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*Like, Comment, Retweet: The State of  
the Military's Nonpartisan Ethic in the  
World of Social Media*

by Heidi A. Urben



Past research contends that with the exception of voting in Presidential elections, military officers' political

participation is fairly muted. Through a survey of more than 500 military elites attending the United States Military Academy and National Defense University, this case study seeks to establish the nature and extent of political expression throughout social media and whether such expression is in keeping with the norm of nonpartisanship.

Findings suggest that while most military elites continue to identify as conservative and Republican, fewer appear to do so today than at any other time over the past 30 years. Military elites who identify as liberals and Democrats are more likely to have more politically diverse military friends on social media, but are also more likely to report feeling uncomfortable by their friends' politics. This study concludes by considering the implications these findings carry for the norms of an apolitical, non-partisan military.



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