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Parameters Of Partnership: U.S. Civil-Military Relations In The 21st Century



Synopsis

A groundbreaking study by Harvard Kennedy School faculty members Sarah Sewall and John P. White assesses modern national security decision-making through the eyes of senior practitioners and offers a series of findings to strengthen the relationship between civilian and military leaders.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought the 2014 version on . Apparently originally issued in 2009 no indication of that date on copy I received. And no entries in bibliography after 2009. Still common courtesy much less helping readers understand its rather obsolete nature would be of assistance. Still the book makes for interesting reading since it is largely a survey of officialdom, civil and military, that have by education, training or experience, with knowledge of the subject. It repeats many homilies that apparently required no further analysis or much discussion, for example, the oft repeated phrase that civilian control of the military is the US history. With the erection of the concept known as the DEEP STATE perhaps this opening survey might well need to be repeated. I will pick out five sentences or paragraphs that I think are at least partially accurate but need further in depth analysis I also commend Mackubin Thomas Owens 2011 tome US CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AFTER 9/11!.

1. Extract from page 24: Section heading: Individuals and their personal relationships are the single most important factors in the civil-military relationship! The several page discussion attempts to develop this thesis. But IMO if true then it indicates a complete failure to design a rational system of civil-military relations that can defend the USA. Certainly loyalty and friendships are factors but I for one hope that even in situations of crisis a system must be able to overcome what may be irrational behavior.

2. Extract from page 30. Under the paragraph ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

is the section heading: The apolitical status of military leaders must be protected. Again a several page discussion ensues. Some very senior officers seem to believe that as long as they don't vote in federal elections they are apolitical. Clearly all must vote and the arrangements to protect the vote of those overseas on active duty is a travesty of our democratic process. We all must vote. But the analysis in this book is all most as childlike as the non-voting defense of some in the military. Humans are by nature political animals. What must be actively opposed in the military is partisanship and even rooted out. Non-partisanship must be the goal. And high level civilian DoD appointees are the major cause of promoting the viewpoint that serving officers are part of the Administration team and promoting and encouraging certain officers to promote Administration policies rather than deriving support through independent analysis using their expertise. Part of the problem is that few persons do POLICY anymore in Washington, even in the so-called THINK TANKS, and instead issues analysis passes for policy with a choosing up sides and participants hoping their view of the issue "wins"!3. Extract from page 73: INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES-Congress is a significant factor in Civil-Military relations. A truism perhaps but often overlooked. With fewer members of Congress veterans as each year passes this is especially important to understand. And the oversight of DoD by the Armed Services Committees, and the Joint Committee on Intelligence, have long been almost totally corrupted by all players, including members, staff, lobbyists [including DoD and Administration lobbyists, and while desperately in need of reform will never be reformed from the inside. In the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king! And in times when budgets and funding of programs, functions, and activities in the Executive Branch are severely restricted many in Congress try and see DoD furnish funding that may actually undermine military preparedness and war fighting. DoD liaison officers to the Congress are often mistreated and misused.4. Extract from page 84: Paragraph heading; Political leaders must manage and correct the capability imbalances between civilian and military agencies. Military complaints about civil resources and budgets often ignore the fact that DoD not only has sucked the air out of civil agencies but also bones and marrow and then pretends to be an innocent an like Brear Rabbit asks to be throun in some civilian briar patch. Many many civil agencies do get help from Dod but DoD has never been willing to study and articulate what it gets from the civil agencies. The best example of course is the Department of Veterans Affairs.5. There is almost no discussion in this book of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, and its organizations. GNA [Goldwater -Nichols Act of 1986] is discussed but no real detail of what it fixed and what it did not fix. Nor is their discussion of the capture by the military of the NSC and its staff and processes. In my judgment civilian control of the military is a thin veneer and gets thinner each day, week, and month that goes by. William R. Cumming President The

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