

Russian Security State

GOVT-5519/IPOL-3519/REES-5519/SEST-6763

Lecture 10. Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency

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Today's objectives

1. *Define*: what insurgency and counter-insurgency are
2. *Consider*: why counter-insurgency is so difficult
3. *Examine*: case study of Chechnya



Figure 1: Conventional war. Clear front lines, combatants easy to identify.

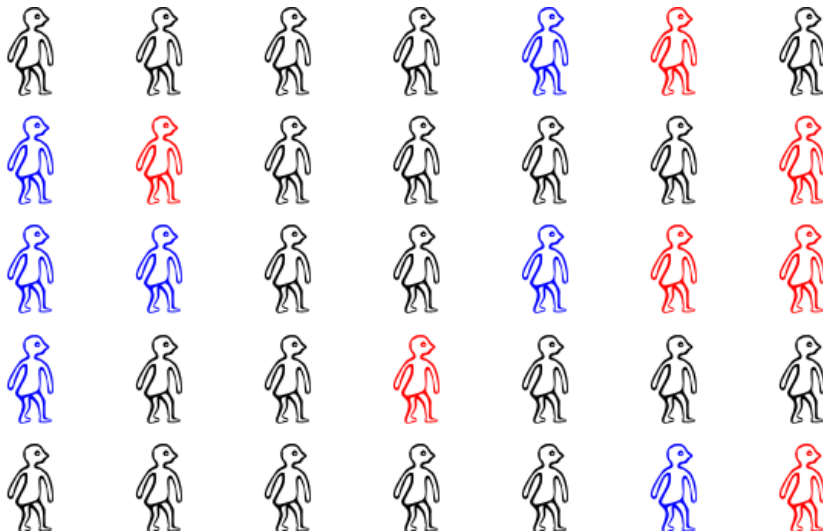


Figure 2: Irregular war. Combatants hide among civilians, hard to identify.



Figure 3: Asymmetric irregular war. One side easier to identify than other.

Introduction to insurgency

Definitions

Irregular war: armed contestation of sovereignty between state and non-state actors, where

1. there are no front lines
2. there is uncertainty over who is combatant or civilian

Insurgency: organized political violence by sub-state or non-state groups, directed against agents of incumbent government

- *includes:* anti-occupational uprisings, secessionist and revolutionary movements, terrorist groups
- *excludes:* unorganized political violence (lone wolves), organized crime, riots and protests

Counter-insurgency: efforts by agents of incumbent government to contain or defeat an insurgency

- *includes:* army, police, foreign military forces, pro-government militia, contractors, non-military agencies
- *excludes:* deposed regime, mutineers and coup plotters

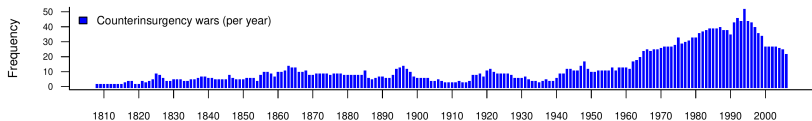


Figure 4: Frequency of counter-insurgency wars.



Figure 5: Success rate of counter-insurgency wars.

Puzzle: Insurgencies becoming more frequent, but harder to defeat. Why?

Common explanations: balance of power, structure of international system (polarity, institutions, treaties), regime type, force employment, technology.

Information problems

Irregular war is a collective action problem

1. sovereignty is contested between two (or more) combatants
 - a) government (counter-insurgents)
 - b) rebels (insurgents)
2. victory requires popular support (e.g. taxes, military service)
3. but support is costly for civilians to provide
4. combatants use *coercion* to deter support for rivals
 - a) punish suspected collaborators, informants
 - b) demonstrate strength, intimidate civilians

Coercion vs. brute force

1. *Coercion*: increase costs of unwanted behavior
 - a. To be coercive, violence must be anticipated and avoidable
2. *Brute force*: limit opportunities for unwanted behavior
 - a. Examples: forcible resettlement, disarmament of civilians
 - b. Difference depends not on coercive intent of perpetrator, but on whether target is given a meaningful choice

Information problems in counter-insurgency

1. Indistinguishability of combatants and civilians
2. Unwillingness of civilians to volunteer information

Discussion:

- Why do information problems make coercion more difficult?
- Why do information problems create incentives for brute force?



