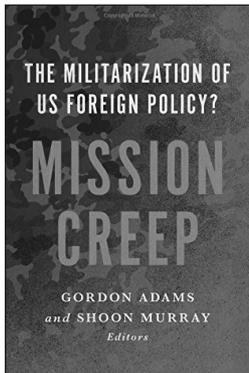


# Book Review



## **Mission Creep: The Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy**

***Gordon Adams and Shoon Murray (Editors)***

Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 2015, 303 pp.

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Gordon and Murray have pulled together a number of prominent scholars and practitioners of U.S. statecraft and public diplomacy to address the causes and effects of the increasing role the U.S. military is playing in what traditionally has been the domain of the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The authors assert that the Department of Defense (DoD), with its massive size and budget, has evolved into the default organization for executing noncore missions. It is precipitously providing military advice on political matters and is notably influencing foreign policy and national security strategy. The U.S. seeks to assist 150 weak and failing states with their militaries, through training, professionalizing, and mentoring them in an effort to build partnership capacity to prevent future conflict. This mounting tendency began with the Cold War and has since accelerated during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Gordon and Murray further believe that this evolution will persist for the foreseeable future since the U.S. has now prioritized security over governance and development activities.

The imbalance between State and Defense is readily apparent in a number of striking ways. Most western countries have parity between military and diplomatic spending, whereas in the U.S. DoD has a budget twelve times the size of its diplomatic and aid agency counterparts. Personnel ratios are even worse. The DoD has over 100 personnel for every person working within the State Department, and 600 deployed personnel for every 25 deployed from State and for every person deployed from USAID. Over the last 10 years the military has also experienced a surge in development assistance funding, a budget now comparable to that of State and USAID combined.

Whereas, there is a statutory requirement going back 30 years for the military to conduct a Quadrennial Defense Review to assess strategies, programs, and resources in meeting the national security strategy, the State Department and USAID initiated their first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review in 2010 on their own initiative. State and USAID have evolved into too many specialized departments, bureaus, agencies and offices for effective coordination. They collectively lack a common voice, vision, and set of priorities. This incoherence has led to poor funding of State and USAID programs by Congress. USAID's budget and personnel numbers have continued to shrink since the Cold War. With personnel shortages, USAID has been relegated to glorified contract managers of non-governmental organizations and private sector companies who now carry out much

of their mandated functions—that which is not done by the military.

In sharp contrast, the DoD has developed a huge advantage in resources and planning capacity, and it speaks with one voice. It is organized, determined, and ready to execute. Another plus for the military is that it inherently produces more tangible results that play well with Congress in justifying its budget. The military has even another fundamental advantage over the State Department with Congress. Foreign policy does not resonate well with voters as much as defense does. Congress is more than happy to accommodate DoD, and along the way, protect their districts defense industry and military installations for economic reasons.

Further addressed in the book is the growing concern that Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) operating within the unified command plan are increasingly treading on the political authority of in-country ambassadors. Through its GCCs, the military has evolved into a separate foreign affairs organization, parallel with the State Department and embassies. This perception is fueled by the simple fact GCCs have a large number of personnel at their disposal, along with the funding and equipment to execute U.S. foreign policy/diplomacy through military means, an option increasingly favored by Congress but not the military.

The book is laid out into three broad categories: 1. The Institutional and Political Context; 2. Observing the Militarization Trend; and 3. Implications of Militarization. Within these comprehensive topical areas are individually authored, interwoven chapters. The breadth and depth of each contribution is purposeful and noteworthy in richness and relevance. The contributing authors' historical perspective and descriptions of the evolution of events that have led to the current situation are striking. Much of their work is clearly quantified through plainly illustrated tables, charts, and figures. Their collective argument is compelling, telling, and thought-provoking. The scholarly research and professional experience depicted resonates throughout the book. Finally, the authors collectively reinforce the book's thesis, and draw well-supported conclusions and make sound recommendations.

Some of the more salient outcomes and points depicted are as follows. The military is not well-suited to serve effectively in the diplomacy realm. It lacks appropriate expertise and is facing force reductions and budgetary pressures that will challenge its ability to meet core missions let alone noncore missions going forward. Congress has to rebalance the budgets of the State Department, USAID, and DoD. The military has recognized the need for rebalancing between defense, diplomacy, and development and has even asked for increases in State and USAID personnel numbers and funding. The Department of State needs stronger leadership, a unified position, and well-articulated objectives in order to effectively battle for its relevance to Congress. If it fails to do so, the authors contend, its capabilities and significance will continue to erode. Unfortunately, real change may only come in the form of system shock from an outside source or event. If so, the rebalancing may prove difficult to address effectively without significant adverse fallout.

This book is a must-read for political science, public policy, diplomacy, and international security/affairs professionals and scholars, those involved in state-building, government policy makers, and senior military professionals. Anyone else interested in learning about the importance of having a well-balanced and interconnected defense, development, and diplomatic structural apparatus to executing foreign policy and national security strategy in achieving strategic objectives will also find this book an informative read. **IAJ**