

## **The Impact of Violent and Nonviolent Action on Constructed Realities and Conflict**

by Spencer Graves

### **Abstract**

When people are killed and property destroyed, the apparent perpetrators often make enemies. This and related observations are used in this article to describe new conceptual tools to help political and military leaders as well as concerned individuals distinguish between activity and productivity by (1) identifying likely short- and long-term consequences of alternative responses to conflict and (2) evaluating the relative frequency with which each has occurred. These tools describe how violent and nonviolent actions impact (a) group identification, (b) people's willingness to listen to the views of others, and (c) their

constructed realities. This theory helps explain why major violent revolutions and independence struggles have often replaced one brutal repressive regime with another, while nonviolent revolutions have advanced freedom and democracy.

*Key words and phrases:* Violent and nonviolent revolutions and independence struggles. The evolution of group identity during conflict. Long-term effectiveness of violence.

## **Introduction**

This article outlines a new theory of conflict that attempts to connect military and police sciences with peace and nonviolence research, social psychology, and political science. The results may help political and military leaders

as well as concerned individuals better evaluate the likely evolution of conflict in reaction to alternative strategies. If people can more realistically assess the likely consequences of alternative courses of action with varying degrees of violence and nonviolence, they will more likely pursue alternatives that increase the chances of better outcomes for themselves and others. This in turn can provide a partial antidote to a phenomenon described by Dunnigan and Martel: most wars last longer, cost more and produce fewer positive results than even the leaders on the officially winning side seem to have expected at the outset.<sup>1</sup>

*How We Construct Our Realities:* Central to this theory is the idea of constructed realities: Each person constructs his or her own system for understanding the world. Even the words we use sometimes mean different things to different people or to the same person at different

times. In productive relationships, these differences are negligible. In conflict situations, these differences in understanding are shaped and accentuated by social processes, often making them the primary drivers in escalating and perpetuating conflict.

Group identification is part of this. Each individual is simultaneously a member of many different groups, male or female, young or old, racial, religious, etc. Time and observations bring changes in the levels of attachment to or distinction from different groups felt by each individual. A major theme of this essay is that changes in individual group identification are driven in part by two factors: (a) apparently inappropriate violence and (b) people's willingness to expose themselves to suffering as part of nonviolent actions. Examples are given and implications discussed.

*Lessons for Government, Military and Civil Groups:*

A better understanding of these phenomena can help individuals and groups, including political and military leaders, more effectively pursue personal and societal objectives. The police and military sciences have focused primarily on the efficient application of force with shockingly little consideration of its long-term effectiveness in supporting important societal objectives. Security forces rarely seem to understand how their violence often manufactures support for the opposition.<sup>2</sup>

This analysis also helps us understand how (a) nonviolent protesters often attract support in the process of exposing themselves to potential violence, and (b) apparent mistreatment of nonviolent protesters often erodes support for established governments. These phenomena can be observed in the nonviolent actions that toppled

governments in the Philippines,<sup>3</sup> Chile,<sup>4</sup> Yugoslavia,<sup>5</sup> and the former Soviet Bloc,<sup>6</sup> almost without firing a shot.

*Five Specific Concerns Regarding the Popular American Historical Narrative:* This discussion begins by raising five specific concerns about the dominant narrative in the US of the founding of democracy. Each is considered individually after a discussion of constructed reality. The article concludes with suggestions for future research and comments on the importance of improving human understanding of these phenomena.

## **The Founding Myth<sup>7</sup> of Democracy**

This essay considers five concerns regarding the dominant claim that the American Revolutionary War brought freedom and democracy to the 13 rebellious colonies that formed the brand new United States of

America. First, major violent events such as violent independence struggles and revolutions seem in the past to have more often had a negligible or even negative impact on freedom. The dominant narrative of the American Revolution makes it virtually unique in human history from this perspective.

Second, a careful review of history suggests that the 13 colonies that rebelled around 1776 had the most advanced democratic cultures in the British Empire, and perhaps the world, at the time, and the rebellion occurred because the King and Parliament attempted to nullify this 150-year tradition of colonial self-government. The American revolutionary struggle itself achieved only modest advances for freedom and democracy, and most of those might more appropriately be attributed to nonviolent

actions that were roughly concurrent with the revolutionary war.

Third, the social construction of news and history is highly stylized, often differing dramatically between different parties to conflict, and tends to overlook aspects of events that may conflict with the dominant theories of how things work. In particular, nonviolent action is poorly understood and usually underreported.

Fourth, even if the dominant narrative of the American Revolution is accurate, it is dangerous because it encourages people to use violence when nonviolent approaches might more likely produce better results with lower risks. While the outcome of any course of action cannot be predicted with certainty, appropriate research can provide better models to help all parties more accurately identify and evaluate likely outcomes of alternative



policies. This in turn can increase the chances for win-win solutions.

Finally, if civil society is the primary contributor to the expansion and consolidation of democracy, as suggested by recent research, then attempts to emulate or uncritically glorify the American Revolutionary war actually threaten democracy itself.

No single event can be understood in isolation; all are interpreted through the lens of people's understanding (theories) of how things work. Inadequate theories sometimes push people to do stupid things. Conversely, a sensible interpretation of anything requires reference to an adequate theory, preferably one tested in relation to many different events sharing some features but differing in others. The theory tells us what to consider and how to evaluate observations in order to understand and predict

differences in outcomes. The next section outlines a general theory of the impact of violent and nonviolent action on (a) group identification, (b) people's willingness to listen to opposing views, and (c) more generally, the personal reality constructed by each individual. These three effects influence the evolution of conflict. This general theory is then applied to the discussion of the previously mentioned five concerns about the dominant narrative of the American Revolution.

## **Constructed Realities, Violence, Nonviolence and Conflict**

Conflict is like fable of the blind men describing an elephant.<sup>8</sup> When the others' comments so contradict what they perceive, they are sure that the others are lying. Many believe the others are evil, irrational, pathological liars,<sup>9</sup>

though some may assume that most members of the opposition are basically good but deluded by evil leaders. In either case the people on “our” side are generally good, wise, and just or at least not as deluded and foolish as the opposition. People’s distrust of others is often reflected in behaviors that induce others to reciprocate that distrust. This sometimes leads to escalating “defensive” preparations by both sides, culminating in a preemptive strike by one side that fears they might not survive a preemptive strike by the other.<sup>10</sup>

An alternative perspective is that when another’s behavior appears irrational, the observer does not understand the other’s rationale. This in turn can lead people to seek to understand the other in ways that build trust and reduce tensions.

*Different Aspects of Constructed Realities and Conflict:* Each person constructs his or her own system for interpreting events. This includes (a) concepts of right and wrong, (b) judgments regarding which behaviors are appropriate or inappropriate under which circumstances, (c) choices regarding what types and sources of information are credible, and (d) personal commitments to spirituality and faith as well as (e) interpretations of physical phenomena more easily shared between religious groups. It also includes (f) determinations of which markers classify people into different groups and (g) variations in the levels of attachment to and distance from numerous groups. This constructed reality<sup>11</sup> is as unique as a fingerprint, but unlike a fingerprint it evolves over time in response to experiences.

People's reaction to conflict, including the evolution of their constructed realities, depends in part on the nature of the conflict. In particular, people who feel *threatened* look for ways to protect themselves. A natural response is to increase contacts with others who seem to share the perception of the threat, building with them a common group identity and unity of purpose in response to the threat. For example, police and military are generally more cohesive under fire.<sup>12</sup> As external threats decline, group cohesion also tends to decline. Many individuals become more receptive to a greater variety of information, and previously suppressed divisive issues are more likely to emerge.

One of many potentially divisive issues might be the treatment of nonviolent non-cooperators. Hard-liners may insist that the protesters have no grounds for complaints.

