WORKING PAPER

The Strategic Logic of Militia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The use of militia in insurgencies has been highly controversial and politically-charged. Most accounts consider militia harbingers of instability that weaken state authority and commit brazen human rights violations. This paper reviews 130 insurgencies since World War II and finds that most governments have utilized militia during insurgencies. Why do governments use militia? The paper finds that governments turn to militia when state security forces are weak and policymakers believe militia can help pacify key areas of the country, especially rural areas where state control is minimal or non-existent. The historical evidence suggests that government perceptions are fairly accurate. A militia has often been effective in helping defeat insurgent groups, though the outcome of insurgencies is determined by a range of factors, not just the performance of militia. But the use of militia has sometimes come at a heavy price since some have perpetrated abuses and weakened state power. To be effective over the long run, governments need to establish tight control mechanisms that prevent militia from challenging the state and committing human rights abuses that can undermine local support. In short, a well-regulated militia appears to be an important – and perhaps an essential – part of a counterinsurgency campaign. Consequently, the emphasis of policymakers should be on the quality of regulation, not on whether a militia is inherently desirable or undesirable.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of militia in insurgencies has been highly controversial and politically-charged. Most accounts consider militia harbingers of instability that weaken state authority and commit brazen human rights violations. As one assessment of the Rwandan war concluded, "Drunken militia bands, fortified with assorted drugs from ransacked pharmacies, were bused from massacre to massacre. Radio announcers reminded listeners not to take pity on women and children."[1] An analysis of the war in East Timor noted that Indonesian-backed militia groups "allowed the army to terrorize the pro-independence supporters without the army itself appearing as the perpetrator."[2] And an account of Somalia concluded, "Notable in the developing chaos were the rampages of young gangsters, high on *qat*, a local drug, who loved to watch Sylvester Stallone movies, took Rambo as a role model, and committed widespread mayhem, looting, and killing in the capital."[3] Even the U.S. Army and Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* is disparaging of militia, noting that they "constitute a long-term threat to law and order."[4]

Yet the employment of militia has significant policy implications. The United States has worked with militia in several recent counterinsurgency campaigns, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Yemen. In Iraq, U.S. military and intelligence agencies supported militia in Anbar and other provinces. In Afghanistan, U.S. Special Operations Forces trained and mentored local defense forces through the Village Stability Operations (VSO) and Afghan Local Police (ALP) programs. In some of these cases, such as Iraq, proponents have argued that they were critical in weakening or defeating insurgent groups. The use of tribal militia in Al Anbar Province, one assessment concluded, served

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[1] Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), p. 115.

[2] Samuel Moore, The Indonesian Military's Last Years in East Timor: An Analysis of Its Secret Documents. Indonesia 72 (October 2001), p. 30.

[3] John Mueller, *The Remnants of War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 105.

[4] U.S. Army and Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 113.

as a virtual "Gettysburg of Iraq" that "fundamentally changed the military and political landscape of Iraq."[5]

In an attempt to better understand the use of militia in insurgencies, this paper asks: Why do governments use militia? As Figure 1.1 illustrates, a review of 130 insurgencies since World War II indicates that most governments utilize militia during insurgencies. So do many insurgent groups. Militia use peaked in 1992 and 1994, along with insurgencies more broadly, when 36 different governments supported militia against guerrillas.

Figure 1.1: Use of Militia During Insurgencies, 1945-2011[6]
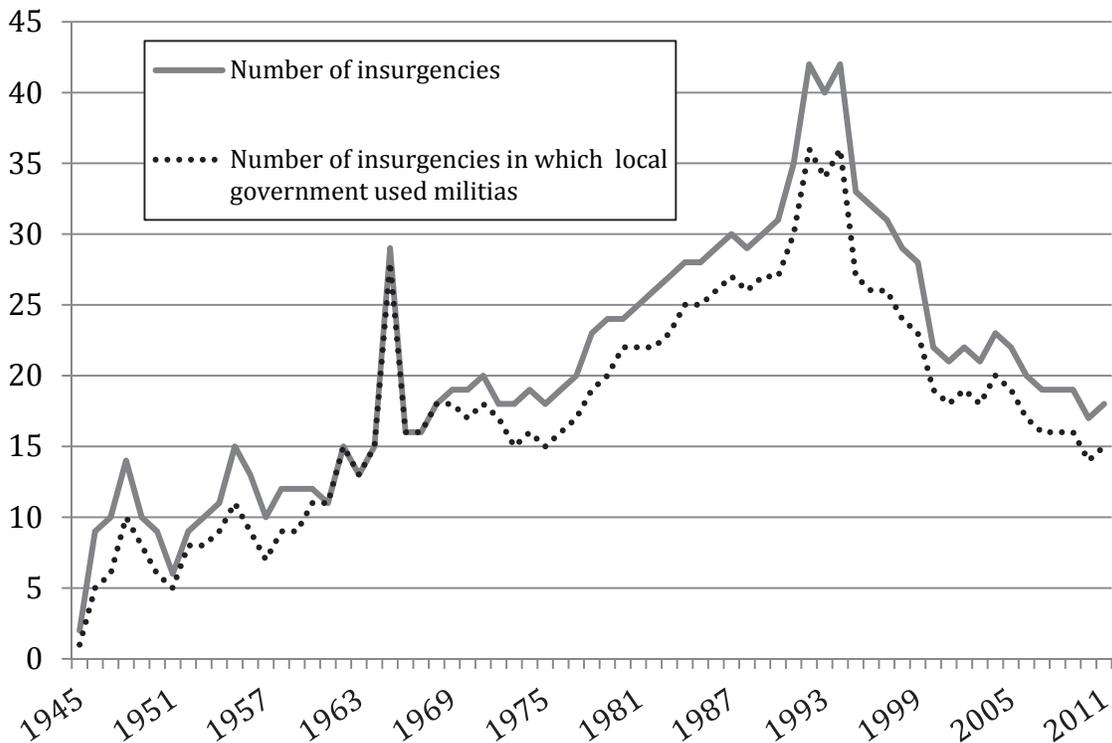
To help understand why governments use militia, this paper adopts two approaches. First, it examines 130 insurgencies since 1945 to ascertain whether the

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[5] Major Niel Smith and Colonel Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review*, Vol. 88, No. 2, March-April 2008, p. 42.

[6] Figure S. 1 captures two trends (1) the number of insurgencies in which governments used militia per year; and (2) the total number of insurgencies since 1945 per year. See Appendix A for specific data.

government supported militia. The paper builds off the data set established by David Laitin and James Fearon, with some minor adjustments.[7] Second, it analyzes three case studies of Afghanistan: militia use during the Musahiban dynasty (1929-1978), Rabbani regime (1992-1996), and Karzai regime (2001-today). In the latter case, I provide a first-hand account of the creation of Afghan Local Police in Afghanistan, which I helped establish.

The paper finds that governments leverage militia when state security forces are weak and policymakers believe militia can help pacify key areas of the country, especially rural areas where state control is minimal or non-existent. The historical evidence suggests that government perceptions are fairly accurate. Militias have often been effective in helping defeat insurgent groups, though the outcome of insurgencies is determined by a range of factors, not just the performance of militia.[8] In addition, the use of militia has sometimes come at a heavy price since some have perpetrated abuses and weakened state power. To be effective over the long run, governments need to establish tight control mechanisms that prevent militia from challenging the state and committing human rights abuses that can undermine local support.

The article is divided into four sections. The first outlines and critiques the primary concerns with militia. The second section examines the strategic logic of militia in insurgencies and outlines why governments turn to militia. The third analyzes the historical use of militia in Afghanistan. The fourth section offers a brief policy conclusion.

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[7] I updated the data set to include several recent insurgencies, such as in Libya beginning in 2011. In addition, I altered some of the dates and insurgencies. For instance, Fearon and Laitin coded Afghanistan as one insurgency from 1992 until today. I broke that period into three wars: 1992-1996 (Rabbani regime), 1996-2001 (Taliban regime), and 2001-today (Karzai regime).

[8] On the end of insurgencies, see, for example, Monica Duffy Toft, *Securing The Peace: The Durable Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Virginia Page Fortna, *Peace Time: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

2. HARBINGER OF INSTABILITY

A militia is an armed, sub-state group that performs security and governance functions within a state.[9] The primary goal of a militia is population control, especially the establishment of local rule in a given territory.[10] It can be established or co-opted by states and insurgent groups, or it can emerge as competitors to both. This analysis focuses on militia used as a tool of states during insurgencies.

There are several characteristics of militias. First, they are armed. Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power to arm militia in order to "execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions."[11] During insurgencies, they can perform a range of security functions: basic self-defense in a village, intelligence collection, reconnaissance and surveillance, and offensive military operations. Second, a militia is a sub-state force. It often does not come under formal command-and-control of the state's military, police, intelligence agencies, or other central government institutions. A militia may receive covert money, weapons, or other equipment from the state, but it is not an official central government force. It typically comes under the control of local actors, to whom members owe their allegiance. Third, a militia often performs non-security functions, including governance. It may help establish justice or deliver basic services, acting as the de facto government in a given area. In Guatemala, rural militias, which were called civil self-defense patrols, exercised judicial powers during the insurgency from 1960 to 1996. Before the war, rural villagers generally turned to the local mayor or judge for dispute resolution, but during the war they often appealed to civil self-defense patrol leaders.[12]

In past insurgencies, militias have been called local defense forces, home guards, civil self-defense forces, and numerous other names. In a few cases, such as the

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[9] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 106-107; Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, June 2007), pp. 15-37.

[10] Adrian H. Jones and Andrew R. Molnar, *Internal Defense against Insurgency: Six Cases* (Washington, DC: Center for Research in Social Systems, 1966), p. 25.

[11] Constitution of the United States, Article 1, Section 8.

[12] Shelton Davis, "Introduction: Sowing the Seeds of Violence," in Robert M. Carmack, ed*., Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), pp. 29-30.

"Minutemen" utilized by George Washington during the U.S. revolutionary war, they have elicited positive connotations.[13] But in most cases, they conjure up negative images. "The damage perpetrated by these entrepreneurs of violence, who commonly apply ethnic, nationalist, civilization, or religious rhetoric, can be extensive," argues John Mueller.[14] Militias have been so counterproductive, echoes Martin van Creveld, that they have contributed to a degeneration of war itself from armies to "bands of ruffians."[15]

This skepticism can be divided into three components: militia contribute to the collapse of state authority, commit gross human rights violations, and are unreliable and unwieldy.

