

SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY

INFORMATION SERVICES TEAM

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CITIZENS HAVE A SOCIAL DUTY TO DEFEND DEMOCRACY

Countless democracies have been destroyed as a result of coups or insurrections.

The minority Nazi Party came to power democratically and legally by forging a coalition government with conservatives in 1933, after which they quickly seized control of the state, ended democracy, and proceeded to rearm Germany with a view to invading many neighbouring nations and eliminating “untermenschen” like Jews.

Boris Yeltsin surrounded Russia’s Parliament with tanks in 1993 and ordered them to open fire when legislators refused to grant him special powers, which harked back to the 1917 coup by Bolsheviks against the Provisional post-imperial government that was organising Russia’s first democratic elections. Legislators quickly capitulated to Yeltsin’s demands, with his successor Vladimir Putin cementing his dictatorial control of Russia.

Thousands of pro-democracy protestors in China were slaughtered by the People’s Liberation Army in Tiananmen Square in 1989, on orders from the ruling Communist Party of China which wanted to continue to rule without democratic accountability. A party that rules on the “might is right” principle and persecutes minorities (many used as involuntary organ banks).

Populists like Hitler can all too readily come to power



Swiss Army honour guard, 2006. (FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP via Getty Images)

democratically by exploiting grievances and nationalism, which reveals the need for democratic safeguards.

Had the German people been committed to defending democracy and minorities, and possessed the practical means of protecting themselves, they would likely have organised mass protests and a national strike to bring down the Nazi regime, but most lacked this commitment and the practical means of defence against the Nazi security forces. An uprising the German army may well have refused to put down or supported.

Defending and supporting democracy can be extremely dangerous, especially when those who oppose its introduction or seek to destroy it have a monopoly of violence, as was the

case in Germany, Russia and China where few ordinary citizens possessed practical defensive weapons.

The gold standard in protecting democracy is the Swiss citizen army, which is comprised mostly of reservist conscripts rather than self-selected professionals dependant on the government for their income. People who self select (volunteer) for military service all too often harbour authoritarian tendencies. Such service is a social duty like voting and paying income tax.

If this is not possible then able adults of good character (members of the unorganised militia) should obtain a service rifle (and pistol) and join a civil defence group or gun club like those affiliated with the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The monopolisation of deadly force by agents of the state dependent on the state for their income endangers democracy.
2. Citizens deprived of the practical means of defending democracy are readily massacred by police, soldiers, state militias or state allied private militias.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Democracies should model their armies on the Swiss Army, or at the very least ensure able adults of good character possess a service rifle as members of a civil defence group or gun club.
2. Promote a love of democracy and vulnerable minorities, and a willingness to defend both.

PRIMARY SOURCES

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ARMED VICTIMS FIGHT OFF GENOCIDAL ATTACKERS

The first Turkish atrocities against the Christian Armenians occurred in the 1890s and largely involved civilian proxies specially armed by the government.

The Armenians were slaughtered in the tens of thousands, but where Armenians were armed they fought back, and were quite

successful not only against civilian irregulars but against regular army troops as well.

Perhaps out of fear that civil war or prolonged disorders might provoke foreign intervention, the army recalled the arms from its proxies and ended the attacks, though the government

continued its policy of confiscating Armenian arms, facilitating the second genocide twenty years later.

The next massacres began in 1915 (up to 1.5 million died), though once again there were instances of armed Armenians warding off troops and escaping.

