The Institutional Sources of Military Doctrine: Hegemons in Peripheral Wars

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This article examines the formation of military doctrine by the United States during Vietnam and by Britain during the Boer War to test the prevailing literature on military doctrine. Finding the literature inadequate, the paper offers an institutional model of the forces shaping military doctrine. The institutional model is based on the broader literature concerning the delegation of power in organizations. The logic of the delegated power depends as much on the structure governing the superior (the civilian authorities) as that governing the specialized subordinate (the military organizations). This model proposes that the differences in adaptability demonstrated by British and American military organizations in response to similar threats can be explained by the distinct structure of civilian institutions and their effect on the development of military organizations.

When will military organizations generate doctrine that is an appropriate tool for reaching national security goals? The imperatives of realpolitik in an anarchical international system and the logic of domestic politics confront each other squarely on this question. Sovereign authority is predicated on the ability of a state to defend its territory, so if the imperatives of the international system are ever determining, they should be in the choice of military doctrine. Still, doctrine is created by civilian leaders and military organizations in political systems that vary considerably from state to state.

The obvious significance of both international and domestic factors has led many analysts of military doctrine to examine the intermingling of domestic and international variables to explain military doctrine (Allison, 1971; Posen, 1984; Snyder, 1984; Van Evera, 1985). Increasingly, these analysts have focused on civil–military relations as holding the key to how international and domestic variables interact to shape military doctrine.

Posen (1984), for example, has argued that domestic organizational factors

Author's note: A draft of this paper was presented at the 1990 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA, August 29–September 2. For valuable comments the author thanks Michael Barnett, David Bartlett, Peter Cowhey, Mike Desch, John Garafranzo, Joe Grieco, Miles Kahler, Paul Kowert, David Laitin, Jeff Legro, Sam Popkin, Phil Roeder, John Ruggie, Andy Rutten, Hendrik Spruyt, David Strang, Stephen Van Evera, all the participants of the CIPS workshop on "Norms and National Security" at Cornell University February 5–7, 1993, and the editors and reviewers for ISQ. Part of the research for the paper was funded by the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation.

Published by Blackwell Publishers, 238 Main Street, Cambridge, MA 02142, USA, and 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK.
explain the rigidities and sub-optimization of strategy on a routine basis by the military bureaucracy;¹ but balance-of-power crises invoke the top political leadership's attention, and trigger a rational updating of strategies in conformance with realism. By deducing preferences for the civilian leadership from balance-of-power theory and for military organizations from organizational theory, and assuming that a determined civilian leadership can redirect the military, Posen devised a parsimonious model with which to explain how domestic and international variables interact.

A comparison of U.S. military doctrine in Vietnam with British military doctrine in the Boer War, however, will demonstrate some deficiencies with this model. These cases will show that the behavior of civilian leaders and military organizations varies from state to state in ways unaccounted for by balance-of-power theory and organizational theory. Also, the cases will demonstrate that the ease with which civilians can steer the military in crisis situations varies across countries.

However, we need not throw out parsimony, the focus on civil–military relations, or the interaction between international and domestic variables to create an explanatory model. Institutional theory can provide a parsimonious shortcut to understanding not only how international and domestic variables interact to affect the civil–military relationship, but also how the interactions vary across countries.²

Institutional theory focuses on the way people's political needs for maintaining power influence their behavior in policy situations. Institutional analyses of hierarchy have extended this focus to examine the strategic relationship between politicians and bureaucracies. This literature can guide us toward a systematic explanation of the differences between the civil–military relationship in different countries, and how that relationship conditions the way domestic actors react to international circumstances to create military doctrine.

The Research Problem

Military Doctrine

Military doctrine is important because it affects both the relations among states and the security of any given state.³ Most agree that doctrine falls between the technical details of tactics and the broad outline of grand strategy. Whereas tactics deal with issues about how battles are fought, doctrine encompasses the broader set of issues about how one wages war, including ideas about how to best fight the enemy and assumptions about what part of the enemy is most

¹Posen (1984) argues that military organizations will prefer offensive doctrine because it allows them to set the terms of the conflict, thereby elevating the chances of winning and lowering uncertainty. The organization's interest in reducing uncertainty will keep it resistant to change and locked into "standard operating procedures." Finally, the organization's value of autonomy from civilian leaders will cause it to structure doctrine in such a way as to make it inaccessible to political tinkering. This, combined with the resistance to change, will keep doctrine from responding to changes in political goals.

²Institutional theory encompasses a broad range of literature focusing on the interaction between structure and process; see March and Olsen (1984). One branch of this theory has been developed by micro-economic theorists to understand how institutional rules can shape collective choices in American politics; e.g., Shepsle (1979), Riker (1980), Fiorina (1977), Mayhew (1974), and, in comparative politics, Bates (1981) and North (1981). Another branch of this theory has examined how past choices become embedded in a logic that is greater than the formal rules, including myth, culture, and political norms; see Powell and DiMaggio (1991). My analysis is based on the former line of theorizing, but includes elements of the latter in my analysis of how the historical growth of institutions affects the strategic expectations of individual players.

³Some doctrines can increase the chances of security dilemmas and thus heighten the probability of conflict. See Jervis (1978), Snyder (1984), Van Evera (1985), and Alexandroff and Rosecrance (1977).
important (Alger, 1985; Sheehan, 1988). Ideally, doctrine should fit well with the general theory (grand strategy) about how to generate security for the country under which policy makers operate.

This article focuses on the relative integration of grand strategy and military doctrine as the fundamental determinant of how military doctrine influences the security of a state. Other factors, such as whether a doctrine is offensive, defensive, or deterrent, and innovative or stagnant, are important in terms of whether or not they make sense for the state’s security goals. For example, technological innovation in areas unimportant to the state’s security could drain important economic resources that may, in the long term, undermine security (Kennedy, 1987); or too much attention to the state-of-the-art may detract from a military’s ability to deal with “low tech” military threats. So, I will examine these variables as part of the larger integration between military doctrine and grand strategy.

Sometimes security goals require militaries to be prepared for a number of different contingencies at the same time. It is rarely the case that a country has only one security threat. If the threats are similar, being prepared may simply require enough troops or a good enough transportation system to meet an invasion from different sides of the country, the classic German dilemma. Other times, preparing for different threats may actually mean preparing to fight different types of war. For example, the Containment Doctrine required the forces of the United States to be prepared to fight Communism in whatever guise it might take, from the major-power threat of the Soviet Union to Communist-supported uprisings in the Third World.

The cases in this article focus on instances where policy makers’ security goals required their militaries to be prepared to meet many types of threats. The dependent variable will be the integration of military doctrine with national security goals. The most important part of the dependent variable for these cases is the ability of the militaries in question to adjust doctrine to “low tech” threats when that was required by policy makers to carry out their security goals.