MILITIA UNDERMINE STATE AUTHORITY

Some contend that militias undermine the authority of the central government by creating competing power centers.[16] One of the key features of the state, as the German sociologist Max Weber argued, is to exercise a monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.[17] Centralizing power is important to keep anarchy at bay and allows individuals to live without constant fear for their safety.[18] Long-term stability, this argument assumes, requires a strong central government and competent national security forces that can deliver services and establish order.[19] One of the quintessential examples is Europe, where the transition to modernity entailed a move from small, decentralized, self-equipped militia raised by feudal lords to large, centrally-financed, and state-organized militaries.[20]

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[13] See, for example, General George Washington's use of militia during the revolutionary war in Douglas Southall Freeman, *Washington*, Abridged Version (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968).

[14] John Mueller, *The Remnants of War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 1.

[15] Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991), p. 225.

[16] See, for example, Kimberly Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 3, Winter 2006/07, pp. 41-73; Mueller, *The Remnants of War*; Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*.

[17] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 78.

[18] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), C.B. MacPherson, ed., (New York: Penguin, 1980), pp. 185-186.

[19] Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[20] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, A.D. 990-1992* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1992); Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Forces, and Society Since A.D. 1000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

During insurgencies, this argument assumes, governments should concentrate on building reliable military and police forces. While militaries play a key role in defending the country from outside threats, the police are perhaps the most critical component of indigenous forces in insurgencies. They are the primary arm of the government focused on internal security matters and usually have a permanent presence in cities, towns, and villages; a better understanding of the threat environment in these areas; and better intelligence.[21] The chief problem with militia, according to this argument, is that they weaken the state's ability to monopolize power. As Kimberly Marten contends, the use of militia "undermines broad stability and limits large-scale trade and long-term investment."[22] Militias lead to the fragmentation of security, political, and economic arrangements within a state, disrupting the free flow of trade and making commerce and investment unpredictable. Over time, militia may become increasingly powerful and constitute a direct threat to central governance.[23] One assessment even concludes that militia "usually seek to eliminate *all the vestiges of central government* within their area of operations," exacerbating conflict rather than curbing it.[24] Consequently, supporting militia is counterproductive. It undermines state authority and increases the likelihood of conflict and instability.

Yet there are logical and empirical problems with this argument. First, a militia is often a *result* of a weak state, not a cause.[25] A range of quantitative assessments suggest that weak central governments render insurgency more feasible and attractive due to incompetent local policing or inept and corrupt security practices.[26] Consequently, where the state and its security forces are weak, co-option of local militia is sometimes essential to defeating insurgent groups. Indeed, key features of statehood, including the monopoly

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[21] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), p. 43; Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency, trans. Daniel Lee* (New York: Praeger, 1964), pp. 31, 72.

[22] Kimberly Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 3, Winter 2006/07, p. 58.

[23] U.S. Army and Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 113.

[24] Michael Klare, "The Deadly Connection: Paramilitary Bands, Small Arms Diffusion, and State Failure," in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 117. Emphasis added.

[25] Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: Wars and Warlords in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 16.

[26] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 February 2003, pp. 75-90.

over force, vary and are not ontologically given.[27] Few states have ever achieved a complete monopoly over force. Instead, they continuously engage in negotiation, collaboration, and conflict with external and internal challengers to assert and maintain a hold on power.[28] The strength of states has varied based on a range of factors, including legacies of decolonization and the existence of an outside threat. In much of the Third World, competition and cooperation between the state and local elites for control remains on-going and unresolved. This may at least partially explain why militias appear to be particularly prominent in Africa, Asia, and Latin America since 1945 – and are extremely rare in North America, Europe, and Australia. The economist Mancur Olson notes in his classic discussion of stationary bandits that "bandit rationality leads militia to seize domains and provide security within them, because to do so encourages local investment by their subjects and in turn increases their own wealth."[29]

There are also empirical problems with the argument that militia undermine state authority. While there are some cases in which militia have contributed to instability, such as the *Interahamwe* in Rwanda and *Janjaweed* and *Marahleen* in Sudan, states have sometimes used them to defeat rebel groups and increase control. It would have been virtually inconceivable for governments to defeat insurgents without the use of militia in, among other cases, Algeria (1992-2004), Angola (1975-2002), Congo (1960-1965), Colombia (1948-1962), El Salvador (1979-1992), Guatemala (1960-1996), Indonesia (1976-2005), Malaya (1948-1960), Morocco (1975-1991), Nicaragua (1981-1988), Oman (1962-1976), Peru (1980-1992), Philippines (1946-1955), Sri Lanka (1983-2009), and Turkey (1984-1999). In these and other cases, the central government was too weak to defeat insurgents on its own. Governments were forced to co-opt or coerce militia to defeat insurgents in rural areas and ultimately increase state authority.

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[27] Ariel L. Ahram, *Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 2.

[28] A.D. Smith, "State-Making and Nation-Building," in John A. Hall, ed., *States in History* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Michael Mann, T*he Sources of Social Power, Volume 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[29] Mancur Olson, "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3, September 1993, pp. 567-576.

MILITIA COMMIT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

A second objection to militia is that they regularly commit human rights violations.[30] As Martin Van Creveld and John Mueller argue, militia members have little or no adherence to long-established norms of conduct in war.[31] A militia is a sub-state force that often does not come under the direct command-and-control of the government's security forces, and sometimes is not held accountable under domestic laws. Some militias have indeed been involved in predatory and abusive violence, including extortion.[32] According to one account in Malaya, "newly recruited officers and sergeants without proper training and a rapidly expanding and poorly supervised rank and file provided fertile ground for corruption. The Emergency made extortion and bribery much easier for those who wished to line their own pockets."[33] In Rwanda, *Interahamwe* militia groups created and trained by Hutu extremists tended to see genocide as a "carnival romp," committing grotesque abuses.[34] In Kurdish areas of Turkey, where the government formed village militia to fight Kurdish guerrillas, one assessment noted that the village guards "do as they please under the color of law … Reports of rape at the hands of village guards are rising."[35]

Yet there is significant variation in militia perpetration of human rights abuses. In fact, state forces appear to be the *worst* abusers of human rights.[36] An estimated 60 million to 150 million people perished in episodes of mass killings during the twentieth century, the vast majority of whom were killed by state security forces.[37] "War is

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[30] Russell Crandall, *Driving by Drugs: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia*, Second Edition (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008); Frank Stafford and Marco Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Max. G. Manwaring, *Non-State Actors in Colombia: Threat and Response* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Mary War College Strategic Studies Monograph, 2002).

[31] Mueller, *The Remnants of War*; Martin Van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[32] Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 34; Elmer Lear, *The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines, Leyte, 1941-1945*, Data Paper No. 42, Southeast Asia Program, Department of Far Eastern Studies. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (1961), p. 27.

[33] Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960* (Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 72.

[34] Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), p. 93.

[35] Karl Vick, "In Kurdish Turkey, a New Enemy," *Washington Post*, October 31, 2002, p. A18.

[36] Alexander Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*.

[37] Valentino, *Final Solutions*, p. 1.

cruelty," wrote General William T. Sherman in justifying his decision to evict the inhabitants of Atlanta and burn the city during the American Civil War, "and you cannot refine it."[38] Governments have targeted civilian populations for at least two main reasons: desperation to reduce their own military casualties or avert defeat, or a desire to seize and annex enemy territory. When a state's fortunes take a turn for the worse on the battlefield, civilians are more likely to be declared legitimate targets. Perhaps most surprisingly, democracies have been especially likely to target civilians in desperate circumstances.[39]

Consequently, there appears to be widespread variation in militia perpetration of human rights abuses. Even more striking, state security forces may be most likely to violate human rights.

MILITIA ARE UNRELIABLE AND UNWIELDY

A third argument is that militias are unreliable. There is little or no guarantee that militia, including those drawn from ex-insurgents, won't resume hostilities against the government at a future time. As John Mueller argues, militia "are often difficult to control" and "can be troublemakers: unruly, disobedient, and mutinous, often committing unauthorized crimes while on (or off) duty that can be detrimental or even destructive of the military enterprise."[40] Most importantly, militia may be disinclined to stand and fight when their lives are in jeopardy, and militia members may desert when self-preservation and opportunity coincide.

According to this argument, militias are unreliable because their actions are based on self-interest, not the state's interests, and their authority is contingent on the charisma of individual leaders and patronage ties.[41] They can refuse to comply with the state's demands, either by neglecting to target groups the state considers enemies or by attacking groups the state identifies as friendly. During the abortive Iraqi offensive into Basra in March 2008, at least 1,000 militia members defected to al-Sadr's side. In Sudan, the *Janjaweed* militia raised by the Sudanese government proved increasingly truculent in Darfur. Militia forces may end up in accidental clashes with regular army and police

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[38] Letter from General William Tecumseh Sherman to the Mayor and Councilmen of Atlanta, September 12, 1864.

[39] Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*.

[40] Mueller, *The Remnants of War*, p. 17.

[41] Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective."

units, and there are reports that Awakening formations in al-Anbar suffered casualties from confrontations with the U.S. military. Such incidents may undermine cooperation between state security forces and local militia. Militia forces may also suffer demoralizing leadership disputes, factional fighting, and squabbles over resources and the spoils of war, leading to in-fighting among militia groups.[42]

One problem with this argument, however, is that there is considerable variation in the unreliability of militia. In some cases, they have been dependable allies of the state and critical components of a counterinsurgency campaign. Studies of violence in Latin America describe patterns of cooperation between states and non-state actors, calling such activity "parainstitutional" violence. In Colombia, for instance, the mobilization of civilians into self-defense forces was an explicit state strategy to help fight leftist insurgents. The Colombian army encouraged landowners to take protection into their own hands. As one paramilitary leader remarked, "The struggle against the same enemy converted us into allies of the army."[43] In Greece, the government supported National Guard Defense Battalions, or *Tagmata Ethnofylakha Amynhs*, which were an ally against Communist guerrillas from 1945 to 1949.[44]

In addition, state forces can be unwieldy and unreliable. Despite pouring millions of dollars into El Salvador in the 1980s to check communist expansion, Salvadoran police and army forces still suffered from mediocre and disengaged officer corps, widespread corruption, a poor promotion system, and conscripts who did not want to fight. In Afghanistan, government army and police forces regularly defected to the mujahideen during the anti-Soviet insurgency in the 1980s. As Daniel Byman concluded in his assessment of state security forces, they have often been "characterized by poor intelligence; a lack of initiative; little integration of forces across units; soldiers who do not want to fight; bad officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs); and difficulties

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[42] Geraint Hughes and Christian Tripodi, "Anatomy of a Surrogate: Historical Precedents and Implications for Contemporary Counter-Insurgency and Counter-Terrorism," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, March 2009, pp. 1-35.

