

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century reflects changing battlefields and security scenarios for nation-states across the world. Contemporary geo-political and strategic terrains are symbolic of the rise of radical Islamic terror propagated by Violent Non-State Actors (VNSAs), in addition to on-going low intensity conflicts, border skirmishes and the prospect of thermonuclear war. The rise of modern armies and their continuing resolve in the face of challenging and changing security environments coupled with their key role in maintenance of state security, power and territorial integrity, points towards their professionalism and caliber. This professionalism of the armed forces, is commonly referred to as military professionalism, and is characterized by able and competent leadership of military forces by the officer corps. The officer corps is well-trained, experienced and possesses valuable tactical and strategic knowledge, enabling a structured and disciplined armed force at the disposal of the state. Snider states that the military profession exists for a singular purpose, which is serving and safeguarding civil society and state interests at large (2017, p-9). Therefore, military professionalism also entails the submission to the overall supremacy of the state and its civilian administration, which the military is duty-bound to serve in a loyal and faithful manner. The interaction of a state's military force with its civilian administration leads to the phenomena of civil-military relations. Kummel defines civil-military relations as the "relations between the armed forces and the soldiers and the non-military, civilian world on the other" (2002, p-66). These relations can be either positive (contributing to state stability) or have a negative impact if they are strained (detrimental to state stability). However, as military professionalism is interwoven with the very fabric and ethos of military forces, the military is firmly in the service of the state and enables positive interactions with the civilian government. Therefore, this essay shall argue that military professionalism (as discussed above) ensures the facilitation and maintenance of positive and constructive ties between armed forces and civilian governments of nation-states.

Firstly, it shall elucidate how the pursuit of national security objectives, under the aegis of professionalism of the officer corps, leads to a productive relationship between civil and military establishments within a state. Moving further, the essay shall showcase how the professional characteristics of the military enable it to maintain cohesion with the government, thereby negating the risk of domestic military coups or military coercion of civilian governments. Lastly, it highlights the influential role of military professionalism in maintaining strong civil-military relations reflected through a dedicated sense of duty by the armed forces in ensuring state survivability in challenging security environments. Overall, the essay does not stress upon the division of the civilian and military as two distinct worlds or entities, with the military operating with complete autonomy. This is primarily because “a clear division of labor and domains of authority between political and military leaders” is not feasible as it creates tensions, giving rise to differences between the armed forces and the civilian government (Brooks, 2020, p-10). Thus, the essay views the military and the civilian administration as two entities supporting one another, acting as pillars holding up the state through productive civil-military relations. Furthermore, the essay shall make use of a neo-realist (structural realist) theoretical lens, to analyze how military professionalism and the military’s adherence to it translates into stable and positive civil-military relations in states. By using a neo-realist lens, the impact of military professionalism in strengthening national security and dictating responses to emerging threats, in addition to enhancing state power in relation to other states and ensuring state survival, can be appropriately gauged.

The current security scenario faced by most nation-states involves dealing with not only the risk of armed hostilities with enemy countries, but also responding to terrorist activity

seeking to destabilize the state by striking fear into the hearts of the citizenry. The existence and persistence of such factors pose serious threats to the national security of states. It is this context that the military itself and military professionalism become “vital to the flourishing of protected society” (Snider, 2017, p-9). This is mainly due to the fact that professionalism of the military, which reflects its readiness and devotion to duty in safeguarding state interests, makes the military the obvious choice for the civilian administration and the wider population to depend upon. Such professionalism therefore prompts the civilian administration to call upon the military to address emerging or continuing threats, in conjunction with national defense policy. As the military is already under able command and guidance of a well-trained and devoted professional officer corps, it is ready to take on any task assigned to it to achieve national security objectives as set out by the civilian government. Examples of such tasks assigned can range from capturing and holding enemy territory, destroying enemy defense infrastructure, or killing or capturing High Value Targets (HVTs) i.e., usually high-ranking members of terrorist outfits. Samuel Huntington in his book on civil-military relations, ‘The Soldier and the State’, also recognized the importance of military professionalism, in the background of fulfilling national security requirements by labelling civil-military relations as an extension of national security policy (1957, p-1). This is due to the fact that military professionalism makes the military establishment a reliable and competent partner in national security, thereby increasing civil-military interaction over issues threatening state security. This leads to a more productive relationship and mutual understanding between the civil administration and the military. Moreover, the positive and productive nature of civil-military relations is also greatly enhanced in times of crises. It is at such moments of crises that there is a critical requirement for professional “background and experience to respond quickly” (Lyons, 1961, p-59). This has also been highlighted by Fox stating that decisions made purely by civilian

