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The Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society: An Interdisciplinary Approach

A Peer Review of The October 24-26, 2003 Proceedings
At The Palmer House, Chicago, Illinois

By:

Sheila R. Ronis, Ph.D.



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The University Group, Inc.**

To understand what it will take to create a transformation in the military, it is helpful to have a military sociologist around. There is an organization that studies issues such as transformation and publishes a journal, *Armed Forces & Society*. Companies who are in the thick of transformation activities may want to learn about the journal and the organization that publishes it, since many policy makers in the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill read the magazine and are influenced by what they read.

The Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS) has an international meeting every other year. The group had its meeting this past year on October 24-26 at the Palmer House in Chicago, Illinois. More than 270 social scientists who study issues related to the military throughout the global community gathered at the meeting in Chicago to talk about their research and policy initiatives. Thirty-one panels presented papers with five to ten scholars per panel. Panelists came from countries in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa and the Middle East.

The two panels on “Peacekeeping” included papers such as, “Israeli-Palestinian Non-Mediated Peacekeeping – A Challenge to Hegemonic Masculinities” by Deborah Heifetz-Yahav of Tel Aviv University; “Peacekeeping and International Policing: The Political Framework” by David Last of the Royal Military College of Canada, Rick Linden of the University of Manitoba, and Chris Murphy of Dalhousie University; “How Peacekeeping Prepared the Army for War” by Laura Miller of RAND.

There were also panels on “Shaping an Army’s Culture,” “Issues in American Security Policy,” “Terrorism and Counterterrorism,” “The Warrior: Psychological and Human Aspects.” Most panels dealt with transformation and change of one form or another. Since much of the future depends on understanding multinational allies and friends who partner with the U.S. on various engagements, there were panels on “Civil-Military Issues: Transnational Perspectives,” “The European Armed Forces in Transition,” “The Transformation of Civil-Military Relations in Postcommunist Europe: Patterns and Trends,” “A Diverse Force,” and “Making the Grade Post-Prague: New Allies, New Capabilities, and Evolving Civil-Military Relations in East Central Europe.”

Panels also included how military education is provided around the world such as, “The Role of Sociology in Military Officer Education,” “Redefining Leadership and the Military Profession in the Twenty-First Century: Cross-National Perspectives,” “Military People and Professionalism,” and “Military Education and Socialization.”

Several social issues with regard to the military were also presented in the panels, “Ethics, Law and Action,” “Women in the Force,” and “Family and the Force.”

Today's IUS organization has over 700 Fellows (members) representing over 35 countries. These individuals are academics, active and retired military officers, students, research scientists and policy makers across many different disciplines and institutional affiliations. The "sciences" represented are across the entire spectrum of the social sciences; sociology, political science, history, economics, international relations, social work, anthropology, law and psychology. Organizations represented include the Service academies, from West Point, The Naval Academy and The Air Force Academy to the Army, Air Force, and Navy War Colleges in addition to the National Defense University and other universities from all over the world as well as think tanks such as RAND, Brookings, and the Society and Armed Forces Institute, The Hague.

Many social scientists study issues of the military. They usually bring the disciplines and methodologies of their "science" to this study. When they come together, it is an interdisciplinary, yet intellectually rigorous "collaboration across university, organizational, disciplinary and national lines." In their event, military-related papers are presented that study issues such as the military profession, military education, civil-military relations, social composition of the armed forces, organizational issues within the armed forces, public policy on defense issues, peacekeeping, arms control and conflict resolution.

One of the panels of the event dealt with the history of the IUS journal, *Armed Forces & Society*. Chaired by the current editor, Patricia M. Shields, Department of Political Science, Texas State University, the journal celebrated thirty years of publication. *Armed Forces & Society* is the leading peer-reviewed interdisciplinary and international journal publishing on "military establishments, civil-military relations, the use and limits of force in armed conflict and peacekeeping operations, security and other related topics." In its pages, readers will find research in the field as well as book reviews and other essays. The tone is clearly one of interdisciplinary approaches.

According to the IUS outgoing Chairman and President, David R. Segal, University of Maryland College Park, "Today, we focus on the adaptation of the volunteer forces that have increasingly been adopted in the West to the states that they defend, the implications of this change for citizenship and

diversity issues, and concerns regarding the implications of volunteer forces for our understanding of civil-military relations.”

Segal, honored at the event for forty years of service to the discipline, and eight years as IUS President, said, “We are also concerned with ‘new military missions,’ many of which are not so new. Latin America and Eastern Europe have largely been formally divested of authoritarian military regimes, and the academic community has not yet successfully engaged the issue of authoritarian military rule and rebellion in Africa. We do see in the research of our Fellows a recognition of the importance of the Middle East as an arena of conflict (and hopefully conflict resolution), and of the reality of asymmetric warfare as we come to grips with a world in which the Cold War in Europe has ended (I continue to see communist nations on the Pacific Rim being capable of great mischief), as has the isolation of North America from hostile attack, and as we seek ways to conceptualize the post Cold War (or perhaps Postmodern) world.”

Segal also served six years as editor of *Armed Forces & Society*. As a sociologist, he stated, “OSD has a desire to transform the culture of the defense establishment by transforming the military departments and services. I think they want to transform the organization of the services, not the culture, since there is much of great worth in the current culture of the American military. Much of the transformation that OSD wants is actually going on out in the field, where our military personnel have to be innovative, creative, and flexible in order to survive in conflicts that are very different from the ones they have been trained to fight. These changes are essential.”

Incoming Chairman and President John Allen (Jay) Williams, Loyola University Chicago, said, “As the security challenges of the new century become evident, the need for the IUS is more apparent than ever. Our Fellows include the most prominent civil-military relations scholars from around the world and represent a wide range of disciplinary approaches. The IUS is an ‘invisible college’ that facilitates the work and collaboration of our Fellows and disseminates their work in the most prestigious journal in our field, *Armed Forces & Society*.”

Williams, a political scientist said, “Challenges to the liberal democratic state continue -- some old, some new. It has never been more important than

it is now to understand issues of military professionalism and the interaction between a free society and the military that defends it.”

The organization was founded in 1960 by Morris Janowitz, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, who was pivotal in the development of military sociology as a discipline. The IUS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization chartered in the State of Illinois. It is supported by membership dues and contributions from individuals and organizations who believe in the importance of its work. Information about IUS can be obtained through their website on www.iusafs.org.

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