[43] Carlos Medina Gallego and Mireya Tellez Adilla, *La violencia parainstitucional: Paramilitary y parapolitical en Colombia* (Bogota: Rodrigez Quito, 1994); Robert Holden, *Armies without Nations: Public Violence and State Formation in Central America, 1821-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Julie Mazzei, *Death Squads of Self-Defense Forces? How Paramilitary Groups Emerge and Challenge Democracy in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

[44] John J. McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War: The Strategy of Counter-Insurgency* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 112.

with training, learning, and creativity."[45] Not only has there been variation in the reliability of militia, but there has been significant variation in the reliability of state forces.

In sum, most assessments of militia offer gross over-generalizations. Militias do not always undermine state authority, are not always unwieldy, and do not always commit human rights abuses – especially compared to state forces. The reality is less categorical. As the next section argues, there is significant variation in the use of militia.

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[45] Daniel Byman, "Friends Like These: Counterinsurgency and the War on Terrorism," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Fall 2006, pp. 79-115; Daniel Byman, *Going to War with the Allies You Have: Allies, Counterinsurgency, and the War on Terrorism* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, November 2005).

3. THE STRATEGIC LOGIC OF MILITIA

Why do states utilize militia? Since 1945, states have regularly turned to militia in an attempt to defeat insurgent groups. This section argues that states use militia for two major strategic reasons: the central government is weak, and government officials believe militia can be effective in pacifying key areas of the country (especially rural areas).

WEAK CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

A weak central government is an important precondition for militia. A growing body of literature suggests that poor and ineffective governance is critical to the onset of insurgencies. Financially, organizationally, and politically weak central governments render insurgencies more feasible and attractive due to incompetent local policing and inept counterinsurgency practices.[46] Governance capacity appears to be a significant predictor of civil wars: weak governments are more prone to insurgencies, while strong governments are less prone.[47] In addition, poor governance also contributes to lengthier insurgencies.[48] Governance, as used here, is defined as the set of institutions by which authority in a country is exercised.[49] It includes the ability to establish law and order, effectively manage resources, and implement sound policies. International relations scholars typically differentiate domestic politics from international politics based on the structure of their systems. As Kenneth Waltz argued, "Domestic systems are centralized and hierarchic … International systems are decentralized and anarchic. The ordering principles of the two structures are distinctly different, indeed, contrary to each other."[50]

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[46] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (February 2003), pp. 75-76.

[47] Ann Hironaka, *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 45.

[48] Hironaka, *Neverending Wars*, p. 51.

[49] On governance, see Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, "Governance Matters III: Governance Indicators for 1996-2002," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, No. 3106 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, June 30, 2003); Daniel Kaufmann, "Myths and Realities of Governance and Corruption," in *The World Economic Forum, Global Competitiveness Report 2005-2006* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2005), pp. 81-98; and Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[50] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 88.

Although this characterization of domestic systems is true of strong states, it is not true of states with weak governance. A state facing an insurgency is often characterized by at least two governance problems.

First, the government is unable to provide essential services to the population.[51] Weak states do not possess sufficient bureaucratic and institutional structures to ensure the functioning of government. They often lack trained civil servants, and can barely operate school systems, courts, welfare systems, or other essentials for social functioning.[52] Corruption can be a particularly invidious challenge that impedes the provision of services. It can undermine support for the government and increase support for insurgents. Corruption hampers economic growth, disproportionately burdens the poor, undermines the rule of law, and damages government legitimacy. It has a supply side (those who give bribes) and a demand side (public officials who take them).[53]

Second, poor governance increases the likelihood of an insurgency because the state's security forces often lack legitimacy and are unable to establish law and order. As Robert Rotberg argues, "failed states cannot control their peripheral regions, especially those regions occupied by out-groups. They lose authority over large sections of territory."[54] Government forces may be badly financed and equipped, organizationally inept, corrupt, politically divided, and poorly informed about events at the local level.[55] A condition of emerging anarchy creates an opportunity for non-state actors to seize control of the state.[56] The state's inability to control its own territory creates opportunities for insurgent groups. This is especially true in remote areas of the country, where insurgent groups can establish rural strongholds.[57] The more extreme the decline

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[51] Jane Stromseth, David Wippman, and Rosa Brooks, *Can Might Make Rights? Building the Rule of Law after Military Interventions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 137-140.

[52] Hironaka, *Neverending Wars*, pp. 42-46.

[53] Transparency International, *Global Corruption Report 2006* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2006).

[54] Robert I. Rotberg, "The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States: Breakdown, Prevention, and Repair," in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 6.

[55] Daniel L. Byman, "Friends Like These: Counterinsurgency and the War on Terrorism," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 79-115; and Daniel L. Byman, *Going to War with the Allies You Have: Allies, Counterinsurgency, and the War on Terrorism* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, November 2005).

[56] Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," in Michael E. Brown, ed., *Ethnic Conflict and International Security* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 103-124.

[57] Hironaka, *Neverending Wars*, pp. 42-46.

or absence of authority in a region, the more the population becomes virgin territory for those wish to establish an alternative government.[58] Insurgents then set up new institutions and use violence against alleged spies, whose execution contributes to their control of territory.[59]

In addition, the process of decolonization in some regions created conditions amenable to militia.[60] The decision by some states to keep militia represents a fundamental abandonment of the state's monopoly over violence and a reliance on sub-state actors.[61] Tribal leaders, village strongmen, and local leaders have often maintained independent access to violence alongside the states' centralized coercive institutions. This may be especially true if a state's regional security situation is benign, it does not become involved in wars of territorial conquest, and it is surrounded by relatively innocuous neighbors.[62]

In Indonesia, for example, the country's revolutionary legacy and geographic dispersion help explain the history of militia, especially since there was no major external threat that forced the state to establish a centralized army. The existence of over 17,000 islands and thirty-three provinces led "Indonesia to survive by domesticating, rather than disarming, non-state militia."[63] In Southeast Asia, Japanese withdrawal and colonial collapse following World War II led to the use of localized militia among many of Indonesia's regional neighbors, including Burma, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam.[64] With most of Southeast Asia composed of decentralized states, there was little external threat compelling individual states to centralize their armies. In Latin America, the collapse of colonial order in the mid-nineteenth century left regional states

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[58] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, p. 216; and Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes since 1956* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 35.

[59] Jon Lee Anderson, *Guerrillas: Journeys in the Insurgent World* (New York: Penguin, 2004), pp. 212-213.

[60] Ahram, *Proxy Warriors*, pp. 7-24.

[61] Robert Holden, *Armies without Nations: Public Violence and State Formation in Central America, 1821-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[62] Ahram, *Proxy Warriors*, pp. 19-20; Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[63] Ahram, *Proxy Warriors*, p. 55.

[64] Christopher Bayl and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, UK: Belknap Press, 2007); Joyce C. Lebra, *Japanese-Trained Armies in Southeast Asia: Independence and Volunteer Forces in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

dependent on militia.[65] One example was Colombia, where regional caudillos successfully contested the authority of the states in such areas as security, taxation, and the allocation of resources.[66] In Africa, local powerbrokers contributed to the maintenance of order in states with substantial territory to control, small militaries, and a limited capacity to control their own territories.[67] The wave of decolonization in post-Soviet Europe had a similar impact. Successor states inherited a bevy of militia, self-defense forces, part-time fighters, and mercenaries rather than conventional armies.

RURAL CONTROL

In countries with a weak central government, officials generally utilize militia because they believe sub-state forces can be effective in undermining insurgent support and securing the population – especially in rural areas. Militias are rarely used in isolation, but rather as part of a broader civilian-military strategy and often in conjunction with national police and military forces.[68] They can be helpful in several ways.

First, militia can collect intelligence about insurgent groups. Because of their permanent presence in villages and interaction with the local population, militia members can tap into private information about the structure and organization of insurgent groups, logistics, support networks, collaborators, movement, and tactics and techniques.[69] In Guatemala, one of the main objectives of the Civil Self-Defense Patrols was "to inform on guerrilla sympathizers in the community."[70] They conducted surveillance of the population and reported to the military about insurgent collaboration and activity in their villages. The Colombian government utilized militia, including the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, to collect information on guerrillas from the Revolutionary Armed

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[65] Miguel A. Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002); Arie M. Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in the Third World: South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

[66] Nazih Richani, "Caudillos and the Crisis of the Colombian State: Fragmented Sovereignty, the War System and the Privatization of Counterinsurgency in Colombia," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2007, pp. 403-417.

[67] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*; Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood," *World Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 1, October 1982, pp. 1-24.

[68] Adrian H. Jones and Andrew R. Molnar, *Internal Defense against Insurgency: Six Cases* (Washington, DC: Center for Research in Social Systems, 1966), p. 25.

[69] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*, p. 107.

[70] Robert M. Carmack, Editor's Preface to the First Edition," in Carmack, ed., *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians the Guatemalan Crisis* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), p. 63.

Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN) in rural areas. These self-defense forces passed it on to state military, police, and intelligence agencies for analysis and operations.[71] They were an integral component of the state's counterinsurgency campaign, which largely defeated Colombian insurgents by 2011, though engaged in human rights abuses.

In Indonesia, the government relied on some 6,000 militia fighters in Sumatra to track down guerrillas in the jungle in the 1950s. As one insurgent leader acknowledged, "being local lads they knew every creek and path just as our people did and could guide the Javanese forces."[72] Even after the regional rebellions had been extinguished in the 1960s, militia remained a feature of village life. Civil defense corps, night watchmen, and local branches of the retired servicemen's association were involved in collecting information and hunting down thieves and unsanctioned political activists. "The techniques of militia mobilization," one assessment of Indonesia concluded, "proved valuable for internal pacification."[73]

Militia can be particularly effective in reporting on insurgent activity when they include insurgent defectors. In Turkey, the state mobilized thousands of Kurdish peasants, many of whom had supported the Kurdistan Worker's Party, into village militia.[74] During the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya, large numbers of Kikuyu defected to the British during the successful counterinsurgency campaign. Many of the Kikuyu populated the Home Guard militia, which grew to 14,800 full-time and 10,800 part-time guards.[75] In Iraq, several thousand Sunnis in Anbar Province defected from al Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) and joined the police and other security forces, significantly weakening the insurgency. These new forces had joined at the urging of their tribal leaders in a society where tribal relationships were crucial. In addition, enough policemen knew the individual members of AQI, since AQI drew from the same neighborhoods and

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[71] Nazih Richani, "Caudillos and the Crisis of the Colombian State: Fragmented Sovereignty, the War System and the Privatization of Counterinsurgency in Colombia," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2007, pp. 403-417.

[72] Cited in Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity, 1926-1998* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), p. 221.

[73] Ahram, *Proxy Warriors*, p. 47.

[74] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Ethnic Defection in Civil War," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 8, August 2008, pp. 1043-1068.