Appropriate military doctrine does not guarantee a successful outcome. Many other variables intervene between military doctrine and national security. If military organizations create doctrine that is a good tool for reaching policy makers’ security goals, however, it is more likely that those goals will be met.

The Puzzle

The literature on civil–military relations and military doctrine yields expectations about when military doctrine will be integrated with national security goals in these cases. At its most parsimonious, Posen’s model should expect that countries in comparable structural positions will generate similar responses. We could argue, then, that the important structural similarities between Great Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States in the post-WWII era should lead to generally similar responses against lesser foes. The abilities of Britain to

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4 Security goals include conflicts the country should avoid as well as those it should be prepared to win. So a state’s grand strategy should include avoiding security dilemmas (Jervis, 1978).
5 Rosen (1992) provides a useful separation of military innovation into three categories: peacetime, wartime, and technological. The dependent variable I am examining here is not technological innovation, but a change in the orientation of a service or service branch in response to a new or changed adversary in both peacetime and wartime.
6 A number of analysts use this logic to explain why major powers often lose peripheral wars. See Cohen (1986) and Mack (1988).
7 Both countries were first among equals, and both countries, for somewhat different reasons, had articulated security goals that required them to meet a variety of threats.
adapt in the Boer War while the U.S. did not in Vietnam could be held out as an anomaly.\(^8\)

However, because Posen's most important contribution is the logic of his civil–military model, the real test is to see if the civil–military relationship operates as expected, and this will be my focus. Military organizations should prefer offensive-style doctrine and should be reticent to change. Civilian leaders should be more attuned to the demands of the international system and should intervene to force change when a crisis looms. Once political leaders intervene, they should be able to force rationalizing changes in military doctrine.\(^9\)

The cases will demonstrate, however, that sustained intervention by President Kennedy resulted in minimal adaptations by the army in Vietnam. In contrast, the British army adapted despite a general neglect of military preparedness by civilian leaders in the time leading up to the Boer War. The civil–military relationship in the U.S. and Britain did not operate as Posen's model would expect.

One might argue that this is a problem of dissimilar cases; that the Vietnam War was a harder war to adapt to. Despite the similarities of the insurgent doctrine, the terrain in Southeast Asia made the U.S. Army's task more difficult, as did the advances in conventional warfare between the turn of the century and the post-WWII era. Perhaps the British were successful because their task was easier. In fact, however, the British adjusted with equal ease to Communist insurgency in Malaya even when the terrain was equally inhospitable and when they had just finished fighting a continental war in Europe.\(^10\) Furthermore, other branches of the U.S. services had no problem adapting to the insurgent threat in Vietnam; in fact, the marines developed an effective counterinsurgency doctrine.

**Institutional Theory**

*Civil–Military Relations as Delegation*

The traditional organizational theory relied upon by Posen and others has been challenged by positive theories of hierarchy that focus on the political nature of bureaucracies (Miller and Moe, 1986). Following this literature, we can examine military organizations, like bureaucracies in general, as designed by civilian authorities. Civilian leaders delegate authority over portions of security policy to military organizations. In so doing, they create new political actors and the

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\(^8\) One could say that the British army was a colonial army, designed to protect the colonies. This is true. As a colonial army, the British army's main task was to defend India against an invasion by Russia through Afghanistan. The use of guerrilla tactics by the Boers was a novel threat to the British army. "What happened was that the British Army, for the first time since the War of 1812, met hostile mounted riflemen and aimed small-arms fire. The experience of some 85 years of formal and little wars in Europe and around the world went into the discard, and an entire new system of tactics and techniques had to be evolved on the battlefield" (Dupuy and Dupuy, 1970:855).

\(^9\) These expectations are most clearly manifested in Posen's (1984) work. Snyder's (1984) model allows for slightly more complexity because, as he argues, some civil–military relationships make civilian intervention more difficult.

\(^10\) I have developed this case in a longer study in which I found that similar dynamics drove British military adaptation. Limits of space prevent me from including two British cases in this article. I opted to use the Boer case because I could best control for both the international structural variable and the similarity of the threat.

Comparative cases must be comparable, but they are never identical. There are obvious differences between the Boer War and the Vietnam War. As the historical list goes, however, these two cases are comparable on many of the dimensions important for the models I am testing.
problem of agency; the organizations may not do what civilian authorities want them to.\footnote{Agency problems are exacerbated by information asymmetry. They can prevent the leader from choosing the best option (adverse selection), cause the agent to devote more effort to the indicators of its behavior that the leader monitors rather than the behavior itself (morale hazard), or lead to unstable or manipulable organizational choices (McCubbins, 1985; Miller and Moe, 1986).}

The delegation process is influenced by the structure of civilian institutions.\footnote{Because civilian politicians cannot exercise their policy preferences unless they maintain political power (Mayhew, 1974), what we end up with is a two-tiered relationship of delegation: voters delegate power to civilian leaders who then delegate a portion of that power to military organizations (Moe, 1990).}

The structure of civilian institutions influences both whether or not civilians will agree about what to tell the military to do (if they do not, they may send contradictory messages to the organization), and how civilians will monitor the military to make sure it follows their directions. Civilian leaders will have more difficulty coming to agreement about how to design and monitor military institutions if there are institutional divisions among the civilian leadership. If there is only one institution responsible for controlling and monitoring the military, agreement among civilian leaders is more likely and it is easier to set up and monitor military institutions.\footnote{This logic is based on the electoral imperative; because politicians must stay in office in order to create good policy, their first preference will be to be re-elected. It is important to consider institutional divisions because if civilian leaders are elected from different constituencies and for different time periods, the likelihood that they will have different electoral incentives increases. This may induce policy disagreements and distrust between politicians in different branches of the government (Huntington, 1957; Mayhew, 1974; Moe, 1987).}

Furthermore, the way civilians design military organizations is influenced by strategic considerations. To the extent that the political future looks uncertain, politicians may attempt to fashion an organization in such a way as to shield it from the future authority of their political opponents (Moe, 1990). These choices affect the future behavior of the organization, sometimes in unanticipated ways.

Civilian choices about how to organize a military institution affect the integrity and institutional bias of the organization.\footnote{Civilian choices may include giving discretion to the organization to structure itself subject to broad guidelines. Civilian choice does not necessarily mean active civilian control.}

An organization's institutional bias refers to the substance of the organization's preferences. I join many new analyses of military organizations (Rosen, 1988; Mares and Powell, 1990; Zisk, 1990; Kier, 1992) in challenging the assumption that all military organizations have the same preferences. I differ from these analyses in arguing that the preferences of a military organization's leadership
are strongly conditioned by past civilian choices. These choices provide incentives through the forces that promote integrity (standards for training, promotion, budgets, etc.) to create an institutional bias. This bias determines the organization's standard set of responses.

