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**Nonviolent Communication Tactics:
Insights from Protest Uprisings in Burma and Iran**

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Introduction

The world has gone through several dramatic waves of democratization since the end of the Cold War, which have seen dictatorships fall in Asia, Africa, South America, Europe and the Middle East. In many cases, this democratization was aided by or resulted from a nonviolent protest uprising. In 2011, international attention was captured by revolutions and mass demonstrations across the Arab world. Just like previous nonviolent insurrections, the Arab Spring increased international attention to theories and strategies of nonviolent protest. Nonviolent protests and actions were commonplace during the successful revolutions of Egypt and Tunisia, and were instrumental in ensuring international support for movements that later turned violent in Libya and Syria. Of course, nonviolent insurrections are hardly a purely post-Cold War phenomenon. From the Indian struggle for independence from colonial Britain to the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, nonviolent protest has defined some of the most influential activist movements of modern history. Not all such uprisings are successful, as seen by pro-democracy activists in Burma and Iran who famously used nonviolence in their own insurrections against their despotic regimes.

Before the wave of uprisings that spread across the Arab world in 2011, the 2007 "Saffron Revolution" in Burma and the 2009 "Green Movement" uprising in Iran were perhaps the most prominent recent examples of activists attempting a "bloodless" insurrection, a forced change of government without a shot fired (by the protesters, at least). In both cases, nonviolent activists took to the street in acts of mass protest and civil disobedience, becoming practitioners of nonviolent protest techniques under the gaze of the international news media, online social media, and dissident media sent back into their countries.

It is in this spotlight that nonviolent protest movements—especially those involved in nonviolent insurrections against dictatorships—gain their strength. In light of the activists' peaceful actions, the violence perpetrated against them reflects especially poorly on their government in the eyes of domestic and international news consumers, a dynamic that goes to the heart of the strategy behind pragmatic nonviolence. This central communication strategy, in which media coverage is essential and nonviolence itself is a form of communication, was brutally put to the test in Burma and Iran. In both cases, activists communicated nonviolently through protest tactics that captured media attention, such as eye-catching physical actions. When Iranian protesters flashed the "peace" sign, or when Burmese monks turned their alms

Sharp's efforts to perfect and disseminate nonviolent strategy, efforts that have been partially credited for the overthrow of governments in Georgia, the Ukraine, and several of the Arab Spring countries (Arrow 2011). However, Burma and Iran cannot yet be added to the list of pragmatic nonviolence's success stories. In both cases, the state cracked down on the activW3::fFfX d r%OrF

through two frameworks: pragmatic nonviolence theory, as advanced by Gene Sharp and Robert

Importantly for my analysis of their communication

Prominent theorists in the field of principled nonviolence have included scholars such as Richard Gregg, Johan Galtung, Douglas Bond and Michael Nagler (Gregg 1969; Galtung 1965; Nojeim 2004; Nagler 1982). In contrast with pragmatic nonviolence, these thinkers tend to stretch the definition of nonviolence to include concepts such as pacifism or non-aggression. For example, Bond insists that nonviolence must combine "a sense of community with an underlying premise of the sanctity of life," or else it is just "violence for other ends" (Nojeim 2004: 6). This

Robert Burrowes also used Gandhian theory to form a

approach can be considered an adaptation to Western culture," writes Martin, "where the basis for widespread principled commitment to nonviolence seems to be lacking" (Martin 2005: 250). Indeed, when Sharp occasionally does make normative or morality-based statements, they often reflect a Western liberal world-view and are defiantly non-pacifist. "It is unreasonable to aim for

nonviolence held by the audience of nonviolent communication, as "pragmatic uses of nonviolent action draw strength from a cultural rejection of violence (in certain circumstances)" (Martin and Varney 2003: 214). Part of the political jiu jitsu process is using nonviolence to appeal to the moral beliefs of third party witnesses, and converting them is at least partially accomplished by appealing to their sense of right and wrong—although in the case of regime supporters, nonviolence also appeals to their sense of self-preservation, as they will be more likely to defect to or negotiate with an enemy that isn't shooting at them (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008: 11).

Morality and self-interest stand side by side in the arsenal of the practitioner of pragmatic nonviolence, all part of a strategy of directly challenging and forcing a total defeat of the opponent. Helvey calls this strategy "political defiance," the amoral use of nonviolence to directly challenge the authority of the practitioner's opponent, "allowing no room for submission" (Sharp 2010: 1). Helvey, who specifically coined the term to separate his brand of nonviolence from that of principled nonviolence theorists, once referred to political defiance and military defiance as "apples and oranges," not because of any moral distinction but because they are "two different weapons systems" (Helvey 2004: 55).