[75] Daniel Branch, "The Enemy Within: Loyalists and the War against Mau Mau in Kenya," *Journal of African History*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 291-315; Kalyvas, "Ethnic Defection in Civil War," p. 1053.

demographic pool as the police. The police also brought substantial local intelligence with them into the force. One U.S. Army lieutenant observed in May 2007 that "about 10 percent of our intelligence is actionable, while 90 percent of their intelligence is actionable."[76]

Second, militias have sometimes been effective in protecting and governing the local population by patrolling villages, conducting offensive operations, and performing basic governance functions. Assessing effectiveness is a difficult task. Several variables likely impact control and quantitative data of territorial control is limited in many of the insurgencies since 1945. Following Kalyvas, I argue that control can be defined as access enjoyed by political actors in a given place and time.[77]

"Effective" control indicates that a government-allied militia is permanently garrisoned in the village or within a one-hour radius; militia and administrators operate freely during all times of day and night; little or no insurgent activity is reported; clandestine insurgent organizations are not set up or are completely destroyed. "Partial" control implies that militia are permanently garrisoned in the village or nearby, but do not move freely at night; militia members and administrators usually do not sleep in their homes; insurgent organizers are active; and there are regular visits by insurgent combatants at night. "Ineffective" control suggests that insurgent combatants are permanently garrisoned in the village or nearby; insurgent combatants and administrators operate freely during all times of day and night; no militia activity is reported; and clandestine militia or government organizations are completely destroyed.[78] Figure 3.1 suggest that most militia have not been decisive in controlling territory for the government, but have been partially effective in providing a security presence during the day and sometimes at night.

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[76] Chris Kraul, "In Ramadi, A Ragtag Solution with Real Results," *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 2007.

[77] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, p. 210.

[78] Ibid., p. 421.

Figure 3.1: Impact of Militia During Insurgencies
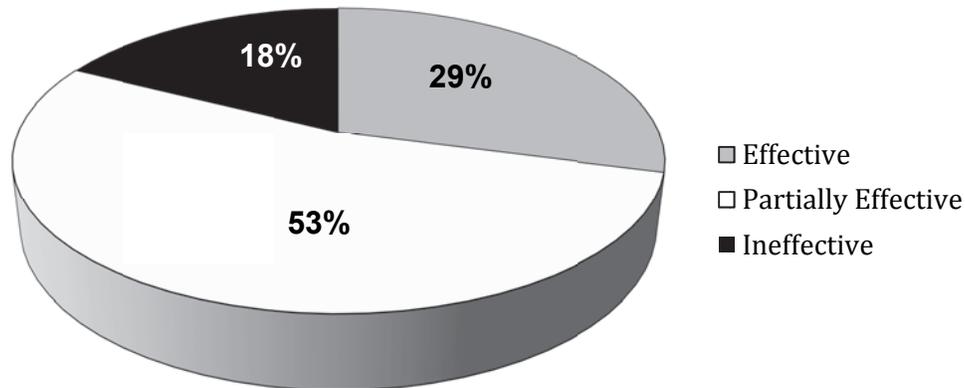
In a range of insurgencies, states have utilized militia to protect fortified villages.[79] At the heart of the Brigg's Plan during the Malayan Emergency was resettling Chinese squatters, estate workers, and villagers into compact "New Villages" and establishing surrogate Special Constabularies. While resettlement was sometimes harsh, the New Villages and local militia protected the population and were an important component in a counterinsurgency campaign that defeated Communist guerrillas by 1960.[80] As one assessment concluded, "For the guerrilla it meant that the tide was going out; that he could no longer move among the people as the fish moves through the water; and that when he was now forced to go close inshore he not only gave away his position but ran the risk of being caught in the shallows."[81]

Some states adopted similar programs in Latin America. In Peru, the state helped establish self-defense groups in pro-government Indian villages to provide security from

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[79] John A. Armstrong, "Introduction," in Armstrong, ed., *Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 30; Eva-Lotta Hedman, "State of Siege: Political Violence and Vigilante Mobilization in the Philippines," in Bruce B. Campbell and Arthur D. Brenner, eds., *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 133; Fred H. Barton, *Salient Operational Aspects of Paramilitary Warfare in Three Asian Areas*, ORO-T-228 (Chevy Chase, MD: Operations Research Office, 1953).

[80] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya to Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 75, 98-99; Hamzah-Sendurt, "A Resettlement Village in Malaya," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 1, No. 9, November 1961, pp. 21-26; Robert O. Tilman, "The Non-Lessons of the Malayan Emergency," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 6, No. 8, August 1966, pp. 407-419.

[81] Quoted in Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, p. 75.

Shining Path guerrillas. Villagers formed *rondas campesinas* that patrolled communities and the puna grasslands, and contributed to the eventual collapse of the insurgency.[82] In Guatemala, the Civil Self-Defense Patrols helped undermine guerrilla support in rural areas and eventually contributed to the 1996 peace accords and collapse of the insurgency. A range of locals viewed the patrols as the "keeper of order and security in the village," despite their brutality against opponents.[83] Another study concluded that "one of the strengths of the counterinsurgency strategy in Guatemala was the involvement of the civil population in the armed conflict by means of the military commissioners and the Civil Self-Defence Patrol – PAC."[84]

In most effective cases, militia worked closely with state police and military forces. In the Philippines, the government used Civilian Home Defense Forces against the Maoist insurgency, which began in 1968. The government became increasingly adept at using regular army forces that conducted clear and search operations against New People's Army guerrillas, deployed Special Forces to set up patrol bases, and established Civilian Home Defense Forces to protect villages once they'd been cleared.[85] The People's Liberation Army (PLA) in China leveraged urban and rural militia during the insurgency from 1946 to 1950. The militia was involved in maintaining law and order, participating in border security in conjunction with PLA forces, and spearheading land reform. The Chinese state also used militia to establish order in later periods.[86] The Sri Lankan government effectively used militia against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

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[82] Kimberly Theidon, "Justice in Transition: The Micropolitics of Reconciliation in Postwar Peru," The *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50, No. 3, June 2006, pp. 433-457; Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency since Vietnam* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1996), pp. 279-280.

[83] Simone Remijnse, "Remembering Civil Patrols in Joyabaj, Guatemala," *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 20, No. 4, p. 463.

[84] Matilde González, "The Man Who Brought the Danger to the Village: Representations of the Armed Conflict in Guatemala from a Local Perspective," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 2000, pp. 317-335. Also see, for example, Michael Richards, "Cosmopolitan World View and Counterinsurgency in Guatemala," *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 3, July 1985, pp. 90-107.

[85] David Kowalewski, "Counterinsurgent Paramilitarism: A Philippine Case Study," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 29, No. 1, February 1992, pp. 71-84; Jose P. Magno, Jr. and A. James Gregor, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the Philippines," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 26, No. 5, May 1986, pp. 501-517.

[86] James C.F. Wang, "The Urban Militia as a Political Instrument in the Power Contest in China in 1976," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 18, No. 6, June 1978, pp. 541-559.

(LTTE). After his split from the LTTE in 2004, for example, Colonel Karuna created the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal to counter the LTTE in the Eastern Province.[87]

Militia, therefore, offer a way for states to recruit local fighters, especially in areas that have been inaccessible to the government. The goal of most governments is to eliminate local support for insurgents through a combination of coercing and co-opting the local population. Militia can be helpful in gaining access to remote areas. Utilizing militia is especially tempting during an insurgency when militia forces already exist in rural areas.

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[87] Neil DeVotta, "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Lost Quest for Separatism in Sri Lanka," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 49, No. 6, November / December 2009, pp. 1021-1051.

4. CASE STUDIES: AFGHANISTAN

This section provides a more nuanced examination of militia by focusing on three cases in which governments used militia: Pashtun militia during the Musahiban dynasty; Soviet-backed militia during the Rabbani regime; and Afghan Local Police during the Karzai regime. These cases offer an opportunity to conduct a controlled comparison and analyze government motivation to use militia.[88]

PASHTUN MILITIA DURING THE MUSAHIBAN DYNASTY

Beginning in 1929, Afghan rulers strategically used militia to quell a rural insurgency and establish a virtually unprecedented golden era for the country: nearly 50 years of relative stability.[89] Musahiban rulers turned to militia because of the weakness of state forces and a perception that militia would be effective in establishing order. In addition, militia did not undermine state authority or commit major human rights abuses, and were rarely unwieldy.

By the 1920s, Afghanistan began to deteriorate into anarchy when Amanullah Khan, who ruled Afghanistan from 1919 to 1929, tried to create a strong central state in the image of Ataturk's Turkey and Reza Shah's Iran. This strategy proved disastrous. The central government's attempt to push into rural areas sparked social and political revolts, first in Khowst in 1923 and then in Jalalabad in 1928.[90] By 1929, local rebellions became so serious that Amanullah was forced to abdicate and a Tajik, Habibullah Kalakani, briefly seized control of the capital.[91] But a militia of twelve thousand Waziri tribesmen took Kabul in October 1929 and overthrew Kalakani, and an emergency *jirga* (council) of

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[88] On "controlled comparison," see Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making," in Robert Coulam and Richard Smith, eds., *Advances in Information Processing in Organization*s, Vol. 2 (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1985), pp. 24-29; Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 56-58.

[89] The term "Musahiban" refers to the lineage name of the family; members were from the Mohammadzai sub-tribe of the Barakzai tribe.

[90] Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 417-429.

[91] Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System,* Second Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 48-52; Kristian Berg Harpviken, "Transcending Traditionalism: The Emergence of Non-State Military Formations in Afghanistan," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 34, No. 3, August 1997, pp. 271-287.

tribal and other leaders elected Nadir Shah as the monarch.[92] Nadir Shah's decision to cement his authority through a *jirga* reflected a calculated acknowledgement that the central government was weak and he required tribal support. "Since the people so designate me so, I will accept," he remarked in 1929. "I will not be the king but the servant of the tribes and the country."[93]

In order to stem a budding insurgency in Pashtun areas, Nadir Shah reached out to tribal militia. In the summer of 1930, he asked some Pashtun border tribes to help crush revolts by the Shinwari and Kohistani tribes in the east, and imprisoned and executed many of Amanullah's supporters.[94] In 1932, he again turned to tribal militia to suppress a revolt by the Zadran tribe along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.[95] Nadir Shah's logic was based on a pragmatic recognition that power had long been decentralized in Afghanistan, especially in Pashtun areas.[96] As one study concluded, "tribal society was too strong, and the state too weak, for the latter to impose its plans on the former by coercion."[97] Pashtuns based their identity on a nested set of clans and lineages that stem from a common ancestor, which helped Pashtuns organize economic production, preserve political order, and defend the group from outside threats.[98]

Pashtunwali, meaning the law of the Pashtuns, shapes daily life through such concepts as *badal* (revenge), *melmastia* (hospitality), *ghayrat* (honor), and *nanawati* (sanctuary). *Jirgas* have long been instrumental in enforcing Pashtunwali through their decision-making at the local level. Unlike formal criminal codes, in which guilty

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[92] Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, Second Edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 20; Dupree, *Afghanistan*, pp. 459-463.

