

SUCCESS MEASURED

from 1900 to 2006
major nonviolent
campaigns were
successful

53%
of the time
in conflicts between
state & non-state
actors

compared with

26%
for violent
resistance campaigns

**Why Civil Resistance Works:
The Strategic Logic
of Nonviolent Conflict**
by M. Stephan &
E. Chenoweth
<http://bit.ly/4kv1mE>

"We tried it, and it didn't work" The strategy double standard

WE OFTEN HEAR THAT NONVIOLENT ACTION WAS PROVED INEFFECTIVE, WHILE THE BELIEF IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ARMED RESISTANCE AND GUERRILLA WAR OFTEN GOES UNCHALLENGED. WHY?

When a nonviolent operation fails to achieve its objectives, the whole strategic choice of nonviolent action is discredited. When a guerilla group fails, it is rarely taken as proof that engaging in terrorism or armed warfare is a futile strategy.

If one instance of nonviolent struggle — or worse, a limited subset of nonviolent tactics (demonstrations, boycotts) — is unsuccessful, it is often taken as proof that nonviolent action has no strategic value. Meanwhile, if an armed insurgency fails to deliver, it is always explained in relation to its specific context, the tactics used, the harshness of the repression, external factors, and so on.

Unrealistic expectations are thus imposed on nonviolent action that are not imposed on violent resistance. It seems nonviolent action has to succeed perfectly, and produce impeccable results all the time before it is considered a viable option. Conversely, the widespread assumption that violence offers greater efficacy does not require any evidence.

Such logic is based on a flawed double standard. As long as more stringent criteria are used to assess the value of the nonviolent technique when compared to violent action, the nonviolent option can't be seen as an effective course of action.

It is high time we insisted the same standards be applied to evaluate the respective merits of nonviolent and violent struggle, and assess their relative successes and failures in actual conflicts.

At long last, a few statistical studies have now been conducted on the relative efficacy of violent and nonviolent resistance. Interestingly, these have found that campaigns driven by civilians wielding nonviolent "weapons" (i.e. boycotts, strikes, protests, civil disobedience, parallel structures, etc.) have a higher rate of success than those using guerrilla warfare or terrorist attacks.



It's no use. We tried water already!

... AND COUNTED

In the

35
years

from 1970 to 2005

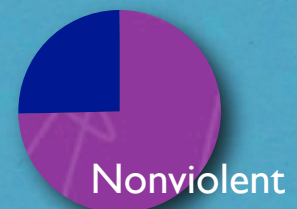
There were

67

transitions from
authoritarian to
democratic
governments

3 OUT OF **4**

of these transitions
were based on a
nonviolent civic force



**How Freedom is Won:
From Civic Resistance
to Durable Democracy**
A Research Study
by Freedom House

[www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/
special_report/29.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/29.pdf)