

Non-Violent Response to Oppose U.S. Aggression

Economic Boycotts directed against the Aggressor Nation

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

Theme: [History](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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People the world over must find non-violent ways to oppose American military force lest they suffer the fate of the Iraqis—hundreds of thousands dead and a nation in ruins.

Given the growing menace of the American war machine, non-violent soul force must be considered as a response in international conflicts just as it was used nationally by Mahatma Gandhi in India and by the Reverend Martin Luther King in America.

During the Sixties, the Urban League's Whitney Young Jr. said of American blacks, "We can't win a shooting war." He was right. He and other black civil rights leaders supported Dr. King's approach. The success of their non-violent movement made America a better nation in which to live.

Today, in response to U.S. arrogance and aggression, non-violent "soul force" must be seriously considered, particularly by small nations of the sort the U.S. has a history of overthrowing or attacking. It will require courage and restraint by the threatened nations but they will earn the sympathy and support of the world by displaying these traits.

Nations faced with illegal assault by the U.S.—here Iran is an example as the U.S. has criminally threatened it with nuclear war—could announce they will not fire back or oppose an invasion.

If this seems like a lot to ask, consider the alternative: the futility of stopping a sophisticated U.S. war machine funded with \$800-billion a year. (Did you know the Pentagon spends more for war than all 50 American states spend for peaceful purposes?)

Does a small nation with a \$5- or \$10-billion defense budget think it can "win" against USA? Does it think it will not suffer horrendous casualties if it fights back?

The best way to fight fire is not with fire but with water. And the best way to oppose violence is not with more violence but with non-violence. While each situation is different, a nation facing illegal assault—as Iran does today—might consider the following steps:

Declare before the United Nations (and the world media) that it will not respond with force if attacked. Thus, an invader that comes in shooting will betray its criminal intent before the world.

Request that spokespersons for religious groups and other prominent figures take up vigils on the rooftops or inside likely targets of attacks. Prominent clergy and leaders from

other countries could be invited to participate in defending the besieged state.

Demand that the invader submit its grievance to international arbitration.

Nations opposed to the aggression could be urged to shut down their ports and airports to people and goods from the aggressor state. Its citizens could organize sympathy rallies and marches.

A global boycott would be launched against the exports of the aggressor state.

Any outstanding loans by the aggressor nation could be called in. Its currency would not be accepted.

The aggressor nation could be stripped of its veto if it is a member of the UN Security Council, a body created to prevent wars, and other sanctions taken.

People the world over could pledge not to travel to its shores on business or vacation or educate their children there.

Surely, there are probably other effective, steps that could be considered but these suggestions are made to convey the idea of how soul force might be put to work globally.

By fighting back militarily, Iraq lost heavily in human life. Such losses—largely of civilians—are absolutely unacceptable, as is the horrific physical destruction the American-led coalition inflicted on Iraq's infrastructure and economy, making the nation literally unliveable. By responding in a non-violent manner, a besieged nation would inspire the rest of the world to make its cause the world's cause.

Instead of having its army fight the Pentagon war machine, a nation that is invaded would urge each and every one of its citizens to participate in the non-violent struggle. Giving each citizen a role to play will imbue them with pride and determination. War is what the Pentagon wants. Don't give them one.

Sherwood Ross is an American who formerly worked as a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News* and as a wire service columnist. During the Sixties he worked in an executive capacity for a major national American civil rights organization. He also served as press coordinator for the James Meredith March Against Fear in Mississippi in June, 1966, and his eye-witness account of Meredith's shooting was distributed globally by wire services. He currently directs the Anti-War News Service from his home in Coral Gables, Florida. To contribute to his work or comment, reach him at sherwoodross10@gmail.com

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