Is nonviolence, as pragmatic nonviolence theorists claim, more strategically effective than violence? When it comes to non-state actors challenging state actors, the numbers seem to suggest that this is indeed the case. A particularly illuminating study by Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth (2008: 8) found that, in an overview of conflicts between non-state and state actors from 1900 to 2006, nonviolent movements were effective in achieving their goals in 53 per cent of cases, and violent movements were only successfF+63OsRk:W+7637OtRk3W9FF6OsRk:Wk:W+7+ u:F+6F] X;rk343W8FW6:K4OaRKWFW9F4:4K:X d r%OtRk3W9F9F+K6OoRk:F.k9WF:38:OcRK7OtRk3W9 nicaiK67OaRKWFFK97OnRkFW8+7WFF767OtRk3W9F283OeRKWFc7 0F3OnRkFW8+9F3:93FK+KOeRKWFF+63OnRkFW8+9F37OcRKWFF+F:OeRKWFF+F:O RkKFW+K+6OfR3WK96K9OrF

Before I illustrate how nonviolence can be used as a form of communication, it is worth pointing out that the alternative to nonviolence is used to communicate quite frequently. Terrorist attacks and government crackdowns that "make an example" of political opponents are just the

jiu jitsu builds the relative power of the nonviolent activist and attacks the relative power of the violent oppressor by inspiring witnesses to turn against the oppressor and take action. During a violent quelling of a nonviolent insurrection, the nonviolence of the protesters becomes harshly contrasted with the violence of their oppressors, casting the protesters in a positive light and their oppressors in a negative one in the eyes of these witnesses.

Such witnesses include international actors, supporters of the opponents, and others among the oppressed, all key recipients of an activist's nonviolent communication. Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth (2008: 9), in their previously mentioned study, confirm that these three pillars of potential support for a protest movement are all vastly more likely to respond positively to a nonviolent movement than a violent one. Sharp outlines in depth, in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, the importance of political jiu jitsu in reaching these groups.

Of the three groups that can be the target of nonviolent communication, international actors are often the easiest to win over through nonviolence. This includes foreign governments, foreign populations, international human rights NGOs, and international media. Images of peaceful protesters being brutally suppressed can be highly effective in mobilizing global public opinion. Sharp quotes American sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross as saying "The spectacle of men suffering for a principle and not hitting back is a moving one. It obliges to power holders to condescend to explain, to justify themselves. The weak get a change of venue from the will of the stronger to the court of public opinion, perhaps world opinion" (Sharp 1973: 659).

There is, however a weakness in relying too heavily on international actors as the sole audience for a nonviolent communication strategy. As Sharp notes, some regimes are far more sensitive to international opinion than others (Sharp 1973: 662). For example, in the case of regimes that are largely alienated from the democratic West, Western criticism could be easily ignored. Barring economic sanctions or direct military intervention, the support of governments hostile to the regime they are rising against is not always enough to tip the balance of power in the favour of nonviolent activists.

Of enormous strategic value is the ability to convert supporters of the regime in power. It is in this aspect that nonviolence is truly unique. "Violent repression of nonviolent actionists is far more likely to result in uneasiness and criticism within the opponent's camp than is violent repression of violent actionists," writes Sharp (1973: 665). This effect is due both to moral outrage and decreased fear for personal safety (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008: 11). Not only are regime supporters more likely to sympathise with a nonviolent opponent, but they are more likely to defect to an opponent that is not trying to kill them.

Finally, and arguably most importantly, political jiu jitsu can have a profound effect on mobilizing the oppressed against their oppressor. "Repression may increase the resistance from the grievance group itself," writes Sharp (1973: 678), "instead of intimidating them into acquiescence." As seen in some of the 2011 "Arab Spring" countries, this can swell the numbers of the existing opposition from a relatively small group of hard core dissidents to a protest movement large enough to grind the country's political and economic process to a halt and topple the regime.

1.5 Political Defiance: Symbolic Protest and Physical Actions

depends on the message being sent and the intended target. Sometimes the message is related to planning or executing tactics, and the target is other activists. When communicating with each other in a situation where the government has a tight grip on domestic mass media, activists can use messengers that include small-scale acts of communication such as email, graffiti, leaflets, and word of mouth (Martin and Varney 2003: 166). When the message is one already known to most activists in the movement, and the targets are international actors, regime supporters, and others among the oppressed, then the messengers chosen by activists with no access to government-controlled domestic mass media are often citizen journalists who post their news and images on websites or provide them to the international mass media. The term 'citizen journalist' is generally used to refer to an amateur journalist such as a blogger, or an activist or bystander taking on the role of a journalist to report on a protest or other newsworthy event.

The forms of international mass media that are relevant to the case studies of this project include radio, television and print reporting from political news companies based outside the countries of the case studies. This also includes forms of pro-democracy media broadcast into dictatorships, often with the support of democratic governments, such as Voice of America and the Democratic Voice of Burma. Burma and Iran are both cases where radio and TV media outlets outside the country broadcast activist-supplied images to the world about what is happening there, and also send broadcasts inside the country of illegal dissident programming (Helvey 2004: 13).

