Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Central and Eastern Europe:  
A Framework for Understanding Civil-Military Relations in Post-Communist Europe

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‘The Transformation of Civil-Military Relations in a Comparative Context’  
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This research project examines the changing nature of civil-military relations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and analyses the implications of this for European security and stability.

As part of the first phase of this research project, this paper lays out a framework for understanding the issues involved in efforts to secure democratic control of armed forces in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. On the basis of this paper, we will be undertaking detailed case studies of the issues and problems involved in establishing democratic control of the armed forces in individual Central and Eastern European states. This paper is a working draft and we welcome all comments on it. Comments should be sent to:

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1 Introduction

After the collapse of communism in 1989 and the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe faced the enormous challenge of making the transition from Soviet communism to an unknown future, with little or no experience of democracy, market economics or stable relations with their neighbours to build on. One element of this transition was the problem of reforming communist-era armed forces and civil-military relations. The ability of post-communist elites to secure democratic control of the armed forces or at least the acquiescence of the military to the democratic transition, would have a significant impact on the prospects for democratisation as a whole. The extent of democratic control of the military might also have a significant bearing on Central and Eastern European states relations with the West and their prospects for integration with the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The extent to and ways in which armed forces maintained influence over foreign and defence policy decisions and were intertwined with conceptions of national identity might also have major implications for relations with neighbouring states and ethnic minorities and hence for peace and security in the region.

There were reasons to be pessimistic about the prospects for securing democratic control of the armed forces in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. During the Soviet era, the military were one of the pillars of communist rule whose loyalty was secured by a combination of penetration by the communist party system, political education and the provision of substantial resources to support the armed forces. In pre-Soviet times, in particular during the inter-war period, armed forces intervened in the domestic politics of a number of Central and Eastern European countries, often alongside or in support of authoritarian and (extreme) nationalist political forces. The wider context of political, economic and social transition, further, meant that the challenge of reforming civil-military relations was likely to take place against a background of domestic and international instability. In these circumstances, fears of military intervention in domestic politics, whether to ‘protect the achievements of socialism’, ‘maintain domestic order’, ‘secure national interests’ or simply to defend the armed forces own institutional or economic interests were hardly unwarranted.

As the communist regimes collapsed in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, there were real fears that the armed forces might intervene to halt the collapse of communism by force. In the event, both national armed forces and the Soviet military
stood by as the ancien regime of which they had been a part disintegrated. In 1991, as the struggle in the Soviet Union between hard-liners and reformers intensified, the military intervened to suppress the independence movements in the Baltic states and elements in the Soviet high command joined with communist hard-liners in mounting the unsuccessful August coup attempt. As Yugoslavia moved towards war in 1991, the military’s loyalty to the idea of a Yugoslav state and support for then Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and the efforts of the other republics (in particular Croatia) to establish their own paramilitary forces played a central role in the genesis of the conflict.

Since then, patterns of civil-military relations across Central and Eastern Europe have become more complex, more varied and more difficult to assess. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary have arguably made substantial progress in establishing democratic models of civil-military relations. Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria are generally perceived to be moving in the same direction but lagging behind, the first three new NATO members. The Baltic states and Slovenia have made progress in establishing national armed forces with democratic, civilian control at their core. In contrast, democratic control of the military in Russia and the former Soviet states remains open to serious questions. In Croatia, Bosnia, the rump Yugoslavia, Macedonia and Albania, the armed forces remain deeply intermeshed with domestic politics, nationalism and weak state structures. In all these cases, however, our understanding of the nature of civil-military relations and the extent and effectiveness of democratic control of the military remains relatively poor.

In order to better understand the emerging patterns of civil-military relations, and in particular the prospects for democratic control of armed forces, in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, this paper lays out a framework for examining these issues. It begins by arguing that democratic control of armed forces involves three distinct but closely related elements: the non-involvement of the military in domestic politics; democratic control of defence policy (in terms of force size and structure, defence spending and procurement); and democratic control of foreign policy (including decisions on the external use of force). The paper then explores the various factors which may shape civil-military relations, suggesting that these are: the ways in which historical patterns of civil-military relations influence contemporary developments; the broad domestic political, economic and social context of any given country; the international context, in particular the dominant influence of the
Western ‘security community’ in post-Cold War Europe; domestic institutional factors (particularly, the constitutional, governmental and administrative arrangements relating to control of the armed forces); and issues of ‘military culture’ and military professionalism.

