposes, control over their own bureaucracy. Within the interagency process, they also have disproportionate access to and control of information. This gives them disproportionate understanding of the facts that inform decision-making. The implication is that everyone else in the room becomes dependent on them. Civilians with insufficient levels of understanding and experience are at the mercy of those that have access, control, and understanding of information and knowledge. With this evolution in the NSC, the military's perspective and influence will always carry more weight" (W1-I7).

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[36] Agencies within the U.S. intelligence community include: The 25th Air Force (USAF); Intelligence and Security Command (Army); CIA; Coast Guard Intelligence (USCG); Defense Intelligence Agency (DOD); Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (DOE); Office of Intelligence and Analysis (DHS); Bureau of Intelligence and Research (DOS); Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (Treasury); Office of National Security Intelligence (DOJ); Intelligence Branch (FBI); Marine Corps Intelligence Agency (USMC); National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (DOD); National Reconnaissance Office (DOD); National Security Agency (DOD); Office of Naval Intelligence (USN).

[37] Former CIA Director and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates described the need for military elites and detailees to be embedded in the CIA in the 1990s; understanding that national policy was increasingly becoming militarized (Gates 2000). Over 40% of CIA directors served while on active-duty and many more directors have been retired senior military flag officers.

Undoubtedly, military elites play a unique role in gathering and controlling information and intelligence that informs the policy process. Presidents, political appointees, and elected officials, particularly those with little or no experience in governance, inevitably rely on military elites and an intelligence community led by military elites to inform their policy decisions. As Weber describes it, "The 'political master' finds himself" in a position of disadvantage and dependency (Weber 1946, 232). If military elites are heavily relied upon to inform policy, they will naturally affect policy agendas and debates, as well as promote and lobby for their policy preferences (Zegart 1999; Brooks 2008). Dubik (2018) warns that national security and foreign policy decisions made in an environment and process wherein relevant voices and relevant information are cut short and prevented from equal hearing are likely suboptimal.

Policy Process at the Departmental Level

Before policy input at the NSC-level occurs, it is formulated and debated at the departmental level. In this process, military elites have multiple avenues by which to influence policy prior to negotiating the interagency process. These avenues include affecting policy within State, DOD, and Congress.

Senior military officers have historically been heavily embedded within the State Department through traditional military foreign area officer (FAO), attaché assignments, and military service fellowship and exchange programs.[38] This results in hundreds of senior military officers serving in support of the State Department. They serve as desk officers. They serve on the State Department

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[38] The exchange program also provides State Department representatives to work on the subordinate staff of COCOMs at the highest level of the command, "to ensure military commanders benefit from the diplomatic expertise provided by a Foreign Service Officer" and that "the two Departments build and maintain shared expertise, which better informs the making of U.S. policy and enhances the effectiveness of its implementation" (DOS 2019).

policy planning staff and in nearly 50 additional offices across the Department. Finally, they serve in Embassies around the world, providing critical support, advice, and liaison to regional COCOMs (Clotfelter 1973; DOS 2008, 2019).

In times of war and in countries in which the U.S. is militarily engaged, the number of military officers and elites working in an U.S. Embassy multiplies significantly as military commanders take a primary leadership role. A former Commander in Afghanistan describes the actions he took to assist the State Department early in Operation Enduring Freedom.

> "In Afghanistan, we were heavily embedded in the U.S. Embassy. I placed 80-100 officers in the Embassy to assist the U.S. Ambassador and augment his staff. State doesn't do planning, doesn't believe in planning and doesn't find it to be a productive exercise because you never know what's going to happen. I'm not exaggerating. It's their culture. It's not a value judgment. The military is on the other end of the spectrum. I made a point, when I got there of…actually living on the embassy compound about 40 feet from the Ambassador's quarters. I set up office in the Embassy…and spent the beginning of every day and the end of every day in that office" (W2-I14).

A former four-star Commander in Iraq described similar action during Operation Iraqi Freedom,

> "I sat down with [the Ambassador] and made sure that we agreed on a 'one team, one mission' concept up front. That may seem like a trivial thing, but bringing two different departments together in a war zone wasn't going to be an easy thing to do…We tend to look at State as a bunch of cable writers, that's how they make a name for themselves… But we needed to get things done…we co-located functions…split the headquarters…and embedded 300 military officers in the embassy compound to help drive the mission and the OPTEMPO" (W2-I11).

These two excerpts are, of course, extraordinary, because they are, as previously noted, in the context of countries in which the U.S. was waging war. One would expect to have more military influence in the policy process during time of war. However, as of 2016, over 100 military officers remained heavily embedded in the U.S. Embassy in Iraq (W1-I69). These excerpts merely amplify the fact that several hundred military officers work, worldwide, in U.S. embassies and are "highly influential" in informing, crafting, and implementing national security and foreign policy, as well as legitimizing purely diplomatic efforts and policies outside the purview of national security (Clotfelter 1973).

The influence of these military officers flows from their access to and control of information and resources. They are liaisons to Combatant Commanders that hold responsibility for entire global regions, whereas an Ambassador has responsibility for a single country. A former Combatant Commander described the dynamic in the following manner,

> "Many times an Ambassador in the command would invite me for a visit. COCOMs have their own plane, so it was easy for us to fly in for a visit. We would bring in our whole entourage; a big package of personnel and equipment to retain full, independent mobility and command, control, and communications across the AOR. It's impressive. Visits by commanders were important because they gave credibility to the Ambassador. The President may not ever visit, but having a four-star Combatant Commander visit, shake hands with the Ambassador, put his arm around him or her and declare them to be our chief ranking representative on the ground to the local head of state and media was important. And we also had discretionary funding that we could provide to assist with events or initiatives an Ambassador wanted to pursue" (W2-I3).

Military commanders wield resources that include money, manpower, intelligence gathering, and military equipment. Ambassadors, by contrast, have a relatively small staff and budget, making them heavily reliant on the military for resources and providing capacity and capability to respond and implement policy in foreign environments. One former OSD staff member described the relationship as being like a hand and glove. The military is the hand, the State Department is the glove (W1-I39).

A specific example of the influence military elites have within the State Department relates to Secretary Condoleezza Rice's decision to support President George Bush's "surge" of troops into Iraq in 2007. It is well-documented that then-Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, serving as a senior military advisor and trusted confidant to the Secretary of State and working in concert with Lieutenant General David Petraeus, advocated for the surge and major change in the Iraq War strategy. His advocacy for the surge, in Rice's own memoir and supported by close observers within the NME and NSC, were a determining factor in her decision to support the surge strategy (Rice 2011; W1-I47; W1-I51; W2-I8; W2-I4).

Within DOD, military elites are heavily embedded and relied upon within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). The OSD staff is "the principal staff element of the Secretary of Defense in the exercise of policy development, planning, resource management, fiscal, and program evaluation responsibilities" (DOD 2019b). According to a July 22, 2010, Defense Business Board meeting, the staff count was over 5,000 people under Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (Punaro 2010). A significant number of these staff members are military elites.

In an oral history with the University of Virginia's Miller Center, Vice President Richard Cheney described his time as Secretary of Defense (1989-1993), noting his statutory role and authority in the context of the Goldwater-Nichols Act.[39] His expansive role and authority, however, did not necessarily translate into control over the military or policy planning. In reality, he depicted a dynamic in which his communication with the military was primarily thru the CJCS, General Colin Powell, to which he expressed substantial deference.

Cheney recalls his time with Powell as significantly impactful, stating "I absorbed, without even thinking about it, a lot of his attitudes and views" (Cheney 2000). Cheney's ability to maintain situational awareness within DOD was primarily through the military elites that surrounded him as close aides and advisors. His own civilian staff, led by political appointees with political connections to the President and presidential campaign, had little experience or training that qualified them to lead DOD. Cheney describes his tenure as overseeing a massive organization in which the Secretary

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[39] The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 was a "campaign to reform the Department of Defense" that began in 1982 at the request of General David Jones (USAF), CJCS; appealing to the HASC for reform of the military's joint warfighting capability (Locher 2002, xi). It was viewed by many military elite, at the time, as legislation that would weaken Service Chiefs and strengthen civilian leadership. The outcome, however intended, unified and strengthened the voice of the military

of Defense is "nominally in charge," had little control, and acted more as a spokesperson and overseer (Cheney 2000).

Within the Office of the Secretary of Defense are several subcomponents led by Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of Defense.[40] The Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD-P), commonly described as a "shadow" State Department, is led by the Under Secretary of Defense, Policy (USDP) (W1-I39). Senior military officers and elites working in OSD-P typically make up 25-33% of the staff (W1-I40; W1-I28). This number increases, however, when presidents are unable to find qualified political appointees that can successfully navigate the Senate confirmation process.

Political appointees that do serve in OSD-P find themselves challenged in their ability to meaningfully contribute to the policy process for several reasons. First, uniformed military routinely serve as the primary "desk" officers, as well as Directors and Principle Directors. They possess the expertise and generate the initial policy options that feed the system and shape the department's policy agenda. These military officers are responsible for,

> "keeping the pulse of policy issues, maintaining networked connections with the Joint Staff, the NSC, COCOMs, and DOS. Civilians have too high a turnover rate. They don't have the relationships and networks. They don't speak the language. They're not used to the high OPTEMPO. They lack organizational and planning skills. They tend to be young and right out of college, so they rely heavily on the uniforms to educate them and navigate the bureaucracy. We tend to be the ones that 'plug the hole,' provide continuity, and are the 'go to' firefighters when critical issues arise" (W1-I39).

Second, as alluded, political appointees have to learn the language of the department. As a former Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy explained, political appointees and civilian leadership,

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[40] For purposes of this investigation, the USDP is examined and it is assumed that senior military officers and elites play a similar role with similar influence across OSD.

in general, require "translators" upon joining the OSD staff. Military elites fulfill this role, as described,

> "Military translators are important to helping civilians understand how to navigate the military and defense bureaucracy, how to negotiate and exercise power effectively. They help political appointees communicate with the institution. Most political appointees don't understand the military planning process. They spend their time understanding political impacts, political costs, rewards, and consequences. Military elites would rather say, 'Just give me your objectives, your desired end-state, and let me plan. I'll tell you what the answer is'" (W2-I18).

Third, political appointees have to adjust their expectations regarding their "leadership" role. A young, former DASD in OSD-P described the following experience,

> "I think I was maybe surprised at the level of influence that a military officer could have…informally, they were the decision makers…able to help influence and shape decision-making because of their stature, prestige, experience, and position within the organization" (W1-I28).

A second DASD explained that civilian roles tend to be titular,

> "Remember, political appointees are typically in their positions because they are being rewarded for political support. Political appointees have a hard time with this dynamic then and it takes time for them to adjust. They are taken aback when the military pushes back and doesn't just salute and follow orders. We are there to represent the President and work to ensure his will is reflected in the bureaucracy, but the roles and positions are mostly titular, and we don't always know what we're doing" (W1-I49).

