I am not really certain how I arrived at the thesis of this paper or when, although I know I concluded that the phenomenon of revolution had changed over time at a relatively early point in my academic career. Notes in my files indicate that I incorporated some of the ideas here in a lecture given at Muskingum College in 1970. The teaching of military history, as well as an occasional seminar focusing more specifically on revolution, also influenced my thinking on the topic, as did my research on the wars in the Philippines and Vietnam. The significant contrast between those two revolutionary conflicts, separated by roughly half a century, indicated that in that interval of time some kind of fundamental change had taken place in the nature of revolutionary warfare.

The work of Walter Millis, although focused almost exclusively on conventional warfare, provided a model for analysis that proved to be extremely important, and I am also indebted to the authors of selected chapters in the original edition of *Makers of Modern Strategy*. I am equally certain that the vast majority of the literature on revolution that I read for my courses contributed very little, except in the negative sense of showing me how not to study the subject historically. As is true of many ideas, however, the exact origin of the argument presented here remains a mystery. All I know for certain is that the paper proved very difficult to write and was in gestation an extremely long time before its 1986 publication, in an abbreviated form, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.

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Revolution is a historical phenomenon of great importance, and no historian is likely to argue that revolutions have not had a significant influence on the history of nations and regions, even on the history of the entire world. Unlike other forms of warfare, however, revolution has no coherent chronological history, and there are no studies of the subject comparable to William McNeil's *The Pursuit of Power* or Theodore Ropp's older but equally important *War in the Modern World*. Despite volumes written on the subject of revolution by historians, political scientists, sociologists, and others, one searches in vain for a comprehensive history of the phenomenon.

In the study of revolution, as Robert Blackey observed in his extensive bibliography devoted to the subject, "there has been a conflict between those who perceive revolutions as such unique occurrences that they defy comparison and those who seek to find certain uniformities, consistencies, and broad theories." Perez Zagorin, in an
earlier review of the literature, wrote of "three possible lines of inquiry . . . the investigation of a specific individual revolution" (the most common approach taken by historians), comparative studies in which one takes two or more cases in an attempt to find "the relationship between them," and, finally, studies seeking to develop a theory of revolution. Others might lump Zagorin's three categories into two, arguing that both comparative and theoretical studies seek to develop generalizations applicable to all revolutions.[4] What is absent from the literature is a historical approach which assumes that revolution, like many other phenomena, evolves over time, changing as a result of changes in the political, social and economic circumstances in which revolutions develop. Viewed historically, revolution also appears to change as a result of the practice, study, and preparation of revolution. At present, however, we know relatively little about the historical dimensions of revolution because scholars studying the subject have given them so little thought.

To date, despite the significant and abundant historical literature on individual revolutions, the scholarly study of revolution as a phenomenon has remained almost a monopoly of psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists, although the results of their work have not been encouraging, particularly given the significant scholarly effort devoted to the topic. In 1973, Zagorin concluded that "the general theory of revolution remains subject to confusion, doubt, and disagreement." He observed that "even elementary questions of definition, terminology, and delimitation of the field to be explained are still not settled." In a review of the literature three years later, William E. Lipsky came to a similar conclusion. Scholars, he observed, could only agree "that revolutions have taken place and that a few movements, at least, have been revolutions." They disagreed, however, "on just what has taken place, how it did so, why it did so, what results it produced, and whether or not these results could or would have been achieved in any case and under other circumstances." In another article published the same year, Elbaki Hermassi observed that, "although few fields in social science have produced a comparable array of theories and findings," the sum total of the work was "quite unimpressive."[5]

Despite the excellent work of a number of scholars in the years that followed, general assessments changed little. In a 1979 review of the literature, for example, Rod Aya concluded that "available theories of revolution and collective violence" were "deeply defective." Blackey echoed those sentiments in his 1982 bibliography, claiming that "any examination of studies concerned with the nature and idea of revolution will invariably result in considerable confusion." My own reading tended to confirm Blackey's warning that "whether the student is a jaded professional or an uninitiated fledgling, the experience can be intellectually traumatic." I have never encountered such a jargon-ridden and soporific body of scholarly literature nor one so extensive. Despite the abundance of their work, the students of revolution have still not reached agreement on a definition of the phenomenon they are attempting to study.[6]

