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The Myths and Realities of Civil Military: Relations in Africa and the Search for Peace and Development

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Introduction

"Perception is a second Reality!"¹

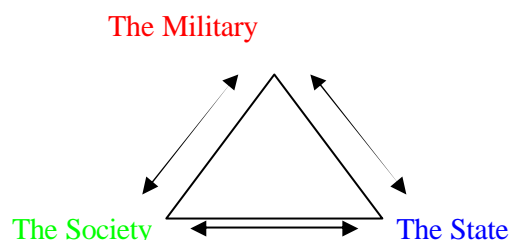
Civil-Military Relations (CMR), peace and development are living terms which in Africa more than any other continent are key to security and prosperity – two variables in an area where millions have died, made homeless and live in abject poverty. Civil-military relations – a seemingly benign term would appear to suggest simplicity in both the concept and practice; it is neither of these.

Adedeji Ebo has defined CMR as follows:

“Civil-Military Relations refer to the web of relations between the **military** and the **society** within which it operates, and of which it is necessarily a part. Such relations encompass all aspects of the role of the military (as a professional, political, social and economic institution) in the entire gambit of national life. Civil-military relations involve issues of the attitude of the military towards the civilian society, the civilian society’s perception of, and attitudes to the military, and the role of the armed forces in relation to the **state**”².

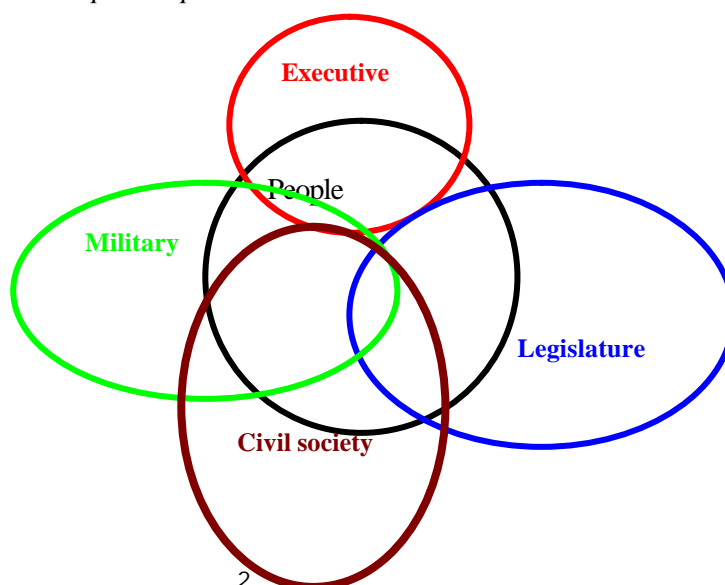
Ebo appears to project in the definition a triad relationship of the military, society and the state, which simply reflects a causal relationship with one another. This is shown by figure 1 below:

Figure 1: The Relationships



However reference to a *web of relations* suggests complexities which take the form of a relationship that is inherent with interwoven factors such as likes and dislikes; certainties and uncertainties; and so on. Further yet, *attitudes* and *perceptions* of each other may not only be different from one another, but also, to some extent, premised on incorrect assumptions. Therefore it would be fair to surmise that the triad structure in figure 1 is somewhat simpler than what the situation actually presents. While figure 1 above relates to the Ebo's definition of CMR, the more comprehensive one takes the form of figure 2 below which not only identifies five actors as opposed to the three in figure 1 above but also point to the multiplicity of relationships amongst them. Of significant note is the centrality of people and of cause the presumption that the four actors in the peripheral regard them as the dominant factor to which they are all accountable.

Figure 2: The Relationships Complex



Common among the actors is their nature of responsiveness to factual as well as elusive data and therefore unpredictable dimension of discernment. Such therefore is the complex nature of civil-military relations.

The cardinal issue in the discourse on CMR is the nature of the relations and the inter-linkage they may have with the all-important mission of peace and development. The concern is with the state or nature of the relationship between the military and the society. The relationship takes two dimensions; the first being at the 'people level' while the second is at a rather more complex manner with governmental structures – a phenomenon that entails application of the 'catch' terms of civilian control or oversight.

In looking at the African continent, the paper examines the nature of CMR by probing the various perceptions held by society of the military. The argument is that these perceptions at times reflect factual issues whilst others mirror nothing but myths. However regardless of the nature of these perceptions, they nevertheless affect the relationship among the actors in the CMR triangle shown on figure 1 above. The paper makes the assumption being made is that a clear understanding of the military by society and other actors as indeed the military of the other actors can only serve to improve the CMRs and subsequently contribute to a tranquil environment on the continent.

In addition, the paper seeks to interrogate the efficacy of the military to the peace and developmental challenges facing the continent in this new millennium. The *apriori* assumption is that there is a linkage between security and development. That being the case, the civil-military relations have therefore a direct bearing on the development and security achievements of the continent. However the first task in the exploration of this association is the coverage of the general concept and practice of civil-military relations.

TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

“Politicians, diplomats and military establishments have (their) own identities and interests that are not always shared by those for whom they supposedly speak”³.

Civil-Military Relations have been in existence as long as society created a part of it to look after its security needs. These relations have tended to be a matter that has for long been an issue of discussion during periods of conflicts. As figure 1 above shows, CMR is at one level

a matter involving the manner in which the defence force and the rest of society relate to one another. At another level this could be a case of the way the military and the structures of government – all three strands (executive, judiciary and legislature) interact with one another. However this relation is not always consensual, as Krause and Williams appear to suggest above.

If the tripartite relationship is this complex, the situation reflected by figure 2 is much more intricate. However Bilveer Singh's definition of CMR "encompass(ing) the whole array of interactions and relationships between the Armed Forces and different segments of society in which they co-exist and operate"⁴ visualises a harmonious relations. What is nevertheless apparent is that perspectives on CMR are not only time bound but are also subjected to several other variables. Amongst these include the influence of democratic ethos to the nature of CMR and the resolution of the allegiance question, which seeks to interrogate, in whose interest the military operates and to whom is it ultimately accountable. Other influencing factors include the influence of training and the role of the military in politics. Also regarded as pertinent to the discourse is whether in fact geographical disposition has a significant effect on civil-military relations on the continent. The current focus has been towards *democratic* civil-military relations.