2 Conceptualising Democratic Control of Armed Forces

In discussions of the role of armed forces in Central and Eastern Europe, the phrases ‘civil-military relations’, ‘democratic control’ and ‘civilian control’ are familiar and widely used terms. They are, however, rarely defined with any exactitude and are often used inter-changeably - implying that they are the same things. This vague use of these terms often produces confusion or ambiguity in debates on the extent to which democratic models of civil-military relations are being established in Central and Eastern Europe. A better understanding of these issues requires more explicit definitions of what we mean by civil-military relations and in particular democratic control of the military.

We suggest that the term ‘civil-military relations’ should be understood to encompass all aspects of relations between armed forces (as a political, social and economic institution) and the society (and state or political/social/ethnic movement) of which they are part. The political function and position of the military - that is to say, their relationship with the institutions and patterns of political power in the society concerned - forms the core of civil-military relations. Civil-military relations, however, also involve wider issues: the broader attitude of the military towards civilian society; civilian society’s perceptions of and attitudes to the military; the military’s ethos as to what its roles should be; and the economic role of the military. In this context, we define ‘democratic control’ of armed forces as control of the military by the legitimate, democratically elected authorities of the state.

2.1 Military Intervention in Domestic Politics

We argue that democratic control of armed forces involves three distinct but inter-related issues. The first issue is the extent to and ways in which civilian government regulates the influence of the armed forces in domestic politics of the state/society. Thus, the idea of democratic control of the military is based on the core normative assumption that the military should not be involved in domestic politics and should remain the apolitical servant of the democratic government. In contrast, most cases
of military intervention in domestic politics are usually justified either explicitly or implicitly by reference to other norms, values, or goals. For example, the preservation of national security, the maintenance of political and social order or defence of the state against communism have often been used as an alternative reference points.

2.2 The Armed Forces and Defence Policy

The second element of democratic control of the military relates to the control of defence policy. We understand this to be the broad direction of the development of the armed forces, encompassing defence budgeting, force structure, equipment procurement and overall military strategy. Democratic control of the armed forces implies that the definition and development of defence policy should be under the control of democratic, civilian authorities and that the military should confine itself to implementing decisions made by those authorities. In practice, since the development and implementation of defence policy involves complex military-technical issues on which the military may be best qualified to provide advice and expertise, what is meant by ‘control of defence policy’ is problematic and raises difficult issues as to the appropriate balance between civilian control and sensible deference to military expertise on defence matters.¹

2.3 The Armed Forces and Foreign Policy

The third element of democratic control of the military relates to the extent and ways in which the military influences a state’s foreign policy, in particular decisions on the use of military force. Again, democratic control of the military implies that the state’s foreign policy, including decisions on the deployment and use of force, must be under the control of the democratic civilian authorities. In practice, as with the issue of control of defence policy, decisions on the initiation and conduct of military operations raise difficult issues as to the balance of influence between civilian and military authorities.² Here, it is also important to note that there is major division between scholars. On the one hand, some argue that the military are more prone than civilians to use force and that weak civilian control will increase the likelihood of armed conflict. Others suggest that an inherent conservatism is present in modern professional armed forces, which makes them reluctant to embark on adventurist military endeavours.³ In the post-communist context, the extent to which the Russian military has played a central role in shaping Russian policy towards the former Soviet
Union (in particular Russian peacekeeping/enforcement operations) remains an important and debated issue.\textsuperscript{4}

\section*{2.4 Civil Utilisation of the Armed Forces in Politics}

Conceptual thinking about democratic control of armed forces also raises a number of other problems with particular relevance for post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. Achieving democratic control of the military is usually conceived of in terms of securing the disengagement of the armed forces from politics - with the implicit assumption that the primary problem is the military’s desire to intervene in domestic politics (as, for example, was the case in parts of Latin America in the 1970s). In communist Central and Eastern Europe, however, the military did not intervene in domestic politics in its own right but was rather one of the instruments of power controlled by the largely civilian communist leadership and was both penetrated by and subordinated to that civilian leadership. This has left a particular legacy in terms of disentangling the armed forces from the communist system of which they were a significant, but not controlling, part. Civil-military relations, furthermore, are not necessarily a one-way process whereby the military actively seeks to intervene in politics against the will of civilian/democratic authorities. The picture is often considerably more complicated, with civilian elites seeking to draw the military into politics and/or divisions within these elites forcing the military to make difficult decisions as to where their loyalty should lie. These problems may be particularly important and compounded when wider society is characterised by deep political divisions. In these circumstances, civilian leaders may try to draw the military into politics in an attempt to gain its support in what are primarily civilian, domestic political conflicts. The absence of clear constitutional arrangements and chains of command may further exacerbate these problems, creating a situation where the armed forces may themselves face difficult political and moral dilemmas concerning which political authorities they should be loyal to. In Russia, for example, President Yeltsin has sought to maintain the support of the ‘power ministries’ and elite Russian army units. The Russian military therefore faced difficult dilemmas over how to respond when called upon by Yeltsin to suppress the 1993 parliamentary revolt by his opponents. In the early 1990s, the Polish military also became the subject of a dispute between the President and government over its control.
2.5 Civilian Control and Democratic Control