Any alleged mistreatment is deemed justifiable or at least unfortunate but not requiring a change in policy. In such situations, some group members often question the judgment of the hard liners, moderating their support and occasionally joining the protesters.<sup>13</sup>

In particular, soldiers confronted with nonviolent protesters tend to kill fewer people than when the soldiers are personally threatened.<sup>14</sup> In Iran in 1979, a soldier ordered to shoot into a crowd of nonviolent demonstrators “killed his commanding officer, and turned the gun on himself”; the Shah fled, and Iran had a new government.<sup>15</sup>

In 1986 in the Philippines, thousands of civilians blocked the streets of Manila, preventing troops still officially loyal to President Marcos from attacking rebels who refused to support Marcos’ fraudulent vote count. “[O]ne of Marcos’s officers complained, ‘They’re psyching our troops, and

we're all falling down without a shot being fired.'”<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, the Palestinian writer Khalil Shikaki noted that Palestinian support for violence declined “from 57% in November 1994, to 46% in February 1995, to 33% a month later, and to 21% in March 1996 -- all dates of major suicide bombings by members of Hamas or Islamic Jihad”.<sup>17</sup>

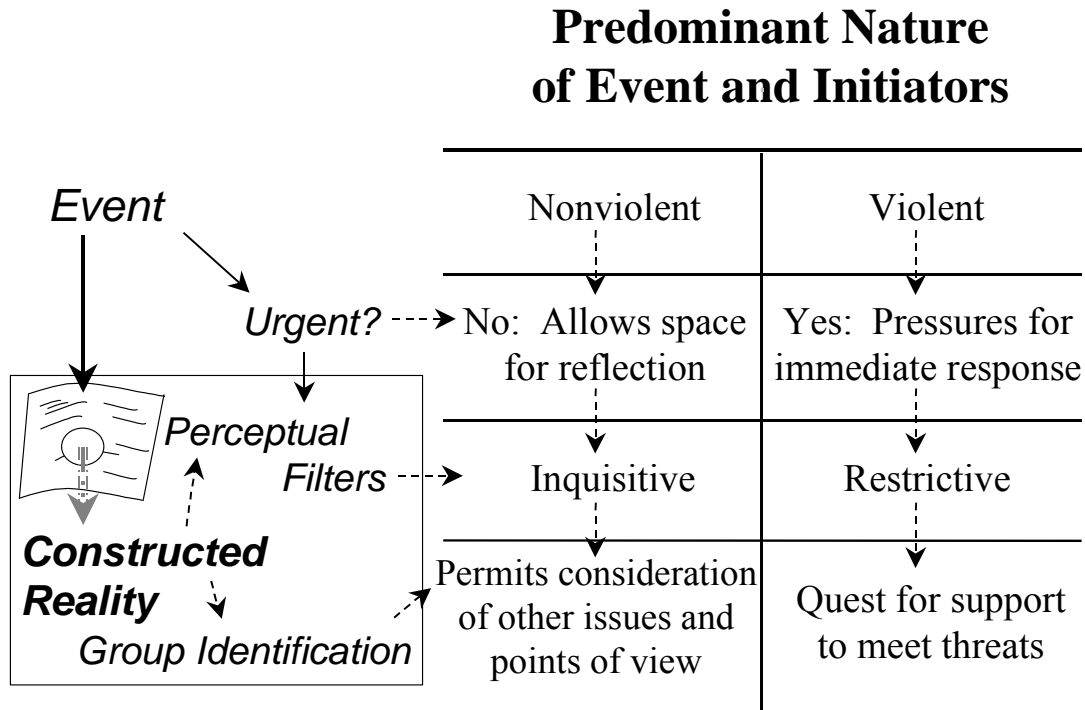
Sharp observed, “In the [nonviolent] Indian struggle for independence ..., probably not more than eight thousand died directly or indirectly as a result of shootings and other injuries”. This is well under a hundredth of one percent of the Indian population in 30 years of mostly nonviolent struggle. Meanwhile, in the 7-year French-Algerian War, 1955-1962, “the number of Algerian dead [was estimated] by some as high as nearly a million out of a population only ten times that size.”<sup>18</sup>

Some accounts of the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989 suggest that the protest was broken only after soldiers were forced to defend themselves against attacks by common citizens armed with knives and hunting rifles.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, around 1749 during the Seven Years' War (called the French and Indian war in the US), a contemporary wrote that the French menace kept the “the English colonists huddled around his Britannic Majesty to avail themselves of his navy and army”, and without that threat, the Americans might have broken at that time the ties that bound them to Great Britain.<sup>20</sup>

*A Systems' Perspective:* Figure 1 outlines how group identity evolves when confronted with violent and nonviolent action. Violence often seems to require an immediate response and usually reduces people's willingness to listen to alternative perspectives. In almost



any sustained violent conflict, few on either side seem to understand what motivates the others. The opponents are assumed to be irrational or to have unacceptable demands.



**Figure 1. Violence and Nonviolence Shapes Constructed Realities<sup>21</sup>**

Only rarely do people make serious attempts to check their assumptions about the opposition. People who suggest that their opponents might have legitimate reasons

for their actions are often accused of being naive or irrational or of siding with the enemy.

Journalism is both a victim and a driver in this destructive process. Communications media that are too balanced risk losing their following. Individual journalists can be punished in many ways. For instance, television personality Phil Donahue was dismissed in February 2003 in the prelude to the Second Persian Gulf War reportedly for projecting a “difficult public face for NBC in time of war.”<sup>22</sup> Journalists attempting direct coverage of conflicts have often been murdered with their murders only rarely seriously investigated.<sup>23</sup> Foreign journalists have been expelled or denied entry.<sup>24</sup>

Conversely, nonviolent action reduces the need for an immediate response, lessens the need for group cohesion, and creates emotional space that increases people’s

willingness to consider the concerns of nonviolent actors. Nonviolent protests may never get the same attention in the media as violence. However, when people learn of nonviolent actions, they are more likely to consider the concerns of the protesters. This does not happen all at once or uniformly across individuals: Those who feel a kinship with the protesters are more likely to change relevant parts of their constructed realities. Groups confronted by nonviolent actions tend to fragment.

*Summary:* The model of Figure 1 seems to provide a more detailed description than previously available of mechanisms driving two phenomena described by Sharp:

1. Violence tends to drive away potential supporters, while nonviolent action tends to attract support.<sup>25</sup>
2. Violence tends to concentrate power, while nonviolent action tends to diffuse it.<sup>26</sup>

These two rules appear as logical consequences of Figure 1.

Each side in a conflict has a right and an obligation to protect itself. Tragically, allegedly defensive violence has often generated similarly violent responses in a self-perpetuating cycle.<sup>27</sup> In a world of imperfect information, it is impossible to predict precisely the short- and long-term consequences of any policy. While perfect prediction seems impossible, the research discussed in this essay suggests that much can be learned from careful study of past and on-going conflicts. Such studies could be enormously valuable in helping political and military leaders and concerned individuals decide what information to collect and how to use it to better assess the likely consequences of alternative responses to conflict.

The possibilities in this regard are illustrated by how the Sandinista government of Nicaragua in the 1980s

approached the Miskito Indians. The Sandinistas were fighting what they believed to be a mercenary army supported by the US. They were surprised to see among their opposition Miskito Indians, whom they had considered allies. To better understand the loss of these allies, the Sandinistas conducted a series of town meetings in the predominantly Miskito Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua. Both sides benefited: (1) Miskitos gained more control over their lives after government leaders publicly acknowledged mistakes and negotiated changes in governance. (2) The government gained because these changes combined with an amnesty program essentially eliminated Miskito collaboration with the “Contra” enemies. This case study provides a vision of how competing groups can turn armed conflict into constructive cooperation.<sup>28</sup>

Conflicts are often exacerbated by the natural human tendency for overconfidence in the veracity of our own beliefs. This was described by the great 1930s-era comedian Will Rogers when he said, “It’s not what we don’t know that gives us trouble, it’s what we know that ain’t so.” This phenomenon has been documented in experiments with individuals.<sup>29</sup> In groups, this overconfidence can be amplified in a process called “groupthink”, wherein group members hesitate to express reservations about a proposed course of action because they don’t want to be disagreeable.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, research has shown that groups that support a more questioning environment tend to make better decisions but feel less comfortable about them than more internally cohesive groups.<sup>31</sup>

In situations involving violence, people raising questions are often accused of lacking patriotism and siding with the enemy. Inadequate consideration of alternatives by people on all sides to a conflict often seems to contribute to cycles of violence and the common tendency of wars to expand beyond the initial participants.<sup>32</sup>

In sum, group identity is often forged in conflict. Most violent events will be considered necessary by some and outrageous by others. Many in the latter group may (a) distance themselves from the apparent perpetrators and (b) attempt to support the victims.

## **1. Independence and Revolution**

This section will try to tie the mechanistic theory of the previous section to a macro level analysis of major revolutions and independence struggles in world history.

This macro analysis builds on the work of Freedom House, which every year since 1973 has scored different nations around the world on political rights and civil liberties. The Freedom House survey team assigns between 0 and 4 raw points on each of eight scales for political rights and fourteen scales for civil liberties. The totals are then converted to numbers ranging from 1 = free to 7 = not free.<sup>33</sup> Comparisons of scores before and after major revolutions and independence struggles provide a partial answer to the question of how violence and nonviolence in previous revolutions and independence struggles have impacted freedom.