An example of this strained and awkward relationship is an anecdote shared by this sample participant (W1-I49) assigned to help draft the National Defense Strategy, the Secretary of Defense's flagship strategy document supporting the National Security Strategy (NSS). Civilians on the writing team quickly realized that the writing team would be composed of at least 50% uniformed military officers. Senior flag officers would closely monitor the process, exercise informal veto power in how this major policy document would be drafted, and ultimately determine the final outcome. Seasoned by this experience, he reflected,

> "The Joint Staff aggressively competes directly with OSD and OSD is not very robust, which makes the Joint Staff more powerful…There seems to be a sense among military elites who have been fighting for 15 years that it's time to reset [the civil-military balance of power]. I think military elites think that civilians, excuse my language, fucked up royally. The

> Bush people mismanaged both wars. Then the Obama people came in and were feckless" (W1-I49).

The Joint Staff also has tremendous influence on policy, because of its capacity to plan and respond to a president's needs. A former APNSA described it in the following manner,

> "OGAs [other governmental agencies] have rudimentary planning skills and limited or no expeditionary capacity and capability. The Joint Staff and the military in general excel at planning. The problem is if you have 10 or 12 crises…you don't get to the crises until they've gotten critical…There is an instinct when you're around that table to turn to the military and say, "What are you guys going to do?" The time to pursue other non-military options is gone. But the military, particularly the Joint Staff do the planning to make stuff happen. So, there's always an instinct to go to the defense folks first" (W2-I4).

A second think tank Fellow, former SAP, and Joint Staff officer described it in the following manner,

> "The imbalance is huge. The Joint Staff's influence is severely over weighted, because they are able to generate data and contextual knowledge fast, efficiently, and professionally. Other institutions can't compete. If it's a race to provide the President with options, the Joint Staff will win every time" (W1-I18).

Three former State, Defense, and military Service civilians currently working in separate think tanks portrayed the Joint Staff in similar terms. They described a powerful organization on the fringe of the NSC that easily overwhelms the interagency because of it's incredible planning capacity, knowledge, experience, expertise, access to information and intelligence, analytic capability, enthusiasm, and a work ethic that other agencies lack (W1-I55; W1-I36; W1-I70). The Joint Staff is often considered "the only game in town," because planning "is just not in the DNA" of other NSC participants. Other interagency participants "don't fully comprehend the value of planning or the planning process. The result is – a failure to plan is a failure to influence." (W1-I70).[41]

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[41] The Joint Staff has become so powerful under some administrations and Chairmen that they deliberately dis-include civilian participants in the policy planning process (W1-I52).

Finally, a former VCJS described the role of the Joint Staff with the NSC and his personal interaction with the President in a detailed description,

> "Military elites [on the Joint Staff] provide continuity of operations and historical perspective. We are a historical repository of how things get done and we help civilians navigate crisis. During my time, I would say, 'Mister President, I'm not going to give you the answer. I'm going to tell you, here's the high side and here's the low side of the situation. The 'Goldilocks solution' really is up to you to figure out. If you say, 'I want to do a little more of this,' I'll tell you what you probably need to do in adjustment here. But at the end of the day, you're going to rely on the military to give you that answer anyway, so you just stay in those boundaries...If you step out of those, then you'll probably hear from me"' (W2-I2).

The embedment of military officers extends beyond the NSC and OSD. Military elites are also significantly embedded in Congress, providing the potential to influence and affect policy within the legislative branch. This fact was famously reported in *Business Week* magazine and made it into the Congressional Record. The article, "Newt's War Games," "talked about how the Speaker of the House had asked the Pentagon for military officers to be put in his office to help him assess strategy and tactics for maintaining party unity." Representative Pat Schroeder, in an effort to understand why military officers would be serving in the personal offices of Members of Congress (MOCs), noted that "The only reason I can see is it has been profitable for them. They ended up with a Pentagon number that was almost $12 billion more than the administration had asked for" (Congress 1996, H12255-H12256).

The Legislative Process

Military elite influence in Congress and the legislative process is historic. During WWII, "Congress was disposed to 'trust in God and General Marshall." They provided the military the funding they requested with a "whatever our boys need" mentality, because "men who knew and who had the information had made these decisions." The process was described by Senator Barry Goldwater as near complete acquiescence, stating, "we almost took as gospel…anything that came from the Pentagon, without really looking into it in depth" (Clotfelter 1973, 148-152). Not much has changed since this period of history.

On rare exceptions that "I could count on one hand," described one senior military officer, would a Member of Congress (MOC) go "against my advice. The only reason they would go against my advice was for political reasons related to the politics of their district" (W1-I57).[42] A retired Service Chief (W2-I8) described how his close relationships with key and powerful committee chairmen, developed over a decade, allowing him "walk-in" privileges with no appointment required to visit key MOCs. He would frequently sit down, one-on-one, to go through funding bills, explain and educate them on important military programs, and recommend line-item changes to meet military needs and interests. Another senior officer described MOCs as being "thankful for providing a voice of sanity to the policy process" (W1-I58). He continued,

> "They rarely know what to do. They want us to engineer and advocate for policy to signal our preference. Ambiguity and agnosticism are not valued. They can only confuse the process and politicians have limited time. They just want to know how they should vote. They appreciate the military informing and constraining the process and injecting reality into complex issues that can be confusing and time-consuming to understand" (W1-I58).

Another senior officer echoed these sentiments, but from a different military service perspective, stated,

> "We teach and mentor Members of Congress and congressional staffers. Most have no military experience. Many staffers are young, bright, highly educated, and right out of college. We engage with them at their level and treat them with dignity and respect. We teach them 'Military 101.' We bring in briefers for specific policy issues and facilitate travel to enable their oversight responsibilities. But make no mistake, they are absolutely reliant on our expertise and we are heavily embedded across Congress, providing information, crafting legislation, preparing Members for hearings, advising on voting, and assisting with constituent services. We make sure they know our position and we act as a conduit to the Service Chiefs, as well, to facilitate answering questions and information exchange. Our job is to get the military's position stuck in their heads" (W1-I34).

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[42] As previously stated, for elected officials, domestic politics takes primacy over national security and foreign policy because of the electoral connection (Mayhew 1974; Jordan and Taylor 1981).

Two important themes that come out of these excerpts are the extent to which military elites are heavily embedded in and, secondly, relied upon by MOCs. The potential for influence is extraordinary.

A review of military manpower dedicated to legislative activities, data for which was gathered through both FOIA requests and interviews, found that approximately 250 personnel from across all military services, the Joint Staff, and OSD work to support and advocate for Department of Defense and military service-specific interests.[43] They also facilitate and support the role of Congress in providing oversight and constituent services. Data provided for this study showed that, collectively, the military services support 700-750 trips annually, congressional and staff delegation travel, facilitating information gathering and oversight related activities (W1-I75). Senior military flag officers from across the services host 1,000-1,200 engagements annually with MOCs, ranging from breakfast engagements, to one-on-one meetings related to legislative issues and military equities. Finally, each military service assists MOCs with constituent services, responding to 16,000 to 20,000 congressional inquiries, annually, related to military issues in a MOC's district or home state (W1-I75; W1-I72).[44] These findings do not reflect the additional level of synergy gained through mutual support, engagement, and coordination between military elites, active and retired, provided by and through alliances with industry, academia, think tanks, and advocacy groups.

A prestigious program, the military Congressional Fellowship, administered by each military service and coordinated through OSD, provides approximately 85-95 military officers, the "best and brightest," to work directly in the personal offices of key legislators, annually. These officers are

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[43] FOIA requests DON-USMC-2018-003838; DON-NAVY-2018-003837; FA-18-0067; and 2018-01405-F (This FOIA remains outstanding).

[44] These numbers may be considerably higher during times of prolonged high-intensity conflict and war.

"hand-picked" to work "for every member of the HASC and SASC," as well as for legislators in both the majority and minority parties serving in key committee and leadership positions with jurisdiction over military interests, equities, and acquisition programs (W1-I72; W1-I31).[45] They are "deeply embedded" and provide a "back door…to keep track of what's going on" in Congress. They are "highly valued assets" by the military and MOCs (W1-I12).[46] For the military, they provide valuable information that can inform the actions and decisions of military elites related to the legislative policy process. For MOCs they are valued, because they allow MOC the ability to focus primarily on a domestic political agenda, relying heavily on military Congressional Fellows to shape and write the National Defense Authorization Act and the Defense Appropriations Act (W1-I35; W1-I57, W1-I73; W1-I74; W1-I75; W1-I12).

Military fellows, regardless of program and assignment, are considered a special pool of talent. They have been given a "running start" in their grooming to be future flag officers. Fellowships, particularly with Congress, provide future military elites with knowledge early in their career that helps them understand how to navigate the defense bureaucracy, work with elected officials and political appointees, and understand the key players and points of influence in the policy process (W1-I56; W1-I31; W1-I72).

Multiple senior military leaders from across all services and the Joint Staff reinforced that the officers selected to work directly for MOCs, are deliberately embedded as "forward observers" to learn and understand the legislative process and institutional culture of Congress. They bring this knowledge back with them to their respective service (W1-I35). They also provide advice, facilitate

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[45]These committees primarily include the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, Armed Services Committees, and Foreign Relations Committees.

[46] Other federal agencies may have a liaison office on Capitol Hill, "but no other organization or institution provides the level of service and embedment that the military does" (W1-I12).

information exchange between MOCs and senior military leadership, and "steer and shape the political environment to achieve military policy goals and objectives" (W1-I56). Responsibilities typically include writing legislation, preparing floor comments, preparing testimony, writing amendments, and assisting MOCs in understanding military and veteran's issues (W1-I58).

As one military elite described it, key political leaders in Congress are assisted,

> "based on their jurisdiction over key service equities in an effort to shape their position and view on policy, assist them in drafting favorable legislation, prepare legislators and senior military leadership for committee hearings, including sharing questions and expectations. The desired endstate is to shape the public debate…bargain, negotiate, and create momentum and synergy that benefit the services' interests" (W1-I56).

The military's intent in supporting MOCs is about,

> "getting inside the legislative process, getting inside the inner circle of key legislative leaders, getting information that helps us understand what and how Congress is thinking, so we can provide them with information to influence their vote…We want to develop and build the capacity to advocate and influence Congress to support what our service is trying to do and accomplish. And, I believe we are successful. We have the ability to influence legislative language as its being drafted. In many cases our Fellows are drafting the language, frankly, that will be inserted into either the House or Senate version of the bill. Officially, we don't lobby and we support the President's Budget submission. Informally, we share information and educate elected officials on the impacts of legislation and policy in an effort to reprogram monies, particularly after the budget is passed" (W1-I31).

A former Service Chief described it more succinctly,

> "Services fight for as much resourcing as they can get. Negotiations for more resources never ends. It's about applying constant pressure on Congress and the President for more resources and coaching the need for resources in terms of acceptable risk against a specific threat. What risk are politicians willing to accept in the interest of national security?" (W2-I16)

Clearly, military elites, constituting an epistemic community, play a unique role in the national security policy process. They are embedded and relied upon horizontally, across the federal government, as well as vertically, within the organizations and institutions with oversight of national security policy. Other actors, agencies, and departments in the national security policy process, the State Department for example, do not have the manpower to integrate across branches of government and within the organizational process to pursue their policy preferences to the extent

the military has achieved. This provides asymmetric advantage in the capability to influence. Yet, capability and outcomes are not the same. It is important to understand how the influential role military elites play translates into policy outcomes.

