

SURVIVAL PAPER

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The “Potential” Militia

By Jim Jones

This is a subject that I explored in an article back in the 1980s, and I think needs to be reviewed again as we enter the 21st Century. There is nothing to advocate here. I am just pointing out a potential in existence.

First lets talk about the term “militia” as it is seen today. The term “militia” much like the terms “survivalist” and “biker” have been twisted and misrepresented in many ways. In all three cases there have been a few individuals or small groups who did not represent the majority of the people that these titles might describe or the true philosophy. In all three cases, I have found the vast majority of these folks to be law abiding, caring, responsible and intelligent citizens. Both the news media and the entertainment media have tended to hang these titles on a variety of racist, extremists and criminal stereotypes and have there-by isolated them from the public. In the case of “militia” they have established the image of paramilitary, Rambo wannabe’s with extremist views, armed to the teeth and waiting to establish some sort of Fascist state. While this is the impression given, the fact is that very few so-called militia members have been convicted of any type of crime. Of course we also see the religious “militia” groups running around the Middle-East with their AK47s and RPGs. This is hardly new. Regardless of the good intentions of the invader, a foreign army occupying anyone’s land will bring about the formation of a militia or militias. Anyway, the term militia has some negative notions attached to it at this time in America.

The first time a few tribal members gathered in the common defense of a village or hunting ground, they had formed a militia. Militias, unlike armies are always defensive and local in organization. Militias do not launch offensives or invasions. National armies do that. In the Middle Ages towns created their own militias when the feudal lords sent away the armies to fight in the crusades. Later these were established by the counties as “Training Bands” that met once each year. In 1814 the Germans established the Landwehr as a localized militia but it soon came under the armies control. The American militia plaid an important role in the American Revolution, but it sometimes proved unreliable. When used in the role of local defense or for holding prepared positions such as at Bunker Hill it could prove deadly, but

when used in remote field battles it tended to give way. Militias by nature lack the discipline of formal armies. Armies will blindly obey orders to hold or attack without questioning. Militias fight best when they are clearly defending a territory or clear value. Militias also played a part in the Civil War on both sides. The “militia Act” of 1903 and 1908 used the term “militia” to establish what was not a true militia but a military reserve. In truth, any military force controlled by the central government and sent beyond the national borders is not a militia at-all and thereby vacates the mission and title of “militia”. **The “well regulated militia” referred to in the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution referred to the potential of local forces formed from the general population keeping and bearing arms to meet local and regional threats.**

Today we have Muslim Fundamentalist groups described as “militias” killing themselves, each-other and just about everyone else. In Brazil there are illegal “militias” formed to protect the people that have turned into gangs that blackmail local residents. We certainly cannot want to see America afflicted by the kind of violence and chaos that we see in the Middle East, Africa and South-America. Sectarian militias, privet armies and warlords have laid waste to these regions and resulted in the death of millions. **The true meaning and mission of “militia” is to unite and defend not divide and destroy.**

There are two kinds of militias to be found in America today. The first is the “standing” or “organized” militia groups that we hear about from time-to-time. These are formally organized, paramilitary groups that have uniforms, a rank system and training activities. Most have some form of political agenda. Most have non-aggressive, pro-freedom missions, but a few have narrow and negative racial or religious agendas. Most members are concerned and responsible citizens but a few are angry and violently inclined. Even the best groups tend to attract a few unstable individuals in addition to infiltrators and agent-provocateurs. These groups also tend to attract constant surveillance from the media and governmental agencies. They are easy targets to blame for all sorts of real and imaginary dangers. So their chief strength and their chief weakness is that they are standing organizations. Of course the same is true of many of the gangs and the terrorists that most *good* militias are formed to oppose. So much for the pros-and-cons of standing militias. I am not here to endorse or condemn standing militias. I would offer that there is also another form of militia that has its advantages.

It may be observed that while the organized militia stood at Lexington and Concord on April 19th, * 1775, it was the “potential militia” of the armed and united population that harassed and drove the elite British forces back to Boston. It was this “potential militia” that coalesced into the forces that eventually won the revolution. Throughout history these “potential militias” have materialized from discontented populations to confront threats to the common good. Most members of the “potential militia” would never think of themselves as such. Armed citizens, veterans, martial arts practitioners, scout leaders, first aiders, self-reliance and preparedness practitioners, hunters, and of course students of survival to name just a few are part of the “potential militia”. **The existence of this potential militia balances against the existence of potential tyranny.** We can observe today that the criminal and terrorists forces that seem to be the hardest to destroy are those that are not tightly organized, but are united only by a common albeit evil goal. With not structure, hierarchy, supply chain or meetings, they are invulnerable to infiltration or attack. The most effective militia is much the same. It is more an idea and a “potential” than an organization. An invisible “force in being” that has the “potential” to become active and united only in the common defense of the common good. A free citizen should sleep better with the idea that there is a “potential militia”, while a would-be abuser of power should have some sleepless nights contemplating its existence.

As the British learned in 1776, and we have learned or should have learned in places like Viet Nam and Iraq, armies can invade and intimidate and destroy, but ultimately cannot control or change. Armies are like ships in the water of a society. They pass through it and make great waves. They damage or destroy each other, but the water is still there. They are damaged and the water sinks them. The water becomes stormy and they are capsized. That water is the people of any place and time as the potential militia.

** A date that has been deliberately defiled by Waco and Oklahoma City.*



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