Chapter 15. Periodic table of government violence from level II to level VII

A first-pass architecture for analysing violence

Introduction

Government force is not one thing. It is a bundle of coercive capacities - defence, policing, intelligence, borders, detention, punishment, emergency action, economic compulsion and force projection - held together by a claim of legitimate authority. As political organisation rises from smaller, personal systems toward large pluralistic and supranational systems, force becomes more specialised, more technologically capable and more remote from the individual. The design problem is therefore not merely whether government has force, but who authorises it, against whom, for what purpose, through which instruments, under what oversight, and how it is stopped or corrected when wrongly used.

How This Chapter Unfolds

1. What do we mean by force? — Defines organised force, the state's claim to a legitimate monopoly on it, and why legitimacy depends on the architecture surrounding coercion.

2. The MECE nouns of government force — Identifies the relatively invariant nouns required to analyse force consistently across different civilisational levels.

3. Levels used in the matrix — Sets out the Level II to Level VII progression through which organised violence becomes more specialised, institutional and technologically capable.

4. Periodic table matrix: government use of force — Maps the nouns of force against the levels, with the highest level at the top of the table and the lowest at the bottom.

5. What the matrix reveals — Draws out the main developmental patterns, including differentiation, distance from the citizen, the growing importance of sensing and the rising requirement for legitimacy.

6. The AI dystopian failure mode — Shows how a captured apex could use AI to integrate existing coercive functions into a fast, continuous system of control.

7. A proposed extension to the governance periodic table — Places defence inside the wider parent concept of force or coercive power and asks whether the monopoly itself is subject to effective L+1 control.

8. What this means for humans — Explains the human responsibility to preserve a legitimate monopoly on force while keeping those who command it visible, restrained and correctable.

9. What this means for AI — Sets out how AI can improve precision, visibility and early warning without becoming an autonomous source of coercive authority.

1. What do we mean by force?

Working definition. Force is the organised capacity to compel behaviour against resistance by threatening or applying coercion. At the extreme it means physical injury or death, but in government it also includes arrest, detention, exclusion, confiscation, compulsory movement, denial of access, and other state-backed sanctions whose final guarantee is physical enforcement.

The monopoly point. Modern states generally claim a monopoly over the legitimate use of organised physical force within a territory. The critical word is not simply monopoly; it is legitimate. A police arrest, a prison sentence, a border exclusion and a military strike can all be acts of coercion. Their legitimacy depends on the architecture around them: lawful authority, purpose, proportionality, due process, oversight and correction.

Why this matters for AI. AI can dramatically increase the sensing, prediction, targeting and coordination capacity of every coercive function. If the governing architecture is healthy, that may increase precision and reduce unnecessary violence. If the apex is captured, the same capacities can turn government force into a near-continuous control system.

2. The MECE nouns of government force

For the periodic-table method, the first task is to name the relatively invariant nouns. The verbs, technologies and institutions attached to them change by level and by civilisation. The proposed nouns are in Exhibit 15.1.

Nouns of violence. Exhibit 15.1

Noun	What the noun contains
Purpose	Why force exists: protection, order, enforcement, regime survival, conquest or collective defence.
Legitimation	Who or what makes the use of force acceptable: custom, ruler, law, constitution, public consent or treaty.
External Defence	Force against organised threats from outside the political boundary.
Internal Order / Policing	Force used to maintain internal rules, public order and protection from violence.
Intelligence / Surveillance	The sensing function: discovering threats, intentions, networks and emerging disorder.
Boundary Enforcement	Control of entry, exit, territory, migration, customs and movement across the political boundary.
Detention	The capacity to physically hold, isolate or incapacitate individuals or groups.
Punishment / Sanction	Consequences imposed after breach: corporal, custodial, financial, civil or other coercive sanctions.
Emergency Power	Exceptional authority activated when ordinary processes are judged too slow or inadequate.
Economic Coercion	Tax seizure, fines, asset freezing, embargo, licensing denial and other state-backed material compulsion.
Force Projection	Use of organised coercive power beyond normal domestic enforcement - expeditionary, alliance, cyber or remote.
Command, Oversight & Correction	Who commands force; who watches the commander; how abuse, error or mission drift is detected and corrected.

3. Levels used in the matrix

Level II - Family: Force is personal, relational and close to the group. Kinship, status, custom and retaliation are major control mechanisms.

Level III - Tribe: Territory, walls, guards, courts and organised militias emerge. Force becomes institutional rather than purely personal.

Level IV - Kingdom / dictatorship: A ruler consolidates armies, taxation, policing and punishment. The monopoly of force becomes much clearer, but oversight is weak.

Level V – Nation-state / Elite democracy: Professional military, police, courts and bureaucracies separate. Law constrains force, although participation and accountability remain limited.

Level VI - Pluralistic democracy: Force is highly specialised and technologically sophisticated, but is intended to be constrained by constitutional law, elections, independent courts, media and civilian oversight.

