

INSURGENCY

PSC/IR 265: CIVIL WAR AND INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS

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Outline

1. Theories of Counterinsurgency Strategy
2. What Causes Insurgencies?
3. Recap

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Disclaimer

- We don't really know what a good counterinsurgency tactic is.
 - Few cases
 - All sorts of inference problems

Conventional Warfare

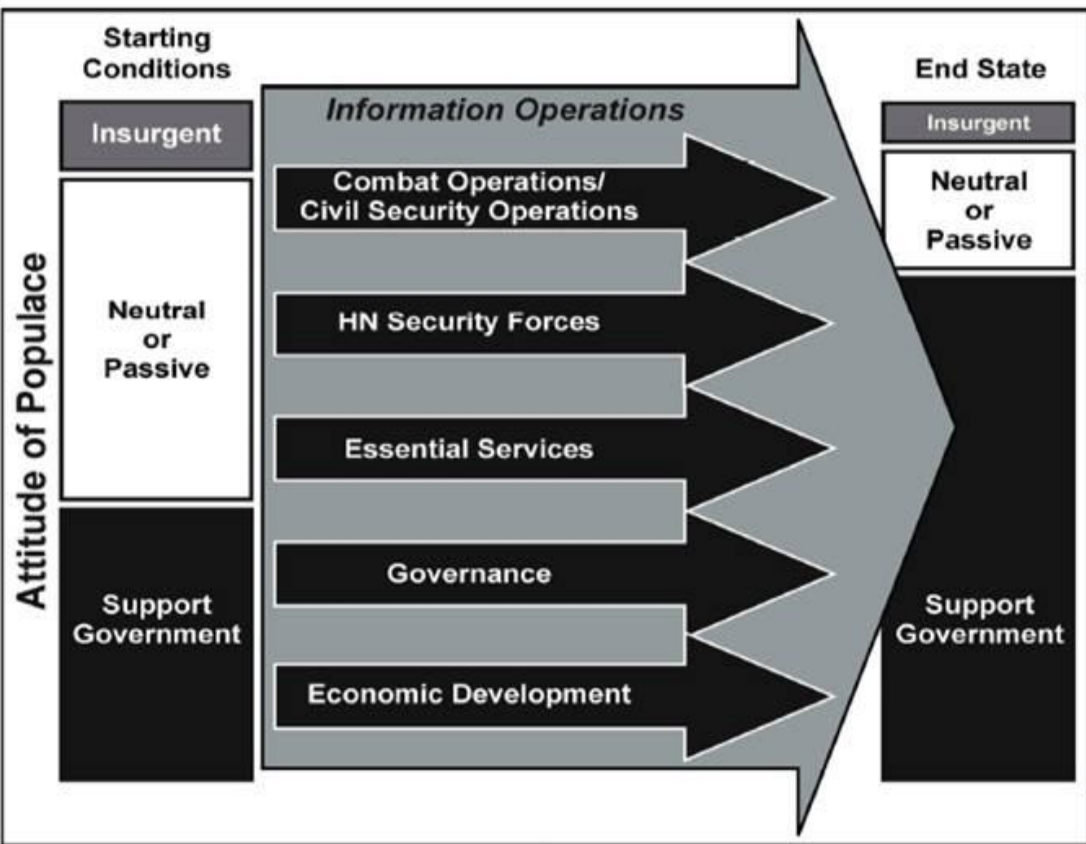
- Historically common
- Reflects that weak opponents normally start insurgencies
- Strategically misguided

Collective Punishment

- Deterrence strategy
- Example: Insurgent strike => 100 killed
- Risks turning everyone against you

Population Centric

- Protect civilians
- Win hearts and minds
- Clear-hold-build



General Obstacles

- Insurgencies fight wars not to lose
- Willingness to kill
- Blowback
- Unequal stakes/resolve

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Some Logic

- Insurgencies start for some reason.
- Counterinsurgencies are supposed to stop insurgencies.
- Need to end the reason they start.

