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Civil-Military Relations: Transforming Albanian Armed Forces from “Red” to Democratic

by

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Abstract

The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the beginning of a new era, an era of change for the world and without a doubt for Albania and its armed forces. Transformation via comprehensive reforms is the only way for Albania to keep up with change and embark on the ‘bandwagon’ of democratic countries. The western-oriented civil-military relations reforms are an important dimension of this transformation and, in many ways, have contributed to the Albanian armed forces’ transformation. Though the overall ‘picture’ of civil-military relations in the post-Cold War Albania at first glance looks good, a closer look would shed light on the real state of these relations. The argument is that Albanian civil-military relations today are merely a reflection of Albania’s overall state of democratic development. This paper will discuss the relevance of civil-military relations theory and its very limited tradition in Albania, the awkwardness of these relations in the communist regime, the emerging of a ‘hybrid’ form of civilian control of the military and the ongoing effort to fully democratize Albanian civil-military relations.

Civil-Military Relations: Transforming Albanian Armed Forces from “Red” to Democratic

In a changing world, staying the same is not an option. The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the beginning of a new era, an era of change for the world and without a doubt for Albania and its armed forces. Transformation via comprehensive reforms is the only way for Albania to keep up with change and embark on the ‘bandwagon’ of democratic countries. The western-oriented civil-military relations reforms are an important dimension of this transformation and, in many ways, have contributed to the Albanian armed forces’ transformation. The military is the most trusted institution among state institutions,¹ and constitutes a bright spot for Albania’s reform agenda,² especially since 2009 when Albania joined NATO. However it is worth exploring the nature of civil-military relations in post-Cold War Albania and how has it affected the democratic transformation of armed forces.

Though the overall ‘picture’ of civil-military relations in post-Cold War Albania at first glance looks good, a closer look would shed light on the real state of these relations. The argument is that Albanian civil-military relations today are merely a reflection of Albania’s overall state of democratic development. This paper will discuss the relevance of civil-military relations theory and its very limited tradition in Albania, the awkwardness of these relations in the communist regime, the emerging of a ‘hybrid’ form of civilian control of the military and the ongoing effort to fully democratize Albanian civil-military relations.

A Snapshot of Democratic Albania and a Theory of Civil-Military Relations.

Albania, like many other countries in world has its shining and dark moments of history. It is also a country of “awkward records.”³ Among many “records” one should

know that from 1944 to 1987 seven Ministers of Interior and Secret Service were purged, and four of these were executed. In addition, hundreds of military officers, including generals, were purged and two Defense Ministers were executed.

History and culture, are factors that in many ways greatly affect and influence civil-military relations (CMR).⁴ Albania's progress since the fall of Communism in the early 1990s has been neither consistent nor comprehensive. . Adding to the 'awkwardness,' Albania was the last of the Eastern European countries to 'break the long marriage' with communism, waiting until March 1992 to form its first democratic government.

Today, Albania is a member of NATO (2009) and at the 'door step' of the European Union (EU) to open accession negotiations. It is an emerging, but functioning democracy. Its Parliament is improving the transparency of law-making; however, "more needs to be done to address the divisive political culture and ensure a more constructive cross-party dialogue."⁵ In addition, Albania has a moderately developed and functioning market economy, with a "good level of preparation in foreign, security and defense policy."⁶

Defining Civil-Military Relations

Some twenty five centuries ago, two Athenian generals, Alcibiades and Nicias, laid the foundation for civil-military relations (CMR). Standing in front of the Athenian Assembly, making opposing arguments about whether to launch the Sicilian Expedition or not, they were 'advising' members of Athenian assembly on the matter.⁷ In today's lexicon and terminology that constitutes a fragment of civil-military relations of the time.