The tagging of CMR with democracy seeks to show the preference of the relationship towards the general political direction of the continent. However this inevitably means that the complexities associated with the concept and practice of democracy apply to the CMR. Bilveer Singh makes the following point:

"As no two democracies, even in the West are alike and can exist on a wide spectrum, depending on the existing social system and political culture, can the same be said of civil-military relations"⁵.

Two critical points arise here. Firstly, just as the concept of democracy is not an entity but rather transitional in nature, so is the case of democratic civil-military relations. Secondly, it also follows that democratic civil-military relations are also perceived as being at a varying degree in varying countries. What nevertheless is key would be the adherence or approximation to the basic requirements of democratic civil-military relations, which entail, amongst others, a military that adheres to the key principles of the democratic governance of

the sector. These principles have been identified by Nicole Ball and Kayode Fayemi⁶ and Len le Roux⁷ in the table below:

Table 1: Key Principles of Democratic Civil-Military Relations

Ser.	Principle
1	<i>Accountable</i> to civil authorities; independent oversight agencies; and civil society
2	<i>Adherence to rule of law</i> i.e. international law and domestic constitution
3	<i>Transparent</i> planning and budgeting
4	<i>Respect for human rights</i> and a culture of civility
5	Subjected to <i>political control</i> over operations and expenditure
6	Regular <i>consultation</i> with civil society
7	<i>Professionalism</i>
8	Supportive of <i>collaborative</i> peace and security

However these principles are not always easy to adhere to, as the cases in Africa will tend to show. The numerous extrajudicial activities by the military on the continent signify the failure by a number of the militaries on the continent to adhere to the tenets of democratic governance.⁸ For instance, Yorgos Kourvetaris makes the point that military institutions do not always adhere to these tenets either.⁹ A view exists that the military responds to a “higher calling” and that it ‘protects’ ‘national’ interests. In this respect the military would regard itself as the ‘guardian’ of the nation. That being the case it would be a power unto itself and therefore effectively transforming what may outwardly be a civilian-led government into a military led one. What would tend to complicate this scenario is that “(i)n most countries, the military is part of the elite structure and its corporate interest are interwoven with the very *raison d’etre* of military rule”¹⁰. Therefore to characterize a government that has not been taken over by a military in coup as effectively a military government on account of seemingly visible participation by the military is conceptually problematic.¹¹

In a number of post-independence governments on the African continent which tended to be single party regimes, unlike the post 1990 ones caught up with the whirlwind of multiparty systems that characterised the current liberal political dispensation, the military and the ruling party structures were dosely intertwined at the highest level of the ruling

regime – Politburos/Central Committees and despite party structures operating at the lowest levels in military cantonments, the military was nevertheless not reduced to a mere tool for the ruling regime.¹² It may even be argued that because of the close proximity of the military to the ‘popular’ political system (government and the general population) the CMRs were good. It may also be asked if this would be dissimilar from the western notions of CMR characterised by “blurring of boundaries between ‘civilian(s) and (the) ‘military’”.¹³ The general assumption that militaries in a multiparty environment has greater respect of supremacy of civil authorities is therefore loyal to the government of the day, has yet to be proven. However the prevalence of military coups on the continent is clear evidence that the military in both single and multiparty systems have yet to settle the question of allegiance of the military.

The allegiance question which places afore to who the military should be loyal the state has remained an important and relevant concern, albeit considerably less so in the more contemporary era in which military governments are regarded as pariahs¹⁴. The loyalty debate has often taken to such views as the military being loyal to either the government of the day, the constitution or the people. It would seem no thought would have been put to the possibility that the loyalty is not a zero sum game. Indeed in a democracy (like the civil service) is designed to outlive the life span of a government, so must the military as it strives to play its critical role in ensuring the acquisition or sustenance of peace and security in the geographical space – the nation-state, sub-region or region. The acquisition of an apolitical military, as would appear to be the reading of the democratic civil-military relations, may be a function of training, the character of its participation in politics and the nature of its relationship, amongst a host of factors, which may or may not be reflective of reality.

Closely related to the allegiance issue is the matter of differences of civil-military relations, not simply over time (as indeed they would be) but more significantly between societies that would have experienced considerably varying historical development. It may be asked whether states that have been through armed conflict necessarily experience CMRs differently from those who have had a more peaceful transition to independence. One would therefore argue the existence of a flaw in the presumption of an African CMR. The same would be extended to the Western CMRs as opposed to the relations elsewhere. Therefore

with a common colonial history – even to the extent of having been colonised by the same coloniser as has been large areas of Western, Eastern and Southern parts of Africa, it would not be unconceivable to observe similarities in the civil-military relations, as indeed would be differences. When Singh regards sources of differences as the “function of the degree of effectiveness of civilian control”, the more stringent control, (i.e. “exaltation of civil control”) he would be accurately describing the more mature democracies.¹⁵ What is an African CMR is very much an issue that is open to debate.

MYTHS & REALITIES

The character and magnitude of reality or myths of the CMR in the African context requires an elaborate investigation of two sets of issues: matters arising out of “civil control” and the general linkage or lack thereof, of the military and the civil. This is best illustrated by Walter Millis who stipulates that civil control evolved from “the eighteenth century *fear and loathing of a standing Army (regarded) as a menace to the liberties of people*”.¹⁶ Since the military normally deals with issues of security, which by definition are shrouded, in some amount of secrecy; it is therefore not surprising that it’s being is a subject of a mixture of myths and realities. Therefore the extent to which Millis statement relates to the African military is a matter that cannot be taken at face value. Three areas that provide a comprehensive out look of the myths and realities of the CMR are issues of training; the military in politics; and general outlook with a focus on how people on the continent view the military.

The African Military: A General View

The entry into this general discourse is through the interrogation of whether there are any character differences between the African and the Western military. The choice for the latter is premised on the general acknowledgement that the West has had a longer history of democratic civil military relations.

Does Geography Matter?

The critical question is whether there is any substantive difference in character between an African and European military. Such a difference would imply a possibility of a fundamental departure in the nature of the civil-military relations. The argument is that since the existence of differences in socio-political and economic histories of different geographical regions is

not in disputed, there would be differences in the character of their militaries and the manner in which they relate with the rest of society.¹⁷ Continuing from an earlier point articulated by Singh that in the West there was hardly any difference between the civil and the military, it can be surmised that the nature and level of its socio-political and economic history facilitated or determined that development. The same applies to the African scenario.