News

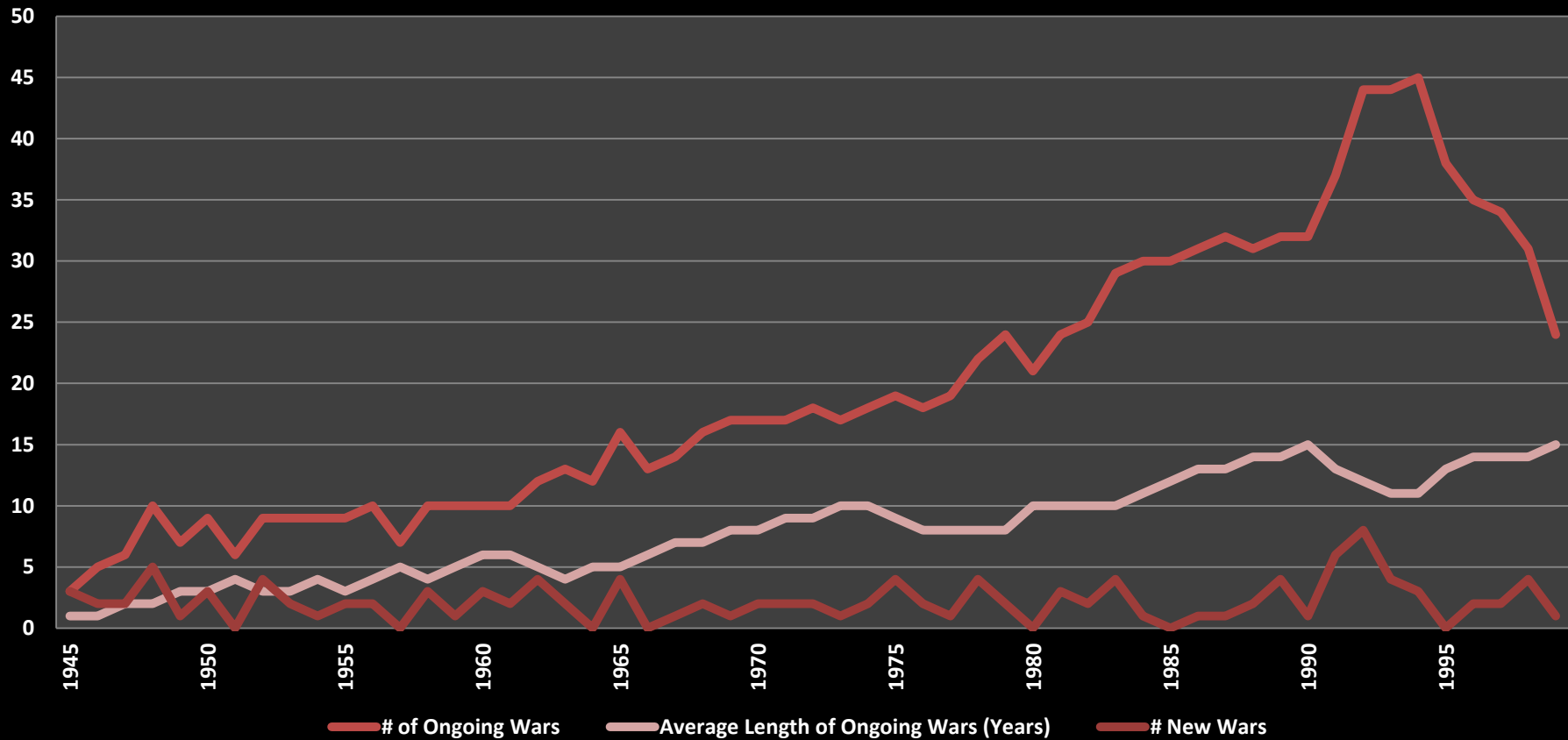
- Bad news: We don't know why insurgencies start.
- Good news: Research has picked up in this area recently.

Some Ideas (Fearon and Laitin 2003)

- Lack of kingmaker
- Ethnic diversity
- Religious diversity
- Weak governments
- Terrain

Kingmaker

- Cold War: Leaders draw support from superpowers.
 - Military assistance ends wars.
- No Cold War => no assistance => no victory
=> more ongoing war



Ethnic/Religious Diversity

- More groups => more disagreement => more fighting.
- Or does it?

Weak Governments

- Weaker governments => greater chance of winning => more fighting
- Or does it?

Terrain

- Rougher terrain (mountains)/noncontiguous territory => better hiding places for insurgencies => more insurgencies
- Or does it?

GIS Analysis

- Groups further from capital more likely to engage in insurgency.
 - Causal?
- Terrain only matters for territorial ethnic conflict.

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Inferences Are Hard

- Best inferences come from randomized experiments.
- We can't randomly assign outbreak of conflict in countries.

Conventional Wisdom Is Bad

- Please don't explain war as the result of people liking war.
- Better explanations: people have preferences *against* war and still fight anyway.

Bargaining

- Is complicated.
- Requires models. (And simple models are okay.)
- Explains why civil war is relatively rare.

Information Problems

- Even perfectly intelligent people can overestimate their chances in war.
- Fighting results, but the fighting also stops the war.

Commitment Problems

- Not just an issue for Barney Stinson
- Also explains why wars occur



Costly Signaling

- Sometimes you have to spend some money to save some money.
- Rings are bad costly signals.



Variance

- It still can't be explained with a constant.

Selecting on the Dependent Variable

- No.
- Just no.
- Stop it.