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Non-violent Resistance and Last Resort

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ABSTRACT

It is commonly accepted that recourse to war is justifiable only as a last resort. If a situation can be resolved by less harmful means, then war is unjust. It is also commonly accepted that violent actions in war should be necessary and proportionate. Violent actions in war are unjust if the end towards which those actions are means can be achieved by less harmful means. In this article, I argue that satisfaction of the last resort criterion depends in part upon the likelihood of success of non-violent alternatives to war, and that the actual and potential effectiveness of non-violent resistance means that the last resort criterion of the *jus ad bellum* and the proportionality criterion of the *jus in bello* are harder to satisfy than is often presumed.

KEYWORDS

Pacifism; non-violent resistance; non-violence; last resort; *jus ad bellum*

1. Introduction

It is commonly held that war ought only to be waged as a *last resort*. That is, recourse to war is morally permissible if and only if alternative remedies to a situation have been properly and reasonably considered. This idea is expressed in the last resort criterion of the *jus ad bellum* (concerning the justification of resort to war). Similarly, violent actions in war may be justifiably performed only if alternative actions have been properly and reasonably considered. The proportionality requirement of the *jus in bello* (concerning the justification of actions in war), which includes a last resort-style provision, holds that soldiers should do only that which is necessary to achieve their aim. Recourse to war cannot be justified if aggression can be successfully resisted through less harmful means. Similarly, violent actions in war cannot be justified if the end to which they are a means can be realised through less harmful means.

Consider a domestic analogy in which I am attacked or threatened with imminent attack by an unjust aggressor: if I can run away, or otherwise escape harm, then I ought not harm or kill in self-defence. Walzer (2004, 88–89) states that last resort means that “if there are potentially effective ways of avoiding actual fighting while still confronting the aggressor, they should be tried.” Coady (2008, 91) argues that last resort “enjoins us to make serious efforts at peaceful resolutions of our political problems before resorting to the sword.”

Given the importance of the last resort criterion to just war reasoning, it is somewhat surprising that just war theorists have not spent more time discussing alternatives to war. The aim of this article is to show that the potential and actual effectiveness of non-violent resistance (NVR) means that it should be considered more often and with greater seriousness than is currently the case, and that satisfaction of the last resort criterion is consequently more difficult to satisfy than is often presumed. This is meant in both an *ad bellum* and *in bello* sense – the former because alternatives to war ought to be properly considered before any recourse to war can be justified; and the latter since non-violent alternatives to violent actions in war ought to be properly considered before those actions can be justified.

A couple of provisos before continuing. First, for the purposes of this article, I assume the legitimacy of the last resort and proportionality criteria of the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* respectively. Both criteria have been well established and accepted by the majority of just war theorists in one form or another, and it is within this context that I should like to locate my comments here. Second, we might question whether last resort is “systematic,” in that recourse to violent resistance cannot be justified until all alternatives have been properly and seriously considered; or “chronological,” in that recourse to violent resistance cannot be justified until all alternatives have actually been tried. While this issue strays beyond the scope of this article, I shall adopt the systematic definition here. This definition, I think, more accurately reflects the general consensus on the criterion.

It is not my suggestion that the last resort criterion can never be satisfied. Rather, I argue that if we fail to properly explore alternatives to war and violent actions in war, specifically those grounded in belligerent NVR, then we do not satisfy the criterion, since we cannot say in that instance that recourse to violence is truly a last resort. Exploring the alternatives does not simply mean thinking about them, it means investing significant levels of thought, effort, and funding into those alternatives. I propose that war cannot be justified if NVR has not been properly acknowledged and explored, through adequate effort and funding, as an alternative to war. There may, of course, be instances where NVR is incapable of preventing some great harm, and thus violence might be justified as a satisfactorily lesser and necessary harm. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of NVR means that war and violent actions in war cannot be justified as a last resort in many cases.

Where is the line at which point it can be legitimately claimed that war or violent resistance (VR) is the only reasonable solution to some problem? It is plausible that war may be justifiably waged to prevent the occurrence of some worse event. But how bad must that event be, and how difficult to prevent, in order to justify war? The answer essentially depends on the relative effectiveness of war and NVR in relation to the harm caused by each. The threshold at which point we have no choice but to wage war goes up as war’s effectiveness decreases, or as NVR’s effectiveness increases. It goes down as war’s effectiveness increases, or as NVR’s effectiveness decreases. The (short- and long-term) harmfulness of war and NVR also affects the threshold at which point war may be fought, since that harmfulness weighs against any claim. Factors such as cost and efficiency are also morally significant. It is not enough, then, to compare the harm of war to the harm of NVR, nor is it enough to compare the effectiveness of war to the effectiveness of NVR – both areas must be considered. The stronger

the moral presumption against war is, or the more effective the alternatives are, the stronger the need for war must be for it to be justified.