Virtually every study of revolution begins by giving attention to the problem of definition, and no matter how much one might wish to avoid it a repetition of that
tedious and unproductive task seems essential. Fortunately, the argument that the study of revolution has suffered from insufficient attention to its historical dimensions does not require precise agreement on a definition. For that reason, there will be no review of previous attempts at definition and no effort to add another one to the growing but as yet unsatisfactory list of contenders.

Unfortunately, two problems of definition exist which one cannot ignore. One is the tendency of some analysts to define revolution in terms of outcomes, insisting that a certain amount of a specific kind of change must occur for an event to be classified as a revolution. As Aya has noted, such an approach "obscures the political crux of revolutions: namely, an open-ended situation of violent struggle wherein one set of contenders attempts (successfully or unsuccessfully) to displace another from state power."[7] To insist that the term revolution be tied to specific results, linked, generally, to the triumph of revolutionaries in their struggle against the state, ignores, by definition, numerous examples of the revolutionary process. It is akin to defining war to include only those violent conflicts in which the state seeking to overthrow the status quo achieved its end, an approach that would exclude World War II. If revolutionary goals must be achieved before an event may be considered a revolution, then one can never speak of "unsuccessful revolutions," although the process at work in both success and failure would appear to be identical in many respects. Surely no definition is suitable that ignores all of the revolutionary situations which result in a violent confrontation but not in the success of the revolutionaries.

A second common problem relating to definition concerns the way in which scholars have separated the study of revolution from that of counterrevolution. One can never gain more than a partial understanding if those who actively resist the revolutionaries are ignored. A few scholars have recognized the error of such an approach. Hermassi, for example, observed that "the study of revolution--especially with respect to its outcome--must include consideration of counterrevolutionary activities," and he concluded that "a study of the efforts to effect change must incorporate an analysis of the resistance to such change, both within and between nations."[8] The forces opposed to revolution represent an important part of the revolutionary dynamic.

At present, the situation still resembles that described by Lipsky in 1976, when he noted that "terminology remains a basic problem" and that "no consensus exists as to just how to define revolution," although some progress has been made. More authors now recognize the need to define the term by something other than outcome and to consider all parties to any revolutionary conflict rather than focusing exclusively on the revolutionaries. Zagorin feared that establishing "a completely satisfactory definition" might be impossible because of the complexity of "the phenomena and variables to be included," but some students of revolution have recognized that the difficulty of definition stems from something more than complexity. Instead, they have identified the historical nature of the phenomenon as the root of the problem.[9]
In 1969, Jacques Ellul concluded that "we must accept as revolution what men of a certain period experience as revolution and so named it themselves." For him, the "historical reality" of revolution was a function of "the way men perceived it at the time, in the way they believed it and transmitted it to us." As an example, he wrote that "it is utterly absurd and pretentious to state that the revolution of 1830 was not a revolution," if "those who made it" believed it was. Later, James Farr focused on the way in which disagreements over "revolution" have existed because of differences in "revolutionary beliefs and practices." He concluded that "the meaning of 'revolution' was a complex and historically evolving product." As a result, there could be "no single meaning timelessly available for the forging of a truly general theory of revolution." Revolution was a concept with a history of its own.[10]

Historians are thus left with a term that is, as John Dunn observed, "irretrievably elastic in application," and they may be forced to accept Peter Amann's view that there can be "no 'true' definition of an abstraction" such as revolution. Amann may even be correct that the term revolution has been "broadened to the point of hopeless imprecision." Despite the problems of definition, however, historians and others have recognized that there is a phenomenon to be identified and studied which, at the very least, embodied the elements that Amann included in his own definition of revolution: an effective though not necessarily successful challenge to the power of the state.[11]