A further issue is the relationship between civilian and democratic control of the military. The two are often treated as the same thing, with the terms used interchangeably and sometimes conflated into one ('civilian, democratic control of the military'). We argue that the relationship between the two needs to be considered in a more nuanced way. It is possible to have civilian control of the military which is not democratic, as in the Soviet Union where the military was subordinated to the Communist Party and some Arab Middle East states, where civilian control remains reasonably strong despite the absence of democracy. Similarly, it is possible to have high-level democratic, civilian control of the military but largely non-civilian control of the details and implementation of defence policy - as in Italy, where the Ministry of Defence remains largely dominated by the military. As we have argued, the real issue is probably defining the appropriate balance between civilian and military control of defence policy.

2.6 Who are ‘the Military’?

An additional problem is the tendency to treat ‘the military’ as a single, coherent whole. In reality, the situation in Central and Eastern Europe is often more complicated, which in turn has significant implications for democratic control of the armed forces. The military may, for example, be divided itself, both on whether to intervene in politics and on whose side to intervene. Additionally, there is often a distinction between the permanent officer corps and mass conscripts, as well as issues concerning the degree to which the officer corps has control of these conscripts. Aside from the regular army, paramilitary forces (including paramilitaries, militarised police, border guards and armed secret services) may also be important. These paramilitary formations may have different roles, constitutional arrangements and ethos to regular armed forces, and may be more likely to interfere in domestic politics. In the former Yugoslavia further complications have arisen from the presence of unconventional armed forces made up of irregulars or militiamen who may owe only abstract political allegiance to a particular ethnic group or state, and who can move in and out of government control.

2.7 Summary

In summary, we argue that civil-military relations should be understood as involving all aspects of the armed forces relations with the society of which they part and that
democratic control of the military involves three distinct but closely inter-related elements: military non-involvement in politics, democratic control of defence policy and democratic control of foreign policy (including decisions on the use of force). Much of the debate and literature on civil-military relations tends not to recognise these distinctions. In turn, this lack of focus often leads to confusion as to what is actually being discussed. In Central and Eastern Europe, for example, the extent of military intervention in domestic politics has been remarkably limited, whereas the military often retain a substantial degree of control over the making of defence policy. Against this background, the rest of this paper examines the factors which shape civil-military relations, in particular the prospects for democratic control of armed forces, in Central and Eastern Europe, and may help in explaining different patterns of civil-military relations.

In the next section, we advance the hypothesis that the international environment plays a central role in shaping domestic patterns of civil-military relations. In post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, in particular, the Western ‘security community’ has a dominant influence, creating strong pressures for states to conform to established Western norms of democratic, civilian control of armed forces. Exactly how a state responds to these pressures is dependent upon a range of domestic factors, of which the most important are the historical legacy of civil-military relations during the pre-communist and Soviet eras, domestic political economic and social circumstances and a range of institutional factors. It also depends on the military culture and the degree of professionalisation of the armed forces in any given country. We hypothesise that the impact of these factors affects the influence of the armed forces in domestic politics, democratic control over defence policy and the military’s influence in a state’s foreign policy in different ways. However, patterns of civil-military relations will be discernible in terms of the relative importance of particular factors.

3 International Context
External international factors can have a significant impact on patterns of civil-military relations. General, long-term international trends are creating pressures for democratic, civilian control of armed forces and military disengagement from politics. These pressures stem in part from the wider, long-term development of democracy (including democratic control of the military) as an international norm. They also stem
more specifically from the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War, Soviet communism imposed its own particular model of civil-military relations, while the West was willing to accept military rule in Southern Europe, Latin America and Africa in order to support allies and oppose communism. In the post-Cold War world, the Soviet model has collapsed, while the rationale for Western support of anti-Communist military regimes has disappeared. The impact of these factors, however, clearly varies from case to case and countervailing pressures exist in some instances.

3.1 The Influence of the West

In Central and Eastern Europe, the predominant position of the Western ‘security community’ (the United States and the countries of Western Europe, embodied in the institutions of the EU and NATO) is by far the single greatest external factor shaping patterns of civil-military relations. The West’s political, economic and military power, and the desire of Central and Eastern European countries for integration with the West, provides it with enormous influence and leverage in the region. General Western support for democratisation extends to the sphere of civil-military relations. More specific Western policies such as NATO’s Partnership for Peace have been designed to promote democratic, civilian control of armed forces. However, it is also clear that Western policies vary from case to case and may have significantly greater impact in some countries than others. Consequently, it is important to examine the impact of Western influence in general, and specific Western policies and programmes, on a country by country basis.