It is often claimed that NVR is ineffective against particularly ruthless or evil aggressors. Anscombe (1970, 42), for example, dismisses pacifism as idealistic and an illusion. Walzer (1977, 332) argues that non-violent defence is no defence at all against the worst sorts of rulers. And Steinhoff (2007, 58) remarks that while NVR may succeed against aggressors like the British in India, it will fail against others like Nazi Germany. I think it fair to say that these statements reflect popular opinion on the matter. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise. A theoretical and historical analysis of NVR suggests that it can be very effective, and has potential to be more effective still, since it has never benefited from well-funded research and training.

The remainder of this article can be divided into two parts. The first explores NVR as a concept, first theoretically and then in terms of its proposed strategies and benefits, and ends by examining some arguments against it. The second part illustrates some historical successes of NVR, aimed at dispelling the common but misguided idea that non-violent alternatives to war are ineffective against powerful and immoral aggressors.

2. The theory of non-violent resistance

It is worth noting a few very brief points before properly examining the concept of NVR. First, NVR is neither passive nor cowardly, since it requires participants to actively withdraw cooperation from an aggressor, which can produce a violent response. An absence of violence does not imply an absence of courage. Second, one must neither be perfectly good nor a pacifist to successfully practice NVR (Aung San Suu Kyi, for example, advocated non-moral employment of NVR in the fight against the Burmese military junta). It can be a good technique for fighting aggressors even if those who apply it are not dedicated pacifists. Third, NVR is not just an Eastern phenomenon – there is a rich history of discussion, research, and application in the West (Brock 1998; Brock and Young 1999).

2.1. The consent theory of power

One way of viewing political power, which can be defined as the means, influences, and pressures used by a power-holder, is that political power emanates from that power-holder. Concepts like “coercion” and “dominance” imply that power emanates from above. The *consent theory* of power, conversely, suggests that subordinates grant power to their rulers: “Power ‘over’ someone does not exist; it is a produced illusion resulting from normalised subordination” (Vinthagen 2006, 4–5). According to this view, power cannot be held without the support of those who grant it – as Gandhi argued, “government of the people is possible so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed” (Burrowes 1996, 87). It is widely held that a ruler’s power is *legitimate* only if the people accept it – the consent theory goes further, suggesting that a ruler’s power is *possible* only if the people acquiesce.

Rulers require certain support structures to maintain power; these structures, along with the active or passive support of a population, produce the illusion that power

emanates from those rulers. These structures, channelled through economic, administrative, and sanctionary systems, are dependent on a population following the rules. A ruler's support system allows her to coerce a population with threats of violence and so on, but that population also has coercive power, since they provide her with the means to rule and supply those mechanisms with the resources they require to function. Either side, if properly disciplined and organised, can influence the course of power.

Different loci of power, such as families, social classes, religious and national groups, occupational and economic groups, cities, regions, states, government bodies, voluntary organisations, political parties, and so on can strengthen or weaken a ruler's power. If the loci that positively affect a ruler's ability to rule are numerous and powerful, then her power is strengthened, and, importantly, vice versa (Sharp 1980, 27–28, 2005, 29–30). Consent theory suggests that a ruler's power rests on external sources, including the populace's acceptance of her right to rule, the knowledge and skills of her supporters, psychological and ideological conditioning, material resources, and available sanctions. Societies that lack strong and varied loci of power, and whose subjects are relatively atomised, are susceptible to tyranny and uncontrolled political power or subservience to an external enemy. Varied, numerous, and strong loci of power increase a population's ability to control power in the long-term, providing stronger defence against aggressors, since they will find it harder to gain an adequate level of power to achieve their ends – this is discussed below.

There are, of course, some objections raised against the consent theory. The first is that a ruler's power does not emanate from the acquiescence of the population, but rather from the assistance of non-subjects, loyal subjects, and resources such as weapons, and therefore a population's dissent can only achieve so much (Burrowes 1996, 87–88). The second part of this article answers this objection by demonstrating the effectiveness of a population's dissent in the form of NVR.

A second objection is that cultural factors such as obedience to authority, approaches and value systems regarding conflict and violence, religious beliefs, and the way that people process knowledge and experience, may affect a society's capacity to dissent. Burrowes (1996, 89–90) argues that the consent theory assumes that all individuals are full members of a civil society and that these members share the same political culture (race, sex, and so on). A third objection is that the consent theory fails to recognise the dependence of individuals on social structures, as well as the coercive nature of these structures (Burrowes 1996, 91). This is certainly the case, although the impact of this could be significantly lessened through education and training if NVR were adopted by, for example, a state. Again, the second part of this article shows that NVR can be successfully employed by diverse populations with commonly coercive social structures.