This analysis is summarized in Figure 2 and the Appendix. It focuses on several of the best-known revolutions and independence struggles in the last quarter millennium. The numbers on the vertical axis in Figure 2



represent the improvement in freedom scores from before to after the events. For example, the upper left corner of the figure lists “East Germany, 1989”. The 1987-88 Freedom House report, the year before the Berlin Wall was dismantled, gave East Germany a score of 7 for political rights and 6 for civil liberties, while the 1990-91 report assigned scores of 1 for political rights and 2 for civil liberties to the reunited Germany. This represents an improvement of  $5 = [(7+6)/2] - [(1+2)/2]$  steps on the Freedom House scale from before to after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This rationale was used to describe “East Germany, 1989” as experiencing an improvement of 5 Freedom House steps in Figure 2.



(\*) Freedom House scores for events since 1973; author's assessment for previous events; see the text and Appendix 1.

**Figure 2. Impact of Violence and Nonviolence on Freedom and Democracy**

As indicated in the left-hand column of Figure 2, this methodology was applied to twelve well-known nonviolent struggles of the late twentieth century from the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 through the “people power” revolution in the Philippines of 1986 and the collapse of the

Soviet Bloc in 1989-91 (almost without firing a shot) to the continuing Burmese tragedy.<sup>34</sup>

For comparison, the right-hand column lists some of the better-known violent revolutions in world history: the French, Russian, Chinese, and Cuban revolutions, the Vietnamese independence struggle, the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua, and the 1973 Coup d'Etat in Chile. The first Freedom House report appeared in 1973, a few months before Chile's Sept. 11 coup. That report gave Chile scores of 1 for political rights and 2 for civil liberties; the report after the coup gave Chile scores of 7 and 5, respectively, for a net change of (-4.5).

The other violent revolutions considered here began before Freedom House started publishing reports using this scoring system.<sup>35</sup> Each of these revolutions doubtless has supporters who insist that their favorite revolution(s)

advanced freedom and democracy. Each reader is free to apply this or a similar methodology using the Freedom House scoring system or any alternative. I felt, correctly or incorrectly, that if the Freedom House experts were to apply their methodology to the situations before and after each of the revolutions listed, they likely would have scored them all as 7 and 7 for political rights and civil liberties. Other researchers would doubtless report slightly different evaluations from those reported here, but I would not expect substantive change in the general image and obvious conclusions.

The message from the right-hand column is hardly novel. A 1963 book by Milton Eisenhower included a chapter entitled, “History sadly reveals that those who grasp freedom with violence too often crush it.” Eisenhower’s message is also consistent with Krejčí’s

theory of revolutions and with recent research on civil society discussed below.<sup>36</sup>

Zimbabwe and South Africa provide interesting examples in this regard. Freedom scores are not available for 1960, the year before the first attempts at armed struggle in Zimbabwe, but they might be worse than the 3.5 (partly free) they received for 1980-81, after the official end of the conflict. If so, Zimbabwe would appear in the currently empty upper right quadrant. Unfortunately, Zimbabwe's scores have since declined gradually, reaching 6.5 (not free) by the 2004-05 report; in this case it took more than a year to crush the freedom so violently grasped.<sup>37</sup>

South Africa by contrast achieved "majority rule" in 1993-94 with a primarily nonviolent campaign; their immediate post-transition score of 2.5 (free) improved to

1.5 (freer) the following year and remained there at least until the 2003-04 report. These and other former colonies are not listed here because their struggles began before Freedom House started publishing these scores, and I am not prepared to assign scores at this time.<sup>38</sup>

Violence made no substantive contribution to freedom in any of the cases considered here in terms of the Freedom House scoring system. By contrast, advances for freedom and democracy have been achieved through predominantly nonviolent means. This seems to support Sharp's second observation discussed above that violence tends to concentrate power while nonviolent action tends to diffuse it.

Conspicuous by its absence from Figure 2 is the American Revolution. The dominant narrative of the founding of American democracy would place it in the

currently vacant upper right corner. However, this image seems to conflict with the general thrust of historical research available today, which suggests that the rebellious colonies had the most open, democratic system in the British Empire and perhaps the world before the Revolution.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the independence struggle might be better understood as two events: a predominantly nonviolent resistance that began in 1765 and the Revolutionary war from 1775 to 1783.<sup>40</sup>

If the events summarized in Figure 2 were an independent random sample from some population, those results could be used to predict with quantifiable imprecision the probability of success using violence or nonviolence in pursuit of similar objectives. This kind of exercise could help everyone, from people who feel oppressed to political and military leaders, evaluate

alternative actions. The events identified here represent 100% of the events of their type for which I could obtain adequate information with a reasonable effort. This should make them representative of some reasonable class of conflicts.

A bigger concern with such computations is the lack of statistical independence between events. For the purpose of illustration, we can deal with this by treating the collapse of the Iron Curtain as one event and counting the Philippine and Korean struggles as one. This would give odds of 4 to 2 (Soviet bloc, Chile, Argentina and Asia 1986-87 vs. Iran and Burma) of advancing freedom by nonviolent methods similar to those used in these cases. This provides an estimated 67% chance of advancing freedom with an approximate 95% confidence interval of (26%, 92%).<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the estimated probability of



success using violence is 0 with a 95% upper confidence bound of 35% based on a sample with 0 successes in 7 trials.

The focus here is on not the exact numbers but the methodology: People considering alternative responses to conflict are encouraged to apply a similar methodology to historical events they believe to be roughly comparable to their situation and to the alternative actions they are contemplating. This exercise can elevate the debate from emotional demands that “We must defend ourselves” to a search for historically relevant precedents to support a more informed choice of strategies and tactics.

Future research might reclassify some of the events listed in Figure 2 and / or find cases to occupy the currently empty upper right corner.<sup>42</sup> More generally, regardless of the particular events considered in Figure 2, it seems likely

that a crudely similar methodology would produce valuable insights into what individuals, nations, and non-governmental organizations can do to better promote freedom, democracy and world peace, as discussed in the two final sections of this article.

## **2. Violence and Nonviolence in the American Revolution**

John Adams, a key leader of the American Revolution and the second President of the US, said, “The revolution was in the minds of the people, and in the union of the colonies, both of which were accomplished before hostilities commenced.” Recent research reviewed the evidence available regarding the level of freedom available during 1584-1800 in the 13 colonies that declared independence in 1776, making four main points:<sup>43</sup>

(1) *Most of the advances for freedom and democracy* popularly attributed to the American Revolution appear to have *developed earlier* as British colonists in America experimented successfully with concepts of governance that could not be similarly tested in England. Early British colonies failed until they adopted relatively democratic governance. The “united States of America” that declared independence in 1776 had a democratic tradition that had evolved and grown over the previous 150 years. Before the Revolution, the percent of adult white males who could vote ranged from perhaps 40% in some locations to 80% in others averaging probably less than 60%,<sup>44</sup> compared to perhaps 5% in Britain proper.<sup>45</sup> A significant contributor to this trend was the growth of newspapers. An important step in limiting the power of government was the acquittal

in 1735 of John Peter Zenger, charged with publishing “seditious libels” in his *New York Weekly Journal*.<sup>46</sup>

(2) The *advances* for democracy during the Revolution were largely achieved nonviolently as colonists worked out details of how they would replace services previously provided by Royal appointees, adopting written constitutions to replace their colonial charters and including bills of rights to ensure the continuation of limited government dating from the Magna Carta of 1215 and the English Bill of Rights of 1689.<sup>47</sup> The rebellion was triggered by the Coercive Acts of 1774, which closed the port of Boston and made all major public officials in Massachusetts subject to Royal appointment in London; many in the 13 colonies that rebelled interpreted this as an unacceptable increase in political corruption that threatened their economic futures.<sup>48</sup>

(3) *Violence* such as the destruction of property in the Stamp Act riots and Boston Tea Party *pushed the King and Parliament to convert a primarily nonviolent political struggle into a war* and stiffened opposition to the rebellion throughout the rest of the British Empire. Violence by both sides drove the evolution of group identities, consistent with the discussion with Figure 1 above.<sup>49</sup>

(4) *If the colonists had maintained a nonviolent discipline, they might have created bigger problems for leading politicians in Britain and elsewhere with an overall greater advance for freedom and democracy.*<sup>50</sup>

This is not a criticism of Washington and the others who achieved US independence; on balance, their accomplishments were exceptional when compared with similar struggles prior to the twentieth century experience with nonviolence. However, past and current US foreign

policy rests on the implicit assumption that most past uses of force by the US government have been appropriate under the circumstances AND effective in protecting freedom and democracy. The best available research in history, human behavior and political science suggests that this standard wisdom may be (a) inconsistent with the available evidence and (b) even dangerous if it encourages people to support violence in situations where nonviolent alternatives might on average produce better results at lower risk.