authority in national security policy making may not be fully in sync with ground or operational realities (1961, p-360). Therefore, there is a crucial requirement of critical military knowledge and technicalities possessed by the officer corps in dealing with matters of national security. This is so because the military officer corps has specialized education and experience in tactics, war-making and strategy, which the civilian authority usually lacks. This is due to the diverse education possessed by serving military officers, which ranges from military or technical education gained from military colleges or academies, in addition to strategic knowhow and advanced skills required for command and staff appointments. Therefore, military professionalism as embodied by the officer corps enables swift reaction to counter any opposing force or threat. Yet again, this leads to favorable relations between the civil and military establishments, with the government often soliciting the expertise of the military professions. It is important to note that even as one threat is dealt with through military support and guidance, others may emerge. This too warrants further cooperation between the armed forces and the civil administration, aiding in productive civil-military interactions and relations in future threat scenarios as well. The system and order of ranks (generally on the basis of seniority or experience) creates a hierarchy within the armed forces of states. In context of the same, it has been stated that “hierarchy is the backbone of all military performance” (Van Doorn, 1965, p-264). This is due to the fact that the hierarchical system within the military generates military professionalism in the form discipline, adherence to set or standardized protocols, authority and orders of superior officers. This translates into effective military performance as the overall obedience of orders also enables the armed forces to accept and obey orders from high-ranking officials in the government. This adherence to orders and an established system of command and control (i.e. C2), as a result of military professionalism, enables civil-military coordination in a harmonious, formalized and orderly manner, thereby helping

to achieve national security or military objectives. Overall, when military professionalism is examined under a neo-realist lens, it is quite evident that the professional discharge of duties by the military enables the state to maintain national security and address any concerns regarding it. This leads to the state's maintenance of power and dominance. Additionally, military professionalism through its service of state interests, and continuous support of the civil administration in negotiating and addressing security scenarios, results in a flourishing equation between civil and military establishments. This occurs whilst ensuring that the state can maintain a favorable balance of power in relation to enemy states.

The essay shall now showcase how professionalism of the armed forces acts as an agent for sustaining close ties between civil and military establishments, subsequently eliminating the risk of military coups or imposition of military authority over the writ of the state. Military professionalism as understood by Owens, reflects the current reality that military leadership must be fully aware of the politics surrounding policy making whilst participating in defense policy formulation in an effort to remain apolitical (2015, p-97). This is due to the fact that the military is an essential part of defense policy making but has to be conscious so as to not over-step and trespass into the realm of civilian governance. Here, it is military professionalism that ensures that civil and military establishments are not at odds with one another. It does so by ensuring the military's devotion to service of the state and of protocol of non-interference in purely civilian matters. As a result of the same, the military and the civilian establishments can maintain close operational ties without leading to a breakdown of civil-military relations. Over the last hundred years, there has gradually developed a consciousness about "the political and social impact of military force" (Sarkesian, 1981, p-

289). This consciousness was quick to expose the consequences of the non-judicious use of military force, war crimes, displacement of people due to armed violence, etc. Therefore, professional militaries now increasingly incorporate a realization of the “deep sense of the political and the social” impacts of military action into their military professionalism (Sarkesian, 1981, p-289). This has led to military professionalism making armed forces act in a more responsible and humane manner in the field of war, while still continuing their commitments to warfare and the destruction of the enemy. As professionalism greatly enhances the accountability of the military, it reduces the risk of the military overthrowing the civilian leadership to capture state power through military coups. Huntington states that the military professional entails a “commitment” specifically involving “the management of violence as a career” (1963, p-785). Understanding this statement in light of military professionalism, it clearly establishes the specific function of the armed forces, thereby eliminating the possibility of a coup like scenario as long as professional, ethical, and moral codes of duty remain intact. Therefore, the military and its doctrine remain consistent with achieving clearly outlined goals of national security, guided by military professionalism, ensuring peaceful and productive relations with both the civil administration and the common citizens it defends. Positive relations resulting out of an adherence to military professionalism contribute to national stability, enhance citizens’ confidence in the government and the military. Productive civil-military relations also ensure the maintenance of state dominance and power in world politics. A neorealist analysis here showcases that military professionalism can greatly ensure state’s stability and power in world politics, through achieving constructive civil-military relations, especially in a world order characterized by anarchy and VNSAs working against state interests.