[93] Quoted in Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 290.

[94] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 197; Senzil Nawid, R*eligious Response to Social Change in Afghanistan, 1919-1929* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1999), p. 185.

[95] Dupree, *Afghanistan*, p. 475.

[96] See, for example, Tribal Liaison Office, Good Governance in Tribal Areas Kandahar Research Project: Research Report (Kabul: Tribal Liaison Office, 2005); Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "No Sign Until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier," International Security, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008), pp. 41–77.

[97] Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, p. 59.

[98] Thomas J. Barfield, "Weapons of the Not So Weak in Afghanistan: Pashtun Agrarian Structure and Tribal Organization for Times of War and Peace," Paper Presented to the Agrarian Studies Colloquium Series, Yale University, February 23, 2007; Barfield, "Culture and Custom in Nation-Building: Law in Afghanistan," Maine Law Review, Vol. 60, No. 2, Summer 2008, pp. 347-373.

individuals pay fines to the government or are imprisoned, Pashtun customary law seeks compensation based on social reconciliation. Community members are the primary fact-finders and decision-makers, though respected outsiders may be used as well. The key functions of arbitration and judgment are usually fulfilled by the local *jirga*. These *jirga*s can demand that the wrongdoer apologize publicly to the victim and make a payment for *sharm* (shame).[99]

Pashtuns have also used militia – including arbakai, chalweshtai, and chagha – to protect their villages. In some areas, such as eastern Afghanistan, the government exempted several tribes from taxation and military conscription, as well as offered land to tribal *jirga*s to help cover militia expenses. Small, village militia policed their areas. In most cases, they were under the command and control of *jirga*s, who provided their legitimacy.[100] The result was that Nadir Shah and his Musahiban successors supported rural militia to establish order. As anthropologist Thomas Barfield argued, "Political stability in rural Afghanistan under the Musahibans rested on the tacit recognition of two distinct power structures: the provincial and subprovincial administrations, which were arms of the central government, and tribal or village structures indigenous to each region."[101] The Musahiban strategy of relying on rural militia was effective in helping defeat rebel groups and contributed to fifty years of relative stability.[102]

The central government kept a tight rein on militia and provided oversight over them. One component was the eventual construction of strong central government security forces, including an Afghan army. By 1933, Nadir Shah had established a modern army of 70,000 soldiers with professional officer education and a non-commissioned officer corps. By 1945, the army had grown to 110,000 and eventually included an 8,000-man air force.[103] These forces were occasionally used to crush revolts

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[99] Barfield, "Culture and Custom in Nation-Building: Law in Afghanistan," pp. 347-373; Fredrik Barth, "Pathan Identity and Its Maintenance," in Barth, ed., Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969).

[100] Mohammed Osman Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan* (London: Crisis States Research Centre, December 2008), pp.1-19; Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, p. 62; Shahmahmood Miakhel, "The Importance of Tribal Structures and Pakhtunwali in Afghanistan: Their Role in Security and Governance," in Arpita Basu Roy, ed., *Challenges and Dilemmas of State-Building in Afghanistan: Report of a Study Trip to Kabul* (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2008), pp. 97-110.

[101] Barfield, *Afghanistan*, p. 220.

[102] Dupree, *Afghanistan*, p. 460.

[103] Obaid Younossi, et al, *The Long March: Building An Afghan National Army* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009), p. 5.

and mediate inter- and intra-tribal disputes. In 1959 and 1960, for instance, Daoud Khan used the Afghan army to settle fighting between the Mangal and Zadran in eastern Afghanistan. He also deployed the army to Kandahar in December 1959 to crush a tribal riot against increased government taxes.[104] In addition, Pashtun militia tended to be small, defensive, confined to village-level protection, and organized under the auspices of legitimate tribal institutions. In Nuristan, for example, villages established local defense forces to protect their areas. As one assessment of the Vaygal Valley of south-central Nuristan concluded, "The survival of Kalasha villages depended on careful, unrelenting attention to defensive arrangements" since there was virtually no government presence in the area.[105]

In sum, the Musahibans strategically supported rural militia because of state weakness and a pragmatic recognition that Pashtuns were fiercely independent and would be unwilling to come under direct state authority. If the Musahibans had tried to exert control in rural areas, as Amanullah Khan had attempted in the 1920s, they would likely have triggered large-scale revolts and decreased – rather than increased – stability.

SOVIET-BACKED MILITIA

Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, the Najibullah and Rabbani governments supported a range of urban and rural militia against mujahideen forces. Again, Afghan government officials turned to militia because of the weakness of the state and a perception that militia would be effective in undermining support for mujahideen forces in rural Afghanistan. But unlike during the Musahiban dynasty, the government failed to establish control mechanisms over the militia, which undermined state authority, committed human rights abuses, and became unreliable.

Faced with a growing insurgency backed by Pakistani, American, and Saudi intelligence agencies, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and its Soviet supporters co-opted urban and rural militia in an effort to control the countryside and "hamper the movement of rebel groups."[106] Some were Pashtun tribal forces, while

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[104] Dupree, *Afghanistan*, pp. 534-538.

[105] David J. Katz, "Responses to Central Authority in Nuristan: The Case of the Vaygal Valley Kalasha," and M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield, eds., Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan: Anthropological Perspectives (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1984), pp. 97, 99.

[106] Antonio Giustozzi, *War, Politics, and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000), p. 201.

others were centered on charismatic, powerful commanders like Abdul Rashid Dostum. The Soviets attempted to place the militia under the direct control of the Afghan Ministry of Interior and officially sanctioned them in March 1983 by a *jirga* in Kabul.[107] By the time Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the central government, led first by Mohammad Najibullah and then by Burhanuddin Rabbani, became increasingly reliant on militia to control the local population.

The government supported several types of urban militia. One was the Sepayan-i Enqelab (soldiers of the revolution), which recruited from Communist party and youth organizations, provided limited military training, and used them to help control urban areas after offensive military operations. A second type was the Hauza-i Amniyati (district security), which were involved in static and mobile protection for government facilities. A third was the Geru-i Defa-i Khodi (self-defense groups), which provided local security and protection for lesser facilities and provided a mechanism to involve non-Communist party members. The regime's rural militia, however, were much larger and more powerful than its urban ones. They were formed in one of two ways: the government co-opted a tribal leader who brought along his followers; or the government reached out to a warlord and provided resources to increase his power base at the expense of mujahideen forces.[108] With both urban and rural militia, the government offered money, weapons, equipment, and other incentives in return for loyalty and fighting against mujahideen forces.[109]

But unlike during the Musahiban years, the collapse of state institutions ensured that the militia became large and unwieldy, challenged state authority, and committed major abuses.[110] In short, there was no central government oversight – and, ultimately, no central government at all. As one study concluded, "Najib continued to lavish on those

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[107] Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: Wars and Warlords in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 53-68.

[108] Abdulkader H. Sinno, *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 124-125; Gilles Dorronsoro and Chantal Lobate, "The Militia in Afghanistan," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1989, pp. 95-108.

[109] Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: Organization of the PDPA / Watan Party, Governments and Biographical Sketches 1982-1998* (Peshawar, Pakistan: Shinwari Press, 1998), pp. 673-687.

[110] Richard F. Nyrop and Donald M. Seekins, eds., "National Security," *Afghanistan Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Area Studies, The American University, 1986); Lester W. Grau and Michael A. Gress, *The Soviet-Afghan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), pp. 50-51; Allan Orr, "Recasting Afghan Strategy," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, March 2009, pp. 87-117.

militia whose loyalty was essential to his survival weapons and currency to the point where they became major contenders for power by the time his regime collapsed with the cessation of Soviet aid."[111] By 1991, militia reached 170,000 members, surpassing a rapidly shrinking army, paramilitary police, and secret police (KhAD) that had only 160,000 total members.[112] In Herat Province, there were roughly 5,000 regular troops compared to 28,000 militia members.[113]

Several factors contributed to the further erosion of state power. One was the decision by the Soviet Union to suspend military aid and stop shipments of food and fuel at the end of 1991. In a rentier state that relied on foreign assistance, this was a devastating blow. A second was the decision by Minister of Defense Ahmad Shah Massoud in 1992 to eliminate the armed forces, which he had inherited from Mohammad Najibullah who had been deposed earlier that year. Instead, Massoud relied on his own Jami'at-i Islami militia forces, though others, including Abdul Rashid Dostum's Junbesh-i Milli-ye Islami, also benefited from the collapse of state security institutions.[114] Senior officials in the Ministries of Defense and Interior defected to the increasingly powerful militia, some of which grew quickly. Massoud, for example, could call on nearly 60,000 part- or full-time fighters, and many of the top 10 largest militia each exceeded 20,000 part- or full-time fighters.[115]

Without *any* central government force that could control or provide oversight to militia, Afghanistan slipped into anarchy. Warlord militia multiplied across the country. Examples included Ismail Khan's forces in the west, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami in the east, Ahmad Shah Massoud's Jami'at-i Islami in Panjshir and the northeast, and Abdul Rashid Dostum's Junbesh-i Milli-ye Islami in the north. These local militia established their own power bases through several sources of revenue, such as drug money, ushr (land taxes), taxes on goods, and foreign aid.[116] Many of these groups

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[111] Sinno, *Organizations at War*, pp. 125-126.

[112] Barfield, *Afghanistan*, p. 245; Antonio Giustozzi, *War, Politics, and Society in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000), pp. 189-190.

[113] Sinno, *Organizations at War*, p. 187.

[114] Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: Wars and Warlords in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 71-72.