How can we compare the American Revolution with the violent and nonviolent events summarized in Figure 2? More definitive analyses would require more careful development of theory with concepts more carefully defined and tested in a variety of situations. If the obvious conclusions from Figure 2 are substantially correct, then

such a theory combined with the record of events from 1765 - 1783 suggests that a campaign more carefully committed to nonviolent noncooperation might have contributed more to freedom and democracy at substantially lower risks than the revolutionary war.

### **3. The Social Construction of War, Truth, and History**

The blind men's descriptions of an elephant seem similar to standard historical accounts of conflict.<sup>51</sup> For example, Uri Avnery, a leading Israeli peace activist said: "The Zionist historical version and the Palestinian historical version contradict each other entirely, both in the general picture and almost every detail." There was friction between Jews and Palestinians almost from the beginning of the contemporary Zionist migration into that region in the late nineteenth century, but the situation was

not always as polarized as it is today. Pappé documented numerous collaborative efforts between Jews and Palestinians prior to the emergence of the modern state of Israel, e.g., “inter racial” commercial partnerships and collaboration for better wages and working conditions.<sup>52</sup>

An activity that may help reduce conflict is the preparation of a common history. For example, the editors of the *Illustrated History of Europe* claim that it is the first truly European history. Previously, the French had their history of Europe, which was different from the German history of Europe, both of which were different from the English, Danish, Spanish, Italian, Greek, etc. In the 1980s, a European businessman identified this lack of a common history as an obstacle to the establishment of a strong European identity and to effective collaboration on many issues. To overcome this obstacle, he organized a team of



leading historians from all across Europe who produced this book.<sup>53</sup>

These differences in historical interpretations of events are reflected in the news, the “first draft of history”.<sup>54</sup> The separate identities of different groups are often maintained and accentuated by separate news services. In conflict, each side often describes its actions as necessary responses to the evil committed by the other. Few people eagerly accept criticism. Most prefer news more sympathetic to their concerns, often avoiding favorable coverage of the opposition. This effect is generally magnified if the different groups speak different languages and have only occasional personal contact. For example, a recent Frontline report on Saudi Arabia note that, “while CNN would be showing the American audience an American reporter riding in an Israeli tank, Al Jazeera would be

showing an Arab audience Palestinian kids being chased or beaten up by Israeli soldier.”<sup>55</sup> Systematic differences in media content both drive and are driven by conflict.

These effects are apparent on a smaller scale in societal understanding of crime. Research has found zero correlation between changes in crime rates and popular perceptions thereof. The latter is largely a creation of biases in the mainstream news media, often driven by media feeding frenzies attempting to sell news by creating themes and patterns that rarely have substance.<sup>56</sup>

These same processes produce greater distortions in times of war. Knightly quoted a US military public relations officer stating that it is appropriate to lie as long as the truth is unlikely to be exposed until the news spotlight shifts elsewhere.<sup>57</sup> Honest journalists are often muzzled, fired, imprisoned or killed, as documented with

Figure 1 above. In 2002-2003, the US mainstream news media rarely raised questions about the Bush administration's reports of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. In contrast, the European media, less directly involved, reported both the claims by the US government and assertions by independent experts questioning the veracity of the alleged evidence. "If Americans and foreigners regard Iraq and its aftermath differently, it is [because] Americans rely on different information ... because the US media by and large report international affairs from the perspective of Washington while foreign media do not."<sup>58</sup>

It is no secret that the news media sometimes do more than just report events (with biases in the selection of what's fit to print and in the adjectives used to describe similar actions by "us" vs. "them"). For example, the

rallying cry of “Remember the Maine” that pushed the US into the Spanish-American War of 1898 was an artistic interpretation of events for which little substantive evidence has been found, apparently driven by a circulation war between the Hearst and Gannett newspaper chains.<sup>59</sup>

Histories on average may not be as biased as the daily news, but they often “attempt to create a sense of national history that would justify the [horrible losses of war] and develop a sense of nationhood”, as Shaffer wrote in his analysis of “The Politics of History”.<sup>60</sup> Raphael described thirteen “founding myths” of the American Revolution, stories that were invented by historians long after the events.<sup>61</sup>

In sum, conflict is often driven by half-truths and blatant lies in news and history. Cross-cultural collaborations in preparing shared narratives of their

common history and current events might facilitate conflict resolution.

#### **4. Emulating the Wrong Model**

People's understanding of history helps define their perceptions of the apparently required response to certain situations. Fortunately, when we are provided with better models, we are sometimes capable of learning.

For example, the Albanian Kosovars had a centuries-old tradition of blood feud: If a family member was killed, it was just "common sense" that the family had to protect itself, e.g., by the son or brother of the deceased taking the life of one or more of the apparent perpetrators. This long-standing cycle of violence was broken in 1990 by a campaign inspired in part by the mostly nonviolent collapse of the Soviet Bloc. It was replaced by a campaign that

included nonviolent responses of various kinds to the provocations of Milosovic's government, e.g. closing many Albanian schools, firing Albanians from government jobs, official harassment, intimidation, and brutality.

After years of this kind of mistreatment, in late 1997 Albanian youths started to leave the nonviolent movement that had lost its creative drive and join the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerilla movement. The KLA violence then was used by Milosovic and others to justify their campaign of "ethnic cleansing", which finally generated substantial international attention and military intervention by the US and NATO. Clark wrote, "had it not been for the years of nonviolence, hardly any government would have blinked at their slaughter / 'pacification'."62

Most national defense policies and tactical decisions in independence struggles around the world seem to assume that violence is necessary in many situations. New, potentially more effective policies might be built on an empirically validated theory describing how violent and nonviolent actions impact (in probabilistic terms) the duration, cost, and contributions to public policy objectives. Such a theory may help simplify the task of understanding and predicting the likely short- and long-term consequences of alternative actions. This, in turn, might help people approach conflict more effectively.

## **5. Violence, Civil Society, and Democracy**

Recent political science research has emphasized the importance of civil society to the growth and consolidation of democracy, illustrated by Vaclav Havel's famous 1979

essay, “The Power of the Powerless”. His subsequent election as the first President of post-Soviet Czechoslovakia and then of the Czech Republic attests to his influence.

Havel illustrated his discussion with a greengrocer who “places in his window, among the onions and carrots, the slogan, ‘Workers of the World, Unite!’” He places that sign in his display, because if he doesn’t, he might lose his job, his children might be excluded from better schools, etc.

The act seems innocent, but combined with millions of similar acts, it helps sustain a corrupt system. If we simply “live within the truth”, Havel insisted, the corrupt system might unravel. “Demanding that the laws be upheld ... threatens the whole mendacious structure at its point of maximum mendacity.” As Havel suggested, the effectiveness of civil disobedience often rests on exposing



the lies embedded in the gap between rhetoric and reality, e.g., when police in the US in the 1960s beat African Americans for peaceably assembling or attempting to register to vote.

Havel counseled nonviolence, noting that “the fundamental lines of conflict run right through each person, [and therefore] no attempt at revolt could even hope to set up a minimum of resonance in the rest of society.” Moreover,<sup>63</sup> “a future secured by violence might actually be worse than what exists now [in the “post-totalitarian” Soviet Eastern Europe of the 1970s]; in other words, a future secured by violence would be fatally stigmatized by the very means used to secure it.”

Gradually, millions of Eastern Europeans stopped following nonsense orders from the Communist Party. When a critical mass had been reached, people gathered

nonviolently in the streets demanding change, and the Soviet system collapsed.

The concepts and actuality of freedom and democracy have grown over time by a series of modest step with some reversals, apparently driven by the growth of civil society. Diamond says, “*Civil society is the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules.* It is distinct from ‘society’ in general in that *it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere* to express their interests, passions, preferences, and ideas, to exchange information, to achieve collective goals, to make demands on the state, ... and to hold state officials accountable. Civil society is an intermediary phenomenon, standing between the private sphere and the state. Thus, it excludes parochial society:

individual and family life and inward-looking group activity (recreation, entertainment, religious worship, spirituality); and it excludes economic society ... . Similarly, civil society is distinct from political society”. In civil society, people learn to agree to disagree agreeably and act together to achieve common objectives.<sup>64</sup>

The difference between uncivil and civil society (and an illustration of Havel’s claim that “a future secured by violence might actually be worse”) can be seen in seventeenth century England: The (violent) English Civil War of 1642-49 replaced one tyranny with another, while the (nonviolent) “Glorious Revolution” produced the English Bill of Rights of 1689.<sup>65</sup>

Schell reports that the “storming of the Bastille in 1789” that began the French Revolution was in fact not a violent capture but a relatively peaceful negotiation at the

end of which “the governor of the fortress turned it over to an angry crowd.” In February 1917, during large, nonviolent protests against the First World War and the Romanov dynasty, the soldiers refused to act against the demonstrators, and Czar Nicholas II abdicated.<sup>66</sup> Apparently, neither the French nor the Russian revolutionary leaders had adequate experience with civil society, and so turned to violence.