The Outcomes of Influence

As stated in the *Introduction*, operationalizing influence requires demonstrating influence over policy outcomes. Previous findings have demonstrated how military elites constitute an epistemic community with the *potential* to influence policy. Based on their conceptual attributes and behavior; role in establishing and controlling policy procedure; control of intelligence informing policy process and decision-making; and their horizontal and vertical embedment across and within the policy process, they may influence perception, cognition, and behavior of the individual, group, and organizational stakeholders in the policy process (Joint Publication 3-13 2012). To demonstrate the outcomes of influence, this investigation now turns to an analysis of the National Security Strategy and discretionary federal spending priorities.

The National Security Strategy (NSS)

Experts argue that "economic strength drives military strength" (Congress 2008, 26). Consequently, it would be expected that economic "resources drive strategy" (Congress 2013, 25). This is not always the rule. A fundamental philosophical approach to formulating U.S. national security strategy flips this relationship. In matters of national security, strategy drives resources. Budgetary requests are "strategy driven," they are "formulated around" the projected needs and requirements to "meet the objectives of the NSS" (DOD 2018b, 1). This philosophical approach and the requirement to submit an NSS are statutory requirements mandated in the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act (Congress 1986, 1074-1075). For this reason, the NSS can be used as a measure of military influence on the outcome of policy.

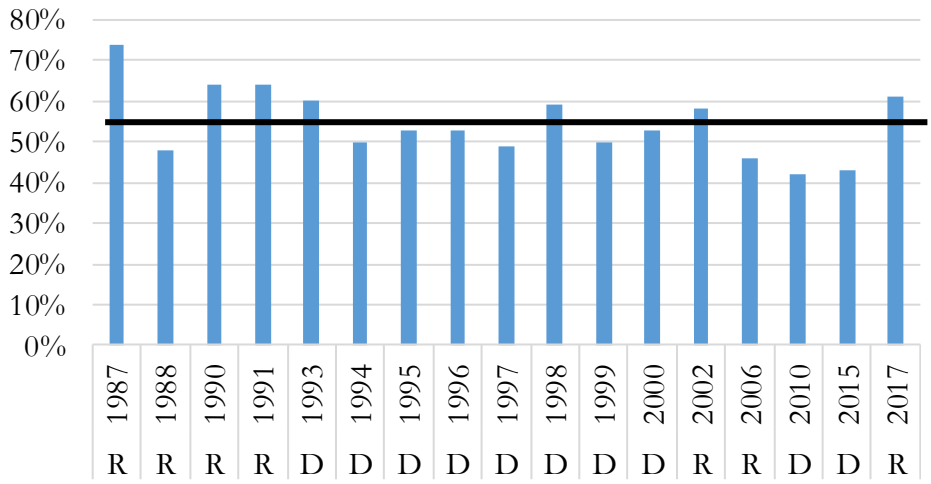
The NSC for every President from Reagan to Trump, has periodically, if not annually, issued an "unclassified" version of the NSS (n=17) and made it available to the public. The NSS document signals to government actors, institutions, citizens, and foreign audiences the national security priorities of the U.S. The NSC is responsible for drafting the document in a collaborative interagency process. A former author of NSS 2015 describes the NSS as designed to support and justify the President's Budget submission to Congress (Thomas 2015). The NSS is written as a narrative that describes the "ways" and "ends" of U.S. national security and foreign policy. The President's Budget, reflecting the priorities of the NSS, represents the "means." To demonstrate this relationship between strategy and resources, David Arthur, an economist for the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), suggested that if the government intended to reduce the military's budget, it should first reduce the "role of military force in the National Security Strategy" (Arthur 2018, 15; CBO 2018).

The NSS document is typically introduced with a short letter from the president. It is his strategy for achieving national security. The main body of the document typically discusses "the worldwide interests, goals, and objectives," of the U.S. and the policy, commitments, and capabilities required to implement the strategy. It does so by communicating and connecting the use of elements of national power to specific U.S. interests that will be promoted, pursued, as well as protected from foreign aggression (Congress 1986, 1075). It is book-ended by a short conclusion that reinforces the president's introductory comments. The NSS documents range in length from 120 paragraphs (NSS 2015) to 430 paragraphs (NSS 2000). Based on the findings in this investigation and findings related to the behavior and role of military elites in the policy process, one would expect that the outcome of military elite influence would be a policy document emphasizing military power and the role of the military in national security strategy, particularly, if the document is used for justification of budgetary resources.

A content analysis of the 17 NSS documents released to the public focused on the central element of national power discussed in each paragraph of each document. For example, if a paragraph's central topic and focus was on the military, it was coded as having a military focus. These topics included: use of military force, state or condition of military readiness, deployment and stationing of troops, war, militarized conflict, military alliances, denuclearization, nuclear proliferation, nuclear and conventional weapons, international and domestic terrorism, military and defense spending, military weapons development, and weapons acquisition. Paragraphs were also coded as military-centric if they referred to and championed the use of military resources to support and aid in homeland security, homeland defense, civil defense, intelligence gathering, emergency response, law enforcement, natural disaster, peacekeeping missions, and humanitarian assistance. If it focused on a different element of national power and made no mention of the military, the paragraph was coded to be non-military in focus. See Appendix E (Analysis of National Security Strategies of the U.S.) for the full results of this content analysis.

From President Reagan to the present, across 17 NSS documents, 55% of the paragraphs, on average, contained military-centric content (See Figure 4). They highlighted military-related topics, the role of the military, or accentuated military power and priorities of the U.S. It is also important to note that NSS documents were written in the context of historical events that were occurring at the time. For instance, NSS 2000 (53%) and NSS 2002 (58%) reflect pre- and post-9/11 policies that have a pronounced increase in emphasizing military power and the preemption of terrorism around the world. The 2010 NSS has the least emphasis on military power (42%) as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were winding down and the U.S. was focused on economic recovery from the Great Recession. Unsurprisingly, the political party of the president appears to influence the military-centricity of the NSS content.

Figure 4: Percentage (%) Military-centric Content, NSS documents, 1987-2017



Democratic administrations published NSS documents (n=9) wherein, on average, 48% of the content was military-centric. President Clinton's administration issued 7 NSS documents, the most of any president. His NSS documents, on average, focused on military-centric issues in 53% of the content. President Obama issued 2 NSS documents. His national security strategy, on average, focused on military-centric content in 43% of the documents.

By contrast, Republican administrations published NSS documents (n=8) that, on average, were 59% military-centric. President Reagan and President Trump both issued NSS documents that, on average, focused on military-centric policy in 61% of the content. President Bush (41) issued 2 NSS, averaging 63% focus on military-centric content. Finally, President Bush (43) issued 2 NSS, averaging 52% focus on military-centric content.

The flagship policy document of the U.S., endorsed by the President and intended to outline a whole-of-government approach to national security strategy, is characteristically military-centric. Why? "A strong military is the underpinning of U.S. national security and foreign policy," stated a former Combatant Commander and Supreme Allied Commander of Europe with extensive experience working on the NSC, "It should come as no surprise that the military, our nation's

military power, is the cornerstone and foundation of our policy. We inform it, we craft it, and we're primarily responsible for its implementation" (W2-I25).

Two retired senior military officers with experience drafting the NSS stated that if the military is going to be responsible for implementing national security strategy or if a policy calls for military resources, it should come as no surprise that military elites will strenuously work to ensure that policy is formulated on favorable terms and will benefit military interests and equities (W1-I11; W1-I46). Unfortunately, a military-dominated, mechanistic process that determines political ends based predominantly on military means results in an insufficient strategy devised with insufficient understanding of how to harness and exploit the full-spectrum of U.S. national power (Sarkasian 1981; Lock-Pullan 2006). Asked if other agencies contributed to formulating and writing the 2017 NSS to the extent the military traditionally does, it was communicated that the State Department, in particular, "did not actively participate. They didn't object. They were very passive. They basically had no influence" (W1-I50).

The Defense Budget

> "Today as never before in their history Americans are enthralled with military power…To state the matter bluntly, Americans in our own time have fallen prey to militarism…a tendency to see military power as the truest measure of national greatness…Americans have come to define the nation's strength and well-being in terms of military preparedness, military action, and the fostering of (or nostalgia for) military ideals" (Bacevich 2005, 2).

Patterns in U.S. defense spending reflect several interesting influences. First, defense spending patterns demonstrate the revolutionary change in the role of the U.S. as a post-WWII, global superpower. Secondly, defense spending patterns reflect a "feast and famine" cycle caused by domestic political priorities and expectations of peacetime dividends for wartime spending (Schilling, Hammond, and Snyder 1962). Thirdly, in a post-9/11 world, defense spending patterns demonstrate an evolution in the American polity that Bacevhich (2005) describes as a "new American militarism,"

in which military supremacy has become central to the American identity. This trend of militarism can be detected in how the U.S. allocates discretionary spending in the federal budget.

The U.S. federal budget is divided into two spending categories – mandatory spending and discretionary spending. Mandatory spending funds programs that are mandated by law and do not require annual authorization. Discretionary spending provides funding for federal government institutions, departments, and programs and requires annual authorization and appropriation bills that must be debated in a legislative process informed largely by the President's Budget submission to Congress (Higginbotham 2017). As mandatory spending requirements increase over time, competition for shrinking discretionary resources also increases. The outcome of this debate and competition is a defense budget that regularly consumes half of discretionary federal spending.

The size of the defense budget is not a direct result of the sole influence of military elites. There are domestic and international factors that influence defense spending. Domestically, scholars debate, to varying degrees, that defense spending has a macro "Keynesian" or economic stimulus effect (Custers 2010; Borch and Wallace 2010; Barro and de Rugy 2010). Some authors argue that defense spending can be used by politicians to advance domestic political objectives and boost the economy (Whitten and Williams 2011). Higginbotham (2017, iii) describes military spending that "produces economic impacts in every state and virtually every congressional district" in the U.S. It supports a workforce of nearly 2.9 million U.S. active-duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian employees (DOD 2019a), and impacts over 4 million Americans working directly or indirectly in the military and defense industry (Higginbotham 2017).

There are also micro-economic effects and impacts of which MOCs are "keenly aware" (Higginbotham 2017, 25). The effects of defense spending at the local and state levels incentivize MOCs to bargain and negotiate "for greater defense spending with the understanding" that it translates into "potential increased tax revenue and potential job growth" for constituents

(Higginbotham 2017, 25). Members of Congress may bargain and negotiate over defense spending with their colleagues through the legislative process. They may also bargain and negotiate over defense spending with the President. Indeed, they are likely to provide more funding than the military needs or requests, labeling pet, "pork barrel" legislation for their home districts and states under a banner of national security priority and defense spending (Clotfelter 1973). Finally, Congress will never "deny funds…during wartime," when Service members are deployed in combat, and rarely deny funding in peacetime (Clotfelter 1973).

Defense spending tends to be higher during times of war, lower during times of relative peace, and can fluctuate based on domestic political considerations and the economic theory of the administration in office. In the context of the budgetary process, discretionary budget spending proposals are viewed as a scorecard of success or failure by the actors competing for limited resources. Budgetary decisions and outcomes are considered as rewarding, or withholding reward, for justified petitions for funding. Budget data reveals "the preferences and priorities" that make for successful budgetary requests at the expense of rival actors and is "a measure of organizational success" or failure (Kanter 1979, 3-5). Defense spending signals to foreign actors the priorities of an administration and the salience of its national security strategy and related policies. The smallest details of defense spending are analyzed to determine a president's support, predictability, priorities, and preferences (Kanter 1979).