One of the most common approaches to the study of revolution, that based upon the analysis of case studies, frequently gives the impression of being historical, but in reality it is not, for it fails to take into account the effect on the phenomenon of changes over time. Ironically, an historian, Crane Brinton, was among those most responsible for establishing the ahistorical approach to the subject that has dominated most other studies. In his 1974 synthesis of research on revolution, Mark N. Hagopian credited Lyford Edwards, George Pettee, and Brinton, among others, with having "produced an intellectual scaffolding of revolutionary theory" that was amazingly resistant to what Hagopian called "the rude storms of the last three decades." Although Morris Janowitz may be correct in his assertion that Edwards' book, *The Natural History of Revolution*, served as "the prototype" for Brinton's *The Anatomy of Revolution*, he recognized the validity of Zagorin's claim that Brinton's volume was "still probably the most influential as well as the most widely read book on revolution to have been written in this country." Lipsky agreed, observing that "while most of Brinton's conclusions have been discounted in the more than thirty-five years since they first appeared, his work established the area of study, the methodology for investigation and the basic working premises."[12]

Although Brinton focused the attention of the historical profession on the phenomenon of revolution in a context broader than the study of individual revolutions, he oriented their thinking about the topic away from its historical dimensions. He and most other people who have studied revolution viewed the phenomenon as uniform over time. Their goal became the discovery of
generalizations which, taken together, would make possible the construction of a valid model. Studies of revolution focused primarily on causation and outcome rather than on the revolutionary process or technique. Techniques, if only because some of them relate to technology and are thus obviously changing, did not fit easily into a model that was not restricted by chronological boundaries. Scholars preferred to treat revolution as a phenomenon largely unaffected by historical change and the passage of time.

Eventually, however, scholars began to recognize the importance of the phenomenon's historical dimension. In 1976, for example, Lipsky drew attention to "the possibility that there may be important causes outside the revolution that influence its course, that revolution is the tip of the historical iceberg and not the iceberg itself." The same year Hermassi noted that, for purposes of comparison, it was useful to conceive of revolutions not merely as internal confrontations between groups with competing claims concerning values and social structures in a given society, but also as world-historical phenomena. Relating revolutions "to the degree of national integration," he concluded that they were a relatively recent phenomenon dependent on "the emergence and consolidation of the nation-state." Similarly, Charles Tilly wrote of the relationship between the nature of collective action such as revolution and both the "rise of national states to preeminent positions in a wide variety of political activities" and "the increasingly associational [as opposed to communal] character of the principal contenders for power at the local as well as the national level." Earlier, Barrington Moore had drawn attention to the connection between routes to modernization on the one hand and existing political and other structures on the other. Although not focusing specifically on revolution, Moore's approach had significant implications regarding the importance of its historical dimensions.[13]

Building upon the work of Moore, Theda Skocpol concluded in her study of revolution in France, Russia, and China that the causes of revolution "necessarily vary according to the historical and international circumstances of the countries involved." Observing that "patterns of revolutionary causation and outcome are necessarily affected by world-historical changes in the fundamental structures and bases of state power as such," she noted that "the likelihood and the forms of revolutions tend to change over world time." But Skocpol's view was only partially historical, for she denied the importance of the conscious human dimension of revolutionary actions. Although she recognized that revolutions occurred "in unique world-historical contexts that change over time," she seemed to forget, as one of her critics observed, "that human beings thinking and acting (however haphazardly) are the mediating link between structural conditions and social outcomes." As a result, she seriously underestimated the role of such important historical variables as "ideology, political organization, and self-conscious social action."[14]

The role of changing structures is only one of the historical dimensions recognized by scholars. Hermassi, for example, noted the way in which revolutions "introduce new
political ideals and principles of legitimacy which threaten existing power arrangements by their explosive novelty or demands for societal restructuring. Revolutions thus had what he called "a demonstration effect beyond the boundaries of their country of origin, with a potential for triggering waves of revolution and counterrevolution." Revolutions also create models and ideals which influence subsequent revolutionary theorists.[15]