3.2 The Influence of Russia

An additional external factor, especially in the former Soviet Union, is the continuing influence of Russia. In may be argued, for example, that in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Russian has prioritised support for strategic allies, former communists and anti-Islamic forces and that this has reduced pressure for the democratisation of civil-military relations. As such, it is also important to ask what impact (if any) have Russian attitudes and policies had.

3.3 External Security Threats and Conflicts

The extent and nature of external security threats and on-going conflicts may also have an impact on civil-military relations. In particular, the existence of significant
threats to national security or on-going conflict makes the armed forces an especially important institution, raising their domestic political profile and influence, increasing their access to resources and potentially making them a focus of national identity. In turn, these factors can create pressures for military intervention in domestic politics and foreign policy and military control of defence policy. As an illustration, the Yugoslav conflict generated and legitimised highly politicised militaries in Serbia and Croatia. In contrast, the absence of an overt external conflict or immediate security threat has reduced the salience of civil-military relations in Ukraine to date.

4 Historical Legacies

The historical context of any given country will have a significant bearing on civil-military relations. In Central and Eastern Europe both communist and pre-communist periods need to be considered. The pre-communist period remains important because states and societies generally, and armed forces particularly, may either deliberately attempt to re-establish or inadvertently fall back into pre-communist national models of civil-military relations in an effort to overcome the communist legacy.

4.1 Soviet and Communist Legacies

One of the defining characteristics of civil-military relations during the Soviet period was the effort of the civilian leadership to ensure the loyalty of the military to the communist system’s values and institutions. Like all other branches of the state, the military was subjugated to Communist Party control. A system of dual elite loyalty was established, in which all high-ranking military officers and most of the lower and middle ranks, were members of the Communist Party - and hence had loyalties to both the armed forces and the Communist Party. The system was re-inforced by the establishment of Party cells within the military and extensive communist political education alongside soldiers’ military training. This system had two significant and to some extent contradictory legacies. First, the military was highly politicised, in the sense that it was closely tied to the ruling Communist Party and substantial efforts were made to embed communist political values and institutions within the military. At the same time, however, the military was also subject to quite strong and direct civilian control and was not directly engaged in domestic politics as an institution in its own right (- indeed, communist leaders were always aware, sometimes acutely so,
of the armed forces potential role as an alternative source of political allegiance and power and a potential threat to communist rule).

The nature of civil-military relations during the communist period raises significant questions about the extent and depth to which the Soviet bloc armed forces were politicised or 'penetrated' by the various communist regimes. In the Soviet and Yugoslav cases, the armed forces appear to have been highly politicised and exhibited significant loyalty to the Communist Party. In contrast, some of the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact militaries (such as the Polish armed forces) do not appear to have exhibited the same degree of allegiance. The depth of communist era 'penetration' of the military may thus play a significant role in determining the prospects for developing democratic control of the armed forces in the post-communist era. The apparent loyalty of the Soviet and Yugoslav armed forces to their respective states and Community Parties also raises important questions about the implications for civil-military relations in states which have disintegrated and situations were the communist system is dead but the Communist Parties or their successors remain major political actors.

The extent of the armed forces’ influence on foreign policy and defence policy during the communist period may also have implications for post-communist civil-military relations. Much of the literature suggests that the influence of the armed forces on foreign policy, including decisions on the external use of force, was relatively limited during the communist period (in both Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union). In contrast however, it appears that defence policy at least in terms of procurement, tactics and strategy was very much under (Soviet) military control. The latter factor may be important in explaining why the development of democratic control of defence policy has been a particular problem in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe.

4.2 Pre-Communist Legacies

Although more distant than the communist period, pre-communist patterns of civil-military relations may have an important bearing on developments in the post-communist period. Thus, it is important to analyse the extent to which there has been a tradition of military intervention in the country concerned. This raises a number of questions. If there have been historic episodes of military rule or intervention in politics, were they viewed positively or negatively be society as a whole? Was the
military seen as a ‘saviour of the nation’ or as a ‘threat’ to democracy, independence or security? To what extent was the military socialised towards political intervention. How far was society socialised towards acceptance of, support for, or opposition to such intervention? The answers to these questions are likely to impinge on current developments in civil-military relations. While the legacy of the communist period has the most direct impact on contemporary civil-military relations in Central and Eastern Europe, the legacy of the inter-war years may also be particularly important and even earlier periods may have significance.