Level VII - Global order: No complete monopoly exists. Force is distributed among sovereign states, alliances and international institutions. The unresolved issue is who controls coercion above the nation-state.

4. Periodic table matrix: government use of force

Y-axis = level of political organisation. X-axis = the nouns of government force. The entries describe the dominant form at each level, not every historical variation.

Periodic table of violence. Exhibit 15.2A

Level	Purpose	Legitimation	External Defence	Internal Order / Policing	Intelligence / Surveillance	Boundary Enforcement
VII Global order	Prevent interstate war; protect shared rules and transnational goods	Treaty, collective consent of states, international law; legitimacy contested	Collective security, alliances, peacekeeping; no single global sovereign	Limited direct policing; cooperation through national agencies and international warrants	Shared intelligence, monitoring bodies, cross-border data cooperation	Sanctions regimes, common external borders in some blocs, refugee/migration conventions
VI Pluralistic democracy	Protect citizens and institutions while preserving rights and legitimacy	Constitutional law, democratic mandate, judicial review, rights norms	Professional military with civilian control; alliance integration	Separated police powers; warrants, procedure, complaint systems	Legally authorised intelligence; technical surveillance; judicial/legislative controls	Border, immigration, customs and biosecurity systems under public law
V Nation-state / Elite democracy	National security, public order, law, property, state continuity	Constitution, statute, parliament, executive authority	Professional military under state command	Professional police; specialised criminal justice	Domestic intelligence services; census, files, communications interception	Border police, customs, immigration administration
IV Kingdom / Dictatorship	Preserve ruler/state; defend realm; suppress rebellion	Sovereign authority, dynasty, religion, law	Standing army, fortifications, cavalry/navy	Royal magistrates, constables, troops used internally	Court spies, messengers, agents, records, local reports	Frontiers, walls, ports, customs posts, passes/permissions
III Tribe	Survival; protect kin; settle threats	Custom, kinship, chief, elders	War party; raid; collective defence	Elders, warriors, retaliation, expulsion	Observation; gossip; kin	Kin and territory defended collectively
II Family	Protect household; settle immediate threats	Parent, guardian, household custom	Adults protect household; seek help	Household rules; parental restraint	Direct observation and family communication	Membership, residence and access controlled informally

Periodic table of violence. Exhibit 15.2B

Level	Detention	Punishment / Sanction	Emergency Power	Economic Coercion	Force Projection	Command, Oversight & Correction
VII Global order	International detention is limited; depends heavily on national enforcement	International criminal judgments and sanctions depend on member-state compliance	Collective emergency coordination; authority fragmented	Trade sanctions, asset freezes, access restrictions, conditional finance	Peacekeeping, coalition enforcement, cyber and economic coercion; authority remains distributed	No effective global +1 with monopoly on force. Central paradox: sufficient power to enforce common rules without creating an unaccountable world apex
VI Pluralistic democracy	Custody subject to due process, review and human-rights standards	Proportional, reviewable sanctions; rehabilitation increasingly relevant	Defined emergency powers with sunset/review mechanisms ideally built in	Tax, fines, sanctions, freezing and regulatory exclusion under law	Coalition operations, deterrence, cyber operations, remote precision systems	Multiple +1 controls: courts, parliament, inspectors-general, media, elections, civil society; persistent risk of secrecy and mission creep
V Nation-state / Elite democracy	Formal prisons, remand, psychiatric/security confinement under law	Codified custodial and financial penalties	Emergency statutes, wartime regulations, executive orders	Tax enforcement, regulatory penalties, compulsory acquisition, asset seizure	Imperial/expeditionary forces; alliances; strategic deterrence	Civilian executive command; courts and parliament constrain use, but franchise/oversight may be narrow
IV Kingdom / Dictatorship	Prisons, dungeons, house arrest	Execution, imprisonment, confiscation, corporal sanctions	Martial law, royal prerogative, suspension of ordinary process	Tax, tolls, confiscation, monopolies backed by force	Conquest, expansion, naval expeditions	Central command; councils and law constrain unevenly; correction through elites or revolt
III Tribe	Restraint, hostage-taking, exclusion	Reparation, shame, retaliation, exile	Chief acts rapidly in immediate threat	Tribute, confiscation, shared-resource exclusion	Raid, revenge, alliance with neighbouring groups	Chief/elder command; kin balance or removal
II Family	Brief protective restraint	Reprimand, restitution, privilege loss	Parent or guardian acts rapidly to protect	Control of pooled household resources	No organised force beyond household defence	Parents/guardians lead; correction through kin, law and community

5. What the matrix reveals

Force differentiates as levels rise. At lower levels the same people may fight wars, police the group, judge wrongdoing and impose punishment. At higher levels these functions split into military, police, courts, prisons, intelligence, border agencies, regulators and emergency-management systems.

Distance from the citizen increases. The coercive act becomes less personal and more bureaucratic. That can reduce arbitrary vengeance, but it also allows coercion to be exercised by people who never see its human consequences.

