Removing a Thorn with a Thorn: Evaluating India’s Use of Militias in Counterinsurgency

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In May 2015, Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar suggested that the country should employ the use of pressure tactics to fight against enemy militants. Using the Hindi phrase “kante se kante nilkalna (removing a thorn with a thorn)….We have to neutralize terrorists through terrorists only. Why can’t we do it? We should do it. Why does my soldier have to do it?” These comments, roundly criticized, fueled speculation that the Indian government was going to sponsor terrorism against its arch-rival Pakistan, a country that has a history of supporting terrorist and insurgent groups throughout India. Others however argued that Parrikar’s comments instead signaled the return of another non-state actor to use against India’s militant adversaries. In Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, politicians and citizens alike dreaded that Parrikar’s statements indicated the potential return of the Ikhwan, a pro-government militia that had allied itself with Indian security forces during the 1990s. While Parrikar eventually clarified that his comments did not mean the use of militias, his remarks still generated a debate on the positives and negatives of the use of the Ikhwan as a counter-insurgent force. Nor was the Ikhwan the

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3 Due to the disputed status of Kashmir (history detailed below), the terminology for the state tends to represent one narrative or the other. The Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir is also referred to as Indian administered Kashmir (IAK) and Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) with Pakistan’s State of Azad Kashmir also being referred to as Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). While this paper will see all designations used, the author will primarily stick to the more neutral IAK and PAK.
only armed group used by the Indian government to fight insurgencies. Just four years prior, the Indian Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional the arming and use of the *Salwa Judum*, a particularly vicious militia that was used to try and counter the Communist-inspired insurgency in the state of Chhattisgarh.\(^7\)

The use of an armed non-state actor as a counter-insurgent force is hardly limited to India’s experience with sub-conventional conflict. Indeed, the use of militias seems to be a common tactic found in insurgencies throughout the world. Perhaps the most well-known project in recent memory remains the Anbar Awakening in Iraq, where American forces allied with Sunni tribes to fight Al Qaeda in Iraq and other insurgent forces. The perceived success of the Anbar Awakening even propelled the career of then-General David Petraeus (Commanding General of all coalition forces in Iraq) and made him a household name.\(^8\)

Yet another experience with militias shows the risks of a government outsourcing the fight to these non-state actors. The Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) in Nigeria was used to combat the terrorist organization Boko Haram. Although it was a civilian venture to combat the terrorist group, the militia soon conducted various human rights abuses including torture and mass killing.\(^9\) Nor is the JTF unique among militia groups. A common factor uniting all pro-government militias seem to be their propensity to engage in severe human rights violations. With the heavy political characteristics of insurgencies, actions that terrorize the population could very well end up backfiring on counterinsurgent. So, the


question remains, are militias an effective counter-insurgent tool, or do they instead harm the state’s effort to defeat any rebellion?

With the renewed interest in counter-insurgency strategy and tactics, this question is one of immense importance to scholars and practitioners alike. India, with its long history of dealing with internal conflicts offers several useful case studies for Western theorists to examine. Using a qualitative approach, I examine two counterinsurgency campaigns in India where pro-government militias were employed as a counterinsurgent force: the Ikwhan in Kashmir, and the Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh. The two case studies also serve as a testing ground for a set of hypotheses that I generated from the literature on the topic of militias.

The plan of the paper is as follows. First, the literature review will examine the academic arguments on the role of militias in internal conflicts. With this, we can lay out the positive and negative contributions that a counterinsurgent militia can bring to the fight, and lay out hypotheses to test in the case studies. This section will also examine the factors that could influence the success of militias as well as the research design and methodology used in this study.

The remainder of the paper will be dedicated to the Indian case studies of the insurgencies in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, and Chhattisgarh. I begin the empirical section with an overview of India, its COIN strategy, as well as how it differs from the American counterinsurgency doctrine. For each case, I then provide an overview of the history of the insurgency and the counterinsurgency campaign, as well as detailed backgrounder on the major insurgent groups and the militia. The paper will conclude with
a general overview of the findings, suggestions for policy as well as further academic research on the topic.
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Hypothesis Forming

In recent years, militias have become a topic of interest to those studying armed conflict and non-state actors. While it could be related to the actions taken during the Iraq war, the increased interest in studying terrorist, insurgent, and other types of armed organizations, including the likes of pro-government militias has come to the attention of analysts and policymakers alike. With the increasing number of pro-government armed groups in the Iraqi government’s fight against ISIS, Nigeria’s conflict with Boko Haram, or general Western counterinsurgency strategy, the importance of the topic is unlikely to diminish anytime soon. Indeed, the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* created a special issue just for the topic of pro-government militias.10

With the literature on militias as an academic topic is growing every day, it is necessary to narrow the scope of our interest here. The question for this thesis is whether militias are effective counterinsurgent actors. Will the use of a pro-government militia ultimately hurt or hinder the overall counterinsurgency campaign? To properly answer this question, it is important to find literature that not only discusses whether pro-government militias are effective or not, but also why they are or are not effective. While the case studies might deal with why militias are formed, demobilization or which armed groups will switch sides, our query is first and foremost about the effectiveness of these groups. Using the academic literature, my interviews, and the case studies, I draw several hypotheses on militia effectiveness that will be tested.

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http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/jcrb/59/4
I divide the literature on militias into two separate categories: one that focuses on the security benefits of militias, and one that emphasizes the human rights consequences of these armed groups. The first is a ‘security-focused’ thread. These primarily focus on the military tactics that militias can be useful for. This can include intelligence provision, actual fighting with insurgent organizations, etc., etc. For many of these authors, the strength of these militias come from the fact that they work as a force multiplier. A good militia can increase the effectiveness of counterinsurgent actions. It is important to note that while a sizeable portion of these works examine the militia as a military force multiplier, some authors also look at how militias can also work towards a positive political action for the counterinsurgent. From here, we will have our first hypothesis.

The second body of literature on the topic of militias focuses more on a human rights perspective. Here, the problems that often come with the introduction of non-state actors is highlighted. Unsurprisingly, militias do not have a quite a positive record in this regard. While all the literature in this strand will not necessarily say that this makes the efforts of the militia less effective, it is worth noting that some of these actions do affect public perception on the counterinsurgent actions. So here, we can find the many effects that can hinder or harm the counterinsurgency. Here, we gather our second hypothesis.

Finally, one last body of literature examines the impact of violence in counterinsurgency. As the conventional thinking usually goes, excessive violence can be counterproductive for the counterinsurgent. According to this thinking, militias, with the human rights abuses, should be a counterproductive tool for the government. To conclude the literature review, therefore, we will examine the role of violence in
counterinsurgencies, before giving an overview of the conditional hypotheses and research methodology.

**Are Militias Effective?**

Several studies find that the use of militias help governments prevail in COIN. Perhaps the broadest and most relevant study to draw from would be Goran Peic’s quantitative study on the use of Civilian Defense Forces (CDFs) in COIN.\(^{11}\) The study reveals that a state that deploys CDFs in COIN is 53% more likely to vanquish the guerrilla threat. CDFs are a form of militias that are local self-defense formations who serve as auxiliary forces. These CDFs facilitate the influx of tactical intelligence (1: help consolidate incumbent territorial control and in doing so, encourage civilian denunciations and 2: leverage their linguistic, topographical, and social skills to gather information) and drive a wedge between civilians and rebels both physically and politically and allow the incumbent (state) sponsor to utilize effectively whatever infrastructural capacity is available at their disposal to defeat the insurgent threats. Good intelligence encourages more efficient, cost-effective COIN policies. With the CDFs disrupting rebel networks, undermines the ability of rebels to draw resources like money, weapons, recruits, and information from the civilian population. While Peic does briefly discuss some of the difficulties and dilemmas in using CDFs (arming civilians with minimal training and autonomy, human rights violations), the piece largely concludes that militias are effective.

However, as Peic himself points out, this does not mean that CDFs are a silver bullet to defeating insurgencies.

A second study of CDFs (in this paper called civilian defense militias) by Govinda Clayton and Andrew Thomson used both quantitative analysis as well as a case study approach focusing on the Sunni militias in Iraq. Similar to other studies, they find that local militias serve as useful informants/intelligence assets, especially in identifying insurgents. This enhanced targeting of insurgents leads to reprisals by the fighters against the civilian population. This in effect also creates a wedge between the insurgents and the civilian population, creating an opportunity for the government to turn the tide. However, this does mean that violence will increase, albeit this is a short-term effect.\(^\text{12}\)

While these quantitative studies shed important light on the effects militias can have on counterinsurgency and civil war outcomes, they have several shortcomings. Due to the nature of quantitative studies, the studies do not allow academics and policymakers to fully examine the full scope of factors that are affected by militias. Certain effects, such as the political consequences of supporting or sponsoring a militia, are difficult to quantify and are often unique to the nation and counterinsurgency in question. This is compounded by the fact that the studies do not seem to distinguish between external insurgencies, those fought by countries in another nation’s territory (e.g. United States in Iraq or Vietnam) from domestic insurgencies. This is a nuance that is not truly appreciated nor necessarily understood. Often, external insurgencies work with another government (save for colonial rule) and can serve as an important power broker. Thus, it is not unreasonable to

contemplate that the ramifications of militia introduction will vary between these insurgencies.

Other studies either focused on specific case studies of militia use. Perhaps one of the best examples of this approach was Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro’s appraisal of US counterinsurgency strategy post-2006. The study was to evaluate whether the ‘surge’ of additional coalition troops or the turning of the Sunni tribes on their former insurgent allies led to the decline of violence in Iraq. After detailing the arguments for both proposals, the authors found that it was a ‘synergy’ of both elements that led to success. The additional number of soldiers were needed to conducted military operations and provide protection to their new Sunni allies, while the ‘Anbar Awakening’ was needed to provide intelligence, redirect insurgent guns onto the counterinsurgent’s enemies, and helped reshape other elements of the Iraq war. The Biddle, Friedman, Shapiro study showed the important effects that a militia could have on a counterinsurgency battle.

Jason Lyall, in his examination of Russia’s Second Chechen War, examined Russian ‘sweep’ operations. Examining sweep operations conducted by Russian forces, allied Chechen forces, or joint operations, Lyall found that Chechen sweeps were able to decrease future attacks by 40% in comparison to Russian only sweeps. In Lyall’s view, the reason for this was because the Chechens were in a better position to identify who were the insurgents through their ability to better access the local networks than Russian soldiers. Not only were the Chechens much better at identification, they were also able to issue more

credible threats to the members of the community and deter anyone who might have helped the insurgents.\textsuperscript{14}

So here we can see these studies do seem to point to the positive effects that a militia can have in a counterinsurgency. Most importantly is the intelligence and identification that these militiamen can bring to the counterinsurgent forces. To a certain extent, this does lead to less indiscriminate violence by the various COIN forces, potentially leading to less violence against the civilian population as well as disrupting insurgent networks. Lyall’s study also seems to indicate the importance of issuing ‘credible threats’ by these militias. Because these militias are from the same ethnicity, same language and culture, and same community networks, it can serve as a deterrent for civilians from aiding the rebels.

Finally, Seth Jones at the RAND corporation examined the strategic logic of militia in a working paper to look at militia effectiveness (Jones, 2012).\textsuperscript{15} Utilizing both a quantitative approach as well as a detailed case study on militias in Afghanistan, Jones contributes a more nuanced perspective on the effects of militias. Criticizing the generalizations of militias as a destabilizing force, Jones argues that there is considerable variation in how effective militias could be in insurgencies.\textsuperscript{16} After examining 130 different insurgencies, Jones concluded that the majority of militias in insurgencies (53%) were partially effective, 29% being effective, and the remainder (18%) are ineffective. While acknowledging that militias could indeed subvert state authority, commit human rights

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 17. In his working paper, Jones defines ‘effective control’ as a militia being garrisoned in the village, with militias and administrators operating freely at all times, and little or no insurgent activity.
abuses, and become unreliable and unwieldy, Jones has argued that this is not uniform in all cases of militia use.

In sum, there is a clear military advantage to using pro-government armed groups in a counterinsurgency campaign. To this end, militias serve as an important security tool in six different ways: through the provision of intelligence, as a group to carry out kinetic operations, through the organization ‘redirecting its guns’, their presence can allow the security forces to redeploy their soldiers elsewhere. To this, I wish to add two more military strengths that militias bring: they can serve as a more flexible fighting force, and finally, they can serve as an outlet of the state’s repression through harsh tactics.

The rather loose, informal structures of militias also make them a more adaptable type of unit in comparison to other security forces. The military, which is designed to fight wars against other militaries, need to adjust their training, strategy, and tactics to be able to handle sub-conventional conflict. A similar adaptation also needs to be taken by the police to deal with the more serious outbreak of insurgency. While these forces adapt to the new conflict, the militias can easily adapt to this partially because they too are a product of the same system. As the case studies show, it is unlikely that these units would have been formed outside of a conflict-ridden area, making them adapted to the conflict that they are now called to fight. Unlike the military and police which have their own bureaucracies and institutional cultures that need to be overcome to properly address the militancy. By contrast, the militias lack these long-standing traditions and institutional biases, making them more adaptable to some of the challenges that need to be confronted when battling an active insurgency.
Finally, the militias also allow an avenue for more brutal violence by the counterinsurgent, while at the same time maintaining plausible deniability.\textsuperscript{17} As part of the discussion on the use of force in battling insurgencies, the excess of violence does not necessarily lead to losses for the government in question. Indeed, the use of violence can play a role in diminishing the capabilities of the insurgent, or providing a deterrence for the ‘fence-sitters’ in joining the insurgency. Especially in democracies where the rule of law needs to be upheld by the official security forces (who are representatives of the state), the state looks for an avenue to dispense this type of violence while maintaining plausible deniability.\textsuperscript{18}

However, most of these studies examined militia use primarily through a security lens. As an insurgency is more than simply a military issue, it is also important to examine the political effects that the utilization of militias might have for the incumbent counterinsurgent forces. Despite the negative perception many people might have when thinking about militias, the use of these forces can have several positive political, economic, and/or social effects. The advantages that a militia can bring can be categorized into three broad categories: legitimacy, cost, and to serve as a counter to other security forces.

In addition to the security benefits of having co-ethnic/religious soldiers in a militia, these co-ethnic forces may also provide a form of legitimacy to the counterinsurgency forces. For many counterinsurgency campaigns, such as the Indian case studies below or


\textsuperscript{18} This is not to say that the official state security forces will not partake in human rights violations or the employment of violence alongside the militia, see Jessica A. Stanton, “Regulating Militias: Government, Militias, and Civilian Targeting in Civil War”, \textit{Journal of Conflict Resolution}, 59:5, 2015, 899-923. However, for some of the unsavory tasks, militias represent an avenue to mete out this form of repression.
the US occupation of Iraq, the security forces might not necessarily be composed of members of similar religious or ethnic groups. Militias that are drawn from the insurgency affected populations can help put a local ‘face’ to the operations carried out by counterinsurgent forces. With the operations having a local face, theoretically it should be easier for the counterinsurgent parties to win the hearts and minds of the contested populations. It can show that the people whom the insurgents claim they are fighting for, are instead taking the initiative to fight off the ‘terrorists’ themselves. This could serve as potent propaganda for the counterinsurgent party to use on the local population, as well as for the nation’s domestic constituency. This is not meant to overstate the effects that possessing a ‘local face’ could have on the resolution of insurgencies, but rather state the benefits that it could bring.

Although having local security forces can undercut support for insurgent factions by providing a ‘legitimate’ face to the conflict-affected populations. The use of militias can also undermine support of the insurgents by other insurgent factions. If militias are drawn from what were previous insurgent groups, it also can also turn sections of their followers, both violent and non-violent supporters, to support the incumbent counterinsurgency forces.

If the militia comes into formation through a deal brokered between an insurgent group and the government, it can set the stage for further surrenders by militants or for other insurgent groups to make their own deals with the counterinsurgents. Although this will not necessarily lead to the end of the insurgency, it is a demonstration that the government is willing to reconcile and forgive previously hostile organizations. This can
lead to the demobilization of other militant groups, as well as make it easier to seek a political solution to the problem.

Militias can serve as a cheap alternative to regular soldiers or security personal. Unlike formal counterinsurgent forces, providing a subsidy can sometimes serve as an inexpensive choice for the government to deal with an insurgent issue. This is especially attractive in conflict-ridden zones where the previous security forces (e.g. police, or military) has collapsed or whose loyalties are suspect. Not only is it relatively cheap to maintain some militias compared to normal security forces, the structure of these informal armed groups (mentioned above) is also attractive to help complement the flailing security forces.\(^\text{19}\)

With this overview of the positive effects that a militia may bring to a counterinsurgency campaign, we have our first hypothesis to test out.

*Hypothesis 1: Pro-government militias increase the likelihood of government victory in counterinsurgency campaigns.*

Yet while Jones has argued human rights violations associated with militia use is often overemphasized, it is difficult to deny that human rights violations by these actors happen (discussed in the next section further below). The overemphasis on military impact tends to underplay the political effects. While Biddle, et al. do point out the military success of allying with the Sunni tribes, their piece does not account for the ultimate failure of the

project. The militias nearly eliminated Al Qaeda and other extremist groups from the country, greatly reducing insurgent violence in the Anbar province, only for these same tribes to ally with the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). It is difficult not to look at this political failure without examining the US counterinsurgency strategy.

Even in Lyall’s study of the Second Chechen War, it is important to keep in perspective that the counterinsurgency campaign was conducted by an authoritarian state that has kept control of Chechnya by appointing, what is practically, a warlord to keep control of the region. For most democracies, like India, it would be practically unthinkable to allow a warlord to keep power in a region. Or rather, it would be unable to keep a warlord in power, especially if they would be required to win elections. Nor do appointing strongmen to keep control a long-term solution. They might keep the appearance of stability, until instability comes. It’s the same type of thinking that viewed supporting autocratic leaders in the Middle East in power would lead to stability, just to see the ‘stability’ of these regimes collapse in 2011. Thus, it is necessary to also examine the backlash that pro-government militias will bring in a counterinsurgency campaign.

**Militias and Backlash**

In reviewing the negative effects of pro-government militias, many authors and studies have posited the issue as a principal-agent problem. The principal, the state or whoever is the primary counterinsurgent power, delegates power to the agent, the pro-government non-state armed group, to carry out tasks. This might be serving as a force for

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20 Al-Sham refers to a ‘Greater Syria’ essentially meaning the Levant.
repression and counterinsurgency, or it might be a low-cost way to fulfil a security void. Whatever the case, the dilemma is then how to hold the agent accountable, and prevent it from shirking from its responsibilities.

The article that best discusses this issue through an academic lens was written by Neil J. Mitchell, Sabine C. Carey, and Christopher K. Butler. Their piece examined the impact that pro-government militias had on human rights violations. Their findings concluded that militias did indeed increase the risk of repression on the country’s civilians, and that rights violations such as killings, torture, and disappearances. Why did the use of militias increase the risk of violence against civilians? The rationale put forward by the authors is twofold: the difficulty that is involved with the government attempting to control and train militias (as well as controlling for the militia’s own private interests in using violence), and the potential benefits of using these informal armed groups to conduct the repression and violations on behalf of the government.

Importantly, the authors do not argue whether the increased propensity for human rights violations will lead to a worse counterinsurgency outcome. While it has seemingly become accepted lore among counterinsurgency researchers that human rights violations make it more difficult for the government to win over hearts and minds of the insurgency affected population, some have contested this narrative. The question of violence and counterinsurgency outcomes will be considered in further detail below. However, there does seem to be some consensus that the overuse of violence and increase in human rights violations against civilians can be counterproductive.

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Another study by Vanda Felbab-Brown on militias in Afghanistan also illustrates the negative effects it can have in a counterinsurgency campaign.\textsuperscript{22} While also affirming the tendency of militias to engage in abusive behavior, she also adds how this itself serves as a driver of conflict. This led to a breakdown in the rule of law, as well as an intensifying of local conflicts in some communities. While the militia of interest in Felbab-Brown’s study, the Afghan Local Police, committed these abuses at a local level, this led to political issues on the national scene. The militias were highly dependent on outside support (specifically the United States government) which meant that the forces melted away upon facing the Taliban, or also turned to increase abuse of their own communities. The political consequences of these actions, as well as the changes in the local power structures created by the sponsorship of militias makes the use of pro-government armed groups a large political liability.

Besides the emphasis on the deterioration of human rights, there is also concerns that the delegating of responsibility to militias also leads to a weakening of government authority. Although Seth Jones has argued that this is not necessarily a uniform experience to all instances of militia use,\textsuperscript{23} it is an important effect of using these armed groups. Individual case studies, such as those focusing on the US’s experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, paint an overall negative picture on the lingering effects of militia use. Of course, the Vanda Felbab-Brown study on Afghanistan has shown militias as representative of this problem.

\textsuperscript{23} Jones, \textit{Strategic Logic of Militias}, 5-8.
Two studies on militias in Iraq highlight several issues with the existence of militias. Andrew Hubbard’s study argued that militias harmed the Iraqi government’s ability to consolidate control of the country. Combined with the sectarian fighting as well as attempts by Sunnis and Shias to try and gain control of the post-invasion Iraqi government, the existence of militias helped exacerbate the conflict. Most importantly, these militias had constituencies that they served, especially providing security to their own communities, delegitimizing the institutions of the Iraqi government in the eyes of the people. In Hubbard’s paper, the militias served as a major political impediment to security and state power.

Anthony Schwarz also warned against the political impact that militias would have in Iraq and Afghanistan. Pointing out that the role of militias, serving as protectors of communities and villages, have seen them gain some legitimacy from citizens as well as some international actors. Yet, Schwarz argues that these militias have undermined the political process at times when their rivals might gain (especially relevant for political parties that have their own militias), as well as hinder economic development by opposing possible disarmament programs. While acknowledging the security benefits that militias can bring (e.g. intelligence), Schwarz points out that militias often provide protection to their own constituencies and their political interests rather than the nation as a whole.

From the literature, we can identify three mechanisms that lead to a political backlash: human rights violations, the polarization of local communities, and the undermining of the rule of law. Here, I wish to add two more negative political

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consequences that can result from militia use: the furthering of grievances against the state, and the creation of perverse incentives.

The recruitment of local members in the conflict-ridden zone also contributes to a potent propaganda point by insurgents. For anti-government forces that are using the grievance based on the discrimination or repression of a certain ethnic or religious group, the enlistment of co-ethnics or co-religionists can be spun as further evidence of the callous attitude by the government. The conscription of co-ethnics, to kill the members of their own community, can be perceived by the population of the indifferent or biased attitude of the state against the community. Rather than providing legitimacy to the force, it is just seen as another rationale for the grievances that the community has against the state.

The lack of legitimacy all contributes to the difficulty for the counterinsurgent forces to reestablish law and governance. For the reasons detailed above, militias can contribute to the general grievances held by the local population. Especially for democracies that employ strategies dependent on winning the trust of the local population, the utilization of militias may be self-defeating.

Government policy that uses surrendered militants to form the militias can create perverse economic incentives for the insurgency and armed groups to continue. Depending on the benefits package that the government assembles, it gives an incentive for ordinary people to join insurgent organizations just to surrender and obtain the benefits from the government, or have militias force others to join and take the benefits for themselves. This can be seen in the Kashmir and Chhattisgarh case studies where militias ‘surrendered’

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26 Personal Interview with Shubranshu Choudhary, February 2016, Skype
innocent people to obtain financial incentives from the government. Although not examined in this paper, the Northeastern Indian state of Assam saw its surrender package against militants be used by ordinary people to fake join the insurgency, but surrender and gain the benefits.\textsuperscript{27}

Yet there are also many reasons to believe that the security assistance of these pro-government militias has its limits. First and foremost, militia members are not trained soldiers. Although they might receive some form of training, this should not be mistaken for these members for being specialists in violence. It is unlikely that militias can properly fend for themselves, or even take on well trained insurgents or terrorists. This strategy of using what are untrained, or minimally trained, civilians is a risky venture when facing organizations that might be better trained, and better equipped. As it was seen in the previous attempts to form a Sunni militia in Iraq, the original militias were unable to survive the onslaught by AQI forces.

This leads to another important problem that militias could cause to the counterinsurgency efforts. Although militias could conceivably help protect regions that have been secured by government security forces, these non-state forces will require protection against reprisals. Unlike soldiers and security forces which can live in fortified areas, militias often live in the very communities that are being affected by the insurgency. As a result, this can make militias relatively easy targets for insurgents and other anti-government forces. Although some counterinsurgencies see the government allocate some troops for protection (hence, being unable to fight elsewhere), other campaigns see a

\textsuperscript{27} Ajai Sahni and Bibhu Prasad Routray, “SULFA: Terror by Another Name”, \textit{South Asia Terrorism Portal}, accessed December 16, 2015, \url{http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume9/Article1.htm}. 
government unwilling or unable to provide security for their allies. This leads to a setback for the counterinsurgents who see their partners collapse or face elimination.

Third, violence conducted by militias can lead to an escalation in violence. As the militias strike against militias or help provide information leading to the arrest or deaths of insurgents and their supporters. Rather than appearing weak to their constituents, rival insurgent organizations, and members, the militant organizations will want to strike back. Not only would they need to strike back for symbolic reasons, the militias also represent a strategic threat to the insurgent groups. In some cases, it is possible that the introduction of pro-government militias will lead to an escalation in violence, rather than a reduction.

The last major militaristic shortcoming that militias could bring is that they can cause tensions between the various government agencies involved in the counterinsurgency. This can result from the militia being under the control of a particular agency, leading to the compartmentalization of an intelligence and military asset. Although not common, this can lead to rivalries among the various organizations involved in the counterinsurgency effort. Most importantly, the political backlash and resentment of the militias (especially depending on the militia’s reputation among the local population) can also make the acceptance or coordination with these armed groups even more difficult. This is demonstrated with the negative reaction by the Jammu and Kashmir state government to the offhand suggestion by the country’s defence minister to re-implement the Ikhwan program to combat the insurgents. Whether the state government and police forces might be forced to go along with what the federal government demands, it still does not bode well that important political players at the local level oppose a counterinsurgency tactic.

With this overview of the negative effects of militia, we can set our second hypothesis.
Hypothesis 2: The use of pro-government militias decreases the likelihood of government victory in counterinsurgency.

While it is important to understand the problems that militias may cause through detailed case studies, the Iraq case studies have several issues that may not necessarily be useful to understanding militia use, or understanding how other countries fight counterinsurgencies. First and foremost, many of these studies do not differentiate between the various armed actors. Rather, pro-government militias and insurgent organizations are all discussed without real acknowledgement of the different dynamics they bring to the conflict. While some problems related to all armed groups (such as those of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) can be more easily applied to a wide variety of actors, this should not confuse analysts into accepting conclusions that do not necessarily differentiate between anti-government actors and pro-government militias.

It should also be noted that the individual case studies also focus on countries that face a nation-wide insurgency. In contrast, the case studies in this thesis focus on insurgencies that happen at a sub-national level. Despite the considerable number of insurgencies that have continued in India, this has not affected the quality of life, or even disrupted the operations of the central government or most state governments. Indeed, the human rights violations are often limited to the state in question. While the insurgency and use of pro-government armed groups might not undermine the central government’s authority, it is worth examining the impact of militias at a local level.

Does Violence Lead to Bad Counterinsurgency Outcomes?
If there is one lesson that is held as consensus among COIN practitioners and scholars, it is the idea that too much violence will lead a backlash. As the argument goes, overusing military force, or the use of indiscriminate force will increase the grievances held by the population. Rather than having the population support the government, they instead lend their support to the insurgents, giving the armed groups a source of economic and political support, safe havens, and potential manpower in return for security from the brutal government. This, if not resolved by the counterinsurgent, could lead to a much more potent insurgency, and potential insurgent victory. Indeed, in his seminal work on The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars, Stathis Kalyvas reviewed one hundred studies and a large number of historical case studies where indiscriminate/overwhelming violence provoked greater insurgent violence.28

Yet, there are several paradoxes within the history of fighting insurgencies where violence did not necessarily lead to an increase in insurgent violence, or counterinsurgent victory. Two of the studies examine counterinsurgencies carried out by authoritarian states. As will be discussed below, authoritarian states cannot necessarily address the population’s grievances in the same manner as a democracy. While citizens living in a democratic environment can vote politicians that do not meet their expectations out of office, authoritarian governments do not have that luxury. Yet, a study by RAND found that the success rates of authoritarian regimes in counterinsurgencies was nearly equal to that of democratic powers.29 Part of the explanation for this might be the advantage that the

29 Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, How Insurgencies End, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2010).
incumbent government has in fighting uprisings. Regardless, it is worth exploring this in further detail.

Prior to examining authoritarian counterinsurgencies, it is worth looking at one study on a study of indiscriminate violence in counterinsurgency. Jason Lyall, in another study of the Second Chechen War, examines the use of indiscriminate artillery. Conducting a statistical analysis on villages that were and were not hit by Russian artillery barrage, Lyall found that villages that were hit saw a reduction in insurgent attacks. Why? The indiscriminate artillery suppressed insurgent violence by disrupting the insurgent’s military capabilities.

While Lyall does scrutinize some potential reasons that might limit the applicability of his findings to other contexts, it is worth noting the rationale of how violence could benefit the counterinsurgent rather than the insurgent.

On authoritarian counterinsurgency, David Ucko and Daniel Byman studies do point out that authoritarian regimes do engage in more repression and overwhelming force than their democratic counterparts. Rather than causing a backlash, it might do an effective job in forcing the population to support the government as well as forcefully create havoc for insurgents operating. Not only does the brutal violence make it costly for the population to lend their support for the insurgents, but the brutal measures can also mean disrupting the logistics and base for armed actors.

However, one should not confuse authoritarian counterinsurgency with simply repression. As Ucko points out in his study, authoritarian governments also engage in

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31 It is also worth noting that Lyall also has two other studies that argues against this premise and instead puts forwards that indiscriminate violence is counterproductive, and incumbents use violence selectively.
significant political outreach to sustain domestic support, separating insurgents from the population, and consolidating their power, much like their democratic peers. However, authoritarian governments have methods and techniques that might not necessarily be able to coexist in a liberal democratic environment, such as prohibiting dissent, creating mass support among their domestic population through their monopoly of information control, mass violence to hinder rebel mobilization, holding on the areas cleared by mass violence to separate insurgents from the population through the saturation of security forces, as well as their own version of ‘winning the hearts and minds’. 33 Although this does seem similar to what democratic counterinsurgents do, Ucko does use the distinguishing factor of mass violence to differentiate between democratic and authoritarian counterinsurgents.