Posen's model of civil–military relations, although it drew on traditional organizational analysis, did note that civilian intervention could change bureaucratic behavior. However, because he focused only on short-term civilian influence, he did not notice the importance of long-term patterns of civilian authority for determining how an organization will automatically respond to a new situation (whether civilians will need to intervene) and how it will react to civilian direction (how successful civilian intervention will be).

Furthermore, the structure of civilian institutions affects the type of short-term civilian control Posen examined. Divided civilian institutions not only enhance the possibilities for policy disagreements, they also encourage distrust between different branches of government over the control of bureaucracy. This distrust limits the way politicians will be likely to use personnel to control the bureaucracy in a crisis. Members of Congress have checks on personnel appointments; they can refuse to confirm presidential appointments or hold hearings to see if the president was correct to fire military leaders. These checks cause the president to use care to anticipate Senate preferences when appointing military leaders and to look for special circumstances before firing a military leader in the midst of a crisis. When civilian institutions are divided, presidents will be more likely to use personnel appointments to shape the overall tenor of a military organization than to direct change in crisis situations.

This has important ramifications for the ability of civilians to intervene in crisis situations. Analyses of successful civilian intervention in crisis situations have demonstrated that promoting new innovative leaders is an effective tool for generating innovation (Weigley, 1976; Mearsheimer, 1983; Posen, 1984). Other control mechanisms are less likely to quickly generate appropriate change. If presidents are less likely to use personnel to direct military change in crisis situations, and if other control mechanisms are less likely to promote effective change, the automatic response of military institutions to new situations will be more important when civilian control is divided.

Institutional History in the U.S. and Britain

The United States. In the United States, concern over the usurpation of power by any one person or group led the Founding Fathers to set up a system of checks and balances which institutionalized divisions among the civilian leadership. Civilian institutions, because they had different constituencies, often developed different preferences over the best way to meet military challenges. Initially, however, the institutional divisions did not lead to competition over the control of the army. Congressional involvement in national military policy before the turn of the century was distracted by the overwhelming concern of Congress with the militia. Because state parties controlled congressional nominations and received many political benefits from their control over the militia,

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16 This is similar to Rosen's (1988) statement that each military organization has its own culture and distinct way of thinking about war which is embedded in career paths for military officers.
17 Even when Truman held much congressional support for firing MacArthur, his political foes drew political blood through hearings and so forth. Lincoln's removal of McClellan and Johnson's removal (or at least promotion) of Westmoreland were free from political costs because the actions endorsed congressional convictions.
18 Rosen (1992) argues that promoting military mavericks is not an effective way of directing military change. In predicting the potential for successful use of personnel, then, we may want to distinguish between mavericks and other policy outliers who are better able to work with the system.
congressmen had electoral reasons to pay attention to militia rather than army matters.

After the Civil War, the army professionalized in a state of isolation. Congress was content to let the army set its own standards for education, training, promotion, evaluations, and retirement relatively free from interference as long as they did not request increased budgets; and the absence of external threat kept the president from interfering (Huntington, 1957). The resulting bias was influenced by the regard in which the army held the military progress of the Prussians.19 The American army devised a highly deductive approach to warfare which relied heavily on the "science of war" most clearly manifested in Prussian military theory. The army objected to the use of the armed forces as a police force because it was beneath the soldiers' vocation and argued that the army must always be governed by classic military principles. The army developed preferences that characteristically were biased toward offensive, decisive doctrine—generally doctrine that would be appropriate in the European theater.20

In response to the rising power of the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, and to the progressive reforms that loosened the ties between congressional nominations and state parties (opening the way for a more nationally oriented Congress), Congress reorganized its oversight of the military. As military power became more salient to American politics (and national politics became more important than local politics for congressional careers), Congress became more interested in military activity. Congress's expanded role in military affairs, particularly after WWII, enhanced the army's discretion over doctrine.

Contrary to what one might expect, having more civilians control the army did not make it easier for civilians to direct that institution. The increased power of Congress in military affairs allowed a military organization with high integrity and distinct biases to appeal to Congress when they were dissatisfied with presidential directions.21 By raising the potential political costs of intervention by the president, the new structure of civil–military relations intensified the army's ability to resist presidential dictates.

This is not to suggest that civilians had lost control over the military. In fact, congressional changes in the budgetary process during the 1920s induced the main military organizations (the army, the navy, and, eventually, the air force) to compete with one another over funds. Competition over funds quickly became competition over strategy. The inter-service rivalry that ensued provided civilian leaders with a range of doctrine appropriate to the front-line military concerns (as well as the parochial pork-barrel concerns) of Congress.22

After WWII, civilian leaders created goals for U.S. security that required a set of military instruments flexible enough to meet a variety of threats. At the same time, the passage of the National Security Act of 1947 (49) institutionalized Congress's role as an active and positive participant in the formation of military policy. Thus, civilian leaders complicated the oversight process at the same time that they required the army to adjust its preparations to meet a wide variety of threats.

Because the U.S. Army professionalized free from civilian intervention and

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19 Thus we cannot ignore the role of ideas. See Goldstein (1989) and Odell (1982).

20 Of course, whether or not offensive doctrine is appropriate even in this theater is subject to debate (Miller, 1991).

21 Or vice versa, as had always been the case. The military was used to appealing to the president to counter congressional "meddling" or extreme cost cutting.

22 The deleterious effects of this rivalry have been pointed out by advocates of a more centralized administration of the military in the U.S. (e.g., Luttwak, 1985). I have no quarrel with the gist of these arguments, but it is necessary to recall that the rivalry was put in place to enhance civilian control. Thus, centralizing the administration of the military without a reconstruction of civilian oversight could obstruct civilian control.
built its professional training around deductive notions of military science, there
was no built-in bias to pay attention to new civilian goals. Therefore, we should
expect the army to resist any presidential attempts to force it to change. Fur-
thermore, increased congressional authority allowed military leaders more lee-
way in resisting presidential attempts to force change.

The institutional pattern in the United States after WWII guaranteed effective
control of civilian leaders over both each other and the military in the defense
of Europe (or conventional wars generally), but sacrificed the capacity to deal
flexibly with different kinds of war.²³

Britain. Unlike the U.S. Constitution, modern parliamentary institutions in
Britain were not founded, but grew out of parliamentary resistance to weak
absolutist rule. The failure of early civilian choices to control the highly orga-
nized British army after the English Civil War led civilians to control the army
by keeping it unorganized.²⁴

The disorganization of the army prevented it from developing either integrity
or biases that would have allowed it to take advantage of divisions in civilian
rule during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because officers purchased
their commissions and the army had no structured education program, the army
did not develop a set of uniform preferences. There was a high degree of
divergence between officers' doctrine and capability which contributed to highly
variable performance by the army.

