

**Forum:** The First General Assembly

**Issue:** The question of the government funding of militia groups

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## Introduction

A Militia group is defined as a fighting organisation of non-professional soldiers or fighters that perform a military service when required; they are a form of backup defense when the verified army are not available. Militia groups require funding for their overall functionality - their weaponry, armour, facilities, additional resources , political support, etc. Generally, militia groups are called to action when there is a local emergency and if the general army can not be contacted, seeing that the individuals only have limited training. Official militia groups can either be supportive of the government, or completely opposing their views and beliefs in an extremist manner. Similar to protests, there can be a variety of both peaceful and violent militia groups; peaceful militia groups often support the government perspectives whereas the extremist groups can retaliate against their governments. This varies from group to group, and across different nations. There can be a number of smaller militia groups in one region; an example would be in the United States. In the USA alone, there were 334 militia groups at the peak time in 2011.

The concept of militia groups was first introduced in Macedonia, under the rule of Philip II. He ensured that there were militia defencemen at each of the bordering and possibly threatened areas. This was established to repel threats. This concept was then spread in early medieval Europe, wherein it became mandatory for every able 18 year old free male to provide military service for a certain period of time. Without militia groups, there would be two possibilities: either governments would not have enough protection to

the rebels threatening their nation, or governments would gain more strength due to the elimination of the anti-government militia groups. A sociologist studying Militia groups within the United States introduced the analogy that ‘various militia groups is like having multiple trees grow on the same small plot of land. They are separate entities, but their roots grow from the same soil.’ Commonly, militia groups act as the voice of rebel factions and attract more attention due to their possession of arms and weapons (SALW). With specific anti-government organisations, there are targeted killings or destructive outcomes - an example of this would be the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Militia groups are frequently dependent on foreign support. Without foreign political and government support, the militia groups will have no basis to fight off of and will rarely pose as a threat. There are both benefits and repercussions of funding militia groups, respective to the governments. Militia groups view themselves as heroes, because they believe to be protecting their nation and communities within, however in majority of the cases, consequences are faced by government authorities. One concern faced by officials is the question of the anti-government groups. Seeing that these militia groups are armed, to eliminate threats, there is a large possibility that the expression of their opinions results in the harming of innocent civilians. In some LEDC’s, militia groups can be a disguise for harmful terrorist groups, stating that they are eliminating all threats, but only end up causing a greater amount of destruction in return.

There are also advantages to the developments of militia groups. A number of governments that support militia groups accept the ideology that weapons are a significant component of self-defense, but they should not be used to support non-state actors in any manner. Gun (and other weapon) control laws and restrictions must be enforced when militia groups are formed, to minimize the overall destruction. During wars, militia groups are beneficial as they act as a back-up if the experienced military is not able to perform up to standard, specifically in wars. This improves the overall security of countries.

## Definition of Key Terms

### LEDC's

LEDC stands for Lesser economically developed countries. According to the United Nations, the countries that showcase the least amount of economic, agricultural, political and social development are referred to as LEDC's. They have a lower standard of living and have a lower GDP. Generally, most of the southern hemisphere is lesser developed, while the northern hemisphere is more greatly developed. Examples of LEDC's are Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Cambodia.

### MEDC's

MEDC stands for More economically developed countries. According to the United Nations, the countries that showcase the most amount of economic, agricultural, political and social development are referred to as MEDC's. They have a much higher standard of living and have a higher GDP. MEDC's have a higher quality and standard of living. Examples of MEDC's are all countries of Europe, the U.S. , Canada and Japan.

### Non-state actors

Non-state actors are individuals that are not affiliated, funded by or directed by governments. Non-state actors obtain a variety of self-motivated interests. They often have territorial control and attempt to exercise political power.

### Anti Government movement

Anti Government movements begin when anti government groups encourage members of a nation to express their negative opinions about their government. Anti government groups are those that believe their government is incorrect with their political and personal views. Often, the members of these groups believe in

and create conspiracy theories regarding political and governmental manners. Anti government movements can cause damages on a sufficient scale to the citizens, physical development and to the economic state of a nation. They often express their frustration in the forms of violent riots; an overall goal may be to result in the government being overthrown.

### **Targeted Killings**

Targeted killings are premeditated killings that involve the use of lethal force, by an armed state or organisation, normally initiated by another nation's government. Drones are a common form of weaponry to undertake these killings. In some nations, targeted killings are directed specifically towards suspected terrorists. An example of this would be the killing of Osama Bin Laden by US officials without the Pakistani government being aware, almost 10 years following 9/11.