2.2. Power and non-violent resistance

The effectiveness of NVR is in part premised on this consensual nature of power. Rather than attempting to violently prevent an aggressor from entering or acquiring goods from a country, NVR removes the means by which that aggressor can gain or maintain power, thereby removing their ability to rule. Distinct and different loci of power mean

that a defence can locate sources of political power and plan strategies to isolate and withdraw that power from its origin (Vinthagen 2006, 6).

NVR cannot halt an invading military force, but it can make a subsequent occupation very difficult. *Coups d'état* and invasions take time to establish their goals; active mass non-cooperation can provide long-term impediments to invasion success. NVR may also provide deterrence against aggression, since an aggressor considers not only an invasion but also the subsequent cost – human, economic, ideological, and political – of post-invasion control.

NVR has often been applied spontaneously and without training or education. States and other powerful bodies (apart from, to some extent, Switzerland) have not supported any significant NVR research, development, or training. Conversely, VR mechanisms have received massive amounts of support and funding from states and other organisations. The cost of maintaining a military force – feeding and supplying soldiers, maintaining equipment and weapons, and so on – is very high, as is the development and production of weapons. Allocation of even a fraction of these resources to research and development into NVR would increase its effectiveness. Moreover, NVR has typically been applied against states; it would be significantly more effective in the hands of the states themselves. A fair and proper comparison of effectiveness between VR and NVR can only really occur when they receive similar levels of support.

Nevertheless, certain non-violent techniques have already proved useful to non-violent resisters around the world – Gene Sharp's research in this area has been employed with success by non-violent resisters against various authoritarian regimes, including the Soviet-backed Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian governments in the 1980s and early 1990s. NVR has been spontaneously and successfully applied in several notable instances, even when lacking organisation and planning (see below). I shall now outline some key NVR principles, techniques, and strategies.

Sharp (2005, 51–64) provides a number of non-violent methods or techniques to employ against authoritarian regimes and invading forces, grouped into three main categories. The first category includes mainly symbolic acts designed to send a message of support or opposition to a regime or action (protest and persuasion). The second and most powerful category is comprised of actions designed to suspend cooperation and assistance (non-cooperation with the enemy), including suspension of social relations, suspension of economic relations, and suspension of political submission and assistance. These are acts that discontinue, withhold, or defy certain established social, economic, and political relationships. The third category is made up of methods of disruption or psychological, physical, social, economic, or political intervention. These actions intervene directly to change a situation, and are typically harder for both resisters to sustain and opponents to withstand.

Ackerman and Krueger (1994, 24–51) provide a different set of “salient features” of successful NVR, comprised of: principles of development (formulate functional objectives, develop organisational strength, secure access to critical material resources, cultivate external assistance, and expand the repertoire of sanctions); principles of engagement (attack the opponents' strategies for consolidating control, mute the impact of the opponents' violent weapons, alienate opponents from expected bases of support, and maintain non-violent discipline); and principles of conception (assess

events and options in terms of strategic decision making, adjust offensive and defensive operations depending on the relative vulnerability of the protagonists, and sustain continuity between sanctions, mechanisms, and objectives). Many of these features, especially the development principles, would be more easily applied by a state against an outside aggressor than a group oppressed by a state.

Ackerman and Rodal (2008, 117–119) argue that the keys to successful civil resistance include unification behind leaders who represent the whole nation, engagement in systematic planning, inclusion of all parts of society, and adherence to non-violent discipline. A campaign should be complete and wide-ranging. Faced with a well-organised non-violent defence force, an invading aggressor could hold the country they had attacked, but would face significant logistical problems since they could rely neither on local transportation or communication systems, nor on the local workforce. And it would be almost impossible to transplant an entire workforce to exploit the natural resources and industrial capacity of the invaded country. The economic and political costs of invasion would be extremely high. They would face uncooperative citizens everywhere, who would protest, strike, and so on.

Findings suggest NVR can be more successful than VR in many instances. The primary reasons for this are that NVR can attract much larger numbers of active participants than its violent counterpart, and can produce a higher likelihood of receiving international support, defections amongst enemy forces, and the possibility of an aggressor's actions "backfiring."

