

Non-Violent Response to US Sponsored Wars of Aggression

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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 Vietnamese and the Iraqis.

The Vietnamese lost four million civilians and the Iraqis to date have lost more than one million civilians as a result of U.S. aggression. Such losses—mainly of unarmed women and children—are unacceptable, as is the horrific physical destruction inflicted on those nations. Viet Nam has yet to recover from Pentagon bombing and the spread of Agent Orange. And Iraq may be centuries recovering from the ravages of U.S. radioactive ammunition fired there, euphemistically called “depleted uranium.”

To this day, some Americans believe the U.S. “lost” the Viet Nam war when the U.S. in fact emerged physically undamaged with no civilian deaths while its military lost but a fraction of the combatants lost by the Vietnamese. Still, the losses suffered by American families were devastating and those by Vietnamese families more so. A non-violent response by other nations could spare the lives of U.S. combatants as well.

Ominously, the Pentagon has spent over a trillion dollars in recent years on the refinement of deadlier killing instruments and the militarization of space from which it can control the planet with even greater authority than from its 1,000 foreign bases.

In an interview recorded in 2003 and published in “Imperial Ambitions”(Metropolitan Books), MIT philosopher Noam Chomsky says the U.S. is arguing “the only way we can have security is by expanding into and ultimately owning space.” And he further points out, “The militarization of space means, in effect, placing the entire world at risk of instant annihilation with no warning.”

Referring to the doctrine of President George W. Bush, Chomsky said it means plainly “the United States will rule the world by force, and if there is any challenge to its domination—whether it is perceived in the distance, invented, imagined, or whatever—then the United States will have the right to destroy that challenge before it becomes a threat.” This, he said, is “preventive war.”

And this doctrine is being needlessly carried forward in Afghanistan by President Obama, who is widening the conflict into Pakistan.

In response to the menace of the U.S. military-industrial complex, non-violent soul force needs to be considered. Satyagraha needs to be brought to bear in international conflicts just as it was used by Mahatma Gandhi in India and by the Reverend Martin Luther King in

the U.S.

Nations faced with illegal physical assault by the U.S.—here Iran is an example as the U.S. has even threatened to use nuclear weapons against it—could announce they will not fire back or oppose invasion. If this seems like a lot to ask, consider the alternative: the futility of stopping U.S. “bunker busters” and “daisy cutters” or missiles fired from offshore warships (as columnist George Will has recommended in Afghanistan).

It should be obvious 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 might consider the following steps:

Declare before the United Nations and to the media that it will not use force against any invader. In such cases, an invader that comes in shooting will betray its criminal intent before the world.

Request that the invader submit its grievance to international arbitration.

Request that spokespersons for religious groups and other public 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.

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

A global boycott could be launched against the exports of the aggressor nation.

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.

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

Sherwood Ross 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 in a national civil rights organization and later served as press coordinator for the James Meredith March Against Fear in Mississippi in June, 1966. To contribute to his Anti-War News Service or to comment, reach him at sherwoodross10@gmail.com

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