These studies question the assumption that violence can lead to a negative outcome in COIN. Yet it is important not to lose sight of the fact that most studies do acknowledge the backlash caused by over excessive violence, and both authoritarian COIN studies emphasize the other steps (besides violence) that the regimes take alongside the violence. It is simply not violence for violence sake, but rather violence used along other tactics to subdue insurgencies. Nor should simply repressing insurgencies be perceived as a solution. As Daniel Byman points out, authoritarian COIN violence causes resentment among the population (especially if the repressive forces are not present), making future conflict likely. Also, authoritarian counterinsurgents may have a harder time implementing peace deals to win over the insurgent-supporting populations. 34 Ucko also raises the question of the differences between democratic COIN goals and authoritarian COIN goals.

This does raise questions on whether over excessive violence will lead to a counterinsurgent defeat, or hinder success. So, while militias might engage in human rights abuses and conduct violence, this does not necessarily mean that the counterinsurgency will fail. Rather, it is the general campaign strategy that must be carried out along with the violence to suppress and insurgency.

As this section has illustrated, there are two important bodies of literature directly related to militias in counterinsurgency. The security literature emphasizes the positive military impact that pro-government armed groups can have in a counterinsurgency campaign, and the ‘political/human rights focused’ literature highlights the negative political influence that supporting these groups have in a country. Both contain gaps (including, by and large, ignoring the other thread) that needs to be reconciled.

**Conditional Hypotheses**

While the above section has detailed how these non-state armed actors can positively or negatively affect the efforts put forward by the counterinsurgent, it is also necessary to examine the conditions under which militias might be more or less effective. Due to the limited nature of the case studies, it is possible that not all these factors will be present for perusal in the two campaigns detailed below. However, this does encourage the necessity of larger-n qualitative and quantitative studies on the topic of militias to fully understand the impact of these variables on effectiveness. Based on these factors, several conditional hypotheses will also be examined.
One factor worth considering is the make-up of the militia group. There are two militia characteristics I wish to highlight here. The first is whether the militia is made up of ‘alike’ members. Jason Lyall, in his study of Chechen militias, found that being coethnics with the community and Chechen insurgency did indeed lead to better military outcomes. Not only were the militia members better positioned to identify insurgents and provide intelligence, the fact they were from the same community also allowed them to issue more credible threats to the local population for cooperating with insurgents and refusing to work with the government.

Yet arguably, simply being part of the same coethnic/coreligionist is itself insufficient for making a militia effective. The Iraqi militias involved in the Anbar Awakening were Sunni, but shared Arab ethnicity with Shias. Yet Shia militia would probably have not been as effective, or possess the same legitimacy that Sunni militias had. Even if we were to look at a militia in the Kashmir valley, Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) could be used, but the community was ethnically cleansed from the valley at the start of the insurgency. Although they are of the same ethnicity and speak the same language, it is highly unlikely that they would have possessed the same strengths that a militia of local Kashmiri Muslims. Even diaspora members, who may have the language skills and share the same ethnicity and religion would not necessarily be able to form an effective militia. While we should not downplay the importance of having co-ethnics or co-religionists, it is necessary to closely examine where exactly these members come from. Co-ethnicity does not intrinsically mean effectiveness.

35 Jason Lyall, “Are Co-ethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents?”
36 Ibid
Hypothesis 3: Militias composed of members of the same ethnic and/or community group as the insurgency-affected population are more effective.

The second crucial point on the composition of a pro-government militia worth considering is the past life of the militia members. Surrendered insurgents or former rebels could potentially also increase the effectiveness of the irregular forces employed by the counterinsurgent side. Not only would these militia members be better trained and potentially ‘better’ fighters than civilians that were employed, but this also can lead to higher quality intelligence for the security forces. As these surrendered terrorists had trained and fought along with members of the insurgency, putting these militias in a better position to identify and target insurgents. Although a small point, the make-up of these pro-government non-state armed organizations could have an impact on the overall effectiveness of militias.

Hypothesis 4: Militias composed of former insurgents or rebels are more effective.

With the militia-specific factors examined, it is now imperative to consider the other aspects of the conflict that could also affect the performance of the pro-government militias. Another crucial factor that could facilitate or hinder the success of militias is the nature of government support to the organization. Previous studies have argued that the government is often able to control the militia in determining whether it targets civilians or not.\textsuperscript{37} What does the government give to the militia in terms of training, weapons, or

\textsuperscript{37} Stanton, “Regulating Militias".
political support? Does the government bestow some form of authority to the militia? The relationship between the state and the militias could potentially factor into the effectiveness of this counterinsurgency tactic.

Hypothesis 5: Militias that receive more support and training from the government are more effective.

As the above discussion illustrates, the militia can contribute both negatively and positively to a counterinsurgent campaign. Yet as shown in the literature review, the scholarly community tends to overall hold an ambivalent view on the use of militias. While many counterinsurgent and security theorists emphasize the military use of these organizations, human rights researchers document the general deterioration of human rights in conflict zones as the various militias engage themselves in the struggle against the various insurgent groups. Even though it is commonly said that the overuse of violence is counterproductive, this by itself does not lead to failure. As previous studies have shown, many counterinsurgency campaigns have seen the excessive use of violence, but the counterinsurgent has come out victorious. At the same time, there is some evidence that grievances toward the actions and policies of the state can further strengthen the insurgency. This continues the debate in the literature separating the human rights research and security driven analysis.

Our final hypothesis tries to incorporate both aspects of the literature in evaluating militia effectiveness. Here, I distinguish between the effects that is seen between the short-term and long-term. The short-term witnesses the constructive addition of the militia,
primarily due to the military benefits identified above. In contrast the long-term use of militias will see the negative influence of the strategy surpass the previously productive impact owing to the political backlash and tactical adaptation by the insurgent organizations, everything else held constant.

As identified above, the short term will see the militia’s military benefits at its highest. It will bring additional intelligence and manpower to the fight, it will see the introduction of a more flexible fighting force, and the government

It’s important to note that while the short term should anticipate the various counterinsurgent forces engage in primarily military activity to fight back the insurgents, the long term will need to see long term engagement in rebuilding the politics of the society. The short term and the use of militias should see the security forces creating space for the political players to promote normalcy and regular governing. Especially in the long term, it is necessary for the government to address the grievances and issues that led to the outbreak of insurgency. This is not to say that the short term should or will ignore the disputes that lead to instability, but rather that the utilization of militias signals an attempt by the government to combat the insurgents and push back their influence.

The short term sees the use of pro-government militia achieve some levels of success against the insurgent groups. First and foremost, this is possible as the militia represent a new tactic. While security forces struggle to adapt to the unconventional threats posed by the guerrilla groups, militias allow the security forces to utilize a similarly unconventional force to strike back. The shift in tactics, in comparison to what insurgents would normally expect from security forces, will be difficult to deal with. Especially if the
militia group is used covertly, away from the public knowledge, this will add to the confusion as well as other complications that insurgent organizations will have to deal with.

Finally, another key factor for the success of militias in the short term is that the government can delegate some of the more unsavory duties to these non-state actors. Although it might be normatively unpalatable to think that excessive violence is a positive thing in a counterinsurgency campaign, it is important to note that violence (as per the discussion in the literature review) can sometimes lead to a reduction of violence while also causing considerable damage to the insurgent organization. However, militaries and other security forces, especially in democratic states, have laws and/or observers that will bring some level of scrutiny to the conduct of the counterinsurgent. The state then delegates some of the ‘shameful’ violence to the militias, who can enact harsh violence against the rebel organizations. This is not to say that the state itself will not engage in human rights violations or excessive violence, but by delegating these undesirable roles to the militia, the state can claim some level of plausible deniability.

For these reasons, the use of militias or other irregular will be of great utility as a counterinsurgent force in the short term. During this period, we should see that the insurgent force suffers more losses in personal, territory, equipment, etc. While there will be human rights violations, this will not necessarily be able to translate into negative reactions for the counterinsurgent. However, if the insurgent organization still retains some or significant capability, then the longer-term use of militias will see diminishing marginal returns. Indeed, the long-term use of militias will see the negative aspects attributed to militias detailed above begin to take effect. Instead of an effective tactical choice taken by the state to battle the insurgency. There will be three distinct factors that lead militias in
the long term to be ineffective: adaptation by the insurgent groups, failure to defeat or cripple the insurgent organization, and resentment.

First and foremost, the longer the militia is in use, it allows the insurgency to adapt to counter these forces. While the initial introduction of these militia forces has the potential to confuse and cause havoc on the guerilla’s efforts, an organization will be able to adapt to the onslaught. This could happen as the actions and activities of the ‘renegades’ start to become known to the public, giving the insurgents the knowledge of another security force, or even through a strategy change. Either way, the adaptation by the insurgent makes it more difficult for the militia to effectively harm the organization.

Second, the human rights violations committed by the pro-government militias and other negative effects examined above will also begin to contribute to a general dissatisfaction by the population. Much like other insurgencies, excessive use of force by the counterinsurgent government can lead to a backlash that ends up aiding the insurgent forces. However, many of these organizations are illicit in nature, and the state will attempt to obscure the use or purpose of groups. As time goes on, more information will be discovered and spread throughout the insurgency affected areas, as well as the country’s general population. The members of the population who might have been uncertain about supporting the government over the insurgents might be angered by the behavior by these renegades. This could lead to members of families negatively affected by these militias to take up arms against the state, or even start a cycle of revenge related violence. For insurgent organizations that were affected by the counterinsurgency campaigns, the discontent by the conflict-affected populations can serve as a new base for recruiting, or obtaining other forms of support. With this, we have our final hypothesis to test:
Hypothesis 6: Militias are military effective in the short term, but their effectiveness decreases over the long term and eventually becomes negative.

Research Design and Methodology

In examining militias in India and the effects that they have had on the country’s counterinsurgency campaigns, I will be using a qualitative approach. Whenever primary resource documents are available, whether it is interviews with insurgents, militia members, military, intelligence, or other policymakers, internal papers, commissions, or court documents, were consulted. However, the bulk of the data for this paper comes from secondary sources. Whenever possible, I have tried to use multiple sources to collaborate information.

As part of the research for this paper, I travelled to New Delhi during January of 2016 to meet with academics, experts, as well as former military or intelligence personnel. I have also followed up with other experts in Washington DC and elsewhere to get their testimony on the topic. However, the sensitive nature of the topic has resulted in some interviewees asking for anonymity. Out of respect and professional considerations, those who have asked for anonymity were granted it.

With this paper, there are several shortcomings that I was unable to address. Due to limited amount of funds and time, I was unable to travel to any of the conflict regions examined in the book. I have attempted to compensate for this through my interviews with those that have experience in the Indian states discussed below. I also cannot speak Hindi/Urdu, Gondi, or Kashmiri. Whenever possible, I have used translations, but have
limited my sources to those in the English language. The sensitive nature of the topic has made obtaining data a challenging task. I have attempted to rectify this by using a wide variety of sources whenever possible.

The theory of militias laid out above has been constructed from both the general literature on the topic and elements of India’s history with non-state actors. Although elements of the theory were constructed from initial observations of India’s experience with militias and other case studies from around the world, the theory will hopefully be a generalizable one that can apply to insurgencies and militias outside of South Asia.

For this paper, India serves as a useful country study. Since its independence in 1947, the country has fought an insurgency nearly every decade. As of this writing, the country is fighting several insurgencies in its north-eastern states, the internationally known rebellion in Kashmir, and a Communist-inspired insurgency in its heartland. Through the decades, India’s experiences with internal conflict have spanned the ideological spectrum, from Communist to religious, with the support of the military and without, as well as dealing with interference from international powers. Nearly every topic and issue about internal armed conflict has been experienced at some point in that country’s history. Besides providing a large variety of potential case studies, the fact that they happened in one country provides another important advantage. Despite the diversity in the country, the people and insurgencies share a common national history and operate under the same set of institutions and laws. This allows the researcher to control for a wide variety of variables that otherwise would not be possible to consider in other international studies. For the most part, the central government and its forces is present in all the insurgencies that will be examined in this thesis and many of the issues that led to the rise of such
violence share the same common root in India’s history. Not only does using India as the
country of study allow any researcher to control for a wide variety of variables, the diversity
of the nation permits us to examine different types of insurgencies and militias.

From India’s fifty plus years of experience fighting insurgencies, this paper will
primarily focus on two: the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, and Chhattisgarh’s struggle
against the Naxalites. Both case studies contain the presence of a counterinsurgent militia
used by the government. They also allow us to test a variety of different conditions that
might affect the use of militias. By using multiple within-conflict comparisons on militia
use, we can separate the distinct factors that affect the utilization of these pro-government
armed groups while keeping the same actor constant. As will be explored in subsequent
sections, while both conflicts have the same counterinsurgent actor, there are several
differences in the politics, environment, and other aspects of each insurgency. This will
allow us to also evaluate militias in different contexts and strategies within the Indian state.
All case studies also contain eras where militias were used and not present. This helps to
examine the effectiveness and outcome of militia use over time, while also holding
important variables within each conflict constant. This allows for a tighter focus on
isolating the effects of militias and less worry about outside conditions affecting the
outcome.

The case studies were also chosen due to the duties carried out by these militias.
The purpose of this study is to focus on pro-government militias that were specifically
raised to conduct COIN operations, with active support from the government. This rule
excluded several different forms of militias that exist in India, some of these outside the
fold of a counterinsurgent group. These include militias associated with various
political/religious parties, or certain elements of society. For these groups, these are militias that may engage in fighting with insurgent groups, but their primary purpose is not dependent on fighting a counterinsurgency battle. Many of these groups work to spread the influence and ideals of their party, or fight for power for their specific community. While they may engage in sectarian violence or even the rare fight against insurgent groups, their primary purpose and design is not of that of a COIN organization. Most of these groups do not normally engage with insurgent forces anyway, making any study focusing on their engagement with counterinsurgency violence superfluous. The few that do, engage in COIN activity without active support from the government, is also not included in this study. For example, the Ranvir Sena in the state of Bihar, a militia associated with the upper caste political forces, did take some action against the Naxalites as they spread among the Dalits and lower caste people in the state. Like the former type of militias, the Ranvir Sena was created for political reasons that did not include counterinsurgency at the time. Even when the organization did conduct violence against the Naxalites, they did so without active support from the government in power at the time. Rather, the government was willing to turn a blind eye to the actions and atrocities that were committed by the group.

Finally, a secondary type of COIN militias was excluded from this study. These are what I shall term ‘defensive COIN militias’, e.g. village defense forces (popularly known in India as Village Defence Committees; VDCs). Traditionally, these were used to free up manpower from the police or military forces from distant regions. While they are present in several of India’s insurgenices, they are not included in this study. While it would be

38 Prominent examples of these are the militias associated with the Hindutva RSS, as well as various Communist parties throughout the country.
worthy to evaluate their effectiveness, this paper will be focused on what I designate ‘active COIN militias’. These have some form of organizational structure, were not necessarily limited to a fixed location like VDCs were, and were often used to engage militant groups. The Ikhwan and the Salwa Judum do have a strong government link, engaged in kinetic operations, and they were not fixed to a single village or town.

Another important reason for the exclusion of these defensive COIN militias was that by most indications, the VDCs were not a separate organization. While the Ikhwan and Salwa Judum were independent organizations that worked alongside the security forces, the VDCs were integrated within some larger police and or military structure. There are valid complaints about individuals in the VDCs abusing their power and weapons, but they could be validly seen as police/military members. Indeed, some interviewees argued that VDCs should be viewed as ‘an irregular force’ rather than a militia. They often were part of a continuous chain of command and were led by police or military officers. Although the Ikhwan and Salwa Judum might possess a strong link to the government, they were an independent group. Hence why they were chosen for as the case studies and the VDCs were not.

The Maoist/Naxalite insurgency in Chhattisgarh serves as the primary hypotheses building case for this thesis. Besides being one of the clearest example of the government using a militia as a counterinsurgent actor, it also remains one of the best documented. Thus, any study of militias in the subcontinent, or any study of militias in general, will be woefully incomplete without the study of the Salwa Judum. The Ikhwan serves as the

40 Personal Interview with Ajai Sahni, January 2016, Delhi.
testing ground for the above hypotheses. I also use a within-case and cross-case comparison in testing my hypotheses. In testing their effectiveness, we will be comparing the militias to other security forces that operated within the counterinsurgency campaign. However, hypothesis 5 which examines the effect of government support to the militia cannot be done within the case studies, primarily as there were few other militias to examine within the same COIN campaign. As a result, this will not be examined until the conclusion.

With the hypotheses, there are three possible results, confirm, reject, or mixed. While the former two seem obvious in so much as an outcome for a hypothesis, the latter requires some explanation. As with any security analysis, there are gradations to examining the impact of policy. Here, we are examining the overall impact the militia had in judging its effectiveness. Except for the last hypothesis which introduces change over time, most of the previous hypotheses demand a general observation. We can expect to see results that might seem contradictory. Part of this could be due to the unique circumstances in the specific COIN campaign that affects the overall results. If the evidence compiled does not confirm or reject outright the stated hypothesis, it will be judged as mixed. However, it is the hope that with the evidence compiled in the case study, the reader will be able to understand my analysis for deciding whether a hypothesis is considered mixed, confirmed, or rejected.

Although the research question, are militias effective counterinsurgent actors or do are they hindrances, has been examined in other studies (as detailed above), this study attempts to further the research agenda by examining variation over time. The in-depth case studies of militia in insurgency-hit regions also can also illustrate the complicated relations between militias, the government, society, and insurgent organizations. A
secondary hope of this paper is to avoid the primary unitary view of the parties involved in counterinsurgency in the case studies below. Rather than viewing the various conflicts as simply the Indian government against militant organizations, the paper looks at the conflicts between the various security forces, the government, insurgent organizations, and society whenever possible. As part of the larger research on armed actors, and the emerging research on militia actors, this paper hopes to further theoretical development as well as obtain a more nuanced understanding of India’s case studies and militia behavior.

It is worth stressing that while India’s counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine will be examined, the primary purpose is to examine the effects of militias in a counterinsurgency context. With the increasing interest in the topic of fighting counterinsurgencies, other scholars have sought to examine India’s experience from several different approaches.\(^4^1\) There are the theoretical approaches of authors like Namrata Goswami who uses case studies from India’s Northeast and heartland to illustrate the influences of thinkers like Mohandas (also referred to as Mahatma) Gandhi and Kautilya in formulating the country’s counterinsurgency strategies.\(^4^2\) Rajesh Rajagopalan used India’s campaign in Sri Lanka to discuss how the Indian army formed its counterinsurgent doctrine, with a special emphasis on examining the institution’s biases for conventional warfare.\(^4^3\) However, this paper is primarily concerned with the examination of militias in counterinsurgency campaigns.

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Caveat on Applicability of Lessons from India to other Cases

As can be seen, the utilization of militias can be a disastrous, self-defeating tactic by the government due to the political consequences. Through the undermining of state authority, the lack of legitimacy, or creating a political economy that encourages conflict, the negatives repercussions of militias should not be underestimated. Whether the overall negative outcomes are enough to overshadow the success will be examined in the case studies below. Before examining the various factors that may affect the effectiveness of pro-government militias, it is necessary to briefly account for an important consideration that affects the political effect of militias in India versus other recent Western experiences.

One important factor that needs to be kept in mind when comparing India’s lessons to other counterinsurgency is that it was the Indian government that ultimately was the main authority and primary counterinsurgent in all the cases examined. Unlike the recent COIN campaigns that the United States has fought in (e.g. Iraq and Afghanistan), the utilization of some militias for COIN was made by a foreign power operating outside of the political system. Take for example the Sunni Awakening in Iraq, the use of Sunni tribes was not a decision made and pursued by the Iraq government, nor was the deal made within the confines of the country’s political system. Instead, a foreign occupying power decided to reach out to the Sunni tribes to fight against other militant groups. Although it can be seen as a military success due to the near decimation of foreign terrorist organizations, it was a disaster for the political stability of the country. While the United States had intended for the Sunni tribes and the Iraqi government to negotiate with each other (an effort that the Maliki government by and large refused to do in good faith), the United States created a separate political power within the confines of the American occupation system, but
outside of the formal Iraqi government structure. A similar power imbalance was also present in Afghanistan. As US forces started to withdraw and transfer the power to the incumbent Afghan government, many of the processes and relationships used to maintain control over militias soon collapsed.44

Contrast this with the Russian use of Chechen militias or India’s use of these non-state actors. Militias were co-opted, utilized, and given a place within the government’s preexisting political structure. Although these militia groups might cause some political turmoil, they were embedded within a system dictated by counterinsurgent’s government. While these groups might obtain a political monopoly within the local region, they were still working within the national system. Indeed, some of these militias that would become local power brokers essentially served as political enforcers for the central government’s policies, essentially guaranteeing themselves a spot within the existing political framework. While this is far from ideal, especially in liberal democracies, it does illustrate not only the key role of who makes the deal with the militia, but also why some lessons from other counterinsurgency campaigns (especially the lessons sought by governments in the United States and Europe) are based in experiences that will not necessarily translate well into other cases.

44 Felbab-Brown, “Hurray for Militias?”, 272-273
Chapter 3: The Indian State and Counterinsurgency

Before examining the case studies, it is necessary to first engage in a brief overview of the Indian state as well as its counterinsurgency strategies and doctrines. There are many different aspects of India and its history of state-consolidation, politics, and diversity that has informed the country’s responses in tackling insurgencies and internal uprisings. Indeed, often analysts of India’s experience with counterinsurgency gloss over the intricacies and actors that helped shape Indian policy, as well as the general principles that outline India’s response to rebellion. This is not to say that India will necessarily respond to every insurgency in the same way, but rather it is important to look at the overall security and political environment that the country faces.

The purpose of this section is twofold: provide an overview of the Republic of India, and an examination of the country’s approach to counterinsurgency. The first section will provide a brief overview of the history of India, with an emphasis on the consolidation of the state. Independence brought new troubles to the state, which also has led to some of the insurgencies that trouble the South Asian country. An overview of the national politics and demographics will also be illustrated. India is a diverse polity, a fact that is not usually appreciated by analysts of security studies. This section will then conclude with an examination of the wide variety of actors that participate in counterinsurgencies, as well as India’s thought on the matter. The individual case studies will delve into the specific details relevant for each insurgency.

History of India
In understanding the politics of India and the reasons why insurgencies have broken out throughout the country, it is necessary to look at the early decades of post-independence India. The lead up and aftermath of partition continues to haunt the country today. While many Western countries have already undergone this complicated process, the relatively young independent India is still continuing the process of state formation.

The country that is today the Republic of India was a former British colony. The colony was so vital to the British that the territory was referred to as the “Jewel in the Crown” of the British Empire. For the duration of British subjugation in the subcontinent, British India would become a vital gear in the pursuit for imperialist objectives.

While it is commonly assumed that colonialism was a negative experience for the Indian people, the extent of the damage done to the country has not been appreciated nor properly considered by Western analysts. Despite the various empires in India being in a process of decline at the time of the British (through the East India Company) obtaining governorship over India, the country was relatively prosperous. By the time the British left, the country was one of the poorest in the world. Much of its infrastructure and industries remained wrecked. Tensions among the various ethnic, religious, linguistic, and caste groups, while existent prior to the arrival of the British, were encouraged through a policy of divide and rule. The results, unsurprisingly, were horrendous.

One of the most famous outcomes of this divide and rule policy can be seen in the idea of the ‘two-nation theory’ and the partition in the Indian subcontinent. The theory stated that Hindus and Muslims were different peoples, so different that they could be seen as people of a different nation. As Hindus and Muslims were so inherently different, a harmonious coexistence would not be possible. Instead, it was necessary to separate the
two populations. The propagation of this theory eventually led to the creation of Pakistan to serve as a homeland for South Asia’s Muslim population.

The partition was a difficult and vicious birth for the two newly independent nations. The partition of British India remains one of the largest migrations of humans in history, with an estimated 14-15 million who moved to a new home, and a million who perished in the violence that followed. Of course, the partition era also saw the outbreak of the first Indo-Pakistani war over the state of Kashmir (the history of Kashmir will be discussed in further detail in the case study below).

This history is generally known to both South Asia specialists as well as non-specialists. However, the process of state-building in the lead up to independence, as well as post-independence is not as well understood outside of South Asia circles. Indeed, many of the issues and grievances that eventually morphed into insurgencies in India can be traced back to the state building process.

Although the British did rule over the subcontinent, there were 560 patches of territory in the subcontinent that formed semi-autonomous kingdoms. Some of these were as small as a couple of kilometers, to sizes of an entire state (e.g. the state of Jammu and Kashmir). While these kingdoms were still under British control and paid tribute to the imperialist power, they were not formally incorporated into the Indian government. In the lead up to independence, and in some cases, post-independence, many of these kingdoms needed to be incorporated into the new independent Indian or Pakistani state. This required negotiation, sometimes coercion. The majority of these kingdoms joined either India or Pakistan prior to independence without the use of military force; some territories required a different approach. While it was expected that Hindu majority and/or Muslim majority
territories would join India and Pakistan respectively, the expected allegiances of some kingdoms were murkier. What now are the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the South being once part of a kingdom ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad, a Hindu majority territory with a Muslim ruler. Upon the Nizam’s refusal to join the Indian Union, the newly independent state responded with military incorporation of the territory into the new country. Kashmir also faced a similar dilemma, with a Muslim majority population but a Hindu Maharaja.

Kashmir and the states in the Northeast remained particularly vulnerable due to their proximity with the neighboring nations. Not only did these neighboring nations sometimes support the various insurgencies in the country, but also served as safe havens for militant groups. Although this is most visible in the Kashmir insurgency, external powers have influenced India’s counterinsurgency campaigns.

Many of these formerly autonomous territories, especially in the Northeast, had become accustomed to the relative autonomy they had under British rule. Upon being annexed into the new Indian nation, the differing ethnic groups had their own concerns with the new arrangement. Some groups worried that they would not have sufficient space to manage their own affairs. This, coupled by allegations of interference by the central government in some of the other states and territories also helped empower some of the extremists that would lead the secessionist movements.⁴⁵ Concerns over issues such as these led to the outbreak of India’s first insurgency, in Nagaland in 1954, and others shortly afterward.

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⁴⁵ Punjab was an example of this, where the Congress party empowered extremists like Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in order to undermine support for the state’s primary party, Akali Dal. Bhindrwanwale would eventually rebel against the central government, and help launch the insurgency in Punjab for an independent Sikh state, Khalistan.
Lessons from History

What is important to note from this is that India’s state formation relied heavily on negotiation to acquire new territory. While a similar experience with the United States saw forceful military incorporation of much of its territory, the Indian government did not have the same luxury. As many Indian observers and policymakers emphasize, the country is still undergoing state-building. In some ways, a national identity that can incorporate the unique range of ethnicities, religions, and languages in the country is still being experimented with. Many of the insurgencies partially stem from the fact that the people did not feel like they had adequate space to embrace their identity. While many countries in Europe and the West have better-established states, India still works on consolidating control over its territory while showing respect to the various sub-nationalisms that exist within the Indian polity.

Demographics and Politics of India

It is again worth reiterating that India is an incredibly diverse country with a multitude of religious groups, ethnicities, languages, and social classes. Indeed, The Economist once remarked that “India is a continent masquerading as a country”. Languages from state to state vary greatly, with different tongues also belonging to disparate linguistic families. In addition to these linguistic distinctions, the country is


further divided into different ethnic groups, religious groups, caste divisions, and social classes. At times, this can be interpreted as outsiders ruling over the affairs of one specific ethnic group, leading to resentment and friction. The insurgencies themselves also represent this clash of different cleavages within their respective society. This short section will provide a brief overview of the demographics of the country and a cursory examination of the various divisions. Here, we will also take a quick inspection of the politics of the country, i.e. structure of government and the major political parties. A comprehensive overview of all the political parties or demographics of India is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it should be succinct enough to give the reader a clear conception of how the state is structured.

The country contains one of the most diverse populations that compromises nearly every major religion, a plethora of ethnicities, as well as a wide variety of subsects, castes, and spoken languages. Hindus account for nearly 80% of the total population, followed distantly by Muslims who account for 14.2% of the population, with Christianity and Sikhism each making up about two percent. While not a serious division by itself, this division is compounded by divisions in ethno-linguistic groups, and even castes. These add a lot of divisions to the already diverse nation, and also form social cleavages in the country’s politics. Within large sections of India, there also exist a large group of Adivasis, tribal groups within India. Officially designated by the Indian government, they make up 8.6% of the total population though they tend to be concentrated in in certain states. While the chapter on the Salwa Judum will cover the situation of the Adivasis in more detail, it is

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49 While caste has traditionally been thought of purely as a Hindu practice, the organization has spread to other religious groups.
worth briefly noting that their overall status in the country tends to be economically underdeveloped.

As of September 2016, there were seven recognized national parties in India. However, the primary national parties, and the ones that usually form the majority or plurality of any political alliance, are the Indian National Congress Party (shortened to INC or Congress) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People’s Party, BJP). The Congress party is one of the oldest parties in the polity, and it was also one of the primary parties that helped liberate the country from British rule. Headed by the Nehru-Gandhi family, it has traditionally been the hegemonic party in Indian politics. Most the country’s Prime Ministers have come from the INC, and prior to the rise of the BJP, few other parties had a realistic possibility of heading political coalitions and obtaining the Prime Minister positions. For much of the post-independence rule, the country was under de-facto one party rule.

The rise of the BJP in the last two decades has brought another major political party to the forefront of national politics. As of 2016, the party has obtained the coveted Prime Minister seat for the second time under former Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, and has obtained the first parliamentary majority in the Lok Sabha (House of the People, also the lower house of parliament) since the general elections in 1984. While the Congress party traditionally portrays itself as a secular party, the BJP distinguishes itself as the party of Hindu Nationalism, or Hindutva. While it is beyond the scope of the paper to go in depth

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51 To be classified as a national party by India’s Election Commission, it must win two percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha in the most recent General Election, be recognized as a state party in four different states, or have gained at least percent of the vote in four different states. Press Trust of India, “Trinamool Congress is ‘National Party’ in India,” The Economic Times, September 3, 2016, accessed February 7, 2017, http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/trinamool-congress-is-now-7th-national-party-in-india/articleshow/53982226.cms

52 While Mohandas Gandhi (also known as Mahatma Gandhi, Mahatma is a Sanskrit word meaning great soul) was a member of the INC, Gandhi here refers to the family name of Nehru’s daughter, Indira Gandhi.
on the beliefs and nuances of Hindutva, there are two major facets to note here. First is the belief that Hinduism forms the underlying culture of the subcontinent\(^3\); and secondly is the existence of a strong social base through Hindutva organizations, primarily the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS), or the National Volunteer Organization. While the existence of the BJP is relatively new in Indian history, the RSS has operated since the time of British India. While there are important state parties that are major participants in within the case studies examined in this paper, these will be covered in their respective chapters.