Non-violent campaigns tend to attract higher numbers of active participants, primarily because the barriers to participation are lower, which significantly improves a campaign's chances of success. Defining "participation" as the active and observable engagement of individuals in a particular campaign, and using estimated counts of observed individuals during peak events in the campaign, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 32–33) have found the average non-violent campaign to have over 200,000 members, and the average violent campaign around 50,000 members. Of the 25 largest resistance movements in recent history, 20 were non-violent. Large non-violent campaigns include: Iran (against the Pahlavi regime, 1978–1979), with 2,000,000 participants; the Philippines (against the Marcos regime, 1983–1986), 2,000,000; Lebanon (against Syrian influence, 2005), 1,000,000; Nigeria (against the military regime, 1993–1999), 1,000,000; and Brazil (against military rule, 1984–1985), 1,000,000. Large violent campaigns include: China (against Japanese occupation, 1937–1945), 4,500,000 participants; China (against the nationalist regime, 1922–1949), 1,000,000; and the Soviet Union (against Nazi occupation, 1941–1945), 400,000.

There are several reasons for this. First, the costs of participating in VR prohibit many from joining. Participation is likely to require agility, endurance, training, weapons use, isolation from society, and so on. Some of these hardships, of course, also apply to NVR, but NVR incorporates a greater range of tactics that can involve almost anyone.

Second, people are more likely to engage in protest and action when they expect many others to participate. There is less risk in participating in a movement when more people are involved, and this is more easily achieved by NVR. Moreover, non-violent campaigns can advertise their objectives, strengths, and numbers to potential

recruits more easily than violent campaigns because participants in the latter are often forced underground, meaning they cannot publicly advertise their cause (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 35–36). Perhaps violence itself advertises a cause since, for example, a bombing attracts greater attention than a mass protest. But such attention is usually negative, and in general it seems that NVR is more visible than VR due to the numbers involved.

Third, VR often requires participants to overcome their own moral aversion to violence and killing; NVR does not require this.

Fourth, one must be very committed to participate in a violent campaign; ready and willing to kill and die, to be away from family and friends, and so on. Non-combatants can assist combatants by providing food and so on, but their role in any defence is limited. The less committed participants in a non-violent campaign, however, can still perform important tasks.

Finally, greater participation numbers result in less emphasis on each individual, which means that each individual carries a lesser burden in terms of labour and expectation. This makes it both more likely that people will join the campaign and more likely that those already involved will be willing to continue the struggle for longer.

The Russian (1917), Chinese (1946–1950), Algerian (1954–1962), Cuban (1953–1959), and Vietnamese (1959–1975) revolutions were violent conflicts that generated mass support, and as such do not follow these trends. But note that these conflicts share a feature – diverse mass mobilisation – more commonly associated with NVR, which leads to loyalty shifts and loss of morale amongst security forces, material support from other states, and so on. VR can garner mass support, but NVR is much more likely to do so.

Walzer (1977, 333–34) argues that guerrilla warfare has an advantage over mass NVR in that it requires relatively few people to “sustain the battle.” But in general, it seems that greater participation numbers increase a campaign’s likelihood of success. There are several reasons for this.¹ As discussed above, VR is based on violent confrontation and disruption, whereas NVR is based on the removal of an opponent’s main sources of power through protest and non-cooperation. Greater levels of participation are likely to result in a greater loss of political and economic support from internal sources, resulting in a greater loss of power. Furthermore, large non-violent campaigns have historically been 70% more likely to receive international support through sanctions than violent ones. They are also more likely to receive material support from non-governmental organisations (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 53–55).

Larger non-violent campaigns are also more likely to produce defections amongst aggressing security forces; 60% of the largest non-violent campaigns have produced significant defections, for example in Iranian forces during the anti-Shah resistance (1977–1979), Philippines forces during the Marcos resistance (1983–1986), Israeli forces during the First Intifada (1987–1993), and Indonesian forces during the campaign in East Timor (1975–1999) (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 47). Conversely, between 10% and 40% of violent campaigns have produced defections, and the chance of defections does not change as participation grows (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 47–49). A VR is actually more likely to result in an increased resolve amongst security forces – when faced with violence their lives are at risk and as such they are more likely to

negatively view the opposition. The resolve of aggressor-supporting civilian groups may also be strengthened in the face of VR due to a similar threat to their lives.

While violent repression of VR typically either results in an escalation of violence or resistance failure, violent repression of NVR has the potential to “backfire” on the aggressor. As such, violent repression of NVR has often caused a breakdown of obedience amongst regime supporters (due to an aversion towards violence against non-violent resisters), increased mobilisation against the regime (because violence against non-violent resisters motivates action), and international condemnation of the regime (due to the observed injustice of violence against non-violent resisters).

Furthermore, it is easier for an aggressor to justify violent suppression of VR than NVR, particularly if aggressing forces themselves feel threatened. In fact, violent crackdowns on NVR have historically increased the probability of resistance success by around 20% (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 50–51). Violent crackdowns backfired in the resistance to British rule in India (1930–1931), Danish resistance to Nazi occupation (1940–1945), the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines (1983–1986), and the “Velvet Revolution” in Czechoslovakia (1989). Although vulnerability against violence is typically seen as a problem for NVR, these examples show that it is often *strengthened* when met with violence.