Civilian control of the military has been generally accepted since the 19th century, however, its form was not yet necessarily democratic. A gradual transformation of

societies in Western Europe and their respective militaries brought the transformation of 'civilian control' to a 'democratic civilian control' as it is known in modern times. In broad terms CMR refer "to the relationship between the armed forces of the state and the larger society they serve – how they communicate, how they interact, and how the interface between them is ordered and regulated."⁸ In a more Western perspective – the concept of CMR embraces the accountability of the armed forces to democratic institutions and the supervision of the military administration and operations by civilian authorities,⁹ In sum, "it is the subordination of the military under a legitimate civilian leadership."¹⁰ For Huntington though, "civil-military relations is one aspect of national security policy... with principal focus the relation of the officer corps to the state."¹¹

A Theory for Civil-Military Relations in Albania

In the realm of civil-military relations, as elsewhere, theories are applied for the same reasons, to explain the matter and to 'assist' the 'actors' participating in these relations, civilian and senior military leaders, to develop the right approaches that enable the maintaining of healthy relations.¹²

Clausewitz's trinity is useful for explaining civil-military relations theories. At the core of every definition of civil-military relations is in fact exactly the interaction of Clausewitz's trinity; the government, the people, and the Army. Since the Roman republic decided to have a representative democracy, they empowered the government to exercise power and control on behalf of the people, including control of the military. In sum, the nature of civil-military relations can be best explained by answering the questions "Who controls the military and how?" with the focus on 'how', and "Who serves in the military?"¹³

The lengthy and nonlinear transformation process of the Albanian military from 'red' to democratic can hardly be associated with a single CMR theory. Civilian leaders and military professionals have both 'navigated' through theories, most of the time unaware of their existence, and developed a "pragmatic relationship,"¹⁴ which has enabled transformation of the military, but not necessarily the CMR itself at the desired level.

At the core of democratic CMR theories, classical and new alike, is the common understanding that the military protects and sustains democratic values. However, explaining how civilian control over the military is established and maintained is a chief concern for CMR.¹⁵ The institutional theory that Samuel Huntington, established in the late 1950s in his 'masterpiece' "The Soldier and the State" is the foundation and also the departing point of CMR theories.

His "objective control' paradigm in simple terms implies that civilian leaders know what they are asking for (ends/political objectives) and military professionals know how (ways) to employ 'the means' to achieve 'the ends'. Huntington emphasized the importance of a country's political culture. A country with more than two centuries of uninterrupted democracy will the advantage of mature democratic institutions. Albania, on the other hand, is a country with no such legacy. Instead, it is a country that after almost half a century of Communist isolation 'woke up' with the great desire of becoming a democracy.

Huntington's societal imperative focuses on the form of government which sets the foundation and the guiding principles for the functioning of a state and its affairs, including its CMR. In the last hundred years quite a few ideologies, in fact too many for

such period of time, have influenced and shaped the form of Albanian regimes and governments in particular periods. Of the regime types that Huntington identified, the conservative pro-military ideology is the one that best describes the years of the Albanian Kingdom (1928-1939). A Marxist antimilitary regime dominated most of the second half of the twentieth century and a liberal antimilitary regime shaped civil-military relations since the early 1990s.¹⁶

Huntington argued that the military is a profession and he further identified three essential elements: expertise, responsibility, and corporateness. His argument has been widely accepted, however the challenge remains for the profession to be predominant over bureaucracy.¹⁷ How about in Albania? This question has not yet been debated, and that probably has contributed to the assertion that the military has historically not been considered an independent factor in Albanian society.¹⁸

Liberal democracies tend to adopt the liberal antimilitary approach, which also comes with the risk of impossibility to build in a longer term strong military. "Objective civilian control" - simultaneously maximizes military subordination and military fighting power. It also addresses the dilemma of protecting simultaneously civilian society from the external threat and from the military themselves.¹⁹ Albania, by many accounts is not yet a fully liberal democracy, but it is working toward the achievement of "objective control." Much progress has been made in the last quarter century and the Cold War era seems distant.