The constitution of India acts as the supreme law of the country, and declares India to be a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic.\(^4\) The constitution acts as supreme law of the land, and sets up a parliamentary form of government with the relations between the Centre and States being federal in nature. The country possesses a bicameral parliament with both a Prime Minister and a President. The representatives of the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha, are directly elected while the *Rajya Sabha*, or upper house of parliament, members are indirectly elected by the legislatures in the state governments. While the President is head of state, the Prime Minister is head of government and in charge of the executive branch. For the most part, the President serves a ceremonial position within the Indian government, and acts on the advice of the Prime Minister.

An important concept to understand is the imposition of President’s rule (or Governors Rule as it is called in Jammu and Kashmir)\(^5\). Under Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, the Central Government (specifically the President), can dismiss the state

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\(^3\) At times, this can lead to the view that non-Dharmic religions (e.g. Islam and Christianity) are ‘foreign’, and not true Indians.

\(^4\) The Constitution of India, Preamble.

\(^5\) Due to the political autonomy that the state has, Section 92 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir states that in the proclamation of emergency, the state will fall under government’s rule. If Governor’s rule cannot be removed within six months of implementation, then President’s rule under Article 356 of the Indian constitution would be imposed. Venkat Ananth, “How President’s Rule in India Has Been Imposed Over the Years,” *Live Mint*, January 27, 2016, accessed February 10, 2017, [http://www.livemint.com/Politics/SJ3mET7ZH11cJKNodKcM80V/How-Presidents-Rule-in-India-has-been-imposed-over-the-year.html](http://www.livemint.com/Politics/SJ3mET7ZH11cJKNodKcM80V/How-Presidents-Rule-in-India-has-been-imposed-over-the-year.html).
government if it is deemed that the state can no longer carry out its constitutional duties. While this paper will examine times when President’s (or Governor’s) rule is imposed due to a breakdown in law in order, it is often declared when a state government is unable to put together a parliamentary majority. When this happens, the governor, normally a figure that serves as a symbolic head of state (while real power rests with the Chief Ministers), will then govern the state as the President’s representative.

Perhaps most important for this study, is the fact that the structure of the Indian state is federal in nature. The state governments hold a great amount of power in dealing with the central government, and it is usually the state governments that are responsible for fighting insurgencies within their respective territories. However, state governments can be hostages to the affairs of the central government and vice versa. In the past, the party ruling over the central government has tried to empower its own allies in the state in order to undermine their rivals. This has, at times, backfired, with the empowerment of extremists who then rebel. Other times, it is the state government which will undertake actions to keep itself in power, even if that hurts the counterinsurgency efforts or goes against the advice of the central government. Regardless, it is important to understand the competitive nature of center-state relations.

**Security Forces**

India has a wide array of security forces that are used to fight counterinsurgencies. Broadly speaking, we can classify the forces into those that are used by the central

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56 Ibid
government, and those used by the state. Within the central government, the security forces are usually under the control of either the Ministry of Defense, or the Ministry of Home Affairs. Unless the state is under president’s or governor’s rule, the central forces are provided to the state government to assist in COIN operations. A brief overview of the various central security forces and the state police is provided below.

The Indian army serves as the land component of the Indian military. Indian army doctrine defines its primary role as preserving Indian national interest and territory through deterrence or waging war against external threats. Although it uses different wording, this is similar to the mission espoused by other armies around the world. The secondary purpose of the Indian army is defined as “Assist government agencies to cope with ‘proxy war’ and other internal threats and provide aid to civil authority when requisitioned for the purpose”.

However, the Indian army was meant for fighting conventional wars against other militaries. As a result, it tends to have a conventional bias in the way it approaches insurgency. Yet despite these criticisms, the Indian army and the Rashtriya Rifles are probably the country’s most capable counterinsurgency forces.

The Rashtriya Rifles (translated from Hindi as National Rifles) are a specialized section of the Indian military that serve as specialized units meant for the fighting of insurgencies. They were first introduced in the state of Jammu and Kashmir during the mid-1990s in an attempt to exfiltrate the Indian army from counterinsurgency operations. The Rashtriya Rifles were initially raised as a counterinsurgency force for the insurgency

57 Indian Army, Indian Army Doctrine Part 1, (Shimla: Headquarters Army Training Command, 2004), 9.
58 Rajagopalan, Fighting like a Guerilla, 134-168.
in Punjab, though they were deployed as the insurgency was in decline. Instead, the force was raised in Kashmir, which had erupted as the Punjab insurgency was concluding.\textsuperscript{59} While the results of this are mixed, it is important to note that they serve as an innovation in counterinsurgency for the Indian state.

The Indian Army and Rashtriya Rifles are the actual military forces that serve in India’s counterinsurgency campaigns. The rest of the security forces detailed below do not answer to the country’s Ministry of Defence (MOD). Rather, they are under the control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Unlike the previous two forces which require a special law in order to engage in counterinsurgency operations (discussed below), these formations essentially are various forms of police and law enforcement. The duties of these bodies include a wide variety of tasks, from simple law and order issues like directing traffic and giving out tickets to heavily militarized groups that serve as important counterinsurgency forces.

It should be noted that the armed forces discussed above have almost entirely only fought against insurgents in border and periphery states. Despite the relatively wide spread of left wing extremism (LWE, also known as the Naxalite insurgency), the army has not been deployed. Part of this is the reluctance of the Indian military to engage in yet another counterinsurgency battle. There is also an understanding that insurgencies in the border states and periphery can be influenced by a presence of a neighboring country. While some of India’s neighbors, most infamously Pakistan, have been known to provide important state support to the militant factions, others are unable to effectively govern their borders and territories. In either case, there is some expectation that the border needs to be

\textsuperscript{59} Interview with Ata Hasnain.
controlled, and foreign elements are being confronted. This would necessitate the involvement of the armed forces. The army has been reluctant to enter the center/heartland insurgencies, where there is no easy access to international borders and less evidence of interference.

The next important category of forces is represented by the different branches of India’s police system. While it will not be possible, or helpful, to provide an overview of all of India’s central armed police forces (CAPF), the focus shall be on the forces that play an important counterinsurgency role in the country in general, or specifically in the case studies examined below.

Assam Rifles remains one of India’s oldest, and primary, counterinsurgency forces. It has been described as a quasi-military force, under the control of the Home Ministry, but uses military officers to command the force. The Indian Army also occupies other important roles within the Assam Rifles that allows the force to set itself apart from other CAPF organizations. The force has its origins in British India, where it was raised in 1835. It gained its official name, the Assam Rifles, in 1917. While it is under the Home Ministry, the organization has played an important military role in India’s wars with Pakistan and China, while also being viewed as one of the main security forces for the country’s Northeast. As the name would suggest, the Assam Rifles are headquartered and

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60 A full list of the different forces that make up CAPF is listed here: Government of India, “Central Armed Police Forces,” Ministry of Home Affairs, May 13, 2014, accessed March 12, 2017, http://mha.nic.in/armedforces. Prior to March 2011, the media would describe some, or all of the forces compromising CAPF, with a wide assortment of designations such as paramilitary forces, armed police, etc. Due to some of the confusion, and negative associations with some of these terms, the Home Ministry issued the new terminology as CAPF. “Adoption of New Nomenclature of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)” Ministry of Home Affairs, March 18, 2011, accessed March 12, 2017. http://www.mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/OM2-020513.pdf
61 Because of the unique organizational structure of the Assam Rifles, they are still referred to as paramilitary organizations in government publications and websites such as the annual home ministry report and the official website for the Assam rifles.
62 Interview with Ata Hasnain
primarily focused in the Northeast. The organization also plays a significant role in guarding the country’s border with Myanmar.\textsuperscript{64} However, it has temporarily deployed to other theaters of conflict where the state has engaged in counterinsurgency campaigns, including in Sri Lanka and the Kashmir valley.\textsuperscript{65} As of the latest Home Ministry report (2015-2016), the force currently has a strength of 66,411 personnel in 46 battalions.\textsuperscript{66}

Central Reserve Police Forces, usually abbreviated as the CRPF, makes up the largest segment of CAPF with an estimated 235 battalions and over 300,000 personal.\textsuperscript{67} While being the largest CAPF, it also does the widest array of responsibilities for any of the police forces. Along with counter-insurgency fighting,\textsuperscript{68} the CRPF is also tasked with serving as crowd control, a riot control force, coordinating security for large scale events like elections, protecting VIPs, as well as rescue and relief operations. This has led to the force being involved in every counterinsurgency campaign in the country. Overall, it is best to say that its success at fighting insurgencies has been mixed.

The CRPF also has two specialized forces within it: The Rapid Action Force (RAF) and the Commando Battalions for Resolute Action (CoBRA). The former is primarily called in to deal with restoring law and order in situations such as communal riots, while the latter were specifically raised to deal with extremists.\textsuperscript{69} Created in 2008, CoBRA is specifically trained in dealing with jungle warfare and have primarily been deployed to

\textsuperscript{66} Government of India, \textit{Annual Report}, 167.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, 172-173.
\textsuperscript{69} Government of India, \textit{Annual Report}, 174.
fight in Naxalite affected areas. Since their inception, a total of 10 battalions have been raised.

Border Security Forces (BSF) are a paramilitary force that, like the CRPF, is one of the primary Central Armed Police Forces for India. Unsurprisingly, the primary focus of the force is to guard the country’s borders. Due to the hostile neighborhood that India operates in, the BSF frequently sees action in wars and border skirmishes with other countries. Importantly though, while the force is responsible for protecting India’s international borders, this does not extend to disputed borders such as the Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan in Kashmir, and the Line of Actual Control (LOAC) between India and China (also in Kashmir). While their duties of protecting the borders would normally serve an important role in preventing infiltration and escape by militant organizations, the BSF can also be seen as one of the first responders in many of India’s COIN campaigns. As shall be seen in the Kashmir case study, the BSF was the first armed force that responded to the ruptures that led to the insurgency.

While CAPF are involved in fighting more of India’s insurgencies than even the Indian army, there remain many issues with the operations of the forces. As defeating insurgencies remains the responsibility of the state, it is the state governments that requests the deployment of CAPF forces and decides what they are used for. As a result, the support and goals that are given to the various CAPF forces can vary from theater to theater.

Intelligence Bureau (IB) remains India’s premier intelligence agency primarily focusing on domestic intelligence collection. The organization also has its origins in pre-

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71 Ibid
independence India where, among other duties, IB kept track of India’s growing freedom struggle. Post-independence, the institution plays a vital role in directing state level intelligence bureaus, as well as the country’s state police. Yet, many controversies exist with the IB. Since it remains the tool of the ruling leader, with little to no parliamentary oversight, the bureau has often worked to the political wills of the party in power.

The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is India’s external intelligence agency, playing a similar role to the United States’ CIA and the United Kingdom’s MI6. As is expected, the agency plays a relatively smaller role in India’s COIN operations than its domestic focused counterpart (IB). Yet due to the nature of some of India’s insurgencies, especially in the border states, the various militant groups can find external support and safe havens, necessitating the use of RAW as an important COIN player. Unlike IB or the above organizations that fall under the purview of a central agency, RAW reports directly to the Prime Minister.

While the above military and police forces belong under the ministries and control of the central/national government, the state police forces are, as the name would suggest, under the control of specific state governments. Under the Constitution of India, law and order are the responsibilities of states rather than the central government. The role of the central government is to assist the state governments in maintaining law and order and modernizing the police forces. Thus, the state police are often the first line of defense in counterinsurgencies, as well as carrying out the other duties necessary for maintaining law

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and order. At certain points, the state police serve as the primary counterinsurgent actor in the state, with support from military or CAPF units. The state governments can take the initiative and raise special police forces. These could range from counterinsurgent forces such as the Greyhounds in the state of Andhra Pradesh to the counterterrorism-focused Force One for the Mumbai metropolitan police.

**Important Laws and Ordinances**

The Armed Forces Special Powers Act, hereafter referred to as AFSPA, remains one of the central laws regulating the use of military forces for operations on Indian soil. Nearly every single insurgency that the Indian state has faced, save the Naxalites and the intervention in Sri Lanka, has seen the implementation of AFSPA. Even the Punjab insurgency which was primarily fought by the state’s police forces required the implementation of this act. Without the act, the Indian military (more specifically the army) cannot engage in counterinsurgency operations. As of this writing, the law is in effect in Kashmir, as well as most of the states in the Northeast.

When AFSPA is enacted, it essentially means that the government has declared the state, or parts of the state, to be ‘disturbed’. This is usually done in a state where all or parts of the government is unable to function or extend its authority. The primary purpose of this act is to help stabilize insurgency-hit zones. In some states, the Indian Army has used AFSPA to extend its stay; in certain cases, for several decades.

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75 For example, this was the case for the insurgency in Punjab. Certain points/operations of the counterinsurgency were carried out by central government forces. However, the latter years were primarily led by the state police, with the military and CAPF serving as supporting role.

The act remains controversial. While proponents have argued that AFSPA is necessary and suffers from a perception problem, critics have called for complete or partial repeal or at minimum reform of the law. There are also those who argue that while the act is necessary, it is time to start withdrawing the act gradually from some theaters of conflict. While it is beyond the scope of this section to get into the details of the debate, it is worth briefly examining the arguments made by both sides.

Proponents of the act argue that AFSPA is an operational necessity. Since the Indian military is meant for conventional warfare against rival countries, it is necessary to provide guidance and oversight to the soldiers on the ground. It allows the soldier to carry on his operations (e.g. entering a house to search for militants) which they would normally not be allowed to do. For the military, it provides legal protection as well as the necessary powers to act against insurgents. Proponents also point out that the law is a special provision enacted by parliament when the law and order situation deteriorates and the police are unable to take control. The very nature of the situation requires the use of this act to bring back control. In response to criticism that the act violates aspects of the Indian constitution (discussed below), pro-AFSPA figures have said that it does not greatly differ from other laws already in force in India.

74 Chadha, AFSPA: The Debate.
Critics of the law paint a much gloomier picture of what AFSPA entails. They argue that the act provides blanket protection, practical legal immunity, to Indian soldiers from a wide variety of human rights abuses. The act, they argue, promotes human rights abuses by Indian security forces and practically gives a blank check to personnel to do so. This argument is regularly cited by human rights organizations and other critics as well. Although it is theoretically possible for soldiers who conduct wrongs to be prosecuted, these are rare occurrences. Rather than allowing the military to gain control of the situation, the use of this act exacerbates this.

Indian Counterinsurgency

The Indian state has been fighting insurgencies nearly since the country first gained its independence in 1947. The first encounter with insurgency faced by the Indian army was against the Naga rebellion in 1956. Since then, the state has fought against a wide variety of insurgencies in the Northeast, a Communist inspired insurgency in parts of North and Central India, ethno-religious uprisings in Punjab and Kashmir, as well as an overseas deployment in Sri Lanka against Tamil rebels. Perhaps no other state and military has seen such sustained counterinsurgency experience with an impressive record of not losing any of these campaigns, save the excursion into Sri Lanka between 1987-1990.

Yet this should not overstate India’s success with counterinsurgencies. While it is true that India has not lost a counterinsurgency campaign, it also has a low win rate. Save for a few exceptions, India has been unable to terminate most its rebellions. At times, it has

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been able to use its various instruments of power to take insurgent groups out of the picture, but this did not lead to the cessation of rebellion. This is also seen in Kashmir and the Assam. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) served as the vanguard of the insurgency in the former. Despite eventually being forced to drop out as a violent organization, its position was soon replaced by another organization. In Assam, the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), while still active, has by and large dropped out as the primary group responsible for violence in the state. Yet, its position has been replaced by another insurgent group fighting a new insurgency in the state. While it is true that India has not lost an insurgency, it is difficult to characterize this as winning.

In December 2006, the Indian army released its counterinsurgency doctrine, *Doctrine of Sub-Conventional Operations (DSCO).* The release of this doctrine was notable because it was released in the same month as the United States’ joint publication Army Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency.* From what most analysts could infer, the work and publication of these two doctrines happened independently from one another, with little to no shared input between the two countries. The DSCO, along with India’s Army Doctrine (IAD), both contain the thinking of the Indian army on the topic of counterinsurgency. Through both these doctrines, scholars and policymakers can get an understanding of the basis for India’s counterinsurgency strategy. Along with these governmental publications, several scholars

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83 As some authors would argue though, the Indian government lacks a comparable COIN doctrine o FM 3-24. The DSCO tends to be more rules and regulations, nor does the DSCO represent the views of the entire Indian government. The police, despite also being important COIN actors in India, lack a similar doctrine of their own. For a larger discussion of this, see Bibhu Prasad Routray, “India: Fleeting Attachment to Counterinsurgency Grand Strategy”, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2017), 59-60.

in recent years have published extensively on distinct aspects on Indian counterinsurgency.\textsuperscript{85}

The United States, since the end of its Civil War and Native American rebellions, has primarily fought counterinsurgency campaigns in a wide variety of overseas locations such as Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. In contrast, India has fought nearly all its counterinsurgency campaigns within its own borders. This has been an important influencing factor in how India fights its various insurgencies. As operations are conducted by the security forces within Indian territory, the country’s constitution reigns supreme. This is partially why the civilians must play the primary role (discussed further below). In some ways, this does provide clear guidance for the various security forces regarding rules and laws in engagements.

However, this also brings about the dilemma of conducting violence against a country’s own citizens. In a diverse country like India with its numerous languages and cultures, some states might feel like an entirely different country to the soldiers and paramilitaries that are operating. This unfortunately sets the stages for tensions at the idea that ‘outsiders’ to the society are controlling the lives of the local citizens, and human rights violations can undermine the legitimacy of the Indian nation. Laws like AFSPA can contribute to these tensions.

If there is one collective agreement on counterinsurgency strategy, it is that the onus of ending the insurgency is not on the military or security forces. Rather, the responsibility for ending the conflict rests with the civilian government.\textsuperscript{86} Instead, the primary duty of


\textsuperscript{86} Personal Interview with Retired Brig. Narender Kumar.
the security forces should be to create space for the civilian authorities to implement their agenda, and force the insurgent groups to the table. Indeed, the language of the military’s role in counterinsurgency is defined as ‘conflict management rather than conflict resolution’.  

However, the fact that the counterinsurgency campaigns are happening within a democratic system can make the short-term incentives for resolving the conflict costly for politicians. At times, this might mean that chief ministers or other important political figures are unwilling to empower and back the officials coordinating the COIN strategy in fear of angering key elements of his or her constituents, or even that they might face interference from opposition parties and the central government. Even strategy and tactics can change with the formation of new governments at the state or central level.

Similar to other counterinsurgency strategies and doctrines reproduced throughout the world, the Indian military also emphasizes the importance of “Winning Hearts and Minds” (WHAM). In this, they argue that there are two distinct facets that the COIN forces must engage in, active civic action and passive civic action. The latter consists of instructions for soldiers to show respect to the civilians and local customs while the former encourages military leaders to engage in activities to help the local communities. This can be providing medical assistance, building and administrating new schools, construction of infrastructure, etc. During the Kashmir insurgency, the military engaged in Operation

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88 Indian Army, *Doctrine on Sub-Conventional Operations*, 44-47.
Sadbhavana (Goodwill),\textsuperscript{89} which saw the army engage in multiple projects aimed at winning the support of the local population.

Another interesting aspect that has also informed India’s counterinsurgency approach is its openness to negotiations. Of course, the country insists that all insurgencies take place within the confines set out in the Indian constitution, meaning that goals of secessionism and overthrowing the government will not be fulfilled. While this is unacceptable by some insurgent organizations, this has helped India reduce the violence in some of these rebellions, and moderate some of the aims and goals of insurgent organizations.

Of course, India has the power advantage in these counterinsurgency campaigns. Indeed, the country can afford to fight until the local populations and insurgents are fatigued. Analysts more critical of the Indian approach to counterinsurgency have argued that rather than being a COIN strategy focus on WHAM and minimum force, the Indian government instead implements a de-facto attrition strategy that is further complemented by the fact that the country can afford to saturate any conflict areas with troops and police personnel.\textsuperscript{90} Already, the AFSPA has given considerable leeway to the armed forces in carrying out actions that are seen by many NGOs, international and domestic, as egregious violations of human rights.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{89} For an overview of this, see Arpita Anant, Counterinsurgency and “Op Sadbhavana” In Jammu and Kashmir, (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2011)


\textsuperscript{91} Just in Jammu and Kashmir, one journalist has said that four times more people have disappeared from government custody than the entire rule of Pinochet under Chile. Cathy Scott-Clark, “The Mass Graves of Kashmir,” The Guardian, July 9, 2012, accessed April 9, 2016, \url{https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jul/09/mass-graves-of-kashmir}
Despite the importance that non-state armed actors like militias can play in a counterinsurgency campaign, India’s COIN doctrine’s treatment of the topic is relatively light. Instead DSCO considers these proxies as force multipliers. In its discussion of the operational facets of sub-conventional operations, the doctrine recommends maintaining a ‘comprehensive surrender policy’\(^2\) as well as integrating human force multipliers such as village defence councils and surrendered terrorists in order to obtain military ascendancy in the conflict zone.\(^3\) Despite the brevity, as the case studies will show, the impact that these pro-government armed groups would have on the counterinsurgency campaigns were much more important than the DSCO would suggest.

\(^2\) Indian Army, *Doctrine on Sub-Conventional Operations*, 33.
\(^3\) Ibid, 35.
Chapter 4: The ‘Renegades’ of Kashmir: The Ikhwan Era

The early 1990s were a difficult period in India’s history. The country experienced its worst economic disaster, an insurgency in the state of Punjab, and the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as a result of India’s Sri Lankan misadventure just to name a few. The country’s woes were further compounded with the outbreak of instability in India’s state of Jammu and Kashmir. The difficult combination of the state’s complex relationship with the central government, Pakistani sponsorship, and initial missteps in the implementation of the country’s counterinsurgency response helped fuel the uprising. Due to the geopolitical competition over the territory between India and Pakistan, the conflict has been studied extensively by South Asia observers and counter-insurgent practitioners alike. Since the insurgency erupted in 1988, between 44,000-70,000 people have lost their lives.\(^{94}\)

Yet an underreported phenomenon (at least in many Western accounts of the insurgency) is the organization informally known as the Ikhwan. The Ikhwan was a pro-government militia that served as a powerful tool against the various insurgent organizations operating in Kashmir. While military officials and analysts view the group as the bane of insurgency, some Kashmiris view the militia as unfavorable (to put it kindly). Indeed, Basharat Peer, journalist and screenwriter of the critically acclaimed Hindi film, *Haider*, portrayed the Ikhwan as brutal renegades who terrorized the local people. When Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar made the controversial comments (discussed above in

the introduction), the response from the Kashmiri government and public opinion was hostile to the possibility that the Ikwhan, or a similar style militia, should be reintroduced into the Kashmir conflict.

Clearly, the legacy of the Ikhwan continues to resonate even today. Yet among most discussions of the Kashmir insurgency, the Ikhwan is barely mentioned. But among Kashmiri interpretations and indeed some of the former security personnel, the Ikhwan played a critical role in the insurgency. With the stirrings of a new insurgency as of this writing, it is unlikely that the debate about utilizing an-Ikhwan style militia will go away anytime soon.

This section will focus on the Ikhwan militia during its years of operations in the Kashmir insurgency. First, a history of the conflict will be given. Not only will this section give a brief look at some of the actions undertaken by the relevant parties, but also illustrate some of the driving forces behind the insurgency as well as how the counterinsurgency was fought. From there, a profile of the major organizations that fought against the Indian state as well as the Ikhwan militia will be discussed. Then against the evidence gathered, I will compare the experience of the Ikhwan militia to that of my theory, before concluding the Kashmir case study.

An important note to keep in mind is that the insurgency in Kashmir also differs from the other insurgencies examined in this report. This is primarily due to the actions of an outside actor: Pakistan. While the insurgency in the Northeast or in the heartland of India might have had some outside influence from the neighboring states, their interactions pale in comparison to that of the Kashmir conflict. Indeed, Pakistan became an important supporter of the insurgency, one that cannot be overlooked. Despite this, the insurgency
should not be read as being a Pakistani plot or an outside conspiracy. While it is undeniable that Pakistan did play a key role in supporting the insurgency, the insurgency was primarily a result of the failure of local politics in the state.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has become crucial to the identity of both India and Pakistan. For Pakistan, Kashmir was a Muslim-majority state that should have acceded to the Islamic Republic. In order for Pakistan to try and justify its existence, it needed to prove itself as the home for South Asia’s Muslims. With the existence of a major Muslim majority territory still under ‘Hindu’ rule, Pakistan has seemingly created a narrative where the struggle for Kashmir was a justification for the relevance of Pakistan’s raison d’etre. Yet, the existence of a Muslim population roughly equivalent to that of Pakistan, and the secession of the country’s Eastern wing (Bangladesh) gives rise to fundamental questions of the relevance of Pakistan’s identity as the South Asian Muslims homeland, even if all of Kashmir was obtained. India, under the largely secular Congress Party, viewed Kashmir as essential to the country’s identity of a secular republic. In a largely Hindu country, the existence of a Muslim majority state is important to illustrate the secular makeup of the nation. Especially in light of the two-nation theory, the existence of a Muslim-majority in India is proof that the theory was flawed. Even if one was to take the Hindutva-inspired Bharatiya Janata Party’s less secular outlook for India, Kashmir still plays a prominent role in the narrative. For the BJP, Kashmir was the homeland for an important Hindu population (the Kashmiri Pandits) as well as being the historical territory for many important Hindu kingdoms. This and the presence of major Hindu temples and shrines also add to the symbolism of the state for the Hindutva narratives. But it is also a temptation (one that is shared by the Congress party also) to prevent the continuing legacy of partition. While
Hindutva thought at its most extreme advocates absorbs (or rather, re-absorbing) other South Asian countries to form *Akhand Bharat* (Undivided India), a more moderate version also refuses to cede any more territory after the humiliation and destruction brought through partition. For this very reason, the secession of Kashmir must be resisted.

**Geography and Demographics of the State**

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is the country’s northernmost territory, sharing a rather long border with Pakistan as well as China. The state is composed of three different regions, Jammu, Kashmir/the Kashmir Valley, and Ladakh. The latter is a Buddhist majority region that maintains a culture similar to that found in Tibet. Jammu and Kashmir compromise the largest segments, population-wise, of the state, with the Kashmiri Valley containing most of the population. Jammu contains a Hindu majority, while the Valley is Muslim majority. The state is the only Muslim majority state in the whole country. The summer capital of the state is in Kashmir, with the winter capital of Jammu being in the region of Jammu.\(^{95}\) Compared to the other case studies examined in this paper, the geography of Kashmir is rugged and mountainous. In some areas, this does lead to some difficulty with a few villages being isolated from major population centers.

In 1991, the population of the state was estimated to be around 7,837,000 people.\(^{96}\) Due to the danger posed by the insurgency, a proper census was beyond reach. However, using the numbers between the 1981 and 2001, we can estimate that state’s Muslim

\(^{95}\) This practice dates to pre-independence days where the capital would shift with the different seasons.

population was between 64.19-66.97% percent of the overall population, with Hindus coming in at a distant second at 32.24-29.62%.\(^97\) Sikhs and Buddhists by and large make up the remainder of the population. The Kashmir Valley is where the majority of the population, and the duration of the insurgency, was based. The population of Kashmiri Hindus in the Valley (usually referred to as Kashmiri Pandits) was estimated to be around 5 percent of the Valley population.\(^98\) After the ethnic cleansing of the Kashmiri Pandits (discussed below), there was an estimated population of only 2,764 Pandits left in the Valley by 2016.\(^99\) While the clear majority of Muslims in Kashmir are Sunni, there exists a small population of Shia, which currently tend to be against the independence movement.\(^100\)

The primary ethnic group of Kashmir are the ethnic Kashmiris, who also make up the majority of the population, and are majority Muslim. The Dogras, who are mainly Hindu, tend to live in Jammu. There are also the Gujjars, Ladakh Tibetans (who are primarily Buddhist but also contain a small Muslim population), and Hindko (also Muslim majority), just to name a few groups.\(^101\) It is worth noting that by and large, the desire for a separate state was most strongly associated with the Kashmiri Muslim population. For this section, the blanket term Kashmiri Muslim is applied to the residents of the Valley who are primarily Kashmiri Sunni Muslims.

The state also contains several prominent political organizations and parties that affect the region’s politics today. The National Conference and the Muslim United Front both play a vital role leading up to the insurgency described in the history below. What is important to note here is that many of the candidates worked for or ran under the MUF banner did join the insurgency in the aftermath of the rigged 1987 elections. It is worth briefly discussing the Plebiscite Front, People’s Democratic Party (PDP), and All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC, or Hurriyet).

The Plebiscite Front has a relatively brief history. It was formed under the auspices of Sheikh Abdullah, he himself never formally joined the party. Instead, the task of managing and founding the party went to his lieutenant, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg. The primary purpose of the party was to put pressure on the Indian government to carry out the promised plebiscite. However, following the Indira-Sheikh accord in 1974, the party eventually merged with the National Conference.

The PDP was not formed until 1999, though it did end up winning the Kashmiri elections twice, with its founder Mufti Mohammad Sayeed serving as Chief Minister twice, from 2002-2005, and 2015 until his death in 2016. The party is now led by his daughter, Mehbooba Mufti. According to Sumantra Bose, the party took a more moderate standing, putting its political positions in the middle of the Hurriyet and the National Conference. In a sense, the party was trying to find a political solution that can accommodate all sections of Kashmiri society, and bring about peace between India and Pakistan.102

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The All Parties Hurriyet Conference is an alliance of political, social, and religious organizations that serves as the representation of the pro-independence or pro-Pakistan elements in the valley. These include groups like the Islamist Jamaat Islami, the former elements of JKLF, and others. It was formed in 1993 as the JKLF faced near extinction due to insurgent infighting, loss of Pakistani support, and improved Indian counterinsurgency efforts. The APHC was an attempt for the surviving members of the JKLF to project influence and negotiate with the Indian government.  