The traumatic socio-political history of the continent together with the general unstable economic environment has affected all the actors in the CMR model. However whether this necessarily places it apart from the Western one becomes a matter of degree. Therefore there is nothing inherently Western that sets it apart from the African CMR. Rather, difference in the socio-political and economic development, which are in a constant state of flux.

As these conditions improve and become identical to that of some of the countries in the West, I argue that so too would their CMRs become similar. To a significant extent, as African countries' political and economic situation improve to the extent that they approximate the conditions in some of the Western countries, so do societies also become similar in character. This is probably why in a number of ways, South Africa with political and economic conditions similar to those of such countries like Spain, are more Eurocentric than those whose conditions have yet to develop to that extent.

The nature and character of CMR across geographical space is therefore a function of the material conditions prevailing in the continent (and country)) but will not be merely on the basis of distance. In the final analysis the African military is like all other in the world – including the West.¹⁸

History of a Loved, Feared, Loathed and Obtuse Military?

The African military has often been referred to as the “People’s Army” to signify that it was a defence force whose mission was to protect the people.¹⁹ The implication to CMRs is in this sense hardly difficult to surmise – a very close relationship that intertwines the military with society. This is much like a military that evolves from traditional farmers, hunters and other native functionaries of the time. The pre-colonial African military was generally not a

standing one but one that was only mobilised during times of need²⁰. Notable in this type of military is that it was interwoven with the society from which it evolved in the words of General Sir John Hackett:

“What a society gets in its armed forces is exactly what it asks for, no more no less. What it asks for tends to be a reflection of what it is. When a country looks at its fighting forces, it is looking in a mirror; the mirror is a true one and the face that it sees will be its own.”²¹

Therefore, here lies the naming of some of some contemporary militaries as the “people’s army” in a desire to reflect the closeness of the defence forces to the people as opposed to the mere protection of the ruling regime. The move to remove the notion of a military that is created only to protect interests of a selected few becomes even more critical when viewed from the backdrop of the history of a colonial military which, although “play(ing) an apolitical role suppressed indigenous uprisings”.²² Its general failure to participate in the liberation struggles, also entrenched the notion of the military as “supporters of colonial masters”²³ which in the contemporary era may be regarded as “a tool of oppression”.²⁴ With this characterisation it is a military that is not just feared but one that is also loathed.

Comments by a Zimbabwean Roman Catholic priest on the deployment of military officers in strategic positions outside the military signified an alliance between the regime and the military to protect the former.²⁵ In his view the military was “blindly loyal” to the political leadership and could therefore not be entrusted to act in the interest of the people. It is therefore not surprising that the manner in which the military is perceived to have acted during the 2005 parliamentary elections has been regarded as evidence of President Mugabe’s corrupt relationship with the military. Huge salary perks of “up to 1,400 per cent to the troops” and “top officers (given) big commercial farms confiscated from white farmers by the government”²⁶ has been given as evidence of the corrupt relationship. The argument is that the trust in the military is “because they follow orders...will do what is required...(and that although) *theoretically neutral* (is) loyal to Mugabe and ZANU PF”.²⁷

The presumed dysfunctional aspects of the military is yet another observation brought out by none other than a former commander of the Zambian military. Retired Lieutenant General Benjamin Mibenge writes that soldiers tend to be regarded as “an illiterate lot who could only write their names”²⁸ and “were brutal and thrived on drugs making them indifferent to the treatment of civilians”.²⁹ The fact that drugs are themselves associated with unpredictable behaviour should alone discount its use by an institution that depends on discipline for the successful fulfilment of its missions. If all these are comments, mythical as they may be from the point of view of Zambian General, none could have been as bone –chilling as the perception of the military as the “preserve of nincompoops”!³⁰ Comments by Dan Henk about the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) are informative in this regard. His views are that the Botswana military has “develop(ed) into a capable, well-educated and self-disciplined force that (is) attracting some of the nation’s most talented young people”.³¹ Although the choice of the BDF is evidently one of the better militaries on the continent in this respect, the general negative views expressed are not symptomatic of the majority of the continent’s military.

The other issues associated with the military but which nevertheless are mere myths are that the military are uneducated and mere simpletons and therefore the inaccurate deduction that it merely follows the lead by political leaders without evaluating the orders. Mibenge concedes that the colonial and the early post colonial military was subjected to segregation which entailed the officer corp. being British and the soldiers from the indigenous population.³² It does not require a rocket scientist to correctly deduce that the officer corp. was more educated than the soldiers. Not only is this no longer be the same in a post colonial environment, but the military in general has contributed to the development of society in more ways than application of brawn.

The description of the military in Africa thus far made can most definitely not be descriptive of an organisation that can maintain a sustained grip on security issues that confront the continent. Therefore a critical review of these perspectives is not only an undertaking that interrogates the claims, but also one that is crucial because of the critical role the military in the pursuit of a peaceful, stable and African Union

that is on its way to a developed continent that meets human security challenges.³³ One of these challenges is a 'neural' military.

The Case of a Neutral Military

The assumption of a "theoretically neutral" military alluded to above is a matter that requires close study. It is safe to stipulate that the claim of such neutrality is only correct if it (like the civil service) relates to the essential requirement of serving whatever government comes to power through democratic means³⁴. The expectation that the military does not serve the interest of any particular 'side', let alone be answerable to any is somewhat difficult to perceive.