An aggressor is also more likely to negotiate or bargain with a non-violent campaign than a violent one, since a regime and its supporters are more likely to negotiate with those who are not killing their comrades or fellow citizens. Violent action makes any shift of allegiance or increased sympathy less likely. Soldiers and civilians might rightly worry about the consequences of surrendering to a violent and ruthless campaign, which may prolong conflict as the enemy worries about what might happen to them should they surrender.

So, what does this all amount to? In short, NVR appears to have been more likely to be successful (where campaign goals are achieved within two years of a campaign’s end, caused in large part by the campaign) than VR (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 33). Of the 25 largest resistance campaigns mentioned above, 40% of violent campaigns were successful, compared to 70% of non-violent campaigns. Major non-violent campaigns have had a success rate of just over 50%, while major violent campaigns have had a success rate of just over 25% (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008, 8–9, 17). Moreover, violently repressed non-violent campaigns have been six times likelier to achieve full success than violently repressed violent campaigns, and aggressors have been 12 times likelier to make concessions to non-violent campaigns than to violent campaigns (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008, 20).

What happens post-resistance is also very important. NVR that results in change is generally more successful and more likely to result in a freer regime after the change: “In short, how one fights determines what one wins” (Ackerman and Rodal 2008, 119). A study analysing 67 regime transitions between 1973 and 2005 revealed that at the time of the study 80% of the societies formed by non-violent transitions were “free,” compared to just 20% of the societies formed by violent transitions. Some reasons for this include the fact that violent insurgents often want to re-establish a monopoly of violence for themselves, have fewer inhibitions in using violence to maintain order, and find it more difficult to establish democracy with threat of violence (note, of course,

that certain societies may be less free simply because they were less free to begin with) (Karatnycky and Ackerman 2005, 19).

2.3. Some arguments against non-violent resistance

Most arguments against NVR attempt to explain the discrepancy in success rates between NVR and VR outlined above. The most common such arguments suggest that non-violence can be successfully employed only against “nice” aggressors. But this is simply false, as many successful non-violent campaigns have been conducted against authoritarian aggressors who were certainly not nice. In the following section I examine the prominent examples of India, Denmark, the Philippines, and Czechoslovakia.

There is also a perception that non-violent campaigns are more likely to be waged against weaker states, increasing likelihood of success. But Chenoweth and Stephan show (2011, 67–68, 72) that around 60% of non-violent campaigns have been waged against “stronger” or “most powerful” states, compared to around 45% of violent campaigns, and have been successful more often.

Another claim is that NVR objectives are usually more limited than VR objectives; hence the former is more likely to be “successful” because success is more easily attained. Again, historical evidence does not support this. When the goal has been regime change, around 60% and 25% of non-violent campaigns have been fully and partially successful respectively, compared to around 25% and 10% of violent campaigns respectively. When the goal has been anti-occupation, 35% and 40% of non-violent campaigns have been fully and partially successful respectively, compared to 35% and 10% of violent campaigns respectively. When the goal has been secession, violent campaigns have been more successful, although neither does very well: non-violent campaigns have had 0% full and limited success; while violent campaigns have had 10% full success and just over 20% limited success (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 73). Generally speaking, NVR has achieved more full and partial success than VR.

It may also be argued that NVR has only been successful in certain areas, such as the Americas, Europe, and the former Soviet Union, where governments have been more tolerant or for other reasons less likely to crush resistance. But the Americas and Europe have seen their fair share of despotic regimes. Moreover, NVR has been more successful than VR all over the world. In the Americas and the former Soviet Union, NVR has been successful 80% of the time, VR just 15% of the time. In Africa and Asia, the distinction is much less pronounced: 40% and 30% for NVR and VR respectively. Nevertheless, NVR has generally been more successful than VR (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 74).

It has been posited that NVR and VR success rates are skewed, since the former occurs in situations where victory is already likely, and the latter is often resorted to when non-violent methods have failed, or will fail. While this is true of certain cases, it is generally not the case. Many violent campaigns do not consider non-violence to begin with, or consider it but never try it. Moreover, although violent resisters often claim that they were forced into using violence, just what does it mean to be forced? Also, non-violent and violent campaigns often co-exist, a fact often obscured by the

higher profile enjoyed – if that is the correct word – by violence. Sometimes, in fact, NVR has been applied when VR has failed (for example in East Timor). One cannot conclude with certainty that VR arises where NVR cannot or could not succeed.