The essay shall now showcase the critical role performed by military professionalism in the preservation of productive civil-military relations, through the military's dedication to a sense of duty towards the state in the face of often challenging scenarios. After the defeat of Iraq in the First Gulf War "many observers believed that Saddam Hussein would eventually be toppled in a military coup" (Quinlivan, 1999, p-131). However, to the surprise or even disappointment of many, Iraq remained a sovereign state with Saddam Hussein firmly in power. The reason for Saddam's continued rule can be attributed to military professionalism. In Iraq, the armed forces were dedicated and loyal to the state and its government. This reflect their clear professional mindset as they were committed to selflessly serving the interests of the state. Such dedication to service and loyalty ensured that Saddam held the military in high regard, equipping it to a high standard which made it a capable military in Middle East. This ensured effective state survival up until the Second Gulf War, wherein Iraqi military units were severely outgunned by superior American weaponry. Other key examples of military professionalism saving the day, by ensuring state survival against all odds, can be witnessed in the cases of Israel during the Arab-Israeli Wars, and the Syrian Arab Republic during the on-going civil war. In reference to Israel, Kamrava stated that the Israeli Military "has been responsible for its very survival" (2000, p-72). This owes to the overall level of professionalism of the Israeli military, as it rendered valuable national service, protecting the fledgling state against the combined armies of the Arab powers. Yamaguchi and Welch highlighted that military minds such Carl von Clausewitz and state constitutions alike establish that the military is in the service of the government and not vice-versa (2005, p-219). Therefore, the military is often constitutionally duty-bound to protect the state in times of crises. This creates an unbreakable bond between the armed forces and the governments they serve. In the Syrian Civil War, the officer corps of the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) has maintained close proximity

and support to the regime of Bashar al-Assad. This stems from committed military professionalism, ensuring the rule and stability of government, even in times of civil unrest. In the cases of both Israel and Syria military professionalism ensured maintenance of continuous civil-military relations, allowing for state survival in scenarios threatening the very existence of both states. Upon neorealist analysis, state survivability in such contexts reflects the success of military professionalism in ensuring state survival and critical state functioning in conditions of prevailing anarchy and turmoil.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that military professionalism refers to the attributes of the military which make it a profession fighting force in service of state interests. It is lucid that military professionalism aids in producing and maintaining positive civil-military relations. Firstly, the dedicated pursuit of national security under military professionalism brings together both civil and military establishments ensuring effective responses to national security threats and critical joint policy formulation. It can also be deduced that military professionalism enables enhanced cohesion and mutual understanding between armed forces and civilian governments. Therefore, it ensures the stability of civil-military relations and the state in general. Moreover, the professionalism exhibited by armed forces in scenarios challenging the very existence of the state itself, inclusive of professional ethos and dedicated national service rendered, leads to enhanced civil-military relations. Through the use of a neo-realist lens, it can be established that military professionalism has an immense impact on the overall maintenance and enhancement of civil-military relations. This is so as it echoes a resolute sense of duty and service that the military has to the state



and its citizens, also enabling coordination and cohesion with the government, to address emerging threats, ensuring continued state power and strategic might by preserving state survival even as conditions of anarchy continue to plague the world order.

## **REFERENCE LIST:**

Brooks, R., 2020. Paradoxes of Professionalism: Rethinking Civil-Military Relations in the United States. *International Security*, 44(4), pp. 7-44.

Fox, W.T.R., 1961. Representativeness and Efficiency Dual Problem of Civil-Military Relations. *Political Science Quarterly*, 76(3), pp. 354-366.

Huntington, S.P., 1957. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Harvard University Press.

Huntington, S.P., 1963. Power, Expertise and the Military Profession. *Daedalus*, 92(4), pp. 785-807.

Kamrava, M., 2000. Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East. *Political Science Quarterly*, 115(1), pp. 67-92.

Kummel, G., 2002. The Military and its Civilian Environment: Reflections on a Theory of Civil-Military Relations. *Connections*, 1(4), pp.63-82.

Lyons, G.M., 1961. The New Civil-Military Relations. *The American Political Science Review*, 55(1), pp. 53-63.

Owens, M.T., 2015. Military Officers: Political without Partisanship. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 9(3), pp. 88-101.

Quinlivan, J.T., 1999. Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East. *International Security*, 24(2), pp. 131-165.

Sarkesian, S.C., 1981. Military Professionalism and Civil-Military Relations in the West. *International Political Science Review*, 2(3), pp. 283-297.

Snider, D.M., 2017. Dissent, Resignation, and the Moral Agency of Senior Military Professionals. *Armed Forces and Society*, 43(1), pp. 5-16.

Van Doorn, J., 1965. The Officer Corps: A Fusion of Profession and Organization. *European Journal of Sociology*, 6(2), pp. 262-282.

Yamaguchi, N., Welch, D.A., 2005. SOLDIERS, CIVILIANS, AND SCHOLARS: MAKING SENSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY. *Asian Perspective*, 29(1), pp. 213-232.