As one not quite trivial example of this, Revauger described how the American Free Masons grew from 100 to 200 lodges (3,000 members) during their Revolution. A few years later in revolutionary France, they collapsed from 650 lodges (35,000 members) to 3. The rituals of Free Masonry provide certain training in democratic governance and civil discourse. In America, “the loyalists little by little left the lodges as they left revolutionary America”, but the

lodges apparently retained their civility. In Revolutionary France, however, the fault lines ran much more clearly through each lodge, pitting bourgeois and aristocratic members against each other and destroying lodges.<sup>67</sup> A more careful study of these events might improve our understanding of the social psychological and political processes outlined with Figure 1.

Havel claimed that the written law was virtually the same on both sides of the Iron Curtain: The difference lay in civil society, the willingness of governmental officials to be bound by the law and the willingness of the populous to accept official lawlessness. The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789 were only words on paper until gradually brought to life by the work of Tocqueville and others.<sup>68</sup>

When citizens and governmental officials cannot agree to disagree agreeably, the results often include political turmoil and economic stagnation, even waves of state terror, initiated as leaders of successful violent revolutions attempt to consolidate their power by liquidating their opposition, often sacrificing the ostensible goals of the revolution in the process, as described by Krejčí.<sup>69</sup> The American Revolution largely avoided this, apparently because the revolutionaries sustained a commitment to civil discourse embedded in the local democratic culture that had evolved and grown over the previous 150 years.

In brief, violence itself appears to threaten civil society and thereby democracy itself.

## **Implications for Public Policy and Future Research**

There is a need for simple tools that would help leaders and concerned individuals better predict the likely short- and long-term consequences of alternative courses of action. A prototype is provided with Figure 2: For conflicts similar to those listed there, the probabilities of advancing freedom by violence vs. nonviolence were estimated at 0 vs. 67% with 95% confidence intervals of (0, 35%) vs. (26%, 92%).

Figure 2 only considers the impact on freedom. We would like to evaluate not just the probability of success but the impact of alternative methods of struggle on the probability distributions of likely costs and benefits. Quantification of the numbers of lives lost and the economic costs vary substantially between violent and nonviolent struggles. In violent struggles, even the official

winners often lose more than they gain, though official histories rarely admit that. Nonviolence, by contrast, tends to substantially lower the costs while increasing opportunities for win-win outcomes, just the opposite of the lose-lose scenarios typical of many violent struggles.

Other systems for evaluating the activities, cohesiveness and histories on all sides of conflicts might help researchers develop more accurate models with more useful rules of thumb and more persuasive descriptions of their value. For example, Tilly outlines a model of how the capacity of a government to control events and its level of democratization influence both the extent of coordination among potentially violent actors and the salience of short-run damage.<sup>70</sup>

Also, Petersen described how fear, hatred, rage and resentment motivate violence.<sup>71</sup> This suggests



opportunities for research in three related areas: (a) How do political entrepreneurs sometimes play on fears, traditional hatreds and other emotions to activate certain group identities over others? (b) What can other actors, governments and non-governmental organizations, do to better predict when intergroup violence is more likely? (c) How can potentially explosive situations be channeled into constructive rather than destructive strategies and tactics? Such research could elevate the debate from an emotional appeal for strong defense to a more open discussion of alternative strategies including careful analyses of expected costs, risks, and benefits; these discussions might also consider the strengths and weaknesses of available research results and needs for further research on specific issues.

Other research might include more historical reviews. With the prominence of Islamic terrorism in the news, it

may be worth studying more carefully the histories of nonviolent Islamic movement, such as the resistance the work of Badshah Khan, who collaborated with Gandhi in securing Indian independence, or the use of nonviolence by Albanian Kosovars or opponents of the Shah in Iran.<sup>72</sup> This kind of research might make it easier to translate otherwise dry research results into real human dramas that could attract wider audiences in addition to possibly improving tools for managing conflict.

This research seems to support the importance of civil society for the growth and consolidation of democracy. If this is accurate, then it suggests that the most effective national defense policy for any nation may be a vigorous support for the growth of civil society internationally. More research could contribute to a virtuous cycle starting with documenting best practices of the most successful

non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This documentation could help the best NGOs obtain more resources and become more effective and efficient using those resources to help aid recipients improve the effectiveness of their own local collaborations.<sup>73</sup>

The cost of such research would be tiny in comparison to the defense budgets of most nations. Even a modest increase in the effectiveness of conflict management could change some lose-lose outcomes to win-win, reduce the devastation of war, and increase the chances for settlement of long-standing conflicts.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

This article has outlined a theory of human response to violence and nonviolence that shows promise for improving the effectiveness of political and military leaders

and concerned individuals in dealing with conflict. In the process, it has identified a problem with the dominant narrative of the founding of American democracy: Is the American Revolution really the only major violent revolution or independence struggle in recorded history to have substantively advanced freedom and democracy?

The history of advances for freedom and democracy seem to coincide with advances in civil society. To the extent that this is accurate, it has two primary implications. First, even if the dominant narrative of the American Revolution is correct, attempts to glorify it actually *threaten democracy itself*, because war weakens civil society and freedom. Second, concerned individuals and many nongovernmental organizations can make major contributions to world peace and economic development by promoting the growth of civil society around the world.

They can do this by protesting human rights abuses, which tend to disrupt and weaken civil society, and by promoting the production and distribution of articles, pamphlets, books, audio and video materials to effectively disseminate this information.

This will not solve all the problems of the world, but it may help empower people all around the world to take action in ways that are more likely to improve their lives using methods that can be shown empirically to be less risky with a higher probability of success and a higher expected return for the effort.

**Appendix. Freedom Scores Associated with Selected Conflicts**

Violent or non-violent	Nation	Conflict years nominal begin end		Freedom House							Source:	
				Report year		Scores(1)				Im- prove- ment		
				before	after	before		after				
						political rights	civil liberties	political rights	civil liberties			
NV	Argentina	1977-83	1977	1983	1976-77	1983-84	6	5	3	3	2.5	US Dept. of State Background Note, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn, accessed 6-8 Nov. 2003, except as noted.  Narissa Navarro, "Madres de Plaza de Mayo", pp. 309-310 in PV(2)  Patricia Chuchryk, "Chile, Transition to Democracy", pp. 71-73 in PV(2)  Lynne Shivers, "Iranian Revolution, 1963-1979", pp. 263-266 in PV(2)  Wonmo Dong, "Korea, Democratic Struggle in the South", pp. 292-294 in PV(2)
NV	Bulgaria	1989	1989	1991	1988-89	1991-92	7	7	2	3	4.5	
NV	Burma	1988+	1988		1987-88	2002-03	7	7	7	7	0	
NV	Chile	1989	1983	1990	1982-83	1990-91	6	5	2	2	3.5	
NV	Czechoslovakia	1989	1977	1990	1976-77	1990-91	7	6	2	2	4.5	
NV	East Germany	1989	1989	1990	1988-89	1990-91	7	6	1	2	5.0	
NV	Hungary	1989	1987	1990	1986-87	1990-91	5	5	2	2	3.0	
NV	Iran	1979	1978	1979	1977-78	1979-80	6	5	5	6	0	
NV	Philippines	1986	1983	1986	1982-83	1986-87	5	4	4	2	1.5	
NV	Poland	1989	1980	1990	1979-80	1990-91	6	5	2	2	3.5	
NV	Russia	1991	1991	1991	1990-91	1991-92	5	4	3	3	1.5	
NV	South Korea	1987	1976	1987	1975-76	1987-88	5	5	4	5	0.5	
V	Chile	1973	1973	1973	1972-73	1974-75	1	2	7	5	- 4.5	
V	China	1945-49	1945	1949							0	
V	Cuba	1956-59	1956	1959							0	
V	France	1789-94	1789	1794							0	
V	Nicaragua(3)	1979	1979	1979	1978-79	1979-80	5	5	5	5	0	
V	Russia	1917	1917	1917							0	
V	Vietnam	1945-75	1945	1976		1976-77			7	7	0	

(1) Author's estimate for events before 1973. The French, Russian, Chinese, and Cuban revolutions are listed as effecting no change in freedom. It seems unlikely that a more careful study might reveal any improvement and might find a decline in freedom from these events. Since this would strengthen the image of this analysis perhaps inappropriately, the more conservative figures assigned here are used.