The dedication to a country's sovereignty and protection of its citizens has always been the fundamental role of the military irrespective of its geographical location. What nevertheless is a matter of debate is to whom the military is actually responsible. The general regard of a President of a country being its Commander-in-Chief is clearly not as obvious judging from the extra-judicial actions by the military on the continent. The major issue is to whom the military bears its allegiance. One view is that the military in the past "owned direct allegiance only to a King as its employers"³⁵ whilst today the interpretation of allegiance has become diverse. It's these interpretations, particularly the manner in which the military in Africa is perceived to be involved in the governance of some of the countries on the continent through extra-judicial means³⁶. It has been suggested that the military are "guardians of the state"; "custodians of the constitution" and "stand guard over parliament".³⁷ It has been stated that even the soldiers are not all agreed on what their relationship with the state should be³⁸. While some truths exist in some of these beliefs, such as the military's responsibility towards the security of the state and people, its relationship in respect of the constitution is confused and one regarding the parliament misplaced. While the constitution is the *grundnorm* i.e. 'master law' it is nevertheless the guide to all – state structures and its people. Ebo has put it succinctly as follows:

"The armed and security forces are at the service of the Nation. Their mission shall be to guarantee, if necessary, by force of arms, defence of the Nation

and its territorial integrity and ensure the protection of citizens and property.”³⁹

National, Cooperative or Public Security?

The deduction is therefore that the military acts in the *national interest* not in its *cooperative self-interest*, as the claim of its indifference to civilians appears to suggest. By definition, the military would be expected to place the interest of the people at the centre as is indicated to by Ebo in the above quotation; and the very belief that it would therefore be brutal, an illogical deduction. Even when the military has taken the reins of political power in a military coup, it has generally been in the mistaken belief that it was acting in the *public interest*. Not only is the military epitomised as that which is “pure” in the state but also its glorification by the public during military parades and other ‘open-day’ events tends to illustrate the point. Ocean explains this idolisation of the military in Africa as follows:

“There is something in military uniform which reflects all that is best in a state, national pride, humility, patriotism, fair play and a feeling for the underdog”.⁴⁰

It is nevertheless important to note that the association of the military with the state itself is a general norm - particularly during a time when the defence and security services have been undertaking missions, which are easily identifiable by the citizens as in their interest. This has been easier when the military has been faced with an external enemy and where there have been proactive policies undertaken to improve its interaction with civil society.⁴¹

Characterising the African Military

In any event, characterising the military in the derogatory manner expressed by myths about the defence and security forces would not be describing institutions that have, by and large, kept the cohesiveness (with a few exceptions) of the continent. Stipulating the Draft African code position Ebo argues that the military ought to be “at the disposal of the constitutionally established political authority”⁴², he describes a democratic power relation consistent with accountability of the military to civil

authorities and the matter of the former being under political control by the latter enumerated at serials 1 and 5 at Table 1 discussed earlier.

The nature of the military in Africa remains an issue that has been engrossed in both myths and realities that at times is not even clear when it is a mere perception and when it is in fact factual. Characterising the military on the continent as feared and loathed explains only a part of history of the countries and the military for only part of the time – this being firstly, in a colonial era during which the military was expected and fulfilled the expectation to project the power of the colonial ‘masters’. This of course necessarily entailed an acrimonious relationship with the indigenous populations from which the military was derived. The military was in this regard indeed feared and loathed; and to a significant extent, conformed to the myths identified above. To a significant extent, some dictatorial governments, which emerged in some of the countries on the continent, equalled this reminiscent. It is nevertheless not an exaggeration to argue, as has been done above that a military with close affinity to society – as those, which experienced a somewhat rigorous fight for the breakages of the colonial ‘yoke’. It is this relatively close affinity of the military to the politics of a country that makes the participation of the military in politics both a necessary subject of discussion, as it is an area that too is complicated with what is a myth or reality.

The Military, Democracy and Politics

The fact that the military is “now an important factor to reckon with in the politics of developing countries”⁴³ of which every country on the continent subscribes to is not disputed. The nature of state determines the intricate relationship between the military and politics that unavoidably relates to the matter of democratic practices. Indeed on the discourse on the principles of democratic civil military relations, the linkage was couched in the reference to accountability, adherence to rule of law, transparency, respect of human rights, political control, consultation with civil society, professionalism and collaborative peace and security. Crucial areas of concern include the extent to which the military and political interests articulated by political elites acquire common ground. Indeed, it has been argued that “(I)n most countries, the military is part of the elite structure and its corporate interest are

interwoven with the very *raison d'être* of military rule".⁴⁴ The validity of this claim in Africa is severely tested going by the prevalence of the continent's military coups already alluded to earlier. In fact Kourvetaris himself concedes to this when he declares that military intervention in politics in the 'Third World' political systems is common to the extent that it is "difficult to distinguish between civilians and military regimes".⁴⁵

However a *coup d'oeil* of the history of *coup d'etats* in Africa tend to project the preponderance of militaries working in a generally cooperative self-interest manner ostensibly in the national or public interest. While some critical input may very well have been provided by civilian-political elites in some of these cases, the general character of military regimes tends to suggest dominance of the military.

As regards to the proximity of the military to issues of politics, Ocran makes the point that not only is politics "not within their (military) province but that participating in politics necessarily makes them impartial. The argument is that doing so would nudge them to "take sides in inter-party rivalries (and consequently) be unable to back the ruling government to maintain or restore peace and order should they be so required".⁴⁶ The call would therefore be for an 'apolitical' military which would avoid what Rupiya sees as a struggle between "partisanship and professionalism".⁴⁷ The flaw with this argument is that it fails to respond to the earlier reflection that other militaries like those in Zambia during the Second Republic and in Tanzania closely operated reasonably civilly in a political environment.

The very definition of politics⁴⁸ assumes the participation of the military in matters of government and thereby reduces the validity of Ocran claim that politics is alien to the military. In the same vane, the argument of impartiality being a function of participation by the military in politics is an area that requires more intensive research and analysis. It may also be argued that because of the prevalence of evidence of cordiality and progressive relationship between the military and civil authority of one party system in Africa, the impartiality thesis does not universally hold firm.⁴⁹ It is nevertheless valid to view such active political involvement by the military in a multi-party scenario as being politically problematic and divisive.

In the final analysis, democratic tenets require that civil supremacy prevails as “(t)he civilian-political elites exercise control of the military through rules which specify the functions of the military and the conditions governing the exercise of military power”.⁵⁰ One area where this power is derived is through training. Like the discussion of the general military perspective and that of the military in politics, the training dimension too is engrossed with some myths and realities that ultimately have an effect on CMR and the search for peace and development.