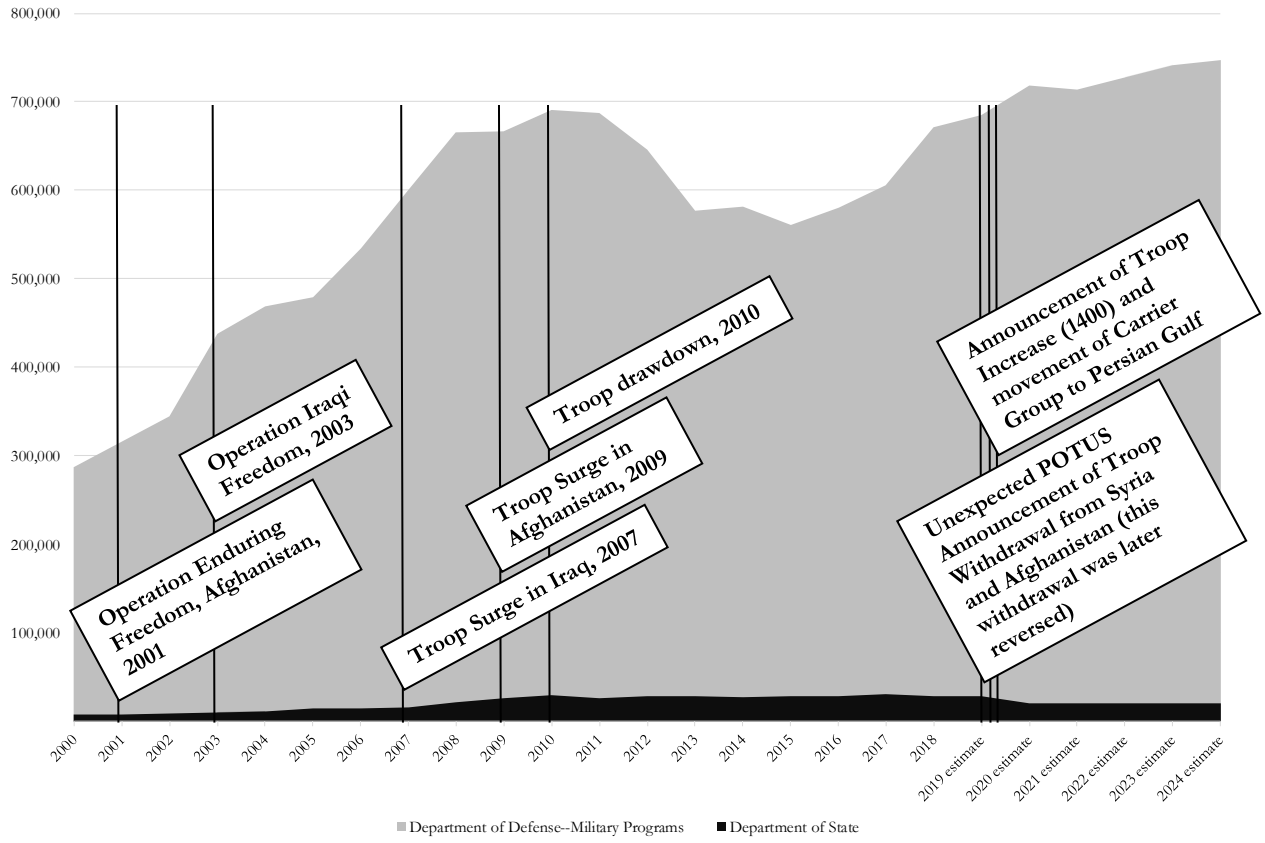
The size of a nation's defense budget is "a telling indicator" of the power, influence, and prestige of a nation's armed forces (Nordlinger 1977, 69). Based on the findings of this investigation, one would expect U.S. defense spending to be disproportionately high in comparison to other federal departments and agencies. Indeed, approximately half of the discretionary budget typically goes towards defense spending (Higginbotham 2017; Comptroller 2017; White House 2019b). Figure 5 provides a chart of discretionary budget authority by department from 2000-2024,

comparing DOD to the State Department, to demonstrate a significant discrepancy that may be a relative indicator of each agency's influence (White House 2019a).

We would expect to see spikes in defense spending at the outbreak of war or during a surge in operations. The chart in Figure 5 demonstrates these expected increases in 2001, 2003, 2007, and 2009. These increases are related to operations in Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), the 2007 troop surge in Iraq, and the 2009 troop surge in Afghanistan. However, when current civilian administration officials unexpectedly announced a unilateral withdrawal from Syria, significant downsizing of forces in Afghanistan, and expanded diplomatic and economic efforts and initiatives with North Korea, China, and Russia, we might expect to see a noticeable decrease in defense spending forecasts, as well as a potential increase in spending related to the State Department.

This is not the case. Rather, the administration immediately changed course (Landler and Cooper 2019); recommitting to the conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan (Lamothe and Dawsey 2019). Current White House estimates show defense spending to increase up to 57.9% of discretionary budget authority by 2024, while the State Department's proposed budget in FY2018 reflected a 33% decrease (White House 2019b; Gramer and Lynch 2019). Since 1980, defense spending has outpaced spending for all other departments combined.

Figure 5: Discretionary Budget Authority (in millions of dollars), DOD & DOS, 2000-2024 (estimated)



Although Congress and the President may tinker on the edges of defense spending to free up resources for competing policy objectives or to benefit and influence electoral politics, a think tank Fellow and former senior military officer that worked within the Office of Management and Budget described the advantage of military elites,

> "There is a line that civilians will not cross in questioning military advice in relationship to the budget. Military elites have enormous formal, statutory influence and equally enormous informal influence, because of their expertise in budgetary matters. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Service Chiefs have parallel budgetary processes that significantly inform and influence OSD and OMB. The Chairman and the Service Chiefs have access to budgetary levers in Congress, as well. The political appointees in the process lack experience, making them incapable of effectively questioning and controlling the military. The effect is that the Chairman and the Service Chiefs have near veto power over the budget. They have multiple 'bites at the apple' with Congress via testimony and reprogramming requests and they understand their unspoken power. They use it with sophistication and caution. They are given very wide latitude and the President is always reluctant to question the budgetary requests of the military" (W1-I29).

A former Service Chief provided perspective at a higher level, stating that,

> "We never cease in our efforts to influence policy or the budget at every level. Even when policy or the budget are considered 'decided,' we are relentless in our pursuit to reshape or reprogram it. It may take a year. It may take several years. But we are at the center of the policy-making apparatus in every administration and we are typically the ones with the knowledge and experience to help a President or Members of Congress understand options sufficiently to weigh them. It creates an unhealthy dependence on the part of civilian officials, who should be the ones exercising oversight, but they have tremendous trust in us and we are careful not to take advantage while, at the same time, protecting and pursuing our interests" (W2-I8).

Military elites from each of the services have always been heavily involved in the budgetary process. They provided budget requirements to the President and participated in budget hearings before Congress. As the excerpts above support, individual services have several formal and informal levers by which they influence the process (Sarkesian 1981). Military influence was amplified under Goldwater-Nichols, mandating that the CJCS, coordinating with the individual services, develop and prepare budget estimates that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the NSS, and related global and regional strategies and plans (Nathan and Oliver 1994). The result was a budget process that ran parallel with OSD, yet left unhindered the ability of Service Chiefs to engage with and advocate their interests to Congress.

An exceptionally public example of military elite influence on the budgetary process occurred in 2006. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld attempted to keep Army spending in FY2008 at $114 billion, an increase of approximately $16 billion from FY2007. The Army Chief of Staff, General Pete Schoomaker, however, requested $139 billion, $25 billion above the Secretary of Defense's cap. In an unprecedented public move, Schoomaker refused to submit the Army's budget request by an August 15, 2006, deadline, effectively creating a standoff (Brand 2006; Russell 2006).

Over the next 60 days, Schoomaker spoke openly about the Army's position and met with the Secretary of Defense and OSD staff to explain that current operations exceeded what policy and strategy documents had forecast. In a "Government Executive Leadership Breakfast" at the

National Press Club, he stated that "There is no sense in us submitting a budget that we cannot execute." His public move forced the Secretary of Defense and OSD to "agree on the facts…and OSD and the Army now agree on *our* facts…the cost of the Army is higher than they thought" (italics added)(GovExec 2006).

In an uncharacteristic act of submission, Secretary Rumsfeld agreed that the Army could negotiate its budget directly with the White House (Shanker and Cloud 2006). Schoomaker also met with key congressional leaders on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. On at least one occasion, when he received push-back, he reportedly reminded a MOC of the low approval ratings of both the President and Congress in comparison with recent polls that showed public approval and confidence in the military to be at historic high levels (Woodward 2008).

The justification that Schoomaker referenced were the NSS and subordinate strategic policy documents that military elites are primarily responsible for drafting and that subsequently drive resourcing requests. If a strategic policy document failed to account for the real-world operational tempo the military was expected to execute, then politicians either needed to change their expectations on the strategic goals and objectives they wished to achieve, or they needed to provide funding adequate to achieve the strategy. The outcome of Schoomaker's influence on the budgetary process resulted in an authorization of $128.9 billion, approximately $15 billion more than Rumsfeld proposed and $10 billion short of Schoomaker's request. However, in supplemental funding measures, the Army received an additional $121.7 billion, over $73 billion more than projected (DiStasio 2009).

How is the influence of military elites over strategic policy and budgetary resources viewed from Congress and competing departmental representatives? A former senior congressional aide, current college Professor, and think tank Fellow with over 40 years of civil service describes his experience,

> "Military elites are heavily involved in lobbying Congress in regard to the defense budget. They fill a leadership and capability vacuum that has been created by the systematic defunding and dismantling of the State Department by Congress. We have unilaterally disarmed our diplomatic capability. "Whole of Government" approaches to national security are no longer really feasible. There's no domestic political cost to down-sizing the State Department, so their capabilities have been shifted to international organizations, such as the IMF and World Bank" (W1-I37).

A former Ambassador and current college Professor added,

> "The State Department does not do a good job of self-promotion. State's leadership doesn't do a good job of communicating its needs. It doesn't adequately engage with Congress…It doesn't engage and lobby for funding in the way the military does. State doesn't have a robust structure with the depth in terms of personnel or budgetary resources for advocating Congress. Secondly, State's mission doesn't resonate with politicians and the public. There's no political benefit to funding the State Department. What politician wants to be on record for expanding a bureaucracy when few Americans understand the benefit they bring?" (W2-I29)

The example and excerpts provided above collectively demonstrate that military elites persistently pursue the resources they project to be required to implement the national policies they have drafted based on the strategic environment they have propagated. No other federal department or agency has the ability to engage with decision-makers in such a robust manner, horizontally across governmental institutions and vertically within organizations and processes. The results are clearly demonstrated in how the U.S. views the international environment and challenges, as reflected in the NSS, and how federal discretionary dollars are allocated to implement strategy.