Huntington's theory alone cannot explain Albanian CMR. There is an interpersonal dimension in CMR. Janowitz puts it at the core of Huntington's institutional theory making the 'blurry picture' a bit clearer.²⁰ These interpersonal relations occur at

two levels - between civilian leaders and the military professionals, and among military professionals themselves. In either case, processes are informed by their personal biases and also by some degree of unconscious biases. Under the Communist regime the interpersonal dimension was vaguely recognizable, while in the 'democratic era' of Albanian CMR that dimension has affected the 'mood' and contributed to both, 'sweetening' and/or 'bittering' of CMR. For example throughout the transition and transformation process the relationships between some Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of General Staff have been defined by their individual personalities.

In addition, there is always a possibility for politicization of the armed forces. They do not exist in isolation and cannot be very different from the society they represent. Thus, a degree of even unconscious politicization is present and cannot be ignored. The level of its influence on shaping the best military advice is a measure of military professionalism. Janowitz saw it as impossible for the military to avoid some degree of politicization, not because the military reflected the values and beliefs of the country, but due to the influence of the U.S-Soviet rivalry during Cold War era and its impact on international and domestic politics.²¹ Introduction and power given to political commissars as a duplicate chain of command, and establishment of party cells across the units of armed forces was clearly influenced by what was happening in the eastern bloc. Thus, Albanian CMR were not an exception then and couldn't "escape" the propensity of politicization, at least during first decade of their transformation from "red" to democratic.

The structural relationship in a communist political system determines civil-military relations in the same way the communist ideology affects relations with other

institutions.²² In communist systems, there is only one ideology with no room for interpreting the relationship between the military and political masters. , The “state’s pattern of civil-military relations”²³ reflected this common view. Thus, the military was not comfortable fighting about either ideological identity, or the ‘normal politics.’ The resulting symbiotic relationship with the party considerably affected the nature of Albanian CMR in the early stages of the post-communist transformation.

Sometimes the nature of Albanian CMR mirrors Peter Feaver’s agency theory, ‘which focuses on the relationship between the “principal” and “the agent”’. Considering the civilian political leadership as the principal and the military as ‘the agent,’ Feaver asserts that the combination of control by the principal and the reaction from the agent determine the CMR. The military should never stop advising the principal, but in the end carrying out faithfully what the civilian leadership asks them to, is the right thing to do in democratic societies where voters punish politicians by vote and not the military.²⁴ Feaver calls behavior that does not comply with the principal-agent norm “shirking,” while norm compliance is dubbed “working.” This norm is so strong that a civil-military relations scholar, Mackubin Thomas Owens argued when referring to the military, “the republic would be better served even by foolish working than by enlightened shirking.”²⁵

When one single theory does not explain Albanian CMR, answering “who controls the military and how,” and “who serves in the military”²⁶ is sufficient to understand the nature and the state of these civil-military relations. Answering the other questions will add to the quality of the civil-military “picture” but definitely will not change its fundamental nature. This would be a useful construct to examine civil-military relations both in communist and democratic Albania.

Limited Tradition of Democratic Civilian Control

There are circumstances or cases when history and legacy are not so much correlated. Anyone would assume that a nation with a long and rich history, definitely has a long civil-military relations legacy too. Albanians are one of the oldest peoples to inhabit the region and have a reputation for martial excellence for more than 2000 years,²⁷ however they have only managed to have their own state and its armed forces as an institution within it since 1912. Although a century does not count as an extended history, the historic journey for Albania has been full of events -- uprisings, Balkan Wars, WWI, WWII, Communism and its fall, transition to democracy, and its integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.

It was of primary importance for the young independent Albanian state and its first government, to have a standing military for many reasons, but most of all to defend the country. Despite the dire political circumstances and poor economic conditions, it managed to build up a modest military, and was nevertheless determined to fight the wars of the time, including the Balkan Wars from 1912 to 1913. When peace seems more like an aberration and the survival interests are at stake the nature of civil-military relations is neither the ideology nor the rivalry, but rather a question of national survival. Like Prince Hamlet the question for Albania was "to be or not to be". This context shaped the interaction between the civilian leaders and the military in early decades of independent Albania.