History

To understand the outbreak of the rebellion and insurgency in 1987-1988, it is necessary to look at the bargain the territory made with the Indian state. Kashmir was among the 560 territories that had some form of autonomy under British rule. As Pakistan and India approached independence and lobbied for the princely states to accede, the rulers of Kashmir attempted to keep their independence and not join with either country. While the princely state was Muslim-majority, the ruler was a Hindu Maharaja from the Dogra dynasty: Maharaja Hari Singh. The Maharaja did not desire to accede either to India or Pakistan, despite pressure from both to do so.

During this period, there were major agitations in the state against Dogra rule. Many of these were led by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and his National Conference.


104 The Dogras are an ethno-linguistic group in India that primarily reside in Jammu and Kashmir, as well as some of the bordering states nearby. The Dogra Dynasty refers to a specific group of Dogras, namely the Dogra Rajputs, which ruled the state prior to independence.
organization. They had protested and agitated against Hari Singh to create an independent, and democratic Kashmir. At the time, Sheikh Abdullah had maintained close ties with INC leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru (himself a Kashmiri Pandit), making the Maharaja even more suspicious of him. These agitations were repressed by the Dogra ruler, who was becoming more and more unpopular as time continued. Two events in particular were particularly indicative of this: the 1947 Poonch Rebellion and the Jammu massacres. Both events represented the harshness of Maharaja Hari Singh’s rule, and his willingness to use communal violence to keep himself in power.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah and representatives from his Muslim League lobbied the Maharaja to join the new country of Pakistan. When outreach failed to modify the Maharaja’s decision, the Pakistani state decided to take advantage of the princely state’s Muslim population’s resentment towards their treatment by the Dogra rulers. While supporting this agitation, Pakistan organized Pashtun tribal lashkars (militia) to start their own brutal large-scale invasion of the territory. The repression towards the local Kashmiris by the Maharaja also proved detrimental to the stability of his rule.

As the situation worsened and it seemed that Pakistan would conquer the whole territory the Maharaja appealed to the Indian government for aid. The Indian government promised to assist the ruler, but only if he joined Kashmir with India. Desperate for assistance, the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession on October 27, 1947, officially making the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir part of India. With this, India

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105 During this period, Sheikh Abdullah was probably the most popular leader in Kashmir, especially for the Kashmiri Muslims. Indeed, he was referred to as the Sher-i-Kashmir, or the Lion of Kashmir.

airlifted troops and supplies into Srinagar, and the first war between India and Pakistan began.

After a year and a half, both countries agreed to a ceasefire that was solidified with the adoption of a UN resolution on this. UNSC Resolution 47\(^{107}\) created a special UN commission on India and Pakistan and laid out three specific steps for each party to take:

1. Pakistan shall withdraw all troops and lashkars from the territory as verified by a UN commission.
2. India shall withdraw except for a minimal force needed to maintain law and order.
3. Then, India shall hold a plebiscite on the question of whether the territory shall accede to either India or Pakistan.\(^{108}\)

At the end of the war and the passage of the UN resolution, India was left in control of roughly two-thirds of the original territory, consisting of the Kashmir Valley, Jammu, and Ladakh; and Pakistan with control of the territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.\(^{109}\) Although some minor changes along the de-facto border between India and Pakistan (known as the Line of Control, LOC) have occurred between the various wars, by and large, the situation remains unchanged.

Unsurprisingly, both South Asian countries have often grappled with this issue in both bilateral and international forums. Pakistan has often pointed out India’s various human rights abuses in its counterinsurgency response, and the lack of any plebiscite; India has responded with counteraccusations. India, with some justification, can argue that


\(^{108}\) Following the adoption of the resolution, India was rhetorically in favor of holding a Plebiscite, which Pakistan opposed. Nowadays, the Pakistani narrative tends to focus on India’s unwillingness to hold a Plebiscite.

\(^{109}\) China also controls a small part of the territory, consisting Aksai Chin and Trans-Karakoram Tract, part of which was ceded by Pakistan in 1963.
Pakistan has yet to withdraw from the territories and has instead worked to instigate the insurgency.

Before moving onto the history of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and its relationship with the Indian government, there are two notable incidents between India and Pakistan that should also be briefly discussed. The first is the 1965 war between the two South Asian neighbors. In the leadup to the war, the Pakistani government believed that it would be able to wrest Jammu and Kashmir from Indian control. At the time, the Pakistani government believed that there was sufficient public discontent with the Indian government to cause a popular uprising.

To this end, Pakistan initiated *Operation Gibraltar*, where it had its troops covertly infiltrate into Indian held Kashmir. The plan was that these troops would engage in acts of sabotage, as well as incite the local population to rebel. The operation was a colossal failure. Not only did they fail to incite an uprising, the Indians responded with an attack on Pakistan, officially leading to the 1965 war. The war ended after a UN mandated ceasefire, with a peace agreement known as the Tashkent Declaration declaring that both sides would return to their pre-war positions. What is important to note is that while Pakistan has tried to inspire mass revolt in Kashmir in the hopes of acquiring the territory, this strategy failed.

The 1971 War did not start over Kashmir. Instead, it started off as a civil war that was fought between West Pakistan and East Pakistan. East Pakistan formed the majority

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110 Estimated to be between 7,000 to 20,000 Pakistani troops.
of the population of the country and its Awami League won the democratic elections, but West Pakistan refused to give the party power. This was in addition to widespread grievances and discrimination that was felt by the majority Bangla population in the territory. As the situation in East Pakistan worsened, West Pakistan began a brutal crackdown known as *Operation Searchlight*. Estimates put the number of people killed in Pakistani operations between 300,000 to 3 million civilians.\textsuperscript{113}

These military operations led to a large-scale refugee exodus to India’s northeastern region. The refugees came in the millions, quickly proving to be a drain on Indian resources there. Sensing an opportunity and wanting to get the refugees out, the Indian government started to train the Bangla resistance, the *Mukti Bahini* (Bengali for Freedom Fighters or Liberation Forces), in the hopes that the Pakistani government would end the war with a negotiated settlement and retake the refugees. When the likelihood of this became dim, India saw an opportunity to intervene and weaken its arch-rival. India entered the war after Pakistan engaged in some preemptive aerial strikes on December 3, 1971. Within 13 days the war ended, with a decisive Pakistan loss. Pakistan lost half of its territory and population (which became the country of Bangladesh), had 90,000 of its troops held as prisoners of war by India, and even the political ideology of Pakistan\textsuperscript{114} suffered a major loss from this secession.


\textsuperscript{114} The Two Nation Theory led to the creation of Pakistan, and the bloody partition of British India. The theory stated that Hindus and Muslims in India were two irreconcilable, separate people. However, the secession of Bangladesh broke the idea that simply having an Islamic identity was enough to keep the diverse country of Pakistan together. With the secession of Bangladesh, and a population of Muslims in India nearly as large as the population of Pakistan, the Two Nation Theory has lost legitimacy, something Pakistan is still struggling to deal with.
In 1972, India and Pakistan signed the Simla Agreement, which declared that India and Pakistan would resolve all issues bilaterally, and not involve any outside power. In essence, Pakistan signed away the possibility of bringing international intervention for the Kashmir crisis. Despite India having a much stronger bargaining position leading up to the agreement, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi did not use the agreement nor the war to force upon Pakistan an end to the Kashmir conflict. The humiliation felt by the Pakistani army led for the desire by many Pakistani officers to return the favor to India and “break the country”. The 1989 uprising in Kashmir provided an opportunity for them to do so. While the immediate catalyst for the 1989 uprising was a rigged election, it is necessary to understand the relationship between India and Kashmir since independence.

To obtain the support of the Kashmiri nationalists, led by Sheikh Abdullah, Nehru had promised Abdullah to hold a plebiscite to determine the future of the territory. Jammu and Kashmir was also given special autonomy status in the Indian union, codified in the country’s constitution under Article 370. Initially, India would only be responsible for foreign affairs, defense, and communication networks; allowing the state to have its own flag and constitution and making laws passed in the Indian parliament exempt unless the laws are ratified by the Jammu and Kashmir state legislature. Sheikh Abdullah was put in charge of the first post-accession government of Jammu and Kashmir, as the Prime Minister.

This honeymoon between the central government and Jammu and Kashmir was short-lived. Abdullah’s government would be dismissed and Abdullah himself arrested.

116 This is a unique provision that is not allowed for other Indian states.
several times, with the first dismissal and arrest on August 8, 1953. He was not released until 1964, though he would be shortly arrested again. While it is not necessary to undertake an in-depth history of Kashmir, it should be noted that India consistently interfered with Kashmiri politics, dismissing the various state governments, imposing governor’s rule, and banning political parties. Part of this would be used to strengthen the Congress party in the state at the expense of local political parties. This led to further anger and disillusionment among the Kashmiri people towards the Indian state. Indeed, Sheikh Abdullah would symbolically resign from his position as the premier Kashmiri nationalist with the signing of the 1975 Indira-Sheikh accord between Sheikh Abdullah’s party and then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. While the accord would allow for Sheikh Abdullah’s party to participate in politics again, it also watered down the autonomy provided to the territory by Article 370 and essentially held that they cannot be advocating for secession. With that, Sheikh Abdullah essentially ceded any claim for secession and independence for the state.

The death of Sheikh Abdullah in 1982 led to the National Conference passing on leadership of the party to his son, Farooq Abdullah. Farooq Abdullah was considered a less able administrator than his father, and earned a reputation for caring more about night clubs than governing. This also led to the perception of dynasty rule of what was the premier Kashmiri nationalist party. The party suffered a major defection led by Ghulam Mohammad Shah, who managed to form a coalition with the Congress party, ousting Abdullah as the Chief Minister. However, this would not last, leading to Farooq Abdullah’s

118 This is not to say that Sheikh Abdullah himself was a perfect ruler. Indeed, many of his actions can be interpreted as authoritarian in nature in his attempts to hold on to power.
return as CM in 1986 after he made amends with the Congress party and formed a coalition with them.

The immediate cause of the Kashmir insurgency began in 1987 with the state’s elections. A new party had arisen that threatened the hold of Congress and the National Conference on the state’s legislature. The Muslim United Front (MUF), which included members like Yusuf Shah and Yasin Malik (discussed further below), seemed to be making progress in obtaining the support of the Kashmiri population. Unlike the NC, Congress, or BJP, the party’s leaders had ostensibly tapped into the aspirations held by the people in the Kashmir Valley. As the date for elections approached, it seemed like a foregone conclusion that the MUF would sweep the legislative seats for the Kashmir Valley.

However, the NC with help from the central government blatantly rigged the elections in favor of Farooq Abdullah’s party. MUF members were arrested and were officially only given four seats in the 87-member legislative assembly. The blatant rigging and interference by the government in the election helped unleash widespread discontent throughout the valley. Seemingly, the political space to express the discontent of the Kashmiri Muslim population peacefully through the ballot box was denied to them. Riots and protests, and the use of excessive force and crackdowns led to a deterioration of the law and order situation in the state. Government buildings and minorities were targeted, and bureaucrats were too fearful to go to their jobs due to potential retaliation. Despite the efforts of the state government to combat it, their policies did little more than help fuel the
flames of resentment. By 1989, it became clear that the state was dealing with a mass revolt.\(^ {119} \) A *tehrik* (Urdu for movement) for *Azadi* (freedom) had begun.

During this time, hundreds, if not thousands of young Kashmiris went over the border to Pakistan to start training for ‘resistance against the Indian state’. The insurgency, led by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), began a campaign of targeted assassinations and attacks that helped disrupt government power in the Valley. The inability of the government to deal with the restlessness in the Valley became abundantly clear with the kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of then Home Minister (center) Mufti Mohammed Sayeed (himself too, a prominent Kashmiri politician), by the JKLF. Their demands for the release of five militants was refused by the Farooq Abdullah government, but accepted by the Central government. Rubaiya Sayeed was released shortly after the militants were released, but her safe return did little to impact the perception that the state was no longer in control.

It is worth noting that the lead up to the insurgency also saw the targeting of Kashmiri Hindus in the Valley (referred to as Kashmiri Pandits). The JKLF targeted prominent Kashmiri Pandits and began taking out ads in newspapers threatening the Pandits into leaving. Despite only representing five percent of the total population, Pandits accounted for nearly half of those killed by militants in the early years of rebellion. This, coupled along with the belief that the majority of population supported the militants,\(^ {120} \) led to a large-scale exodus of the Kashmiri Pandit population from the Valley into Jammu and

\(^ {119} \) One interviewee conveyed to me that the central government had believed that the situation had deteriorated so greatly, that government official believed that Kashmir would be lost within a matter of weeks or months. Interview with Ata Hasnain.

\(^ {120} \) Indeed, for many Pandits, this is what led to a large rift between the Pandits and the Kashmiri Muslims. In Rahul Pandita, *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, this remains a central theme of where they would see hundreds of thousands of their neighbors taking to the streets to yell anti-Pandit slogans, and many doing little to protect the Pandits or their homes.
other areas in India. Around 300,000 Pandits are believed to have fled the Valley on January 19, 1990, after reports of Mosques and protestors blaring out specific threats to the Sikhs and Hindus in the Valley to leave or die.\textsuperscript{121} Many of those who fled that day, still live in refugee camps in Jammu and elsewhere today.

It became clear at this point that the state government was incapable of governing the state. On January 19, 1990, the state government was dismissed and the state was put under Governor’s Rule, with Governor Jagmohan Malhotra now leading the state. September of the same year would also see the imposition of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) for Kashmir,\textsuperscript{122} leading to the introduction of army troops in counterinsurgency operations. Three years after the rigged legislative assembly elections, and a year after the insurgents had come out of the underground, the Indian counterinsurgency response began.

\textit{Lessons from History}

Kashmir became a part of the Indian union through a unique set of circumstances that helped lead up to outbreak of rebellion in the late 1980s. This also led to a flashpoint for confrontation between India and its neighbor, Pakistan. The competition over Kashmir will result in Pakistan playing an integral role in supporting and sustaining the insurgency against Indian control. While many international observers tend to focus on the bilateral aspect of the conflict, it is important to recognize that Pakistan by itself was unable to spark

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the insurgency. At the end, it was domestic conditions and the deterioration of the relationship between the Kashmiris with the Indian state that led to the eruption of violence in 1989.\textsuperscript{123}

Although it was difficult to highlight properly in the historical section, there also was some inequality between Muslims and Hindus (Pandits) in the Valley. Pandits, unfairly or not, became associated with the Indian state. Due to the Pandits comparative higher level of income and education than the general Muslim population in the Valley, Pandits were more likely to hold government jobs. Some have argued that Pandits received favorable treatment from the government in receiving jobs due to the general mistrust towards the Muslim population. This was coupled with the rise of Hindu Nationalism at the Central government. This dynamic, along with the increased identification with a general Muslim identity in the Valley, helped feed the anxiety felt by the majority Muslim community in the Valley.

\textbf{Major Insurgent Organizations}

According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, there have been at least 35 distinct groups that have operated in the state during the course of the insurgency.\textsuperscript{124} Others cite higher numbers, saying that as many as 150 insurgent organizations had fought within

\textsuperscript{123} For a sophisticated social science explanation for why the insurgency broke out in 1989 and not earlier, see Sumit Ganguly, \textit{The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace}, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Sumit Ganguly, “Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency: Political Mobilization and Institutional Decay,” \textit{International Security}, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Fall 1996), 76-107. His argument revolves around the increased political mobilization in the state, as well as the decay of Kashmiri institutions that developed since independence, and converged in 1989.


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Kashmir. It is beyond the scope of the paper, and unnecessary, to profile each of these tanzeems (groups), I will instead profile the two major groups that served as the most powerful/influential groups during the first decade of the insurgency. These would be the pro-independence, relatively secular Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and the pro-Pakistan, Islamist Hizbul Mujahideen (HM). These groups both received extensive support from the Pakistani state, and were also groups that were primarily made up of Kashmiris.

Before profiling these two groups, it is worth briefly noting the trends in the insurgency. In this, we can separate the ongoing insurgency into three phases. The first two phases were dominated by Kashmiri groups, namely the aforementioned JKLF and HM. While the initial phase was spearheaded by the JKLF, the group soon found itself under constant pressure by the Indian state, vulnerable to fragmentation, and undermined by their Pakistani sponsors. The second phase, led by the Hizbul Mujahideen, also worked to “Islamize” Kashmiri society. However, increased Indian COIN success, fatigue by the general population, and the increasing belief by Pakistan that Kashmiri groups were unreliable, also led to the marginalization of the group. The final phase is the takeover of the insurgency primarily by foreign groups. Although not covered in this paper, it is important to note that India did have success in nearly ending the overall threat from Kashmiri groups. Instead, the insurgency was carried out by foreign fighters from around the world, and primarily Pakistan-based groups like Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. These groups also had a much more extremist ideology, and were even willing to

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126 On the change to the JKLF organizational structure during the COIN campaign, see Staniland, Networks of Rebellion, 80-84.
conduct attacks in other parts of India. Most infamous was the 2001 attack on Indian Parliament, and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. The implication of this third phase will be discussed further below.

**Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front**

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front was the first major insurgent actor to emerge in the state, essentially spearheading the insurgency. The JKLF is easily classified as a secessionist group. It has always had the same demand, *Azadi* (freedom) from the Indian government. But while much of its activities were focused in India, it had the desire to reunite the entire princely state, thus including Azad Kashmir in their designs. The organization’s end goal was, and continues to be, gaining independence for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. To achieve this, the JKLF decided to use a strategy of attrition to force Indian withdrawal from the state with an urban warfare strategy. Although the group’s demand was popular among a large section of the Valley’s population, the leadership was ultimately centered on cities like Srinagar and Anantnag. Using terrorism, the insurgents were able to create doubts in the Indian government’s ability to govern in the area. This combined with the harsh response by the central government also encouraged further resentment towards the Indian state. It should be noted that while the Indian response did obtain active and passive support for the organization, a significant portion of the population had already sympathized with the organization’s goals. The

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addition of Indian overreaction just further strengthened their resolve. The human rights abuses and discontent of the Kashmiri population was also notable for bringing international attention to the conflict, most notably from Pakistan.\textsuperscript{129} While most nations did not attempt to intervene in the conflict, the unrest did tarnish India’s image.

The insurgents were reliant on Pakistani state support as well as the support from the population and diaspora. Pakistan provided a safe haven, training, arms, and funding that was safe from Indian retaliation. The support of Pakistan also allowed for members of the militant group to enter India under the cover of Pakistani artillery fire.\textsuperscript{130} The Kashmiri diaspora in the UK played an important role in trying to generate international support for the insurgency as well as provide money to the organization.\textsuperscript{131} While the organization did maintain some propaganda networks as well as activists who could help spur mass demonstrations against Indian rule, they became easy targets for Indian police and military due to their visibility.

Despite spearheading the insurgency, the group was essentially a spent force by the mid-1990s. Its failure can be traced back to three causes: loss of international sponsorship, failure to build connections to actually achieve their goal, and failure to adapt to Indian counterinsurgency strategy. First, the JKLF was highly dependent on Pakistani sponsorship in order to survive. It was under the auspices of the Pakistani state that allowed the organization to maintain funding, arms, and training camps away from Indian reach. However, the goal of the group would inevitably affect Pakistan. That along with the


presence of pro-Pakistan groups in the insurgency led to loss of Pakistani support. Second: the goal of independence is popular in the Kashmir Valley, this did not translate into support in the other regions of Indian Kashmir. Indeed, it would have been difficult find significant Azadi supporters in Jammu and Ladakh, with a Hindu and Buddhist majority respectively. This failure to build up support networks meant that any demand for complete independence for the entire Kashmir territory would have run into significant opposition. This, added with the organizations role in the cleansing of Hindu Pandits from the Valley, encouraged opposition to the group’s demand. Due to the urban background of the group’s leaders and founders, there was a failure to properly build networks in the rural regions. When the insurgency became more focused in rural areas, it became difficult for the JKLF to become a prominent force in the changing insurgency.  

Finally, Indian counterinsurgency efforts improved. Although there are many valid complaints of human rights abuses towards the population, it is difficult to deny that in many aspects, Indian COIN operations made it arduous for the organization to adapt. This coupled with the competition from other militant outfits, and the Pakistani military feeding intelligence to the Indians, eventually led to the defeat of the organization as an armed movement. In 1994, the final leader of the JKLF, Yasin Malik, declared his group had renounced violence and would continue the struggle for an independent Kashmir using peaceful methods.

**Hizbul Mujahideen**

133 Sharma, “The Kashmir Insurgency,” p. 27
The Hizbul Mujahideen (Arabic for the Party of the Holy Warriors) remains one of the largest, if not the most powerful, insurgent group operating in Kashmir today. While it only officially came into existence on November 1, 1989, the group drew from an organization with strong social roots and fighters who had already been engaged in militant activities.\textsuperscript{135} By 1991, the Hizbul Mujahideen had emerged as the most powerful insurgent group in the rebellion. It retained this position until about the year 2000 when it would slowly be replaced by more extreme groups coming from Pakistan.

Like the JKLF, the Hizb also advocated for secession from India. However, they differed from the JKLF in two important ways: Pakistan and ideology. While the JKLF advocated for independence for all of Kashmir, including the territories being held by the Pakistani state, the Hizb had advocated that Kashmiris must instead ‘liberate’ Jammu and Kashmir, and then accede to Pakistan. While the JKLF would cheer “Kashmir banega khudmukhtar” (Kashmir will be sovereign), the Hizb’s cheer was “Kashmir banega Pakistan” (Kashmir will be part of Pakistan).\textsuperscript{136} While the JKLF was nominally secular,\textsuperscript{137} the Hizb was unapologetically Islamist.

Much of the strength of the Hizbul Mujahideen came from their social roots, the Jamaat Islami in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{138} The Islamist group’s insistence on a conservative Islamic ideology was at odds with the more Sufi-inspired Islam practiced among the denizens of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[135] Muhammad Amir Rana, \textit{A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan} (Lahore: Mashal Books, 2006), 436.
\item[136] Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” 235.
\item[137] Although it would not hesitate to use Islamic references, or flex its “Islamic credentials”, and was the primary driving force in forcing out the Kashmiri Pandits. Nandita Haksar, \textit{The Many Faces of Kashmiri Nationalism: From The Cold War to the Present Day}, (New Delhi: Speaking Tiger, 2015), 219-221.
\item[138] Jamaat Islami, sometimes spelled Jamaat-e-Islami, is one of the strongest Islamist groups in South Asia founded in 1941 British India by Abdul Ala Maududi. The organization is like the Muslim Brotherhood in the sense that it too has multiple branches in other countries. Besides having prominent branches in Pakistan and India, the group also maintains a separate branch specifically for Kashmir.
\end{itemize}
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Kashmir. However, this gave the group a tightly integrated cadre and political infrastructure to draw from and organize in both the Kashmir Valley and Pakistan.\(^{139}\)

Unlike the JKLF whose overall militant reach was limited, the Hizbul Mujahideen had much more success in creating and maintaining cells in the Hindu-majority Jammu region of the state.\(^ {140}\) Due to the stronger organizational structure and extensive state support from Pakistan, the Hizbul Mujahideen was a much greater threat than the JKLF.

In a sense, Hizbul Mujahideen helped undermine support for the insurgency and led to the fatigue felt by the general Kashmiri population. Hizbul Mujahideen was ruthless in taking control of the insurgency, which led to the defeat of multiple other militant groups. Indeed, the military pressure of both the Indian armed forces and Hizbul Mujahideen led to the decimation of the original Ikhwan as well as the JKLF. This was also the desire of the Hizb’s allies in Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to maintain control of the insurgency, and rid the rebellion of any element that could be perceived as detrimental to Pakistani interests. While HM continued its campaign against Indian rule and other insurgent organizations, the Pakistani ISI also facilitated the merger of other tanzeems with their preferred proxy.\(^ {141}\) This was in an attempt to also reduce the infighting.

Yet, this came at the cost of alienating the Kashmiri Muslim population. Many were uncomfortable with the conservative ethos of the HM, and became even more disillusioned due to the ferocious actions of the organization in attacking civilians and other militant organizations. Indeed, there does seem to be a perception among Kashmiris that one of the main reasons why the militancy failed against India was the role of Pakistan and Hizb in

\(^{139}\) On this point, see Staniland, Networks of Rebellion, 76-80, and Swami, Secret Jihad, 179.

\(^{140}\) Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” 241.

\(^{141}\) Bose in Terror, “JKLF and JKHM,” 239.
undermining the insurgency expending their energy in fighting against each other.  

While it could never achieve the same support from the pro-Azadi segments of society as the JKLF could, it still had some respect for fighting the Indian state and being composed of mainly Kashmiris.  

Yusuf Shah, alias Syed Salahudeen, remains the leader of the group. Yusuf Shah was a candidate for the MUF in the rigged 1987 elections, and was arrested shortly after the election. Once he was released, he joined the group that was founded by Muhammad Ahsan Dar. In 1990, it was estimated to have around 10,000 members, though this quickly has come down to an estimate of 700-1,500 in the mid-1990s and today. 

Indian Response

Fighting the JKLF

Although India’s counterinsurgency campaign did contribute to the defeat of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, it did not achieve the government’s stated campaign goal. Indeed, the insurgency continued for at least another decade, and continues, albeit at a lower level of violence, to this day. One component of this failure was the government’s initial failure to understand the driving forces behind the insurgency, among other reasons.  

The Indian political system is defined as one of pluralism. Save for a brief period in the 70s that saw a state of emergency, India has remained a liberal democracy.

142 Interview with Hafsa Kanjwal, email correspondence.  
144 Ibid
Ultimately, the decision to start fighting the insurgency came to the central government. The central government put the state of Jammu and Kashmir under Governor’s Rule in 1990 when it deemed that the state government, usually headed by an elected Chief Minister, was unable to function due to the breakdown in law and order. Under Governor’s rule, the authority and decisions of the state would be carried out by the Governor of the state. At the time that Governor’s Rule was imposed, Jammu and Kashmir’s governor was Jagmohan Malhotra.

Although Jagmohan would only be a governor for a brief time, the perception of his rule as well as some of the practices were ingrained in the attitudes of the Kashmiri people towards the Indian state. Jagmohan saw the insurgency in stark contrast to what it was. Instead of a domestic problem with discontent fueling the violence, Jagmohan saw it as a Pakistani plot that “conspired to subvert the Union and to seize power”. Rather than a political problem to be solved, it was a conspiracy that had to be brutally crushed. While Jagmohan’s successors would try to improve the human rights situation and the central government realized the need to reach out to the people, many of the succeeding governors in the JKLF fight were former military or intelligence folks who were not necessarily trained, or ready, to conduct the art of politics.

Despite the critical examination of Jagmohan, it is worth nothing the national context. At the time, India was facing major political instability. The economy was under considerable stress, with the country facing its worst economic crisis since independence.

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The end of the Cold War also deprived India of one of its most important international partners, the Soviet Union, making its international position weaker. In addition, the Indian military had suffered what was seen as a humiliating defeat in Sri Lanka against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, i.e. the Tamil Tigers. At the center, the initial years of the insurgency saw three different Prime Ministers. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was forced out in the 1989 elections due to a corruption scandal, known as the Bofors scandal, which led to a loss for the Congress Party. His successor, Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh of the Janata Dal party, lasted for less than a year before his coalition collapsed. The next Prime Minister, Chandra Shekhar, who created his own party: the Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya), lasted only seven months and resigned in March 6, 1991. This time period also saw social paralysis in India with widescale protests and discontent over the Mandal Commission report, ongoing insurgencies in Punjab and Nagaland, and then the outbreak of the Kashmir insurgency. At the time, the state did not have the manpower to secure the state. So, the state was unable to secure the border, and the Line of Control (LOC) turned into a fluid border for people to cross the border for training. The state police were falling apart and looked upon with suspicious by Indian policymakers, and there was a fear that Kashmir would be acquired by Pakistan within a matter of hours. In this light, some of the former policymakers interviewed for this argued that Jagmohan was a decisive decisionmaker in an unsure time.

The security forces included members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), the Indian army, as well as elements of India’s intelligence

149 The border between India and Pakistan in Kashmir.
150 Interview with Lt. Gen. Ata Hasnain. Also worth pointing out that this also took place shortly after the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. This encouraged the Pakistani military to replicate the same strategy they used in Afghanistan against their Indian rivals.
services. While the BSF and other paramilitary forces oversaw COIN operations in urban areas, the army was in charge of support as well as securing the rural areas of the state. To give directions as well as lay of the rules of engagement to the security forces, the central government approved several new laws, most importantly the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). While there were other laws that gave powers to the counterinsurgent forces, AFSPA remains the most controversial. It essentially gave legal protection to any actions committed by the Indian soldiers. Unfortunately, the protection given to the soldiers made it very difficult for Kashmiri citizens to hold the counterinsurgents accountable. This gave rise to a plethora of human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture, rape, etc. 151

In one particular atrocity, CRPF forces opened fire on protestors on January 21, 1990, killing between 35-100 demonstrators. These figured included those who were shot while attempting to flee from the onslaught by the security forces. In what would be illustrative of what was to come, no action was taken against the CRPF members who fired upon the demonstrators, nor was a public inquiry was ever set up. 152

The stated Indian goal in the Kashmir counterinsurgency campaign was a return to ‘normalcy’. 153 Achieving ‘normalcy’ through ‘peace and development’ became popular buzzwords among Indian policymakers. By this, the Indian government wished to reduce violence to what was considered an acceptable level of violence. This is usually understood as stabilizing the situation enough the state government and civil administration could still

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151 Chowdhary, “India’s Response to the Kashmir Insurgency”, 52-53.
function be able to hold regular elections. To accomplish this, the Indian government worked to stop the flow of militants coming over from Pakistan and to reestablish public order by flooding the insurgent areas with soldiers. The number of total security forces in Kashmir went from 36 companies in 1989 to 300 companies and an entire division of the Indian army in 1993.154

In attacking the insurgents, the government adopted cordon-and-search operations in the cities. Much of the information for these ‘crackdowns’ came from informants that the soldiers had extracted from guerillas and civilians. This along with a policy of mass arrests and catch-and-kills wrecked the membership of the JKLF.155 Between 1990 and 1992, three of the four commanders for the JKLF were neutralized (along with over 2,000 guerillas killed, most of whom belonged to JKLF). While Ashfaq Majid (killed) and Yasin Malik (captured) were eliminated within the first year of the COIN campaign, Hamid Sheikh would be captured but released by BSF. When he was released in 1992, some analysts figured that the security forces were trying to fight the growing clout of Islamist groups that were now ascending. The army apparently disagreed with the decision, and killed the JKLF leader several months later.156

The political and social environment that the counterinsurgents acted in was not favorable for the government. The local police forces had virtually collapsed in the early stages of the insurgency, taking away some of the local representation in the counterinsurgent force. The majority of the security forces were of different ethnicities, religions, and linguistic groups throughout India. Many were not familiar with the social

154 Ibid, 54.
155 Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” 238.
156 Ibid
and cultural fabric that was present in Kashmir. This coupled with the early Indian COIN efforts helped set the image of the conflict being India versus Kashmir, rather than India (including Kashmir) versus the JKLF.\textsuperscript{157} It is also important to keep in mind that the bulk of the insurgency was carried out in the Kashmir valley, where the population in the state was concentrated. However, the other two regions of the state (Ladakh and Jammu) were Buddhist and Hindu majority respectively. Despite the goals of the JKLF to liberate all of Jammu and Kashmir, there was little to no hope in rallying the state’s Hindu and Buddhist populations. This became especially true when the organization took part in the expulsion of 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) from the Valley. Yet this added another difficulty to Indian COIN operations. Not only did it add a large refugee population for the Indian government, the nature of the Pandit’s expulsion made some Kashmiri Muslims think that the whole tragedy was planned by the Jagmohan government to demonize the \textit{Azadi} movement, and keep the Hindus safe while terrorizing the Kashmiri Muslims.\textsuperscript{158}

However, succeeding governors did recognize the need to try and reduce the presence of and intrusion of the soldiers in Kashmiri lives. To help reduce human rights abuses and give some legitimacy to the armed forces, the central government created new bodies like the National Human Rights Commission in 1993 to add greater scrutiny to the actions committed by the armed forces.\textsuperscript{159} Yet some of the abuses remained systemic, and many of the improved tactics and reforms would come near after the JKLF period.

