



Diplomatic Strategies for National Security in Military Education Curricula

Veli Goje Burak

*Department of International Affairs
Nigerian Army School of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria*

Abstract

Contemporary security environments demand that military professionals possess not only tactical competence but also advanced diplomatic and strategic skills. Modern military operations increasingly occur within complex political, cultural, and multinational contexts, making diplomacy an indispensable component of national security. This paper examines the role of diplomatic strategies within military education curricula and argues for their systematic integration into professional military education. Drawing on comparative perspectives from global military institutions, the study analyzes how diplomacy, interagency coordination, and international engagement are taught within selected military education systems. The paper proposes a curriculum framework that embeds diplomatic competencies alongside traditional military training, thereby preparing officers for multidimensional security challenges. The study concludes that incorporating diplomacy into military education enhances strategic judgment, civil–military relations, and national security effectiveness.

Keywords: military education, diplomacy, national security, professional military education, strategic studies

Received 12 Jan., 2026; Revised 23 Jan., 2026; Accepted 25 Jan., 2026 © The author(s) 2026.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. Introduction

The nature of warfare and national security has undergone profound transformation in the twenty-first century. Contemporary security challenges—ranging from terrorism and cyber threats to peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions—require military leaders to operate beyond the battlefield. As a result, modern military professionalism increasingly emphasizes diplomacy, negotiation, and interagency cooperation alongside combat readiness (Huntington, 1957; Gray, 2016). Military institutions worldwide have begun to recognize that success in contemporary conflicts depends not only on kinetic power but also on the ability to manage relationships with civilian authorities, international partners, and local populations. This shift has elevated diplomacy as a core component of national security strategy rather than a peripheral function of foreign ministries alone (Murray & Mansoor, 2012). Consequently, professional military education (PME) systems are under pressure to reform curricula to reflect these realities.

In Nigeria, the evolving security landscape—characterized by insurgency, transnational crime, peacekeeping commitments, and civil-military relations—demands officers who are both tactically proficient and diplomatically literate. However, military education curricula have traditionally emphasized operational and technical competencies, often marginalizing diplomatic studies. This paper argues that integrating diplomatic strategies into military education is essential for developing officers capable of navigating complex security environments.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Diplomacy and National Security

Diplomacy has long been recognized as a central instrument of statecraft. Classical theorists such as Clausewitz acknowledged that war is a continuation of politics by other means, implicitly linking military action to diplomatic objectives (Clausewitz, 1976). Contemporary scholars expand this view by emphasizing the integration of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of power in national strategy (Gray, 2016). Modern security scholarship increasingly views diplomacy not merely as negotiation between states but as a comprehensive process involving dialogue, influence, and coordination across governmental and non-

governmental actors (Berridge, 2015). In this context, military personnel frequently function as diplomatic actors, particularly in peacekeeping missions, security cooperation, and crisis management.

2.2 Military Education and Professionalization

Professional military education (PME) serves as the institutional mechanism through which armed forces transmit strategic culture, ethics, and professional norms (Huntington, 1957). Research indicates that advanced military education enhances strategic thinking, civil-military relations, and policy awareness (Nielsen & Snider, 2009). Comparative studies of military academies in the United States, United Kingdom, and NATO member states reveal a growing emphasis on interagency coordination, international relations, and strategic communication (Yarger, 2008). These curricula increasingly include modules on diplomacy, international law, and global governance, reflecting the realities of contemporary operations.

2.3 Diplomacy within Military Pedagogy

Diplomatic engagement has become a routine aspect of military leadership, particularly in multinational coalitions and peace support operations. Scholars argue that military officers must be trained as “strategic diplomats” capable of balancing coercion with persuasion (Hill, 2016). Educational programs that integrate diplomacy enable officers to understand cultural contexts, negotiate effectively, and support foreign policy objectives without escalation. Empirical studies demonstrate that officers exposed to diplomatic education exhibit greater strategic awareness and adaptability (Murray, 2018). These findings support calls for embedding diplomatic competencies into the core of military curricula rather than treating them as optional supplements.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in civil-military relations theory and constructivist approaches to security studies. Civil-military theory emphasizes the need for a professional officer corps that understands both political authority and civilian oversight (Huntington, 1957). Constructivist perspectives highlight how norms, identities, and shared understandings shape security behavior (Wendt, 1999). From this standpoint, military education is not merely technical training but a socialization process that shapes how officers perceive threats, allies, and political authority. Incorporating diplomacy into military education fosters strategic reflexivity, cultural awareness, and ethical judgment—qualities essential for modern security environments.

1. Comparative Perspectives on Military Education

Several international models illustrate the integration of diplomacy into military education:

- **United States:** War colleges and staff colleges include instruction in diplomacy, international relations, and interagency coordination. Programs emphasize strategic communication and civil-military cooperation (Yarger, 2008).
- **United Kingdom:** The Defence Academy incorporates international relations and security studies, emphasizing civil-military interaction and coalition operations.
- **NATO Institutions:** The NATO Defense College provides multinational education focusing on strategic decision-making, diplomacy, and alliance management.
- **Asian Military Academies:** Institutions in countries such as Singapore and China increasingly emphasize regional diplomacy, strategic culture, and defense diplomacy as part of officer education.

These comparative experiences demonstrate a global consensus on the importance of diplomacy within military professionalism.

2. Integrating Diplomatic Strategies into Military Education

To strengthen national security education, this study proposes the following curriculum innovations:

- I. **Dedicated Courses on Diplomacy and Foreign Policy:** Modules covering negotiation, international law, and strategic communication should be embedded in officer training programs.
- II. **Interagency Learning:** Joint seminars with diplomats, intelligence professionals, and development experts can foster whole-of-government thinking.
- III. **Simulation and Scenario-Based Learning:** Crisis simulations and negotiation exercises enable officers to practice diplomatic decision-making.
- IV. **Cultural and Regional Studies:** Language training and regional studies enhance cultural competence and reduce operational misunderstandings.
- V. **Ethics and Civil-Military Relations:** Courses should address ethical leadership, civilian oversight, and democratic accountability.

These elements collectively prepare officers for the complex intersection of diplomacy and defense in contemporary security environments.

III. Conclusion

The evolving character of conflict demands a reconceptualization of military education. Diplomatic competence is no longer ancillary to military professionalism but central to effective national security strategy. By integrating diplomacy into military education curricula, armed forces can cultivate leaders capable of navigating political complexities, engaging international partners, and supporting national interests through both force and dialogue. For Nigeria and comparable states, such curricular reform represents an opportunity to strengthen civil-military relations, enhance strategic foresight, and position the military as a constructive instrument of national and international stability.

Acknowledgement

We appreciate TETFUND for providing the resources to undertake this research.

References

- [1]. Berridge, G. R. (2015). *Diplomacy: Theory and practice* (5th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- [2]. Clausewitz, C. von. (1976). *On war* (M. Howard & P. Paret, Trans.). Princeton University Press.
- [3]. Gray, C. S. (2016). *Strategy and defence planning: Meeting the challenge of uncertainty*. Oxford University Press.
- [4]. Huntington, S. P. (1957). *The soldier and the state: The theory and politics of civil-military relations*. Harvard University Press.
- [5]. Murray, W., & Mansoor, P. R. (2012). *Hybrid warfare: Fighting complex opponents from the ancient world to the present*. Cambridge University Press.
- [6]. Nielsen, S. C., & Snider, D. M. (2009). *American civil-military relations: The soldier and the state in a new era*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- [7]. Yarger, H. R. (2008). *Strategic theory for the 21st century: The little book on big strategy*. Strategic Studies Institute.