Finding: Military elites, constituting an epistemic community, clearly play a unique role in national security and foreign policy decision-making. They are heavily embedded and relied upon in the process horizontally across the government, as well as vertically within organizations with primary responsibility for national security and foreign policy planning, formulation, decision-making, and implementation. Their presence as key staff members in the NSC, OSD, and Congress provide them with exceptional influence over U.S. national security.

The exceptional influence military elites wield in the policy process has explicit outcomes. By informing the process, establishing and controlling policy formulation procedures, providing key

staffing to oversee and administer the process, and tasked with the vast majority of policy implementation, the outcome of military elite influence is plainly found in the flagship national security strategy document produced by the NSC and signed by the President, as well as within the budgetary process, appropriation, and authorization of discretionary federal funding approved by Congress and the President. These documents favor military power over other elements of national power and provide exceptional funding and resourcing that maintains the military's primary role in national security and foreign policy.

Summary

This Chapter substantiates Proposition Two – *U.S. military elites, constituting an epistemic community, play a unique role with exceptional influence on national security and foreign policy*. Military elites advocated for and played a major role in establishing the NSC, the top of the "policy hill" (Shoemaker 1991; Daalder and Destler 2009, 5). They remain heavily embedded and relied upon in the process. They overwhelmingly lead and manage the intelligence community that informs the process. They play an outsized and influential role in the Secretary of Defense's staff, as well as in the personal offices of MOCs. Thus, military elites are in a powerful position to influence and norm civilians, instilling their values, beliefs, and preferences. Civilians, particularly novice political appointees and those with episodic experience and involvement in the policy process, find themselves in a position, under pressure, often dealing with crisis, in which it is easier and more likely that they acquiesce to military preferences, rather than contribute more independently. A former Obama-era NSC SAP and current think tank Fellow summarized that,

> "Military elites play an out-sized role in national security that exasperates a growing problem and causes a militarization of policy problems. All our national security issues are looked at through a military lens. The military brings process, training, and knowledge that civilians don't have. It gives the military an advantage and it norms the group. It's really easy for civilians in the process to become intimidated or influenced by the overwhelming expertise of military elites and the prestige and aura of credibility they bring and its harder for the military to be questioned and challenged…Military elites play a significant and over-weighted role in the policy process, and they bring significant bias because they are typically the ones

> that will implement the policy they helped formulate. They're in the position of grading their own homework, so to speak. And I don't blame the military. It's not what the military is doing. It's that the rest of the system is not taking or playing a role. It's not the military's fault. They are not to blame. The military bears the costs and consequences of policy and Americans get lower taxes, an all-volunteer force, and no skin in the game" (W1-I18).

Establishing and controlling procedure, alone, does not equate to exceptional influence. Controlling information and providing the institutional support to analyze, interpret and understand how to apply information as knowledge that informs the policy process, alone, does not equate to exceptional influence. Having principle control over policy implementation, alone, does not equate to exceptional influence. Taken together, however, the ability and will to apply procedural control, predominantly control information and knowledge, and take principle control of policy implementation gives military elites power to influence policy outcomes.

These dynamics are inherently political. They take on political character. Military elites, operating fundamental levers of the policy process, do so through the lens of a belief system and worldview that distorts their effort, serving their own policy preferences and interests (Betts 2007, 14-15, 74). The outcome of their influence is an NSS that is military-centric, heavily reliant on military power, and requires significant budgetary resources to achieve implementation.

By taking the philosophical approach that strategy drives resources and having an NSS signed by the president, the military now has the political justification to request immense resource requirements. The request for resources and submission of a budget request must wind its way through an Executive and Legislative process in which military elites are heavily embedded and relied upon. The findings demonstrate that military elites are heavily embedded horizontally and vertically across the federal government, and particularly within the NSC, OSD, and Congress. The outcome is a discretionary federal budget continually dominated by defense spending.

Feaver argues that "military influence" suggests that military elites wield political power, regardless of whether the military has seized "power through a forceful takeover" (1999, 218).

Abrahamsson (1972) elaborates. A *coup d'etat* is not necessary for military elites to co-opt politicians, pursue their interests, and impose their preferences on the national security policy process. Military elites exert tremendous and, many times, overwhelming influence and power in many, more subtle ways, such as political bargaining; well-informed policy recommendations; exploiting their experience, expertise, reputation and public standing; and, finally, lobbying, leaks, and public relations in coordination with outside, sympathetic interest groups (Abrahamsson 1972).

In the following conclusionary chapter, I provide a collective summary of the findings of this investigation and what they mean for epistemic community theory going forward. Additionally, I explore three major topics. First, I discuss a future research agenda driven by a series of questions that relate to internal, external, and environmental dynamics faced by military elites and epistemic communities, more generally. Secondly, I discuss consequences related to the loss of civilian control over the military. Thirdly, I discuss the implications of under-funded institutions that can balance military influence; the relationship between military elites and elected officials; and the potential necessity for a new framework of civil-military relations. The final paragraphs remind military elites of an epoch identity crisis they have faced throughout history and important warnings provided by two respected military elites that have reached the pinnacle of command and leadership.

Chapter Six: Consequences, Implications, and Conclusion

> "The practitioner's impatience with academic theories stems from the inherent nature of theory in social sciences, in general and in complex policy-making systems in particular. A theory or model is an abstraction of reality and an attempt to reduce untidy complexity to regularized and rigorous relationships" (James Dixon 1984, 139)

The literature and scholarship across the subfields of Presidential Studies, International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis, and Civil-Military Relations predominantly approach the study of the military with restraint. They consider it broadly and at a distance as the institution and powerful bureaucracy that it is. Large-*n* opinion surveys cast a wide net across the military and the officer corps in an effort to determine how and what military members think. The blind spot in these contributions is that they fail to identify, define, and investigate the practical behavior, role, and influence of the military elites that lead the institution and bureaucracy. Rather, they investigate a theoretical, textbook, and constitutional relationship between civilians and the military institution in an idyllic, normative, and unidirectional fashion. Collectively, they fail to provide an adequate, real-world understanding of military elite influence on national security in practice.

As Dixon (1984) states above, the national security policy process is an untidy process. No field or subfield of social science provides theory capable of fully explaining the nuance of relationships in the policy process. No theory, proposition, or assertion will fully explain the complex calculus of influences on decision-making in national security and foreign policy. However, the arguments presented here provide a window of understanding and explanation of the behavior, role, and influence of U.S. military elites by considering this well-defined group through the lens of epistemic community theory.

In a unique and novel investigation incorporating elite interviews and insider academic research, this study demonstrates the influence of military elites as powerful and influential actors. It highlights how U.S. military elites constitute an epistemic community through the embodiment of conceptual attributes that characterize epistemic communities. It explores these attributes,

unearthing important nuance with theoretical implications that give a richness to the epistemic community framework that is new and fresh.

The characteristics of an epistemic community are not black and white descriptions that a community either possesses or does not. There are degrees of behavior that indicate important variance that can impact the role and influence that an epistemic community plays and exercises in the policy process. For example, the findings demonstrate how epistemic community influence over policy can be affected when an epistemic community is too broadly defined, as jurisdiction over a policy enterprise weakens, as policy debate expands to include domestic and electoral factors, as authoritative knowledge is challenged by competing actors or groups of actors from different communities, and as epistemic community control over resources ebbs and flows.

Additionally, previous epistemic community scholarship focused on the internal relationships within an epistemic community. It is vague and imprecise regarding the advantage that external, international, and domestic relationships and alliances provide epistemic community influence. This study demonstrates the tremendous impact of an epistemic community's external, domestic relationships and how they provide more than access to decision-makers. Relationships also cultivate alliances, provide 'reach back' capabilities, and aid in securing resources that further asymmetric advantage in influencing policy process and outcomes.

In addition to establishing the potential to influence, this investigation establishes and demonstrates the outcomes of influence. It demonstrates how military elites influence policy by and through establishing and controlling policy procedures, informing the policy process, formulating policy options, and implementing national security policy decisions. Finally, it demonstrates the outcomes of influence in both the military-centricity of the NSS and the resulting authorizations and appropriations in discretionary federal spending.

There are, no doubt, confounding factors. Since 9/11, the U.S. has remained on a constant war footing and in continuous militarized conflict on multiple fronts, in multiple domains, globally. Without this condition of global military engagement, would the military have gained the kind of influence this dissertation claims? The short answer is yes. Global engagement, constant militarized conflict, technological advancement in warfare, increased professionalization of the military, and a decreasing pool of elected officials intellectually prepared for serving as commander-in-chief have only increased the rapid evolvement of military influence and the dissolution of the principle of civilian control. These trends are traceable to the history, background, congressional proceedings, and passage of the National Security Act of 1947; findings in multiple government reports (Jackson 1965; Packard 1986; Tower 1987); and identified in a thread of Civil-Military Relations literature that traces back to Mills (1959), Finer (1962), Bletz (1972), Abrahamsson (1972), Korb (1979), Gibson (2008), Schiff (2009), Schulman (2012) and this investigation.

Understanding the nuanced behavior, role, and influence of epistemic communities in a future research agenda will better inform scholars *and practitioners* on the role of epistemic communities in the policy process, providing potential answers, for instance, as to why competing communities have more or less influence over policy. Further scholarship should continue to investigate the role of military elites using more quantitative methods, strengthening the link between military influence and policy outcomes related to the NSS, the federal budget, and congressional voting records. Finally, additional investigation should address the issue of effective civilian control of the military in a democratic polity, and how and why this dynamic has evolved in the U.S. since WWII, the end of the Cold War, and post-9/11.

Tangential questions remain to be answered that relate to the internal behavior of military elites. How do military elites behave towards novice elected officials (or a commander-in-chief) that may share their political preferences, but not their values or moral code? Do they remain reliably

submissive, compliant, and conform to the Hobbesian human nature to which they purportedly subscribe, placing self- and institutional interests above their warrior ethos and moral code? Do they risk constitutional crisis and call out immoral, unethical behavior in civilian leadership, regardless of whether or not their political beliefs and preferences align (Bergen 2019; LeBlanc 2019)? How do military elites react to elected officials intent on politicizing them for electoral benefit (Starr 2019)?

Further questions related to the external behavior of military elites remain. How is the influence of military elites impacted by an administration's political affiliation and preferences, generally? Are they more activist in a liberal, Democratic administration, increasing their efforts to achieve policy preferences, while being more subdued during conservative, Republican administrations, assuming policy preference alignment? How does a President's level of experience or cognitive complexity affect the level of influence of military elites? What does it mean for military elite influence and behavior, if a novice president with low cognitive complexity is elected? Are presidents with high cognitive complexity and healthy skepticism concerning the role of military elites and military power more apt to face friction with military elites?

Finally, questions related to domestic and international environment remain. What role do national and international environments play on the influence of military elites? How do times of peace versus times of military conflict mute or amplify the influence of military elites? How do times of economic boom or recession affect military elite behavior and influence? Knowing the answers to these important questions fills gaping holes in the literature and, more importantly, may have significant implications for how we understand U.S. national security and foreign policy behavior, decision-making, and civil-military balance of power relations.

Consequences

> "I find in existence a new and heretofore unknown and dangerous concept that the members of our armed forces owe primary allegiance or loyalty to those who temporarily exercise the authority of the Executive Branch of Government rather than to the country and its Constitution which they swore to defend. No proposition could be more dangerous"

> General Douglas MacArthur in a speech to the Massachusetts Legislature, July 1951 (Ridgeway 1973).