Effective action by the British army before the professionalizing reforms of
the 1870s was heavily dependent on the personal qualities of particular leaders.
It took premier leadership capabilities to impose order on the upper echelons
of the army's administration. An extraordinarily gifted military leader like the
Duke of Marlborough could make the system work, but the army often floundered
under less committed generals (Barnett, 1970).

The variety of British performance in the period between the American
Revolution and the Crimean War is a testament to the power of personal
idiosyncrasies in this type of system (Barnett, 1970). Parliament's strategies for
ensuring that the military would not act against their interests had inhibited the
military from developing either integrity or biases. The trade-off was an unpro-
essionalized army with highly variable leadership.

Changes in the nineteenth century centralized power over policy making in
the Cabinet (Cox, 1987). As the vestiges of royal control over the army were
removed, Parliament allowed the army to professionalize.²⁵ With only one in-
stitution beholden to the same constituency responsible for controlling the mil-
itary, British politicians in the Cabinet had an easier time agreeing on what to
tell the military to do and ensuring that civilian preferences were represented
in both the structure of military institutions and military policy.

Although there was no shortage of military theorists bent on creating a
"scientific" professional military in Britain, these people had less effect on the
structure of the army than in the U.S. The Cabinet, particularly the secretary
of state for war, could appoint officers with more practical ideals, and the
"scientific" school of British theorists had only marginal impact on British mil-

²³Similarly, Weingast et al. (1981) demonstrate how political mechanisms systematically bias public decisions
toward larger-than-efficient projects in distributive policy-making arenas. Distributive policy-making areas can
produce collective goods, but efficiency is often sacrificed in order to provide the good.

²⁴After "winning" the Civil War, English members of Parliament found themselves as weak as the Crown when
the highly organized army with distinct biases became the center of political life.

²⁵The Cardwell reforms simultaneously removed the final vestiges of the Crown's control of the army and
instituted the beginnings of professionalization. See Barnett (1970), Beckett and Gooch (1981), Biddu-
lph (1904), Bond (1966, 1972), Omond (1933), and Spires (1980).
itary doctrine (Bailles, 1981). Because the structure of officer promotion re-
warded military leaders who paid attention to the concerns of civilian leaders,
military leaders had reason to pay close attention to civilian goals and to create
military doctrine that would meet them (Howard, 1972; Bailles, 1981).

Without institutional divisions in the civilian leadership, military leaders had
less opportunity to develop biases toward particular doctrinal responses. The
potential for easy civilian intervention kept the British military more closely
attuned to the preferences of civilian leaders. When the military has incentives
to pay attention to the preferences of civilian leaders, we should expect the
military to respond more flexibly to their goals. Thus, around the turn of the
century when the civilian leadership in Britain was ambivalent about what kind
of war was most important (continental or imperial), the army was able to
respond with doctrine for both (Howard, 1972).

The Test

_U.S. Military Doctrine in Vietnam_

Civilian leaders and military organizations both behaved the way Posen's model
would lead us to expect before and during the U.S. intervention in Vietnam.
Whereas civilian leaders understood the prerequisites for fighting against Com-
munist insurgent forces, the army continually argued that standard military
tactics were appropriate to fighting the Vietnamese Communists, and, once the
probability of conflict heightened, civilian leaders attempted to force the military
to rationalize military doctrine. Contrary to what Posen would expect, however,
civilian efforts were ineffective. What military innovations did occur are those
that the institutional model would expect.

After the French withdrawal in the mid-1950s, the United States launched a
concerted effort to rescue South Vietnam. The army was directed to devise a
program to train the South Vietnamese Army for the purpose of maintaining
internal security (Betts, 1977:22; _Pentagon Papers_, 1971:II, 408, 416). Between
1956 and 1960, however, the U.S. Army's implementation of the training pro-
gram undermined and eventually changed the program. Instead of creating an
army that could maintain internal security, it created an army prepared to
counter an invasion from North Vietnam (Spector, 1983:238–265; Krepinevich,
1986:23). Army behavior in the 1950s, however, does not necessarily challenge
Posen's conclusion because civilian leaders made little effort to change the army's
direction. Kennedy, however, did attempt to change the army's focus. The same
institutional forces that allowed military goals to redefine civilian plans during
the 1950s, however, frustrated civilian attempts to refocus military doctrine.

_Kennedy_. Kennedy came in to office committed to the need for a Flexible
Response. He was concerned not only that Eisenhower's notion of Massive
Retaliation could do little to stop small Communist incursions, but also that
what conventional forces the U.S. did have were ill suited for handling brush-
fires in the Third World. Kennedy used at least three different strategies
to prompt the army to adapt to counterinsurgency wars.

The first strategy was to attempt to get the army interested in counterinsur-
gency. Immediately after he took office, Kennedy delivered a Special Message
to Congress in which he argued that the nation needed a greater ability to deal
with guerrilla forces. He then directed the army to examine its force structure
in light of a possible commitment to Southeast Asia in May 1961. In November,
he summoned high-ranking army commanders and urged them to back the
counterinsurgency program. “I know that the Army is not going to develop this counterinsurgency field and do the things that I think must be done unless the Army itself wants to do it.”

The army responded minimally to Kennedy’s appeal. Although it did not attempt intentionally to frustrate the formulation of national security policy, its conviction that Europe was the first priority, and its belief that if you could win a large war you certainly could win a small one, left the army both resistant to, and questioning the need for innovation (Hilsman, 1967:424–425; Smith, 1983:56–60; Krepinevich, 1986:33; see also Komer, 1986). Army leaders saw the president’s obsession with counterinsurgency as a fad which the army should not get caught up in, but should satisfy with minimal effort.

General Lemnitzer (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1960 to 1962) declared that the administration was oversold on the importance of guerrilla warfare. Similarly, General George H. Decker (Army Chief of Staff from 1960 to 1962) countered a presidential lecture on counterinsurgency with the reply, “Any good soldier can handle guerrillas.” General Taylor, too, felt that counterinsurgency was “just a small form of war,” and that “all this cloud of dust that’s coming out of the White House really isn’t necessary.”

Kennedy’s second strategy was to appoint officers who had shown an interest in special warfare to important new posts that could spearhead his movement. Brigadier General Rosson was appointed as the army’s special assistant for special warfare in order to be Chief of Staff General Decker’s eyes and ears on special warfare activities.

General Rosson, however, was given only limited access to the army force structure. Seen by the army as a representative of the administration, he was not allowed to develop his own staff and was instructed to focus only on the army’s “special assets” (i.e., the Green Berets and the Psychological and Civil Affairs units). Any special warfare requirements affecting main force units were kept outside Rosson’s supervision.

