

The containment notion itself can also be seen as an overstated one as the movement survived three Israeli major attacks on Gaza by the time the book was published. Baconi claims that Hamas is trapped within the borders of Gaza and constrained by the administration of the Strip. The truth is that Hamas launched a major attack from Gaza in an operation called the Sword of Jerusalem to prevent the Israeli efforts to change the status quo at al-Aqsa Mosque and prevent confiscations in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood near al-Aqsa in 2021. This attack was characterized by the fact that none of its goals were related to Gaza but Jerusalem, and for the first time, Hamas, not Israel, was the initiator of the war. Certainly, an organization that has been pacified and confined to the Gaza Strip is not

expected to carry out such a massive attack on Jerusalem. It was more likely to launch an attack to end the prolonged blockade of Gaza.

Similarly, and more clearly, the October 7 attack proved that Hamas has never been pacified. On the contrary, it appears to be carrying out a campaign of strategic deception to carry out the October 7 attacks it has been preparing for years. In other words, Hamas was not pacified but was pretending to be pacified. Consequently, although the author has closely analyzed Hamas, he has failed to properly position the organization due to neglecting its preparations over the years. Still, this book is informative for understanding the evolution of Hamas and the whole Palestinian case through Hamas's narrative.

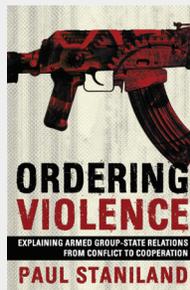
Ordering Violence: Explaining Armed Group-State Relations from Conflict to Cooperation

By Paul Staniland

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The world has experienced a dramatic change in power politics from the West to the East and actors, the main elements of International Relations. According to the traditional understanding of mainstream theories, in which states are considered as the main component, it is not enough to explain the existing diversities on the ground. The rising impacts of non-state actors in international order, such as corporations, NGOs, and armed groups, make it necessary to consider these elements. Mainly, non-state armed actors (NSAAs) should be given special attention due to their



threatening impacts on daily life and NSAAs' ability to use force to gain negotiation power with the states.

Paul Staniland's book, *Ordering Violence: Explaining Armed Group-State Relations from Conflict to Cooperation*, focuses on the relationship of armed groups with South

Asian states. The book aims to explain how states' actions towards NSAAs vary and in which conditions cooperation and conflict occur. In this sense, it is a crucial starting point for the book to see that a state can cooperate with some large-scale armed actors

while it might act aggressively against a small and militarily less powerful one that could be seen as an existential threat. The book argues that the ideological positions of states have a central role in determining which armed groups can cooperate or conflict regardless of size, power, and organizational characteristics. In other words, ideology will lead the governments to judge the armed groups as legitimate, tolerable, or unacceptable.

The book includes four countries, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Burma/Myanmar for two reasons. First, these countries have a shared political context of being British colonies, which makes the research comparable. For this concern, the book excludes Nepal and Bangladesh since the former is outside the colonial context, and the latter can be evaluated within Pakistan's political struggles. Second, though the politics in these countries changed after independence, they have been challenged by different armed groups in terms of language, religion, and redistribution over the years.

The book is divided into 7 chapters. The first chapter puts forth two main arguments. First, the perception of threats from armed groups is determined by a state's own ideology. To this end, the book focuses on nationalistic inclusiveness, the state's position on the secular-religious view, and the redistributive ideology. Second, tactical incentives may explain the attitudes of states and armed groups toward each other. According to states' intentions, such as being coercive, winning a violent election, or having a partner against shared enemies, armed groups can be operationally valuable. In this sense, armed groups can be seen as opposed, aligned, or gray zones for the states.

Chapter 2 discusses how armed order changes by giving some examples. In this re-

gard, changes can happen due to either ideological alignment or tactical overlap. There are three contexts in which states and armed groups cooperate: violent elections, international politics, and intense civil wars. The ideological position of armed groups is also significant in understanding whether cooperation or conflict will happen. In the case of violence, states and armed groups are keen to interact, by which states can outsource the violence.

Chapter 3 explains the statistical methodology of the book, which uses a new dataset of state-group orders. According to statistical classification, the armed orders could be total war, containment, limited cooperation, or alliance. Armed groups can be categorized as anti-state, mainstream party, or pro-state, and their goals can be autonomy, independence, control of the central government, or reform/policy change. Incentives of groups might be as redistributive, leftist, or religious. There are two remarkable messages in the chapter. First, states and armed groups may have significantly variable relations. Second, the armed groups have manageably comfortable relations with South Asian states.

In chapter 4, armed politics in India is discussed within a historical context that has a determinant role in structuring the dynamics of politics in India. Parties, insurgents, and state institutions have deep roots in the country. Therefore, there are five empirical expectations for state-armed group relations in India. First, tribal and linguistic armed groups can be considered in the gray zone and are more likely to cooperate with any regime. Second, minority religious groups like Sikhs and Muslims are perceived as the most threatening structures, especially for Hindu nationalists. Third, leftist groups are closer to the gray zone than religious groups and closer

to opposed armed groups than tribal and linguistic groups. Fourth, intra-systemic insurgents are broadly tolerated. Fifth, while the Congress in India is more repressive towards Hindu nationalist armed groups, Hindu Nationalist Parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party are more supportive of them.

Chapter 5 investigates the complex relationship between Pakistan and armed groups. It is possible to see some armed groups with which Pakistan collaborates and some towards which Pakistani forces behave severely. Pakistan generally considers ethno-linguistic groups as ideologically opposed due to Bengali or Baloch separatism and Islamist armed groups as the gray zone or ideologically aligned. As for tactical overlap, Pakistani security forces collaborate with some specific armed groups in cross-border rivalries, electoral politics, and counter-insurgency operations.

Chapter 6 analyses Burma/Myanmar's large-scale civil conflict and state oppression since independence. As discussed in the chapter, Bamar-dominated ethnicity and Buddhist-based religious identity can explain the cause of ongoing conflicts. What is special to

Burma/Myanmar is that military authoritarian rule is too dominant, which leads to centralization and Bamar-Buddhist dominance in the country.

In chapter 7, Sri Lanka's experience with armed groups and insurgencies is analyzed. Sri Lanka has experienced an extraordinary conflict since its independence, most of them stemmed from armed politics of some party-linked networks. Moreover, ethnic and linguistic cleavage between Tamil and Sinhala has shaped the armed order in Sri Lanka.

Overall, this book presents a holistic and comprehensive perspective of armed orders in South Asia from a historical perspective. The book has a state-centric perspective giving the state a central role. Along with the theoretical background, the book's statistical method makes the research powerful since the book utilizes a new dataset to explain the armed orders. However, the measurement and reliability of datasets in conflict studies is one of the main challenges, as is the case in the book as well. In this sense, the dataset may be strengthened by new variables to comprehend the real nature of armed politics in South Asia.