[115] Zalmay Khalilzad, Prospects for the Afghan Interim Government (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991); Olivier Roy, Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan, Second Edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[116] Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud*.

turned on each other in a bid to control Kabul, creating a window of opportunity for the Taliban to rise in 1994. Militia forces proliferated as the state disintegrated. "The roads [in Kandahar] were full of checkpoints," noted Abdul Salam Zaeef, who was in Kandahar Province in the early 1990s and eventually became the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan. "Every few kilometers a different gang or commander demanded money or goods. Even nowadays when people talk about that time, they call it *topakiyaan*. The time of the men with guns."[117]

Beirut-style street fighting erupted in Kabul, especially between the Hezb-i-Islami and the Jamaat-i-Islam. Kabul, which was left virtually untouched under Soviet occupation, was savagely bombarded with rockets, mortars, and artillery by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The bombing reduced Kabul to shambles. Entire neighborhoods, including mosques and government buildings, were destroyed. In Kandahar, fighting between mujahideen groups resulted in the destruction of much of the traditional power structures. In the rural areas, competition between warlords, drug lords, and criminal groups triggered a state of emerging anarchy as the tribal leadership system began to unravel. In 1993 and 1994, the fighting around Kabul and throughout Afghanistan continued, and a vagabond government in Kabul shifted between surviving buildings. On January 1, 1994, Hekmatyar, Dostum, and Abdul Ali Mazari launched one of the most devastating assaults against Kabul to date. Their attack took several thousand lives and reduced Kabul's population – which had numbered more than two million late in the Soviet war – to under 500,000. In the midst of this anarchy, the Taliban filled the vacuum.[118]

Ultimately, the Afghan government's strategy of co-opting militia failed to establish order. Unlike during the Musahiban dynasty, the Communist government had allowed militia to grow from small, defensive entities under the control of local *jirga*s to large, offensive forces under the control of individual warlords – and without a national force to challenge them.[119]

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[117] Abdul Salam Zaeef, *My Life with the Taliban* (New York: Hurst & Company, 2010), p. 59.

[118] Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), pp. 23-68; Peter R. Blood, ed., *Afghanistan: A Country Study* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001).

[119] See, for example, Robert D. Crews and Amin Tarzi, eds., *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Mohammad Osman Tariq Elias, "The Resurgence of the Taliban in Kabul: Logar and Wardak," in Antonio Giustozzi, ed., *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 45.

AFGHAN LOCAL POLICE

In 2009, the U.S. and Afghan governments established militia to counter the Taliban and other insurgents. Their reason was straightforward: the central government was weak and carefully-controlled militia could be effective in pacifying rural parts of the country.

After the overthrow of the Taliban regime, the United States and other organizations were was involved in several efforts to disarm – and arm – militias. In April 2003, the United Nations created the Afghanistan New Beginnings Program to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate militia and other combatants. But progress was underwhelming. By May 2008, 53,000 weapons had been destroyed under the program; 19 illegally armed groups had been disbanded; and nearly 28,000 metric tons of ammunition had been collected and destroyed.[120] But Afghanistan was still awash in weapons and ammunition, and there was an *increase* in the number of insurgent and other illegal groups. A range of commanders retained large militia forces, such as Abdul Rashid Dostum and Atta Mohammad in the north. Perhaps the most serious challenge to disarming militia was the continuation of war, which provided an incentive for commanders to retain their forces. Virtually all successful disarmament programs in such countries as Mozambique, El Salvador, and Namibia took place *after* the war ended.

In addition, the United States supported several failed efforts to establish militia. One was the Afghan National Auxiliary Police, a program established in 2006 by U.S. and Afghan officials. "There were not enough guns and people to protect local villagers," remarked Ambassador Neumann. "This is counterinsurgency 101: to protect the local population."[121] In February 2006, Ambassador Neumann and Major General Robert Durbin were approached by senior officials from the Afghan Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Finance. The Afghans wanted to hire an additional 200 to 400 police per district. The idea was to create a new force, which would eventually be called the Afghan National Auxiliary Police. Durbin and his deputy, Canadian Brigadier General Gary O'Brien, briefed Neumann on the initial concept in the spring of 2006, and Durbin then briefed President Karzai in May 2006. His plan was to establish a "mercenary" police force designed to fill a local gap in Afghan security forces.[122] The auxiliary police

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[120] United Nations, *DIAG Implementation Progress Report* (Kabul: United Nations, 2008).

[121] Author interview with Ambassador Ronald Neumann, September 7, 2007.

[122] Author interview with Major General Robert Durbin, January 3, 2008.

program meant training villagers for ten days and equipping them with guns. They were then sent to secure static checkpoints and to conduct operations with Coalition forces against insurgents in six unstable provinces: Helmand, Zabol, Kandahar, Farah, Oruzgan, and Ghazni.[123] But the program was ineffective since there was virtually no mentoring of local forces in the field, they were never integrated into local tribal structures, and they were never viewed as legitimate by local Afghans.[124]

By 2009, U.S. and NATO intelligence assessments were bleak. They indicated that insurgent groups had increased their control of territory in much of rural Afghanistan, including Pashtun areas of the west, south, and east. The 2009 assessment from General Stanley McChrystal, the Commander of the U.S. and NATO International Security Assistance Force, noted that "we face not only a resilient and growing insurgency; there is also a crisis of confidence among Afghans – in both their government and the international community – that undermines our credibility and emboldens the insurgents."[125] The Taliban, Haqqani network, Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin, and other insurgent groups increasingly co-opted and coerced rural communities in Afghanistan. As McChrystal's assessment concluded, "elements of Afghan society, particularly rural populations, have been excluded from the political process."[126]

By the spring of 2009, U.S. and Afghan officials began discussing options to establish rural militia. U.S. planning was led by Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A), under the leadership of Brigadier General Edward Reeder. Key staff across the J3 (operations), J2 (intelligence), J5 (plans), and command group started formal planning in the spring of 2009. In late June 2009, Reeder's staff briefed him on a concept to train and mentor militia forces. The program's explicit goals were to "identify local communities that seek outside help against insurgents" in rural Afghanistan and to "assist [the] local population to provide their own

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[123] Author interview with Ambassador Ronald Neumann, September 7, 2007.

[124] Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), pp. 175-176.

[125] Memorandum from General Stanley A. McChrystal to the Honorable Robert Gates, Subject: COMISAF's Initial Assessment, Reference: Secretary of Defense Memorandum 26 June 2009, August 30, 2009, p. 1-1.

[126] Ibid., p. 2-17.

security with defensive 'neighborhood watch' type programs."[127] Reeder's staff analyzed the history of militia use in Afghanistan, including during the Musahiban dynasty and Rabbani periods. They also examined the role of traditional Pashtun self-defense forces, such as arbakai, chagha, and chalweshtai. CFSOCC-A leadership concluded that the central government was too weak to defeat the Taliban in rural areas of Afghanistan without leveraging small, defensive militia under the immediate command of village elders. It was a model built consciously on Afghanistan's previous stable periods, including the Musahiban dynasty.

The CFSOCC-A plan involved deploying U.S. and Afghan special operations teams to live in villages that were already resisting insurgents. The teams would focus on three tasks: improve informal governance by actively supporting village *jirgas*; establish or co-opt already-existing "village-level defensive forces through tribal or other local institutions to protect population"; and improve development "through *jirgas* to improve infrastructure, health services, education and other sectors."[128] In July 2009, CFSOCC-A leadership briefed General McChrystal and Lieutenant General David Rodriguez, the deputy commander of U.S. forces, on the concept at NATO Headquarters in Kabul. McChrystal supported the program in principle, though asked for more details.[129] In August after further planning, CFSOCC-A leadership again briefed General McChrystal, arguing that militia should be supported in areas that met the following four criteria: locals had already resisted insurgents; the area was strategically-important for the Taliban and other insurgent groups; the area was strategically important for the Afghan government and NATO; and an assessment team concluded that it was feasible based on local support, terrain, population density, and other factors.[130] In addition, CFSOCC-A leadership emphasized that the militia had to be small (several dozen to no more than 300 locals), defensive (could not be used for offensive operations), under the immediate oversight of village *jirgas* (not warlord commanders), and closely monitored by the

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[127] Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command – Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A), *The Community Defense Initiative* (Kabul: CFSOCC-A, June 2009). The briefing took place in CFSOCC-A Headquarters in Kabul, Slide 2. Document unclassified.

[128] Ibid., Slide 3. Document unclassified.

[129] Unclassified meeting notes, CFSOCC-A Briefing to General Stanley McChrystal, ISAF Headquarters, Kabul, July 2009.

[130] Unclassified meeting notes, CFSOCC-A Briefing to General Stanley McChrystal, CFSOCC-A Headquarters, Kabul, August 2009.

Afghan government and NATO. The deployment of U.S. and Afghan forces to permanently live in villages facilitated oversight.[131]

At the same time, CFSOCC-A leaders conducted a series of meetings with Afghan officials from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, National Directorate of Security, and other organizations. Most Afghan leaders supported militia, though differed somewhat on such points as which ministry should have oversight over militia. Minister of Interior Mohammad Hanif Atmar told CFSOCC-A officials that "this initiative takes on the Taliban on their own turf – at the village level." He argued that U.S. and Afghan special operations forces should partner with Afghan National Police and Afghan intelligence to "help locals stand up for themselves," since the government couldn't always do it. "This program will hinge on empowering villages to defend themselves and on co-opting local insurgents."[132] During meetings with CFSOCC-A officials, Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Wardak likewise supported local forces because "it would provide a bridge between the central government and local communities in areas where the government had little reach." He continued that "local, village-level forces have been critical in stabilizing Afghanistan in the past."[133]

In August 2009, CFSOCC-A deployed a special operations team to Nili, Day Kundi Province at the invitation of Sultan Ali Uruzgani, the provincial governor, to train militia forces with the help of Afghan National Police. By December, the U.S. had teams training a total of 100 militia members in four other districts: Arghandab, Kandahar Province; Chamkani, Paktia Province; Shindand, Herat Province; and Posht-e Rod, Farah Province.[134] Initial results were encouraging. In Arghandab, for example, U.S. intelligence assessments concluded in early 2010 that the Taliban had lost control of a growing portion of territory because of local militia, NATO, and Afghan national security force operations. As planned, the militia numbers were small, defensive, under the immediate oversight of village elders, and linked to Afghan national security forces.

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[131] CFSOCC-A, *The Community Defense Initiative* (Kabul: CFSOCC-A, August 2009). The briefing took place in CFSOCC-A Headquarters in Kabul. Document unclassified.

[132] Unclassified meeting notes, CFSOCC-A meeting with Minister of Interior Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Ministry of Interior, Kabul, August 2009.

[133] Unclassified meeting notes, CFSOCC-A meeting with Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Wardak, Ministry of Defense, Kabul, August 2009.

[134] CFSOCC-A, *The Community Defense Initiative* (Kabul: CFSOCC-A, December 2009). The briefing took place in CFSOCC-A Headquarters in Kabul. Document unclassified.

In April 2010, Brigadier General Scott Miller took command of CFSOCC-A and began a significant expansion of the program with the support of General McChrystal. He coined the term Village Stability Operations to capture a mission that incorporated governance and development lines of effort. When General Petraeus took command of ISAF in July 2010, he began pushing for a formal agreement with President Karzai. In August, President Karzai officially authorized the establishment of the program under the Ministry of Interior, calling the militia members Afghan Local Police.[135] By December 2010 there were 3,000 individuals in 15 districts, and by December 2011 they had increased to 10,000 militia in 57 districts.[136] Most militia had less than 100 members, though the largest (in Marjah, Helmand) had 400 members.[137]

Figure 4.1: Afghan Local Police Locations, December 2011

Some human rights organizations became concerned about predatory behavior by a few ALP units, though most of the accusations ended up being baseless or the abuses

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[135] President Hamid Karzai, Decree to Establish the Afghan Local Police, August 2010.