In 1949, the Hoover Commission submitted its report to Congress regarding the "Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government." Within the nearly 600-page report, former President Hoover found that military elites, particularly military Service Chiefs and the CJCS, were given "specific authority to resist the supervision" of the Secretary of Defense, particularly "in budgetary matters." Military elites have a greater capacity "for planning and execution and, in fact, operate" near autonomously, leading a federation of autonomous departments (Hoover 1949, 190).

Civilian control of the military "scarcely exists," the Commission found, due to weakness, confusion, and divided authority within the Executive Branch. Civilian Service Secretaries and the Secretary of Defense "cannot, as a practical matter, maintain effective civilian control" over the military. The military services and the Joint Chiefs of Staff operate in a near "complete absence of control" and are "virtually a law unto themselves" (Hoover 1949, 190). Military historian Andrew Bacevich finds that, post-WWII, "civilian control" of the military was precarious and civilian supremacy in the relationship was "a useful fiction" (Bacevich 2007, 210). Nothing has changed.

If Congress was expected to provide effective civilian control, its powers were effectively diminished based on its own legislative practices and budgetary procedures. Congress' power of the purse, a "time-honored device of subordinating the military to civilian control" was increasingly attenuated and "civilian control" was "a label instead of a reality" (Hoover 1949, 190). Nearly 40 years later, President Reagan, "hardly attentive to the tedious details" of policy, had turned the entire enterprise of the NSC over to military elites (Nathan and Oliver 1994). Following the Iran-Contra Affair in 1986, President Reagan's administration, embroiled in scandal, created the "President's Special Review Board," also known as the "Tower Board." Reagan also created the "Blue Ribbon

Commission on Defense Management," chaired by David Packard, a former Deputy Secretary of Defense under President Richard Nixon.[47]

The reports of both commissions were written in parallel with key legislation that was moving through Congress that would eventually be passed in October, 1986. The legislation was known as Public Law 99-433, or the "Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986." The Tower Board report alluded to the military's dominant role in controlling and operationalizing the NSC. A former EXECSEC under President Jimmy Carter described that President Reagan had "purged" the NSC and "whereas it had been predominantly FSOs detailed to the NSC, it now became predominantly military" detailees manning the directorates, the EXECSEC staff, and the Situation Room (W2-I1).

As a former APNSA under President Reagan described,

> "75% of the NSC staff under Reagan were detailees, and the majority of them were military…it was very, very chaotic when, in the beginning, political appointees were in charge…they're inexperienced, don't know how to lead and manage people, and don't understand process. Especially academics and lawyers. The military does a better job of bringing a systematic approach to problem-solving, decision-making, analysis, and course of action development to address issues and challenges. I think military officers have more of a tendency to bring that to a position than civilians do" (W2-I10).

He goes on to admit that the NSC under his leadership became "very operationally focused." He understood the criticism he received because of it. However, he defended his leadership, stating that "when crisis demands it, civilians lack the experience and understanding of

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[47] Over the temporal scope of this study, the President, Congress, DOD and JCS have initiated several studies related to defense management. These include the "Grace Commission;" a congressional study entitled "Defense Organization: The Need for Change," the "Defense Management Review," the "Base Force Review," the "Report on Roles, Missions, and Functions of the U.S. Armed Forces," the "Bottom-Up Review," "Joint Vision 2010," the "Quadrennial Defense Review," the "Defense Reform Initiative," the "Hart-Rudman Commission," the "Transformation Planning Guidance," the "Joint Defense Capabilities Study," and the "Defense Strategic Guidance."

military power to be able to act operationally. They have no depth of knowledge" (W2-I10). In other words, as Vice Admiral John Poindexter testified before Congress, the "stakes are too high for us not to take actions…there are high risks involved" and bureaucrats are ill-equipped to handle high-risk situations. They are insecure and afraid of failure. This requires an operationally focused NSC loyal to the President (Congress 1987, 168). Tower's report warns, however, that any organization that formulates policy and maintains implementation responsibility "compromises objectivity" (Tower 1987, 57).

The 1986 Packard Commission found that civilian control of the military was severely diluted to the point that civilians were deprived of any real control over the military. The organization and behavior of Congress added no additional element of civilian control. Rather, the Joint Chiefs of Staff maintained firm corporate control over national security policy (Packard 1986).

In an attempt to remedy a pattern of ineffective civilian control and joint warfighting capability, Senator Barry Goldwater and Representative William Nichols crafted legislation intended "to reorganize the Department of Defense and strengthen civilian authority" (Congress 1986, 992). The Goldwater-Nichols Act mandated changes to improve military advice to the President, NSC, and Secretary of Defense; strengthen the chain of command; provide authorities commensurate with responsibilities; increase capabilities related to policy and strategy formulation and planning; improve efficiency in management of resources; discourage inter-service rivalry; and increase joint warfighting capability (Congress 1986, 992; McInnis 2016a, 7-8). In theory, the outcomes of the Goldwater-Nichols Act would have strengthened civilian control of the military. In practice, the outcomes of the Goldwater-Nichols Act were much different.

A hesitant military, favoring the *status quo*, yet plagued by operation-crippling inter-service rivalry, dysfunction, and a lack of joint capability, embraced the Goldwater-Nichols Act and created the most powerful joint force the world has seen. If military elites began to constitute an epistemic

community post-WWII, with the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, military elites were poised to dominate the policy process. The CJCS, supported by a powerful Joint Staff composed of the service's best and brightest officers, now had mandate to assist the President in providing strategic direction for U.S. national security strategy, national security policy, budgetary requirements, and operational planning.

The growing professionalization of military elites and increasing complexity of war and the international environment eroded traditional boundaries between "best military advice" and political issues. The result was an "increased foothold in the political sphere" by military elites. As military elites become more politically astute, they become more politically powerful as a pressure group, as well as expert advisors with recognized jurisdiction over military and national security issues (Abrahamsson 1972, 155).

Alternately, the Secretary of Defense was mandated to develop equally broad capability. To date, that mandate has been unfulfilled. As this dissertation demonstrates, the lack of experience and high turn-over rates of political appointees, coupled with an increasingly partisan confirmation process and polarized political environment, has left OSD a shell of its statutorily required composition. Rather, as the data presented has shown, military elites are deeply embedded within OSD and heavily relied upon by novice political appointees with no foreign policy or military experience (Stracqualursi 2018). The present fecklessness of OSD in the policy process has resulted in an intellectual drain among the staff. Civilians actively avoid OSD assignments, seek reassignment, and OSD is now considered a rubber stamp of the Joint Staff. The consequence is a level of praetorianism within the U.S. that is discounted by scholars, *formally* denied by military elites, and blissfully ignored or disregarded by civilian leadership.

In a moment of reflection shared by Secretary Rumsfeld with President Bush during the Iraq War, he confides that military elites possess a vast and widely differing perspective from their civilian

counterparts as it relates to how policy should be shaped and implemented. Disparity in perspective relates to military elites having extensive, first-hand experience; seeing threats to national security up close, on the ground, and understanding that policy implementation will never be a tidy, predictable, or even bloodless process. They take a historical perspective informed by their conservative beliefs and personal experiences (Rumsfeld 2004). The implication is that civilians, by contrast, serve for a political season. They lack experience, understanding, and historical perspective on policy matters.

Elected officials and political appointees with less experience and further removed from the "front lines" of national security and military conflict, who float in and out of government with the political tides, consider decisions and risk through a political lens that "single-mindedly" considers electoral politics as the first priority (Mayhew 1974). Their perspective is shaped and skewed by the relative peace and tranquility they experience in the U.S. They can fall prey to media sensationalism, polling numbers, political winds, and unrealistic expectations of military capabilities.

This dynamic "has propelled the armed forces" into a more relevant position in society, as well as in the policy process, particularly since 9/11 (Morgan 2008, 1). U.S. involvement in prolonged conflict and war has altered the civil-military balance of power resulting in the military playing the central role. This evolution of military predominance in the national security policy process did not occur over night. It developed over decades to a point that political leaders now rely on military elites across a policy spectrum that includes more than national security and foreign policy, but also includes advancing policies of social change and partisan interests and causes (Morgan 2008).

This dissertation's findings that military elites constitute a powerful epistemic community in the national security policy process suggests that the military is no longer effectively controlled by civilians. Rather, in matters of national security, civilians are reliant and dependent upon military elites. They rely on them to inform decisions. They rely on them to establish, control, manage, and

lead planning and decision-making process. Finally, they rely on them to carry out and implement policy decisions, once made.

The unique role and exceptional influence of military elites is not constant or irreversible. It waxes and wanes. Military elites are at their most powerful at the beginning and end of an administration. Their influence is muted by domestic political and electoral priorities. It is challenged by experienced, cognitively complex leaders that demonstrate skepticism regarding the role of military power. It is balanced by institutions that are adequately resourced and by individuals that have experience that rivals that of military elites. As presidents, political appointees, and elected officials learn their job and how to exercise power, the role and influence of military elites can be diminished, but only after an administration has gained its "sea legs," do civilian leaders, as Bland suggests, endeavor to *direct* it (Bland 1999, 19).

Implications

In December, 2017, the Trump administration published its first NSS. In the President's cover letter, he describes "an extraordinarily dangerous" international environment characterized by numerous existential threats, change, and complexity. "Rival powers were aggressively undermining American interests around the globe," challenging U.S. power and prestige, requiring the U.S. to respond politically, economically, and militarily (Trump 2017b, i-2). America's unmatched military power, however, meant that future provocations and conflict would, most likely, be below the threshold of armed conflict, in a battlespace that balances U.S. conventional military dominance, and incorporates cyber warfare, autonomous weapon systems, and artificial intelligence (JCS 2018, v; W2-I26). In this environment, what are the potential implications of a community of military elites, constituting an epistemic community and increasingly behaving in a praetorian manner, for national security policy moving forward?

The first implication relates to imbalanced resources and under-funded institutions that represent and exercise competing elements of national power. Without adequate resources, functioning, rival institutions in the policy process fail. Farrow (2018) provides the State Department as an example. In the first year of the Trump administration, State was underfunded and under-manned. It was plagued by "chaos at every level." Core leadership roles and senior positions remained vacant and national security and foreign policy were "ceded to the Pentagon." A 35-year veteran of the State Department described a department "exploited for political purpose," undermined by the President and his political appointees, and feeling as if "the shit had been beaten out of it" (Farrow 2018, 258-309).

Military elites and politicians pay lip-service, but devote little attention, to ensuring capability and resources enabling a "whole of government" approach is feasible. As themes within this investigation show, politicians are ambivalent because there are no electoral incentives in committing limited discretionary resources to expand institutional bureaucracies that have complex, overseas diplomatic missions with little visible domestic impact in the minds of voters, and few short-term, visible returns on investment. Military elites are ambivalent because its simply not in their interest. Competition for resources inside DOD is already high. The American public is ambivalent, because they are attracted to and awe-struck by the military's fascinating weapons of war, attractive uniforms, and romanticized Hollywood image. The behind-the-scenes, bookish, and wonky diplomat that routinely pushes credit for his or her efforts to outside actors to ensure successful diplomacy is not the hero they seek.