The next 'wave' of civil-military relations is from 1925-1939. This era was dominated by a single person, Prime Minister Ahmet Zogu,²⁸ who became the king. He abolished the Ministry of War and restructured the whole military from the ground up. He made himself head of General Command (i.e. Commander in Chief) and co-opted the officer

corps by granting them a step up in rank, a pay rise, and dazzling new uniforms.²⁹

These steps ensured that the military was loyal to him over the country. In the wake of the Italian occupation of Albania in April 1939, King Zog fled the country and the military with very few exceptions failed to defend the country from the aggressor.

Although the King's reforms and initiatives contributed to shaping Albanian CMR so that they were in relative harmony with the national and international environment, as it usually happens, failure eclipses any previous achievement. Professionalism improved through the education of the officer corps in the best western military academies of the time, improved recruitment policies, and the introduction of new specialties. These reforms along with others had a significant positive impact on the military's effectiveness, but it did not change the state of CMR. The King controlled the military and the relationship was only a "one-way street".

Civil-Military Relations in the Communist Regime

Such were the circumstances and the legacy inherited from King Zog, which combined with the unstable conditions that WWII created, enabled Enver Hoxha, his Communist party, and the National Liberation Front to elevate themselves to power.³⁰ This unintentionally facilitated the politicization of the military institution,³¹ thus creating an officer corps loyal to the state leadership rather than to the state. This marks also the third, and by far the longest era of civil-military relations. This period started during WWII, was formalized in July 1943 with the creation of General Staff of National Liberation Army, and continued throughout the 'dark years' of the Cold War.

The nature and intensity of civil-military relations in Albania during the Cold War was also significantly affected by the nature and intensity of relations between Albania and its strategic allies. These included first Yugoslavia, then the Soviet Union, and

before going into a long political “hibernation” which totally isolated Albania from the world, China. This left no room for the formation of an Albanian identity to manifest itself in civil-military relations. Instead, as in all Marxist-Leninist settings, CMR were based on Mao Zedong’s maxim that the party must control the guns, and the guns must never be allowed to control the party.³² And as in tales with no-happy ending, where the friend becomes the foe, all three strategic allies became the biggest enemies, including the whole West. Under these circumstances one assumes that military would be dominating the realm of civil-military relations for the external threat is perceived to be high.³³ What in fact happens is the opposite.

Paranoia ‘takes over’ and the Constitution looks more like the party’s manifesto. “Albanian Armed Forces shall be led by the Albanian Labor Party” and ‘the First Secretary of the ALP is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and Chairman of the Defense Council.’³⁴ The Constitution, therefore, declared that the primary institution of power is the Party. Its extended hand with a gun, the secret police, was always ‘vigilant’ to make sure nothing went against the party line. The Albanian state was portrayed as the “governmental expression of the dictatorship of the working class.”³⁵ The military did not manage to become a factor in the years of total communist rule, nor its aftermath.

The regime was careful enough to design recruiting policies to ensure that the officer corps came from families with proven loyalty to the party and regime. But that was not enough. The regime’s isolationist policies, tight control of the military, adoption of Chinese military patterns, such as the abolishment of ranks in the mid-1960s, set the stage for what was going to come. There were more than 2,500 trials of military

personnel from 1965 to 1980, which resulted in the release from duty, imprisonment, or execution. These actions crushed one of the pillars of professionalism, corporateness.³⁶ The result was a military that did not threaten the regime, but was no longer capable of defending it.³⁷

For forty-seven years after the World War II, Albania was an insignificant Balkan country sealed off from the world by mountains, sea, and a devout Stalinist named Enver Hoxha, who kept Albania near 'total isolation'.³⁸ The Albanian military during the Communist regime was undoubtedly under 'civilian control', and was one of the vehicles for society-wide inculcation of communist values.³⁹ Was it democratic control? Not even close. Was it an "objective control?" Hard to define, but for sure it was a total control of military and total control of everything. Albanian CMR resembled subjective over objective control, since the military did not have a sphere of professional autonomy and its values mirrored the values of the Communist leadership.