The forms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) relevant to these case studies include cell phones, digital cameras and video cameras, and internet resources, including blogs and social networking sites like Flickr, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. At an age when the internet has become a global communication tool, democratic and autocratic governments alike are increasingly finding it to be a frustrating source of civil disobedience (Calabrese 2004: 335).

1.7 The Importance of Medium

A reliance on the international media means that the ability to attract international media attention to demonstrations and the ability to ensure that this attention is positive can make or break a movement with no method of domestic mass communication at its disposal (Singh 2010: 105). How then can an activist movement ensure positive media attention? "In principle, any story, told in any way, could lead the evening news or hit the headlines," Martin and Varney (2003: 183) write; "In practice, what is selected by editors is tightly constrained by experience, competition, expectations of audiences, and responses of powerful interest groups."

As Martin and Varney point out, activists must choose which messages and tactics are appropriate for different kinds of mediums, as a message or tactic that is effective for television news is often useless for radio (Martin and Varney 2003: 168). For example, when radio is the messenger, Helvey suggests using popular music to gain additional listeners (Helvey 2004: 83). When television is the messenger, and compelling visual images are needed, Helvey suggests that activists use visual symbols, such as flags or uniforms, to accompany their audio message. When courting visual media, activists need to consider both what conveys meaning through symbolism and what will be camera-friendly on a purely aesthetic level.

which to achieve those goals, as well as shared sym

"obsolete" (Curnalia 2005: 242). The term propaganda is mostly used in contemporary literature as a negative term, whereas neutral or positive analysis of propaganda tends to use the euphemism 'political communication.' There is a wealth of political communication literature available, such as Karen Sanders' *Communicating Politics in the Twenty-First Century* and *Political Communication in Action¸* edited by David L. Paletz. However, within this literature there is no analysis of nonviolence or nonviolent protest actions.

Jowett and O'Donnell's work, which bridges the gap between modern mass media and communication theory and the now faded propaganda theory (Curnalia 2005: 247), allows a greater flexibility in its scope of communicative political acts than political communication theory, which tends to focus on traditional mediums of communication. Furthermore, Jowett and O'Donnell's work—including the 10-step process for

1.11 Conclusion

stopping it. Instead, Sharp advises that in cases of limited violence, a clear distinction be made between violent and nonviolent forces and actions (Sharp 2010: 33).

In addition to the pragmatic nature of their relationship with violence, the case for pragmatic nonviolence as the approach of choice for activists in Burma and Iran can be made by the fact that both have been directly inspired by Gene Sharp and Robert Helvey's writing and direct involvement (Beatty 2010: 629, Beer 1999: 179, Revolution 2011, Arrow 2011). Burma even has a dissident organization, not coincidentally with a history of working with Robert Helvey, titled "The Political Defiance Committee" (Helvey 2004: 41). Most tellingly of all for the pragmatic nonviolence of the Burmese opposition is the fact that Helvey personally oversaw

Chapter Two: The Saffron Revol Re

2.1 Ideology and Purpose

Jowett and O'Donnell stress the importance of isolating the beliefs, values and goals of the propagandists as part of an overall analysis of their propaganda (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006: 271). Despite the diversity of groups present in th

standards issues to avoid a stricter response from authorities (Thawnghmung 2008: 13,14), and the ABMA marched in order to protest "the worsening plight of the people" (Kingston 2008: 11).

The ideology of the monks and other protesters during Burma's 2007 "Saffron

2.3 The Propagandist

Jowett and O'Donnell acknowledge that finding the identity or affiliation of the propagandist can sometimes be difficult (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006: 273). It is impossible to identify the group affiliations of the civilians protesting along with the monks in Image 3 and Image 4, and hundreds more who do not appear in these images were engaged in similar acts across the country. For obvious reasons, in such an authoritarian state even an act of public protest is best done in relative anonymity. However, it is reasonable to assume from the political context of these demonstrators that the protesters are supporters of Aung San Suu Kyi and the pro-democracy cause. In a country that voted overwhelmingly for Suu Kyi, it is possible that the protesters are not members of activist groups such as the NLD or the 88 Generation Students, and are in fact laypeople who were inspired by the protests of the monks to voice pre-existing sympathies for the pro-democracy struggle. In a country where political dissidents are regularly sent to forced labour camps and subjected to torture, their mere presence in the street as protesters carried enormous political weight.