Training & Training Outputs

Just as training and socialisation shapes a child’s future and direction through skills to undertake challenges in childhood, so the same can be said of military. Faced with the monumental undertaking of contributing to the search for peace and development, the military in Africa has been engaged in a variety of training to equip itself with the relevant skills for challenges of contributing to sustained peace and development. However, the military training too is engrossed with myths and realities which consequently have an effect on the perceptions people, civil society and government structures have of it and indeed on the military’s behaviour itself.

Firstly it has been postulated that there is a direct relationship between training and military intervention in what are referred to as the “new nations”.⁵¹ It is argued that as a result of what is called external, reference, or emulation theories, the trainees or in the case of the officer corp. - the officer cadets - subsume the traditions and values of the host country where the training taking place outside the trainees’ or officer cadets’ countries. Therefore in the event that the country or countries providing the training had a ‘rich’ history of military coups, the assumption would then be that the likelihood that the undemocratic traits would be assimilated and consequently emulated by the students would be high. Logical as this may appear, Ocran identifies a major flaw in the hypothesis. For instance Sandhurst Military Academy in the United Kingdom where significant numbers of officer cadets from the continent – prides itself with “well-engrained traditions and values of the British Army, among which include abstention from partisan politics or adherence to the doctrines of non-interference in politics”.⁵² Yet countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, which have benefited from this institution, have had long history of military interventions in their governments.

This indeed is a paradox. This is especially the case since contagion theories point towards a significant level of prevalence of military coups premised on geographical proximity. This may entail a close relationship of military personnel from neighbouring countries (in conformity with contagion theories) at a variety of training institutions.⁵³

The second postulation, which projects a clearer movement from a mythical to a realistic dimension, is that “military career(s) and training almost everywhere produce the same basic qualities of honesty, loyalty, (and) public service”.⁵⁴ Ocean may not be projecting the puritanical characteristic of the military discussed earlier per se, but rather describing an objective reality in view of the general linkage between instruments of national hood such as national flags and defence and security services. Therefore providing military parades for important dignitaries and on national days, are not mere coincidences but a reflection of the high esteem the military is held by both the government and the lay. This reflection is also put to its paces by the CMR, peace and development nexus.

CMR, PEACE & DEVELOPMENT

*“The African continent is facing a security and development crisis of immense proportions. Over 300 million people live on less than a dollar a day, average life expectancy is 48 and falling, more than a third of all children are malnourished and over 100 million people’s lives are adversely affected by conflict”.*⁵⁵

A linkage has been established between political modernisation, development and the military. Singh argues that “the military (has) often been the leading agent of modernisation”.⁵⁶ It may even be argued that the Zimbabwean government motivation for the strategic deployment of military personnel in the manner described earlier could have taken into account the positive factors of the armed forces thus far discussed.

The apex of the discourse on the civil-military relations on the African continent is the extent to which it all benefits the most important component of all – the ordinary people in Africa. As the figure 2 depicts, the manner in which this all relates is rather complex, even if in the final analysis all the people desire is a peaceful environment and a higher standard of

living provided (amongst other factors) by economic development characterised by such phenomenon as an increase in wealth at both the national and personal levels.⁵⁷ The triad of CMR, peace and development is therefore a critical equation in the attainment and sustenance of security. Nowhere has this been more emphasised than in the African Union and its regional organisations.⁵⁸ How the triad operates is the focal point of this section and therefore a contribution “to bring(ing) civil-military relations into the development dialogue”.⁵⁹

A valuable point to begin this dialogue is discovering that the relationship between security and development may be fused or distinct depending on the intensity of conflict. During periods of conflicts, security and development will tend to be rather fused. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the intense insecurity in the country has demanded a greater focus on the security challenges facing the country than on the demands of developmental nature. The United Nations (UN) through its peacekeeping mission MONUC in conjunction with the African Union (AU) and its sub-regional bodies which have brought forth such arrangements as the Great Lakes Conference as well as bilateral and multilateral arrangements, have been determined to bring about an acceptable level of normalcy in the country. The insecurity in the country has resulted in millions of people killed, injured and brutalised whilst thousands or more have been internally displaced and become refugees. The nature of the security challenges on the continent, particularly where the levels of conflict are high, such as in the DRC, neighbouring Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda; the Sudan, Somalia, Ivory Coast; to mention some, require developmental strategies to be infused together with those targeting the insecurity. The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) strategies, especially the reintegration component, are symptomatic with conflict and post-conflict areas. This is a strategy that could be said to bring the military (formal or informal) the closest to the society, thereby making the reintegration into the population the most crucial, longest and most difficult as both the demobilised military personnel and the society into which they are infused, engage in the process of developing a relationship with one another. In an environment of an on-going conflict and where the ex-combatants may have committed some atrocities on the local population, as the case was in Sierra Leone, acceptance by the society is problematic.

However in the situation where security and development are rather distinct, in other words in a more peaceful environment, one would have thought that the relationship between the former and the latter would be easier. Although the loss of human life and other human upheavals associated with a fused relationship characteristic of a conflict environment, the more peaceful situation is in more ways than one, more complex. One such situation is the well-known *gun versus butter argument*. Moreed Yusuf put it as follows:

“Critics contend that many of our development problems are a direct consequence of expenditure on defence; that the military takes away a large share of (the) country’s budget, leaving little for the enormous developmental needs”.⁶⁰

It has even been further argued in respect to Pakistani – a country with much in common with the African continent in terms of its political growth and poverty levels that “(w)ere the defence expenditure reduced and additional allocations made to the development sector, much more progress would be made in the latter sector”.⁶¹ However Yusuf brought out the futility of this reasoning in that the reason for the failure by the development sector to perform in the expected manner was due to structural inefficiency rather than merely, the matter of resource constraint. Therefore as the general matter of “guns versus” butter issue has been exposed as more of a myth than reality, he nevertheless concedes to the general role of the military. Despite the seemingly general belief (surprising enough held by the World bank through its Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)) a correlation is assumed between a reduction in military expenditure and “releases (of) valuable resources for the ongoing development of the country concerned”.⁶² This incorrect assumption, which Rocklyn Williams described as “mechanistic equations”, is not borne by firm evidence. In fact “downsizing the military forces to releases money for development is both dangerous and counterproductive”.⁶³ This is because it may not only result in a serious reduction of the capacity of the military to meet the country’s current and future security challenges but also fail to make a meaningful improvement in the capacity of the developmental sector.