\textsuperscript{158} On this point, see Rahul Pandita, \textit{Our Moon Has Blood Clots: The Exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits}, (New Delhi: Random House India, 2013). Not only does it serve as the author’s personal account of his experience, he also discusses the perceptions held by many Kashmiri Muslims.
For the most part, international involvement (save Pakistan) remained inconsequential. Many international powers criticized India for its heavy handedness in its counterinsurgency campaign. Yet, many of these same powers would also criticize Pakistan for its involvement in India’s domestic troubles. Ultimately, no international power was interested in intervening in the conflict unless it was to prevent a potential war between the two South Asian countries.\textsuperscript{160} India also worked to ensure that the Kashmir conflict would be resolved through bilateral negotiations between itself and Pakistan.

Pakistan acted as a safe haven, supplier of finance, weapons provider, trainer, and political supporter to the Kashmiri insurgents. In both the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Azad Kashmir, Pakistan’s ISI provided training camps and intelligence support.\textsuperscript{161} For the Pakistani state, the insurgency was a godsend. It would allow them to fight a proxy war with India to obtain Kashmir without any risks to their own soldiers. Despite years of pressure and threats from India, Pakistan has yet to end its support to the Kashmir insurgency.

In a lucky break for the government, the JKLF primarily kept itself to the urban areas and did not spread out to rural areas like the other insurgent groups. The geography of Kashmir is mountainous, with large forests, and in general a very difficult terrain to operate in. The main difficulty of terrain came with Indian efforts to try and secure the border from infiltration. This task was complicated even further due to the porous and unstable nature of the border with an arch rival that supported the insurgent forces. By the

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{161} Although primarily focused on the Islamist groups that came after the JKLF period, see Arif Jamal, \textit{Shadow War: The Untold Story of the Jihad in Kashmir}, (New York: Melville House, 2009) remains a useful source for discussing Pakistan’s involvement in Kashmir.
mid-1990s, the security forces had implemented a three-tier system of defenses to try and combat infiltration.\textsuperscript{162}

Despite the JKLF being defeated, there are several of important issues that need to be examined in India’s response. Ultimately, there are three main failures of India’s counterinsurgency strategy during the JKLF period. The first was the failure to end the insurgency. This was not entirely the fault of the Indian government. Despite the end of the JKLF, it is likely that the insurgency would have continued with Pakistan continuing its policy of supporting terrorist organizations. An occasional terrorist attack would be manageable, but India did not work to address the political aspects of the conflict that could have resolved the insurgency.

This closely ties in with India’s second failure during the initial counterinsurgency campaign. During the fight against the JKLF, the Indian security forces conducted numerous egregious human rights violations. Whether it was torture, finding mass graves, or rape, word of the government’s atrocities spread throughout the Kashmiri community. If there was anything that provided propaganda material and alienated the Kashmiri population from the government, it was the callous response to the accusations of human rights abuses. Although later Indian COIN efforts would attempt to improve on its human rights record, this has done little to change the perception of the government as the oppressor.

The final failure of Indian COIN strategy is the government’s failure to curb Pakistani support to the various Kashmiri insurgent groups. Despite some of the policies

undertaken by the Indian government to try and prevent the infiltration of militants from Pakistan, sponsorship has not been dismantled. While this inability to end Pakistan’s sponsorship has complicated Indian counterinsurgency operations, it is also worth recognizing that the history of India’s relationship with Pakistan, as well as the power and ideology of the Pakistani military, made any peaceful attempt to have Pakistan cease its support unlikely. Nor are there many coercive options that India could have taken successfully to resolve the issue. However, India potentially could have tried to bring international pressure onto Pakistan. While nations did criticize both Indian human rights violations and Pakistan’s support to these militant organizations, India did not take the initiative to use this condemnation to try and isolate Pakistan. Although this would not have necessarily translated into the successful end of Pakistani sponsorship, this was a policy route that was relatively unexplored.

**Combating the Hizbul Mujahideen**

Compared to the era when the JKLF led the insurgency, the Indian government was in a much better position to fight the HM. Despite the political turmoil, the security forces were in place and were doing a much better job at combatting the insurgents and restoring some semblance of law and order on the streets, though these areas remained contested.

As discussed above, the Indians had also put in new policies to try and counter infiltration by militants returning from training in Pakistan. Also noteworthy, towards the end of the JKLF era, the Indian army and Rashtriya Rifles were able to set up a rudimentary
grid system for counterinsurgency. \textsuperscript{163} The counterinsurgency grid remains an impressive COIN tactic used by the Indian military in achieving area domination and weakening the insurgency. For this, the insurgency affected areas were dominated into 49 different sectors, with each sector containing its own military units to achieve control over time. This was further backed up with a platoon-level quick reaction teams for each quadrant to back up the military units. \textsuperscript{164} This was further complemented by the creation of a special COIN school for army soldiers being deployed into Jammu and Kashmir in 1994. It allowed army soldiers to go Khrew, Kashmir and be prepared to train in COIN operations relevant to the Kashmir theater. \textsuperscript{165} Finally, unlike the JKLF, the Hizbul Mujahideen had much more difficulty winning the hearts and minds of the Kashmiri Muslims, although there still was great resentment towards the Indian state.

However, while the JKLF area of operations was limited to the Valley, the decline of the JKLF and the dominance by the Hizbul Mujahideen helped to spread the insurgency in some areas of Jammu. \textsuperscript{166} Perhaps another essential element in the insurgency that changed in the era of post-JKLF dominance was the attack on foreigners. Starting in 1991, foreign tourists who visited Kashmir came increasingly under attack. Most notable of these attacks was the kidnapping of Western tourists in 1995 in Anantnag by a group claiming itself to be Al-Faran. \textsuperscript{167} This did bring more international attention to the conflict, and more criticisms towards both Pakistan and India for human rights abuses.

\textsuperscript{164} Ganguly, “Slow Learning,” 83.
\textsuperscript{165} The country already had a well-known COIN school, the Counterinsurgency and Jungle Warfare School in Mizoram to help train soldiers being deployed to the Northeast regions. Ibid, 84-85.
\textsuperscript{166} Although it makes sense with the goal of Azadi or accession to Pakistan to also fight Indian control in Jammu, there is also difficulty believing that Jammu would ever vote for independence or Pakistan, considering the vastly different demographic makeup of the region. One former military commander has argued that this was more of a ruse to continue instability in the region. Lt. General Y.M. Bammi, \textit{War Against Insurgency and Terrorism in Kashmir}, (New Delhi: Natraj Publishers, 2007), 193.
\textsuperscript{167} For an in-depth investigation on this, as well as a damning indictment of Indian counterinsurgency efforts, See Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark, \textit{The Meadow}, (New York: Penguin Books, 2012).
The strength of the Indian security forces also made it quite clear that an insurgency would not be able to wrest away Kashmir from the country’s control. This, along with the general violence and anger towards Pakistan for manipulating the insurgents, led to a general fatigue by the Kashmiri Muslim population. While the idea of an independent Kashmir still had some resonance among large segments of the Kashmiri population, the lack of real representation among the militancy disillusioned many. Despite this, the Indian government was eager to restart the political process in the state in order to undermine some of the political appeal of the militancy. However, the situation during the initial COIN campaign against HM still remained violent.

There was some evidence that the campaign against the Hizb was taking its toll. Intelligence Bureau operations had taken out much of the leadership of the organization, and the increasing number of Pakistanis, Afghans, and other foreigners in the group distanced it from their Kashmiri Muslim constituency. The group’s fight against the other militant organizations, more Islamist outlook, and indiscriminate human rights abuses also contributed towards its political weakening. Harassment faced by JI members from Ikhwanis and security forces, forced some political distancing from its social organization.

While much of the political and social issues driving the insurgency still were not completely resolved, it was difficult to deny that the Indian government had obtained the upper hand. Improved COIN techniques, the use of the Ikhwan, and the general fatigue with the violence helped to put the militants on the defensive.

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The Counterinsurgent Militia

The counterinsurgent militia, the *Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen* (Muslim Brotherhood), or the renegades/*nabyidh* as they were sometimes referred to locally, served as the most prominent pro-government militia in Kashmir. Between late 1994/early 1995 to 2000, they served a significant role in supporting the security forces in pushing back the Hizbul Mujahideen and other militant organizations. The militia was brutally effective in targeting Hizb members, but engaged in a wide variety of human rights abuses that would taint it in the eyes of the local Kashmiri Muslims.

*History and Background*

The name Ikhwan initially referred to an Islamist insurgent group, led by Hilal Beg, which was described as “one of the most virulent tanzeems”\(^\text{170}\) operating in the insurgency. The group had a pro-Pakistan ideology more similar to the HM rather than the JKLF. Initially, the group was part of JKLF, but Beg eventually broke away and created the *Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen*. However, he was unable to assert proper control over the organization, and the group would frequently clash with the larger Hizbul Mujahideen. The frequent clashes with the Hizbul Mujahideen would prove vital in helping to dismantle the tanzeem, as well as force large sections of the Ikhwan to seek the help of the Indian security forces.

Perhaps the most important Ikhwan leader, and the one who would formalize the pro-India Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon, was Kuka Parrey\textsuperscript{171} (Mohammad Yusuf Parrey)\textsuperscript{172}. Kuka Parrey was originally a small time folk singer from the Baramulla district, who used to compose songs celebrating the youth who cross the LOC for military training.\textsuperscript{173} A native of the Baramulla district, Parrey would come to dominate the Ikhwan wing that was posted there. But as clashes with the Hizb became more intense, it convinced Parrey to turn to his enemy, India, for aid. While some have said that he did this out of concern for his hometown, other accounts instead have said that some humiliation he faced from HM fighters is what ultimately convinced Parrey to become a counter militant.\textsuperscript{174} Another account was that Parrey’s daughter was raped by a Hizb member.\textsuperscript{175} Although many Kashmiris did see the use of the Ikhwan as proof that India was happy to use Kashmiris to kill Kashmiris for the sake of divide and rule,\textsuperscript{176} there also seems to be a recognition that the counterinsurgent militias was only made possible due to the excesses by HM and Jamaat members.\textsuperscript{177}

Members primarily came from either surrendering or being captured\textsuperscript{178} by Indian forces, and due to the changing nature of the militancy. A widespread problem was that many youth who had felt the general grievances and excitement that drove the initial wave, soon left. Some of them were never ideologically connected to the idea of a free Kashmir,
others were disillusioned with the changing nature of the militancy. It was through the work of India’s intelligence agencies that the Indian state able to formalize some of these cracks and turn militant leaders into Indian allies.

In the initial stages of the Ikhwan experiment, the various branches did not start off as a single, coherent group. Rather, the Ikhwan it became known, was the result of combining several strong regional groupings of the surrendered militants under their own influential commanders. While Kuka Parrey was particularly strong in north Kashmir along the Baramulla district, there existed a strong contingent of surrendered insurgents in Anantnag led by Liaqat Ali Khan in Southern Kashmir. In Baramulla and Anantnag, the Ikhwan would play a vital role in helping to secure these two locations for the Indian state.

The inclusion of the Ikhwan also represented another crucial element for India’s counterinsurgency strategy, local representation. With the near collapse of the Jammu and Kashmir state police, and suspicion from the other security forces, the Kashmiri representation in the security forces was low. The inclusion of the Ikhwan allowed the Indians to have local participation and an important intelligence asset composed of former militants. However, there were concerns that the use of the Ikhwan served as a means for the central security forces to bypass the state police. Part of this was understandable, as many policemen were either sympathetic to the militants, or were worried about blowback.

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179 Chowdhary, “India’s Response to the Kashmir Insurgency,”, 57-58.
180 Interview with a former intelligence official. Also for some details on the work of the intelligence agencies in turning some of the militant groups into ‘renegades’, see Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark, The Meadow, 396-397.
from the insurgents. However, the use of the militia was thought to have detracted from
the rebuilding the capacity of the Jammu and Kashmir Police.\textsuperscript{184}

Although Kuka Parrey became what was perhaps the best-known commander of
the Ikhwan, figures like Liaqat Ali Khan (alias Hilal Haider), Javed Shah, and Ghulam
Azad also played important roles in the militia.\textsuperscript{185} Liaqat Khan was particularly known for
his command of the Ikhwan in the south of Kashmir, in locations like the Anantnag district.
The members of the southern Ikhwan would regain the countryside of Anantnag, which the
Indian security forces had difficulty securing from the various tanzeems.\textsuperscript{186}

The Indian military, whether it was the Rashtriya Rifles or regular Army units, had
varying relationships with the Ikhwan. The Ikhwan, comprising of former militants that
were trained in Pakistan, rarely, if ever, were trained by the military to help counteract the
force of militias. However, it has now become a well-known fact that this was an
organization supported by the Indian government who also provided protection and
funding to the group. One Ikhwani member said that he was earning 2,000 rupees a month,
which was later increased to 4,500 Rupees a month, which was significantly less than what
he had earned as a militant member.\textsuperscript{187} However, payment and rewards for the militants
differed. One Inspector General of Police said that militants who surrendered with an
assault rifle could be paid an additional 5,000 rupees, along with a stipend.\textsuperscript{188} A report by
the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) documented that Ikhwanis

\textsuperscript{184} Manoj Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, 428
Waheguru Pal et al. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 52-53.
\textsuperscript{186} Levy and Scott-Clark, \textit{The Meadow}, 390.
\url{http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl2020/stories/2003101000103203400.htm}.
\textsuperscript{188} Human Rights Watch, “India’s Secret Army in Kashmir: New Patterns of Abuse Emerge in the Conflict,” \textit{Human Rights Watch},
Vol. 8, No. 4 (May 1996), \url{https://www.hrw.org/reports/1996/India2.htm}. 
initially did not receive any stipend, though later the security forces would give a stipend of RS 2,500 per month.\footnote{International Peoples’ Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir (IPTK) and The Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), “Structures of Violence: The Indian State in Jammu and Kashmir”, Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (2015), 21. It is important to note that the report focuses on the Ikhwan in southern Kashmir, so this might not be applicable to the Ikhwan as a whole. But it does give us an important look into the relationship between the Indian security forces and Ikhwan.} Using the testimony of former Ikhwan members, the report also points out that ammunition and weapons were supplied from the army camps, and many Ikhwanis lived near military enclaves.\footnote{Ibid, 20-21.} There are many allegations that the Rashtirya Rifles started a ‘cash for corpses’ deal with the Ikhwan to kill additional militants,\footnote{Sanjay Kak, “The Dogs of War,” The Caravan, June 1, 2012, accessed April 12, 2017, http://www.caravannmagazine.in/reviews-essays/dogs-war.} with the seniority of the militant killed determining the payout.\footnote{Somini Sengupta, “Indian Army and Police Tied to Kashmir Killings”, New York Times, February 6, 2007, accessed April 25, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/06/world/asia/06kashmir.html.} However, as one renegade commented “But no one examines the bodies, asks for debriefs or IDs, so we shoot whosoever we choose.”\footnote{Levy and Scott-Clark, The Meadow, 390.}

According to Liaqat Ali Khan, it was due to work of the Ikhwan groups like his that the Indian government was able to hold elections in 1996.\footnote{Ipsita Chakravarty, “Is Absorbing Former Militants into State Armed Forces a Good Idea?”, Scroll.in, October 28, 2016, accessed April 10, 2017 https://scroll.in/article/820050/is-absorbing-former-militants-into-state-armed-forces-a-good-idea.} The elections also showed an attempt by some Ikhwan members to flout their own political parties in an attempt to gain seats in the legislative assembly. Most famously was Kuka Parrey’s Awami League which fielded 27 candidates in the 1996 elections, but only resulted in a win for Kuka Parrey and not any other candidate.\footnote{Government of India, “Statistical Report on General Election, 1996 to The Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir”, Election Commission of India, (New Delhi: National Informatics Center, 1997), http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/SE_1996/StatisticalReport-JK96.pdf, 7} The 2002 elections did not see much of an improvement, to the anger and frustration of many former militants.

In 2003, the Indian army Northern Command was ordered to do a phased decommissioning of the Ikhwanis to prevent them from becoming a law unto themselves.
and embarrassing the security forces.\textsuperscript{196} Most of the militia members would later be absorbed among the various CAPFs or state police.\textsuperscript{197} The full extent of operations carried out by the Ikhwan might never be known.\textsuperscript{198} Despite their decommissioning, they still remain under threat from the Hizb and other militant groups. Even Kuka Parrey would face his end at the hand of a gun the same year.\textsuperscript{199} By 2003, it was estimated that around 300-500 Ikhwan members still remained active in the militia, operating with the police and army. But by then, the assassination of their leadership, public and political resentment, the loss of military support, and continued attacks on Ikhwan members by terrorist organizations had demoralized the force.\textsuperscript{200}

\textit{Positive Contributions}

In their local areas, Ikhwan members also could give information on the local insurgent organizations that operated, as well as help the military map out the insurgent organizational structures and leadership.\textsuperscript{201} The intelligence provided by these surrendered militants became vital. A former special forces officer who had served in Kashmir and utilized Ikhwan members told me bluntly that some of the best operations were done

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{196} Rostum N. Nanavatty, \textit{Internal Armed Conflict in India: Forging a Joint Civil-Military Approach}, (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2013), 127.
\item \textsuperscript{197} Manoj Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, 428.
\item \textsuperscript{198} It is worth briefly looking at a possible use that the Ikhwan was used for. In 1998, a cross-border operation took place that killed 22 civilians on the night of March 26-27 in the Pakistani village of Bandala. Several bodies were found with their eyes gouged out, and two civilians were decapitated. A note was discovered along with the bodies asking, “How does your own blood feel?”. The raid was allegedly done in retaliation for the massacre of 29 Hindus in the Kashmiri village of Prankote by Lashkar-e-Taiba. Later journalistic investigations said that the operation was carried out by irregulars supported by Indian special forces. Unfortunately, I was unable to ascertain for certain whether this was carried out by the Ikhwan, though many indications seem to suggest this. While the massacre was never replicated in the future, this does open up the possibility that the intelligence (and manpower) was used in carrying out cross-border raids. Praveen Swami, “Locked in U.N. Files, 15 Years of Bloodletting at LoC,” \textit{The Hindu}, June 16, 2016, accessed July 5, 2016, \url{http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/locked-in-un-files-15-years-of-bloodletting-at-loc/article4358199.ece}.
\item \textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{201} Interview ret. Brig. Deepak Sinha.
\end{itemize}
carried out with the help of the Ikhwan, and that he was quite happy with the Ikhwanis. Special forces teams utilized these former militants to create irregular teams to help infiltrate and disrupt insurgent operations. The Ikhwanis were able to help the Indian military crack the code used in militant communication, as well as keep a lookout for movement or infiltration within the villages and township. This latter aspect was particularly important as the Ikhwan member can recognize what’s happening in their village or township. That specific aspect of their intelligence knowledge was difficult to replace in the long run. According to Lt. Gen PC Katoch and journalist Saikat Datta in their book on Indian Special Forces, the special operations soldiers and former insurgents were able to neutralize several major militant leaders. However, over time, the Special Forces units could acquire the skills to infiltrate the groups without relying on the surrendered militants. Eventually, the special forces units had the language and cultural skills necessary to operate. With the institutionalized presence of the Rashtriya Rifles, this also helped with allowing the military to better transfer their intelligence and knowledge to new deployments.

The Ikhwan also provided an opportunity for the Indian government to outsource some of the human rights abuses to the militia. As a Kashmiri doctor told Human Rights Watch in the mid-1990s, “When someone misbehaved, he was wearing a uniform, so he was accountable. We could call his commander. Now, when these renegades misbehave,
there is no one to call. No one accepts responsibility for them, though we know the government is sponsoring them.”

Whether the Ikhwan was used as a fighting force is contested. Some military officers argued that there some initial experiments with this during the beginning of the militia, but that this was seen as creating more trouble and terminated. As Brigadier Sinha pointed out, these former militants are also facing threats from militants and needed to be protected, hence a reluctance to engage in these operations. Others, including former Ikhwani members themselves, have discussed the success of the militia in fighting the various militant groups. Besides the intelligence contribution, and the allegations and claims of Ikhwan fighting are true, the kinetic aspect of the group also aided the Indian security forces. What is well-known is the use of the Ikhwan in joint-operations, especially when seeking major terrorist leaders, suspected sympathizers, or arms. According to the previously cited JKCCS report, the Ikhwan would operate with the army in conducting crackdowns, raids, and search and cordon operations.

There are three more positives that have come from the Ikhwan experiment. 1) It allowed the Indian forces to have a ‘local’ face to the security forces, especially during the period when the J&K police was rebuilding. It allowed the Indian government to coopt some of the most stringent anti-India groups. Whether this made the Indian COIN campaign ‘legitimate’ in the eyes of the Kashmiri Muslim population is arguable; this was a successful signal that the militancy was failing. 2) It allowed the Indian state to redirect the guns of militants away. Prior to the formation of the pro-government Ikhwan, the

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207 Human Rights Watch, “India’s Secret Army in Kashmir”.
208 Interview with ret. Brig. Deepak Sinha.
210 Ibid, 23.
original Ikhwan was a powerful militant organization. The crippling of the organization with the defection of Kuka Parrey and any others allowed the Indian government to use the militants who used to target security forces against their former comrades. This too helped take the pressure off the security forces. 3) It did raise the costs of being a political supporter of the Hizbul Mujahideen. Jamaat members and suspected supporters of the Hizb or any other organization would face harassment and abuse at the hands of Ikhwan members. This helped contribute to the decision by the Kashmir Jamaat Islami branch to try and disassociate itself with the Hizb.

The Ikhwan experiment was perceived to be so successful that other security forces attempted to obtain their own militias. The Jammu and Kashmir police created their own counterinsurgent unit, the Special Operations Group (SOG, initially called the Special Task Force, STF). Like their Ikhwani counterparts, the SOG also incorporated the use of surrendered militants to work alongside the security forces to track down insurgents. In a sense, the various security forces and agencies tried to create or control their own versions of the Ikhwani model for their own purposes. This led to increased tension among the different security forces, and competition for power and control. 211

**Negative Contributions**

While the Ikhwan helped improve Indian security forces intelligence gathering, there were certainly costs attached. Despite noting that the surrendered militants were quite useful for intelligence purposes, Brigadier Deepak Sinha cautioned that this happened

211 Human Rights Watch, “India’s Secret Army in Kashmir”.
when the renegades were regulated. Where the Ikhwan were given a loose reign, the militias would harass locals through extortion and other methods. Bold Text

Though in Brig. Sinha’s experience, the military was much better at disciplining and maintain control over the Ikhwanis to prevent them from engaging in criminal activities. However, the police were much less successful in maintaining control over them.

Others have argued that this criminality by the Ikhwan went even further than this. Due to their connections with the Indian security forces, the Ikhwan began extorting the local population. Members of the group also worked to obtain more money by trafficking timber and other forms of illegal trade. Indeed, a group that was being used to help the Indian government restore law and order was itself undermining law and order. Nor was that the end of it. Ikhwanis were known to abuse the rewards for turning in suspected militants for their own benefit. In a case that was investigated by Human Rights Watch, Ikhwanis made colleagues of a hospital workers suspected of being sympathetic to the militants to buy a gun. The militia then confiscated the gun and had the hospital worker appear in front of security forces, as proof that the Ikhwan had convinced another militant to surrender.

The sanction of the security forces also allowed some Ikhwanis to achieve a higher position in society. One particularly gruesome example of this was described by journalists. A renegade named Fayaz lived in Anantnag and walked around his home village “like a king” that “even the policemen looked down”.

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212 Interview with ret. Brig. Deepak Sinha.
214 Human Rights Watch, “India’s Secret Army”.
215 Levy and Scott-Clark, The Meadow, 394.
who was the most beautiful girl in the village. However, she rejected him. In response, he had her abducted and repeatedly raped her until she became pregnant. To further solidify the message of his dominance, he had Naseema’s sister kidnapped too. When the family contacted the police, the cops then called Fayaz, who in a fit of rage, took eight months pregnant Naseema to the village market and stripped her. Before a large crowd, he repeatedly shot her in the belly and let her die. To top it all off, he shouted, “We are in charge, and no one can touch us. This is what you get when you fuck with us.” Although security forces and militants had engaged in widespread human rights abuses, the Ikhwan certainly did its part to contribute to the problem.

However, former military officials have cautioned that while the Ikhwan did engage in some human rights abuses, there is a strong possibility that the stories are exaggerated or even made up. In an insurgency, it would not be unheard of that both sides use propaganda to delegitimize the opponent. Many of the stories, such as the story of Fayaz detailed above, were given to journalists and human rights activists by the local police. As some of the interviewees pointed out, this was still a period where the local police were still not trusted by the central government security forces, and who were angry that their positions had been taken over by CAPF and armed forces. Although it is difficult to know for sure, there are many accounts that have pointed out the reign of terror that the Ikhwan had perpetuated on the Kashmiri population. Regardless of whether the accounts were fake or not, the Kashmiri population grew to hate the counterinsurgent militias.

The use of the Ikhwan and other surrendered militants also led to increased tension between the various security forces. The BSF and Indian army both would try to achieve a

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216 Ibid, 394-395
higher surrender rate than the other. Along with the political economy created around surrendering (briefly discussed above), there was also an incentive by the competing security forces to increase surrenders. Some surrendered militants were assaulted for surrendering to the army instead of BSF. Others have described being told by the BSF to obtain new weapons and surrender again.\textsuperscript{217} One journalist even feared that the tensions between the competing security forces had become so high, that it was leading to counterinsurgency operations being undermined.\textsuperscript{218}

The Ikhwan acted like ruffians that became a law on their own, harassing and killing suspected militants and their supporters. This also went further, to harassment and threats towards journalists. In one notorious example, Ikhwan members grabbed 19 journalists and took them to the headquarters of Hilal Haider (Liaqat Ali Khan) in Anantnag.\textsuperscript{219} Thirteen of the journalists, from both the Indian and international press, were segregated from the remaining correspondents who worked for Kashmiri publications. After nearly eight hours, Rashtriya Rifles members intervened and released the 19 journalists.

Another example of the Ikhwan bringing international scrutiny involved the murder of Jalil Andrabi. Andrabi was a human rights lawyer and JKLF member who was well known internationally for his work. In 1996, he had told members of Human Rights Watch, as well as the US Embassy in New Delhi that he had received threats from the various counter militants. Later, he was arrested by a Rashtriya Rifles Major Aftar Singh. When Andrabi’s wife tried to file a report with the police, she was told not to mention the major,


\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.

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and instead claim it was unidentified men. They were however assured that Andrabi was in custody and would be released shortly. Instead, Andrabi’s body was found floating in the Jhelum River. It was later revealed that Andrabi was given over to some Ikhwan members after the arrest, who promptly killed him.220

Unsurprisingly, the Ikhwan was viewed highly negatively by the general population in Kashmir. This is particularly demonstrated by two anecdotes. Prior to the death of Ikhwan leader, Javed Shah, legislator and former militant Firdous Sayed saw that the Ikhwan leader was depressed right outside the Jammu and Kashmir assembly. When Sayed approached Shah, Shah relayed that his son had asked if he could put down a different parentage for the school records. When asked why, Shah’s son said that he wanted to avoid the humiliation he felt from other students, who regularly refereed to his father in terms such as a renegade and criminal.221 Liaqat Ali Khan, leader of the Southern Ikhwan, recalled that he has been called a “Kaafir (infidel), traitor, RSS agent, IB (intelligence bureau) agent, RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) agent, Army agent...” and now lives in a militarized neighborhood in Anantnag with his family.223

Because of the knowledge that the security forces allied with and ignored the crimes of the militia also tainted the perception of the counterinsurgency forces. With the wide variety of human rights abuses briefly discussed above, and the fact that many knew that

222 For the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the country’s most prominent Hindutva organization.
the Ikhwan was a government sanctioned militia (which at the time was denied), inevitably made the winning of hearts and minds much more difficult.

There are two final negatives that the Ikhwan also brought. The first was the reciprocal violence between the HM and Ikhwan, and the need for protection for the surrendered militants. Surrendered militants, whether they joined the Ikhwan or not, were still threatened by the Hizbul Mujahideen and other militant groups. This had caused some to seek protection from the military, or live in securitized areas to try and avoid reprisals by militants. This was in addition to the reprisal attacks carried out between the two groups. In one example, HM abducted 12 members of an Ikhwan group from a house in Bagh-e-Mehtab, and beheaded at least three of the Ikhwanis. The members of the Ikhwan responded by lynching an elderly man on a bus, and burning down houses and shops.