It is also reasonable to assume that the monks in Image 1 and Image 2 are members or direct supporters of the ABMA. Monks in Burma make for particularly powerful propagandists, as they are highly respected in Burmese society and a key element of Burmese culture (Selth 2008: 282; Rogers 2008: 116). In addition to being highly respected by a devout population, the monkhood also offers a sort of social safety net to the poorest families—sons who cannot be fed are allowed to become novice monks and live on alms (Kingston 2008: 11). To an even greater degree than the laypeople who protested with them, the very fact that they were protesting was of great political consequence, and sent a powerful message in light of the repressive actions that they were likely to face. 2007 was not the first time that monks had risen up in protest, as monks in the country had a long history of political militancy—including mass participation in the 1988 rebellion (Pinheiro 2007: 14). However, the monk uprising in 2007 proved to be particularly damaging to a regime that attempted to gain legitimacy through cooperation with the country's religious community (Steinberg 2010: 136). Observers of Burmese politics assert that images of soldiers cracking down violently on the monks will

Membership in Burmese dissident groups such as the 88 Generation Students and the NLD reflect the fact that activism in a country as closed and repressive as Burma is better done with the strength of a group than as an individual (Beatty 2010: 625). These organizations

opportunity of social mobility for the country's poor, and there are no incentives for these recruits to turn against the system that has provided for them and their families (Shen 2010: 39). The monks aimed to appeal to the faith and morals of these recruits through the nonviolence of their protests, and to "awaken" members of the regime to the suffering they were causing (Fink 2009: 367; Fink 2009: 102).

Facebook, Flickr, and blogs, and photographs sent t

supporters, it can be seen as a form of nonviolent

Another popular technique is the reliance on "opinion leaders," or the use of the status and influence of respected figures in a population (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006: 281). The involvement of monks in these protests, who are so revered in Burmese society and whose mere presence as protesters sends such a powerful message to their targets, fits with this theme perfectly. Furthermore, even non-Buddhist international audiences are more likely to side with Buddhist monks, famous for their staunch morality and devotion to nonviolence, than a violent military responding to them.

activists, was remarkably successful in light of how prominent these actions became in coverage and analysis of the protests. Success in the 2007 "Saffron Revolution" may have been out of reach for the activists no matter what communication strategy they adopted.

It is worth noting that, at the time of this research, the Burmese state is in the midst of a sudden, drastic, and unprecedented democratic thaw. While the 2007 protests may not have immediately toppled the ruling military regime, they may have set in motion the process that will eventually lead to the attainment of their aspirations for freedom and democracy. Thanks largely to the images from the 2007 "Saffron Revolution," the world has been reminded of their struggle, renewing sympathy for a cause that was largely overlooked internationally since the uprising in 1988. The day Burma becomes fully democratic will be celebrated worldwide as a victory for democracy, human rights, and nonviolent struggle.

Chapter Three: The Green Movement in Iran

Unlike many authoritarian states, Iran does experience a limited form of democracy, although all political candidates are chosen by its religious leadership.[13] The country of almost 78 million people, aided by substantial wealth from oil, has created a thriving educated middle class and a GDP that places it among the top economies in the world—just shy of the G20 economies (CIA World Factbook). However, Iran is a deeply divided state with a violently repressive government, and increasing economic stagnation in recent years has only exasperated frustration among the population with the substantial limits to their personal and political freedom (Mather 2010: 508).

The power of Iran's theocratic dictatorship has never been uncontested. In

3.2 Context

The spark that ignited Iran's worst internal instability since the 1979 revolution was the June 12, 2009 election, in which conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared victory over reformer favourite Mir-Hossein Mousavi. Many in the country doubted the validity of the election results, and there was plenty of reason to do so, such as dubiously high results for Ahmadinejad in areas where Mousavi was notably popular (Ansari 2010: 57). The government announced Ahmadinejad's victory before all the results were counted, and immediately began arresting activists, journalists, and others that it anticipated would be a source of trouble.

Demonstrations began the day after the election, on June 13. Mousavi and another reformer election candidate, Mehdi Karroubi, accused the government of rigging the vote. This act, and their subsequent support for anti-government protests, made them accidental leaders of the uprising as the thousands of activists in the street adopted them as figureheads in their calls for human rights and democracy.

The regime responded to the protests with violence immediately. The first day of demonstrations saw attacks against activists by the feared Basij[15] militia, which only infuriated the protesters further. The next day protests continued across the country, and the government raided student dormitories, beating, arresting and killing students in response. On June 15, millions took to the streets, carrying green, the colour of Mousavi's election campaign, and the Green Movement was born.

Over the following weeks a grim pattern emerged. Protesters took to the streets nearly every day, only to be met with shocking violence from security forces. June 20 saw the worst of the violence, as government snipers opened fire on protest crowds, seemingly at random. Murdered demonstrators include 27 year-old student Neda Agha-Soltan, whose death was captured on video and became an iconic symbol of the protest movement.

The enormity of the government's violent response was largely successful in stopping the momentum of the uprising, and the days following June 20 were largely quiet. Sporadic demonstrations continued in the following months, usually corresponding with anniversaries, holidays, and other government-sanctioned events which allowed people to initially gather in large numbers without government suspicion. The largest demonstrations in Iran since the initial post-election protests took place in 2011 in the early months of the Arab Spring uprisings, although those too were met with brute force from the government and the Green Movement was once again made dormant.

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[15] The Basij militia are a paramilitary group that was founded during the Iranian war with Iraq. They are often tasked by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards with crushing dissent and enforcing the country's strict religious laws.