In 1973, Sheldon Wolin observed that "learning the 'lessons' of revolutionary experience, incorporating them into theoretical form, searching for the close integration of theory and praxis became permanent features of the revolutionary tradition." Revolutionary action became bureaucratized, and as a result, wrote Wolin, "revolutionary theory . . . became essentially a body of strategic and tactical doctrines, a quasi-military way of thinking about action . . . conceived in terms that stressed organization, planning, secrecy, and discipline." The changes in the phenomenon can be seen in comparisons of one revolution with another, later one, or in individual revolutions, such as that in Vietnam, which evolved over a relatively long period of time.[16]

A perfect example of the historical dimension of revolution is evident in the comparison of the 1899-1902 American conflict with Filipino revolutionaries and the later struggle against the forces of revolution in Vietnam highlighted in Chapter Five. As historian Glenn A. May observed when he compared the two, "the passage of time meant that Vietnamese military leaders had a much more sophisticated approach to unconventional warfare than the Filipino leaders. Giap," wrote May, "fought more ably than Aguinaldo, in large part, because he had at his disposal a body of military doctrine on 'people's war' that was based on the mistakes and successes of others." May concluded that "the spread of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the development of Communist organization techniques had fundamentally transformed the nature of the national liberation movements."[17] As seen in earlier chapters, differences in the course of the two revolutions were also the result of changes taking place in the international balance of power between 1899 and the 1960s, as well as changes in warfare itself.

Unfortunately, although many scholars have noted briefly the way in which revolution changed over time, the stranglehold of the comparative approach used by Brinton and others remained unbroken. Even a number of the authors who drew attention to various historical aspects of the phenomenon continued to approach the subject in an ahistorical manner. In 1977 historian Walter Laqueur could observe that studies of political violence were "one-dimensional with regard to the time factor, i.e., synchronic instead of dichronic," without abandoning traditional assumptions. He too sought uniformities instead of the historical roots of significant contrasts, and he devoted his monumental study of guerrilla warfare to the search for "common patterns." One finds a similar orientation in his work on terrorism. Although Zagorin rejected the idea of "a universal typology or structural model comprehending all the forms of revolution," he nevertheless sought uniformities within the taxonomy of
political violence that he created. Harry Eckstein also hoped to identify "common features" in "all cases of internal war," and Skocpol acknowledged her "urge to clarify the general logic" in the revolutions that she analyzed. Like so many others, she sought "causal regularities across the various historical cases."[18]

The results of all the work done to date are too meager to sustain a continuation of the commitment to past approaches in the study of revolution, and the time is long overdue to make research into the phenomenon more compatible with what we know about its historical, i.e. changing, nature. The first step is to abandon efforts to force the phenomenon into the ahistorical mold of traditional comparative studies. The second step is to recognize that the development of a general theory of revolution may be impossible, as some scholars have begun to suspect.[19]

The sources needed for the development of a history of revolution exist in abundance. As was the case with the history of war at the point when authors brought forth the first comprehensive studies, an extensive secondary literature treating a number of important aspects of revolution is readily available. In addition to countless volumes treating individual revolutions, one finds many broader studies. Some, such as The Age of Democratic Revolutions by R. R. Palmer or Zagorin's Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660, focus on periods of conjuncture or revolutionary upheavals in a limited chronological period. Others, such as Laqueur's Guerrilla, deal with specific aspects of the revolutionary process, such as strategy or tactics. Similarly, James H. Billington's Fire in the Minds of Men, one of the few volumes that actually approaches being a comprehensive history, treats the "origins of the revolutionary faith" from the late eighteenth century to the 1905 revolution in Russia. The building blocks for a comprehensive history thus await the builders. What is needed is a change of assumptions so that historians might begin research into the phenomenon of revolution on a new and more profitable tack, comparable to that taken decades ago by historians studying war.[20]

The brief survey that follows is meant to be suggestive of what one might see when revolution is viewed as a historical phenomenon that changes over time. It provides no more than a set of tentative conclusions. To simplify the task at hand, the chronological scope of the example has been limited to the period since the seventeenth century, and it focuses primarily on the process of revolution rather than its causes, which, as is the case with war, may be more event specific than the technique. Particular attention is given to the results of the conscious study of the phenomenon and reflection upon experience gained by revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries. Finally, the historical overview presented here clearly reflects the author's many years as a student of military history.