### **Possessions of small arms and light weapons**

Small arms and light weapons can be described as weapons designed for individual use. The possession of these objects is referred to the state of owning, controlling or keeping them. The arms laws vary from region to region.

### **Rebel groups**

Rebel groups are described as individuals who protest against their own country's political order, opinions or leader in order to invoke change to the system. If successful, the rebel faction will have established changes or gained a sense of independence; if unsuccessful, depending on the situation and regulations (laws), the opportunity to be executed, removed from the country or simply have the group shutdown is a possibility.

### **Key Issues**

## Terroristic use

Militia groups begin by forming members of a community that share common beliefs. After that has been established, they can become official as a private entity. The next step is to acquire a variety of weapons and arms; they then can become a verified militia group.

A major concern with the funding of militia groups is its morphing into a terrorist group. Terrorist groups are organisations that a court deems related to some sort of terrorist activities, destroying the public's sense of familiarity and safety. When militia groups are formed, there is a high possibility that there are non-state actors involved. Seeing that militia groups are armed, they obtain a higher level of power against the unarmed communities. Their intention is to act as a backup for the military when there is a lack of power or defense, however, some individuals use this label as an excuse to exercise their own opinions. When members of a militia group are unhappy with the government's economic and political situation, laws or regulations as well as political leaders. This can result in the militia groups acquiring a certain number in funding, but then utilising that to ensure that their opinion is heard by the government.

The intention of said militia groups is to protect citizens of their nation against threats and during wars and to protect their member's lives. This power any leads to authority can be abused, resulting in the major harm of the nation's populations which then eventually leads to the organisations being labelled as terrorist. In many cases, this is the accurate reality. Due to the fact that they are armed, there is only so much that the government can do to dampen their effects as a whole. Militia groups will then spread their views to other individuals in these countries. Then collectively, the government is forced to enforce regulations, occasionally even harming their citizens, in order to maintain a certain level of authority and respect. In many instances, these extremist views are not actually viewed as extremist by their members, and they assume that it is in fact beneficial for all citizens.

## General Abuse of power

Similar to the formation of terrorist groups, these militia groups can often abuse their power and authority. Once the militia groups are official, they are at liberty to eliminate threats, with the orders of their respective governments.

Specifically in The United states, there is the issue of abuse of power with regards to white supremacy. White supremacists generally believe in sexist and racist views, and then impose said ideologies on other citizens, often leading to riots and protests. An example of this occurring would be when former President Barack Obama first came into power; concerns surrounding the fact that the president was a person of colour were established. Eventually, the groups obtaining these views then led to aid the Capitol Attack in 2021. These groups utilise the title of being a part of a militia group as an excuse to express their opinions, imposing them on other citizens. This can generally lead citizens being unhappy with the government and political officials. Once they express their views, the government is at liberty to handle them according to their capabilities. If the government is unable to tame the unhappy groups of civilians, it can eventually result in mass rioting, destruction of property, looting, general harm of citizens and more.

## Lack of military

Whilst weighing the pros and cons of providing government funding for militia groups, the decision will lie in the leaders of the government itself, varying from nation to nation. Having considered the valid concern of militia groups being morphed into terrorist groups and becoming incredibly harmful, there are also negative repercussions if funding is not provided.

For countries with a weaker military, they are at a higher risk of harm and loss when at war with other nations, especially in LEDC's. Once two countries have declared war, their militaries must ensure complete protection for their citizens and communities

to their capabilities. If funding is provided by governments for militia groups to obtain their arms and weapons, the defence and military power of that country is automatically strengthened. However if one nation has a weaker army and a lack of militia support, against a nation with a powerful military and militia presence, there is an obvious imbalance in odds of said war. An alternative to involving militia groups as a back up for the military would be to enroll all those individuals into the army itself; this will ensure that the individuals do not have any political control on the decisions, yet are still acting as a source of defence. There is a risk when providing funding, yet there is also a risk when holding back on the funding of militia groups. Governments must decide on whichever initiative is the most suitable for their country.

