

Government 1521  
Bureaucratic Politics:  
Government, Military,  
Social and Economic Organizations

D. Carpenter

Lecture 07: The Modernization  
of the U.S. Army

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Continuation of

Lecture 06: Cultural and Reputation-Based  
Accounts of Bureaucracy and Organization

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What is a Bureaucratic Reputation?

- Organizational reputations assign roles.
- Organizational reputations assign or attribute a unity ("identity") to structures, that may contain considerable dissimilitude, disarray, disorganization. They create fiction of unity.
- Organizational reputations differentiate. Why are Marines diff from Army, Navy, etc?
- **AUDIENCE IS KEY.** Explanatory variable: with what audience is BUR trying to gain legitimacy? (Whom are they trying to impress?)

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## REPUTATION-SEEKING BUREAUCRACIES

- Predictions: (1) hi-rep agencies receive more discretion, enjoy more autonomy  
(2) Agencies avoid visible errors, see many decisions as irreversible  
(3) "N-of-1" argumentation: reputations often consist in stories (Henry Ford, thalidomide)  
(4) Dovetails with Meyer-Rowan emphasis on ceremonial and symbolic role of formal structure

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## I. Pre-Modern History of the U.S. Army

### A. Administrative Organization – the Department of War

Pre-modern concepts: cavalry [mobile units], infantry [mass units, occupation, possession of territory], artillery [large but transportable armament]

### B. Commanding General

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## The Diminution of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> c. U.S. Army

1865: over 1 million men and officers

1866: 54,000

1869: 45,000

1870: 30,000

1874: 25,000 enlisted men and 2,161 officers

SUM: "As the Prussian revolution in military organization swept Europe, the American army was being swept back into obscurity as an Indian patrol." (Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, 87)

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## I. Pre-Modern History of the U.S. Army

### C. State Militia and the National Guard

Connected to governors and to state political parties (National Guard is source of patronage [appointments, procurement] for these agents).

Important part of American federalist system; supported autonomy of states.

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## War and Organizational Learning

Spanish-American War: Navy organization deemed effective, Army organization seen as ineffective.

McKinley Administration and John Hull (chair, House Military Affairs Comm): Hull Bill for “expansible army” under War Department control.

- Three-battalion regiment organization
- Direct recruiting by Central Army (recruiting districts)
- Volunteers trained by regulars

Opposition from National Guard and state governors.

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## Defeat of the Hull Bill (1898)

“...the National Guard became violently excited ... Members [of Congress] would state that they knew nothing about the merits of the Bill, but they had a telegram from a general or colonel of their Guard urging them to defeat it, and no amendment or concession on my part would prevail. The opinions of Grant, Sherman, Schofield, and [Commanding General Nelson] Miles did not have the slightest weight when put in the balance against an officer of the state militia. The great generals had not votes, the militia officer had votes back of him with which to enforce his demands.”

John Hull, “The Army Appropriation Bill,” *The Forum* 25 (May 1898), p. 399; in Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, 114.

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## Problems in War Mobilization

- National Guard units lose members, forced to recruit new and inexperienced members
- Conflict between Comm. Gen. Nelson Miles and Secretary of War Russell Alger over timing of Cuba invasion and direction of land forces.

“The debacle of debarkation at Tampa received complete press coverage. With no notion of rail capacities or priorities, the army spent much of the spring staled in a train caravan stretching as far back as Columbia, South Carolina. Lack of experience with overseas army transport and the absence of a transport fleet also took their toll. Guns went on one ship and ammunition on another. Doctors went to sea and found their supplies still on the mainland.” [Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, 116]

More criticism from Dodge Commission (appted by McKinley) and by Congress

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## Elihu Root on the Need for a General Staff

But when we come to the coordination and direction of all these means and agencies of warfare, so that all parts of the machine shall work true together, we are weak. Our system makes no adequate provision for the directing brain which every army must have, to work successfully. Common experience has shown that this cannot be furnished by any single man without assistants, and that it requires a body of officers working together under the direction of a chief and entirely separate from and independent of the administrative staff of an army (such as the adjutants, quartermasters, commissaries, etc., each of whom is engrossed in the duties of his own special department). This body of officers, in distinction from the administrative staff, has come to be called a general staff.

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## Root on the Concept of General Staff, 1902 (continued)

Quoting Brigadier-General Theodore Schwan:

In Prussia, at least, the term has been exclusively and distinctively applied, since about 1789, to a body of officers to whom, as assistants to the commander-in-chief and to his subordinate generals, is confided such work as is directly connected with the designing and execution of military operations. ...