The Stilwell Report, issued on 13 October 1961, faulted the army for failing to evolve a simple, dynamic doctrine within the conceptual framework of counterinsurgency. The Howze Board Report on Special Warfare in January 1962 echoed the Stilwell Report’s findings. The army responded to these criticisms with a host of reports, boards, and programs, merely a stronger-sounding variant of the lip service that the army had been paying to counterinsurgency all along. When the administration called for more hours devoted to training for counterinsurgency, army manuals began to define more activities as counterinsurgency.

Rather than focusing on the new threat, counter-guerrilla training came to

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25 U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (C&GSC), Program of Instruction for 250-A-C2 Command and General Staff College Officer Regular Course (Fort Leavenworth, Kans., 1959/60–1960/61); idem, Program for Command and General Staff Officer Course (Fort Leavenworth, Kans., 1963–67. Also, Dr. Ivan Birrer to Dr. Dastrup, 23 July 1982, West Point, N.Y. Cited in Krepinevich (1986), p. 51 (footnotes 77 and 78, pp. 283–284).
mean special warfare contingencies within a concept of conventional war (Krepinevich, 1986:51). Defined this way, the army argued that it had been concentrating on counterinsurgency warfare all along. Army Chief of Staff Earle Wheeler said in a speech to the armored division in 1965, "Our division is not a stranger to guerrilla-type warfare. In fact, some historians credit troops of the division with originating and perfecting the armored ambush, and the ambush is certainly basic to guerrilla warfare."32

Finally, when President Kennedy increased the advisory effort in 1962, he appointed Lieutenant General Paul D. Harkins, an army insider, as its commander.33 The appointment of Harkins can be seen as an attempt to compromise with the army in hopes that appointing an insider would prompt innovation that relative outsiders were unable to spawn.34 Contrary to Kennedy's wishes, however, General Harkins did not become interested in counterinsurgency.

The innovations that the army did make during the Vietnam War occurred in precisely the areas that the institutional model would expect. For example, the army developed the use of helicopters in the air mobile division or the air cavalry because it was a good way to compete with the other service branches. Helicopters could be used in a conventional conflict, and air had a history of being an elite part of the service. Because individual officers' careers were enhanced by air mobile duty, air mobility was successfully developed. The same logic enhanced the army's resistance to counterinsurgency because the promotions process minimized the importance of tours of duty as an advisor or in the Special Forces.35

Civilians were hindered in their attempts to direct military doctrine by information asymmetry. They had to rely on the army's information to evaluate the progress of training in counterinsurgency, and they had to base their evaluations of MACV's success on MACV's data. Although challenges were made to MACV's prosecution of the war by fact-finding missions (organized by the State Department and the Department of Defense), these missions were conducted by people whose military evaluating capabilities were often easy to impeach (Krepinevich, 1986).

Thus, despite its commitment to counterinsurgency, the Kennedy administration was unable to supervise the implementation of innovative programs in a way that would keep them within the proper conceptual framework. It was also unable to evaluate the successes of Special Forces programs or to challenge the army's dissatisfaction with their lack of offensive character. The innovations that were made (such as the air mobile divisions) were made because they were consistent with the army's bias—preparation for a conventional war in Europe.

Johnson. As the U.S. committed troops to Vietnam in 1965, and as the war began to escalate, the army did not learn from its mistakes. The search-and-destroy missions which provided the basis for American military doctrine were an offensive attempt to bring as much firepower as possible to bear on the

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33 The advisory effort was increased under the newly formed MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam).

34 Neustadt argues that to bring "outsiders" well-connected in their own circles in to the White House is often an optimum strategy for presidential success (Neustadt, 1960/1980).

35 General George Morton, Chief of the Special Warfare Branch Headquarters with MACV, wrote: "During numerous interviews with our Special Forces officers, the GPO stand was that continued assignments in Special Forces would be detrimental to an officer's career. Col. Spears did not consider Special Forces assignment as duty in a troop unit." Letter to Colonel George Blanchard from Morton, 22 May 1965, George C. Morton Papers, Official Correspondence (personal file), Military History Institute (Archives). See also Peter Dawkins (1979) on the Special Forces.
Communist forces. The army continued to ignore the detrimental effects of such a strategy on securing the population from Communist incursions, which was, of course, the ultimate goal of U.S. policy.

Some have argued that the dual nature of the war, which included attacks by both Viet Cong insurgents and North Vietnamese main force units, made it necessary (and reasonable) for the U.S. forces to concentrate on the hard-core northern forces; that light counterinsurgency forces would be overrun by the heavily armed Communist main forces (Palmer, 1984). Interestingly enough, however, marine counterinsurgency forces (the Combined Action Platoons, or CAPs) in the I Corp area facilitated better results against both types of units. Not only were the marines able to coordinate resistance to the insurgent strikes, they were also able to gather information about when main force units would be moving through the area and to alert American forces. Also, when caught by Communist main force units, they were able to radio for help much more quickly and efficiently than local Vietnamese forces (West, 1972/1985; Krulak, 1984; Peterson, 1989). The dual nature of the war, in fact, heightened the importance of a coordinated counterinsurgency effort.

Although the marines developed and implemented successful counterinsurgency concepts in limited areas of the country, their efforts were not recognized as successful by the army. The army's dominance of the planning and implementation was also dominance over expertise, especially measures of success. In deciding how to measure success, the army emphasized its own conception of factors important for military victory. Many of the factors that are important for success in an insurgent war had no place on the army's list of variables to monitor in Vietnam.36 Similarly, many of the variables most important on the army's list (e.g., the number of enemy kills) were not exceptionally significant for determining progress in an insurgent war. But because the army defined the factors it monitored as "military," and other variables as something else (often "political"), it was difficult to impeach the army's evaluation. In fact, the CAP program was dismantled because of its low success rate—it did not kill enough Communists. Even after it was dismantled, no village that had participated in the CAP program fell to Communists before the 1975 invasion.

The Marines.37

In a century and a half, they evolved an elite, almost mythical institutional personality. Partaking variously of pride, aggressiveness, dedication, loyalty, discipline, and courage, this complex personality was—and is—dominated by a conviction that battle is the Marines' only reason for existence and that they must be ready to respond promptly and effectively whenever given an opportunity to fight. Finally, they have come to accept, as an article of faith, that Marines must not only be better than everyone else but different as well. (Krulak, 1984:3).

Why did the marines adapt so readily to the Communist threat in Vietnam? Posen's use of organizational theory would, of course, expect this organization to resist change like any other organization. One might argue that the institutional model would also expect the marines to resist change because divided civilian institutions enhance the potential for agency problems. However, an organization's bias is a product of the strategic interaction among institutional

36Even officers within the army believed that their efforts in unconventional missions were not evaluated fairly (Dawkins, 1979).
37The CIA also developed an effective counterinsurgency strategy in combination with the Special Forces (the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG)) early in the war which I discuss in a longer version of this study.
players over time. The particular development of the marines led that organization to be biased toward flexibility, and to pay attention to civilian leaders' goals.