The typical arguments against NVR do not show with any certainty why it is not a powerful and effective tool against aggression. The next section shows that NVR has been successfully applied in the past, against powerful and morally corrupt aggressors, thus responding to the claim that it does not work.

3. Non-violence in practice

NVR has been successfully applied in a number of instances. A look into just a few of these cases demonstrates how NVR can remove an aggressor's power, how NVR can succeed where VR has failed, and how violent suppression of NVR can backfire. Moreover, it can help to dispel the prevailing myth that NVR only works against “nice” aggressors.

NVR has successfully helped to both oust authoritarian governments and dictators, and repel or oust foreign aggressors. Examples of the former include the Philippine resistance movement against dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1983–1986, and the Czechoslovakian Velvet Revolution against Gustáv Husák's Soviet-supported government in 1989. Examples of the latter include the Indian movement against the British in 1930–1931, and the Danish resistance against Nazi occupation in 1940–1945. These examples demonstrate in different ways how it is possible to reduce aggressors' power through non-cooperative acts and disregard for authority. Methods used include non-cooperation, strikes and economic deprivation, protests, deliberate breaking of laws, and general organisation.

The Danish resistance against Nazi occupation demonstrated effective non-cooperation. On the morning after Denmark fell under Nazi control in April 1940, a list was written and adopted by Danish resisters, which implored citizens not to work in Germany and Norway, to work poorly, inefficiently, and slowly, to destroy everything of benefit to the Germans, to delay all transport, to boycott German and Italian films and papers, not to shop at Nazis' stores, to alienate traitors, and to protect anyone sought by the Germans. The Danish Freedom Council emphasised non-violent non-cooperation: “All of us must purposefully and untiringly ... put obstacles in the way ... deny, delay and diminish” (Ackerman and DuVall 2000, 211–212, 225). The desire to actively withdraw all cooperation, combined with acts of sabotage, persisted throughout the resistance campaign, and aided the efforts to prevent the Nazis from properly controlling Denmark and its resources.

Strikes and other economic attacks have been effective in certain cases. Indian strikes occurred when Gandhi was arrested in April 1930; half of the country's textile mills closed in protest. Villages and towns stopped paying taxes, and local government and civil service workers resigned from their positions. Overall it is estimated that this particular movement caused an 18% reduction in trade with India, significantly harming British economic interests there (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 191).

Returning to Denmark, the cooperative Danish government refused Germany's orders to ban public meetings and strikes, impose curfews, censorship, and the death

penalty for sabotage, asserting that those measures would make it impossible to keep the population calm. In this case the authorities saw the threat of strikes and other economic sabotage as a real danger to their continued rule. Citywide strikes were held throughout Denmark, including labourers, police, office workers, and civil servants. The German minister to Denmark reported that any extreme provocation of the Danish people would result in the paralysis or serious disturbance of political and economic life (Ackerman and DuVall 2000, 219–222). The Danish actions and their capacity for further disruption were noticed and greatly affected Germany's attitude and subsequent actions.

Protests have also helped NVR movements to achieve their objectives. In February 1943, the Nazis arrested the last remaining Jews living in Berlin. Their "intermarried" spouses protested outside the building in which they were detained, observed by diplomats, the press, and spies; on the protest's fifth day all the intermarried Jews and half-Jewish children (between 1700 and 2000) were released. The released Jews survived the war on official rations, and plans to arrest intermarried Jews throughout Germany were abandoned (Sharp 2005, 143–147).

Mass protests were the main tool used by the Czechoslovakian revolutionary movement against their Soviet-supported government in 1989. In November 1989, 200,000 people gathered in central Prague, demanding the resignation of Socialist Party and government officials, as well as the release of political prisoners. Protests were held almost every day; 10 days after the initial protest the entire Politburo and Central Committee of the Communist Party resigned. Demonstrations continued, spreading to Bratislava, and 24 days after the initial protest, President Gustáv Husák formed a new cabinet consisting of non-Party members and participants in the movement for democratic change, and resigned, securing the success of the Velvet Revolution (Sharp 2005, 272–275).

Deliberate and active law breaking has been used to demonstrate dissent while simultaneously highlighting the unjust nature of certain laws. The first major action that Gandhi organised as commander in chief of the Indian resistance occurred in Bardoli, where farmers were being unfairly taxed. They withheld all taxes for six months; the tax was eventually ruled to be unjustified and withdrawn. Full resistance in India began with the famous Salt March, designed to violate the 1936 Salt Act that monopolised salt production for the British and forced Indians to pay salt tax. The British did not want to make Gandhi a martyr, so allowed him and his followers to break the law. Approximately 5,000,000 Indians broke the Salt Act in 5000 separate locations in the following year (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 172–173). Boycotts against the textile and liquor monopolies followed, with people illegally making clothes and alcohol. These actions signalled to the British the Indian intent to disobey their rules, thus rejecting their authority.