Clausewitz's dictum ... fails to notice the important obligation of the general staff officer of constantly watching over the effectiveness of the troops, which would be impaired by a lack of attention to their material welfare. Out of this obligation grows, he says, the further duty of **furnishing** to the heads of the supply departments and other officers attached to headquarters such explanations touching the general military situation, or the effect of a sudden change therein, as will enable them to carry out intelligently what is expected of them. **The general staff thus becomes a directing and explaining body, and its chief, therefore, is in some respects the head of the whole staff.** ...

It is conceded on all hands that the almost phenomenal success that has attended the German (Prussian) arms during the last thirty years is due in a large degree to the corps of highly trained general staff officers which the German army possesses.

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Root on General Staff, 1902 (continued)

Neither our political nor our military system makes it suitable that we should have a general staff organized like the German general staff or like the French general staff; but the common experience of mankind is that the things which those general staffs do, have to be done in every well-managed and well-directed army, and they have to be done by a body of men especially assigned to do them. **We should have such a body of men selected and organized in our own way and in accordance with our own system to do those essential things.** The most intelligible way to describe such a body of men, however selected and organized, is by calling it a general staff, because its duties are staff duties and are general in their character.

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Root on General Staff, 1902 (continued)

The duties of such a body of officers can be illustrated by taking for example an invasion of Cuba, such as we were all thinking about a few years ago. It is easy for a President, or a general acting under his direction, to order that 50,000 or 100,000 men proceed to Cuba and capture Havana. To make an order which has any reasonable chance of being executed he must do a great deal more than that. He must determine how many men shall be sent and how they shall be divided among the different arms of the service, and how they shall be armed, and equipped; and to do that he must get all the information possible about the defenses of the place to be captured and the strength and character and armament of the forces to be met.

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Root on General Staff, 1902 (continued)

He must determine at what points and by what routes the place shall be approached, and at what points his troops shall land in Cuba; and for this purpose he must be informed about the various harbors of the island and the depth of their channels; what classes of vessels can enter them; what the facilities for landing are; how they are defended; the character of the roads leading from them to the place to be attacked; the character of the intervening country; how far it is healthful or unhealthful; what the climate is liable to be at the season of the proposed movement; the temper and sympathies of the inhabitants; the quantity and kind of supplies that can be obtained from the country; the extent to which transportation can be obtained, and a great variety of other things which will go to determine whether it is better to make the approach from one point or from another, and to determine what it will be necessary for the army to carry with it in order to succeed in moving and living and fighting.

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## General Staff Reforms

### Dick Militia Act of 1903:

- (1) Imposes federal supervision of state militia (both in peace/training and in combat)
  - NG relegated to reserve role, but first-line offensive reserve
- (2) Centralize control over War Department, reduce role of Comm. General, and reduce autonomy of bureaus.

Field Service Regulations of 1905: *Field Service Regulations* booklet includes and summarizes Leavenworth course materials

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## Root-Carter Educational Reforms

Professionalization of officer-corps: “With the advent of the twentieth century and the Root reforms, the level required of a military professional rose considerably. It was no longer enough to keep a post in good order with proper supply accounts and the garrison appropriately drilled and disciplined. To be professional in this period, as always, required a mastery of the knowledge and skills in one’s field, and there had been a notable expansion in the requisite knowledge and skills.” [Coffman, 190-91].

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## Root-Carter educational reforms

- (1) uniform training system

Coffman: “a uniform system throughout the Army for a two-year program that included a basic knowledge of administrative and drill regulations, weapons, tactics, law, field engineering, and care of horses.” [177]

- (2) General Service and Staff College [officers]

[Fort Leavenworth Schools]

Infantry and Cavalry School (School of the Line) [1st-yr]

Staff College [second-year course, more selective]

- (3) Army War College

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## National Defense Act of 1916

- (1) Guard reassumes position as nation's first line behind regulars
- (2) Guard gives up autonomy, can be deployed overseas
- (3) Creation of Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)

[Summary in Coffman, *The Regulars*, 199]

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## Writing Demands I

### 1. Clear Argumentation

- Argument on paper's first page.
- Argument should be summarized (or able to be summarized) in one sentence.

### 2. Clear organization: ("Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em, tell 'em, then tell 'em what you told 'em.")

- Papers should have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Paragraph is the basic building-block of the paper.

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## Writing Demands II

### 3. Proper Grammar and Spelling

- Use spell-check
- Grammar: Strunk & White: *Elements of Style*.
- Use grammar-check
- Have a friend (even someone else in class) read your paper.

### 4. Counterarguments

- Essential to good argumentation
- Actively consider (and briefly refute) arguments against your position

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