The sensing function becomes decisive. Intelligence and surveillance are the nervous system of force. AI greatly expands this function because it can turn huge volumes of behavioural data into prediction, targeting and intervention.

Legitimacy must rise with capability. The more powerful the instruments of force become, the stronger the architecture of authorisation, proportionality, transparency, review and correction must become.

The Level 7 problem is unresolved. At the global level there is no accepted monopoly on legitimate force. Humanity therefore oscillates between two dangers: too little common force to restrain states, and too much centralised force in an apex that may itself become unaccountable.

6. The AI dystopian failure mode

The dystopian analysis becomes sharper when the force periodic table is added. A captured apex does not need an AI that has gone rogue. It needs AI to integrate the state's existing coercive nouns into one high-speed control architecture:

- intelligence identifies emerging dissent;
- surveillance maps people, relationships and intentions;
- policing intervenes before collective action forms;
- boundary systems control movement and exit;
- economic coercion freezes assets or removes access;
- detention isolates organisers;
- information systems manufacture felt truth and reduce resistance;
- military or paramilitary force remains the final backstop.

The closed loop becomes: sense -> predict -> classify -> intervene -> measure -> correct. **The crucial architectural question is therefore:** who controls the controllers?

7. A proposed extension to the governance periodic table

The existing governance noun "Defence" is too narrow if we are trying to understand civilisational architecture in the AI age. I would retain Defence, but place it inside a larger parent noun:

Force / coercive power

Under it would sit: Defence - Policing - Intelligence - Boundary Enforcement - Detention - Punishment - Emergency Power - Economic Coercion - Force Projection - Command/Oversight/Correction.

This also produces a new test for every governance architecture: Does the system merely monopolise force, or does it also contain a legitimate, independent and effective L+1 capable of controlling the monopoly?

8. What this means for humans

Civilisation does not remove violence. It tries to contain it, legitimate it and place it inside institutions that allow conflict to be resolved without every person or group maintaining its own coercive power. A legitimate state monopoly on organised force is therefore a major civilisational achievement. It reduces private retaliation and makes law enforceable among strangers.

But monopoly creates its own danger. The people who command police, military, intelligence, detention, punishment and emergency powers are human beings with the same predispositions as everybody else. Fear can narrow judgement. Loyalty can become complicity. Status can become entitlement. Threat can turn opposition into enemy. The more coercive power is concentrated, the more important it becomes that the people who hold it remain subject to law, independent oversight, truthful feedback and peaceful removal.

For elites who control or influence the coercive system, the standard must therefore be higher rather than lower. Power should be visible enough to be challenged, decisions should be reviewable, exceptional powers should remain exceptional, and no leader or institution should be able to disable the mechanisms intended to restrain it. The monopoly on violence is safest when those who command it know that command is conditional, bounded and correctable.

For citizens generally, the responsibility is different but equally important. A society has to maintain support for due process, proportionality, independent courts, legitimate policing and non-violent political succession even when fear, anger or tribal

loyalty make shortcuts attractive. Once violence becomes an accepted means of resolving ordinary political disagreement, the system begins moving down levels and the protections created by higher-level civilisation become easier to lose.

The human objective is therefore not the elimination of all coercion. It is to keep necessary force inside an architecture in which protection remains stronger than predation, law remains stronger than revenge, and the monopoly remains answerable to the people and institutions it exists to protect.

9. What this means for AI

AI can make organised force more precise, more informed and potentially less violent. Better sensing can distinguish threats more accurately. Better analysis can improve proportionality. Better records can make decisions more auditable. Early-warning systems can identify escalation, abuse, mission drift or the weakening of oversight before those failures become entrenched.

The same capabilities can also create an unusually powerful coercive system. AI can join surveillance, intelligence, policing, border control, economic sanctions, detention and information systems into one rapid loop. A state does not need a rogue AI to become dystopian. It needs an inadequately restrained human apex with access to AI-enabled sensing, prediction and intervention.

AI must therefore strengthen the control of force, not become a new source of unaccountable force. It should help expose who authorised an action, what evidence supported it, which rule applied, whether the action was proportionate, what consequence followed and whether correction occurred. High-consequence coercive decisions should remain inside explicit human authority, legal process and independent review.

The key design principle is the same one that runs through this book: capability and control have to rise together. As AI raises the capability of the state's monopoly on violence, the visibility, truth-seeking, restraint and L+1 control surrounding that monopoly must rise with it. The central question remains: who controls the controllers - and can that control still work when AI makes the controllers vastly more capable?

Conclusion

Civilisation requires organised force because rules without enforceability eventually become suggestions. But force creates a permanent paradox. Too little force and the architecture cannot protect itself or its members; too much concentrated force and the architecture can become the principal threat to them. The higher the level and the

more powerful the technology, the more important the +1 becomes. In the AI age, the central issue is not simply whether governments retain a monopoly on force. It is whether humanity can build control systems capable of governing that monopoly before AI makes it vastly more precise, predictive and difficult to resist.