(2) PV = Roger S. Powers and William B. Voegelé, eds., *Protest, Power and Change* (NY: Garland, 1997)

(3) The classification of the Nicaraguan revolution as violent follows the US Dept. of State Background Note. See, however, Sharon Erickson Nepstad (1997) "Nicaragua, Nonviolence and Revolution" in PV(2).

**Brief Bio:** **Spencer Graves** is an engineer with a PhD in statistics working to develop empirically validated models to help people predict with quantifiable imprecision the likely short- and long-term consequences of alternative responses to conflict. A companion to the present article is “Violence, Nonviolence, and the American Revolution,” available from [www.prodsyse.com](http://www.prodsyse.com).

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup>. James F. Dunnigan and William Martel, *How to Stop a War* (NY: Doubleday, 1987)
  - <sup>2</sup>. E.g., William S. Lind, “Understanding Fourth Generation War”, *Military Review*, Sept.-Oct. 2004, pp. 12-16; [www.leavenworth.army.mil/milrev/download/English/SepOct04/lind.pdf](http://www.leavenworth.army.mil/milrev/download/English/SepOct04/lind.pdf), and Norman Emery, “Information Operations in Iraq”, *Military Review*, May-June 2004, pp. 11-14; <http://www.leavenworth.army.mil/milrev/download/English/MayJun04/emery.pdf> (accessed 12 Oct. 2004). Lind discussed “fourth generation war”, i.e., against non-state opponents. He said, “To fight such battles, we need some truly light infantry that can move farther and faster” than the enemy. In contrast, Emory discussed “information operations” in Iraq. He said the US must convince Iraqis that they should trust us more than the guerillas, so Iraqis would help us find the guerillas rather than hiding them. Ideally, this involves winning their hearts and minds, convincing them that democracy is better than extremism. This strategic objective is not supported, Lind argued, by operations that go to a house, “kick in the door, ... ransack the home, ... humiliate the men, offend the women, and alienate the very people who are supposed to provide intelligence about terrorists and Baathist holdouts.” Emory recommended better use of “information operations (IO)” and “psychological operations (PSYOP).” Unfortunately, the discussion of IO and PSYOP suggests an excessive focus on “selling” with little mention of the research required to understand what might motivate people of a potentially very different culture to “buy” our position.
  - <sup>3</sup>. Cecilio T. Arillo, *Breakaway: The Inside Story of the Four-Day Revolution in the Philippines, Feb. 22-25, 1986* (Manila: CTA & Associates, 1986)
  - <sup>4</sup>. Patricia Chuchryk, “Chile, Transition to Democracy”, pp. 71-73 in Roger S. Powers and William B. Voegle, eds., *Protest, Power and Change* (NY: Garland, 1997).
  - <sup>5</sup>. Steve York, *Bringing Down a Dictator* (PBS video, 2002; [www.pbs.org/weta/dictator](http://www.pbs.org/weta/dictator), accessed 17 Sept. 2004)
  - <sup>6</sup>. Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* (NY: Oxford U. Pr., 1993); George Weigel, *The Final Revolution* (NY: Oxford U. Pr., 1992)

7. Seymour M. Lipset, "George Washington and the Founding of Democracy", *Journal of Democracy* 9 (1998, no. 4): 24-38. Lipset wrote that George Washington "is the most important single figure in American history" for his role in keeping an army in the field throughout this period, in providing a respected voice urging unity while others worked out the details of the current US federal system (or "republic" as they called it) with its checks and balances, and in establishing precedents as the first President that have served the republic well since. I differ with Lipset only in his use of the word "democracy" in the title to his article. Regarding the word "myth", see, e.g., Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (NY: Norton, 1988), esp. pp. 14-15. Morgan used the word "fiction" to describe the aspects of mainstream culture by which "the many are governed by the few". See also Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, ed. (1984) *Arms and Independence: The Military Character of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA: U. Press of VA). Hoffman, Albert and their contributors discussed aspects "of the mythologizing of the Revolution". For example, Charles Royster "Founding a Nation in Blood: Military conflict and the American Nationality", pp. 25-49, described how "the shared violence of the conflict [was exploited] to create an important bond" or group identity and traced the utilization of this image through the War of 1812. In this article, the word "narrative" is used to describe how people understand history, what happened, why, and what it means for how they should approach current problems. "Myth" is a synonym that is used less often here because of its provocative connotations.
8. [http://www.noogenesis.com/pineapple/blind\\_men\\_elephant.html](http://www.noogenesis.com/pineapple/blind_men_elephant.html); <http://www.cs.princeton.edu/~rywang/berkeley/258/parable.html>, accessed 01/10/2004.
9. James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (NY: Oxford U. Pr., 2002). The Publishers Weekly said, "In his last and most interesting section, Waller shows how a perpetrator learns to see his victim as a less-than-human 'other,' so that, in some cases, the victim is even blamed for his or her death." (quoted on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), 7 Nov. 2004)
10. Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U. Pr., 2002)
11. Paul Watzlawick, *How Real Is Real?* (NY: Vintage 1977); Herbert Bless, Klaus Fiedler, and Fritz Strack, *Social Cognition* (NY: Psychology Press, 2004); Leroy H. Pelton, *Doing Justice* (Albany, NY: State U. of NY Pr., 1999); Benjamin R. Barber, *Fear's Empire* (NY: Norton, 2003).
12. John H. Johns, et al., *Cohesion in the US Military* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Pr., 1984, p. 33) claimed, "When a group is faced with a clearly defined external threat (physical threat or threat to its status), it tends to pull together if it has moderate or high cohesion at the time of crisis." For examples from the American Revolution, see Robert Middlekauff *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (NY: Oxford, 1982), esp. pp. 451-452, 461. For recent research, see Shane R. Thyle and Edward J. Lawler, eds., *Group Cohesion, Trust and Solidarity* (NY: Elsevier Science, 2002).
13. Serge Moscovici, "The Discovery of Group Fragmentation", pp. 107-127 in Donald Granberg and Gian Sarup, eds., *Social Judgments and Intergroup Relations* (NY: Springer, 1992)
14. Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, p. 462. Middlekauff described an incident where a victorious army mistreated captured enemy soldiers but permitted hundreds of them to escape, commenting, "men who had fought so well under great pressure folded when it was removed."
15. P. 265 in Lynne Shivers, "Iranian Revolution, 1963-1979", pp. 263-266 in Roger S. Powers and William B. Voegelé, eds., *Protest, Power and Change*.
16. P. 413 in Douglas Elwood, "Philippines People Power Revolution", pp. 413-424 in Roger S. Powers and William B. Voegelé, eds., *Protest, Power and Change*. For similar events during the fall of the Soviet Bloc, see Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*; George Weigel, *The Final Revolution*.
17. John Darby *The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes* (Washington, DC: US Institutes of Peace Press, 2001, p. 56).
18. Gene Sharp, *Social Power and Political Freedom* (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent, 1980, p. 168). Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 3 vol. (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent, 1973) 3: 552. Richard B. Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, 2nd rev. ed. (NY: Shockten, 1966, p. 100). The



