

Book Review

Sunita

Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic
of Nonviolent Conflict, Author- Erica Chenoweth
& Maria A J. Stephan

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This book is a well evidenced argument in favour of non-violent resistance. It expands various cases of civilian resistance in situation of occupation, secession and regime change campaigns. The effectiveness of nonviolent struggle encourages scholars and policy framers to seriously think over the role of civilians in actively pursuing conflict without resorting to violence.

Mass participation in a non-violent campaign, according to the author is open to female and elderly population also. When community observes open mass support and collective acts of defiance, the perception of risk seemingly decline, reducing the constraints of participation. Because these common protest activities are by ordinary people who are often law-obeying, non-violent resistance can potentially mobilize the entire aggrieved population without the need to face moral barriers. Participants retain their life they came back in their routine life but in armed struggle they often lose their life. The authors cites example of the Iranian revolution wherein the resistance became mass resistance and nonviolent popular struggle replaced guerrilla violence as primary mode of resistance. Accordingly, the long term protest by participants fundamentally alter the relationship between ruler and ruled. Mass participation campaigns are much more likely to succeed them small campaign. As membership increases, the probability of success also increases. Similarly, in Lebanon and Palestinian territories mass non-violent resistance worked well where violent insurgencies failed. In Lebanon 2005 Cedar revolution involved more than a million Lebanese demonstrator foreign Syria to withdraw its armed forces. First Intifada moved the Palestinian self-determination movement

further than the PLO's violent campaign that preceded it. The author has drawn insights from various instances of civil resistance including Gandhi's salt march, mass protests at Tiananmen square and mass sitting in Maidan square in Kiev during the orange revolution, Cedar revolution, and the massive gathering of people in Tahrir square during the 2011 revolution.

The study also draws from various case studies, wherein resistance campaign's commitment to nonviolence is one important factor to encourage large scale mobilisation, whereas the use of violent methods discouraged participation civil resistance movement, is basically a civilian support for mobilisation, more than 90 per cent of the movement execute their campaigns without the direct financial assistance of any foreign regime. Non-violent campaigns attract a larger number of more diverse participants, thus this diversity of the campaigns offers the advantage to tactical innovation. A specific type of tactical diversity of non-violent resistance is a shifting between methods of concentration and methods of dispersion.

Methods of dispersion involves acts that spread out over a wider area, such as consumer boycotts stayaways and go slow action at workplace. Examples are consumer boycotts in S.A. labour strikes by oil workers during Iranian revolution, the banging of pots and pans by Chileans during the anti-Pinochet movement.

Non-violent campaigns are always successful in both democratic and autocratic regime. Iran and the Philippines have major success by civil resistance. In comparative studies of violent and nonviolent resistance author concludes that civil resistance actually leads to desirable long term social outcomes such as civil-peace, and democratic governance. Even failed non-violent campaigns are more favourable to democracy and civil peace, than protracted violent successful campaigns. Successful nonviolent movements are never followed by socio-political polarisation, or intense political competition, Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' is the example for this case. Scholars argue the democracy requires a liberal culture. The way to which power transition occurs predicts the way the new regime will rule. Democratic transitions are often driven by an interactive process involving elites and grassroots civil-elements and resistance campaigns serve as the catalyst for such transition.

Democratic regime in post war context is a prerequisite for the duration of civil-peace. Author has presented several examples of the violent revolution

which failed in long term peace building and developmental process because of recurring civil war. for instance, 1917 revolution of Russia, Afghanistan civil war in 1989, Maoist Revolution followed by bloody Cultural Revolution in china, Cuban Revolution followed by class war. Studies found that civil wars create weak governance and civil society institutions, increase the probability of international conflicts, and create more specialists in violence than politics. Further mass-participation in non-violent political change encourages the development of democratic skill and fosters expectations of accountable governance, which is least possible in violent opposition author stresses that nonviolent campaigns are more likely to use consent, leading to the establishment of more democratically oriented parallel institutions that might aid in transition to a democratic system he has cited the example of 'Truth and Reconciliation commission followed the non-violent anti-apartheid campaign contrary to the armed insurgencies of Cuba and Afghanistan installed a secretive dictatorship.

Author has provided data of nonviolent and violent campaigns to support his view, those 218 violent insurgencies since 1900, and democratic governments succeeded only about 5 per cent of victorious insurgencies. Thus non-violent transitions that have succeeded contain inherent potential to continue to maintain accountability of the new state through civil society using non-violent, means, contrary to that violent insurgencies have premade violent civil society norms and organisations that are antithetical to democratic practices. Shared expectations between rules and ruled in new regimes enhance certainty about laws and institutions. Successful democracies requires the commitments to resolve domestic conflicts using non-violent, institutional mechanism. Civic engagement, civil resistance enhances government accountability and responsiveness. Non-violent protests and civil disobedience are routine activities in nature democracies popular reliance on extra-institutional extra legal means to resolve conflicts may be emblematic of democratic weakness. In an analysis of the effect of resistance type on probability of democracy, author found more than 50 per cent than the violent campaigns, and a country with a successful nonviolent campaigns is about 82 per cent likely to remain a democracy after the campaigns ends people in non-violent insurgencies or conflicts are more likely to codify emerging norms of non-violent bargaining and conflict resolution after the end of the conflict and even if the non-violent resistance campaign fails, still there is a potential for democracy and democratic values. Author also asserts that contrary to

theorists who emphasize structural factors in determining whether a conflict will succeed or fail, nonviolent campaigns succeed against democracies and nondemocratic weak, and powerful opponents conciliatory and repressive regimes. Conditions can shape but do not determine the capacity for nonviolent resistance to adapt and gain advantage under even the direst of circumstances. He has cited the example of American Revolution against the British who used armed insurgency against British forces as guerrilla warfare but again they were preceded by a decade of parallel democratic institution building, nonviolent boycotts, civil disobedience, non-cooperation and other nation building methods.

Thus, the author concludes that nonviolent civil resistance impacts the strategic objectives and long positive effects on the societies which are involved in the resistance movements on the other hand violent resistance have very dismal impact on societies. Although this book focuses on state opponents but civil resistance also effectively confronts the violent non state actors as well. Civil Resistance enhances citizenship skills and societal resilience in ways that elude armed campaigns. Indeed, the civil resistance is an enduring force for change in the international system according to the authors.