5 Domestic Political, Economic and Social Context

The broad domestic political, economic and social context of the state will also have a significant impact on civil-military relations. While various specific domestic factors are likely to influence patterns of civil-military relations, in practice they are often inter-related and mutually reinforcing. The inter-related problems of internally weak states, undemocratic politics, deep political and social divisions, economic deprivation and extreme nationalism and ethnic conflicts, for example, may help to create circumstances where there is a far greater likelihood of military intervention in domestic politics than would otherwise be the case. Many examples can be drawn from post-colonial Africa and Latin America. In contrast, internally strong states with established democracies, moderated political and social divisions, economic stability and prosperity, and moderated nationalism and ethnic conflicts are probably much less likely to experience military intervention in domestic politics. The countries of Western Europe after 1945 provide the most prominent examples in this case.

The internal ‘strength’ or ‘weakness’ of a state may have a significant bearing on the likelihood of military intervention in politics and on the prospects for democratic control of the military. In this sense, a ‘strong state’ is one with effective state, governmental and political structures and a high degree of social cohesion and unity rather than an internally repressive or internationally powerful one. One consequence of an internally strong state is the likelihood that there will be few opportunities or rationales for military intervention in politics. Sweden, the Netherlands, or post-1945 (West) Germany might be cited as examples. In contrast, a ‘weak state’ is one with ineffective state, governmental and political structures and deep social/political divisions and/or disunity. In ‘weak states’ there are likely to be substantial opportunities and rationales for military intervention in domestic affairs. Nigeria provides a classical example of an internally ‘weak state’ providing the
context for repeated military intervention in domestic politics. There are obviously a range of possibilities between the ideal of an internally ‘strong’, democratic state and the extreme of an internally ‘weak’ (even ‘collapsed’) state - with differing implications for civil-military relations. In Central and Eastern Europe, one could argue that the Czech Republic and Poland represent relatively ‘strong states’, and that Albania or Serbia are examples of ‘weak’ ones.

5.1 Democratisation
Civil-military relations and the prospects for democratic control of the military also clearly cannot be separated from the more general level of democratisation in the country concerned. Countries where democratic norms, institutions, and practices have become entrenched are probably unlikely to be prone to military intervention in politics. In contrast, un- or partially democratic countries may be more vulnerable to such intervention. In Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it is no co-incidence that countries which have made the most progress in the process of democratisation in general are also those which have made the most progress in establishing democratic control of their armed forces.

5.2 Political and Social Cohesion
The extent to which any state is politically and socially divided can also have important implications for its civil-military relations. A politically relatively united and cohesive society, or at least one where there is a broad consensus on basic political values and institutions, may be less prone to military intervention in politics than a more divided society. In the latter case, the military may intervene on one side or the other, or political groups may attempt to gain the support of the military. In post-communist states, the division between (former) communists and ‘democrats’ (descendants of communist era democratic opposition) has often been the primary political division. In Russia, for example, there is has been a sharp division between ‘communists’ and ‘reformers’. In Albania regional divisions have become enmeshed with political divisions between socialists (former communists) and centre-right political forces. Poland’s post-1989 politics have been shaped by the division between ‘post-communist’ and ‘post-Solidarity’ political parties. In all three cases, these divisions have created problems for civil-military relations (though in Poland these have been moderated by a consensus on basic values).
5.3 Economic Factors

Economic factors may also have a bearing on civil-military relations. Economic stability and prosperity may facilitate the development of effective state/governmental structures, democratisation and the successful management of political and social divisions and hence minimise opportunities, incentives or rationales for military intervention in politics. In contrast, economic instability and poverty can weaken the state and exacerbate political and social divisions, thereby making military intervention in domestic politics more likely. Additionally, choices over economic policy or reform may influence civil-military relations. The military may, for example, see it as their role to defend or promote a particular (political-) economic system. In Latin America, for example, the military often intervened in domestic politics in part to defend capitalism and the economic status quo against socialism or economic change. In post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, one issue is the extent to which the ‘penetrative’ communist model of civil-military relations has left a legacy of inherently anti-capitalist armed forces with (post-) communist sympathies.

5.4 Nationalism and Ethnic Divisions

Nationalism and ethnic divisions can play a significant role in the military establishment of a particular state, with repercussions for civil-military relations. The military can, for example, sometimes be seen as the guarantor of national unity, identity or security and this may become a rationale or justification for military intervention in politics. The centrality of the military in nationalist post-communist Croatia provides one example of this tendency. Similarly, ethnic divisions, and particularly majority-minority problems and potentially violent conflicts, within a country can have an impact. In this respect it is important to examine whether the armed forces have become involved in any such conflicts or have instead sought to distance themselves from them. The partisan role of the JNA/VJ in the Yugoslav conflicts and the interaction of this with the JNA/VJ’s own domestic political role provides an example of this problem.