3.3 The Propagandist

Of enormous significance to the Green Movement protests of 2009 was the presence of female protesters. In a country where 65 per cent of all university students are women, there is a growing political radicalization among Iran's young female population (Esfarandiari 2010: 47). Both reformer candidates received the support of many female voters and established women's rights groups for their stance on reforming Iran's archaic gender laws (Esfandiari 2010: 47).

now eponymous green. It is worth noting that the color green has religious connotations in much of the Muslim world, as it is a color closely associated with Islam (Gheytanchi 2020: 253). Mousavi's statements have become relatively indicative of the direction that the Green Movement leadership wishes to take, such a list of nine demands that he released after the elections, which include freedom of the press, the release of political prisoners, revised election laws, and punishment for those in the security forces who used violence against peaceful protesters (Sahimi 2010: 190). His wife has also become a figurehead of the movement, and is particularly respected by female activists (Dabashi 2011: 57).

While the exact number of the movement's supporters would be impossible to find, it is clear that the organization holds the support of a wide cross section of Iranian society, although most represented are likely women and youth (Hashemi 2010: xix). As previously established, the ideology of the group's membership is harder to gauge than the moderate ideology of its leadership, although the shared goals certainly include a freer, more liberal, and more democratic Iran.

The communication strategy of the group has received an enormous amount of media and academic attention, particularly on the importance of ICTs (Sohrabi-Haghighat 2010, Golkar 2011, Fisher 2010). In a country where media is muzzled by state censorship and foreign press act under heavy restrictions, the activists relied so heavily on cell phone cameras and social networking sites like Facebook, Youtube and Twitter that foreign press famously dubbed the uprising "the Twitter revolution" (Parsi 2010: 161, Fisher 2010: 106). Activists uploaded news and images on to social networking sites or sent them directly to foreign press as their most prominent communication tactic, and Mousavi himself used Facebook to communicate with the world outside Iran (Cross 2010). Dissident Nasrin Alavi wrote, "The films, images, tweets and blogs that are cast out like messages-in-bottles across the cyber-waves are a central part of people's struggle to narrate their own stories and present the case for justice" (Alavi 2010: 257).

3.5 The Targets

The targets of the propaganda of Iranian protesters were the same targets as many practitioners of political jiu jitsu: international actors, regime supporters, and others among the oppressed. In this case, all three targets appeared at first to be susceptible to the protesters' message.

Due to the Iranian regime's aggressive policies, such as its pursuit of a nuclear program and its support for militant groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, the Western world was highly likely to support a peaceful and democratic uprisin

accusations that it is a Western plot. Iranian dissidents thus hoped to keep the United States at arm's length from their movement, and wished only for Americans to "bear witness" (Dabashi 2011: 40) to their struggle. Little attempt appears to have been made by the protesters to court

3.10 Evaluation

The Western world reacted with immediate support for the Green Movement, although American support was wisely restrained (Dabashi 201

4.1 The Ideology and Purpose

The first and most obvious similarity between the activists of Burma's 2007 "Saffron Revolution" uprising and Iran's 2009 "Green Movement" uprising is that both were part of protest movements aimed at bringing democracy to an authoritarian state (Rogers 2008: 116, Rooz 2010: 113). Democracy is a complex concept and a difficult one to convey in depth through the medium of physical actions. However, Iranians in particular have done an impressive job of capturing this concept using their physical actions, demonstrating the versatility of the medium.

Many of the nonviolent actions of the Iranian activists, including the use of human chains, the carrying of green banners, and the "peace sign," were originally used to show support for Mousavi during the campaign for his election (Ollie 2009: 1; Gheytanchi 2010: 253; Sohrabi-Haghighat, 2010: 27). These Iranian physical actions originated in a celebration of the potential of democracy, and only when that potential was crushed were they used as symbols of rebellion. By using the same physical actions that they had used to promote democracy as symbols of defiance against the regime's authoritarianism, the Iranian activists were able to demonstrate both their opposition to the regime and their choice of replacement for it, all simply and nonverbally.

As previously established, the Burmese activists chose instead to base their symbols around the moral strength of their beliefs. Both the overturning of the alms bowls and the human chain in Burma were used to simultaneously demonstrate opposition to the ruling government, and support for their desired replacement of it—a system more in line with the sanctity and nonviolence of the monks. Furthermore, all of the Burmese actions were taken in the context of pro-democracy demonstrations, and with the pro-democracy goals of the movement clearly visible in the discourse of its leadership and in the protest signs of its activists. In such a context, physical actions that convey opposition to the regime can be seen as also conveying an implicit support for democracy.

Another clear similarity between the Burmese and Iranian activists—a similarity which is the basis of this project—is the use of nonviolence by both. However, as previously established, the inspiration for this nonviolence appears to be different in each case. Activists in both states were clearly inspired at least partially by the work of Gene Sharp and Robert Helvey (Arrow 2011, Beatty 2010, Revolution 2011, Sharp 2010: iv), and there is a case to be made for examining the actions of activists in both countries using a pragmatic nonviolence framework.