- Algerian government reported a million deaths in that war. Other sources reported much smaller figures, e.g., Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace* (NY: Viking, 1977). Horne thought the number was probably close to 675,000 (from <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat2.htm#Algeria>, accessed 31 Dec. 2004).
19. Zhang Liang, *The Tiananmen Papers* (NY: Public Affairs, 2001); Craig Calhoun, *Neither Gods nor Emperors* (Berkeley, CA: U. of CA Pr., 1994); Nan Lin, *The Struggle for Tiananmen* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992)
20. Marc Ferro, *Histoire des Colonisations* (Paris: Seuil, 1994, p. 275).
21. Another important perspective on violence is provided by Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U. Pr., 2003). The present research seems to suggest that a consideration of constructed reality as discussed in the present article might provide a valuable addition to Tilly's work.
22. Robert W. McChesney, *The Problem of the Media* (NY: Monthly Review Pr., 2003, p. 279). In the months prior to the Second Persian Gulf War, the European press reported more than just the Bush administration's claims of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction: They also featured numerous authorities shunned by the US press stating that there was no evidence for the US claims. See, e.g., Mark Hertsgaard, *The Eagle's Shadow: Why America Fascinates and Infuriates the World* (NY: Picador, 2003, p. 218).
23. The Committee to Protect Journalists reported, "During the last decade, 337 journalists have been killed while carrying out their work. While conflict and war provide the backdrop to much of the violence against the press, CPJ research demonstrates that the vast majority of journalists killed since 1995 did not die in cross fire. Instead, they were hunted down and murdered, often in direct reprisal for their reporting. In fact, according to CPJ statistics, only 67 journalists (20 percent) died in **cross fire**, while 244 (72 percent) were **murdered** in reprisal for their reporting." "[www.cpj.org/killed/Ten\\_Year\\_Killed/Intro.html](http://www.cpj.org/killed/Ten_Year_Killed/Intro.html)". See also "[www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=03/04/07/0321256](http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=03/04/07/0321256)"; accessed 21 Feb. 2005.
24. For example, in August 2004, Iraqi interim governmental officials banned Al Jazeera from reporting on events in Iraq, in spite of a professed commitment to a free press. This is consistent with attempts by the US government in part through Secretary of State Colin Powell to have Qatari governmental officials pressure Al Jazeera to provide more favorable treatment of US positions in Iraq and the Middle East more generally. "[www.cpj.org/op\\_ed/Campagna04aug04.html](http://www.cpj.org/op_ed/Campagna04aug04.html)" and "[www.cpj.org/CPJ\\_update/update\\_8\\_17\\_04.html](http://www.cpj.org/CPJ_update/update_8_17_04.html)", accessed 12 Sept. 2004. Benjamin Bache, a grandson of Ben Franklin, was arrested by the administration of Pres. John Adams in 1798; Bache was released on parole and died in a yellow fever outbreak before his case came to trial. See "<http://americanhistory.about.com/library/prm/blordervliberty2.htm>" and [www.highbeam.com/ref/doc3.asp?docid=1E1:Bache-Be](http://www.highbeam.com/ref/doc3.asp?docid=1E1:Bache-Be), accessed 9/12/2004, or Richard N. Rosenfeld, *American Aurora* (NY: St. Martin's Pr., 1997). Beginning in 2003, the US began requiring visas for journalists from 27 friendly countries from which visas are not required for tourists or businessmen, and journalists without the visas have been denied entry and sent back; see [www.lapressclub.org/events/openingthedoors.html](http://www.lapressclub.org/events/openingthedoors.html), accessed 9/12/2004.
25. Gene Sharp, *Politics of Nonviolent Action*, esp. vol. 3, ch. 12 for the principles and vol. 2 for numerous examples.
26. Gene Sharp, *Politics of Nonviolent Action*, esp. vol. 3, pp. 799-806. See also Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (NY: Routledge, 1990, p. 109). Lipset said, "The emphasis on due process, free speech, and other rights of individuals as superseding the needs of the state for the maintenance of order is severely challenged during wartime. Threats to the very existence of the nation lead governments everywhere to suspend or ignore legal rights. America and Canada have not been exceptions. In the United States, habeas corpus was suspended during the Civil War; free speech was denied opponents of the conflict in World War I, and many, particularly socialists and other radicals, were imprisoned; citizens of Japanese ancestry were placed in concentration camps on both sides of the 40th parallel for no other offense than their national origin; and a wave of intolerance against Communists and other leftists accused of complicity with them, which entered history under the generic name of McCarthyism, swept the United States during the Korean War, a conflict with

- two Communists states. The courts did little to restrain the authorities, thus revealing the fragility of legal guarantees in the face of wartime hysteria.”
27. A useful study of the evolution of conflict is provided by Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).
28. Jane Freeland, *A Special Place in History: The Atlantic Coast in the Nicaraguan Revolution* (London: War on Want, 1988, esp. pp. 72ff); “Un Año de Autonomía”, *Barricada Internacional Especial*, no. 3, Sept. 1988, esp. p. 3.
29. J. Edward Russo and Paul J. H. Schoemaker, *Winning Decisions* (NY: Doubleday, 2002): 80-81. In a simple experiment, Russo and Schoemaker ask people to assign numbers like the date of James Watt’s first experiments with steam power or the weight of a Boeing 747. For each question, they are asked to provide a range such that 90 percent of the ranges cover the actual number (a 90 percent confidence interval). A “perfect score” with ten questions like this is nine intervals that contain the correct answer and one that does not. Russo and Schoemaker gave ten questions like this to over 2,000 managers. Over 99 percent of the managers missed more than one; most got between 30 and 60 percent coverage.
30. Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982); <http://www.abacon.com/commstudies/groups/groupthink.html>, accessed 19 Oct. 2004.
31. Karen A. Brown, T. D. Klastorin, and Janet L. Valluzzi, “Project Performance and the Liability of Group Harmony”, *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, 37 (1990): 117-125.
32. James F. Dunnigan and William Martel, *How to Stop a War*.
33. All the scores assigned by Freedom House since its beginning were downloaded from [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org) in a Microsoft Excel file, accessed 1 Nov. 2003, along with a description of their methodology, which was used by the author to score earlier events.
34. Cecilio T. Arillo, *Breakaway*; Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*; George Weigel, *The Final Revolution*; Roger S. Powers and William B. Voegelé, *Protest Power and Change*, pp. 24-25, 56-58. For more recent information, see, e.g., “[www.freeburma.org](http://www.freeburma.org)”, accessed 12 Sept. 2004.
35. [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org), accessed 19 Oct. 2003.
36. Milton S. Eisenhower, *The Wine is Bitter* (NY: Doubleday, 1963). Similarly, Thomas Jefferson, writing of Washington’s handling of the Newburgh conspiracy, observed, “The moderation of a single character probably prevented this revolution from being closed, as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish.” Quoted from p. 30 of Seymour M. Lipset, “George Washington.” Jaroslav Krejčí, *Great Revolutions Compared: The Outline of a Theory*, 2nd ed. (NY: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1994)
37. Eric Young, “Zimbabwe”, pp. 2051-2053 in Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Africana* (NY: Basic Civitas Books, 1999); [www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2005/table2005.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2005/table2005.pdf), accessed 25 Feb. 2005.
38. Alonford James Robinson, Jr., and Kate Tuttle, “South Africa”, pp. 1759-1762 in Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, *Africana*.
39. Alan Tully, “Political Development of the Colonies after the Glorious Revolution”, ch. 5 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution*, paperback ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004). Tully discussed the substantial political development that made independence possible but concluded that this political culture “would not go through an era of revolution without some profound alterations.” While “profound”, the changes brought by the revolution are still modest compared with the dominant, naive claim that revolution replaced the tyranny of George III with democracy. See also John M. Murrin, “Political Development”, ch. 14, pp. 408-456 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Colonial British America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins U. Pr., 1984); Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People*, and Marchette Chute, *The First Liberty* (NY: Dutton, 1969).
40. Walter H. Conser, Jr., Ronald M. McCarthy, David J. Toscano, and Gene Sharp, *Resistance, Politics, and the American Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1986), and Ray Raphael, *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord* (NY: The New Press, 2002), and Elisha P. Douglass, *Rebels and Democrats: The Struggle for Equal Political Rights and Majority Rule During the American Revolution* (Chicago: Elephant, 1955)