The marines traditionally held a peripheral and tenuous position in the U.S. security structure. The marine force was initially designed as a force to keep sailors from deserting. As improved naval training produced better sailors, the marines became an anachronism, no longer needed to enforce discipline or man the ships' guns. Around the turn of the century prominent naval thinkers proposed that the marines be removed from the ships and used as expeditionary battalions to support the fleet or U.S. foreign policy abroad. Despite resistance from the marines, an executive order in November 1908 put this idea into effect. Once the marines were off the ships, however, army officers began to pressure for the absorption of the marine force into the army. Even as late as the unification debates during and after WWII, the marines came close to being "merged out of business." 38

Their status as an organization on the brink induced the marines to search for missions that would allow them to maintain their institutional integrity. At the turn of the century this meant playing the role of an expeditionary force ready for deployment to advanced bases; being the "first to fight." In the interwar period when the navy's war plan "ORANGE" depended on the seizure of defended naval bases, the Marine Corps developed the amphibious assault (Millett, 1980:320–343). Similarly, Kennedy's call for counterinsurgency was taken seriously by the marines.

The organization survived precisely because it was flexible, and flexibility became a part of the professional ethos of the marines. Adaptations were often pursued by eager and ambitious innovators who were able to win over more conservative officers because they could argue that innovation and flexibility were necessary to preserve the independent status of the organization. 39

The concern for flexibility and innovation was built into promotions decisions. Officers and enlisted men were rewarded for innovations that worked and often escaped punishment for those that did not (Krulak, 1984:67–69). Because marines were not punished for thinking of new ways to deal with problems, even if they went against the book, standard operating procedures for the marines were often anything but standard.

Congress. One might have expected to see congressional influence manifested in an overt alliance with the army to thwart presidential goals. However, both Kennedy and Johnson enjoyed general support in Congress for their activities on behalf of unconventional warfare. Congress seems to have had little active role in the story above. Congress did not intentionally frustrate presidential influence; however, congressional actions circumvented presidential success in two ways.

First, as mentioned above, congressional budgetary decisions were largely allocated on the basis of competition between the services. The biggest part of the pie (and the part least subject to change) was focused on the primary threat. For the army, this meant the Soviet Union in Europe (Betts, 1977). The risk-averse budgetary strategy induced by Congress (though not designed to frustrate preparations for unconventional war) reinforced the army's bias toward the European theater.

Second, congressional involvement made controversial personnel decisions politically risky. The most obvious lesson was MacArthur's firing, which, though

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39See the example of the amphibious assault in Millett (1980), pp. 322–330.
supported by Congress, presented an opportunity for congressional foes to exact a serious political price from Truman in the way of hearings and so forth. Thus, presidents tended to choose less risky mechanisms to try to induce military change. These mechanisms, though, were less likely to result in the change that presidents wanted. Congressional participation in the policy game changed presidential expectations about the political costs and risks of different strategies.

Military Doctrine in South Africa

In the period leading up to the Boer War, civilian leaders did not systematically try to change military doctrine. In fact, concern with the budget and the possibility for political negotiations kept civilian leaders from noticing and acting upon war preparations by the Boers. Nonetheless, as the war began, the military quickly recognized its losses and adapted to the circumstances in South Africa.

The Background. The turn-of-the-century conflict between the British and the Boers had its roots in an earlier struggle. The Boers, surrounded by hostile Bantu tribes in 1877, allowed the British to annex and protect them. Within a few years, however, Boer resistance to British rule led to a settlement that granted autonomy to the Boers, but with British suzerainty, some restraints on external treaty making, and vague guarantees for the citizen rights of European residents (Selby, 1970:190). Conflict over the latter of these strings, the voting rights of British immigrants (Uitlanders), resulted in the outbreak of war in 1899.

The first problem that the British encountered in South Africa was that the Boers were equipped with modern, superior weaponry which overpowered old-fashioned British weapons and tactics. So, the first adaptations that Great Britain made were modernizing and, to the degree to which they were remembered after the war, led Britain toward a doctrine that would be more successful in a modern war against other major powers.40 Within a year, the British cavalry carried rapid-firing rifles in the place of lances, were using artillery for the defensive, and had innovated in the use of machine guns. These innovations brought military success. The British captured the capitals of Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

The collapse of the capitals, however, did not cause the Boer military leaders to surrender. Instead, the Boers launched a series of guerrilla attacks. Optimistic about the ability of British troops to quickly subdue the Boer guerrillas, General Roberts left South Africa to General Kitchener for “mopping up” operations in the fall of 1900. Kitchener, however, did not leave for eighteen more months.

Most histories of the Boer War treat it as a black moment in British history. The initial advances made by the Boers were a blow to both the British imperial self-image and to the world’s image of British power. Nonetheless, the Army’s ability to realize its initial losses and change its approach to the war in order to effectively counter the Boers must be regarded as a successful case of doctrinal adaptation.

Civilian Disregard; Military Adaptation. The Intelligence Office had noted an increase in war provisions, including armament shipments into South Africa, as early as 1896. The earliest dispatches advised serious consideration of the possibility of a Boer invasion of Natal. In September 1898 a memorandum pointed out that “the Transvaal has, during the last two years, made military preparations

40Stone (1985) makes the argument that the British lessons learned in South Africa were responsible for the success of British intervention which prevented the Schlieffen plan from working.
on a scale which can only be intended to meet the contingency of a contest with Great Britain."

As late as 6 September 1899, however, memos and letters between Chief of Staff Wolseley, Secretary of State for War Lansdowne, and Colonial Secretary Chamberlain demonstrated a conviction on the part of Lansdowne and Chamberlain that the intelligence reports exaggerated the size of the Boer force (Fergusson, 1984:113–114; Symons, 1963:64). Both Commander in Chief Wolseley and Sir Alfred Milner (high commissioner for South Africa and lieutenant governor of Cape Colony) thought that the British forces in position were much too small to protect the security of the British colonies, but civilian leaders in London remained optimistic.

The prime minister, Lord Salisbury, was chiefly concerned with the effect of the South African problem on British relations with Germany (Balfour, 1985:235). He was also worried about the difficulties of mobilizing the population behind a war with South Africa: "We cannot afford to have more than a limited area of heather alight at one time," he warned Joseph Chamberlain (colonial minister) (Balfour, 1985:240). He feared that war preparations might aggravate the Boers and prevent a more preferable peaceful settlement (Barnett, 1970:338).

