



## Armed-Civilian Relationship in the United States

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L'Armée de Terre dans la société

**The reality of the relationship between the military and civil society in the United States is perhaps less idyllic and much more complex than the perception of it in Europe. However, it can be described as generally good, if not very good.**

It is practised in a very particular societal framework which explains, for many, its importance and quality. Four components of this framework deserve special attention.

**A conditioning, from a very young age, of the school population** to patriotic and nationalist values and to the place, unique in the world, of "the great America". This conditioning is carried out daily, for years, before starting the work day.

Armies are, of course, considered to be major sources of this "greatness". While the commitment of armies to dubious causes is sometimes challenged, it is politicians, not the military, who pay the price. Total support for armies has therefore become " cultural". It is an almost unquestioned and indisputable " norm.

**The power of influence of the four most powerful lobbies in the country is exercised, out of interest, to the benefit of the armed forces** These are the military-industrial lobby, the veterans' lobby, the NRA (National Rifle Association), and the neo-conservative current, supported by the A/PAC (America Israel Public Affairs Committee), which advocates undivided US hegemony on the planet and incites and supports unilateral military interventions deemed necessary to achieve it. It should be noted that AIPAC and the neo-conservatives control finance, the media, HOLLYWOOD, the "peoples" and many politicians whose elections they finance. They have the support of an impressive

number of generous billionaires to achieve their goals.

**The historical generosity of the US executives** towards the personnel of the **armed forces**. This generosity applies to serving personnel, reservists, retirees and their families. It includes salaries and pensions, health care, and university education and retraining. This generosity is not philanthropic but addresses the acute problem of the triple crisis of vocations, recruitment and retention. An extensive recruitment system, widely deployed throughout the country, quite often exchanges a few years of well-paid military service for the financing of a few years of university studies, which is very expensive in the USA.

**The "National Guard" effect.** The National Guard, an integral part of the armies, is deeply rooted in the population of each state on which it depends. Volunteer units come from the same region, county or municipality. The personnel know each other, serve sustainably together and know the civilian community of which they are a part. Cohesion within the units and symbiosis with the populations characterize this very important component of armies. These personnel often have the same capital of sympathy as volunteer firefighters in France, even if they sometimes act in a rather brutal way in maintaining order. This "active reserve" regularly takes part in external operations, which fully involves the communes, counties and their home state in these operations.

Within this framework that is generally favourable to the armed forces, let us mention a few key points of this relationship.

1. Politicians fiercely defend in Congress, for **economic and employment reasons**, the military or military-industrial installations established in their constituency or state. On the other hand, when they are neo-conservative in nature, they disdain the great military leaders who have been considered mere executors since the end of the Cold War. They can be cut, drilled and replaced at will. The five-minute video given<sup>45</sup> on the following link is edifying, not to say hallucinating. It shows the hearing in 2016, at the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of Secretary of Defense (therefore Minister) Ashton CARTER and US Chief of Staff Joseph DUNFORD by a well-known neoconservative, Senator Lindsey GRAHAM. Such a spectacle is indicative of the relationship between US neoconservative politicians and military leaders.

2. **The US** mainstream press is in the permanent promotion and exaltation of the power and action of the US armed forces on the ground, even if it sometimes challenges the appropriateness of particular decisions of commitment taken by politicians. The Charlie Hebdo type cartoons on the deaths of soldiers on operations and the comments made about them in the French mainstream media are simply unimaginable in the United States, where freedom of expression is far superior to that in Europe. One can speak of a cloudless relationship between the US military and the press, very different from that which prevails in France.

3. **US citizens have a paradoxical attitude.** If they support their armed forces because they have been conditioned to do so, and if the permanent action of the media exacerbates nationalism and patriotism, they do not rush to serve in them. Recruitment selection rates are low due to a lack of applicants for enlistment. Recruiters are struggling and have to pay a high price for even the smallest recruit (exchange of years of service for

funding of education or training). The most vulnerable and least educated segments of the US population, as well as young people in precarious situations from recent immigration, constitute the main pool of young recruits. Turnover is high. Non-commissioned members at the end of their contract tend to take their due and return to civilian life. Contract renewal and retention must be paid for at a high price to ensure proper personnel management.

4. As regards freedom of expression for military personnel, it is, in theory, almost equivalent to that of civilians and is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution, provided that the unity of belonging and its mission are not jeopardised. However, the "Up or Out" promotion system encourages officers to exercise caution and self-censorship. The overwhelming majority of them are therefore content with a militarily and politically correct expression.

5. To increase their chances of reaching the top of the hierarchy, general officers have every interest in being part of a network of influence that can be "civil-military".

In the United States, Freemasonry is undoubtedly the most effective network for promoting its members. It has a less sulphurous reputation than that sometimes attributed to it in France.

17 of the 45 Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces (and therefore Presidents of the United States) were Freemasons.<sup>46</sup> 7 of the 11 generals or admirals who have been awarded a fifth star by Congress, in the entire history of the United States, were Freemasons. (for the record, in the USA, an army general only has 4 stars, the 5th, created in 1944, corresponds to the French marshalate). 2 of these 7 general officers 5 stars freemasons were appointed posthumously in 1944 (WASHINGTON and PERSHING), the five others are (Mac ARTHUR, MARSHALL, BRADLEY, ARNOLD and the admiral of the KING fleet).

More recently Colin POWELL, the first colored US Chief of Staff, or General SCHWARZKOPF, commander-in-chief in the first Iraq war, have been part of the same network of influence. It should be noted that the most eminent members of the most powerful lobbies mentioned at the beginning of this article (including the neoconservatives and AIPAC) are often part of several networks of influence and, in particular, freemasonry. All this creates link...

It can therefore be estimated that relations between civil society and its army will always remain very good, except for the condescension and even contempt that the neo-Conservatives and AIPAC have for the military. Conservatives, " self-confident and domineering", have for the high military hierarchy, which they have largely contributed to establishing.

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[45] [www.facebook.com/ionathan.uzan/videos/10204109433770937/](http://www.facebook.com/ionathan.uzan/videos/10204109433770937/).

46| George WASHINGTON, James MONROE, Andrew JACKSON, James POLK, James BUCHANAN, Andrew JOHNSON, James GARFIELD, William MCKINLEY, Theodore ROOSEVELT, William TAFT, Warren HARDING, Franklin D. ROOSEVELT, Harry TRUVIAN, Lyndon JOHNSON, Gerald FORD, Ronald REAGAN and George BUSH.

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