The complex challenges of the international system, coupled with the demands of the American polity, have hampered the government's ability to plan and execute long-term, "grand" strategy. Rather, the U.S. produces military strategies that masquerade as a "whole of government" approach to national security. The U.S. no longer adequately incorporates all elements of national

power into national policy because the institutions that wield elements of national power, other than the military, are under-resourced. They lack the wherewithal to exercise their mission, role, and responsibilities. They have neither the money nor the manpower to contribute in any meaningful way for any extended period of time, particularly in an expeditionary environment. They are progressively getting weaker; bleeding experience, expertise, and talent, as they lose the ability to attract, recruit, and retain the best and brightest minds. As senior congressional aide and think tank Fellow stated,

> "If other institutions and organizations that contribute to national security have, over time, become hollowed out, they will no longer attract or retain young talent and seasoned experts. Any capacity they did have will atrophy. Any capacity that remains will lack sustainability during long wars and high operational tempo" (W1-I37).

The result is that presidents are left with a blunt instrument with which to plan and execute national security policy. As Cohen (2016, 226) warns, "Military power is, at best, a rough and imprecise instrument, used painfully and with unpredictable results. It is not a scalpel…military power is about the ability to crush, maim, destroy, and kill." Yet, military elites exert "enormous influence over policy" simply because of their overwhelming presence that informs, controls, and implements national security and foreign policy (Schadlow 2017, 2-6).

A second implication of the findings of this study relates to the dynamic that can occur between novice politicians and politicized military elites. When a novice politician or political appointee seeks advice and asks novice questions, there is a higher likelihood that the guidance given is contaminated with the expert's worldview and belief system (Kahneman 1982). If, by chance, a decision-maker or the public are given biased, invalid information, the consequences are indelible. Misinformation, even when debunked, leaves residue in the belief system (Kahneman 1982).

Titular decision-makers that are unable to ask the right questions and gain the best advice are, ultimately, at the mercy of their advisors. However, epistemic communities are not always the best judges of information and its significance. Outside experts with diverse backgrounds,

unexposed to information, may produce better judgment, advice, and decisions, because their judgment and advice is less contaminated by their worldview and belief in how the state should act (Kahneman 1982, 124).

As the findings in this investigation demonstrate, however, military elites often act as a guardrail for novice presidents. They ensure continuity of government. The military is, in the words of many elites, the last fully functioning institution in the U.S. government that retains the trust and approval of the American public, and the respect and deference of civilian leaders. Military elites are increasingly viewed as the only pool of talent that can successfully navigate an incredibly partisan confirmation process.

A third implication of the findings of this study relates to the evolution in U.S. civil-military balance of power. Civilian leaders, elected officials, and political appointees face a dilemma. Szayna et. al. (2007, 23) find that politicians "would not be wise to go against the consensus of the military when it comes to matters of military expertise…repeatedly ignoring policy advice from recognized experts in their own policy area may lead to erosion of the President's power…raising questions regarding the President's ability to lead." This can have the effect of limiting a president's autonomy and imposing constraints on his freedom of action in policy-making. At the same time, presidents should not allow military elites a free reign to develop and craft national security strategy "without any real authorization" or oversight (Cimbala 1995, 100).

Military elites in the U.S. may be fully committed to the principle of civilian control. However, they face a dilemma that is rooted in the 'genetics' of military culture. The Office of the President and Congress, two institutions charged with providing primary oversite and civilian control, are increasingly perceived as failing or in decay. They increasingly lack capable governmental leadership, resulting in a failure to adequately perform and resolve conflict. They are hobbled in deadlock because of hyper-partisanship and polarization (Krehbiel 1998; Bruneau and Tollefson

2006). This sort of political decay marks the beginning of a praetorian polity because military elites feel a professional duty to fill the resulting leadership vacuum (Welch and Smith 1974).

Failures of moral and ethical leadership can also create a vacuum. When elected officials thwart the *status quo* and established precedent, rules, procedures, and the law, this dynamic invites praetorianism. When military elites perceive political and social decay marked by incompetence, corruption, and malfeasance by weak civilian leadership, they naturally question civilian supremacy and feel obligated towards direct involvement and activity in the political arena (Welch and Smith 1974). A politically active and politicized military in a declining polity, unchecked by decaying institutions, can have the effect of diminishing accountability because there is no consistent, meaningful, reliable civilian control (Shulman 2012).

Indeed, how we have traditionally defined effective civilian control of the military no longer applies. Bland (1999, 10) argues that, "civil control is a dynamic process susceptible to changing ideas, values, circumstances, issues, and personalities and to the stresses of crisis and war." In the context of a discussion related to current and anticipated future national security challenges, one current active-duty, senior flag officer summed up what he and, in his description, many of his active-duty and retired peers believe,

> "We are okay with the military being a praetorian guard. We're more experienced. We're more seasoned. We're more mature. We have more practical experience. We're better trained leaders, managers, and planners. We have greater resources. We have a global presence. We have an expeditionary and responsive mindset. Our engagement is continuous. We have the networks, relationships, and professional culture that allows us to take a policy decision and provide immediate, visible effects toward achieving national security objectives that no other agency can match" (W2-I26)

He continued,

> "Without continued and increased delegation of authority and autonomy from civilians to senior military leaders, you lack agility germane to the current operational environment…the process will become log-jammed and stifled by insecure civilians who have no idea what policy is or how to implement it. Civilians are more concerned with their legacy. Civilians will test the political winds before they respond to a president's directives, and elected officials are more concerned about political survival" (W2-I26)

He concluded,

> "The military is different. We believe in leadership and we are loyal to our oath. Civilians don't possess that same sense of loyalty. Most presidents know this, although some may prefer personal loyalty over loyalty to the constitution. Regardless, who do you want protecting our national security?" (W2-I26)

Asked about the need for revisiting civilian control of the military, he responded,

> "There's no doubt that we need a new framework of civil-military relations. Those that understand the requirements of aggressive competition understand that we do not have the framework that allows us to rapidly escalate in the international 'competition space' where actions are non-kinetic, but still very threatening to our national security interests. Military elites need to be willing to push the boundaries, to push the envelope, to push politicians to ensure that we [the U.S.] remain responsive and capable of acting in the grey zones of interstate competition and conflict. But it goes against the grain of our traditional American culture and it requires an updated legal framework" (W2-I26).

Responsibility for national security and foreign policy is shared between military elites and their civilian counterparts (Bland 1999; Herspring 2013). There will always be tension between military elites and civilian leaders because of this overlap of obligations (Gibson and Snyder 1999). Changes in autonomy affect this relationship, however. When civilians, to include the President, are unengaged, civilian control is lost (Rodman 2009). If military elites continue to dominate the process, civilians could choose to accept this evolution, particularly if a benevolent military "uses its expertise to influence…policy more likely to achieve" U.S. national security goals and objectives (Avant 1998, 383).

In meeting foreign and domestic crisis, President Dwight Eisenhower warned in his famous "Farewell Address" that "there is a recurring temptation" to rely on quick solutions offered by advanced technology, military power, and costly action. The government should exercise "good judgment" that seeks balance, Eisenhower implored, while simultaneously maintaining an overwhelmingly powerful military "ready for instant action." He warned, however, that a powerful military creates a dynamic in which,

> "The total influence – economic, political, even spiritual – is felt in every city, every State House, every office of the Federal Government…Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications…In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist" (Eisenhower 14-15)[48]

Conclusion

Lamenting the lack of leadership, knowledge, and experience by civilian, political appointees in a Republican administration, a former APNSA remarked,

> "They don't know how to make informed decisions. They lacked adequate understanding of our nation's capabilities and power, particularly military capabilities and power, so there's a heavy reliance on us, on the military, on military power. To suggest we are a praetorian guard – I'm okay with that!" (W2-I6).

Is increased praetoriansim by U.S. military elites a healthy trend in the right direction for the American polity? If the international environment, as defined by military elites, is the baseline for formulating and resourcing a militarized national security and foreign policy, a new civil-military control framework may need to be considered. It could be that the fanciful myth and useful fiction of civilian control has become a stumbling block and confusing, unrealistic "legal" standard preventing an imperative need for rapid decision-making in the national security and foreign policy process.

National security challenges can have existential implications and are inherently tough, politically complex, often dangerous and ugly. The process by which the U.S. copes with and confronts such challenges requires an array of actors from different communities, backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, and expertise with the commitment, capability, and capacity to take ownership and remain engaged over the long-term. However, the national security of the U.S. is too

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[48]The text is underlined in the original document in Eisenhower's own hand.

important to leave to novice, episodic actors with no skin in the game. As such, rebalancing military elite influence should be on the minds of elected, civilian leadership.

An active-duty flag officer preparing to pin on an additional star and take over a major operational command stated in his interview that there is no going backward, "The pendulum will never swing back because DOD's budget will always be higher and national security issues will always have high salience" (W1-I72). The absence of peer competitors in the policy process, or flawed national security and foreign policy and strategy is not the fault of the military or the influence of military elites. Rather, it is a product of extraordinary failure and poor performance by civilian elected and appointed leaders (Nordlinger 1977).[49]

In an "End of Tour Memorandum" from retiring General Eric Shinseki to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the general stated, "the making of national policy and the critical decisions associated therein are not for the thin-skinned…who are insecure in their public image" (Shinseki 2003). He warned that national policy requires established process, not *ad hoc* action. Informal, uninformed process produces decisions that are "piecemeal and often internally inconsistent." They do not incorporate strategic review required to "provide consistency and long-term perspective." They "lack explicit discussion" of risk and result in "miscalculations with unacceptable consequences." He concluded that policy decisions are best made in a process that incorporates structure, objectives, pending decisions, "and other traditional means of time management" (Shinseki 2003, 10).

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[49] Poor performance can include issues related to inexperience, but also includes perceived immoral, unethical, illegal, corrupt, and unconstitutional behavior; severe economic downturn; and political and social disorder and turmoil (Nordlinger 1977).

Seven years later, General Martin Dempsey published a white paper on "The Profession of Arms." The purpose of the paper was to facilitate a dialogue about the military profession because of a recognized failure of the military to hold itself accountable to historic standards of professionalism (Dempsey 2010). As post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continued to rage, the paper asserts that focus on and interest in traditional conceptions of the military profession had waned. Military elites were becoming increasingly politicized and civilians increasingly irrelevant.

If this is the new norm, many military elites recognize that they still have a long way to go in developing their capability to *consistently* contribute at the national-strategic level. As discussed in the findings, the majority of senior flag officers are not universally recognized as being exceptionally capable at the strategic level. They have been rewarded for their performance at the tactical level.

Military elites are caught up in an identity crisis that has plagued the profession for millennia. They cannot decide if they truly desire and need "flexible, adaptive, creative thinkers" with a political sophistication developed through civilian education and broadening opportunities that expose them to experiences at the strategic level (Petraeus 2007); or whether they subscribe to a romantic image of the muddy-boots leader that eschews politics, is loved and respected by his/her subordinates, and believes that "too much formal education clouds a senior officer's judgment, inhibits his instincts, and slows his decision-making" (Peters 2007).

