

United states history of military and policy essay examples

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The role of the citizen soldier and the professional military throughout American History

The whole concept on citizen soldier can be associated with the fact that American citizens have full obligation of arming themselves for the purposes of protecting families and their nation from foreign encroachments as well as domestic tyrants (Weigley, 1997). However, the idea of allowing citizen-soldier establishment enabled direct involvement of the people's will power in the preservation of liberties and rights within the society. The concept became popular in America during the times of colonial militia before Revolutionary War. The citizen-soldier serves from different perspective contrary to professional soldier whose vocation was clearly known to be war. The citizen-soldiers were basically not paid for going into war; they were generally driven by acts of patriotism, nationalism and obligation of duty. They were never involved in war for imperialistic purposes (Bradford, 2003).

There has been duality within the American military for fairly long time. The duality involved both the citizen-soldiers and military professionals performing military activities in all the wars America has been involved. In the 18th and 19th centuries, America supplemented their professional regular Army with state militia as well as other volunteer forces. The dual system was used until the emergence of the American Civil War. During this time, the United States Military Academy located at West Point considered traditionally to be the source of army officers could not support fully the force required in the 1860's. This led to establishment of Land-Grant Act of 1862 (Morell Act) which legalized the giving away of the state's federal land

for the purposes of establishing colleges intended to produce good number of reserve officers for the American Army. The Morrill Act failed to satisfy the functions for which it was established since there was eminent lack of quality and uniformity towards consistent supply of competent military personnel. Due to this, the National Defense Act of 1916 steered the establishment of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) who were instrumental in both World War I and World War II (Weigley, 1997).

The role of the US in foreign affairs throughout American history

America's involvement in the world affairs could be traced from its possession of a number of regions which stretched from Caribbean to the Pacific. American foreign policy was ushered into a period of Isolationism by the signing of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I. However isolationism became impossible owing to the war which broke out in Europe in the year 1939. United States cooperated with other international agencies in the 1920's and 1930's, especially on matters of trade. The country was involved in talks of conflict resolution with other nations of the world, which involved diplomatic talks on war debts, limited disarmament, reparations and international peace. This made United States get deeply involved in the Western issues hence making American foreign policy far from being considered isolationist (Millett & Maslowski, 1994).

Moreover, America was involved in persistent calls for disarmament in the 1920's since they believed that the build-up of arms was the major cause of World Wars, hence reduction of military strength would help prevent

emergence of such conflicts. Military strength of Japan became America's concern since it presented a barrier for their interests within the region, hence the need to limit Japan's military capabilities. The Washington Armaments Conference held in 1921 and 1922 saw the signing of a treaty amongst five countries namely; Great Britain, France, the United States, Italy and Japan. The treaty known as Five-Power Treaty, limited the tonnage of each country's navies hence restrictions on the manufacture of aircraft carriers and battleships. However, the treaty placed no restrictions on the manufacture of non-capital ships. This was followed by diplomatic agreements on the preservation of Asia. The countries involved in the scramble for Asia i. e. Japan, Great Britain, France and the United States agreed on terms and conditions of settling disputes amongst themselves concerning their possessions in Asia. Consequently, Nine-power treaty was signed involving circle of nations which all supported the Open Door Policy leading to respect to territorial Integrity of other nations (Bradford, 2003).

There were mixed relations between America, the Caribbean and Central American countries in the 1920's. Good example is in the Dominican Republic where America withdrew their military after democratic elections in 1924, but later returned in Nicaragua in 1927 during civil war. Then American president Coolidge justified the action based on protection of America's business interests and property (Bradford, 2003).

How victory was defined throughout US Military History. Consider limited and complete types of victory

Traditionally, the concept of winning war was based on the belief of reducing enemy's means of resistance. This was done in a way that rendered the enemy totally ineffective, hence making the enemy incapable of resistance. The other means was to paralyze the enemies vital parameters especially control and command systems. Total wars required the participant to break both the government and the people's will to govern. On the other hand limited wars required one to only overcome the will of the government based on the assumption that the government enjoyed superiority in enforcing decisions. There is also the will-oriented approach which focuses on the psychological aspect. The will-power according to the US military can be attacked through information operations. However, definition of victory as an assessment includes the inclusion of information operations in deciding strategically the winner. Inefficiency in intellectual and psychological aspects of the US army can be given as the reason for their inability to achieve profound victory in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is because of the impossibility to control information within the current age (Weigley, 1997).

In conclusion, victory in war can well be described as the process and act of breaking the will. The aspect of eliminating means of resistance can at times prove difficult because there still remains the will to create within the enemy soldiers. Destroying only the means and ignoring the will creates ultimate hostility. However, destroying the will to resist ends the war despite combat capability. Military force can therefore be used to achieve economic goals as well as political supremacy.

References

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