



Programme

CIVIL RESISTANCE

Popular movements challenging oppression: Policy issues for the international community

Wednesday 30 March – Friday 1 April 2011 | WP 1032

In partnership with the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict

Conference Chair: Professor Sir Adam Roberts

President of the British Academy, London: and Emeritus Professor of International Relations, Oxford University¹

Policy background

Historically, political change in countries that curtail freedom and ignore international human rights norms has been difficult to achieve. Violent revolution or the use of armed force by external actors is typically seen as the primary means of overcoming oppression. Yet civil resistance, relying on a variety of methods of nonviolent action, has been used for this purpose for well over a century in different parts of the world, by different peoples and societies, in different cultures and political systems, and with some impressive results as well as some apparent failures. This phenomenon has only recently started gaining greater recognition as a potentially formidable strategic force by policy makers, political observers and scholars. Often this recognition has been spurred by the spectacle of dictatorships and undemocratic rulers succumbing, not to armed insurrections, but to the coercive nonviolent pressure of mass civic movements, as in countries such as the Philippines, Chile, Poland, South Africa, Serbia, Georgia or Ukraine. The sweeping political ferment taking place in North Africa and the Middle East since the end of 2010 provides new, dramatic evidence of how civil resistance can drive political change. Furthermore, it has also been suggested that countries that experience bottom-up, civilian-based resistance are more likely to sustain human rights and democracy once they are established.² Given this record, it would be valuable to explore the strategies and dynamics of civil resistance movements and broadly disseminate the understandings that result from such exploration. Enlarging global awareness of the relative success of nonviolent resistance in triggering political change might also help turn some aggrieved groups from violence to nonviolent means of fighting for their rights.

¹Professor Roberts is also the author of numerous studies on nonviolent resistance, including the recently co-authored edited volume: Adam Roberts & Timothy Garton Ash (eds), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²Peter Ackerman and Adrian Karatnycky, "How Freedom is Won. From Civil Resistance to Durable Democracy" – Freedom House, 2005: http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/29.pdf

Conference objectives

The conference will bring together approximately sixty to seventy participants, including officials from national governments and international organizations, politicians, academic experts, representatives of non-governmental and civil society organizations, and journalists. It will include presentations and in-depth, off-the-record round table discussions aimed at addressing the following set of inquiries:

About civil resistance

- What is civil resistance and how does it work?
- What is the historical record of civil resistance and has this had an impact on the choice of civil resistance as a method of struggle for human rights and democracy?
- What strategies of civil resistance are most likely to widen the political space within countries ruled by oppressive regimes and bring about democratic transformation?
- How can awareness about the relative success of nonviolent resistance in triggering political change help turn some aggrieved groups from violence to nonviolent means of fighting for their rights?

About possible actions

- How can international organisations, governments, and their diplomatic representations abroad effectively and properly support nonviolent movements?
- How can international development and civil society organisations translate knowledge of civil resistance into their strategies and activities to assist grass root-level mobilisation and action?
- How can the media report better and more effectively about civil resistance?
- What publication proposals can be developed to advance knowledge of civil resistance and policy implementation in its support?

Wednesday 30 March

1300-1430 Participants arrive and buffet lunch available

1445 **Welcome and introduction**

Robert Grant
Programme Director, Wilton Park

1500-1600 **1. Civil resistance: what is it and why does it matter?**

Adam Roberts
President of the British Academy, London; and Emeritus Professor of International Relations, Oxford University

1600-1645 Photograph followed by tea/coffee

1645-1745 **2. Strategic theory and civil resistance: Why skills make it “A force more powerful”**

Peter Ackerman
Founding Chair, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, Washington DC

1745-1900 **3. Civil resistance in landmark cases**

“Solidarity”- a self-limiting revolution

Janusz Onyszkiewicz

Chairman of the Board, Euro-Atlantic Association of Poland and former Minister of Defence, Warsaw

The case of South Africa

Howard Barrell

Senior lecturer in Journalism, Cardiff University; and former Intelligence Official, African National Congress

1900 Drinks reception

1930 Dinner

Thursday 31 March

0800-0900 Breakfast

0900-1100 **4. Strategic dynamics of civil resistance**

Chair: Jack DuVall

President, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, Washington DC

Why civil resistance works: the strategic logic of nonviolent conflict

Maria Stephan

Strategic Planner, US Department of State; Editor, "Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East"

What explains the emergence of a nonviolent revolution?

Mary King

Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, University for Peace, San José

1100-1130 Tea/coffee

1130-1300 **5. New challenges for nonviolent movements**

Chair: Robert Grant

Programme Director, Wilton Park

The use of digital technology in civil resistance

Patrick Meier

Visiting Fellow, Program on Liberation Technologies, Stanford University; Director of Crisis Mapping, Ushahidi: and Co-founder of the International Network of Crisis Mappers

Democratic transition and corruption in the middle east- lessons for civil resistance

Arwa Hassan

Senior Programme Coordinator, Middle East North Africa, Transparency International, Berlin; and Adviser, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, Washington DC

1300-1500 Lunch

1500-1630 **6. Contemporary cases: Middle East, Africa**

Chair: Stephen Zunes

Professor of Politics and Chair of Middle Eastern Studies, San Francisco University

Lessons from Egypt's revolution

Saad Eddin Ibrahim

Visiting Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies, Harvard University; and Co-founder, Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies, and the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, Cairo

Mobilising a nonviolent movement: strategies; structures and women's participation

Jennifer Williams

Co-founder of Women of Zimbabwe Arise and co-recipient of the 2009 Robert F Kennedy Human Rights Award, Bulawayo

1630-1700 Tea/coffee

1700-1830

7. Policy implications in advancing human rights and democracy

Chair: Mary King, Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, University for Peace, San José

External support for civil resistance movements: help or hindrance?

Mark Canning

British Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Harare

Supporting civil resistance: The role of external actors

Massimo Tommasoli

Permanent Observer to the United Nations, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Stockholm

1830

Showing of the Nashville episode from film the "A Force More Powerful"

1900

Drinks reception

1930

Dinner with after dinner speaker: **Reverend James Lawson**

Former President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; and Pastor, Holman United Methodist Church, Los Angeles

Friday 1 April

0800-0900

Breakfast

0900-1030

8. Civil resistance and countering extreme violence

Chair: Maciej Bartkowski, Senior Director, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, Washington DC

Confronting the myth of the rational insurgent

Erica Chenoweth

Assistant Professor of Government, Wesleyan University, Connecticut

1030-1100

Tea/coffee

1100-1300

9. Policy recommendations and blueprint for action

Chair: Robert Grant

Programme Director, Wilton Park

Hardy Merriman

Senior Advisor, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, Washington DC

Maciej Bartkowski

Senior Director, Education and Research, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, Washington DC

1300

Lunch

1415

Participants depart