

Summaries

7–44

Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict

Maria J. Stephan, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, and
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The historical record indicates that nonviolent campaigns have been more successful than armed campaigns in achieving ultimate goals in political struggles, even when used against similar opponents and in the face of repression. Nonviolent campaigns are more likely to win legitimacy, attract widespread domestic and international support, neutralize the opponent's security forces, and compel loyalty shifts among erstwhile opponent supporters than are armed campaigns, which enjoin the active support of a relatively small number of people, offer the opponent a justification for violent counterattacks, and are less likely to prompt loyalty shifts and defections. An original, aggregate data set of all known major nonviolent and violent resistance campaigns from 1900 to 2006 is used to test these claims. These dynamics are further explored in case studies of resistance campaigns in Southeast Asia that have featured periods of both violent and nonviolent resistance.

45–81

How American Treaty Behavior Threatens National Security

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In recent years, American treaty behavior has produced growing concern among both allies and less friendly nations. On such fundamental issues as nuclear proliferation, terrorism, human rights, civil liberties, environmental disasters, and commerce, the United States has generated confusion and anger abroad. Such a climate is not conducive to needed cooperation in the conduct of foreign and security policy. Among U.S. actions that have caused concern are the failure to ratify several treaties; the attachment of reservations, understandings, and declarations before ratification; the failure to support a treaty regime once ratified; and treaty withdrawal. The structural and historical reasons for American treaty behavior are deeply rooted in the United States' system of government and do not merely reflect superpower arrogance.

82–117

Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz

Caitlin Talmadge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

How might Iran retaliate in the aftermath of a limited Israeli or U.S. strike? The most economically devastating of Iran's potential responses would be closure of the Strait of Hormuz. According to open-source order of battle data, as well as relevant analogies from military history and GIS maps, Iran does possess significant littoral warfare capabilities, including mines, antiship cruise missiles, and land-based air defense. If Iran were able to properly link these capabilities, it could halt or impede traffic in the Strait of Hormuz for a month or more. U.S. attempts to reopen the waterway likely would escalate rapidly into sustained, large-scale air and naval operations during which Iran could impose significant economic and military costs on the United States—even if Iranian operations were not successful in truly closing the strait. The aftermath of limited strikes on Iran would be complicated and costly, suggesting needed changes in U.S. force posture and energy policy.

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The Window of Vulnerability That Wasn't: Soviet Military Buildup in the 1970s—A Research Note

Pavel Podvig, Stanford University

The Soviet strategic modernization program of the 1970s was one of the most consequential developments of the Cold War. Deployment of new intercontinental ballistic missiles and the dramatic increase in the number of strategic warheads in the Soviet arsenal created a sense of vulnerability in the United States that was, to a large degree, responsible for the U.S. military buildup of the late 1970s and early 1980s and the escalation of Cold War tensions during that period. U.S. assessments concluded that the Soviet Union was seeking to achieve a capability to fight and win a nuclear war. Estimates of missile accuracy and silo hardness provided by the U.S. intelligence community led many in the United States to conclude that the Soviet Union was building a strategic missile force capable of destroying most U.S. missiles in a counterforce strike and of surviving a subsequent nuclear exchange. Soviet archival documents that have recently become available demonstrate that this conclusion was wrong. The U.S. estimates substantially overestimated the accuracy of the Soviet Union's missiles and the degree of silo reinforcement. As the data demonstrate, the Soviet missile force did not have the capability to launch a suc-

cessful first strike. Moreover, the data strongly suggest that the Soviet Union never attempted to acquire a first-strike capability, concentrating instead on strategies based on retaliation.

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Divining Nuclear Intentions: A Review Essay

William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, both at the Monterey Institute of International Studies

Although projections of nuclear proliferation abound, they rarely are founded on empirical research or guided by theory. Even fewer studies are informed by a comparative perspective. The two books under review—*The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions, and Foreign Policy*, by Jacques Hymans, and *Nuclear Logics: Alternative Paths in East Asia and the Middle East*, by Etel Solingen, are welcome exceptions to this general state of affairs, and represent the cutting edge of nonproliferation research. Both works challenge conventional conceptions of the sources of nuclear weapons decisions and offer new insights into why past predictions of rapid proliferation failed to materialize and why current prognoses about rampant proliferation are similarly flawed. While sharing a number of common features, including a focus on subsystemic determinants of national behavior, the books differ in their methodology, level of analysis, receptivity to multicausal explanations, and assumptions about decisionmaker rationality and the revolutionary nature of the decision. Where one author emphasizes the importance of the individual leader's national identity conception in determining a state's nuclear path, the other explains nuclear decisions primarily with regard to the political-economic orientation of the ruling coalition. Notwithstanding a tendency to overinterpret evidence, the books represent the best of contemporary social science research and provide compelling interpretations of nuclear proliferation dynamics of great relevance to scholars and policymakers alike.

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