- <sup>41</sup> This binomial confidence interval was computed on the logits or log odds  $z = \ln(p/(1-p)) = \ln(4/2) = 0.69$  with the distribution of the estimated logit being approximated by a normal with this mean and a variance of  $1/(np(1-p)) = 0.75$ . This gives us an approximate 95% confidence interval for the probability of success of (26%, 92%). Recent statistical research has shown that the actual coverage probability of this computation is generally substantially better than the traditional computation based on the variance of the estimated proportion  $= p(1-p)/n$ ; see Lawrence D. Brown, T. Tony Cai and Anirban DasGupta (2001) "Interval estimation for a binomial proportion", *Statistical Science*, 16, 101-133. A 95% upper confidence bound on the probability of success can be obtained from  $\Pr(0 \text{ successes in } n \text{ trials}) = (1-p)^n > 0.05$ , so an upper confidence bound on  $p$  is 35%.
- <sup>42</sup> Other possible cases for the upper right quadrant of Figure 2 were mentioned by Charles Tilly, *Politics of Collective Violence*: 44. Tilly said, "Surges of democratization often follow violent interstate wars, civil wars and revolutions; cases in point include the partial democratization of Switzerland after the Sonderbund war of 1847, of the United States after the Civil War, of France after the Commune of 1871, and of Japan and Germany after World War II." Careful study would be required to determine where these cases belong relative to Figure 2, but a superficial review will be attempted here. First, Figure 2 was deliberately restricted to "revolutions and independence struggles", which would seem to exclude World War II. It should be possible to extend this analysis to include such cases, but the appropriate generalization is not obvious, in part because in Japan and Germany, democracy was imposed upon the vanquished by the victors and accepted at a time when the local pre-war aristocracy was substantially discredited by their defeat. Tilly's three other examples may be appropriate for this analysis, but it's not obvious how to score the nations involved before and after the events mentioned. At least some historians claim that the defeat of the Paris Commune was followed by a merciless repression that "paved the way for a more conservative republic." (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1967, v. 9, p. 741) Similarly, while the Civil War in the US ended slavery, it also generated hostilities that are still poisoning relations between some White Southerners and others. The antebellum South had a substantial population of poor white, non-slave owning artisans who didn't like having to competing with slave labor and might have responded positively to a non-violent campaign that respected their concerns while pushing for an end to slavery. Michele Gillespie, *Free Labor in an Unfree World: White Artisans in Slaveholding Georgia, 1789-1860* (Athens, GA: U. of Georgia Pr., 2000).
- <sup>43</sup> Jonathan Schell, *The Unconquerable World* (NY: Metropolitan, 2003, ch. 5, p. 160). *The works of John Adams, second President of the United States: with a life of the author, notes and illustrations, by his grandson Charles Francis Adams*, v. 5 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1850-56, p. 492); cited from Claude H. Van Tyne, *The Causes of the War of Independence* (NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1922, p. 1). Spencer Graves, "Violence, Nonviolence and the American Revolution", available from "www.prodsyse.com", accessed 1 Mar. 2005.
- <sup>44</sup> Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*(NY: Basic Books, 2000, p. 7).
- <sup>45</sup> Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Grenville Program, 1763-1765, ch. 15 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Companion*. See also Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (NY: Norton, 1998, esp. pp. 5-7).
- <sup>46</sup> Michal R. Brozbicki, "The Cultural Development of the Colonies", ch. 9 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Companion*, esp. pp. 75-76. Also Robert A. Rutland, "Bills of Rights and the First Ten Amendments to the Constitutions", ch. 33 in Greene and Pole, *Companion*, p. 266, and Doug Linder, "The Trial of John Peter Zenger: An Account", [www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/zenger/zengeraccount.html](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/zenger/zengeraccount.html), accessed 14 Feb. 2004.
- <sup>47</sup> Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People*; Jack N. Rakove, *Declaring Rights: A Brief History with Documents* (NY: Bedford Books, 1998).
- <sup>48</sup> David L. Ammerman, "The Tea Crisis and Its Consequences, through 1775", ch. 24 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Companion*; "Massachusetts Government Act, [www.founding.com/library/lbody.cfm?id=94&parent=17](http://www.founding.com/library/lbody.cfm?id=94&parent=17) accessed 5 Nov. 2004.
- <sup>49</sup> Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Stamp Act Crisis and Its Repercussions, Including the Quartering Act Controversy", ch. 16 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Companion*, p. 123. David L. Ammerman,

- “The Tea Crisis and Its Consequences, through 1775”, ch. 24 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Companion*, p. 197. In early 1774, Franklin, then a lobbyist in London, wrote, “The violent destruction of the tea seems to have united all parties here against us.” Walter H. Conser, et al., *American Struggle for Independence*, p. 222 plus ch. 7, pp. 278-324; Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, pp. 229-231.
- 50 Spencer Graves, “Violence, Nonviolence and the American Revolution”, available from “www.prodsyse.com”, accessed 1 Mar. 2005.
- 51 Arthur H. Shaffer, *The Politics of History: Writing the History of the American Revolution* (Chicago, IL: Precedent Publishing, 1975): The book analyzed “the American Revolutionary generation’s attempt to create a national history that would justify the Revolution and develop a sense of nationhood.” More recent historians have corrected many of the most blatant biases, but substantive errors in interpretation still remain.
- 52 Uri Avnery, *Truth Against Truth* (Tel Aviv, Israel: Gush Shalom; www.gush-shalom.org, 2003, p. 1). Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge U. Pr., 2004), esp. pp. 111-116 for a national labor cooperation. See also Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (NY: Verso, 1988). Avli Schlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (NY: Norton, 2000). Tanya Reinhart, *Israel / Palestine: How to End the War of 1948* (NY: Seven Stories Pr., 2002).
- 53 Frédéric Delouche, ed., *Illustrated History of Europe: a Unique Portrait of Europe’s Common History* (NY: Holt, 1993).
- 54 attributed to Philip L. Graham, Publisher, Washington Post by James B. Simpson, *Simpson’s Contemporary Quotations*, www.bartleby.com/63/9/8109.html, accessed 10/8/2004.
- 55 Frontline, “House of Saud,” www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saud, aired 21 Feb. 2005.
- 56 Gary W. Potter and Victor E. Kappeler, *Constructing Crime* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1998). Loïc Wacquant, “Fermons les prisons!”, pp. 6-7 in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Sept. 2004. Gilles Balbastre, “Les faits divers, ou le tribunal implacable des médias” and “Un certain effet de brouillage”, pp. 14-15 in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Dec. 2004.
- 57 Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent As Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo* (Johns Hopkins U. Pr., 2002).
- 58 Mark Hertsgaard, *The Eagle’s Shadow*: 217-218.
- 59 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish-American\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish-American_War) accessed 8 Oct. 2004.
- 60 Arthur H. Shaffer, *The Politics of History: Writing the History of the American Revolution 1783-1815* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1975).
- 61 Ray Raphael, *Founding Myths: Stories that Hide our Patriotic Past* (NY: The New Press, 2004, esp. p. 6).
- 62 Howard Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* (London: Pluto Pr., 2000, esp. p. 78, 197)
- 63 Václav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless”, pp. 11-96 in John Keane *The Power of the Powerless* (1976; Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1986, e.g., pp. 27-29, 70-71, 76).
- 64 Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins U. Pr., 1999, p. 221)
- 65 Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* (NY: Norton, 1980, pp. 95-97). Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People*, ch. 7, pp. 55-77. Spencer Graves, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the American Revolution”, downloadable from “www.prodsyse.com”, accessed 1 Mar. 2005.
- 66 Jonathan Schell, *The Unconquerable World*, esp. pp. 165-166, 169.
- 67 Marie-Cécile Révauger, “En Amérique et en France: le Franc-Maçon dans la cité”, pp. 17-30 in Élise Merienstras, ed., *l’Amérique et la France: Deux Révolutions* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1990).
- 68 Václav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless”, pp. 11-96. This observation is not new. Solon, the legendary “lawmaker of ancient Athens” who died in 559 BC, said the law is like cobwebs: strong enough to hold the weak but too weak to hold the strong. <http://education.yahoo.com/search/bfq?lb=a&s=seq&p=author%3A720>. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835), <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/home.html>, accessed 22 Feb. 2005. Philippe Raynaud, “‘The ‘Rights of Man and Citizen’ in the French Constitutional

- Tradition”, ch. 8, pp. 199-218 in Ralph C. Hancock and L. Gary Lambert, eds., *The Legacy of the French Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996).
- <sup>69</sup>. Jaroslav Krejčí, *Great Revolutions Compared*.
- <sup>70</sup>. Charles Tilly, *Politics of Collective Violence*: 55-57.
- <sup>71</sup>. Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*.
- <sup>72</sup>. Eknath Easwaran, *A Man to Match his Mountains: Badshah Khan, Nonviolent Soldier of Islam* (Petaluma, CA: Nilgiri Pr., 1984); Howard Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*. For more general reviews, see Roger S. Powers and William B. Voegelé, eds., *Protest, Power and Change*; Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Non-Violent Conflict* (NY: St. Martin’s Pr., 2001). Even Hitler was challenged by nonviolent noncooperation; see Jacques Semelin, *Unarmed Against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe 1939-1943* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993) and Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers U. Pr., 1996).
- <sup>73</sup>. The need for research on NGOs is increased by the controversy expressed, e.g., by Arundati Roy, “Les Perils du Tout-Humanitaire”, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Oct. 2004, pp. 24-25. Jennifer Windsor, Executive Director of Freedom House, has written that, “Promoting Democratization Can Combat Terrorism” (*The Washington Quarterly*, 2003, 26:3, pp. 43-58). She cautions, however, that “promoting democratization in lands without a tradition of democracy carries certain risks.” More research is needed to evaluate the relative effectiveness of alternative policies in (a) promoting democracy while (b) managing appropriately the risks. The present research suggests that active promotion of civil society internationally may be the most effective and least risky approach, developing democracy from the grass roots up. This seems to be the agenda of the Democracy Coalition Project, “[www.demcoalition.org/html/home.html](http://www.demcoalition.org/html/home.html)”, accessed 15 Jan. 2005.