Figure 6: Selective violence

- targets chosen individually
- (e.g. arrests, assassinations)



Figure 7: Indiscriminate violence

- targets chosen collectively
- (e.g. artillery, area bombing)

Case Study

Russian-Chechen War

Background: Caucasus Wars

1. 1816:
Aleksy Yermolov becomes viceroy,
begins conquest of N. Caucasus
2. 1817-1864:
Caucasian Imamate vs. Russia
→ mass resettlement, genocide
3. 1921-1926:
Akushinskiy insurgency vs. Bolsheviks
→ forcible disarmament
4. 1940-1944:
Israilov insurgency vs. Soviets
→ mass deportation to Central Asia
5. 1989: Chechens return home



Figure 8: Map of Caucasus

1st Chechen War, 1994-96

1. Prelude

- 1991: Chechnya declares independence
- Yeltsin ignores this at first
- low-level Chechen civil war

2. Main phase

- 1994: troops sent to restore order
- catastrophic Russian losses
- poor intelligence, heavy air power, indiscriminate artillery shelling

3. Settlement

- 1996: separatists recapture Grozny
- Russia signs peace agreement
- Chechnya becomes de facto independent



Figure 9: Restoring order



Figure 10: And leaving

2nd Chechen War, 1999-2011

1. Prelude

- 1997: Chechen leadership splits
- rise of Salafi-Jihadis
- 1999: Basayev, Khattab invade Dagestan to create Islamic state

2. Main phase

- 1999: Russia invades Chechnya
- 2000: Russia takes Grozny, cities
- 2000-2011: guerrilla war in forests, Russian indiscriminate reprisals

3. No settlement

- Russia enlists former rebels (Akhmat and Ramzan Kadyrov)
- "Chechenization" of conflict
- violence becomes more selective
- Chechnya becomes police state



Figure 11: Old friends

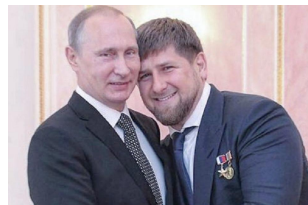


Figure 12: New friends

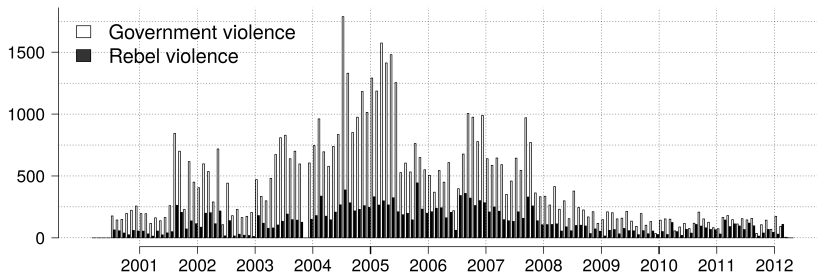


Figure 13: Government and rebel violence over time

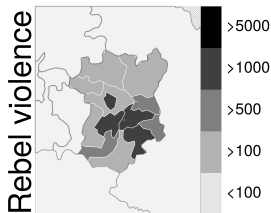


Figure 14: Insurgency

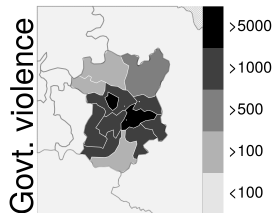


Figure 15: Counterinsurgency

Discussion:

Back to the future?

- why didn't the Russians (re-)attempt resettlement in Chechnya?
- but then why has Russia been using these tactics in Ukraine today?
- is there always a trade-off between reducing government violence and preserving civil liberties?
- how did corruption affect the conduct of counter-insurgency?

NEXT MEETING

State Security Services (Th, Oct. 9)

- inside the police state
- things to consider:
 - why didn't the secret police care if they were arresting the "right people" under Stalin?
 - is the FSB still capable of state terror on a 1937 scale?