More generally, military elites, and the officer corps they lead, embrace the domestic political dimension in which they operate. They should recognize that they are an exceptionally powerful political interest group within it. They should ensure that they are extraordinarily capable of entering into public, political debate, but are self-aware and wise enough to refrain from such "actions that unravel the fabric of trust that is essential and should exist between U.S. military elites and the civilians they serve" (W2-I3). They cannot be an independent, autonomous decision-making body if they are perceived as a politically tainted arbiter of national security policy (Sarkesian 1981).

Not long before retired General James Mattis agreed to serve as Secretary of Defense, he co-authored a book with Kori Schake on civil-military relations. The book unveiled quiet undertones and warnings of collapsing public trust and confidence in elected leadership; civilian disengagement, apathy, and ignorance related to military and national security issues; decaying political institutions and debilitating political partisanship; and a public that depends on the military to guard the Republic, even from the inadequacies of its own elected leaders (Schake and Mattis 2016). Their book offered an additional warning that should not be lost on military elites.

As praetorianism within the ranks of military elites increases, militarization of national security strategy continues, military budgets remain high, and military elites continue to gain influence and become increasingly politicized, they will likely hear a supportive crescendo of cheering from a prominent section in America's ruthless and brutal political coliseum. The cheering will be from a raucous segment of the American electorate that believes they share the military's political and policy preferences. The cheering will last for a season.

What military elites may fail to notice is that beneath the cheers of the hyper-polarized partisans that fill their ears, the remainder of the coliseum remains silent. The vast majority of the American will be public watching and judging their actions. It is their own behavior and actions that will plant the seeds of skepticism and distrust in the public's mind as it relates to the military as an institution and in their own elite role in the policy and governing process.

Audiences across the spectrum the American polity should study and examine the growing praetorianism within U.S. military elites. They, too, may recognize that a silent coup of the guardians has occurred in U.S. national security and foreign policy. Recognizing this coup, they will hopefully ask what should be done to rebalance civil-military relations.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

The following list of questions were used to guide semi-structured elite interviews with sample participants. Questions were made available prior to interview. Questions were not asked verbatim and time was allocated for asking follow-up questions to amplify themes raised in the interview dialogue. Each interview began with a deliberate effort to answer any preliminary questions, gain consent to record and take notes as applicable, and build rapport.

1. What are your experiences and observations as it relates to how military elites influence national security policy?

2. Do military elites approach national security challenges, problem-solving and decision-making differently than their senior civilian counterparts? How? Why?

3. How do you feel civilian elites and military elites perceive or view one another as it relates to their experience, education and ability to contribute to the national security policy process? Is their mutual respect, trust and confidence, or are they overly skeptical of one another?

4. How do military and civilian elites differ in relationship to how they navigate complex, uncertain international environments and risk?

5. How does access to and control of resources (people, money, equipment, information) change the dynamics of policy discussions, proposals, decisions, policy implementation and the civil-military relationship?

Interviews concluded with a solicitation of any closing questions or comments. Additionally, sample participants were reminded of the measures that would be taken to protect data and ensure non-attribution. Participants were encouraged to notify the investigator of any follow-up questions, concerns, or withdrawal of consent. No sample participants withdrew consent.

Appendix B: Sample Population

Category	Code	Number	%
Wave	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
One	1	76	72%
Two	2	29	28%
Experience	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Academia	1	35	33%
Defense Civilian	2	16	15%
Intelligence Community	3	7	7%
Military	4	71	68%
NSC Staff	5	63	60%
State Department	6	20	19%
Think Tank	7	34	32%
Military Service	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
None	0	34	32%
Army	1	53	50%
Navy	2	7	7%
Air Force	3	6	6%
Marines	4	5	5%
Combat Experience	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
None	0	37	35%
Yes	1	68	65%
Military Status	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
N/A	0	34	32%
Retired	1	41	39%
Active	2	30	29%
Education	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
BA	0	2	2%
Masters	1	54	51%
Terminal	2	49	47%
Gender	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Female	0	12	11%
Male	1	93	89%
Interview Type	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Email	0	1	1%
Person	1	37	35%
Phone / Skype	2	67	64%
Transcription	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
No Transcript	0	21	20%
Transcript	1	84	80%
Presidential Administration	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Reagan	40	14	13%
Bush (41)	41	15	14%
Clinton	42	19	18%
Bush (43)	43	42	40%
Obama	44	51	49%
Trump	45	34	32%

Appendix C: Wave One

Wave One Category	Code	Number	%
Experience	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Academia	1	28	37%
Defense Civilian	2	12	16%
Intelligence Community	3	4	5%
Military	4	47	63%
NSC Staff	5	36	48%
State Department	6	11	15%
Think Tank	7	25	33%
Military Service	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
None	0	28	37%
Army	1	37	49%
Navy	2	4	5%
Air Force	3	4	5%
Marines	4	2	3%
Combat Experience	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
None	0	31	41%
Yes	1	44	59%
Military Status	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
N/A	0	29	39%
Retired	1	19	25%
Active	2	27	36%
Education	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
BA	0	1	1%
Masters	1	34	45%
Terminal	2	40	53%
Gender	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Female	0	10	13%
Male	1	65	87%
Interview Type	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Email	0	0	0%
Person	1	25	33%
Phone / Skype	2	50	67%
Transcription	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
No Transcript	0	18	24%
Transcript	1	57	76%
Presidential Administration	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Reagan	40	3	4%
Bush (41)	41	5	7%
Clinton	42	7	9%
Bush (43)	43	24	32%
Obama	44	38	51%
Trump	45	32	43%

Appendix D: Wave Two

Wave Two Category	Code	Number	%
Experience	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Academia	1	7	23%
Defense Civilian	2	4	13%
Intelligence Community	3	3	10%
Military	4	25	83%
NSC Staff	5	28	93%
State Department	6	10	33%
Think Tank	7	9	30%
Military Service	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
None	0	5	17%
Army	1	17	57%
Navy	2	3	10%
Air Force	3	2	7%
Marines	4	3	10%
Combat Experience	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
None	0	6	20%
Yes	1	24	80%
Military Status	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
N/A	0	5	17%
Retired	1	22	73%
Active	2	3	10%
Education	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
BA	0	1	3%
Masters	1	20	67%
Terminal	2	9	30%
Gender	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Female	0	2	7%
Male	1	28	93%
Interview Type	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Email	0	1	3%
Person	1	12	40%
Phone / Skype	2	17	57%
Transcription	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
No Transcript	0	3	10%
Transcript	1	27	90%
Presidential Administration	***Code***	***Number***	***%***
Reagan	40	11	37%
Bush (41)	41	10	33%
Clinton	42	12	40%
Bush (43)	43	18	60%
Obama	44	13	43%
Trump	45	2	7%

Appendix E: Analysis of the National Security Strategies of the United States

NSS Year	Party	Mil	Non-Mil	Total	%
1987	0	199	70	269	74%
1988	0	184	197	381	48%
1989	0	No NSS submitted			
1990	0	136	78	214	64%
1991	0	130	73	203	64%
1992	0	No NSS submitted			
1993	0	79	52	131	60%
1994	1	124	123	247	50%
1995	1	135	118	253	53%
1996	1	200	175	375	53%
1997	1	106	110	216	49%
1998	1	153	107	260	59%
1999	1	161	58	319	50%
2000	1	227	203	430	53%
2001	0	No NSS submitted			
2002	0	119	86	205	58%
2003	0				
2004	0	No NSS submitted			
2005	0				
2006	0	93	109	202	46%
2007	0				
2008	0	No NSS submitted			
2009	1				
2010	1	105		252	42%
2011	1				
2012	1	No NSS submitted			
2013	1				
2014	1				
2015	1	52		120	43%
2016	1	No NSS submitted			
2017	0	125		205	61%
2018	0	No NSS submitted			

Appendix F: Military Elite Conceptual Attributes and Theoretical Implication

Conceptual Attribute / Finding	Implications for Epistemic Community Theory
Shared normative, principled, causal, and political beliefs – **Strong**	Despite whether an epistemic community demonstrates this conceptual attribute, what matters most is how they are perceived by the decision-makers with which they interact. "Politically untainted" actors wield greater influence in the long-term. Politically tainted actors may have limited, short-term influence when policy preferences align with decision-makers. However, they lose influence as policy preference alignment shifts. In the long-term, politically tainted actors are viewed with skepticism and distrust.
Shared Notions of Validity – **Strong**	Shared notions of validity, as it relates to professional knowledge and expertise, are not a substitute for critical thinking and novice approach to complex problems, challenges, and crises, particularly as it relates to national security and foreign policy. Decision-makers should remain vigilantly on guard against 'group think' within an epistemic community and the usurpation of authority by well-meaning experts during times of crisis.
Common Policy Enterprise – **Strong**	Outsiders extend deference to epistemic community members, recognizing their knowledge and expertise as it relates to their common policy enterprise. However, as policy discussion and debates shifts away from this common policy enterprise and begins to overlap into other policy domains, friction and contest increase among policy advisors with competing knowledge and expertise.
Profession and Ethos – **Strong**	A strong professional ethos that is periodically reinforced from 'cradle to grave' throughout the career of a member of an epistemic community strengthens this conceptual attribute. The more connected a member feels to the community and its shared beliefs and values, the greater sense of esprit d'corps within the community, as well as strong entitativity from observers outside the community.

Appendix F: Military Elite Conceptual Attributes and Theoretical Implications

Conceptual Attribute / Finding	Implications for Epistemic Community Theory
Internal Cohesion and Intra-Group Trust – **Strong**	The more broadly defined an epistemic community, the more diffuse is its influence. This attribute does not equate to unanimity of opinion regarding policy preferences.
Consensual, Authoritative Knowledge and Expertise – **Notable**	Practical experience / expertise and public confidence in an epistemic community amplify influence. However, domestic / electoral political components of policy mute influence.
Perceptions of an Uncertain, Complex Environment – **Notable**	Convincingly propagating conceptions of a strategic environment that supports an epistemic community's policy preferences increases influence.
External Relationships, Alliances, and Resources – **Exceptional**	Access to and control of resources provides asymmetric advantages, providing epistemic communities the ability to inform, as well as implement policy decisions.

Appendix G: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS Research

APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL

April 9, 2018

Todd Schmidt
toddandrewschmidt@ku.edu

Dear Todd Schmidt:

On 4/9/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Military influence on national security policy
Investigator:	Todd Schmidt
IRB ID:	STUDY00142253
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Schmidt_Debriefing Statement.doc, • Schmidt_Interview Questions.docx, • Schmidt_IRB application form.pdf, • Schmidt_Oral Consent.doc, • Schmidt_Oral Consent.doc, • Schmidt_Recruitment Material.docx, • Schmidt_Written Consent.doc, • Schmidt_Written Consent.doc, • Semi-structured Interview Questions

The IRB approved the study on 4/9/2018.

1. Notify HRPP about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at https://rgs.drupal.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training.
2. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported immediately.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.

Continuing review is not required for this project, however you are required to report any significant changes to the protocol prior to altering the project.

Please note university data security and handling requirements for your project:
https://documents.ku.edu/policies/IT/DataClassificationandHandlingProceduresGuide.htm

You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the "Documents" tab in eCompliance.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Isley, MS, CIP
IRB Administrator, KU Lawrence Campus

Human Research Protection Program
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