The concern for Albania and its military transitioning from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one was not whether civilian control was possible, but how the military would adapt to interact with the new democratic political leadership and the new requirements of democratic military professionalism.⁴⁰ However, the military started this journey and making the 'first step' is as important as walking the whole path.

The Big Change with a Mixed Outcome - Transforming the Military but Not Necessarily Civil-Military Relations (1992-1997)

The 'ghost' of 'secrecy', a dominant feature of communist regimes does not go away easily. Transitioning from a regime where secrecy is the norm to a system characterized by openness and democratic principles is by all means a challenge of great magnitude. This is even truer for the military. 'Western style' leadership, including

the delegation of authority, norms of democratic military professionalism, and everything else was not only all new but also against anything that the Albanian officer corps was familiar with. For certain, the change was “the start of a social revolution”⁴¹ in the armed forces. And as Liddell Hart puts it, “Harder than getting a new idea in the military is getting the old one out.”⁴²

Civil-military relations in a democracy are uniquely concerned that designated political agents control designated military agents.⁴³ It is a primary concern for any country and more so for a country that comes out from the “dark hours of communism” to have steady first steps. “People don’t change because it is the right thing to do; they change because it is less painful to change than to stay the same.”⁴⁴ However, as it happens when someone is brought to light after a long time in the dark, the first steps are hard, thus inertia takes place. These first steps are merely a continuation of walking in the dark.

As in the case of all Eastern European countries, Albania too, had to overcome the challenge of “building effective defense policy making structures, establishing meaningful parliamentary oversight of the defense and security sectors, and developing wider civil society input into defense and security debates.”⁴⁵ In other words establishing democratic civilian control of the armed forces. The answer to the challenge is reform, which is anything but easy.

A sound legal framework which provided a clear delineation of authority and also a clear command and control of military in times of war and peace, was a good first step to establish democratic civilian control over the military.⁴⁶ However, this step addressed only the ‘who controls the military’ part of question. The other equally important question

is “how is the military controlled’. As is often the case, the problem most of the time is not the law itself, but the way the law is implemented, or ignored at all. It is un-arguable that the 3Ds and P (depoliticization, departization, democratization, and professionalization)⁴⁷ approach taken by the first democratically elected government was sound, ambitious, and very convincing for a solid transformation of the military and everything concerning it, including democratic control with healthy civil-military relations.

The reality though of the first decade of transition offers a mixed picture of a good legal framework and good intentions, but not this was not always combined with other best choices or approaches. Both the civilian and military leaders were ‘operating’ in uncharted territory. The former was skeptical that a military so connected to the previous regime cannot easily be democratically controlled, while the latter was concerned that the ‘good old days’ were gone and worried how to adapt to new institutional and cultural changes. Ironically, the approach taken to transform a profoundly politicized military to a depoliticized one, was the same as that of previous regime - purge military officers because of their past records.⁴⁸ In many cases that resulted in a disruption of continuity, a damage to institutional memory, and a new politicization of the military.⁴⁹

Civilian leaders in the MoD and elsewhere were somehow convinced that the only way to conquer the fear inhabiting them from the lack of trust, was to centralize decision making and turn civilian control into almost a civilian command. Sometimes the Minister of Defense and Chief of General Staff had a common view and agreed approach, however this shared view did not ‘travel’ through the whole armed forces. The fear ‘conquered’ and the first democratically elected government unfortunately

became a one-party structure, with the bond of communist ideology being replaced by clan loyalty.⁵⁰ The identification of state institutions with the political party has been one of the significant traits of Albanian democracy and going in cycles with the elections.⁵¹