The Danish resistance against the Nazis also involved large amounts of active law breaking. In 1942, resisters began to destroy objects and property useful to the Nazis, such as trains and munitions factories. The underground press broke the German suppression of free speech by printing resistance and banned literature – by 1943 it had a circulation of 2,300,000 (Ackerman and DuVall 2000, 215–216). These actions kept the resistance in the public consciousness while also demonstrating Danish opposition to German occupation, indicating that it is not just active resistance that can reduce power, but also the *demonstration* of resistance and opposition.

It has also been shown that NVR can be successfully employed when VR has failed or not been attempted. One such example was the revolution against Marcos in the Philippines. After Marcos was falsely proclaimed the winner of the 1986 elections, a group of army officers planned a *coup d'état* against him. But their plan was discovered and they took refuge in two army bases, broadcasting their support for the opposition. Crowds of more than 1,000,000 civilians blocked the tanks and troops sent by Marcos to attack the bases. Because they could not get through without injuring or killing thousands of people, the troops turned back. The next day Marcos ordered another attack, but their commander refused to participate in actions that would kill and injure innocent unarmed civilians (Sharp 2005, 242). That day 90% of the military forces defected, and Marcos left the country, defeated. In this case, civilian power was required to oust the dictator – it protected the original defecting soldiers and then caused widespread defections, significantly reducing the president's power.

There have been other instances of troop defection or insubordination caused by NVR. Backfire can create military difficulties, cause troop defection or insubordination, and start or give further impetus to a movement. In April 1930, in Peshawar, India, the military interrupted a peaceful protest, causing around 400 deaths. Disturbingly for the government, two platoons of soldiers refused orders to fire at the crowd on the grounds that their job was to protect India, not to kill their fellow citizens. These soldiers were sent to labour camps, some for life (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 175–177). These sorts of events occurred all over the country – police often reported that they simply could not continue to harm protesters who did not fight back. These acts of insubordination showed the British that their security forces were not reliable, vulnerable to the ethical difficulties of harming those who did not fight back.

German generals in Denmark complained that although they had been trained to deal with violence, they were baffled by non-violent techniques. They were relieved when the resistance incorporated violent guerrilla tactics, making it easier to violently suppress both simultaneously. This indicates the impact that non-violent strategies can have on those who are trained only in violence. Moreover, the Danish resistance showed that military sanctions are not enough to extinguish a popular movement if that movement is resilient and imaginative. The Danish movement strengthened when Germans killed striking civilians in 1944, culminating in mass resistance that in part caused the withdrawal of troops from Copenhagen.

The arrest of Gandhi in 1930 provided a martyr catalyst for greater mobilisation of the Indian people. Motilal Nehru, who was himself jailed the same year, claimed that for every one person imprisoned, 20 people joined the resistance movement. Over 60,000 protesters were imprisoned in the first year of the movement, while the movement itself grew rapidly.

The beginning of the Philippine revolution can be traced to the assassination of Marcos' leading political opponent Benigno Aquino in 1983. The subsequent funeral procession drew 2,000,000 people and started a series of protests in which some protesters were killed and injured. These events provided the motivation and martyr to inspire the movement that eventually saw Aquino's widow, Corazon Aquino, elected president.

The movement in Czechoslovakia was also motivated in part by suppression of peaceful protest. In November 1989, an anti-government student demonstrators were

surrounded and attacked by riot police and anti-terrorist squads. Videos of the attack were distributed amongst students and the wider community, sparking the revolution. Violent suppression of a non-violent movement, including arrests, beatings, and killings, has historically motivated others to join the movement and strengthen the resolve of those already involved. In this sense these suppressing tactics can be said to backfire against those who utilise them.

As mentioned above, some have argued that non-violent tactics can only work against morally reasonable aggressors – against, say, the British, but not the Nazis. And yet NVR has succeeded against morally unreasonable aggressors. Moreover, typical examples of “morally reasonable” aggressors, such as the British in India, are often not so reasonable after all.

Let us start with the British. Before the Indian independence movement, the British had colonised parts of Africa, the Americas, Australasia, and so on, producing a range of negative consequences for those areas’ indigenous inhabitants. The 1857 uprising in northern and central India was brutally suppressed. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, in which over 1000 peaceful protesters were killed, and for which British general Reginald Dyer was treated as a hero by the Raj, displayed Britain’s ability and desire to violently oppress in order to maintain control. This incident was indicative of Britain’s actions in India. English soldiers killed protesters in Peshawar and Solapur. *Lathis* (clubs with metal ends) were used to beat protesters; at the Dharasana salt works hundreds were seriously injured in this manner. Protesters were killed in the Takkar massacre in Mardan Tehsil and the Hathikhel massacre in Bannu. As Jawaharlal Nehru suggested at the time, the British condemned Mussolini and Hitler, while performing their own unjust actions in India (Sharp 2005, 160–161). The British were not so reasonable.

