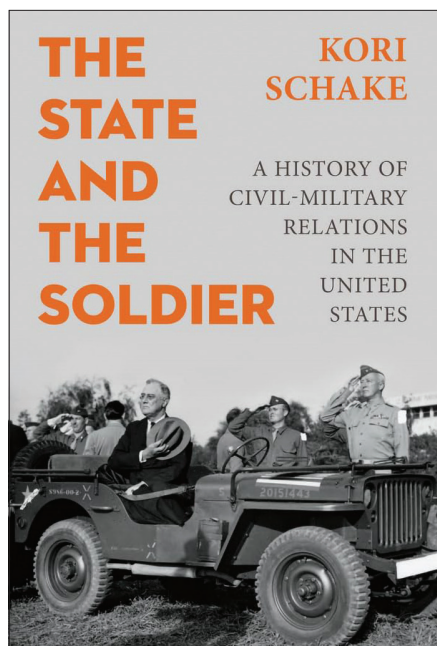


Joint leaders will find that it provides needed contemporary historical context for understanding the war in Ukraine and introduces the region's complex geopolitical dynamics. For commanders and staff officers, it can help illuminate the geopolitical tensions and differing perspectives on Ukraine to inform strategic plans and policy development. It is also an excellent read for strategists and foreign area officers serving in J5 directorates (strategy, plans, and policy) or U.S. European Command. Specifically, chapter 7, "The Search for Guardrails," and chapter 8, "Removing the Guardrails," can be used in professional military education to study deterrence. For instance, the collective failure of European states to address regional security following the Minsk agreements and a 20-year war in Afghanistan fueled Russia's belief that it would not pay a high cost for attacking Ukraine. Kimmage writes, "What mattered in the fall of 2021 [to Russia] was not the military's real-life inadequacies . . . what mattered was the military Putin thought he had. On its supposed excellence, he would make decisions about war and peace." The insular nature of Putin's autocratic rule created an echo chamber for the Russian government to perceive a greater chance of initial success in Ukraine. This is an important case study for deterrence theorists as it demonstrates how a leader's perception of military might, realized or not, encourages military action.

*Collisions* is a worthwhile chronicle of one of the most consequential conflicts since World War II. While the book suffers somewhat due to the access limitations around source material, it is an excellent contextualization of the Ukraine war's competing perspectives and drivers. For military leaders, especially those in planning or strategy, Kimmage provides a solid foundation for understanding the geopolitical forces shaping the war in Ukraine. The book's ability to balance the competing worldviews that led to the war and offer insightful lessons from these "collisions" is an important historical resource for the joint force. JFQ

---

Captain Peter R. Carkhuff is a U.S. Air Force Security Forces Officer.



## The State and the Soldier: A History of Civil-Military Relation in the United States

By Kori Schake  
Polity, 2025  
253 pp., \$29.95  
ISBN-13: 978-1509570539  
Reviewed by Lindsay L. Rodman

Kori Schake's *The State and the Soldier* is an engaging, compact, and comprehensive examination of U.S. civil-military relations history. The book recounts the defining moments in the relationship between civilian political leadership and the military from the perspective of a scholar and think-tanker who is well-known for her commentary on a wide range of defense policy-related topics. *The State and the Soldier* is an important and timely resource—amidst increasing public discourse regarding the current state of norms in civil-military relations, Schake provides much-needed historical perspective on what constitutes a civil-military crisis, and how worried we should be.

Throughout the nearly 250-year history of the United States, the military has been a bulwark of democracy, despite the Founding Fathers' original fears about a standing army. The U.S. military has

consistently passed Schake's two essential tests of healthy civil-military relations: can the president fire military leaders with impunity, and will the military carry out policies with which it does not agree? Even so, current public discourse suggests that we are at a perilous point for civil-military relations. Schake provides context for general readers as well as military professionals who seek to better understand what is at stake and how to navigate the tricky relationship between military and civilian leadership.

Most military professionals' understanding of civil-military relations is based on Samuel Huntington's 1957 *The Soldier and the State*. Professional military education still relies heavily on Huntington's theory of objective civilian control, which posits that civil-military relations are best maintained when there is strict separation between military and civilian spheres. In the Huntingtonian formulation, military leadership should remain technically expert, providing "best military advice" to civilian leadership, but otherwise refrain from politics and civilian decisionmaking. Yet any military professional who has served in the National Capital Region knows that military leaders are frequently asked to engage in political-level decisions.

Navigating civil-military relations today requires more than a reading of *The Soldier and the State*. Schake weaves the scholarship of prominent voices in civil-military relations into her historical retrospective, highlighting the works of Peter Feaver, Risa Brooks, and Eliot Cohen, among others. The strong theoretical work—providing a new perspective on Huntington and his contemporary rival, Morris Janowitz—is left for the epilogue. There, Schake notes the impracticality of both Huntington's strict separation and Janowitz's desire for complete integration. Informed by history, she concludes that both are "extreme models at variance with what has actually worked, and worked well, in American history."