Through the summer British civilian leadership continued to hope that a conflict with the Boers could be avoided. The urges to mobilize as tensions mounted in early 1899 were resisted for fear of ruining a political solution. Politicians' perception of the wisdom of this policy was reinforced by their concern with spending, and both served to bolster the skepticism with which they viewed intelligence reports on Boer mobilization.

The Conventional War. Even after the British managed to get troops in the field, however, the initial encounters between the British and the Boers demonstrated a host of problems with British doctrine. In early December a string of defeats—commonly referred to as "Black Week"—left the army, the government, and the public reeling.

The first problem was that the British relied entirely on the railroads for transport and supplies, and the Boers took advantage of the British army's limited mobility (Sternberg, 1901:114; Stone, 1985:140; see also Stone and Schmidl, 1988). The traditional use of artillery in an offensive manner (to "soften" the enemy) also proved ineffective against the Boers. Invisible pockets of Boer forces would typically be spread over a great distance. Without a target to aim at, long uses of artillery before an attack merely allowed the Boers more time to dig in and study the positioning of the British forces. Furthermore, artillery crews were subject to sniping.

The most embarrassing failures occurred in the most elite branch—the cavalry. Perhaps the most ingrained of all British military traditions was the charge. For the British soldier, the charge represented a whole way of life (Bond, 1966). Boers in the open, however, could simply not be pinned, even by a larger British cavalry force. "Constantly harassed, the British would charge only to sustain twenty dead troopers and 30–40 dead horses while observing the Boer retreat when still 600 yard distant. The English would then regroup on their now blown

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42Milner proposed that Great Britain send an overwhelming force of 10,000 men to South Africa. Wolseley recommended that they should mobilize Buller's 1st Army and a cavalry division (a total of 35,000 men) to demonstrate Britain's might. Secretary of State for War Lansdowne thought these proposals were extravagant (Packenham, 1979, pp. 66–68).

43As the war began, the British were not only using artillery ineffectively, they were using outdated artillery which still fired black smoke. See Stone (1985), p. 312.
steads as the Boers returned to their irritating tactic of sniping” (Stone, 1985:358).

Civilian leaders in London responded to Black Week by calling up the reserves, and replacing Commander in Chief for South Africa Sir Redvers Buller with Lord Roberts. I have argued that political control over the military in Britain was effective, in part, because of easy civilian control over military personnel. The removal of Buller demonstrates both that civilians had absolute control over the appointment of the military leadership and that personnel choices, even removing an officer in the height of war, had few political consequences.

One might assume that civilian leaders replaced Buller in order to induce adaptive doctrine. A quick look at the events, however, demonstrates that this was not the case. The British military at the turn of the century was divided into two factions, the Wolseley Ring (or the Africans) and the Roberts Ring (or the Indians). Secretary of State Lansdowne had been viceroy of India, and worked closely with Roberts. He had pushed for Roberts to be appointed as commander in chief in South Africa as soon as the conflict arose. Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces Wolseley exercised similar pressure for the promotion of Buller, who was his protégé. The prime minister, Lord Salisbury, initially resisted Lansdowne’s pressure out of personal distrust for Roberts and appointed Buller. However, after the events of Black Week, Lansdowne was able to convince Lord Salisbury to replace Wolseley’s political crony with Lansdowne’s.

This is not to suggest that Roberts was unqualified for the job. In many ways he was the obvious choice for replacement. However, it is not at all clear that Buller would have been replaced without Lansdowne’s political maneuvering. Regardless, Roberts was not appointed because of any doctrinal differences with Buller. In fact, Buller was left in the field in charge of a portion of the troops.

The army responded to Black Week with adaptations. Changes in personal equipment were generated by Buller immediately. He wrote to Lansdowne, even before his disastrous defeats, that in order to restore and protect communications he needed a more mobile force. To accomplish this, he intended to mount the infantry and have them wear trousers like the Boers (Symons, 1963:141).

After successive defeats, Buller demonstrated significant tactical adaptation. He came to realize that infantry was essential for assault on Boer positions and that half of the troops should be mounted so as to secure the flanks of the attacking infantry column and outmaneuver the Boers (Stone, 1985:166; see also Maurice, 1906–1910:509–513). Artillery was used in conjunction with a creeping infantry, and the battle involved protracted fire-fights along an extensive front.

Roberts’s methods also departed significantly from earlier British tactics and surprised the Boers, who had become confident that the British would never leave the rails. His first attack at Boer supply lines in concert with General French’s cavalry on their other side laid the foundations for a noteworthy success (Packenham, 1979:350–355; Stone, 1985:168–169).

Even the cavalry made adjustments. The charge was largely given up in favor of the fire-fight, and some brigades abandoned the carrying of swords altogether. In addition, military leaders noticed that the cavalry was most effective

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44The Wolseley Ring (as an informal patronage network) had dominated promotion mechanisms for years. The Roberts Ring was formed of those officers who had been denied Wolseley’s patronage.
45Stone (1985), p. 365. Instead of charging the enemy with lances, the British cavalry began to pursue the Boers with rifle-fire.
when combined with the mounted infantry. The policy of coupling these two arms was solidified by a War Office study in 1901.46

Different commanders in the army drew different lessons from the conventional battles with the Boers. Buller drew the lesson of slower progress with painstaking coordination between artillery, infantry, and mounted troops; Roberts decided to pursue the cheap victories (Stone, 1985:174). Roberts's sweep through the capitals demonstrated his understanding of the futility of frontal attacks against the Boers despite Britain's now superior numbers. This sweep, however, by not engaging enemy forces, ultimately left more opportunity for guerrilla strikes.

In this initial phase of the war, the British adapted quickly to the Boer challenge, but the challenge was quite similar to that which the British could expect to face from any continental power. One could argue, then, that these adaptations did not interfere or run counter to the changes required for a war in Europe (Luvaa, 1964; Callwell, 1976; Stone, 1985; Travers, 1987). However, the Boers did not surrender at the end of the conventional war. Instead they resorted to a guerrilla war which presented a much more difficult adaptive task for the British forces. Unlike the American army in Vietnam, however, the British army adapted to this as well.

The Guerrilla War. When Kitchener took over in the fall of 1900, he faced an army with a doctrine not unlike the insurgent force in Vietnam.47 The Boer army had always been a highly nationalistic force which enjoyed the support of the population. They now abandoned all pretenses of a conventional war and put guerrilla tactics to use.

Even without a significant defeat akin to Black Week, Kitchener developed a two-pronged strategy to counter the new Boer doctrine by early March. First, sweeping operations to flush the guerrillas out of large areas of the country; second, destruction of anything that could give sustenance to the guerrillas (Packenham, 1979:522). The strategy was carried out by building a series of "blockhouses" (fortified huts) from which to ensure that areas remained clean of guerrillas. The blockhouses, within rifle range of one another, could defend designated areas. These and barbed wire operated to divide up the countryside into units that could be swept clean. Farms within these areas were burned and the rural civilian population was placed in internment camps.