However, in the case of Burma's monks, the roots of their nonviolence are very clearly in their Buddhist faith (Kingston 2008, Rogers 2008), making their nonviolence distinctly principled, however pragmatic it may be as well. Aung San Suu Kyi's attribution of her beliefs and goals to her Buddhist beliefs re-enforce this view (Suu Kyi 1991). Meanwhile, the tendency for Iranian activists to cite practitioners of nonviolence from other cultures as inspiration shows that their nonviolence is not deeply rooted in their own cultural beliefs (Jahanbegloo 2009; Ahmari 2010: 173). Despite literature existing on the potential roots of nonviolence in the

4.4 The Propaganda Organization

A comparison of the organizational structure of Burmese and Iranian dissident groups would be better suited as the subject for a different, much longer, project. However, it is worth noting that in both Burma and Iran, activists formed the sort of grass-roots social structure that is typical of a protest uprising. While in both cases a semblance of leadership was present, the degree to which this leadership had control over the crowds on the streets has not been fully established, and was possibly minimal. With this in mind, the adoption of communication strategy could either have been passed down from the protest leadership, or adapted by street level activists and spread when adopted by other activists. Further research would be needed to explore the exact relationship between the leadership of these movements and the activist crowds regarding their strategic choices.

stretched up, the monks' grip on their alms bowl appears even more assertive and commanding, as it is held like a weapon, whereas the double "peace signs" of the Iranian protesters look more celebratory, and more elated. Most importantly, both physical actions demonstrate assertiveness and nonviolence simultaneously. Both show power assertion without appearing threatening to the observer. As such they dramatically embody the spirit of pragmatic nonviolence.

The use of human chains varies substantially between these two cases. In the Burmese case the human chain demonstrates a deep commitment to the activists' spiritual beliefs, whereas the human chain formed by the Iranian protesters seems to be indistinguishable from those of any protest worldwide (note the similar human chain formed by Martin Luther King and his fellow activists in appendix 1, Image ii). This may at least partially explain why the Burmese human chain was widely referenced in literature on the "Saffron Revolution" and why the Iranian human chain appears to have been largely overlooked (Fink 2009: 356, Larkin 2010: 123).

4.7 Special Techniques

Both the Burmese and Iranian activists appealed to predispositions in their targets, which as established is an essential element of both principled and pragmatic nonviolence—the need to gain sympathy through an appeal to the target's moral beliefs and negative conceptions of violence. Activists in both countries also relied on symbols of power, albeit unconventional ones.

alms bowls and the human chain around the monks, as physical actions, were widely dissected, analyzed and explained by the media, NGO analysts, and academic authors. What caused such an interest in physical actions during the Burmese protests, but not during the Iranian ones? This is likely because the meaning behind the Burmese physical action are deeper and more complex than those of the Iranian actions, and the images of the Burmese actions can therefore become more powerful when an explanation accompanies them. The Iranian actions were relatively straight-forward in their presentation, and drew the attention of photographers and news consumers for their eye-catching visual appeal more than for their symbolic meaning.

4.9 Regime Counterpropaganda

In both cases, the regime in power proved the strengths of the activists' communication strategy through their counterpropaganda—the Burmese government through attacking the nonviolence and legitimacy of the monks (Larkin 2010: 143) and the Iranian government through imitating the youth-friendly and group norm-establishing appeals of the Green Movement in their own rallies (Kurzman 2010: 16; Dabashi 2011: 161). Disturbingly, both regimes responded with their own, violent, propaganda of the deed, and used murder and injury to send a message to activists to stay off the streets.

4.10 Evaluation

In both the 2007 "Saffron Revolution" in Burma and in the 2009 "Green Movement" uprising in Iran, political jiu jitsu was initially successful. The nonviolence of activists—partially established and publicized through the use of physical actions in protests—was contrasted with the immediately violent response of both regimes. Sympathy for the cause of the activists led to immediate global condemnation of their regimes and a surge in the population of mass protests domestically. However, in both cases the regime saw no defections and no acquiescence. Instead of buckling under popular pressure, the regimes in both cases intensified their repression and violently crushed the uprisings.