### Lack of funds

Funding is quite respective to each of the countries. To state the obvious, MEDC's will have larger funds and strength for their military, and the opposite for LEDC's. As stated above, funding for this military power must be decided by their governments. LEDC's do not have the sufficient funds to provide significant food, water and shelter to their citizens. This raises the concern of how Lesser economically developed countries will be able to afford this extra military support. Funds are required for militia groups to obtain their weaponry, carry out their training as well as to ensure strong health of the soldiers. Without this capital, LEDC's do not stand a chance in any conflicts with other nations. Even if these nations wanted to, they would not have the sufficient funds to carry through with these development

That being said, MEDC's have a clear advantage when the topic of funding is brought up. Seeing that they are more economically developed, they often have more wealth to devote to such causes. This means that their weaponry and technology may be more significantly advanced, acting as a major head start. As a whole, they will also have more economic stability which gives them an obvious advantage in terms of overall strength.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### The United States

The United States is incredibly familiar with militia groups and their effects. A movement named by the Intelligence Project was able to identify at least 488 extremist anti-government groups active within the United States in 2021 alone. This number was a reduction from the whopping 566 groups active in 2020. Out of these, 92 groups were militia groups, 75 sovereign citizen groups, 52 propagandist groups and 3 constitutional sheriff groups. As a result of the pandemic introduced in 2020, the number of anti government groups skyrocketed; individuals suspected that COVID-19 was essentially a scam and fabrication, giving room for more speculation. These groups collaborated to target specific marginalized communities and engaged in threats of political violence.

6th January attack on the United States Capitol was an eye opener for both the government and people of the USA. This attack was an attempt to stop the democratic change in power as a result of electoral votes. It was one of the most public moments for the antigovernment movements since the Oklahoma city bombing which occurred in 1995. As a result of this stunt, over 700 people were charged with offenses that ranged from trespassing to seditious conspiracy.

There are a number of currently active militia groups across the states. However, many of these groups do not fall under the general definition of militia - instead of acting as a military back up for the army, they instead oppose the government. The Militia movement is a recently developed extremist movement that is composed of extremist and anti government ideology. A significant number of the members in the Militia Movement have been arrested as a result of wrongful use and possession of weapons, explosives and on other conspiracy charges. This movement causes a number of obstacles for law



enforcement and the surrounding communities. As a result of these disruptions, most of the political bodies are not supportive of militia groups. Although they can not legally stop them, their funding and support is limited.

## The Sahel

The Sahel is a region located in Western Africa, bordering Burkina Faso and Niger. The Sahel is home to multiple extremist, even terroristic militia groups. Many of these groups are associated by the name of the 'Jihadists'. Jihadists is a term generally used by the western world to address a violent group of Muslims, attempting to spread their beliefs to non-believers. The 9/11 attack is an example of the effects of Jihadist groups. However, the most notable use of militia groups is as a result of the unreliable and ineffective military. Militias were used for almost two thirds of the armies in civil wars between 1989 and today. Members of the militia groups state that they are useful to aid the armies in their battles by including an additional security force. They are beneficial because they are most familiar with the territory, and are less costly than the standard soldiers. They are increasingly efficient in their responses to threats, and update the government regularly. Today, these militia groups are most prominent in the conflicts regarding Mali and Burkina Faso.

## Iraq & Iran

Iraq is home to a number of interesting militia groups, as they spread across the middle east and develop as a norm. Within Iraq, they have a significant impact on international as well as internal politics, economic development, local development, a number of humanitarian crises and regional geopolitics. There is a conflict in the mobilization of such groups, due to the opinions of the Islamic State.

Once the tension between the United States and Iran began to brew, Iraq's militia groups acted as a key flashpoint; as well as in Lebanon, the group 'Hezbollah' was the epicentre of regional terroristic activities. It introduced a number of difficulties for the political officials and the citizens of many surrounding nations. Hezbollah is the topic for debate regarding whether they are an Iranian Proxy or a nationalist group. In 2014, Iraq's army was significantly damaged as ISIS captured large territories, including Mosul. Shiite is a sect of belief within Islam, that is relatively popular within Iraq. One of Iraq's top Shiite clerics issued a religious call to arms in a fatwa. Responding to this, tens of thousands of men joined new and old militia groups. Eventually, more than 60 armed groups merged under the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). By spring of 2015, the PMF collectively had 60,000 fighters.

The Shiite groups were categorised into three groups: The Sunnis, Christians and Turkmen. These militias received training and financing from Tehran. As a result of these categories, a sense of tension developed amongst the Sunnis, Kurds and Iraqis.