Kitchener's policies were not popular with the population at home in Britain. The internment of the civilian population, especially, caused an uproar in London. Politicians in Parliament called Kitchener's policies "methods of barbarism." Whether or not this policy was worth the cost in human lives and suffering (thousands of people died in the camps of disease due to inadequate facilities and poor sanitation) has been the subject of much debate. For all its barbarism, however, the policy was effective. In contrast to the (equally barbaric) American search-and-destroy operations, the blockhouses provided a defensive mechanism with which to hold on to territory and clear the countryside of guerrillas. Whereas the United States attempted to succeed by killing a percentage of the enemy, the British sought to control territory. Kitchener instituted a plan that

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46Stone (1985), p. 370. The mounted infantry were more adept at dismounted action. The changes in weaponry (from the lance to the rifle) increased the chances that troops would need to dismount, take cover, and pursue the enemy on the ground.

47The cast of characters changed in the autumn of 1900. Lord Salisbury reasoned that the course of the war was going well enough to call an election in which he was victorious. In his new cabinet, the foreign secretary job went to Lansdowne (up until this point Lord Salisbury had been both prime minister and foreign secretary), and Lansdowne's undersecretary, St. John Brodrick, took over the War Office (Ensor, 1956).
was effective at achieving civilian goals. In April 1902 the Boers entered negotiations to end the war.

The changes instituted by the British were not pushed on a reluctant army by astute civilian leaders in London, but were initiated by the army itself, often by the commander in the field. So neither civilian leaders nor military organizations behaved the way Posen would expect during the Boer War. In this case, however, doctrine was integrated with national security goals.

Discussion

This comparison demonstrates the insights of institutional theory for adjusting the prevailing models of civil–military relations. As institutional theory would expect, civilian leaders’ concern with balance-of-power goals vary (even when there is an international threat) according to their domestic political agendas. The political leadership’s concern with spending prior to the Boer War in Britain dampened their reaction to a growing threat. Despite intelligence reports that the Boers were acquiring capabilities that could only be directed at Britain, civilian leaders in London ignored urges from the military to make war preparations and remained optimistic about a negotiated solution. Kennedy does seem to be operating on the basis of the balance-of-power goals, but we mustn’t forget that Kennedy’s concern with counterinsurgency tactics as a priority for national defense was tied to his political fortunes. One wonders if the civilian pressure for counterinsurgency would have been as great had Richard Nixon been elected.

After the disasters of Black Week the impetus for adaptation in British military doctrine comes not from civilian leaders, but from the military itself. First in conventional battles, then in a counter-guerrilla campaign that broke all the conventional rules, British army officers in the field adapted in innovative ways to the Boer threat in order to maintain the integrity of national security policy.

Because past civilian choices induced the British army to be flexible, and those officers who adapted to new threats were rewarded, the institutional model would expect the British army to adapt to the Boer threat. The politically painless use of personnel appointments by civilian leaders reinforced the probability that the British army would adjust to the Boer threat.

The institutional model would also expect the U.S. Army to be resistant to counterinsurgency doctrine. The long-term effects of civilian choices had structured the army’s professional ethos to focus on conventional-style battles in Europe. Because the army’s notion of professionalism included neither the importance of flexibility nor attention to civilian goals, those who did recognize the need for change were not rewarded, but were regarded suspiciously for defying the army’s guidelines. This focus was reinforced by congressional budgetary rewards after WWII.

Furthermore, the structure of civilian institutions in the U.S. made it unlikely

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48 This is not to say that less barbarous plans would have necessarily been less effective. The policy instituted in Malaya was quite effective and more humane. Why the British army chose blockhouses and internment camps in 1901 and the protection of the population in new villages is an interesting question which I address in my larger study.

49 In the 1960 presidential campaign, Kennedy continually evoked the theme of U.S. military weakness under Eisenhower. Nixon, who generally defended Eisenhower’s foreign policies, did not have the same electoral incentives to pursue change (Divine, 1974).

By taking into account the impact of domestic political considerations on political leaders’ goals, I am not questioning Kennedy’s commitment to fight against brush-fire wars, but simply noticing that once Kennedy made a public commitment to that policy he was more likely to notice circumstances that reinforced the policy’s importance. Jervis (1976) and Popkin (1991) explore the theoretical basis for this point.
that civilian leaders could quickly change the army's behavior. After Truman's experience with MacArthur, dramatic control over personnel was a politically risky strategy for controlling doctrine. Kennedy, instead, tried to micro-manage military doctrine. Micro-management, however, is rarely an effective oversight mechanism; as we would expect, these attempts were undermined by army personnel.

A focus on the development of domestic political institutions sees the international system as important, but only through its effect on domestic structures or domestic political debates. Because the significance of the international system is filtered through domestic institutions, only when an issue is seized upon by political actors does it become an important element in the making of military doctrine. The relative power and interests of domestic institutions affect the way similar international issues play their way out in different countries.

Conclusion

The key to the comparison of the two cases above is to discover what mechanism led the British army to be both attuned to the particular circumstances of different engagements and willing to change; and what caused the American army to be so confident that one doctrine would be effective in dealing with any potential threat. The institutional model of civil–military relations presented here has accounted for that difference by looking at the way civilian institutions affected civilian choices and the way civilian choices affected the development of the two armies.

Based on this model, we should expect that the short-term political interests of civilian leaders will affect the way they interpret similar international events. Thus, attention to institutional structure should provide us with a systematic way of understanding why civilian leaders in different countries react differently to comparable international events. Attention to civilian institutions also suggests which tools civilians are most likely to use to direct military change.

In addition, the model has shown how the logic of delegation in two different structures influences the integrity and (over the long run) the biases of military organizations. Thus, consideration of institutional structures provides us with a systematic way to account for variations in the bias, or culture, of military organizations.

In the cases examined here, the institutional model of civil–military relations has explained why the military organizations of two hegemons, with similar positions in the international system and similar national security demands, showed different abilities to adjust to similar threats from peripheral powers.

Posen's formative analysis of the sources of military doctrine before WWII articulated an important and understudied phenomenon in international security studies, the degree to which military organizations respond to changes in political goals. The analysis here should be regarded as a further step in that research program. By modifying our notions of the sources of civilian and military preferences, it points to a new model for explaining and beginning to predict the way different military organizations will respond to changing political goals. The plethora of changes in international circumstances and political goals of late should provide ample opportunities to test this model further.

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50This is a variant of the "second image reversed" argument made by Gourevitch (1978), but I focus on institutions rather than social coalitions. Other recent studies share this focus. See, for example, Haggard (1988).
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