Briefly, it is worth caveating the accusations against the Ikhwan. While some former officials did admit that some Ikhwan members might have engaged in brutal human rights violations, they have argued that the extent of the abuses is often over exaggerated. They made the legitimate point that in an insurgency, especially one sponsored by a hostile state, propaganda was common. While some abuses happened, it was also an attempt to delegitimize anyone who was going against the cause of Azadi. It is certainly true that many insurgent organizations use over ground workers to try and carry out their own propaganda activities, it is also true that they need something to work with in the first place. This paper has attempted to use a wide array of sources to gauge a common perception. Yet in some senses, regardless of whether the Ikhwan committed the human rights

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224 Basweja and Vinayak, “A Dangerous Liaison”.
225 Human Rights Watch, “India’s Secret Army”.

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violations or not, there was a perception that they did. This still leads to a negative political outcome for the counterinsurgent.

With the various atrocities carried out by the Ikhwan, especially those illustrated by journalistic accounts, human rights reports, or locals who grew up during the time, the Ikhwan was a feared organization. In Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark’s book, *The Meadow*, the policy of the Ikhwan can be neatly summed up in a quote that was scrawled beneath a veranda in Anantnag: “We are proud to be Indians. Get them by their balls, hearts and minds will follow.”

**Evaluation**

The Ikhwan remains an understudied group in the literature, especially within the social sciences. The two most prominent studies that examined these groups examined why insurgents become pro-government fighters, while another looks at when and why the state would outsource violence to non-state actors. Besides examining in detail the contributions, both negative and positive, the group brought to the counterinsurgency fight, this will also test the larger literature on counterinsurgent militias.

*Hypothesis 1: Pro-government militias increase the likelihood of government victory in counterinsurgency campaigns.*

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226 Levy and Scott-Clark, *The Meadow*, 394. Nor was this the only account that would use this phrase to describe the Ikhwanis.

227 Paul Staniland, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place”.

As the then-operations head of SOG, Farooq Khan admitted, “Without these groups, it would have been very difficult for the parliamentary and assembly elections to have been held in a peaceful atmosphere.”\(^{229}\) It is undoubtedly true that as a military and intelligence asset, the group was a tremendous success. Across the spectrum, from regular Kashmiris, journalists, to Indian security forces members, there is agreement that the militia played an integral role in weakening the Hizbul Mujahideen. The intelligence given by the Ikhwan forces to Indian security forces were so vital that one former Special Forces Brigadier even went as far as to say that he would have not been able to effectively carry out his job without the assistance of the militia’s information.\(^{230}\) As I had briefly discussed above, the Hizbul Mujahideen was a much stronger group than the JKLF. Despite the Indian security forces having much better control of the situation, the Hizbul Mujahideen was still able to control large swaths of the countryside. The arrival of the pro-government Ikhwan turned the tide in the government’s favor. The pressure of these counterinsurgents caused the HM to try and put on a brave face to the general public, but this ultimately did little to stop the onslaught of the renegades.\(^{231}\)

The Ikhwan also brought some positive political effects for the Indian state. Of course, the security provided by the Ikhwan did help allow the 1996 state elections to be held, which helped resume the political machinery in the state and end Governor’s rule. This served as an important benchmark for the counterinsurgency. Since the 1996 elections, the state has been able to hold regular state elections, with each election seeing an increase in turnout.

\(^{229}\) Swami, “Death of a General”.
\(^{230}\) Personal Interview with retired Brig. Deepak Sinha, January 2016, Delhi.
\(^{231}\) Manoj Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, 426
The cooption of surrendered militants also provided the security forces with a counterinsurgent force consisting of locals. It could be argued that this did provide the counterinsurgents with a form of legitimacy with the local population. However, the true extent that this could sway the public opinion is debatable. But, the continued surrender of militants, including previous insurgent leaders did play a positive role for the Indian government. By this I mean that it helped delegitimize and sway members of the public that the ‘rebellion’ was failing, and that militancy was not a viable way to achieve their goals and desires. Although this did not mean that the Indian state was viewed positively, it did help shift some public perception of the success of the armed uprising.

The Hizbul Mujahideen would not be officially defeated though. Yet it is difficult to deny that by 2000, the HM was nearly a spent force. Pakistan would start to shift towards sponsoring some Pakistani groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, giving both of these groups a much larger presence in the insurgency. The insurgency soon shifted from a domestic uprising, to a proxy war fought primarily by foreign insurgents. While the Hizbul Mujahideen was not defeated, it was backed into a corner.

With this, we can confirm hypothesis one.

Hypothesis 2: Pro-government militias decrease the likelihood of government victory in counterinsurgency campaigns.

The Ikhwan were marked men by the insurgents and their supporters. They were perceived as traitors to the cause of Azadi, and their actions certainly made them unpopular. While they were targeted, numbers do not indicate that violence increased drastically
during the time period.\footnote{For government figures going from 1988 to mid-1998, see Manoj Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, 453. Also, see South Asia Terrorism Portal, “Fatalities in Terrorist Violence 1988-2017”. Though it should go without saying, the numbers are still difficult to measure.} As detailed above there were attacks on Ikhwan members, and many of them lived in special enclaves. Yet, it is unclear how much of a strain that had on security resources. The fact that they were allowed to keep their guns and were trained militants did give them some agency in taking care of themselves. It is certainly observable that the Ikhwan did increase competition and tension among the various security forces, and journalistic accounts also detail the issues that the militia created for police forces.\footnote{Levy and Scott-Clark, \textit{The Meadow}, goes into detail about the messiness of Indian COIN, as well as the shadowy deals made by some renegades and militant groups.} So it did make the task of eliminating the insurgency harder in some respects, but these seem to be relatively minor compared to the positive military contributions detailed above.

However, the Ikhwan remained a tactic within a larger counterinsurgency strategy. As the literature on counterinsurgency (as well as the Indian DSCO) reminds us, counterinsurgency usually requires addressing the political grievances that led to the outbreak of rebellion. The Ikhwan was not used to solve the political issues in the state, but unfortunately had a political effect. By and large for most Kashmiris, whether pro or anti-India, the Ikhwan is a reminder of repression and widespread human rights abuses by the state. The group remains an example of the willingness of the Indian state to turn a blind eye to the suffering of the Kashmiris as renegades extorted the local population. Several respondents in Delhi also agreed that the Ikhwan experiment led to too many excesses in the long run, making the Kashmiri population feel more disillusioned than before. As a result, the political backlash to the group also had continued to polarize the population’s opinion towards the state.
Taking both the political and military negatives effects of the militia in Kashmir, it is clear that the military drawbacks did not overshadow its security benefits, although the resonance of its political unpopularity continues today. In sum, the evidence towards hypothesis two is mixed at best.

_Hypothesis 3: Militias composed of members of the same ethnic and/or community group as the insurgency-affected population are more effective._

_Hypothesis 4: Militias composed of former insurgents or rebels are more effective._

For both hypotheses, the Ikhwan proved itself to be effective. As members of the insurgency-affected population, it also positioned the Ikhwan members to be useful informants. This allowed them to relay information and societal information to the government to help increase their understanding of the situation. Most importantly, the renegades could live in the same villages and areas that they grew up in, and serve as eyes on the ground. They did also serve a political role; running for office and serving as the ‘local representation’ for the counterinsurgent side, but this was less successful.

As former insurgents, they were trained to fight. This made them useful in accompanying the Security Forces in conducting operations and securing areas out of reach for the Indian Army. Most importantly, the fact that they were former militants was an intelligence godsend. They understood the paths and infrastructure that was used by militants. This allowed the Ikhwan, along with the Army, to set ambushes and cut off vital logistical support for the insurgents. Perhaps even more than the fact they were part of the
same ethnic group, their statuses as former militants allowed the state to greatly weaken the insurgents.

By all indications, Hypothesis 3 and 4 are confirmed.

_Hypothesis 5: Militias that receive more support and training from the government are more effective._

As mentioned before, this would require a comparison with another militia. This will be done in the conclusion.

_Hypothesis 6: Militias are military effective in the short term, but their effectiveness decreases over the long term, and eventually becomes negative._

The assistance provided by the Ikhwan allowed the security forces to weaken the militant group to the point of near extermination, and successfully allow the state to hold elections again to restart the political machinery. In this, it is worth comparing to the initial fight against JKLF that lasted for a few years, and imploded as the infighting among the Kashmiri movement increased, Pakistan rescinded its support, and India started to implement better counterinsurgency strategies. Yet, the Hizbul Mujahideen faced a much more formidable Indian presence in the state, but was still able to mount a serious challenge to the state. However, the use of a pro-government militia played a key role in acting as a force multiplier for Indian security forces. Despite this, the political backlash has been near disastrous for the Indian nation. It did little to help address the underlying reasons that led
to the outbreak of insurgency. Indeed, it has inflamed them. Even today, the militia remains incredibly unpopular among nearly all segments of the Kashmiri population. Even most former military and security officers and analysts have admitted that the long-term effect proved disastrous.

Also, it is questionable how useful the intelligence could have been as the insurgency changed. Although they could still serve as eyes on the ground, one of the main changes to the insurgency was the dominance of groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad. Not only are these groups composed of foreigners, it is also likely that the routes and sources used for infiltration and safe houses had changed. So, while they still had some intelligence utility, it is likely that in the LeT/JeM era, their usefulness would have decreased. This combined with the fact that the Ikhwan was increasingly becoming unpopular and viewed as troublesome by the security forces and the general population seemed to lend credence to this hypothesis. Yet, the military benefits have seemed to outweigh the negatives, although it has hardened sentiment towards the Indian state. Overall, it would be fair to conclude that the Ikhwan had mixed success in India’s counterinsurgency campaign in Kashmir.

Conclusion

As the case study above demonstrated, the Ikhwan played a vital role in allowing the Indian security forces to create space for the political process to resume. Paradoxically, the excesses of the militia also made it more difficult for any political actor hoping to heal the wounds of the blood-soaked state. The marginalization of the Hizbul Mujahideen led
to the introduction of foreign, and even more extremist, groups like the infamous Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. For nearly a decade, the domestic presence in the insurgency remained marginal to the proxy war waged by Pakistan against its neighbor India. This was a much different situation than the 1990s where it was an internal uprising that provided for a foreign power like Pakistan to wage a war against its rival.

Yet, a permanent solution to the relationship between the Kashmiri Muslims in the Valley and the Indian state still remains out of reach. Indeed, the supremacy of the Indian government in the fight made it resistant to changing its policy. This refusal to fully engage in changing the political order of the Valley and continued militarization of the state has led to outbursts of public anger in 2008, 2010, and (as of this writing) an ongoing struggle that began in the summer of 2016. Perhaps more worrying is the return of the Hizbul Mujahideen and local fighters, a trend that was reasserting itself in 2015. This coupled with the failure of ruling coalitions, and a perception that the Hindu right wing is ascendant in India, continues to spell trouble in an already troubled valley.

As for the militia, the group continues to be reviled by ordinary Kashmiris, and they remain a target for militants. As recently as April 16, 2017, Ikhwan members continued to be killed. Their portrayal in mainstream Bollywood movies such as Haider also demonstrate the anger and fear of the Kashmiris towards the renegades. When then-Defence Minister Parrikar suggested on using former militants to kill militants, even

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Ikhwanis spoke out against this idea. As of now, the organization remains symbolic of an especially bloody time in Kashmiri history.
Chapter 5: The ‘Purification Hunt’ in Bastar: The *Salwa Judum* in Chhattisgarh

The Naxalite (internationally known as the Maoist)\textsuperscript{236} movement in Central India has emerged as possibly the country’s most intense and dangerous insurgency. Despite decades of counterinsurgency campaigns through several different states, the movement continued to spread. In 2010, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared that the Naxalite movement was the biggest internal security challenge facing the country, and that it was necessary to control the insurgency lest it impede the country’s economic growth.\textsuperscript{237}

The Naxalite rebellion remains one of the longest running insurgencies in the country. Accounts differ on where and when the insurgency started, but there is an agreement on the importance of the 1967 Naxalbari Uprising in West Bengal. Since then, various elements of the Maoist movement have undergone waves of uprisings and defeats, and spread to many Indian states. The insurgency has managed to gain momentum through its mobilization of the country’s marginalized *Adivasis* and lower castes. In response, the insurgency has generated a ferocious response from state and non-state actors alike. Of particular notoriety was the *Salwa Judum* in the state of Chhattisgarh. The use of the Salwa Judum proved so controversial, a petition to the Supreme Court of India eventually led to a court order demanding the dissolution of the militia. Despite this, there have been accusations that the militia continues to operate today, or that militias like the Salwa Judum should be used in counterinsurgencies in the future. As of February 2016, the Naxalites were estimated to be in 106 districts across 10 different states.\textsuperscript{238} Despite all the decades of

\textsuperscript{236} Here, the terms Maoist, Naxalite, and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) are used interchangeably.


fighting against the Naxalites, the insurgency shows little sign of ending within the near future.

This section will examine the use and effectiveness of the Salwa Judum militia in Chhattisgarh. Similar to the chapter on Kashmir, we will first give an overview of Chhattisgarh and a brief history of the general Maoist movement. The status of the Adivasis in Chhattisgarh is particularly pertinent to understanding the appeal of the Left Wing Extremist movements in the country. Following this, I will provide a brief overview of the Naxalite group in the state, and the response of the state government. Along with this, I will provide a brief overview of the counterinsurgency response in neighboring Andhra Pradesh to allow a comparison of a COIN campaigns against the Maoists with and without the use of a state sponsored militia. Finally, we will examine the use of the Salwa Judum militia, and the consequences it had on the counterinsurgency campaign.

Overview of Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh is a relatively new state in the country. It was part of the northern state of Madhya Pradesh until 2000, when the state was split upon socio-political basis rather than a linguistic basis. Part of this was due to the districts that would form Chhattisgarh being rich in mineral resources and rice production, but received a relatively small share of the overall revenue. Despite its wealth of mineral resources, Chhattisgarh remains one of the least developed states in India. In 2007-2008, Chhattisgarh had a HDI score of only

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.358, significantly lower than the national average of .467. This lack of development coupled with the India’s rapid economic expansion since 1991 has encouraged the state to aggressively make deals with various commercial enterprises to mine the various mineral resources. The state’s deals with corporations for mining rights, particularly on Adivasi land has served as an important driver for the Naxalite insurgency in the state.

The terrain of the insurgency affected areas in Chhattisgarh is particularly harsh. It remains a heavily forested area that covers over 40% of the state. The climate in the state remains a challenge also, with temperatures in the summer reaching up to over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the insurgency affected regions like Dantewada. These climate and geographic conditions has made operations being conducted by the local police and CAPF forces difficult. This is not aided by the fact that the region remains underdeveloped, with the lack of proper roads being an obstacle for anybody travelling through the region, and for connecting the Adivasi villages with the rest of the state.

The country does not possess any unique regional political parties such as the National Conference or the People’s Democratic Party. Instead, the two major parties were the BJP and the Congress party. Since 2003, the state has been led by Chief Minister Raman Singh of the BJP, with Mahendra Karma of the Congress Party serving as the leader of the opposition in the state assembly. Despite the national rivalry between the two parties, both proved to be quite supportive of the counterinsurgency campaign adopted to fight the Naxalites.

242 https://en.climate-data.org/location/24324/ ; May 12, 2017
Scheduled Tribes make up roughly 34 percent of the total population, with Scheduled Castes (Dalits) making up roughly 12 percent. Tribes and Castes that are described as ‘Scheduled’ are granted special constitutional provisions to make sure that their rights are protected, such as self-governance and protection of tribal lands from non-tribal folks. Scheduled Tribes are found throughout India, particularly in the Northeast where they form the majority communities in some states. In Chhattisgarh and other Central Indian states, ST’s are usually referred to as Adivasis, meaning original inhabitants. They are also the group that make up most of the members of both the Maoist movement in Chhattisgarh, and the Salwa Judum. In general, Scheduled Tribes remain economically deprived and under developed compared to most other Indians. While the 2011 census showed that 73 percent of Indians could read, the average for the tribes was just 59 percent. This statistic is also misleading, as Scheduled Tribes in the Northeast, which often make up the majority of their societies, have literacy rates closer to the national average.

The constituency of the Naxalite movement varies from region to region. In Bihar, the Maoists were able to gain support from the Dalits, formerly known as untouchables. In Chhattisgarh, it was the condition of the Adivasis that allowed the Naxalites to gain a foothold and build up their networks. To understand this, we must understand the

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importance of the state for mineral wealth, India’s economic growth post-1991, and Adivasi attachment to their land.

After facing a severe economic crisis, 1991 saw the implementation of multiple neo-liberal reforms. After stunting the country’s growth for nearly 40 years, Socialism in India was losing its power as the driving economic ideology in the country. The implementation of market reforms allowed the country to become one of the fastest growing economies in the world, second only to China. These economic reforms allowed the country to bring wealth to a wide section of its society. Yet in many ways, these reforms help cement existing divisions within the country. Those who were not in a position to take advantage of these reforms, e.g. Adivasis.

However, mineral resources and making deals with multi-national corporations for profit gained new prominence in this new era of liberalized India. Chhattisgarh, which has some of the richest mineral reserves in India, becomes particularly important in this light. Many of the richest mineral deposits also exists on lands inhabited by the Adivasis. Iron ore is particularly abundant in the region, with the district of Dantewada by itself having the second largest Iron ore depository in the country. Chhattisgarh, an already impoverished state, was eager to develop these resources; and the rapidly growing India was ready to consume.

This runs into conflict with the Adivasi population. As it was mentioned above, the Adivasis are given special constitutional protection over their land from being encroached by non-Tribal people. Yet, this has not been respected. Instead Adivasis have seen their

land encroached as corporations and politicians have colluded to mine on Adivasi land without sharing the profits. Sometimes this has taken on a darker form, with Adivasis forcefully cleansed from their land. As the Salwa Judum examination below will show, the militia at times acted as private foot soldiers for the sake of corporate deals.

The status and treatment of Adivasis in Indian society is far from acceptable. In a wide variety of pop culture, mythology, and attitudes, Adivasis are portrayed as backward. Two relevant examples of how Adivasis are treated and their status in Indian society is worth a brief discussion here. The first comes from the ancient Hindu epic, *The Mahabharata*. In one scene, Eklavya, a Prince of the Nishadha (Adivasi) tribes comes to the great guru Drona, who served as the instructor for the Pandavas (the heroes of the story) and the Kauravas (the cousins to the Pandavas, as well as their enemies). Drona was well known for his knowledge in the art of war and his commitment to making the Pandava, Arjuna, the greatest warrior of all time. When Eklavya approached Drona for instruction, the great guru refused, citing Eklavya’s lower caste and status as an Adivasi prince. Dejected, Eklavya left for the forest, and created a clay statue of Drona. Every day, Eklavya would practice archery in front of the statue, eventually becoming the greatest archer in the world. One day, the Pandavas and Kauravas came to the forest where they saw the Adivasi prince perform a great feat of archery. There, Eklavya declared that his mentor was Drona. Arjuna and Drona were upset by this. Drona then asked the Adivasi prince for a gift, the archer’s right thumb. Without hesitation, Eklavya cut off his right thumb. This allowed Drona to keep Eklavya from flourishing over his favorite pupil Arjuna, and Eklavya to

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248 It was tradition for the pupils of a guru to give their teacher a gift.
acknowledge Drona as his guru. While there are many interpretations to this story, lower castes and Adivasis have used it as an example where the upper castes would use their power to keep the Adivasis suppressed, and prevent them from outperforming others.

For the 2015 Telugu blockbuster, *Baahubali*, there are two different tribal communities represented. The first, the one that nurtures the protagonist of the story, are portrayed as fair-skinned folks, albeit simple. The second tribal community are portrayed as dark skinned savages. Here, even the ‘good’ tribals, simple, religious folks who help the hero achieve his great destiny are still stereotyped. Indian cinema has had a complex relationship in portraying the Adivasis, often using elements of their culture, i.e. music, for entertainment purposes. While the portrayal of Adivasis on the silver screen continues to evolve, this is still within the prism of a somewhat orientalist view of the tribals by the rest of India.

Even in the fight against the Naxalites, the Adivasis were stereotyped. Nandini Sundar, an activist-academic that has studied the Adivasis in Chhattisgarh at length has also discussed at length the attitudes engrained against the Adivasis. For the non-Adivasi security forces, the Adivasi as a Naxalite was seen as a savage and irrational thinker. Yet, a friendly Adivasi who fought against the Naxalites as a SPO was seen as ‘poor material’. Unfortunately, these social attitudes remained ingrained. At the same time, the plight of the Adivasis also bring about some sympathy from observers and civil society alike. Even Prime Minister Modi, who campaigned with a tough on terrorism platform, used more

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conciliatory language with the Maoist groups.²⁵² This relationship with the Adivasis remains one of the primary driving forces of the Naxalite insurgency in India. While we will now discuss a general history of Naxalism, it is important to keep this in mind when analyzing the political and social issues that helped lead to the insurgency.

**History of the Naxalites**

The country has had a long history of Communist-inspired insurgencies. Even prior to India’s independence, there was a Communist insurgency in the Telegana region. At the time, they were fighting against the repressive Nizam of Hyderabad, an independent territory at the time.²⁵³ After India annexed the region in 1948, the Communist party then turned its guns against the Indian state. This uprising was relatively short lived, although agitations for a separate Telugu speaking state would continue.

However, the main inspiration for Left Wing Extremism comes from a series of events in 1967. The name of the insurgency, the Naxalites, comes from the original uprising in West Bengal, in the village of Naxalbari. Charu Mazumdar, an idealist associated with one of the local Communist Parties was beginning to form his own breakaway faction. In the aftermath of the recent successful revolution organization by Mao Zedong in China, Mazumdar emerged as an enthusiastic supporter. Mazumdar set out four basic principles for anyone that wanted to join: Acceptance of Mao as the world revolutionary leader, belief that revolutionary fervor existed all around India, that seizing the wealth is the only path

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²⁵³ The territory today is part of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and as of 2014, Telegana.
forward, and that guerilla warfare was the only means for bringing about the revolution.\textsuperscript{254} He propagated his beliefs and teachings among the peasantry and poor. In 1967, he organized some of the farmers and peasants to revolt against the powerful landlords to fight against the inequality and their exploitation. The peasant movement gained traction, but would be violently be put down. Mazumdar himself would die in police custody in 1972, but his ideology would linger on.

The Naxalite movement saw revival in the mid-1980s, where it spread to a wide variety of Indian states in Central India like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh, which as noted above already had the ongoing Telegana agitations. Although splinter groups existed, they had mostly followed the same paths and goals. They would spread their teachings to those who were among the poor and marginalized, and try to organize the masses against the prevailing power structures. This took different forms throughout the states, through Dalits, Adivasis, or general class struggles. This usually resulted in a harsh reaction from those who benefited from the power structure, such as landowners, tribal leaders, etc. Often, this was done through the use of local police and private militias. This would become a familiar pattern throughout all regions where the Maoists would try and gain power. They were agitate trying to start a national revolution, those threatened by the forceful violent quo would strike back, and the Naxalites would have to recuperate or go somewhere else. Although Maoist ideology did call for the overthrow of the Indian state, this does not necessarily mean that many of its foot soldiers support this goal.

The districts of Chhattisgarh (post-2000 when it was carved from Madhya Pradesh) saw Maoist influence seep in during the 1980s as Maoists from Andhra Pradesh established

some of their bases in the forested district of Bastar (current age, the district is split into Bastar and Dantewada). They remained there for the better part of two decades until the uprising in the mid-2000s. When the insurgency took a new turn in the mid-2000s, this was one of the results of the Naxalites fleeing Andhra Pradesh’s successful COIN campaign against the group.

*Lessons From History*

Unlike Kashmir, the Maoist insurgency did not arise due to specific political issues arising from the integration of the state during the country’s independence. There is no need to address a foreign power trying to use the insurgency for its own ends; there is no desire for the Adivasis to form their own country. Rather, this is a conflict with strong socio-economic grievances, and a desire that the relationship between the Adivasis and the State is equitable and fair. This eliminates a problem of subnationalism, such as those found in the Northeast, Kashmir, or Punjab. Those conflicts necessitated a ‘restart’ of the political process, as well as finding ways to accommodate the subnationalisms within the greater Indian nationalism. Here, the people are already ready to think of themselves as “Indian”. The politics of the state has not stalled. Instead, the lower castes and Adivasis were left out of it.

*An Overview of the Naxalite Movement*

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) (CPI (Maoist)) in its most current iteration came from a merger of two different Communist groups, the Communist Party of India
(Marxist-Leninist) People’s War (most commonly known as the People’s War Group (PWG)) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI). The group came into existence on September 21, 2004, with the official announcement of the merger taking place on October 14, 2004. Since then, the Maoist movement has proved to be a powerful force able to set up its own parallel government in insurgency areas, as well as carry out powerful attacks on Indian security forces.

Unlike Kashmir or any of the other insurgencies that India has experienced, the Maoists are not looking to carve out their own separate nation. Rather, they seek the overthrow of the Indian state and a total replacement of the government. According to their constitution, the immediate aim of the organization is to accomplish the “New Democratic Resolution” in India by overthrowing imperialism, feudalism, and comprador bureaucratic capitalism. With the power of the people and the teachings of Marxist-Leninism-Maoist ideology, socialism and Communism shall be established throughout the country.

As is normal with Maoist ideology, the CPI (Maoist) argues that it will achieve its goals only through a protracted people’s war. This is the primary way it differentiates itself from other Communist parties throughout the country. While most mainstream Communist parties believe and participate in parliamentary politics, the Naxalites eschew this in favor of the gun. The clearest indication of the Naxalite thinking on strategic and tactical matters come from their publication, *Strategy and Tactics Of The Indian Revolution*. The document is extensive, analyzing the structure and actors in the Indian state, and giving detailed instructions for both the political and military branches of the organization.

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Though again, all of this is to work in conjunction with the carrying out a protracted people’s war. Here, they try to establish a foothold in rural areas to then encircle and defeat the enemy forces. By and large we see them argue that India is ripe for guerilla warfare. The thick jungles and rural areas with little to no government oversight has proven to be a boon for the group. It is hoped that the guerilla warfare phase will help bring additional manpower, allowing the group to launch a more conventional style war to overthrow the Indian state.

The organizational structure of the Maoists is best categorized as an integrated group. Both the leadership of the military and political branches seem to act together cohesively, especially with the political members playing important roles in rallying the populace and spreading Naxalite ideology. They have proved vital in setting up a government like structure that provides services and some form of governance to the people. This has also proved as an important way for the Naxalites to obtain funding. As mentioned before, the area is rich with minerals. At times, the organization has made compromises with corporations and industries. If the businesses and landlords would give money to the Maoists, they would be left untouched. Indeed at one point, an interviewer asked a Maoist member why the group did not go after large corporations like Tata and Essar, but instead focus on local representatives and tribal elders. The response: the people do not know those corporations, but they do know their local representatives.\(^{257}\) Although this went against the ideology of the Naxalites in overthrowing the landlords and corporations, this was done purely on a practical basis.

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The CPI (Maoist) also has a unique split in the organization. Of course, it has a military separate military branch composed of *Dalams*,\(^\text{258}\) and a central committee/politburo that oversees the various *Sanghams*.\(^\text{259}\) But more importantly, the leadership and the cadres differ completely. The cadre in Chhattisgarh is primarily composed of Adivasis, while the leadership remains dominated by those who are not Adivasis. The General Secretary of the Party, Ganapathi (real name Muppala Laxman Rao), is from the state now known as Telegana (formerly Andhra Pradesh). Despite fighting for the cause of oppressed people in India, few of the leadership is made up of the oppressed.\(^\text{260}\)

The group in Chhattisgarh enjoys a significant element of popular support. In many Adivasi areas, the government was practically non-existent. They knew their tribal elders and representatives, who seemed to repress them more than anything. The Maoists helped fill this governance void. They helped set up hospitals, set up their own schools, and generally took on the responsibilities of the state. Their services proved useful in gaining Adivasi loyalty. Gondi, one of the primary languages spoken by the Adivasis in Chhattisgarh, has been neglected by the Indian state, with the textbooks used by Adivasi children generally written in Hindi. The Maoists started to write their own books in Gondi, and even tried creating a unique script for the language.\(^\text{261}\) The fact that the insurgents learned to speak the Adivasi language gives them a major edge in propaganda and communication over the state.\(^\text{262}\)

\(^{258}\) Naxalite terminology of armed squads.

\(^{259}\) A Sangham refers to a village level organization set up by Maoist supporters and members who work to implement Maoist policy and propaganda.


\(^{261}\) Currently, it is written using the Hindi alphabet. It was the hope that by introducing a new script, it would help cement Adivasi identity as different than that of the Indian state. Debarshi Dasgupta, “When The Naxals Speak Your Language”, *The Wire*, May 11, 2015, accessed May 10, 2017, [https://thewire.in/1420/when-the-naxals-speak-your-language/](https://thewire.in/1420/when-the-naxals-speak-your-language/).

Most importantly, the Naxalites have proved to be a major force in the jobs that many Adivasis hold. Of particular importance is _tendu_ farming. _Tendu_ is a popular leaf that is used for rolling tobacco throughout the country, with Adivasis expending a lot of effort and time in farming this. However, Adivasis were often given low wages for their produce. With the coming of the Maoists, they helped organize the locals in obtaining benefits from the market in selling these leaves. While this seemed minor, it was through these labor and agricultural issues that the Naxalites were able to infiltrate Adivasi society, replace the old power structure, and challenge the Indian states.

However, it is questionable how deep the support for the Naxalites are. Often, it seems that support comes from the fact that the government is absent, and its representatives are exploitive. While the Constitution does give special privileges to the Adivasis, this is not realized on the ground. It is quite likely that through the implementation of government programs, as well as actual governance, that the pro-Naxalite Adivasis will support the Indian state. Of course, this does entail that some force will be used, but the establishment of governance and respect for the Adivasis Constitutional rights could weed away most support for the Adivasis. Unfortunately, India’s counterinsurgency response has often made things worse.

**The Counterinsurgency Campaign**

As can be seen above, deep issues with inequalities in society, corruption, and land rights helped lead to the outbreak and continuation of the insurgency. Unlike Kashmir,

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there is no real worry of losing the territory as the Maoists have no desire to secede. There is no worry about the presence of rival nations interfering heavily in the territory, nor does Chhattisgarh or the Adivasi areas represent an important ideological construction for the nation. In many areas where the Naxalites took root, this caused major pain to the states, but did not necessarily represent a large threat to the nation. It was not until the late 1990s that the Union government started to pay more attention to the issue, and it was not until former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared the peril of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) as the greatest internal security threat that the central government started dedicating additional funding and manpower for the COIN campaign.