Revolutionary outbreaks in the seventeenth century tended to be spontaneous; the response by government, when initially challenged, was often weak. Both revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries proceeded by ad hoc arrangements, responding to situations as they developed. Because of the balance of power that
existed, civil war was a likely outcome of any intense confrontation between
government and a large revolutionary group. Religion acted as an important
organizing force, related both to the causes of revolt and the revolutionary process
itself, with Protestant churches playing a role akin to that taken much later by
revolutionary parties.

The balance of power between seventeenth century revolutionary and
counterrevolutionary forces appears to have been roughly equal. Although slow
communication initially hampered the government by delaying its response, later it
also worked to prevent the rapid spread of revolution and the linkage of revolutionary
groups. Other counterrevolutionary strengths included the psychological one of
acceptance of and obedience to traditional authority, and the military value of cavalry,
a branch of the service not easily developed by either peasant or urban rebels. At the
same time, however, the general flux in military organization and tactics, as well as
the simple technology of seventeenth century weapons, enabled revolutionaries to
challenge the military power of the state, just as the high degree of political and
religious fragmentation in the seventeenth-century state enabled them to challenge
its authority.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the forces of order, the status quo, the
counterrevolutionaries (call them whatever your politics might dictate) seemed to
have gained the upper hand. Although challenges to government did take place, they
were met effectively. The increasing strength of central authority and its
manifestation in well-trained standing armies gave government greater power than it
had been able to exercise a century earlier. Improved communication, though not
rapid by any means, did enable central governments to move forcefully against rebels,
quashing potential revolutionary upheavals before they could grow.

With time the balance again shifted, and the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth
centuries were indeed an "age of revolution," if not necessarily an age of "democratic"
revolution. Not only were revolutions apparent throughout Europe and America, but
the revolutionaries often succeeded. Many historical developments appear to account
for that success. Growing national feeling and its reinforcement by both revolutionary
rhetoric and the process of revolt itself gave strength and power to revolutions as they
emerged. The revolutionaries' firm base in liberal ideas also gave them a clarity of
objectives as well as a wide appeal that added to their power. Improved
communication and literacy further strengthened the revolutionary causes, and
organization was facilitated by all of these developments. The superior organization of
the revolutionaries, compared to those of earlier centuries, combined at times with
unconventional military technique to further enhance revolutionary power. Able to
organize nations and field large armies (forces that would later be called people's
armies) revolutionary governments benefited from the relatively simple military
technology of the day that enabled rebels to acquire and master the use of arms equal
to those of the professional military units of the counterrevolutionaries. Existing
governments were surprised by the force and vigor of the revolutions, and in Latin
America both the region's isolation and Spanish preoccupation with problems in Europe gave a significant boost to the fortunes of the revolutionaries.

As the nineteenth century progressed, however, the environment in which revolution took place altered significantly. Attempts to copy the successful movements of the period before Napoleon's defeat were often met with swift repression and the more effective use of armed force. Metternich and the other leaders of monarchial Europe created an international system for enforcing the status quo. The active response of their governments, aided by the force of their allies when needed, prevented less formally organized revolutionaries from gaining the upper hand. Also, although its effects were not really felt until mid-century, technology played a role in the enhancement of counterrevolutionary power. Numerous inventions such as the railroad, steamship, and telegraph would enable the state to move its military forces to respond with greater rapidity to threats of rebellion. Weapons were also changing, and whatever arms one found over the hearth or in the cupboard were no longer a match for the rifles and mobile artillery of the standing armies.