While there is a valid critic on the correlation between the reduction of military expenditure and development, it is nonetheless pertinent to address the need for effective way of addressing security challenges. Such challenges are rarely adequately met solely by a

country's own resources because of both the character of the challenges and the large amounts of resources required mitigating them. Often a collaborative approach such as those at regional and sub-regional levels are being undertaken by the African states as the correct way of meeting these challenges. Therefore there is a case to be made for African states to make a saving on their military expenditure by embarking on the collaborative strategies that necessarily imply a pooling of resources.

An area where insecurity and development have a very strong correlation is one of military coups and gross national products per capita. Samuel P. Huntington has argued that countries with a GNP per capita of +\$1000 coups have not been successful and where it is over \$3000, coups do not occur at all. Going by the extremely low GNP per capita figures of 2003, the African continent would seem to be faced with a phenomenon security challenge in terms of military coups. The table 2 below provides the rather dismal picture.

Table 2: GNP per Capita and Probability of Military Coups⁶⁴

Ser No.	Country	GNP per Capita (US\$)	Probability of a Military Coup	Comment
		Above \$3 000	Coups do not occur	
1	Libya	7 796	Zero	Coup in 1969 and coup attempt in 1975
2	Seychelles	7 000	Zero	Several military coups
3	Mauritius	4 008	Zero	No attempted coup
4	Gabon	3 417	Zero	History of military coups
5	Botswana	3 250	Zero	No attempted coup
		Above \$1 000	Coup attempts are not successful	
6	South Africa	2 427	Military coups possible but cannot succeed	A vibrant liberal democracy but with deep cleavages that could cause serious political instability
7	Namibia	1 872	As above	Attempted secession on 2 August 1999
8	Egypt	1 379	As above	Some disaffection in the military and Growing political

Ngoma/The Myths and Realities of Civil Military: Relations in Africa and the Search for Peace and Development

				instability
9	Cape Verde	1 289	As above	No coups or coup attempts
10	Morocco	1 202	As above	History of coups and coup attempts
11	Swaziland	1 191	As above	Growing disaffection in civil society
		Below \$1 000	Coups attempts and successful coups prevalent	
12	Equatorial Guinea	851	One	Growing wealth through 'black gold'; Growing stability?
13	Angola	777	One	Recovering from civil war
14	Congo Brazaville	731	One	History of coups and coup attempts
15	Ivory Coast	611	One	Unstable and susceptible to civil war
16	Cameroon	549	One	History of coups and coup attempts
17	Zimbabwe	485	One	Unstable and especially targeted by the 'international community' for governance-related issues
18	Senegal	471	One	History of coups and attempted coups Debt cancelled
19	Sudan	409	One	Instability in the East, South and Darfu provinces
20	Guinea	405	One	History of coups and attempted coups
21	Lesotho	405	One	History of coup attempts
22	Comoro	400	One	History of coups
23	Kenya	396	One	One coup attempt
24	Benin	364	One	History of coups Debt cancelled
25	Zambia	358	One	History of coup attempts Debt cancelled
26	Nigeria	314	One	History of coups and coup attempts
27	Sao Tome & Principe	294	One	Two military coups
28	Mauritania	278	One	Coups and coup attempts Debt cancelled

Ngoma/The Myths and Realities of Civil Military: Relations in Africa and the Search for Peace and Development

29	Tanzania	273	One	A number of coup attempts Debt cancelled
30	Gambia	269	One	Attempted coups
31	Central African Republic	267	One	History of coups and coup attempts?
32	Mali	262	One	Debt cancelled
33	Ghana	260	One	History of coups and coup attempts Debt cancelled
34	Rwanda	249	One	History of coups? Unstable Debt cancelled
35	Uganda	245	One	History of coups and coup attempts; unstable Debt cancelled
36	Togo	242	One	History of coups and coup attempts?
37	Burkina Faso	237	One	Debt cancelled
38	Madagascar	231	One	Debt cancelled
39	Chad	206	One	History of coups and coup attempts
40	Niger	204	One	Debt cancelled
41	Eritrea	193	One	Unstable
42	Mozambique	191	One	Debt cancelled
43	Somalia	180	One	Unstable/ Failed state
44	Malawi	170	One	Civilian plots
45	Liberia	159	One	Unstable/ Failed state
46	Guinea Bissau	150	One	History of coups and coup attempts
47	Sierra Leone	146	One	Recovering
48	Burundi	109	One	Unstable / History of coups and coup attempts?
49	Democratic Republic of Congo	96	One	Being ravaged by a civil-war
50	Ethiopia	94	One	Unstable/History of coup and coup attempts Debt cancelled

The table above shows a continent with very low levels of wealth and therefore highly susceptible to instability and particularly that due to military coups as argued by Huntington. However, contrary to Huntington, having a GNP per capita income of three thousand dollars does not make the countries immune to military coups as serials 1, 2 and 4 show. The prevalence of military coups and general instability together with very low GNP per capita which characterise the continent can hardly be a mere coincidence. However the linger of hope resides in that despite these dismal picture the countries have been coping to the extent that instead of the expected total breakdown of governance which would have been predicted by Huntington's thesis, there has instead been increased stability over time on both the political and economic fronts. This may in part be due to the insistent on democratic governance by the donor community, the World Bank and the International Marketing Fund (IMF) on the AU and its sub-regional organisations. With the debt cancellation of fourteen states (shown on Table 2 above) most susceptible to military coups, the likely economic improvements that may arise may yet place Huntington's thesis to a real test and hitherto signify a close relationship between CMR, peace and development.

THE ASSESSMENT

The complexities of CMR are a granted phenomenon. Little of life is different - especially when it concerns issues of peace and development. The complex relationship illustrates realities of the discourse of this elusive and yet critical subject of CMR that serves as an umbilical cord for peace and development.

What is certain about CMR – particularly on the African continent - is that unless it adheres to the general democratic tenets, it is not only destined to be inconsequential in the world where everything is judged according to the extent to which it measures to this rather debatable phenomenon of democracy, the attainment of peace and development is likely to be nothing but a mere mirage. Therefore accountability, adherence to the rule of law, transparency, respect for human rights, consultation with civil society, professionalism and a collaborative approach to issues of peace and security, must of necessity be essential elements of CMR if indeed the illusive peace and development that African so much needs are to be achieved.

