

# Book Reviews

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## ARMED NONSTATE GROUPS

### **Global Security Upheaval: Armed Non-state Groups Usurping State Stability Functions**

By Robert Mandel

Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz, Visiting Research Professor at the US Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, PA, and Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics

Robert Mandel's *Global Security Upheaval: Armed Non-state Groups Usurping State Stability Functions* is a tour de force in the field of security studies. The author's arguments and recommendations turn the Westphalian state system on its head. In that system, rule or monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force is considered the exclusive domain of the state. Furthermore, the state's ability to provide for the welfare and security of its citizens is derived from its presumed social contract between the rulers and the ruled. However, Mandel's *Global Security Upheaval* calls into question the common belief that central governments are the sole source of a nation's stability and argues that subnational and transnational nonstate forces are major sources of global instability in an insecure world. According to Mandel, "the steady concentration of power in the hands of states, which began in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia, is over, at least for a while" in part because "of the ability of armed individuals and armed nonstate groups to undertake physical coercions." In this post-Westphalian system there are diverse sources of rule or monopoly over the use of force rather than just the mighty Leviathan. In addition, armed nonstate groups may enjoy a form of Weberian legitimacy if they step into a power vacuum and provide for critical public needs.

Mandel questions the conventional thinking about international stability. His argument rests on four main assumptions. First, states and intergovernmental organizations are the dominant focus of authority in global society. Second, armed nonstate groups are legitimate spoilers disrupting security and triggering political disorder and violence. Third, the public consistently demands state government protection, and private bodies can enhance security only if they do not rely on the threat or use of violence, as with transnational market-based or humanitarian organizations. Fourth, if a state is not providing stability, a strategy of strengthening and expanding governmental capacity would be a sensible response to the government deficit.

Mandel also provides a set of counterpropositions. For example, areas exist where it makes little sense to rely on central state governments for stability; attempts to bolster such governments to promote stability often prove futile; armed nonstate groups can sometimes provide local stability better than states; power-sharing arrangements between states and armed nonstate groups may sometimes be viable; and these changes in the international setting call for major analytical shifts and significant deviations from standard responses. Mandel believes a state must follow these strategies to enhance its national security.

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SECURITY  
USURPING STATE STABILITY FUNCTIONS  
UPHEAVAL



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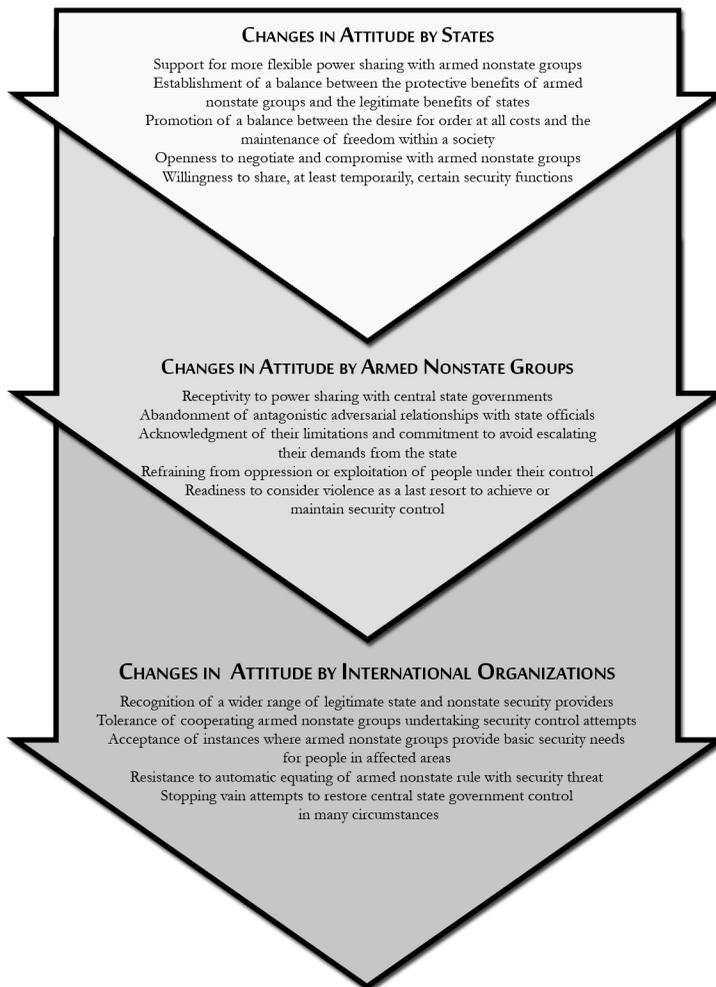
Moreover, changes in the global supply and demand for protection are the primary reason for the rise of armed nonstate groups. As the state diminishes its ability to fight unconventional threats and while there is an increase in public demand for protection, armed nonstate groups will proliferate around the world to fill the vacuum left by the state. As the security of the state and individuals becomes grounded in private enterprise, armed nonstate groups in locales where the state has lost control could become the only viable alternative for stability. Mandel argues that there are areas of the world where it makes little sense to rely on state government for stability. In fact, argues Mandel, attempts to bolster such governments' efforts to promote stability often result in the opposite outcome: more violence and less security. Figure 1 summarizes Mandel's argument of supply and demand of nonstate actors for protection.



**Figure 1.** Mandel's argument of supply and demand of nonstate actors for protection.

There are several elements in this text that make it unique in relationship to other works. First, each chapter uses figures to highlight

key conceptual points, allowing readers to gain a quick understanding of a section's main thrust and to compare at a glance multifaceted findings across topics and sections. Second, the book contains extensive cross-references allowing readers who want more background on a topic to find the appropriate discussion in another section easily. Mandel explores the question whether the mighty Leviathan state is willing to coexist with a "parallel state" or a "state-within-states" to provide security and stability in the future. Mandel's answer is obviously yes. Figure 2 illustrates Mandel's vision regarding attitude changes for alternative security governance.



**Figure 2.** Mandel's proposed attitude changes necessary for successful alternative security governance.

In conclusion, I recommend this book to anyone interested in global security studies and future military leaders. This text can be especially useful to students at the US Army War College, many of whom will have to face the dilemma raised by Mandel.