Fitting the events of 1848 into the historical evolution of revolution presents a problem. The revolutions did not fail because of faulty military technique or the superiority of counterrevolutionary weapons. They did, however, suffer from inadequate pre-revolutionary planning, insufficient groundwork among the people expected to bear the principal burden of the upheavals, and poor organization. Still, the revolutionaries of 1848 presented the forces of counterrevolution with difficulties. Barricade warfare in urban centers, for example, posed a significant problem for professional armies. In the end, the counterrevolutionaries proved themselves capable of retaining power, signaling would-be revolutionaries that the revolutions of the past could not be easily duplicated. The ability of the counterrevolutionaries to organize internationally gave them a distinct advantage over the revolutionaries, whose nationalistic endeavors lacked coordination.

For revolutionaries, 1848 was a disaster, but the study of those events led to a more thoughtful approach to the whole problem of revolution. The work of Marx and Engels is undoubtedly the most well-known of the revolutionary reassessments, although it did not stand alone, and the themes that emerged provided the text for the revolutionaries of the next two generations and more. Much of the post-1848 revolutionary literature stressed the need for planning. It also emphasized timing, noting the need for patience and a period of prolonged ideological struggle. In 1848, the forces of counterrevolution had found the peasants their willing allies and an important source of recruits. The lesson flowing from that realization stressed the importance of creating greater union between urban workers and peasants. Also, given the final results of the battle of the barricades, revolutionaries emphasized the need for offensive rather than purely defensive action. The focus, however, was on the initial phases of revolutionary activity. Little thought was given to techniques for seizing power if the initial moves of an uprising failed.
Frightened by 1848 and the revolutionary stirrings brought on by industrialization, governments also gave more attention to the problem of revolution. The construction within cities of long, straight, and wide boulevards which could accommodate rifle and cannon volleys, as well as provide avenues for the rapid movement of troops, was not a coincidence. Urban planning was consciously counterrevolutionary. Political, social, and economic reform was also a potent counterrevolutionary weapon, particularly when added to armed force and increasingly professional police work in a comprehensive approach to the problem of preventing revolution. Welfare capitalism undermined the revolutionaries by mitigating some of the worst evils of industrialization. At the same time, increasing technological change continued to provide advantages in weaponry and mobility to standing armies.

In the struggle to gain and maintain colonies, European governments met challenges similar to those provided by revolutionaries at home, and their response was comparable. Mixing reform with military advantage, European colonial governments pacified large sections of Asia and Africa despite the resistance of the local inhabitants. Even when they resorted to the technique of guerrilla warfare, which presented Europeans with a frustrating problem that was rare though not unknown in Europe, the locals failed. By the end of the nineteenth century, European governments had become skilled in the conquest and governance of resistant people, at home and abroad.

The frustration of revolutionaries in the period after 1848 is perhaps best seen in their resort to terrorism. Faced with governments that were either too powerful or too astute to be overthrown, the frustrated agents of rebellion lashed out in destructive terrorist activity which did little to further revolutionary progress, although it may have provided revolutionaries with an outlet for their hostility. Despite attempts to legitimize terrorist activity and demonstrate its revolutionary potential, the advocates of terrorism were never able to develop it into an effective tool. Alone, terrorism was little more than a nuisance to governments prepared to fight revolution forcefully.

When revolution did come in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, it took place where government was weak and unable or unwilling to utilize effectively the techniques of repression and co-optation. Such was the case in Mexico in 1910 and in Russia in 1917. In Cuba, in 1898, foreign intervention first aided and then stifled the revolution. The same thing happened in the Philippines. Elsewhere, particularly in Latin America, revolution was possible because the military itself was the motivating force behind the overthrow of government.

The success of revolution in Russia stimulated revolutionary activity throughout the world. As had been seen earlier, at the time of the American and French revolutions, a highly visible revolution prompts others to emulation. Initially, however, the forces of revolution outside the U. S. S. R. and colonial independence movements after World War I were both countered by a continuation of the repressive and co-optative measures that had proved so successful at the end of the nineteenth century.
Revolution from the right, best exemplified by Italian fascism and the Nazism of Hitler, was more successful than that from the left, in part because it could be presented as a restoration of past glories instead of a radical leap into an unknown future. Elsewhere, revolutionaries continued to find themselves frustrated in their attempts to seize power.