The paper has shown that the perceptions of CMR play a crucial role in the search for peace and development. It has been argued that basically the nature and character of CMRs are not geography specific *per se*. What has instead been shown is that prevailing material conditions are the critical factors. The military (regardless of which) has been argued in the paper as essential alike in character. It is therefore these conditions which bring about differences in their being. Another dimension covered is that historical development of the military on the continent points towards its close affinity to society despite its colonial history that tended to create obstacles in the relations between the military and society because of the former's religious pursuant of the policies of the colonial masters which to a large extent were not in the interests of the latter. It is this structural relationship, which the military found itself in that long after the demise of colonialism has continued to be viewed by society largely as serving the interests of the state to its exclusion. Therefore what has tended to be of crucial importance is whose interest the military serves. The paper has argued that just as the civil service lives beyond the life of government, so does the military. Therefore the interest of the military lies in the preservation of the totality of the country in which its people are the sovereign and where the military operates under the command and control of legitimately elected officials who operate within the constitution of the land and subjected to oversight by the legislature and adjudication by the judiciary as does the military. Indeed it is this character of the military that serves it as a symbol of a given country, so well articulated by Ocean. The negative aspects of the military are a mere general reflection of a military that serves an unelected political leadership or one that fails to adhere to the tenets of democratic governance.

The paper has also presented arguments for and against the military playing an active role in the political development of a country. The existence of practical examples of militaries operating closely but cordially in party politics has tended to suggest that the presumption of impartiality may only relate to a multi party system. However, ultimately the matter has been about the need for the military to respect civil supremacy. Related to this has been the issue of external influences on the military through training vis a vis the military's respect for the civil authority. Although in theory such an influence is possible, the experience of the continent has been towards some progressive influence. The hoist Western training centres are those that adhere to democratic governance and therefore unlikely to instil undemocratic practices

as have been seen by the numerous unconstitutional removal of governments by the military on the continent. Therefore the answer to the problem is likely to be more internal than external. Undemocratic practices by the African governments and their lack of delivery of development to the people could be some of the reasons for the extrajudicial behaviour of the military.

However, the attempt to make a linkage between development and security has met unexpected results. Contrary to the expectation of a fulfilment of Huntington's thesis, only two countries with a GNP above \$3 000 have not had a military coup whilst there have been successful coups in countries above \$1 000. However as expected, military coups and generalised instability have been the norm in countries with GNP below \$1 000. However with the recent debt cancellation of a number of the countries in this category, it remains to be observed whether attempted coups may be a thing of the past and consequently proving a linkage between peace and development. What has been evident is that there are several myths related to CMRs. However being myths does not necessarily diminish their effects. After all there is more credit in the view "perceptions" are but "second reality".

Notes

¹ An argument attributed to an unknown philosopher.

² A Ebo, *Towards a Code of Conduct for Armed and Security Forces in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Policy Paper, Geneva, March 2005, p 2. The bold emphasis is the author's.

³ K Booth, "Security and Self: Reflection of a Fallen Realist" in Krause and Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, UCL Press Limited, London, 1997.

⁴ B Singh, *Civil-Military Relations: Theory, Practice and Extrapolations for the Southeast*, The International Conference on Soldiers In Business: Military as an Economic Actor, Jakarta, October 17 - 19, 2000, p 6.

⁵ Ibid, p 23.

⁶ N Ball & K Fayemi (eds), *Security Sector Governance in Africa: A Hand Book*, Centre for Democracy & Development, Lagos, 2004, p. 39.

⁷ L Roux, "Challenges for Defence Management in Africa", in L Roux, M Rupiya and N Ngoma, *Guarding the Guardians: Parliamentary Oversight and Civil-Military Relations: The Challenges for SADC*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2004, pp 89-90.

⁸ See N Ngoma, "Coups and Coup Attempts in Africa: Is There a Missing Link?" , *African Security Review*, 13 (3), 2004, pp 85 - 94.

⁹ Y A Kourvetaris, "Civil-Military Relations and Military Disengagement" in C P Danopoulos, *Military Disengagement from Politics*, Rutledge, New York, London, 1988.

¹⁰ Ibid, p 270.

¹¹ During the Second Republic in Zambia (a period referred to as a One Party Participatory Democracy), the military not only actively participated in the politics of the country, but also saw some senior officers entrusted with high government posts such of Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the country's representative to the United Nations. The Tanzania military was in a similar situation and continues to be fairly involved in the country's politics.

¹² See forthcoming H Lungu and N Ngoma, 2005. "The Zambian Military: Trials, Tribulations and Hope", M Rupiya (ed.) *Evolutions and Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa*, Institute for security Studies, Pretoria 2005.

¹³ Singh, 2000, op cit, p 4.

¹⁴ See Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4 (p) on the continental approach to military governments. Regional organisations have also taken a similar position on these extra judicial means of changing governments.

¹⁵ Singh, 2000, op cit, p 4.

¹⁶ W Millis "Reorganisation" in W Millis, H Mansfield and H Stein, *Arms and the State* Twentieth Century Fund, New York, 1958.

¹⁷ See T S Cox, *Civil-military relations in Sierra Leone: A case study of African soldiers in politics*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 1976. He argues that fundamental differences exist.

¹⁸ See also N Ngoma, "Civil-Military Relations: Searching for a Conceptual Framework with an African Bias", G Chileshe, M Chimanse, N Ngoma, P Lwando and T Mbewe (eds). *Civil - Military Relations in Zambia: A Review of Zambia's Contemporary CMR History and Challenges of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria 2004, p 12.

¹⁹ The term "people's army" has been commonly applied officially in countries closely associated with socialist-inclined states such as Tanzania, Angola and Mozambique. The countries that may not have tagged their military as such, have nevertheless tended to regard them in that manner.

