



# **Securing the State: Reforming the National Security Decisionmaking Process at the Civil-Military Nexus (Military Strategy and Operational Art)**

*By Christopher P. Gibson*

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Focusing on top civilian and military advisors within the national security establishment, this significant book looks at four case studies with a focus on civil-military relations within the US Department of Defense. It investigates whether balanced approaches produce more effective policies and outcomes than dominating structures. The culmination of Gibson's treatise is the advancement of the 'Madisonian approach' to civilian control of the military, a normative framework designed to replace Samuel Huntington's 'Objective Control' model and also the 'Subjective Control' model, initially practised by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and most recently by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. The Madisonian approach calls for changes in US law and new norms to guide the interactions of key participants who populate the civil-military nexus. This book is destined to influence US strategic thinking and should be added to the syllabus of courses in civil-military relations, strategic studies and military history. Given the struggling US policy in Iraq, the time is right for a critical review of US civil-military relations and this book provides the departure point for analysis and a potential way forward.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

'Gibson clearly leads the next generation of soldier-scholars within the Army Profession. In this deeply analytical book on the wide range of civil-military relations in America's past, Gibson offers solid reasons for a new structure of decision making that will better enable military advice to get to the right civilians in timely and consistent ways. His insights merit careful consideration and implementation by civilian and military leaders alike.' Don M Snider, US Military Academy, West Point, USA and Project Director and Co-Editor of *The Future of the Army Profession* (2005) '...an important book that deserves a wide readership among those concerned with military and national security affairs. Gibson's comprehensive and thoughtful examination of this subject represents a significant contribution to the often emotional debate over the respective roles of senior military officers and their civilian leaders...certain to spark debate, a debate that holds promise for helping civilian and military leaders analyze accurately threats to security, make informed decisions, and take appropriate measures to protect.' H.R. McMaster, International Institute for Strategic Studies, UK 'Col. Christopher Gibson is a scholar, professor, and combat officer who draws on that unique experience to offer a much needed revisionary analysis of the moral and practical responsibilities of today's military leaders. A sober, frank - and long overdue - discussion of democracy at war that pulls no punches in its quest for the truth.' Victor Davis Hanson, Stanford University, USA 'From inter-agency field operations to the national security decision making process itself, cooperation and collaboration is absolutely critical to success in today's operating environment. Using historical and contemporary examples, Gibson provides a penetrating and poignant examination of the complex relationship between our civilian and military leaders during times of conflict. Securing the State brings to light this necessary political-military relationship and forces one to reflect on how to improve this affiliation within our organization culture. A must read for military or civilian leaders operating in today's challenging environment.' LTG William B. Caldwell, IV, US Army 'Gibson's recommendations would greatly increase the stature of the Pentagon's ranking military officer...Gibson has constructed a complex argument leading to a bold position...In its fullest dimension, then, Securing the State tests the limits to which serving officers can go in criticizing national and military affairs for the sake of professional and academic debate.' *Military Review* 'The historical discussion is comprehensively covered and is a particularly strong point of *Securing the State*...One of the best things about *Securing the State* is that it continues the now well established trend of serving US military officers writing about important topics and having the courage to state their case clearly and loudly. It makes the American military stronger and better. Wouldn't it be nice if it happened more often here [in Australia]?' *Defender - National Journal of the Australia Defence Association* 'Gibson's dual backgrounds, as both a military professional and a distinguished scholar, provide the qualifications to write this impressive study on civil-military decision making...this is a very readable book which covers a wide variety of subject matter in an accessible way. It is highly recommended for military scholars and civilian bureaucrats who are interested in improving the most senior levels of decision making involving the use of armed force. The book is the latest in the Military Strategy and Operational Art series from Ashgate Publishing. It features an extensive bibliography and is fully referenced.' *Australian Defence Force Journal* 'Taken together, Gibson's recommendations strengthen the voice of military professionals and focus their efforts in direct opposition to those of civilian appointees...Gibson and his fellow officers are honourable and patriotic Americans and none seek to undermine the foundations of their country. Yet *Securing the State* is an eloquent testament to how liberty can be undermined even by the best intentions. It should be read with care by all who wish to better understand the current state of American civil-military relations and the dangers ahead.' *Contemporary Security Policy* '...a well-argued proposal for a balanced partnership between civilian and military leaders within the US national security establishment. Whatever their theoretical dispositions and feelings about

civilian control, scholars of civil-military relations will need to contend with Gibson's arguments. His book is also sure to become required reading for students of the subject in civil and military educational institutions in the US, but also in other countries in spite of the exceptional US constitutional design and the difficulties of a controlled com

#### About the Author

Christopher P. Gibson was former Assistant Professor of American Politics with the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy at West Point, and is currently Hoover National Security Fellow at Stanford University, USA.

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