While the violence that the regimes had used at first only angered the protesters and international actors through political jiu jitsu, the heightened violence that they used later proved to be overwhelming and sufficient to scare protesters off the streets. However, as the current thaw in BOkRkFW8+9F37OlRk3W9FK+Ken BnWO-RR6InREawAleste9OOrR3WK9+:4OoRkFW8+64:9OfR3V

PART 3

Conclusion

should also be creative with their communication strategies, and take advantage of the fact that propaganda is a versatile form of communication. Under political conditions in which their communication abilities are restricted, unconventional propaganda mediums, such as physical

would benefit from an increased look at unconventional forms of propaganda such as through

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Appendix 1
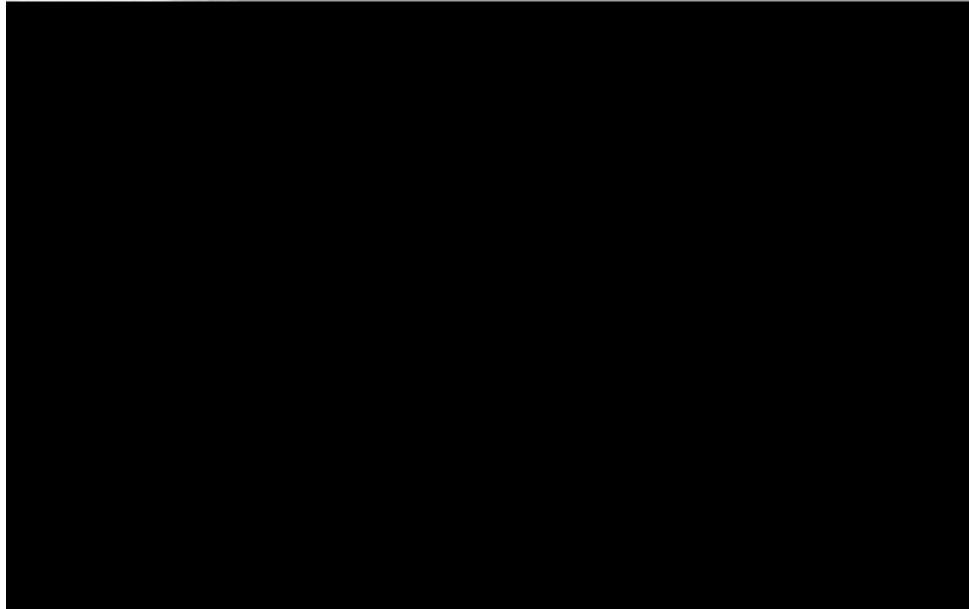
Image i: Ghandi Leading the Salt March (India)
Source: http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/article388858.ece

Image ii: Martin Luther King Leading a Civil Rights March (The United States)
Source: http://www.hopeandchange.net/2011/11/not-non-violence.html

Image iii: American Black Power Protest at 1968 Summer Olympics (Mexico City)
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carlos-Smith.jpg

Image iv: A Man Faces Down Chinese Tanks During the Tiananmen Square Protests (China)
Source: http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/03/behind-the-scenes-tank-man-of-tiananmen/
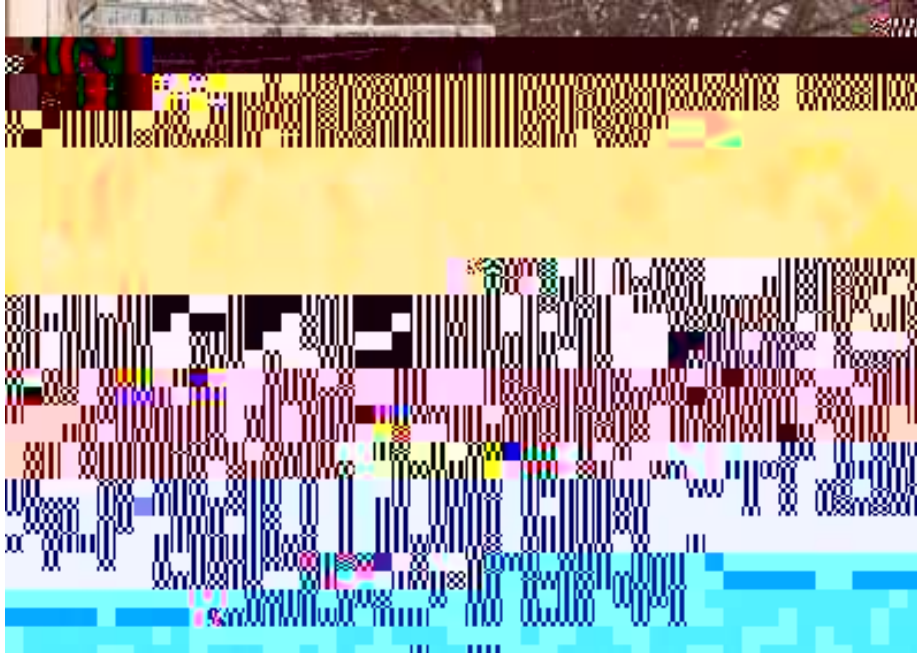
Image v: Otpor Activists Protest Milosevic's Rule (Serbia)
Source: http://www.rferl.org/content/exporting_nonviolent_revolution_eastern_europe_mideast/2316231.html