A breakthrough in the development of revolutionary theory and practice came, finally, in China, where the writings and activities of Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party demonstrated a new approach. It embodied a combination of two elements, the focus on preconditions and prior planning inherent in the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin and the technique of guerrilla warfare used throughout the nineteenth century to resist the expansion of industrial Europe. The link between the partisan guerrillas of Napoleonic Spain and Russia and the anti-colonial guerrillas of the Philippines and Vietnam, on the one hand, and the revolutionary theory and organizational skill of the Communists created a revolutionary instrument of great power.

Developed for an agrarian and semi-colonial nation lacking in national organization, Mao's theory had widespread application, particularly after World War II put a severe strain on the resources of the Western colonial powers. Where Lenin had seen the value of the people's war and guerrilla techniques in the post-revolutionary civil war in Russia, Mao saw that they might actually provide the mainstay of revolutionary activity. To the traditional Marxist stress on organization, propaganda, ideological struggle, and timing, he added a stress on guerrilla war from base areas in a rural setting and a recognition that any such struggle would be a protracted one. In the process, the Marxist concept of patience in waiting for the moment of revolution was transformed into a new type of patience in fighting for the moment of revolutionary victory.

Mao's theory, the example of Communist success in China, and the collapse of Western colonial power led to a series of guerrilla conflicts in the post-World War II period. A second age of revolution, comparable to that at the end of the eighteenth century, began. It was a period of manufactured revolution in which individuals and groups set out to overthrow their respective governments using the new techniques. The works of such theorists as Ché Guevara and Vo Nguyen Giap augmented the original work of Mao, but the general focus remained the same, revolution through protracted people's war.

Strongly challenged for the first time in many decades, the forces of counterrevolution attempted to offset the advantage gained by the revolutionaries through their mix of traditional revolutionary methods with the neutral military techniques of the guerrilla. The result, based upon such notably successful counterrevolutionary campaigns as those in Greece, Malaya, and the Philippines, was the doctrine of counterinsurgency, which combined all of the military, political, economic, and social approaches of the past. In practice, however, the doctrine
proved extremely difficult to implement, as the United States discovered in Vietnam.

Much has been written about revolutionary warfare as a Communist weapon of the Cold War, but in reality East-West tension and rivalry aided counterrevolutionaries as well as revolutionaries. Both groups were virtually assured of support if they could convince one of the superpowers that its aid would help erode the power of the other. Eastern bloc support for anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist revolutionaries was thus balanced by Western support for anti-Communist regimes, even when those regimes were illiberal or only nominally pro-Western. The Cold War thus had much less influence than once believed on the fundamental balance of power between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution. If anything, it enhanced the ability of both sides to sustain protracted and bloody stalemates.

In the face of potential stalemate in their respective activities, the parties involved in revolution and counterrevolution were forced to reassess their various approaches and the theories behind them. Perhaps because stalemate was more frustrating for revolutionaries seeking change than for counterrevolutionaries committed to the status quo, the most visible attempts to find a way around the impasse took place in the revolutionary camp. Faced with evidence of counterrevolutionary success in detaching people from the revolution through the use of a variety of techniques including propaganda and civic action, revolutionary theorists began to incorporate into their writings specific warning against such nonmilitary techniques used by counterrevolutionary forces. Frantz Fanon, for example, warned specifically against being deceived by enemy civic action operations and psychological warfare. Marxist and "neo-Marxist" theory, such as the work of Regis Debray, increasingly stressed the need to be uncompromising in the struggle for the goals of the revolution.

In the 1960s, the success of counterinsurgency efforts in the countryside of Latin America led to the development of a theory of guerrilla warfare in which Mao's traditional base, the rural populace, was ignored in the initial stage of warfare. The peasants were no longer seen as a hospitable sea for the guerrilla fish. Thus, Ché and Debray advocated the development of isolated guerrilla focos of 20 or 30 individuals who would operate independently of any political party, rural base, or other group that might compromise them in the face of well-trained counterinsurgent forces. With Ché's death in Bolivia and the failure of other focos elsewhere, revolutionaries in Latin America attempted to move the locus of revolution into the cities, while discontented members of urban-industrial societies elsewhere also gave new attention to the problems of urban revolution, something which had not been attempted in such earnest since the nineteenth century. In practice, however, the urban guerrillas proved no more effective than the rural focos in precipitating revolution.