6 Institutional Factors

The existence, nature and effectiveness of formal state institutions for the control of the military and defence policy are of major importance for civil-military relations. In Central and Eastern Europe, countries have faced the specific challenge of replacing existing communist constitutional arrangements with new democratic ones. This,
moreover, has had to be done in a very short space of time. Institutional issues not only raise the question of whether new institutional arrangements have been put in place, but also whether and how these function in practice. New constitutional or institutional structures, though important, can only provide effective democratic control of armed forces if they are underpinned by real changes in the practice of the military and of defence policy-making. The ‘real’ practice of civil-military relations in a particular state may be quite different from the picture painted by the constitution and the organograms of institutional administrative arrangements. This problem raises numerous specific questions, as well as some important general ones.

### 6.1 Constitutional and Legal Frameworks

First, it is important to consider the extent to which a new, post-communist constitutional and legal framework has been put in place. If it has, is it broadly accepted both in the country as a whole and by the armed forces specifically? Factors to be considered include whether the new framework covers operational control of the armed forces in both peace-time and war-time, as well as whether or not it addresses the issues of control and development of defence policy (in areas such as spending, force structure, procurement, etc). How autonomous are the armed forces in developing their requirements? At what stage in military planning does civilian control first appear?

#### 6.1.1 The Executive and the Armed Forces

Key institutional factors are the division of powers and responsibility over control of the military. What, for example, are the powers and responsibilities of the President, Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Government, other bodies (such as a National Security Council) and the Chief of Staff with regard to peace-time operational control of the military, war-time operational control and the development and control of defence policy? To what extent is the division of these powers and responsibilities clear and generally accepted? If there is a dispute, or lack of clarity over these issues, civil-military relations may be adversely affected. Perhaps most significantly, any analysis of the constitutional and legal division of powers and responsibilities must ask whether they work in practice. Do, for example, civilian powers have adequate expertise and advice available independent from that of the military?
6.1.2 Parliament and the Armed Forces
The specific role of the parliament in civil-military relations is central when issues of
democratic control are considered, since the parliament should provide scrutiny not
only of the military, but also of the executive and of defence policy as a whole. Thus,
the constitutional and legal role of parliament in civil-military relations needs to be
looked at closely. Such an examination needs to ask what institutional arrangements
(such as committees, hearings, parliamentary debates, formal approval of defence
budgets, etc.) exist to implement parliamentary powers. Similarly, how far does the
parliament actually perform its constitutional and legal role in practice? What factors,
such as lack of resources, limited civilian expertise, or access to information,
constrain parliamentary oversight?

6.1.3 The Ministry of Defence, Chief of Staff and the Armed Forces
The relationship between the Ministry of Defence, the Chief of Staff and the Armed
Forces is a crucial aspect of democratic control of the military. In most cases, it is this
relationship which provides the day-to-day mechanism for civilian control of the
military. As a consequence, the nature of these relationships with regard to peace-
time operational control, war-time operational control and control of defence policy
are central to any examination of civilian, democratic control of the military. Are these
relationships clearly defined and are these definitions accepted (especially by the
military)? Do these relationships work in practice? Similarly, the functions and
operation of the Ministry of Defence are central to democratic control of the military.
What is the balance between civilians and military personnel within the Ministry of
Defence and how does this impinge on civil-military relations? Does the Ministry of
Defence really develop and implement defence policy or do the Chief of Staff and
armed forces do this in practice?

6.2 Control of the Defence Budget
Control of the defence budget can also be central to civilian control of the armed
forces and the formulation of defence policy. Thus, any analysis of democratic
control of defence policy should consider what constitutional/legal mechanisms and
what institutional arrangements exist for control of the defence budget. In particular,
how far do any civilian budgetary controls work in practice, and do they cover both
the overall defence budget and details of spending within the budget? In post-
communist Europe, a number of problems may make civilian (and indeed any!)
control of defence budget difficult. These can include an overall lack of an effective state budget/tax/finance system, lack of information on military spending, limited civilian expertise on military issues, the integration of the armed forces with defence industry procurement and the existence of a non-monetary defence economy.