One might argue that the Danish NVR was successful only because the Nazis were comparatively reasonable there, and would have failed in Eastern Europe where they were much worse. But the Nazis in Denmark were, of course, still Nazis. Hitler’s orders were to rule over Denmark “with an iron hand,” and many resisters were arrested and killed.

It is important to note that it was not just NVR that caused the success of these two campaigns. In India, for example, the successful ousting of the British was in part caused by Britain’s post-World War II situation and the fact that they saw India as less of an asset than before. Nevertheless, the *satyagraha* movement led by Gandhi, culminating in the “Quit India” movement, was a major cause of the removal of the British. The resistance in Denmark was aided, of course, by the ultimately successful Allied Forces’ violent campaign being waged against Germany at the time. But the NVR employed locally did achieve its own successes, and does show that NVR can be a useful and effective way to resist violent and repressive aggressors.

In 1972, Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines, abolishing the two-term limit for the presidency, taking control of newspapers, radio, and television, abolishing the right of assembly, and suspending *habeas corpus*. His regime made 60,000 political arrests, many of whom were tortured (Ackerman and DuVall 2000, 218, 372–374). And many civilians were saved only due to the military’s refusal to follow his orders to kill them. And yet the resistance movement succeeded. Similarly, the regime in

Czechoslovakia violently repressed the country's citizens in order to maintain control, leading the country to the edge of a "spiritual, moral, political, economic, and ecological abyss" (Sharp 2005, 272). Students were severely beaten, leading to the mass movement that eventually won independence.

NVR is often held to be impractical against strong and morally corrupt aggressors. And when it does succeed, it is said that it can only have been successful due to an aggressor's weakness or leniency. But the reality is that NVR has made a difference on many occasions against powerful and severe aggressors. Empirical evidence clearly demonstrates that NVR can succeed against morally corrupt aggressors.

4. Conclusion

This article is designed neither to argue that NVR will always be successful in repelling aggressors, nor to show that recourse to war or violent actions in war can never be justified.² It is, however, meant to indicate that NVR should be afforded much greater consideration in the dialogue and decision-making processes that occur both before and during war, and that the potential effectiveness of NVR means that the last resort criterion, relating both to recourse to war and violent actions within war, is harder to satisfy than is often presumed. As Walzer (2004, 153) points out, we think war should be waged only as a last resort, "because of the unpredictable, unexpected, unintended, and unavoidable horrors that it regularly brings." The practical effectiveness of NVR raises the bar, so to speak, for what can be truly considered a last resort.

The last resort criterion of the *jus ad bellum*, then, ought to be amended to include the provision that recourse to war is justified only if NVR resistance has been properly considered as an alternative. And the proportionality requirement of the *jus in bello*, which includes a last resort-style provision (in that soldiers should only do that which is necessary to achieve their aim), should be similarly amended to include the rule that violent actions in war should only be performed if non-violent alternatives have properly been considered. Both of these tests are stronger than often presumed.

If the last resort criterion were adhered to in the manner that I am suggesting, then there would be far fewer wars. To be sure, NVR has failed on many occasions. But so too has VR, despite the vast resources dedicated to it. States could better fund NVR research and training, and NVR could form a central part of states' defence systems. It is a viable defence strategy.

The problem of war does not deal exclusively with the present; we must also consider the resolution of future conflict. If the lessons of the past are not considered and proper investment into non-violent research and technologies is not made, then we will not have properly considered all possible alternatives to war, and thus war in the future will not truly be waged as a last resort. For "consideration" in this instance is not mere rumination, but rather a genuine attempt to establish NVR as a viable alternative to war. Weapons are designed for use in the future; so too NVR should be prepared now, for when it is needed later.

The extreme harmfulness of war means that it ought to be justifiably turned to only in absolute desperation, as a last resort; all alternatives must be properly considered before we let slip the dogs of war. But as it is, those alternatives are not properly

considered, if they are considered at all. I hope that sometime soon I shall have cause to revise my view.

Notes

1. See Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 40), for detailed statistics correlating campaign size with historical probability of campaign success. See also Chenoweth (2016), for an extensive database of NVR movements and their outcomes.
2. I have argued elsewhere (Parkin 2014) that war cannot be justified, through a novel version of conditional pacifism.

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