[136] CFSOCC-A, *ALP Update* (Kabul: CFSOCC-A, December 2010), Slides 1-2; CFSOCC-A, *ALP Update* (Kabul: CFSOCC-A, December 2011). Document unclassified.

[137] CFSOCC-A, *ALP Update* (Kabul: CFSOCC-A, December 2011). Document unclassified.

were perpetrated by non-ALP militia forces in the north.[138] But there was still variation in the competence of ALP units. Some were intimidated by insurgent assassination and intimidation campaigns, others quit for personal reasons, and a few faced were involved in extortion or bribery. Despite these challenges, which were common among Afghan national police and army forces, NATO and Afghan government assessments were positive about ALP effectiveness, especially in rural areas. The ALP contributed to a decrease in Taliban control of territory in southern Afghanistan, where most were located. They remained small, defensive, and tied to village elders and the Ministry of Interior. While not a magic bullet, the ALP helped pacify rural areas of the country where the Afghan government was weak.

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[138] Human Rights Watch, *"Just Don't Call It a Militia": Impunity, Militia, and the "Afghan Local Police"* (Kabul: Human Rights Watch, 2011).

5. CONCLUSIONS

It has become de rigueur for policymakers and academics to condemn militia as harbingers of instability and over-generalize about their ineffectiveness. Most assessments of militia have generally been normative, rather than empirical, denigrating them as inherently immoral and destabilizing. This review of 130 insurgencies indicates that there has been considerable *variation* in the effectiveness of militia and, perhaps more importantly, that governments almost always use militia during insurgencies. Like it or not, they are a reality. In some cases – as in Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan, and Zimbabwe – militia have been destabilizing, undermining state authority and contributing to grotesque human rights abuses. In other cases – as in Greece, Guatemala, Kenya, Malaya, Oman, and the Philippines – they have played an important role in defeating insurgent groups.

Contrary to most accounts, a well-regulated militia appears to be an important part of a counterinsurgency campaign. Consequently, the policy emphasis should be on the quality of regulation, not on whether a militia is inherently desirable or undesirable. Perhaps the key policy challenge, if militia forces are used, is to understand how to minimize their risks and ensure they do not alienate the local population and contribute to instability. In order to be effective, however, states have generally needed to keep a tight reign over militia forces to ensure they do not challenge the state, they remain focused on state priorities as much as possible, and they don't undermine local support through excessive brutality or corruption. Maintaining local support is critical. In Kenya, for instance, ethnic Kikuyu Home Guards formed by the British did not necessarily support colonialism. "In taking a stand," one assessment concluded, "these so-called loyalists were in fact motivated by more prosaic and personal concerns: by the interests of their families; by the need to protect their property; by their sense of social status; and by their own values."[139] Several control mechanisms have generally been important to tame militia.

First, states need to build competent national military, police, and intelligence units that retain a preponderance of power. If militias become unwieldy or

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[139] David M. Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), p. 229.

counterproductive, they can coerce or co-opt members – including through violence – to reign them back in. A sufficiently large, well-armed, and well-disciplined military and police force can be effective in controlling militia.[140] In Oman, the state ensured that local militias, or *firqats*, were "a disciplined force perceived to be a servant of the people."[141] These units were trained by the British Special Air Service and were made up almost entirely of defectors from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman.[142] The same was true in Malaya, where the Special Constabularies were controlled by the British army, who established a standardized training program for them.[143] But a failure to keep militia in check can be destabilizing. In Indochina, French and local government forces provided little oversight over militia. "Without nearby French troops to back them, few Vietnamese were interested in being members of the village self-defense forces," one assessment concluded. "The villagers' lack of training and equipment made them no match for the tough, battlehardened guerrillas … Of course, the French could not keep the militia effective under these conditions."[144]

Second, retaining a preponderance of power means that states need to keep militia small and manageable. Large, offensive forces can pose a serious threat to the state if militia leaders are able to expand power unchecked. In Afghanistan, there were more militia members than government forces by 1991, making it impossible to provide oversight. During the failed French counterinsurgency campaign in Algeria in the 1950s, the French raised nearly 160,000 *Harkis*, who became increasingly unwieldy, difficult to control, and ultimately counterproductive.[145]

Third, a militia generally needs to be disarmed, demobilized, and reintegrated when the insurgency is over – if possible. Under most disarmament programs, combatants hand over weapons to international or local authorities, who are responsible for their collection, safe storage, disposal or destruction. Disarmament generally involves three

[140] Mueller, *The Remnants of War*, p. 140.

[141] Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1990), p. 130.

[142] Stephen A. Cheney, *The Insurgency in Oman, 1962-1976* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1984).

[143] Vernon Bartlett, *Report from Malaya* (New York: Criterion Books, 1955).

[144] John J. McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War: The Strategy of Counter-Insurgency* (London: Faber, 1966), pp. 110-111.

[145] M. Roux, *Les Harkis: Les oubliés de l'histoire, 1954-1991* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991); Kalyvas, "Ethnic Defection in Civil War," p. 1052.

steps: a weapons survey; weapons collection; and weapons storage, reutilization, or destruction. The process of demobilization comprises different steps, from individual combatants flowing through temporary centers, to the collection of soldiers in camps designated for this purpose. The objective of reintegration programs is to assist ex-combatants in their social and economic reintegration into civilian society so that they do not return to banditry or violence. One of the first steps of reintegration programs should be to provide training, employment, shelter, and where appropriate land to ex-combatants. An alternative to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration campaign is to integrate some former combatants into new or reformed local security units.[146]

There have been some fairly effective programs. In Mozambique, for instance, the United Nations helped oversee the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of 22,637 *Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana* (RENAMO) guerrillas and 64,130 government and militia troops.[147] In addition, RENAMO's transition from a powerful insurgent group to an opposition political party was critical to the end of the conflict. But a failure to reintegrate can cause significant repercussions, including if the government loses. In South Vietnam, the United States resettled several thousand Degars in states such as North Carolina, but thousands more were executed in Vietnam or fled to Cambodia.[148] In Sierra Leone the Kamajors, who were partially effective in undermining support for the Revolutionary United Front, were not successfully reintegrated into society and became a political problem. In Colombia, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia were not effectively reintegrated, and became increasingly involved in narcotics production and trafficking.[149]

Despite these challenges, the use of militia is a reality in insurgencies. States have generally turned to them because national forces are weak and they believe militia can

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[146] United Nations, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment: Principles and Guidelines* (New York: United Nations, 1999); United Nations, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Nicaragua and El Salvador* (New York: United Nations, 1997); United Nations, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Cambodia* (New York: United Nations, 1996); International Peace Academy, *A Framework for Lasting Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Crisis Situations* (New York: IPA, 2002).

[147] Chris Alden, *Mozambique and the Construction of the New African State: From Negotiations to Nation Building* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Eric Berman, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Mozambique, Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project* (Geneva: United Nations Publications, 1996).

[148] Aman Gupta, *Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Volume 1 (Adarsh Nagar, Delhi: Isha Books, 2005), p. 26.

[149] On challenges with disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration see Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*, pp. 24-25.

help pacify key terrain. But a militia is not a magic bullet. Where states remain illegitimate and counterinsurgency operations are poorly planned, managed, and executed, the government may still lose. Though the British effectively used militia as part of the New Villages program during the Malayan Emergency, the French were unsuccessful with similar efforts in Vietnam in 1952. So was the United States with a range of programs such as the CIA and Special Forces' Civil Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG), Marines' Combined Action Platoons (CAPs), and U.S. Army's Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS).[150] Declining support among the Vietnamese population, outside support, waning domestic support in the United States, and other factors contributed to the failed counterinsurgency campaigns. In the end, a better appreciation of the costs and benefits of militia should help policymakers know when and how to use them – and when not to – during counterinsurgency campaigns.

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[150] Robert O. Tilman, "The Non-Lessons of the Malayan Emergency," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 6, No. 8, August 1966, pp. 407-419.

APPENDIX A: MILITIA FORCES, 1945-2011

Country	Years	Government-Supported Militia	Effectiveness in Defeating Insurgents	Who Won?
Afghanistan	1978-1992	Government and Soviets supported urban, rural militia	Partially effective, but government fell in 1992	INS
Afghanistan	1992-1996	Rabbani government supported urban and rural militia	Partially effective, though largely in areas such as Panjshir	INS
Afghanistan	1996-2001	Taliban supported several Pashtun and other militia	Partially effective against Northern Alliance and other groups	INS
Afghanistan	2001-	Karzai government and ISAF supported several militia	Partially effective in undermining Taliban control	ONGOING
Algeria	1954-1962	French army established *harkis*	Partially effective, and knowledge of terrain made them valuable	INS
Algeria	1992-2004	Government raised self-defense militia and *harkis*	Effective in securing some rural areas	GOVT
Angola	1961-1974	Portuguese government utilized several types of militia	Partially effective, though coup in Portugal facilitated independence	INS
Angola	1975-2002	UNITA worked with militia, including from Ovimbundu tribe	Effective in undermining support for MPLA in some rural areas	GOVT
Argentina	1955	None	N/A	INS
Argentina	1973-1983	None	N/A	GOVT
Azerbaijan	1992-1994	Azerbaijan used militia, including Russian mercenaries	Partially effective	MIXED
Bangladesh	1971	Pakistan used militia against Bangladesh rebels and Indians	Ineffective in establishing order, and East Pakistan seceded	INS
Bangladesh	1976-1997	Bangladesh supported some militia, including settler militia	Partially effective, and helped quell the Chittagong insurgency	GOVT
Bolivia	1952	Bolivian government supported some rural militia	Ineffective	INS
Bosnia	1992-1995	Government supported a range of pro-Bosniak militia	Effective, with NATO help	GOVT
Burma	1948-	Several militia, such as sitwundan and Pyusawhtis	Partially effective	ONGOING
Burundi	1972	President Michel Micombero used Tutsi militia	Partially effective in quelling the insurgency	GOVT
Burundi	1988	Government used militia and army units against	Partially effective in quelling the insurgency	GOVT