Competing needs of the first decade of transition were such that they did not favor the military. This affected civil-military relations. In the DIME (Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economy) paradigm of instruments of national power, the first democratic government focused on D. Understandably that translated into less attention to the military as an instrument of power. The weak economy and an obsolete inherited military were legitimate reasons for focusing on D. However, excluding senior military leaders from the decision making process and the development of policies governing the military, contributed to the unhappiness of military professionals.⁵² Exclusion from any relations, including civil-military ones, is also a matter of trust, and the lack of trust results in fear which always 'guarantees' a dysfunctional relationship.

Aside from the grey picture of civil-military relations in post-communist Albania, and the resulting distorted democratic control of the armed forces, there is the view that, by deciding not to act, the military affected the affairs of the state. Despite a few isolated cases where the military was hesitant to separate itself from the legacy of the communist regime in the early 1990s, the Albanian armed forces have been on the side of 'change'. Not acting in 1997 against the popular uprising, contributed to democratization by not worsening the situation which was already explosive.⁵³ However, failure to protect its own military installations became a challenge to internal security due to the amount of weapons and ammunitions that ended up in the hands of the citizens.

The reality almost never meets the expectations. In the case of Albania, the first decade of the post-communist era not only did not meet the expectations of the people, but had flaws and setbacks that delayed the delivery of better results for decades to come. It was “neither a genuine post-communist society and state, nor a fully capitalist one” – it was an ‘un-baptized decade’.⁵⁴ So it was for the civil-military relations. Both, civilian and military leaders failed to recognize the need for deep institutional cultural change. In addition, both sides lacked the understanding of many norms, most of all moral and behavioral ones, to enable the armed forces to take the proper role within the country and within the wider western community.⁵⁵ The civil-military relations domain aimed to separate from the Cold War paradigm and embrace the democratic paradigm, yet they ‘got stuck’ in between the two.

The Integration Decade – Getting Better, but Still Not Perfect

The second decade of transition was smoother, but still had its ups and downs. It had some of the same mistakes and of course its own new ones. Civilian control of the military became more ‘democratic’ and the transparency of the decision-making process improved, but the lack of trust remained. The public’s perception of the military improved, but the military leadership still lacked cohesion. New individuals had the opportunity to take on powerful roles, but these new personalities affected civil-military relations. In the end, the decade from 2000-2010 is remembered as the ‘perfect’ decade resulting in both NATO membership and an overwhelmingly 91.3percent of the public supporting the military and Albania’s accession to NATO.⁵⁶

Calls to improve democratic civilian control could no longer be ignored since sufficient progress in democratization was a requirement of NATO accession.⁵⁷ For Albania and the other former communist countries, the desire to join the “Western

Clubs” of NATO and the EU, and low levels of external security threats were the drivers that contributing to the establishment of democratic civilian control of the military and civil-military relations based on democratic principles.⁵⁸

The Constitution of 1998 was a strong foundation for making civilian control more democratic. In addition, the “Law on Power and Authority for Strategic Direction of Albanian Armed Forces” in 2000, laid out clear roles and responsibilities for Parliament, the President, the Council of Ministers, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the General Staff, the Chief of the General Staff, and the service commanders, made ‘democratic control’ of the armed forces from the legal framework perspective possible. Also a good deal of attention was focused on faithfully following the norms of democratic military professionalism and the compatibility of military and societal values.⁵⁹

Yet, the ‘how’ part of the control remained still a concern. There is ‘check and balances’ in the constitution, and there is also a certain degree of ‘check and balance’ principle in the law that regulates the power and authorities over the armed forces, all intended to avoid precisely the ‘unchecked’ and ‘unbalanced’ decisions regarding control of the armed forces. The reality, however, sometimes is different. A number of retired general officers have taken their cases to court and most of them have won. While the law at the time foresaw that general officers serve for a certain number of years, the court found that the decision for their retirement was not in compliance with the law. Although this is not the same as the purges of the past, it still raises the concern that some decisions are not ‘balanced’ and not at all transparent.⁶⁰ This shows that ‘political bonds’ sometime prevail over principles of the law. On the other hand

there is the risk that the military may 'pay the price' of a political fight. Only recently, the President of Albania and the Prime Minister, who are political rivals, did not agree on the proposed Chief of General Staff of Albanian Armed Forces. The President did not approve the proposal mainly because of lack of prior consultations on the matter.⁶¹ A good law that is not enforced, is worse than having a bad law.