Against the Maoists in Chhattisgarh, we can split the anti-Maoist response into two distinct phases. The first is the campaign between 2004-2008 that was primarily led by the State Police, the Salwa Judum, and some CAPF forces, which was then followed by Operation Green Hunt (OGH) which saw a massive influx of CAPF forces as well as additional Union government input. The Salwa Judum also played a role in OGH, albeit a much more diminished role. However, it is difficult to properly analyze the effect of a militia when we are unable to have a counterinsurgency experience sans militia to compare it to. Although it is difficult to analyze the Chhattisgarh campaign due to its presence of the Salwa Judum, it is worth comparing it to the anti-Naxalite campaign in neighboring Andhra Pradesh. Despite having a history of being a stronghold for Left-wing extremism, Andhra Pradesh managed to nearly eliminate the threat in the early 2000s.

Despite some propaganda, accusing Maoists of having relations with Pakistan’s Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), (see Nandini Sundar, The Burning Forest: India’s War in Bastar, (New Delhi: Juggernaut Books, 2016), 102-103) by and large is that, propaganda.
Chhattisgarh against the Maoists

The initial years of the counterinsurgency against the Maoists saw the local police and CAPF fighting alongside the Salwa Judum. While most of that will be discussed below, it is worth giving a brief overview of the government strategy and tactics.

Government strategy against the Naxalites tends to be heavily enemy-centric, and security focused. Although many of the issues that led to the rise of Maoists is usually due to political and development issues, there seems to be little concern for this. It has become common knowledge that the government has had little patience for conducting a ‘hearts and minds campaign’, and that the strategy seems to be heavily kinetic in nature. Instead, the government has sought to try and co-opt local powerbrokers (the Salwa Judum proved valuable in this) and conduct search and destroy operations.265

The central government’s role in this has also been sporadic. As Prakash Singh notes, the response has always fluctuated between one extreme or another, depending on the political party in power.266 During the initial years, policy that was implemented was primarily done through administrative means. This could mean fulfilling state requests for additional CAPF forces, or attempting to set up new infrastructures schemes to increase connectivity in the region.

However, it is difficult to say that the State government had a consistent, or coherent response. Rather, it let the Salwa Judum roam free in the hopes that it would wipe out the Maoist presence. This was aided by the fact that the national media did little to

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265 Lalwani, “India’s Approach to Counterinsurgency and the Naxalite Problem”.
report on the Salwa Judum campaign, and the insurgency happened in an area that received little care or attention from the rest of India. While the Kashmir COIN response did have some flaws, it still had organization and a clear idea on what the goals were, and how to achieve it. Compared to the Naxalites who had a well-developed military and political strategy in combating the Indian State, the government response has been lackluster.

*Operation Green Hunt*

Operation Green Hunt was launched in 2009, partially due to the intensification of the insurgency, as well as the failure of the State and the Salwa Judum in stopping the spread of the Naxalites. Here, the central government help strengthen the overall police presence in the state with the additional deployment of CAPF battalions to the insurgency affected region of Chhattisgarh. This saw an increase to nearly 20,000 (police) troops from the previous 6,000 troops that were stationed in the state. It is a highly kinetic response, involving massive manpower in removing the Naxalites from the affected districts. Officially, the doctrine that seems to be used is that the fight will be in three phases, clear, hold, then develop.

This was an operation that was coordinated by the Central government throughout most of the affected states. While it is questionable how different the strategy is from the

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268 It is worth noting that this is the name given to the ‘operation’ by the media. The government has not used this name.
previous era prior to Green Hunt, there seems to be some improvement in dominating additional districts. According to the most recent Annual Report put out by the Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011-2016 (when the most recent report was written) has experienced a general decline in violence and overall deaths while seeing an increase in the number of deaths of Naxalite members.\(^{271}\) The presence of Salwa Judum was also greatly diminished, although analysts and journalists alike have argued that it exists today.

While the Maoists have been taking casualties, and losing districts, it is difficult to see how this will solve the overall problem that led to the prominence of Naxalism in Chhattisgarh. There is little to suggest, besides rhetoric, that the approach is unique from the pre-2009 era, save for the additional expenditure of manpower. The approach is security-centric, with a political or developmental tract that is missing. Yet, this is not much different from the pre-2009 response where political responses were absent, and developmental programs faced numerous issues in implementation.\(^{272}\) However, the central government did start establishing a sort of unified command to help coordinate security operations, though this has had multiple fissures.\(^{273}\)

While it is important that the Union government get more involved in coordinating the states in combatting the Maoists, its security response is muddled, not to say anything of its political or development response. Nor in Chhattisgarh, was the Salwa Judum ever really gone, just weakened. For proper comparison of a COIN operation without the militia, let us now look at how the Andhra Pradesh government fought Left Wing Extremism.

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Andhra Pradesh and the Greyhounds

Andhra Pradesh was able to severely reduce, if not completely end, its Naxalite rebellion by the mid-2000s. It was so significant that Maoist General Secretary, Ganapati, admitted that the organization suffered serious losses in the state.\(^{274}\) It was due to their loss in Andhra Pradesh that the Naxalites that were organized there had to relocate to Chhattisgarh and focus on the Adivasi areas of other nearby states. Part of this success came from the creation of the Greyhounds, an anti-Maoist special unit, that proved effective in forcing the Naxalites out of the state. The perceived success of the Andhra Pradesh model has led other states to try and adopt elements of the strategy, namely the creation of a Greyhounds-like unit. However, the Andhra Pradesh model is a little more sophisticated than just the creation of a special forces-like unit. Nor is the model an unqualified success. Nevertheless, the Andhra Pradesh model and the Greyhounds provide an interesting comparison to the Chhattisgarh and Salwa Judum response.

Since the beginning of the Naxalite insurgency, Andhra Pradesh remained one of the principally affected by the insurgency. Indeed, it was through Andhra Pradesh that the Maoists first entered Bastar. The 1980s and 1990s saw the state battling multiple Communist groups, who all would later make peace and form an even large Maoist organization. At its peak, the insurgency affected 21 of the state’s 23 districts.\(^{275}\) The state also suffered higher fatalities compared to other states fighting the insurgency, losing 3,600


people between 1990 and 2000. The government tried multiple approaches, from
development, police work, etc. In 2004, the Maoists offered a ceasefire, potential to
recuperate from recent losses due to police action. However, this collapsed in 2005, which
saw a new COIN campaign being undertaken. This campaign would prove to be successful
and nearly eliminate the Maoist threat to the state.

One highly publicized aspect of the state’s COIN campaign was the development
of the Greyhounds. The Greyhounds were a specialized police force that first began in 1989
specifically for countering the Naxalite insurgency. They members of the force were
selected police officers from the regular state police that received higher pay, advanced
weaponry, as well as the relevant linguistic, geographic, and political knowledge necessary
and relevant to operating in Maoist controlled areas. They also learned the art of guerrilla
warfare similar to that practiced by the Maoists in Nepal and China. When peace talks were
called off in the 2004, the force was credited with the arrest or killings of 40 Maoist leaders,
as well as arresting or forcing the surrender of 9,000 Naxalite cadres.

Besides the advanced equipment and tactics, the Greyhounds were developed in
conjunction with two other crucial factors. One was the curation of a better intelligence
network, the second was a better trained and equipped police force. During the ceasefire
and peace talks, the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) of the local police and the
Greyhounds cultivated informers throughout the Maoist-affected areas. When the
ceasefire collapsed, they were able to use this network to great effect in driving out the
insurgents. The better police force also proved crucial. At the end of the day, the

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276 Ibid.
Greyhounds were unable to hold onto territory and defend it. The Greyhounds primarily conducted raids and small team attacks, it was up to the regular state police to help the state dominate the territory. This was achieved through the investment of additional training centers, weaponry, and modernization of the state police in Andhra Pradesh. All of this helped augment the capability of the Greyhounds. As Ajai Sahni put it, “You cannot have a first-class counter-insurgency response in a third-class police force.”

Despite their success, there are two deficiencies to the Andhra Pradesh and Greyhounds model. The first issue was with displacement, an issue that is discussed further below. The second was the necessary investment needed to make the Greyhounds a successful force. The use of the Greyhounds did not solve the Naxalite problem in the region. Rather, the Maoists fled Andhra Pradesh and refocused its fight in states like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. While Andhra Pradesh could claim success in reducing Naxalite violence, it’s hard for the counterinsurgent to claim it’s a victory when you simply push the insurgents into a different part of the country. However, this should not necessarily reflect negatively on the efforts of the Andhra Pradesh government, but rather the importance of all affected states in coordinating their security operations and continuing development work, under the auspices and guidance of the union government.

On the second point, no one can deny the importance in investing in specialized police forces to counteract insurgencies. Nevertheless, the Greyhounds had the benefit of nearly two decades of training, setup, and institutional learning prior to becoming an

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280 Ibid

effective anti-Maoist force. Without doubt, most states and governments would prefer a short and easily implementable solutions to the problems of insurgency. An investment on a force that takes 20 years before becoming truly effective is a long time to wait, especially as state and central forces are already fighting.

Lastly, the Greyhounds were a security measure. There needs to be a political program that follows the implementation of security measures. The Greyhounds did create space for a political solution to be implemented, such as the execution of development assistance or anything else to help improve the lives of those living in the Naxalite affected regions. The results of this political and development strategies are mixed. Arjit Mazumdar has argued that the Andhra government had both repressive approaches as well as political and development assistance.282 Working consequently with the security approach and taking advantage of the state’s high economic growth, the state government approved new programs to help develop the tribal areas, and lead to better delivery of goods and services.283 This was complemented by a political approach that encouraged Maoists to surrender and integrate within the existing political process, and delegated more autonomy to district administrators who usually were made up of local folks, especially tribals.284

Yet, a survey taken in the Maoist-cleared districts of Andhra Pradesh showed that a plurality believed that exploitation had actually increased since the Naxalites left, as well as a majority still sympathizing with the Maoists.285 Nor is there much to suggest that the

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282 Mazumdar, “The ‘Andhra Model’”.
284 Ibid, 455-456.
285 Lalwani, “India’s Approach to Counterinsurgency and the Naxalite Problem”.

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peace is permanent. Indeed, intelligence officers and officials working in Andhra believe that the lull is only temporary.\textsuperscript{286}

The Andhra Pradesh COIN campaign serves as an important model for other states fighting against Maoist insurgency. However, there are several factors that are worth noting that might make utilizing the model elsewhere troublesome. Nonetheless, the overall success of the Greyhound has become an interesting contrast to the approach to what the Chhattisgarh government undertook in its counterinsurgency campaign. While Andhra Pradesh has the Greyhound force, Chhattisgarh had the so called ‘Peace March’. Despite its popular reputation as a savage militia, the question remains, what actual effects did the Salwa Judum have on the counterinsurgency campaign.

\textbf{The Salwa Judum}

The Salwa Judum in Gondi is usually translated as ‘Purification Hunt’, although the official government preference was to term the militia as ‘Peace March’. The use of the Salwa Judum proved to be counterproductive for the state of Chhattisgarh. The controversy over the Salwa Judum’s role in the campaign against the Naxalites led to a Supreme Court decision that would declare the group illegal and forbid any other state from carrying out any similar experiments with civilians.

**History and Background**

The origins of the Salwa Judum are contested. Its supporters and the government have claimed that the militia was a grassroots uprising by Adivasis disgruntled with the Naxalites. In this narrative, the Naxalite leadership that entrenched itself in the Adivasis villages were insensitive to the local cultures and traditions. There were also accusations that the Naxalites had prevent some of the Adivasis from collecting *tendu* leaves, which served as the livelihoods for many of the Tribal people. In this account, the Salwa Judum was a ‘people’s uprising’, a spontaneous reaction by the locals to the Maoist insurgency.

As the Salwa Judum gained more prominence, this narrative of the militia put forward by the state government was contested. Most accounts now have argued that rather than a spontaneous ‘people’s uprising’ against Naxalite terror, it was a government initiative to create the organization. In the 1990s, Mahendra Karma, an Adivasi politician belonging to the Congress Party organized a militia called the *Jan Jagran Abhiyan* to fight against the Maoists. Unlike the Salwa Judum, the Jan Jagran Abhiyan did not receive state support, and collapsed by 1998. By 2002, the militia was more or less defunct.

In 2005 with the resurgent Naxalite insurgency, and a realization of the lucrative potential for anti-Naxalism, Karma helped launch the Salwa Judum. Despite being an opposition leader in what is a BJP-run state, Karma managed to gain bipartisan support for this experiment. By portraying it as an uprising, the state of Chhattisgarh would fight the

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290 Ibid
narrative that the Naxalites had popular support, bring a positive reputation to the state government, and fight against the idea that the struggle was primarily one of socio-economic grievances. This coincided with the Chhattisgarh government signing a 1.6 billion dollar contract with various power industries. Mahendra Karma himself laughed at the prospect of addressing development while the Naxalites still remained in the state. Yet while there is evidence of the government helping to create the Salwa Judum, it did coincide with a time that many Adivasis were getting angry at the Naxalites. As mentioned above, the Naxalites did upend some Tribal power structures, as well as interfere with Adivasi livelihood.

SPOs, also Special Police Officers, are a way for the state and central police to deputize locals. It serves as a useful tool for the various police forces to gain additional manpower on the cheap. Although cheap, the recruitment of SPOs also can provide some form of compensation and work for those living in conflict zones. However, while the intention of the act allowing for the creation of SPOs was to be seen as a temporary supplement for the police forces, the state seemed to use it as an inexpensive way to obtain foot soldiers. Each SPO and Salwa Judum member would be given a 1,500 Rupee monthly stipend, and receive 1 lakh (100,000) Rupees if they died in battle.

294 Interview with Aai Sahni.
295 Nandini Sundar, Burning Forest, 193.
296 People’s Union for Civil Liberties, Where the State Makes War On Its Own People, April 2006, 24.
comparison, a regular cop earned 9,000 Rupees a month, and those who died due to Naxal violence could receive benefits up and payment worth up to 25 lakh Rupees.

It is also important to note that SPOs were traditionally used for special situations such as riots and unlawful assembly, not must more dangerous problems like counterinsurgency and guerilla warfare. However, the use of SPOs in Chhattisgarh to fight the Naxalites was an abuse of the system, and against the regulations laid out by the Madhya Pradesh Police Regulations (which were adopted by Chhattisgarh upon its split from the state).

Many Salwa Judum members and some of its leaders were given SPO status in order to be seen as a legitimate force to outsiders. However upon closer inspection, this designation is contestable. As Jason Miklian revealed on his paper on the Salwa Judum, the term SPO can be applied to individuals that serve as ‘official’ SPOs, but also to clandestine informants and Salwa Judum members. In the latter two cases, the title is ‘honorific’, or sometimes even given out by those who normally would not have the authority to do so. Many Salwa Judum members who claim to be SPOs do not carry identification, pledge their allegiance to the militia rather than the security forces, and are not even recognized by the state as a SPO. Others used the Salwa Judum movement to obtain SPO status for their own benefit, in the hopes that it would lead to a more stable job with the police force. It is worth noting that the state, especially Adivasi areas, had

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300 Ibid.
elevated levels of unemployment. The prospect of gaining stable employment, especially with a government job, was desirable.

Mahendra Karma emphasized in a meeting with civil society members that the Salwa Judum was not a tribal movement, but rather a movement that consisted of all that were affected by the Naxalites.303 Many Salwa Judum members and leaders were Adivasis, but usually from the upper classes of Adivasi society.304 Due to this, they were often targeted by the Naxalites and their Sangham members. The Salwa Judum provided an avenue for these people to strike back. Other people who joined the Salwa Judum were non-Adivasi members that were from the area, or those that were forcibly recruited. Indeed, it is a common story to hear about Adivasi households who have had children that were recruited into the militia.305 Many ‘surrendered’ Maoists also took part in the Salwa Judum. However, there have been accusations that these so-called ‘surrendered’ members were either coerced to join after being captured, or were just bystanders who were forcibly recruited. Another controversial element of the Salwa Judum membership was the use of child soldiers to help fill the ranks. When Maoists would attack the Salwa Judum bases and relief camps, it was often the child soldiers who fought in the militia that were killed.306

Despite being a measure to help make up for the lack of a strong local police presence, the state did little to materially support the group. The training the Adivasis would receive from the state was minimal. Some reports seemed to indicate that few Salwa Judum members were properly trained in weapon handling.307 Despite this, Salwa Judum

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303 Independent Citizens Initiative, War in the Heart of India, 20.
304 Personal Interview with Shubhranshu Choudhary, February 2016, Skype. while still relatively poor, they were often villages heads or contained more wealth, land, or power than other Adivasis. Many of these were undermined by Maoist Sangham members, and would face harassment or threats. This helped drive some recruitment to the Salwa Judum.
306 Sundar, Burning Forest, 141-142.
307 ICI, War in the Heart of India, 23.
members were often sent into dangerous situations with nothing but bow and arrows, and World War II vintage .303 rifles. This did put them at a distinct disadvantage against the Naxalites who often possessed more sophisticated weaponry. The police forces were reluctant to hand over more advanced firearms to the group. There was a fear that weapons given to the Salwa Judum could end up in the hands of the Maoists, either through looting or defection. There was also some level of distrust between the security forces and the Salwa Judum, with some officials fearing that training the group could lead to training Maoist double agents. This was also coupled with the view that Salwa Judum members were expendable. However, as the conflict advanced, the government would provide the group with more powerful weapons such as the Ak-47.

The primary way that the government supported the group (save some training and weapons) was through political support and shielding complaints about it. Despite the large scale human rights abuses carried by Salwa Judum members, the government avoided filing any cases against the militia members. While Maoist attacks were recorded, Salwa Judum attacks were not. This happened despite the fact that police officers would often be present when these attacks would happen.

The Salwa Judum was brutal, to say the least. It is not uncommon to find analysis that would characterize the violence carried out by the group as a scorched earth policy. Villages would be burned down and the residents forcefully removed into relief camps run by the militia. Although there were some citizens who legitimately had fled Naxalite

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308 Ibid
309 Jason Miklian, Purification Hunt, 444.
310 Ibid, 445
311 K.S. Subramanian, Political Violence and the Police in India, 141-142.
violence, most were civilians that were herded into the camps by the Salwa Judum.

‘Strategic hamletting’ or the removal of people from remote villages to camp for COIN purposes, became central to the tactics adopted by the Salwa Judum.313 The militia had some financial incentive to do this, as the camps were given 100 rupees a day per a resident.314 Villagers who would not obey the militia’s orders faced beatings and torture. As will be discussed further below, the human rights violations committed by the group was horrific. It led to the displacement of between 40,000-60,000 civilians in Salwa Judum-run camps, with nearly 100,000 people displaced overall.315 The relief camps themselves were pitiful. Often, Salwa Judum members would kill those who annoyed or angered them, and prevent villagers from leaving.316

Prior to the 2011 Supreme Court decision in India, the Maoists were able to retaliate and greatly weaken the militia. As it was, the militia was poorly equipped, increasingly unpopular among the public as well as civil society, and were in a terrain that made protection difficult to procure. This led to large scale attacks against the Salwa Judum which proved devastating. According to one observer, the Naxalite response to the Salwa Judum nearly led to the militia being defeated, militarily marginalizing it.317 In 2008, the continued attacks by Maoists and the increasing loss of political support led Karma to announce that the group might soon cease to exist.318

During the same period, civil society also started to raise awareness on the atrocities carried out by the security forces and the Salwa Judum. Of particular importance was a

313 Chenoy and Chenoy, Maoist and Other Armed Conflicts, 101-107.
315 Interview with Shu Choudhury.
316 Jason Miklian, Purification Hunt, 451-452.
317 Sunad, Burning Forest, 137-139.
318 Ramasubbu, “How the Salwa Judum Experiment Went Wrong”.
report by the Independent Citizens Initiative (ICI) led by renowned academics like Ramachandra Guha and Nandini Sundar. The group organized trips to the conflict affected zones where they talked with personal from all sides of the conflict to understand what was happening. The release of this report led to the participants of the ICI to file a Public Interest Litigation against the state of Chhattisgarh over the human rights abuses in the fight against the Naxalites, through the Salwa Judum.\textsuperscript{319} This led to the decision that called for the dismantlement of the militia in 2011.\textsuperscript{320} The case continues today, as the petitioners attempt to try and hold the perpetrators of the violence accountable.

**Positive Contributions**

Like the Ikhwan case study, the Salwa Judum were made up of members of the local community who knew the area well. Even those who were deeply critical of the movement did point out that they served important intelligence roles for the security forces. Their knowledge of the rough terrain was of importance, as well as their knowledge of the Gondi language. Similar to the Ikhwan, many Salwa Judum members knew the people in their village well, and often who was associated with the Naxalites.

As illustrated above, an important reason for utilizing the Salwa Judum was due to the lack of manpower needed to fight the Naxalites. The various police forces were poorly trained, they did not know the terrain, and there were some indications that the security forces were unwilling to put their lives in danger to attack the Maoists. At the time of the


\textsuperscript{320} Ibid
litigation against the state of Chhattisgarh, the state’s counsel argued that the Salwa Judum was necessary due to the fear of local police officers in fighting the Maoists.\textsuperscript{321}

Especially with the overwhelming number of security force personnel that were not from Chhattisgarh nor Adivasis, the Salwa Judum provided a local face to the counterinsurgency campaign. It allowed pro-government Adivasis to serve as a political counterpoint to Naxalite propaganda, and it gave an intelligence benefit to the police forces. Indeed, one fact of particular pertinence was that while the leadership of the Naxalite movement were overwhelmingly upper caste outsiders to the Adivasi community, the head and some other members of the Salwa Judum leadership were Adivasis. Although not all Salwa Judum members were Adivasis, they were still locals to the area.\textsuperscript{322}

Upon its introduction, the Salwa Judum did cause some damage to the Naxalites. Through the attacks on the Sangham and additional intelligence that they were bringing to the police forces, the Maoists were on the retreat to interior areas of the state.\textsuperscript{323} This inevitably affected their control over the population, although this was achieved by forcibly removing tens of thousands of people from their home. However, this additional military benefit was short-lived, with the Maoists conducting large scale attacks on the Salwa Judum and their relief camps.\textsuperscript{324}

\textit{Negative Contributions}

\textsuperscript{321} Chenoy and Chenoy, \textit{Maoist and Other Armed Conflicts}, 104-105.
\textsuperscript{322} Interview with Shu Choudhury.
\textsuperscript{323} Prakash Singh, \textit{Irregular Warfare}, 73.
\textsuperscript{324} It is worth noting that in the minds of Salwa Judum members, like Mahendra Karma, the presence of the Salwa Judum forced the Naxalites to bring in their cadres from other districts in order to meet the challenge posed by the militia. ICI, \textit{War in the Heart of India}, 20.
Out of all the militias that have been examined in this paper, probably none have been quite as egregious in their human rights violations as the Salwa Judum. Displacement, rape, extrajudicial killings, horrible conditions in camps, pillaging, false arrests, child soldiers, forced conscription, and harassment of media and activists were all too common. Burning down entire villages became well documented and known among the Adivasi population. While this was done to force villagers to come to their camps, the Judum members also started burning houses once Maoists started placing booby traps in them.\textsuperscript{325} The litigation brought against the Salwa Judum accused the organization of having killed 548 people, and the rape of 99 women.\textsuperscript{326}

The weak training and human rights violations helped strengthen the Naxalites. In May of 2005, the Naxalites had a presence in 9 out of sixteen districts in the state of Chhattisgarh, with four districts where it was trying to expand into.\textsuperscript{327} By 2008, they had expanded into 10 districts.\textsuperscript{328} Even in districts that were not formally under their control, they were able to expand their influence.\textsuperscript{329} This was aided by the fact that the Salwa Judum and Chhattisgarh government made being neutral nearly impossible. It became that either one joins the Naxalites for protection, otherwise they would be victims of the Salwa Judum. The horrific actions of the Salwa Judum also led many to join the Communist group for the hope of achieving revenge. Although difficult to measure, journalists with experience in the region have said that the result of Salwa Judum actions led to a noticeable increase in Adivasis joining the Naxalite movement.\textsuperscript{330} According to one journalist, in 2005, the

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\textsuperscript{325} Nandini Sundar, \textit{Burning Forest}, 143.
\textsuperscript{326} Choudhary, \textit{Let’s Call Him Vasu}, 176.
\textsuperscript{327} Asian Centre for Human Rights, “The Adivasis of Chhattisgarh: Victims of the Naxalite Movement and Salwa Judum Campaign”, \textit{Asian Centre for Human Rights}, March 17, 2006, 8.
\textsuperscript{330} Interview with Shu Choudhury.
\end{flushright}
Naxalites were planning to create a second company of fighters for December 2006 to face the additional challenge of the Salwa Judum. However, the influx of Adivasis that joined the Maoists in the aftermath of the militia’s campaign allowed the Communists to create seven new companies by March 2006.\textsuperscript{331} The Salwa Judum proved to be such a boon that a Maoist publication published an article titled “Thank You Salwa Judum”.\textsuperscript{332}

It was no secret that the Salwa Judum also did little to help restore law and order to the insurgency affected areas. Instead, the Salwa Judum would use corrupt methods to get additional funding meant for the camps, that ended in their own pockets. In the camps, the Salwa Judum leaders acted like warlords. Not only did these leaders redirect money given to them by the state, creating contracts with private companies for security provision, they also met on a regular basis to divide up newly acquired territory.\textsuperscript{333} At one point, there were even discussions within the security forces on how to respond should the militia decide to break free from the state.\textsuperscript{334} This all suggests a dangerous lack of control and regulation by the state of its non-state ally.

The political fallout from supporting the Salwa Judum proved to be negative also. Several civil society organizations that examined the Salwa Judum published damning reports on the atrocities carried out by the militia. International organizations and media also started to pay attention, leading to additional scrutiny on what was happening in the forests of Bastar. This led to activists and academics to take the state of Chhattisgarh to the Supreme Court, which declared the use of the Salwa Judum unconstitutional. Regardless of how one felt about the Naxalite forces, it was difficult to try and put the Salwa Judum

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\textsuperscript{331} Choudhury, \textit{Let’s Call Him Vasu}, 184.
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid, 185
\textsuperscript{333} Jason Miklian, \textit{Purification Hunt}, 449-450
\textsuperscript{334} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
in good light. Rather than the focus being on the Naxalites, the spotlight was put on the state government.

The group was poorly equipped, with bows and arrows and guns from a different era, going against a much better trained, and better equipped insurgency force. The training was also spotty. As SPOs were not usually used for COIN operations, and training was only two weeks long.335 But as it was mentioned above, police forces avoided serious training with the militia members due to CAPF suspicions of the militia’s true loyalty, and the view that the militia was expendable. Within a couple of years, the Maoists were able to militarily marginalize the Salwa Judum, even before the Indian government ordered its dismantlement. The process started in 2006, when the Naxalites started a campaign against the Salwa Judum, with attacks on their relief camps and processions.336 Similar to the Salwa Judum campaign, this led to yet another escalation of violence, this time carried out by Maoist forces.

One of the most unfortunate aspects of the Salwa Judum was that it facilitated the militarization of Adivasi lands. Of course, the Maoist, state, and central forces all contributed to this, but the Salwa Judum helped escalate this. In many ways, the Salwa Judum operated as a civil war within Adivasi society. It is not uncommon to hear stories about households where one child fought for the Naxalites, and one fought for the government.337 The area also became the focus of continued paramilitary operations that

335 Miklian, “Purification Hunt”, 445. Although some Salwa Judum members were given higher quality guns, such as the AK, this was not the case initially.
336 Nandini Sundar, Burning Forest, 110-111.
affects the lives of the tribals today. Unfortunately, the escalation in conflict caused the Adivasis to pick up a gun as the area became flooded with militiants and policemen.

**Evaluation**

The Salwa Judum has become associated with the failures and excesses of Indian counterinsurgency against the Naxalites. It has become the subjects of numerous articles, books, and other discussions. Despite the negative perception that the militia has, how was the group’s overall contribution to the COIN campaign, as well as its comparison to the local security forces? Here now, we see how the militia confirms or rejects the hypotheses laid out in the beginning.

*Hypothesis 1: Pro-government militias increase the likelihood of government victory in counterinsurgency campaigns.*

Theoretically, the Salwa Judum should have been a major force multiplier for the Chhattisgarh security forces. On the political level, it seemed to represent an Adivasi uprising against the Naxalites. The militia was supposed to be proof that the Maoists who claimed to care about the plight of the Adivasis, now saw the Adivasis revolt against them. Salwa Judum members had knowledge of the land, language, as well as important Naxalite members who operated in the villages. Finally, the Salwa Judum introduced additional manpower to the fight against a well-organized enemy. Indeed, some of this was crucial to pushing LWE back in the initial years, as well as inflicting some losses onto the Maoist
forces and their leadership. Yet, the Salwa Judum did not increase the likelihood of government victory.

If there was one thing that my interviewees could all agree on, it was that the Salwa Judum was described as “disastrous” at worst, or not successful at best. Nor does the literature or public discussions on the group seem much different. The operational successes achieved with the group disappeared within a year. It is partially due to the escalation in violence and the failure of the Salwa Judum to counteract the issue of Left Wing Extremism that led to the government announcing Operation Green Hunt in 2009. If there was anything that the Salwa Judum had proved, it was that the Naxalites could not have wished for a better enemy. The onslaught of the Salwa Judum practically revigorated the Communist insurgency. Based on our previous discussions above, using large scale violence will not necessarily hurt the counterinsurgent cause, but only if it can devastate the insurgents. This did not happen. Of course, the Adivasis were forced to pick a side, and few wanted to join the side that they saw was causing the most amount of damage, which was the Salwa Judum in this case. Not only did this help reinvigorate the Naxalites, it also helped the insurgents gain additional support. Truly, the use of the Salwa Judum hurt the chance of government victory in Chhattisgarh’s counterinsurgency campaign.

With this, we can reject hypothesis 1.

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338 Mukherji, Maoists in India, 80.
Hypothesis 2: Pro-government militias decrease the likelihood of government victory in counterinsurgency campaigns.