Image vi: FPM activist during pro-Opposition Demonstration before 2009 Election (Lebanon)
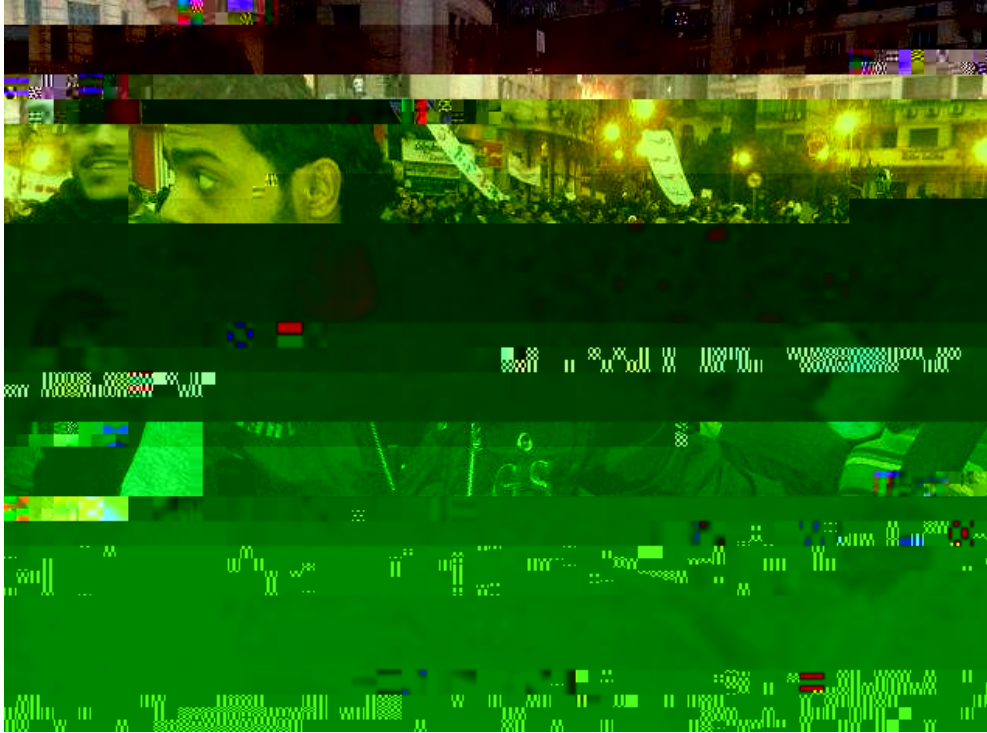Source: http://www.jadaoun.com/blog/2010/10/2520/bahrain-election-candidates-adopt-fpms-check-mark/

Image vii: Coptic Christians Protecting Praying Muslims in Tahrir Square Protest (Egypt)
Source: http://www.thisis50.com/forum/topics/muslims-protect-optic?xg_source=activity

Appendix 2

JOWETT AND O'DONNELL'S 10-STEP PROCESS FOR PROPAGANDA ANALYSIS

i: "The Ideology and Purpose of the Propaganda Campaign" (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006: 270)

beliefs and dispositions, relying on sources with pre-established credibility and using visual symbols of power (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006: 279-282).

viii: "Audience Reaction to Various Techniques" (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006: 270)

In the absence of the availability of opinion polls and elections, audience reaction to propaganda techniques can be partially measured through resulting behaviour changes in the target and tf a

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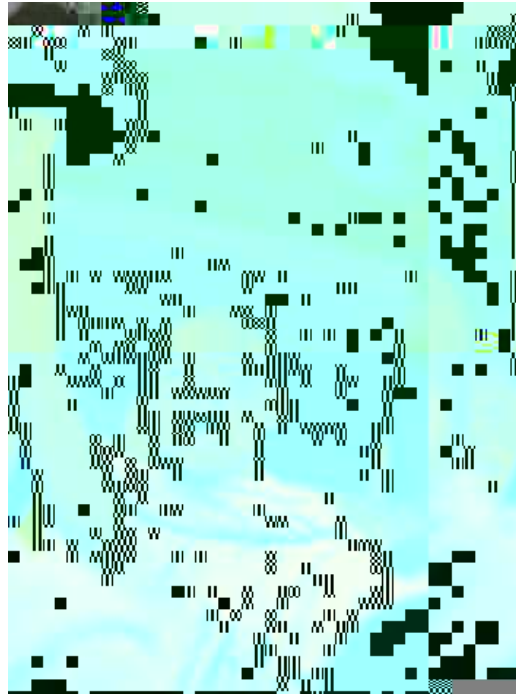
Appendix 3

Image 1: Burmese monk overturns alms bowl with one hand
Source: Burma Voices
http://burmavoices.com/2010/12/u-zawana-50-when-the-burmese-people-and-the-international-community-take-real-action-change-can-come/

Image 2: Burmese monk overturns alms bowl with two hands
Source: Reuters
http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/09/25/myanmar-idUSB58859920070925

Image 3: Burmese activists form human chain around protesting monks
Source: Flickr
http://www.flickr.com/photos/naingankyatha/14436099

Image 7: Iranian men form a human chain to lead a protest march near Tehran University
Source: The New York Times
http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/07/latest-updates-on-new-protests-in-iran/