6.3 Paramilitary Forces

All of these institutional issues can be further complicated by the existence of paramilitary forces alongside the regular armed forces, especially when (as in Russia and some of the other post-communist states) such forces are large and heavily armed. The existence of paramilitary forces raises the question of whether such forces are governed by the same institutional arrangements as the regular armed forces or different ones and how effective these are in practice. Since paramilitary forces usually have a remit relating to internal order/state security, they often come under the control of an internal security ministry (rather than the Ministry of Defence), are governed by different constitutional and command arrangements to those for the regular armed forces. The internal role of paramilitary forces, further, means that they are perhaps particularly likely to become embroiled in domestic politics (whether by their own efforts or as a consequence of politicians attempting to draw them into politics). In post-communist Russia, for example, control of the ‘power ministries’, including the Interior Ministry and paramilitary internal security and border forces, has been a focus of political struggle within Russia’s elite.

6.4 Non-State Actors

Finally, there are significant, if less formal, institutional factors ‘beyond the state’ which have an influence over civil-military relations. Effective democratic, civilian control of the armed forces implies not only that elected executive and legislative authorities should have control of the military, but also that wider society plays a role in formulating and overseeing defence policy. Consequently, issues such as the role of the media, and the existence of independent centres of expertise such as research institutes and non-governmental organisations should also be considered. Specifically, does the media provide effective discussion and oversight of the military? Do independent centres of expertise exist, and how effective and influential are these?
7 Military Culture, Professionalism and Defence Policy

Although difficult to define or measure empirically, ‘military culture’ can have a major impact on civil-military relations. Any analysis of the prospects for democratic control of the armed forces, therefore, should attempt to identify the culture of the military in the country concerned and ask how entrenched that culture is. Is, for example, the military inclined towards intervention in domestic politics or not? Is the military supportive of, or associated with, a particular political group or ideology? In Central and Eastern Europe, it is important to ask whether the military retains loyalty to (post-) communist political forces. Alternatively, has it transferred loyalty to other forces or ideologies such as nationalism? Other elements of military culture might include the extent to which the military is inclined to shape foreign policy, especially with regard to decisions on the external use of force. In Russia, this factor is illustrated by the debate on the role of the military in shaping intervention in the former Soviet Union. Similarly, to what extent does the military accept or oppose democratic, civilian control of defence policy?

7.1 ‘Military Culture’

The concept of ‘military culture’ also raises the issue of how such cultures are generated, sustained and changed and what policies may be put in place to shift military culture towards acceptance of democratic, civilian control of the armed forces. In Central and Eastern Europe, it is important to ask what arrangements existed for the socialisation of the military (for example, Community Party cells, military education) and what new arrangements have been put in place to control or prevent political activity within the military (such as constitutional bans on political activity and reforms of military education). One also needs to be aware of potentially important informal influences which may shape military culture, such as networks of patronage. In Central and Eastern Europe one important issue is the extent to which the officer corps and especially senior commanders who rose through the ranks during the Soviet period, remain in power and how far they hold to a ‘military culture’ which may be reluctant to submit to democratic, civilian control. This points to the importance of ‘generational change’ within the officer corps as a factor facilitating significant shifts in ‘military culture’.
7.2 Professionalization

‘Military culture’ and the prospects for democratic control of armed forces also relate to the issue of professionalization - i.e., the extent to which the military sees its primary professional role as providing for national defence and contributing to international peacekeeping or enforcement missions, rather than being involved in domestic politics. Indeed, persuading the military to disengage from politics and accept democratic, civilian control of defence policy may depend to a significant degree on establishing a new role for the armed forces, and ensuring the preservation of their status. In the Central and Eastern European context, a number of questions are particularly salient here. To what extent were the Soviet era militaries already ‘professionalised’, seeing themselves as providers of national defence and contributors to international missions (e.g., with the United Nations)? How has the loss of old, and especially Cold War, missions affected the military’s sense of its role? How far have new missions, such as national defence in new circumstances and contributing to international peacekeeping/enforcement missions, been established? Are these now accepted as the primary roles of the military?

7.3 Civil-Military Relations and Defence Policy

Finally, there is, to some extent, a dialectical relationship between civil-military relations and defence policy if the latter is understood in terms of defence spending, force structure, procurement and strategy. Civil-military relations shape defence policy, but defence policy also influences civil-military relations and the prospects for democratic control of the armed forces. For example, what is the balance of armed forces between volunteer and conscript? What impact (if any) does this have on civil-military relations? Is the real issue the attitudes of the officer corps as distinct from conscripts? What (if any) are the implications of overall force structure and defence spending for civil-military relations? Also important is the mission focus of the armed forces. A military whose primary mission retains an internal focus, for example the VJ in Yugoslavia, may be more prone to political involvement than one whose main focus is on external security threats.