Schake advocates for a more practical and modern conceptualization of healthy civil-military relations. The key to military subservience to civilian authority and the integrity of the profession in the United States begins with General

and President George Washington, who set numerous important precedents that today's military carries forward as norms of civil-military relations. Schake recounts Washington's scrupulousness in honoring Congress's role in both strategy and managing the purse strings, even when he disagreed with its decisions or lamented the slowness with which it operated. Washington's willingness to step away from his leadership roles was also remarkable at the time, impressing onlookers including King George III.

Schake's admiration for Washington is based on his political acumen, not his apoliticism. Understanding the politics of the moment (and perhaps the future), Washington made deliberate decisions to strengthen certain institutions over others, clarifying the subordination of the military to civilian authority and signaling to the public the importance of adherence to the Constitution. It was Washington, not Huntington, who laid out the tenets of American military professionalism.

Though the foundation for the stability of the U.S. civil-military relationship originated with Washington, it took time for these norms to take root. Here, *The State and the Soldier* makes a significant contribution by exploring the numerous often-overlooked instances of general officers challenging elected political authority within the first 100 years of U.S. history, including insubordination from future Presidents such as Ulysses S. Grant and Zachary Taylor. Even so, the staying power of the norms established during Washington's tenure carried through the tough early years to serve as the better example from early U.S. history.

The most dangerous event in U.S. civil-military history might have been the failed conspiracy of former Vice President Aaron Burr and the Commanding General of the U.S. Army, James Wilkinson. However, Schake believes the most trying moment was when Congress compelled General Ulysses Grant to testify against the President and the Secretary of War. In December 1867, the House was considering President Andrew Johnson's impeachment, posing tough questions to Grant about the President's policies. Although Grant had a checkered

history regarding civil-military relations, in this critical moment he followed in Washington's footsteps by siding with Congress in its Constitutional oversight role, regardless of the effect on the military and commander-in-chief.

According to Schake, two major efforts contributed to a transformation in civil-military relations: the passage of the Posse Comitatus Act in 1878 and the professionalization of the military around the turn of the century, following the example of the Prussian school. The result was a military that invested in its own technical competence and ethos, designed for employment primarily overseas. Schake is just as meticulous about retelling the history of civil-military relations in the United States after these first 100 years, through the modern era and until today, including an entire chapter devoted to the past decade, but notes that these events pale in comparison to the potential threats posed in the early years.

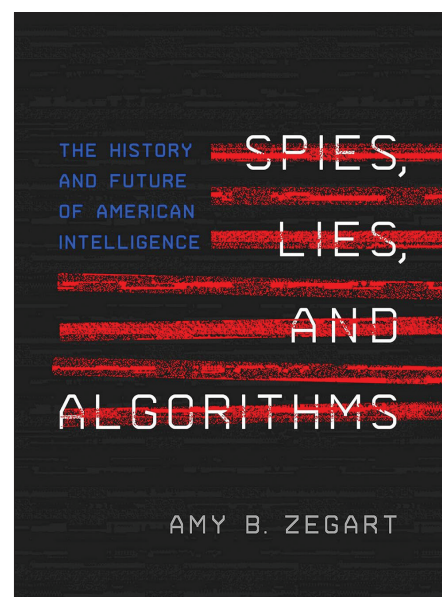
Despite the professionalization of the military that inculcated many of the norms Washington pioneered, the civil-military relationship today is far from perfect. Using historical cases, Schake performs some course-correction on prevailing narratives regarding more recent events in civil-military relations. She provides examples of general officers staying above the political fray and mistakes that general officers have made in attempting to constructively engage in inherently political conversations. Ultimately, it is the civilian leadership's responsibility to make and own strategic decisions. For example, while H.R. McMaster wrote that military officers were derelict in their duty to push back on bad civilian strategy during the Vietnam War, Schake questions whether his preferred approach would be appropriate as civil-military relations advice.

Instead of outright defiance, the civil-military relationship in the modern era has been mostly characterized by Feaver's concept of "shirking"—that is, military leadership's placing bureaucratic obstacles in the way of implementation of civilian political decisions. While military professionals are taught to remain "apolitical," adept bureaucratic maneuvering is often lauded as an important skill set for senior

officers. Military leaders are often called on to navigate political worlds, requiring a more sophisticated understanding of the history and context in which military professionals are operating today. *The State and the Soldier* is essential reading for any military professional who anticipates an assignment in the National Capital Region or other strategic-level commands requiring engagement with senior civilian leadership. JFQ

---

Lieutenant Colonel Lindsay L. Rodman, USMCR, is a recent graduate of the Marine Corps War College, an adjunct professor at George Washington University Law School, and a Ph.D. candidate in War Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada.



## Spies, Lies, and Algorithms: The History and Future of American Intelligence

By Amy B. Zegart  
Princeton University Press, 2022  
424 pp., \$21.95 (Paperback)  
ISBN-13: 978-0691223070  
Reviewed by Nalonic J.M. Tyrrell

Amy Zegart has long been intrigued—and often confounded—by America's obsession with what she calls “spytainment”: the blending of espionage and enter-