## **Somalia**

The militia groups within Somalia introduce a great deal of violence, abusive rules, crime and insecurity. These groups allow an increase in power for other stronger militia groups such as Al-Qaida's supporting Jihadists, commonly referred to as Al-Shabaab. They aim to fight against such groups, however, it can be described as a double edged sword wherein 'short term military gains must be balanced against the militias longer term destabilizing impact'.

Somalia's government was encouraging the funding of militia groups in an attempt to take down Al-Shabaab, however, it remains to be Somalia's strongest political and military group. A donation of \$1 billion US dollars of financial, training and humanitarian assistance was provided in 2012, but the Somalia National Army (SNA)

continuously lacked the strength and facilities to reduce the group's power. Existing efforts to strengthen the SNA have been introduced in the forms of donations and projects introduced by nations such as the US, UAE, Kenya and Ethiopia.

**Development of Issue/Timeline**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>June 18, 1812 - February 17, 1815</b>	The war of 1812	The war of 1812 was a conflict between Great Britain and the United States as a result of British violations of the US maritime rights. The tensions that developed were initially due to the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. During this period, Britain enforced a blockade on French and Spanish exports, monitoring all the USA's and other neutral ships that they suspected were being sent to France. The US was unhappy with this enforcement and demanded to put an end to it, however, Britain refused; this led to mass destruction. British militia groups and military put

		<p>buildings in Washington to flames, including the white house. The US retaliated with their own separatist movements.</p>
<p><b>April 19, 1975</b></p>	<p>The militia movement</p>	<p>The militia movement was a powerful organisation consisting of various militia groups within the United States. The movement was split into two categories of militia groups: organised and unorganised. The members of organised militias are those of the US National Guard and other state established military units; unorganised militias are groups that are made up of members belonging to other state militias or state citizens. Following the Revolutionary war (around the 1960's), the concept of private militia groups spread state-wide, ignoring the laws prohibiting their existence. A great deal of these groups expressed racist,</p>

		<p>fascist and sexist opinions - often white supremacists - which introduced violence among the citizens. The militia groups began to accept ideologies opposing the US government: an example of which would be that the government would undermine American liberties in order to introduce their totalitarian regulations. The longer this continued, the more powerful militia groups were able to become. Around the 90's, the number of deaths were at a steady incline. In 1992, the wife and son of a white supremacist (Randy Weaver) were killed in a standoff with law enforcement. In 1993, 80 members of the group 'Branch Davidian compound' were killed in a fire as a result of a standoff with federal agents, in Texas. While it may seem that there were a great deal of murders due to the law enforcement,</p>
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		<p>the militia groups also caused damage. At its peak, the movement claimed at least 40,000 members (some claim the number was close to 250,000).</p>
<p><b>June 9th, 2021</b></p>	<p>Capitol attack</p>	<p>On the 9th of June, 2021, there was an attack on the Capitol in the United States. This was the combined effort of a number of militia groups, primarily white supremacists and extremists. Shortly after the attack, law enforcement made a series of arrests, holding these members accountable for their destruction. These extremist groups conducted this attack in support of former President Donald Trump, claiming that the election was stolen from him.</p>

**Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

**Laws prohibiting private militias**

This attempt was specifically applied to the United States of America, following The Militia Movement. A regulation applied to 48 out of the 50 states requiring the military involved to be subordinate to the civil authority. Additionally, laws were implemented introducing the prohibition of private militia groups; a private militia group is defined as a militia group whose members are private or state citizens, and are not recognised officially by state or military officials. These laws also include the ban of public parading and such activities with firearms. Half of the states introduced regulations that limit or prohibit the use of lethal weapons and firearms, as it will result in more civil disturbance and general violence. Despite these laws becoming official, they are rarely abided by.

## **Possible Solutions**

### **Including military officials**

Despite the previous attempts to try and mitigate the damage caused by militia groups, in many parts of the world, they are one of the leading causes of reckless activities. Seeing as imposing regulations to prohibit private militia groups as a whole was unsuccessful, a different approach would have to be introduced. Currently, militia groups are encouraged when considered to be ‘organised’ - this means that few members must be military officials.

A new regulation can be proposed, stating that militia groups are allowed on the condition that the chief or commander in charge is an experienced military official. This official must be screened by the military of that nation itself as well as the UN, and must pass a standard evaluation. This will cover the official’s military experience as well as knowledge, on top of their political views (which could be verified by a polygraph test). This chief will lead the militia group and their decisions, ensuring that any anti-government or extremist activities are put into action.

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