²⁰ See also B J Phiri, 2003. "Civil control of the Zambian military since independence and its implication for democracy", R Williams, G Cawthra and D Abrahams (eds), *Ours To Know: Civil-Military Relations and Defence Transformation in Southern Africa*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2003 pp 3-16. The account of the Ngoni system of a "people's army" was the general norm during the pre-colonial era serve for the emergence of standing armies during the period of Dingiswayo, chief of the Mthetwa in the 18th century. See Wallace G. Mills, "The Zulu Kingdom and Shaka", <http://husky1.stmanys.ca>

²¹ G Ferguson, *Coup d'etat: A practical manual*, Arms and Armour Press Limited, Dorset, 1987, p 9; M Rupiya, 2004. "A Survey of Civil-Military Relations in the SADC Sub-region" in G Chileshe et. al. op cit 2004, p. 21 refers to "...created armed forces in according to their

own images". However Rupiya's writing is about the one party era in the Southern African region.

²² N Ngoma, op cit, 2004. p 12.

²³ H Mtonga, 2004. "Encapsulating Zambia's Civil-Military relations in the Third Republic", in G Chileshe et. al., p 28.

²⁴ B Mibenge, 2004. "Civil-Military Relations in Zambia: A view from the Military", in G Chileshe, ibid, p 12.

²⁵ Interview in Tswane, South Africa on 8 June 2005 of a Zimbabwean Catholic priest. See also similar claims by C Sithole, "Military to Run Election", March 15, 2005, <http://www.freesebia.net/Editorial/Zimbabwe8.html> citing an introduction of new Electoral Act designed to enable the military, police and prison officers to become workers in the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC); appointment of Brigadier Kennedy Zimondi, a retired army officer to the post of chief election officer amongst other posts given to serving and retired military personnel.

²⁶ C Sithole, ibid, p 30.

²⁷ Ibid. The italic emphasis is my own to highlight the significance of this assumption and its relationship to other legalistic/political concepts of national interest, individual interest and corporate self-interest, which will be a subject of later discussion.

²⁸ B Mibenge, 2004, op cit, p 32.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ A perception, which according to Western Shilaho, a Kenyan member of a non-governmental organisation at a workshop on Peace Building workshop at the Good Shepard Retreat in Tswane, South Africa on 9 June 2005 exists amongst some civilians.

³¹ D Henk, "The Botswana Defence Force: Evolution of a professional African military", *African Security Review*, 13 (4) 2004, p 85. Henk nevertheless wrote of Botswana citizen's contemptuous view of police capabilities.

³² Ibid.

³³ See Commission for Africa, 2005. *Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa*, www.commissionforafrica.org

³⁴ See also Ocran, 1978, op cit, p 61.

³⁵ Ibid, p 59.

³⁶ See S Hameso, "Issues and Dilemmas of Multi-Party Democracy in Africa", *West Africa Review*, 3 (2), 2002 and N Ngoma, "Coups and Coup Attempts in Africa: Is there a missing link?" *African Security Review*, 13 (3), 2004, pp 85 - 94.

³⁷ Ocran, 1978, op cit., p 60. See also Ngoma in Gilbert et. al. and <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/america/chile/chile0903-6.htm>.

³⁸ Ibid. See also Henk, 2004 op cit, p. 94 who categorically that the BDF has a clear norm that its soldiers should be "apolitical servants of the state and have no business involving themselves in partisan political squabbles".

³⁹ Ebo, 2005, op cit, p 16.

⁴⁰ Ocran, 1978, op cit, p. 64.

⁴¹ Mibenge, 2004, op cit., p.36.

⁴² Ebo, 2005. Op cit, pp 8.

⁴³ Brigadier Osaigbovo Ogbemudia of Nigeria quoted in Ocran, 1978, op cit, 3.

⁴⁴ Kourvetaris, 1988, op cit, p.270.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ocran, 1978 op cit, p 58.

⁴⁷ Rupiya, 2004, op cit, p. 21

⁴⁸ Generally taken to mean the theory and practice of forming and running organisations connected with government. Activity with a political party is taken as only one aspect of politics.

⁴⁹ See Lungu and Ngoma, 2005, op cit

⁵⁰ Ocran, 1998, op cit, p. 57.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 66.

⁵² Ibid, p. 67. See also Henk, op cit, p 92.

⁵³ See Alan Wells, "The Coup d'etat in Theory and Practice: Independent Black Africa in the 1960s", *American Journal of Sociology*, 79 (4), 871-887 and Hutchful, 1997, op cit.

⁵⁴ Ocran, 1998, op cit, p. 67.

⁵⁵ Oxfam 200, Africa at crossroads: time to deliver, *Oxford Briefing Paper 19*, Oxfam, Oxford.

⁵⁶ Singh, 2000 op cit., p. 7. See also Ocran on the organisational format theory, which postulates that military involvement in politics is because of the institution's organisational format which makes it able to play a vital role in modernisation.

⁵⁷ It is important to note that development is a rather an all-embracing concept which goes beyond the mere economic function. Goran Hyden argues that "...(D)evelopment is not only about projects, programs, policies, but also about politics". See Goran Hyden, "Governance and the Reconstitution of Political Order" in Richard Joseph (ed.) *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, London, p. 21.

⁵⁸ See the Constitutive Act of the African Union and Treaties of ECOWAS, East African Community and SADC.

⁵⁹ Center for Democracy and Governance, "Civil-Military Relations: USAID's Role", *Technical Publication Series*, July 1998, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research, Washington, D.C., p. 3.

⁶⁰ Moeed Yusuf, "Defence, Development and civil-military relations", www.thefridaytimes.com/main31.shtml-31k, p. 1.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.1

⁶² R Williams, "Bringing the Security Sector into the Democratisation Process - Africa and the Challenge of Security Sector Transformation", *Centre for Defence Studies*, Zimbabwe, Working paper, Number 2, December 2000, p. 1. See also Major General Len Le Roux, "The Political and Economic Impact of Defence Modernisation in sub-Saharan Africa", Conference

on Arms and Security in Asia 22 May 2003 with the South African Institute of International Affairs, Institute of International Relations (Taipei) and the Centre for Defence and International Security Studies (UK).

⁶³ L Roux, "Defence Sector Transformation: Challenges for sub-Saharan Africa", *African Security Review*, 12 (3) 2003, p. 5. See also N Ball & K Fayemi Security Sector Governance in Africa: A Hand Book, Center for Democracy & Development, 2004.

⁶⁴ Premised on <http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/> and Samuel Huntington, "Reforming Civil-Military Relations", *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (October 1995), p. 11.