Healthy civil-military relations require also that the military possesses expertise, which is gained through a reliable professional military education (PME). Albanian PME has already moved away from its inherited one.⁶² Leadership and the role of the military in democracy introduced almost two decades ago is an enduring theme of training and education of the military professionals.⁶³ It is important as it ensures that military becomes "democratically accountable"⁶⁴ But the difficulties military education has experienced are present in other domains as well. Transitioning from communism to democracy is a revolutionary change which of course affects military professionalism.⁶⁵ Reopening the military academies in 1995-1996 was a great achievement; however, "they could not escape from the legacy of the long period under a totalitarian-communist regime."⁶⁶ Transformation of PME is still 'unfinished business' and that has an impact on the quality of civil-military relations now and in the future.

At times it is hard to have the right or the desired relations with the boss you serve. It is a two-way street but leadership theories put more emphasis on the boss. He/she is the one exercising leadership and it is up to him/her to set the tone of the relations with the people working for and with him/her. If someone thinks it is hard to deal with the boss, just one boss, he or she should be reminded that the Albanian Chief of Defense has three bosses. He has to consider not only the leadership style of each of

them, but more importantly he must know the relationship among his bosses and 'adjust' his behavior accordingly so he does not upset one while getting along with another.

The Albanian military overcame the existence of "toxic political discourse and a death of constructive dialogue,"⁶⁷ to navigate its way to become politically impartial. However, the time has come for the military to increase its influence in shaping the security policies and strategies and more so to ensure that policy benefits from the military's professional expertise. As democracy matures, so do the armed forces and their ability to influence policies without becoming political.

Conclusion

It is not unusual for a country's civil-military relations to reflect its state of democratic development. Indeed, that might be a desired goal. However, there is reason to believe that civil-military relations in post-communist Albania would have been better, had the senior military leaders not been concerned about becoming "political," which is "seen as antithetical to military culture and ethics," but had focused more on diving into the "murky waters" of strategic decision making.⁶⁸ On the other hand, had the civilian leaders been more receptive toward the military profession CMR would have also been better.

Accountability of institutions is a fundamental principle of democratic societies. Armed forces and their senior military leaders are not only held accountable but they are held to a higher standard. Within the democratic context of Albania, the armed forces and their senior military leaders are held to a higher standard. However, one always should be mindful that it is the state of democratization that dictates most of the interaction and engagement of senior military leaders. Striking the right balance of this

engagement is a challenge for senior military leaders in any democratic society. Either over engagement or lack of it can be misread and misinterpreted, even in countries with a long tradition of democracy and democratic civil-military relations. In Albania, though, the climate is not conducive to favoring the ones that 'speak up' or 'speak truth to power' without the worry of being treated the same as the ones that 'speak out'.

Politicians are mostly described as 'different beasts' compared to other 'actors' in a democratic society. Their most developed sense and instinct is power. "Divide and conquer" is not an unknown approach to Albanian politicians. It has been "effectively" employed causing the divide at the very top of the military leadership and making it a significant trait of civil-military relations. It is also almost inevitable for civil-military relations to be affected by the climate of an era, but in any case they should not be affected by the weather of the day. In fact, the transition of the Albanian Armed Forces from 'red' to democratic indicates that civil-military relations were affected not only by the climate of the era but unfortunately by the weather of the day as well.⁶⁹

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