Due to the actions of the Salwa Judum, the conflict escalated and the Maoists hit back hard. The overall military effect of the movement proved to be minimal, with the violence carried out by the militia being counterproductive in the effort to weaken the Naxalites. Instead, the Naxalites could use the indiscriminate violence of the Salwa Judum to their own advantage and replenish their ranks. The Naxalites emerged stronger than it had been prior to the Salwa Judum.

Politically, it also turned out to be harmful. It brought both national and international attention to the violence carried out in the state, as well as the horrific actions carried out by the militia. The Adivasis, whose support the Naxalites thrive on, ran to the Communist group for protection. The Salwa Judum made neutrality disappear and force the locals to choose a side. This did not work out in the favor of the state.

The ‘political’ aspect of the Salwa Judum also proved to be a failure. Rather than being an avenue for tribal youths to rally behind, it soon became exposed as a government machination. Although there was an element of anger among some Adivasis against the heavy handedness of the Naxalites, its relationship with the government did not help matters. In a period where the Adivasis were angry at their exploitation by the government and corporations, what would be more unpopular than a pro-government, pro-corporation militia that inflicted horrific atrocities onto the population?

The notoriety of the Salwa Judum led to the Supreme Court banning the group, as well as all SPOs. This is certainly troublesome for normal police activity which usually
call on the use of SPOs that do not threaten the lives of civilians, as well as the use of irregular forces like the Village Defence Councils (VDC) which maintain proper police regulation as well as a continuous chain of command. While it is questionable how much of the Supreme Court judgment has been implemented, this nevertheless has affected how the country will have to engage with future counterinsurgency campaigns.

With this, we can confirm hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3: Militias composed of members of the same ethnic and/or community group as the insurgency-affected population are more effective.

The fact that the Salwa Judum was composed of Adivasis helped in several ways. First, it provided a useful propaganda point for the government to portray the organization as an uprising of tribal folk against the power of the Naxalites. Second, it also gave the state a cadre of people who can communicate in the local language, as well as know the geography of the region where the fighting took place. Compared to the local police forces and CAPF forces, they indeed were an important intelligence asset. They did possess better knowledge of the terrain and were better positioned to identify Maoist members and supporters. However, as it has been mentioned before, they were not trained as well as any of the police officers, nor were they able to stop Maoist attacks on their own. Whether they were more effective overall against the Maoists is still certainly mixed in the military sense, although the political impact was not optimal.

In comparison with the Greyhounds, they were not effective. The Greyhounds had their own intelligence networks, exceptional knowledge of the area they fought in, as well
as fighting power. Simply put, the establishing of specialized police forces here outperformed a militia composed of locals. Although this did result in the displacement of Naxalites rather than their elimination, it is still important to acknowledge their success.

Overall, it is difficult to say that the Salwa Judum was effective. Especially when one compares it to the efforts carried out by other states like Andhra Pradesh in establishing a specialized police presence to combat the Maoist insurgency. Even when compared to the CRPF which was composed of outsiders, the Salwa Judum was a weak military asset.

With this, we can reject hypothesis 3.

**Hypothesis 4: Militias composed of former insurgents or rebels are more effective.**

Although there were some former Maoists in the militia, it is difficult to evaluate them separately from the other Salwa Judum members. Nor were there accurate numbers on how much of the militia was composed of former insurgents. Because of this, this hypothesis is irrelevant to the case study. This will be explored in the conclusion alongside the Ikhwan militia.

**Hypothesis 5: Militias that receive more support and training from the government are more effective.**

This will be discussed in relation to the Ikhwan case study in the conclusion.
Hypothesis 6: Militias are military effective in the short term, but their effectiveness decreases over the long term, and eventually becomes negative.

Upon their introduction to the conflict, they did indeed put the Naxalite on the retreat. However, this only served as a temporary setback. Due to the actions of the Salwa Judum, the Naxalites were able to gain additional recruits and mount a powerful counterattack against the militia as well as the security forces. Within a year, the Salwa Judum’s military successes were erased. Politically, this experiment was nothing short of a disaster. Not only did it alienate a large section of the population that the state was supposed to protect, it also led the central government to disavow the entire movement. There is some reason to believe that Operation Green Hunt had to be enacted due to the failure of the state government and the Salwa Judum. By most accounts, the Salwa Judum put the state in a worse position for fighting the Maoists.

As I said earlier in this paper, the Salwa Judum served the main hypothesis building case study. It is no surprise that hypothesis 6 is confirmed.

Conclusion

The threat of Left Wing Extremism remains one of India’s longest lasting problems. From the Communist inspired Telegana movements in the late 1940s, to the current Naxalite insurgency since 1967, the insurgency has spread far and wide. This has led to often brutal response by the state in order to quash the insurgency, as well as prevent large scale changes to the status quo. The fact that some of India’s most marginalized groups have taken part in these rebellions should have caused some introspection among
policymakers. Alas, this was not to be so. Instead of building up properly trained security forces and working on a more equitable social contract with the Adivasis and lower castes, groups like the Salwa Judum have exacerbated the conflict.

Despite the Supreme Court Order, activists and academics have argued that they have done little enforcement. While some have contended that the Salwa Judum is active today, albeit in a weaker form, others have pointed out that the state is trying to create a second version of the militia. Mahendra Karma’s son, Chhavindra Karma, announced the creation of an anti-Maoist militia to carry on the work of the Salwa Judum.339 This flies in the face of what the Supreme Court had demanded. If this case study is any indication of what effects this Salwa Judum 2 might have, the future of counterinsurgency operations in Chhattisgarh look bleak.

Although the conflict has always been dangerous for activists, journalists, and academics alike, recent events have given little hope that the situation will improve. A personal acquaintance that works in the Naxalite areas informed me of efforts by the government to prevent funding of NGOs working in the area, especially if they might report on human rights violations carried out by the State. This was part of a larger effort of arresting and harassing journalists, accusing them of being linked to the Naxalite insurgents.340

Perhaps the most infamous example of this was the murder allegations against academic/activist Nandini Sundar, Archana Prasad, Vineet Tiwari, and others for the

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murder of a tribal on November 4, 2016.\footnote{The Hindu, “DU Professor Nandini Sundar Booked for Tribal Man’s Murder”, The Hindu, December 8, 2016, accessed May 10, 2017, \url{http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/DU-professor-Nandini-Sundar-booked-for-tribal-man%E2%80%99s-murder/article16440119.ece}.} This of course was carried out by Inspector General (Bastar Range) SRP Kalluri. Kalluri remains one of the major figures in charge of the state’s counterinsurgency campaign in South Chhattisgarh, especially post-2014. Many activists, journalists, and even senior police officials have characterized him as authoritarian, especially when they delve into the exact details of his so-called lauded policy against the Maoists.\footnote{Prashant Jha, “Bastar’s IGP Kalluri: Both Lauded as a Hero and Damned as a Villain”, Hindustan Times, April 7, 2016, accessed May 10, 2017, \url{http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/bastar-s-igp-kalluri-both-lauded-as-a-hero-and-damned-as-a-villain/story-QwkgtrhdHplDaentBy5bcK.html}.} Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was around the same time that Nandini Sundar had published a book detailing the counterinsurgency war in Bastar, especially as it relates to the Salwa Judum.

The murder charge itself is ridiculous. Despite the victim’s wife stating that she never accused the academics of the crime,\footnote{Siddharth Ranjan Das, “Never Named Anyone, Says Wife of Murdered Tribal on Professor Nandini Sundar”, NDTV, November 11, 2016, accessed May 10, 2017, \url{http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/never-named-anyone-says-wife-of-murdered-tribal-on-professor-nandini-sundar-1624206}.} the state police attempted to continue on their campaign to intimidate critics. According to the charge, the activists had come to the victim’s village on May of 2016 where Nandini Sundar, under a fake name, threatened the tribal people who were protesting against Maoist atrocities. This eventually led to the tribals being incited, and killing the victim…nearly six months later. The circumstances of the case would lead any balanced reader to dismiss the charge as ludicrous. Unfortunately, these remain real challenges to those commenting on the counterinsurgency campaign in Bastar.

Nor does it seem that the counterinsurgency will be concluded anytime soon. On April 24, 2017, the Naxalites killed 24 CRPF troops in Sukma, making it the deadliest
attack since 2010. The attack reignited nationalistic sentiment, and the government spent its time criticizing human rights activists rather than investigating the reason why the CRPF was so easily ambushed. Unfortunately, many of the same issues that plague the security forces in Chhattisgarh continue today, and the war shows no sign of stopping, to the detriment of the Adivasis who continue to be brutalized.


Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion

Review of Results and Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Pro-government militias increase the likelihood of government victory in counterinsurgency campaigns.

With the help of the Ikhwan ul-Muslimoon in Kashmir, the Indian security forces were able to cause great damage onto the Hizbul Mujahideen. On the military front, the intelligence and aid provided by the Ikhwan to their handlers proved invaluable. Indeed, the Ikhwan era saw the near defeat of the Hizbul Mujahideen, which led Pakistan to find other proxies that it could support in order to strike at India. Most importantly, the use of the Ikhwanis helped the Indian government hold state elections, a major step to restoring law and order, and symbolic of the power of the Indian nation-state. Although the militia did lead to some negative consequences, by and large, hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

On the other hand, the Salwa Judum’s era proved disastrous. Rather than inflicting hard blows onto the Naxalites, the excess of the militia allowed the insurgents to strike back even harder. This led to an escalation of the conflict, and started to portray the Chhattisgarh government as ones who will gladly sacrifice the entire population to the Salwa Judum. Despite some initial setbacks, the Salwa Judum experiment became a boon for the Naxalites, and led to a more divided, and more powerful insurgent force. By nearly all counts, the Salwa Judum put the counterinsurgents in a worse position than prior to the force’s introduction. Here, hypothesis 1 is rejected.
Hypothesis 2: **Pro-government militias decrease the likelihood of government victory in counterinsurgency campaigns.**

Although they helped deal some devastating blows to the Kashmiri insurgent groups, the renegades also helped cement the disillusionment Kashmiri Muslims felt towards the Indian state. Even the supporters of the Ikhwan admitted that the militia committed too many excesses which did little to help the overall COIN campaign. Keeping in mind its military success though, it is difficult to say whether this would have been enough to derail the whole COIN campaign. Yet, it is quite clear that the impact of the Ikhwan’s action did effect the political grievances driving the insurgency. Hence, why hypothesis 2 was designated mixed.

For the Salwa Judum, the group did make it harder for the government. Their actions caused widespread backlash, among the insurgent affected populations as well as the Naxalites. The Adivasis soon started joining the Maoist movement, seeking revenge and protection from the pro-government militia who was wreaking havoc on the region. This gave the Maoists additional members, and they also escalated their attacks on government forces as well as suspected Salwa Judum supporters. Whether one examines the overall influence of the Salwa Judum from either a military or political standpoint, it is not difficult to see why they decreased the likelihood of government victory against the Naxalites. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is confirmed for the Salwa Judum case.

Hypothesis 3: **Militias composed of members of the same ethnic and/or community group as the insurgency-affected population are more effective.**
Both militias studied in this paper contained members who were from the same insurgency-affected populations. This served a key role for several reasons. 1: It allowed the counterinsurgency to have some representation of local people, especially when the security forces in India were composed of people from other states around the country. The fact that they were often from the same villages that insurgents hailed from allowed them to serve as important intelligence assets for the counterinsurgents. Despite their negative reputation in the community, the ethnic composition of the Ikhwanis in Kashmir did help Indian counterinsurgency efforts. The fact that they were composed of the local ethnic and religious group, something that the regular security forces did not possess, served as a force multiplier for the counterinsurgency campaign.

Again though, this by factor is insufficient for creating an effective militia. Despite being drawn from the same community as the Naxalites, the Salwa Judum was seen as a menace. Although the Salwa Judum brought some benefits to the security forces due to their knowledge of the language, community, etc., this was all moot in the overall counterinsurgency campaign. In comparison to the Greyhounds, the Salwa Judum’s ethnic composition was moot. Compared to the local security forces in Chhattisgarh, it provided a small advantage, but overall did little in the long term to affect the counterinsurgency campaign. While the Ikhwan case confirms hypothesis 3, the Salwa Judum leads to a rejected outcome.

_Hypothesis 4: Militias composed of former insurgents or rebels are more effective._
The Ikhwan was primarily made up of former insurgents. By all indications, this was one of the reasons why the Ikhwan was an effective militia force. As former militants, they already knew how to fight, and could give precise intelligence to Indian security forces on the infiltration of other militants. This helped the security forces in several ways: they knew the code language used by militants, they knew the infrastructure in place to help the insurgents, and they were also better trained than most other militias in the country. Indeed, the fact that the Ikhwanis were familiar with the secret messages and militant routes from their former lives, this intelligence proved critical in breaking the back of the Hizbul Mujahideen and other tanzeems. Since they were trained by Pakistan, that negated a need by the Indian security forces to heavily invest in their training. The importance of this characteristic proves especially pertinent when compared to the Salwa Judum.

Unlike the Kashmir case study, the vast majority of Salwa Judum members were not made up of former insurgents. Although some did join/were forcibly recruited into the movement, the militia was primarily made up of Adivasis and others who were affected by the Naxalite violence. While the Ikhwanis were trained insurgents, the Salwa Judum members were not, and this greatly affected their utility in the Maoists. Once the Maoists were able to launch counterattacks, the lack of training for Salwa Judum members became obvious. Nor did the employment of the Salwa Judum lead to more selective violence. The fact that the Salwa Judum engaged in its “strategic hamletting” proved to be indiscriminate, and helped alienate the population. Although neither militia was popular among the general insurgency-affected population, it was the utilization of the Ikhwan which helped lead to

346 Unfortunately, to my knowledge, there is no data that exists on whether elements of the Salwa Judum that were made up of former militants performed differently than their non-insurgent counterparts.
the marginalization of the Hizbul Mujahideen. The Salwa Judum saw the Maoists get stronger, and were powerless to stop it. Especially in comparison to the Kashmir case, the utility of employing former insurgents is obvious.

With this, we can confirm hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5: Militias that receive more support and training from the government are more effective.

The full extent of the security forces connection to the militia is difficult to ascertain. From what is public knowledge, we know that a stipend was paid, there was close cooperation with the military in carrying out operations and providing important intelligence assistance, and that weapons were provided to the group. According to testimony by Liaqat Ali Khan, who headed the Ikhwan in Kashmir, he was in regular contact with the military in coordinating operations and intelligence. The extent of the joint operations also seemed to indicate that the Ikhwan had strong links to the government. Although the Ikhwan were trained, they were still not as formidable as the Indian military. The fact that the Ikhwan could regularly conduct joint operations with a formidable security force trained in counterinsurgency did increase their effectiveness.

The Salwa Judum received minimal training from the security forces, and initially had difficulty procuring proper weapons. Part of this was due to the suspicion that the various CAPFs had towards the true loyalty of the militia’s Adivasi members, as well as fear that these weapons would fall into enemy hands. Even the training was sporadic, with many of the designated SPOs not receiving the basic training required for police officers.
The fact that Salwa Judum members were given such low payment compared to regular police officers, especially upon death, also demonstrates the real lack of commitment to the militia members by the state government.

The government did provide political support, as well as tried to protect the members of the Salwa Judum from prosecution. Even a relatively large section of the state government supported the movement. Yet, this did little to assuage fears on the ground. Indeed, it probably exasperated the culpability of the state government in committing crimes against the Adivasi people. Although the Salwa Judum did carry out operations with the security forces, they were often used as a ‘spearhead’, as the frontline. It is possible that the government providing better training and arms could have made the militia more effective in wiping out the insurgents, but it seems that the political issues would have still been exacerbated by this policy.

The Salwa Judum and Ikhwan case studies offered two distinct levels of support provided for by the counterinsurgency power. Both parties provided political protection, funding, and some weapons. However, the Chhattisgarh government was initially hesitant to provide standard weapons, or the necessary training to the Salwa Judum. The Ikhwan had the advantage of already possessing the necessary training, but they received additional weapons and ammunition from the Indian military. Although both groups committed joint operations with their relevant security groups, the Salwa Judum seemed to serve as frontline soldiers on behalf of the CRPF and Chhattisgarh state police. Overall, the Ikhwan seemed to be much better integrated within the security forces apparatus and strategy than the Salwa Judum, and the Ikhwan received more direction and support from the government.
With that, we can confirm hypothesis 5.

**Hypothesis 6: Militias are militarily effective in the short term but their effectiveness decreases over the long term and eventually becomes negative.**

The Ikhwan proved to be a devastating force for the Hizbul Mujahideen. Although some of their military utility did decrease due to adaptation by the insurgency and the Indian army, it never became counterproductive. However, the long term political effects of the Ikhwan, especially in the political space, has proven to be much more disastrous. Even those I interviewed seemed to agree with the fact that the Ikhwan was for a past era, and should not be used again in the future. Despite the military success of the Ikhwan in defeating the Kashmiri insurgent groups, it also worked to harden public opinion towards the Indian state. Due to the long term political consequences, and their decreasing military utility, I designated hypothesis 6 as mixed in the Ikhwan case study.

The Salwa Judum, which served as a template for creating the hypothesis, unsurprisingly fits hypothesis 6 well. The Salwa Judum did experience military success within the first year of its existence. However, this military success became short-lived and the Salwa Judum soon proved itself to be as hazardous for the state as the Naxalite insurgents. On the political side of the COIN campaign, they got rid of any space for neutrality, and made the state look like a bigger problem than the militants. This also brought negative international attention to the militia, and forced the Indian Supreme Court to intervene in the matter. Despite their initial accomplishments, these soon disappeared as both the military and political benefits of the Salwa Judum became non-existent. In the Salwa Judum case study, we can confirm hypothesis 6.
Policy Implications

This research carries several important policy implications. First) the necessity of regulating any militia that is used. Second) capitalizing on the space that comes because of militia use. Third) creating the necessary support to utilize militia information. Finally) the dangers of using non-state actors in fighting a counterinsurgency battle.

One problem in both case studies was the various human rights violations carried out by these non-state actors. Too often, the government and security forces were more than willing to cover up these abuses, to the detriment of the people that the government is supposed to protect, as well as the overall counterinsurgency effort. This also became true when both the Salwa Judum and Ikhwan used their privilege as an organization favored by the Indian government to engage in corruption and other illegal activities. In the case of Kuka Parrey and Mahendra Karma, the fact that politicians with their own personal army could obtain so much power from outside of parliamentary hall should be worrying for anyone that hopes to restore rule of law after an insurgency. Regulating the militias, as well as limiting what its members could do might have been able to resolve some of these issues.

In both cases, the militia was able to help the government regain some control over contested territory, albeit this was more successful with the Ikhwanis than the Salwa Judum. However, both cases also saw the government doing little to capitalize on this development. Kashmir saw a wide variety of elections come and go, but little progress was made in dealing with the political issues that led to the outbreak of insurgency in the first

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347 Partially because the security forces themselves would carry out abuse too.
place. With the decrease in violence, some Kashmiris started to question why it was still necessary to keep AFSPA or the military in place. Growing up under a virtual military occupation does little to assuage the political concerns help by the population.

Even in Chhattisgarh, the Salwa Judum did represent some important constituents in Adivasi society. When the Naxalites were forced to retreat, this could have been an opportunity to make any resurgence of the Maoists difficult. But rather than working on improving the conditions and alleviate the tribal’s concerns with the corporations, the Chhattisgarh government doubled down. It signed more deals with a wide variety of companies, and attempted more land seizures. Combine this with the pure brutality of the Salwa Judum, and it’s no wonder why the insurgency continues today.

It is also worth mentioning the necessity of a properly trained security force. When the Ikhwan was used, it was used in a campaign where the Indian security forces had already been fighting, had established their own bases, and were able to utilize the intelligence brought by the renegades. This was also the reason why the Greyhounds proved successful in fighting the Maoists. The creation of the Greyhounds went alongside the modernization of the state’s police forces, as well as the establishment of new training centers and intelligence sources. In contrast, the Salwa Judum was used in a manner to make up for the lack of manpower in the state, and the hopes that they would serve as the force. Although they had some successes, Chhattisgarh was unable to properly utilize the force to inflict devastating blows onto the insurgent groups. The militia cannot serve as a potent force multiplier a proper force.

Lastly, both represent the danger that non-state actors can bring. These were still independent groups with their own agendas and interests. They also represent an ‘easy’
path towards a counterinsurgency victory. Where India did successfully end insurgencies with the restoration of normalcy, it often did it through the investment and training of proper security forces. The political agenda of separatist or other anti-India parties also lost steam, thanks to the efforts of the traditional political parties. Essentially, there was a competent security force, and there was a restart in the political process. However, the politics in Kashmir remain frozen, save for an election held every couple of years. In Chhattisgarh, the Adivasis who want better treatment from their representatives also remain marginalized. Instead, the militias were used in the hope that they could sidestep these issues. Whether it was due to the lack of local security forces, or an unwillingness to address the grievances, militias seemed to represent a shortcut.

**Avenues for Further Research**

This paper also hoped to bring a more nuanced examination on the effects that militias have on counterinsurgency campaigns. As discussed in the literature review, most studies have either focused mainly on the security benefits of using militias, or their negative repercussions. I have attempted above to examine both the security and political contributions of pro-government non-state organizations, and look at how these varied over time. Yet, this also does bring up avenues for further research.

First and foremost, there can be an examination on the utility of assorted types of militia. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, we were focused exclusively on the militias that received government support, but were still independent organizations. This excluded Village Defence Councils (VDCs) which were part of the chain and command of police
forces, but are considered irregular units. Although these served a different purpose than the militias examined here (static guard rather than kinetic action), these serve as a policy relevant organization that merits study.

This paper also excluded anti-insurgent militias in India like the Ranvir Sena. Although the government was willing to serve a blind eye to the actions of this group, they also participated in the fight against the Naxalites in Bihar. Here, we have a pro-government militia that does not receive comparable sponsorship by the government, but nevertheless fought against a militant force. It is unlikely that the Ranvir Sena was the only one of its kind to operate in a country as vast as India, making for another important subject in need of attention.

Finally, there needs to be greater discussions of counterinsurgency policy impact when it is carried out in an external territory, versus domestic terrain. Often, many COIN discussions seem to blur these distinctions when discussing the literature. Yet, the impact of similar policies would be different in a domestic setting versus as an occupying power of foreign territory. How does winning the hearts and mind work, when you’re a country that has no intention of ruling over the territory you’re fighting in? Does political sponsorship of a militia by an outside power end up giving the militia political leverage to challenge the rule of the state? These are important distinctions that need to be delineated and examined.

Ruminations on India’s Internal Conflicts
During writing this thesis, much has occurred. Kashmir, which for the most part was stable save for some periodic uprisings such as what was seen in 2008 and 2010, has witnessed a possible return to militancy. After the killing of a young Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani in July of 2016, the Valley witnessed large scale protests. The protests only grew more intense with the use of pellet guns by the CRPF and the state police, which in turn injured, and at worst blinded, around 17,000 Kashmiris. This materialized within an international context where the India-Pakistan relationship was fraying, with regular cross border firing between 2014 and 2015, and an Indian special operations raid in Pakistan targeting militant launch pads. But while Pakistan had incentive to increase its support to militants in an effort to revive and insurgency, it has to be seen not as purely an international problem, but a domestic issue with some international dimensions. Despite gaining control of the insurgency, ‘normalcy’ was never truly achieved. Instead of resolving the underlying grievances and issues that drove to a mass rebellion, the Indian government has been too willing to use repression and wait for protests to die down.

Yet while the protests from the summer of 2016 died down, it soon emerged that this was an issue that would not go away. A by-election held in the state at the beginning

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350 British Broadcasting Corporation, “Kashmir Attack: India ‘Launches Strikes Against Militants’”, British Broadcasting Corporation, September 30, 2016, accessed January 4, 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37504308. This happened after a deadly attack on Indian soldiers on the border near the town of Uri. The attack was believed to have been committed by Jaish-e-Mohammad, which has strong links to Pakistani intelligence. This also followed other attacks by the group on the border, as well as attacks in some of India’s border states.
of April of 2017 saw a paltry 7% turnout. A re-polling saw only 2%.\footnote{Press Trust of India, “Srinagar LS byelection: Only 2 Percent Turnout in Repoll”, \textit{Manorama Online}, April 13, 2017, accessed April 27, 2017, \url{http://english.manoramaonline.com/news/nation/2017/04/13/srinagar-ls-constituency-only-2-percent-turnout-in-repoll.html}} This also followed larger trends in the state, which saw more and more local Kashmiris joining militant organizations compared to the mid-2000s which saw the fighting primarily carried out by foreign fighters.\footnote{http://www.hindustantimes.com/static/the-young-militants-of-kashmir/ ; April 20, 2017, \url{http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/jammu-kashmir-sees-rise-in-number-of-locals-joining-militancy/articleshow/57324051.cms} ; February 26, 2017} Regardless of how one feels about the Azadi movement, it was clear that India needed to make a change and use the political machinery of the state to start addressing the needs and concerns of the youth.

Unfortunately, the atmosphere in India has started to change. The election of a strongly Hindu nationalist Narendra Modi government in 2014 has led to a different environment in the country. Hindu nationalists feel more empowered than ever before, with cow protection groups feeling empowered to harass minorities in the name of religion, sometimes with deadly results.\footnote{Baweja, “Kashmir’s Disturbing New Reality”} Students that were protesting against the policies and general rise of ‘intolerance’ soon faced harassment and arrest in what was perceived as ill-conceived attempt by pro-Modi forces to silence dissent. But it became to deny that militant Hindutva was on the rise, and it was seeping into society and the media.

It was only a matter of time before this would start to affect policy discussions. On April 14, 2017, a video emerged from Kashmir. Some Indian soldiers had taken a local Kashmiri, tied him to their jeep, and paraded him around warning that “stone throwers will meet a similar fate.”\footnote{Al Jazeera, “India Probes Video of ‘Human Shield’ in Kashmir”, \textit{Al Jazeera}, April 14, 2017, accessed April 14, 2017, \url{http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/india-probes-video-human-shield-kashmir-170414154149770.html}} The soldiers claimed that they were facing a mob of stone throwing youth, and that several other members of the security forces were surrounded by this mod
and under threat. In an act of ‘quick thinking’ the soldier grabbed a stone thrower, tied him to the military vehicle in order to save the other security members. Here, the soldier admitted to using an Indian citizen as a human shield, an act that is considered a war crime according to international law and against Indian military rules and regulations. The victim said he was not a stone thrower, but rather a random Kashmiri civilian, one who was part of the 7% that had voted in the election. Some former military officials, such as a former general who directed the Indian army Northern Command, came out to condemn this act. Instead, members of the media and some politicians used the time to troll the general on social media sites.

Major media figures, and anecdotally, general members of Indian society, all praised the use of a human shield. Anyone who denigrated the military, was seen as an ‘anti-national’, a ‘Pakistani’, an ‘Islamist sympathizer’. Despite that the fact that Kashmiris are citizens in a democracy, it seemed that this was unimportant to their fellow citizens. Indeed, it seemed that the public was clamoring for a repressive crackdown.

Similar sentiments were seen in the aftermath of a large-scale Naxalite attack on CRPF troops overseeing road construction. The attack in southern Chhattisgarh killed 37 CRPF members. Despite the well-known problems with the various CAPFs and the

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355 Mudasir Ahmad, “He Voted, Never Hurled Stones, ‘What Was My Crime,’ Asks Army’s ‘Human Shield’ in Kashmir”, The Wire, April 15, 2017, accessed April 15, 2017, https://thewire.in/124465/kashmir-farooq-ahmad-dar-army/. To be realistic, the story provided by the story seems suspicious. In an ‘emergency’ situation, the idea that while facing a hostile, stone throwing mob, the soldiers were able to run up, grab a stone pelter, take him back to the jeep, tie him up, and then drive to rescue the troops is far-fetched. An investigation is underway.

356 This is the command that has Kashmir under its jurisdiction


359 Covered in the Salwa Judum case study.
counterinsurgency campaign, the government instead blamed human rights activists.³⁶⁰ Like Kashmir, this led to renewed calls for military action; a military solution for what are political problems.

The difficult conditions that the Adivasis faced was not part of the discussion. Nor was the rights and issues faced by the Kashmiris ever brought up. Indeed, one prominent politician with the BJP called for removing the Kashmiri Muslim population from Kashmir!³⁶¹ Yet, what does this have to do with this paper and counterinsurgency campaigns?

If there is one theme that this paper attempted to highlight, it is the importance of measuring the political effects policies have in a counterinsurgency campaign. Too often, what is examined is the security effects, and not the political outcomes. Winning the hearts and minds seems to take a backseat when examining exciting military developments like surging troops or using new tools of war. For Western countries conducting a counterinsurgency campaign in foreign countries, this can be understood. It is difficult enough to deal with the politics in one’s country. Yet the stability and polity of Western countries is usually not at stake.³⁶² India faces the potential consequence of having parts of its polity split, or finding itself in perpetual war with itself. Several years ago, security analyst Praveen Swami noted (in relation to Kashmir) that long term military deployments created friction between the government and its citizens. Despite the low levels of violence, force numbers increased in India’s northern state, and some withdrawal of troops were

³⁶² Some notable exceptions are there of course, such as Northern Ireland and the UK, Spain and Catalonia, etc.
needed to help breathe some new energy into the state government to help bring peace and settle people’s demands.363

Yet in today’s India, with jingoism on the rise, ‘moderate’ solutions are out of reach. Nor does there seem to be desire by the Indian public to demand anything different of their government. The idea that Adivasis, Dalits, Kashmiris, and the people in the Northeast do not get the chance to experience Indian democracy like their fellow citizens is ignored to cheer on military deployments, forgetting how this also proves brutal for the soldiers and paramilitary people that must experience the fight.364 In the words of Kashmiri journalist Basharat Peer, who lived through the insurgency and counterinsurgency in the 90s, “India’s vaunted democracy seemed to stop short of the mountains circling my hometown…”365 Unfortunately, it seems more and more likely that the rest of India rather keep the people under the rule of a gun rather than a law.366 Indeed, at times it seems that the territory is more valued than the people that live on it.

Both the Congress party as well as the Hindutva parties have utilized the same playbook of repression and nationalism to maintain in its peripheries and towards marginalized people. However, it does not stay in the periphery for long, as it is becoming clear today. The idea of India as a country that can accommodate one of the most diverse populations in a democratic polity still exists today, and remains an important answer to helping guide policymakers to ending the insurgencies throughout the country.

365 Basharat Peer, A Question of Order, 12.
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