		Hutus		
Burundi	1993-2005	Substantial use of militia	Partially effective	MIXED
Cambodia	1968-1975	Government supported rural militia against the Khmer Rouge	Ineffective and Khmer Rouge overthrew government	INS
Cambodia	1978-1992	CPP used militia	Partially effective in undermining Khmer Rouge and other groups	GOVT
Cameroon	1955-1960	None	N/A	INS
Central African Republic	1996-1997	Patassé worked with militia, including from Gbaya tribe	Partially effective	GOVT
Chad	1965-1982	A range of militia, including those controlled by Hissène Habré	Partially effective in keeping Habré in power	GOVT
Chad	1994-1998	Déby government supported some militia	Partially effective in establishing order	GOVT
Chad	2005-2010	Déby government supported some militia	Partially effective in establishing order	GOVT
China	1946-1950	China used urban and rural militia	Effective in establishing order	GOVT
China	1950-1951	None	N/A	GOVT
China	1956-1959	None	N/A	GOVT
China	1991-	None	N/A	GOVT
Colombia	1948-1962	Colombian government supported rural militia	Partially effective in establishing order in rural parts of Colombia	MIXED
Colombia	1964-	United Self-Defence Forces	Effective in undermining rural support	ONGOING
Congo	1960-1965	Government supported militia, including white mercenaries	Partially effective in putting down rebellions	GOVT
Congo	1977-1978	Mobutu used militia	Partially effective in quelling rebellions	GOVT
Congo	1996-1997	Mobutu used militia	Partially effective, though government collapsed	INS
Congo	1998-	Kabila used militia	Partially effective	ONGOING
Costa Rica	1948	Government supported several militia	Ineffective in weakening resistance	INS
Croatia	1992-1995	A range of pro-Croat militia	Effective in achieving Croat independence with NATO help	GOVT
Cuba	1953-1959	None	N/A	INS
Cyprus	1974	Turkish Cypriot militia, as well as Greek Cypriot militia	Partially effective	MIXED
Djibouti	1991-1994	Government supported militia, including from Issa population	Partially effective	GOVT

Dominican Republic	1965	None	N/A	GOVT
El Salvador	1979-1992	The government supported several rural militia	Partially effective in undermining support for the FMLN	GOVT
Ethiopia	1974-1992	Government established self-defense forces in rural areas	Ineffective	MIXED
Ethiopia	1997-	Some use of militia	Partially effective, though Ethiopia has relied on regular forces	ONGOING
Georgia	1992-1994	Government supported militia, including the Mkhedrioni	Ineffective in undermining Abkhazia rebels	MIXED
Greece	1945-1949	National Guard Defense Battalions	Effective in establishing order	GOVT
Guatemala	1960-1996	Civil Self-Defense Patrols (PAC)	Partially effective in contributing to government victory in rural areas	GOVT
Guinea Bissau	1962-1974	Government supported militia, including Black Militia	Partially effective, though rebels ended secured independence	INS
Guinea Bissau	1998-1999	Government recruited rural militia	Ineffective, and Vieira government was overthrown	INS
Haiti	1991-1995	Cedras government used militia, including FRAPH	Partially effective, but government collapsed after U.S. threat	INS
India	1982-1993	None	N/A	GOVT
India	1952-	Government supported some militia, including Salwa Judum	Partially effective	ONGOING
India	1989-	None	N/A	ONGOING
Indochina	1946-1954	Several militia, such as Catholic forces	Ineffective, and militia were heavily infiltrated by Vietminh	INS
Indonesia	1958-1960	Several militia, including from Communist Party of Indonesia	Effective in undermining rural support for insurgents	GOVT
Indonesia	1965-1966	A range of local militia that Sukarno called the "fifth force"	Effective against Communist insurgents	GOVT
Indonesia	1975-1999	Several militia	Partially effective in rural areas	INS
Indonesia	1976-2005	Village militia in Aceh as part of the "fence of legs" program	Effective in pacifying rural areas, but committed atrocities	GOVT
Iran	1978-1979	None	N/A	INS
Iran	1979-1993	Khomeini use of komitehs, Basij, and other militia	Effective in undermining KDPI and other Kurdish resistance groups	GOVT
Iraq	1961-1974	National Defense Battalions (NDB), better known as *jahsh*	Partially effective in undermining Kurdish support	GOVT
Iraq	2003-	Several militia, including Sons of Iraq	Effective in undermining insurgents in such provinces as	ONGOING

			Anbar	
Jordan	1970	None	N/A	GOVT
Kenya	1952-1956	British worked with Kikuyu Home Guards	Effective in undermining rural support for Mau Mau forces	GOVT
Laos	1960-1973	Several militia, including Hmong, Mien, Khmu forces	Partially effective in rural areas, though ultimately defeated	INS
Lebanon	1958-1959	Several militia, including the Phalange	Effective in stabilizing the country	GOVT
Lebanon	1975-1990	Several militia, including the Phalange	Partially effective in establishing order in some of the country	GOVT
Liberia	1989-1997	Government used militia, including from Krahn	Ineffective, as Charles Taylor's NPFL took power	INS
Libya	2011	Government supported Quwwat al-Muqawama al-Shabiya	Ineffective	INS
Madagascar	1947-1948	None	N/A	GOVT
Malaya	1948-1960	Militia in "New Villages," including Special Constabularies	Effective in protecting villages and undermining rural support	GOVT
Mali	1989-1994	Some, though limited, support of militia against Tuaregs	Partially effective	GOVT
Moldova	1992	None	N/A	GOVT
Morocco	1953-1956	French forces used local Moroccan militia	Partially effective in establishing order	INS
Morocco	1975-1991	Government leveraged some militia, including Makhzani	Partially effective in undermining Polisario	GOVT
Mozambique	1964-1974	Government utilized militia, including Flechas	Partially effective in rural areas	INS
Mozambique	1976-1995	Several militia, including in the Communal Village Program	Partially effective against RENAMO rebels	MIXED
Nepal	1997-2006	Rural Volunteer Security Groups and Peace Committees	Ineffective in rural areas	MIXED
Netherlands	1945-1946	None	N/A	GOVT
Nicaragua	1978-1979	None	N/A	INS
Nicaragua	1981-1988	Several militia, including Sandinista Defense Committees	Effective in establishing order	GOVT
Nigeria	1967-1970	Government used militia from Yoruba and other groups	Partially effective in defeating Biafra rebels	GOVT
Nigeria	1991-	Government supported militia, such as the Bakassi Boys	Ineffective in countering guerrilla groups in the Niger Delta	ONGOING

Oman	1962-1976	Oman supported some militia, including Firqats	Effective in undermining PFLO support	GOVT
Pakistan	1973-1977	None	N/A	GOVT
Pakistan	1971-1971	None	N/A	INS
Pakistan	1993-1999	None	N/A	GOVT
Pakistan	2004-	Government supported militia against TTP and others	Partially effective in countering insurgent groups	ONGOING
Papua New Guinea	1988-1998	Government supported militia in Bougainville	Partially effective in undermining BRA	MIXED
Paraguay	1947	President Morínigo leveraged militia, including Colorados	Effective in defeating insurgents	GOVT
Peru	1980-1992	Self-defense groups, including *rondas campesinas*	Effective in undermining rural support for the Sendero Luminoso	GOVT
Philippines	1946-1955	Home Guards and other pro-government militia	Effective in helping defeat People's Liberation Army insurgents	GOVT
Philippines	1968-	Civilian Home Defense Force	Effective in undermining support for the Maoist insurgency	ONGOING
Russia	1946-1949	NKVD supported People's Defense Platoons	Effective in undermining Lithuanian resistance, but ruthless	GOVT
Russia	1946-1950	None	N/A	GOVT
Russia	1946-1947	None	N/A	GOVT
Russia	1946-1948	None	N/A	GOVT
Russia	1994-1996	None	N/A	MIXED
Russia	1999-2009	Government utilized Kadyrovtsy against Chechen guerrillas	Effective in undermining Chechen guerrilla support	GOVT
Rwanda	1962-1965	Rwandan government leveraged militia	Effective in defeating insurgents, though extremely violent	GOVT
Rwanda	1990-1994	Government supported militia, including *Interahamwe*	Ineffective	INS
Senegal	1990-	None	N/A	ONGOING
Sierra Leone	1991-2002	Civil Defence Force (CDF) fighters, including Kamajors	Partially effective in undermining RUF support	GOVT
Somalia	1981-1991	Siad Barre regime utilized militia	Partially effective, though government collapsed	INS
Somalia	1991-	Successive governments utilized local militia	Partially effective, though unable to defeat insurgents	ONGOING
South Africa	1983-1994	Government support militia, including Zulu militia	Ineffective	INS
South Korea	1948-1950	None	N/A	GOVT

Sri Lanka	1971	Government used militia	Effective, together with regular units, in defeating JVP	GOVT
Sri Lanka	1983-2009	Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal and other militia	Effective in undermining support for LTTE, including in Eastern Province	GOVT
Sri Lanka	1987-1989	Government used militia	Effective, together with regular units, of defeating JVP	GOVT
Sudan	1955-1972	Several successive governments supported militia	Partially effective	MIXED
Sudan	1984-2004	Several militia, including Janjaweed and Marahleen	Ineffective in undermining support for rebel groups	INS
Syria	2011-	Syrian government has leveraged pro-government militia	Partially effective	ONGOING
Tajikistan	1992-1997	Pro-government militia, including from Kulyab region	Partially effective in establishing order	MIXED
Tunisia	1952-1956	None	N/A	INS
Turkey	1977-1980	Government used militia, such as "Counter-Guerrilla" force	Partially effective in establishing order	GOVT
Turkey	1984-1999	Kurdish militia, including village guards	Effective in undermining PKK support in rural areas	GOVT
Uganda	1981-1987	Successive governments used militia against NRA	Ineffective, and government was eventually overthrown	INS
Uganda	1993-	Government used militia, such as Local Defence Units	Partially effective against Lord's Resistance Army	ONGOING
United Kingdom	1969-1999	None	N/A	GOVT
Vietnam	1955-1975	Several militia, such as CIDG and CAP	Partially effective, but government eventually collapsed	INS
Yemen Arab Rep.	1948	Government used militia	Partially effective in undermining coup attempt	GOVT
Yemen Arab Rep.	1962-1969	Republican government used militia	Partially effective in defeating royalists	GOVT
Yemen Arab Rep.	1986-1987	Ali Nasir's government used militia	Partially effective	INS
Yemen	1994	Saleh government used militia	Effective in defeating southern Yemeni forces	GOVT
Yemen	2004-	Saleh government used militia	Partially effective	ONGOING
Yugoslavia	1996-1999	Several Belgrade-backed militia in Kosovo	Ineffective	INS
Zimbabwe	1965-1980	Forces led by such individuals as Bishop Abel Muzorewa's UANC	Ineffective, and ZAPU and ZANU rebels gained independence	INS
Zimbabwe	1980-1987	Mugabe's government supported youth militia	Effective in undermining rebellion, but ruthless	GOVT