In Vietnam, the forces of revolution also faced a situation that demanded a reassessment of concepts regarding how revolutionary wars end. The revolutionaries were unable to mobilize a mass uprising or to move successfully to the regular or
third stage of revolutionary warfare as long as the United States resisted. In the end, the struggle became a contest of will, pure and simple, and the will of the revolutionaries proved to be greater than that of the most powerful force against them. But the destruction of the long war was truly horrible, and no revolutionary movement can engage in such carnage without a superhuman commitment. Whether the fruits of victory in such situations are worth the costs should be a matter of debate for revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries alike.

Counterrevolutionaries found the new dimensions of the struggle equally frustrating. To the extent that reform was an important counterrevolutionary device, the general problem was one of how much reform was possible. If, to end a revolution, counterrevolutionaries had to resort to political, social, and/or economic changes that were almost as radical as those advocated by the revolutionaries, a policy based on reform quickly lost its appeal. One cannot expect those defending the status quo, and profiting from it, to make the revolution. An alternative approach, based on terror, proved more attractive. It had seemingly proven its value in the Battle of Algiers, and it became the mainstay of repressive military regimes in such places as Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.

By the 1980s revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries alike found themselves frustrated by the alertness, preparation, and will of their opponents, and they could see no clear pattern indicating the future course of either revolution or attempts to stop it. In strong, authoritarian states, such as South Africa or the Soviet Union, revolution proved impossible as long as government remained able and willing to use the full repressive force of the state. For decades the leaders of both nations, and many more like them elsewhere, showed that they had the will needed to maintain their power by the most brutal means necessary. In relatively strong, democratic states, such as the United States or the United Kingdom, revolution appeared to be impossible as long as government retained the allegiance of a large majority of the population. Although revolutionary terrorists continued to be a deadly annoyance, they were not really a threat to the state. If anything, their actions were more likely to bring about repression than revolution.

Only where government was weak, in will or means, did the struggle between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces manifest itself in a context where revolutionaries stood a chance of achieving their aims. That was possible, however, only as long as counterrevolutionaries did not receive significant outside help, but until the 1990s such situations were unlikely, given the way in which Cold War politics made many weak states the focal point of international intervention and involvement as well as the focal point of revolutionary activity. The most probable result was thus the prolonged carnage of an El Salvador or Afghanistan. There, as in Vietnam, pure will was the most important weapon in the arsenal of both revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries, and the cost of exercising it was horrendous for each nation's population.
Because the phenomenon of revolution is still evolving, as demonstrated so vividly by events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, a historical overview of revolution cannot be brought to a definite conclusion. Currently situations in which a revolutionary challenge is met by a counterrevolutionary response augmented by outside aid will almost invariably result in the creation of a balance of power that prevents the triumph of either side. Similarly, stalemate will emerge without outside intervention where a balance of power exists between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution. Given this pessimistic assessment of the revolutionary process at the end of the twentieth century, one is left with no clear indication of how to avoid stalemate or minimize the horror and destruction of contemporary revolutionary violence. All that can be said with confidence is that revolution has changed significantly over time, and many attempts to generalize about the phenomenon have accomplished very little because so few scholars have studied revolution as a historical phenomenon.


[20] R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1959 and 1964); Perez Zagorin, *Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660* (Cambridge, 1982); James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York, 1980). The literature of revolution is immense. Although Blackey, *Revolutions and Revolutionists*, contains over 6,000 entries, students of specific revolutions will find a number of important works that have not been included. Documentation of a historical overview such as that presented in the last half of this chapter is a truly impossible task, and no attempt will be made to provide specific citations for the material presented. It rests upon a wide variety of sources read by the author in his more than twenty years as a student and teacher of United States, Latin American, and military history.

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