8 Conclusion

After the fall of communism and the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the transformation of civil-military relations was only one of many challenges facing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Indeed, in the context of
the broader post-communist transition, reforming civil-military relations has received less attention than larger issues of democratisation and economic reform. However, as events in Russia and the former Yugoslavia have illustrated, the armed forces remain important players in the post-communist environment, and issues relating to democratic, civilian control of the military may have significant implications for the prospects for democratisation. As the Yugoslav wars and Russia’s various military interventions in the former Soviet Union also illustrate, civil-military relations may also have a significant impact on the likelihood and evolution of violent conflict in the post-communist world. Civil-military relations and especially the extent of democratic control of the military also have an important bearing on individual Central and Eastern European countries prospects for integration with the West in general and membership of NATO in particular.

This paper has sought to provide a framework for understanding the range of factors which may shape the prospects for democratic control of the armed forces in the countries of post-communist Europe. It argues that democratic control of the military revolves around three distinct but inter-related issues: the non-intervention of the military in domestic politics, the military’s role in the formulation of foreign policy (especially decisions on the external use of military force) and the military’s role in the development of defence policy (in terms of defence spending, force structure, procurement and military strategy). In all three areas, the core normative assumption of democratic control of the military is that the armed forces should be the neutral, apolitical servant of democratic, civilian leadership and that their role should be limited to implementing the policy choices of that leadership, rather that engaging in domestic politics or playing a central role in determining the direction of foreign or defence policy. Defence policy and decisions on the use of military force, however, also involve complex military-strategic and military-technical issues, requiring technical military expertise which civilian leaders are unlikely to have. Such military-strategic and military-technical issues, further, may have important implications for broader political decisions on defence policy and the use of force. The development of defence policy and aspects of foreign policy relating to military power, therefore, raise difficult issues as to the appropriate balance in decision-making between democratic, civilian control and acceptance of military advice and expertise.

On the basis of this explicit definition, of democratic control of the armed forces, this paper has sought to explore the factors that shape the prospects for democratic
control of the armed forces in the countries of post-communist Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It has suggested that these factors can be considered in five broad categories: the international context (the impact of the dominant Western security community, of Russia and of external conflicts); historical legacies (the impact of communist and pre-communist patterns and traditions of civil-military relations); the domestic context (the impact of the internal strength/weakness of the state concerned, the extent of democratisation, economic stability and the extent of internal political and ethnic conflicts); institutional factors (constitutional, governmental and administration arrangements relating to the control of the armed forces and the development of defence policy); and issues relating to ‘military culture’ and professionalization (i.e., how the military as an institution views its role).

The impact of these differing factors obviously varies from country to country, and the interaction between them may help to explaining differing patterns of civil-military relations across the region. Broad background factors that are not easily amenable to dramatic change - such as the impact of historical legacies and domestic and international contexts - may have a major bearing on the prospects for democratic control of the armed forces. Thus, a chaotic, internally weak state facing serious obstacles to democratisation - such as contemporary Russia or Serbia - is unlikely to provide a strong basis for the development of effective democratic control of the armed forces. In contrast, a reasonably strong state, making progress with democratisation - such as Poland or Hungary - is likely to have better prospects for developing democratic control of its armed forces. At the same time, however, factors relating more directly to civil-military relations - such as institutional arrangements for the control of armed forces, ‘military culture’ and professionalization - may have a significant bearing on the prospects for democratic control of the armed forces and may be more amenable to change via deliberate policy actions. The challenge for the future is to better understand the interaction between these different factors and to develop policies focused on those areas which are most central to democratic control of armed forces.
Notes

1 It is notable that even long-established democracies face periodic controversy over this issue, with military commanders accusing civilian leaders of ignoring realistic military advice and civilian leaders accusing the military of demanding excessive defence requirements. Indeed, debates on defence policy often pit civilian and military leaders against one another.

2 Again, even long-established democracies usually face disputes or tensions between civilian and military leaders over decisions to use force. See Edward N. Luttwak, ‘From Vietnam to Desert Fox: Civil-Military Relations in Modern Democracies’, Survival, Vol. 41, No. 1, Spring 1999. Most recently, such tensions occurred between civilian and military leaders within NATO during the war in Kosovo - see Reuters, ‘NATO’s Clark Faced Internal Battle Over Bombing’, Central Europe Online Website, 21 August 1999.


5 S.E. Finer, The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics, London and Dunmow: Pall Mall Press, 1962, pp.86-89. Finer divides states into three categories, countries of developed, low and minimal political culture, arguing that the likelihood of military intervention is inversely proportionate to a state's level of 'political culture'.