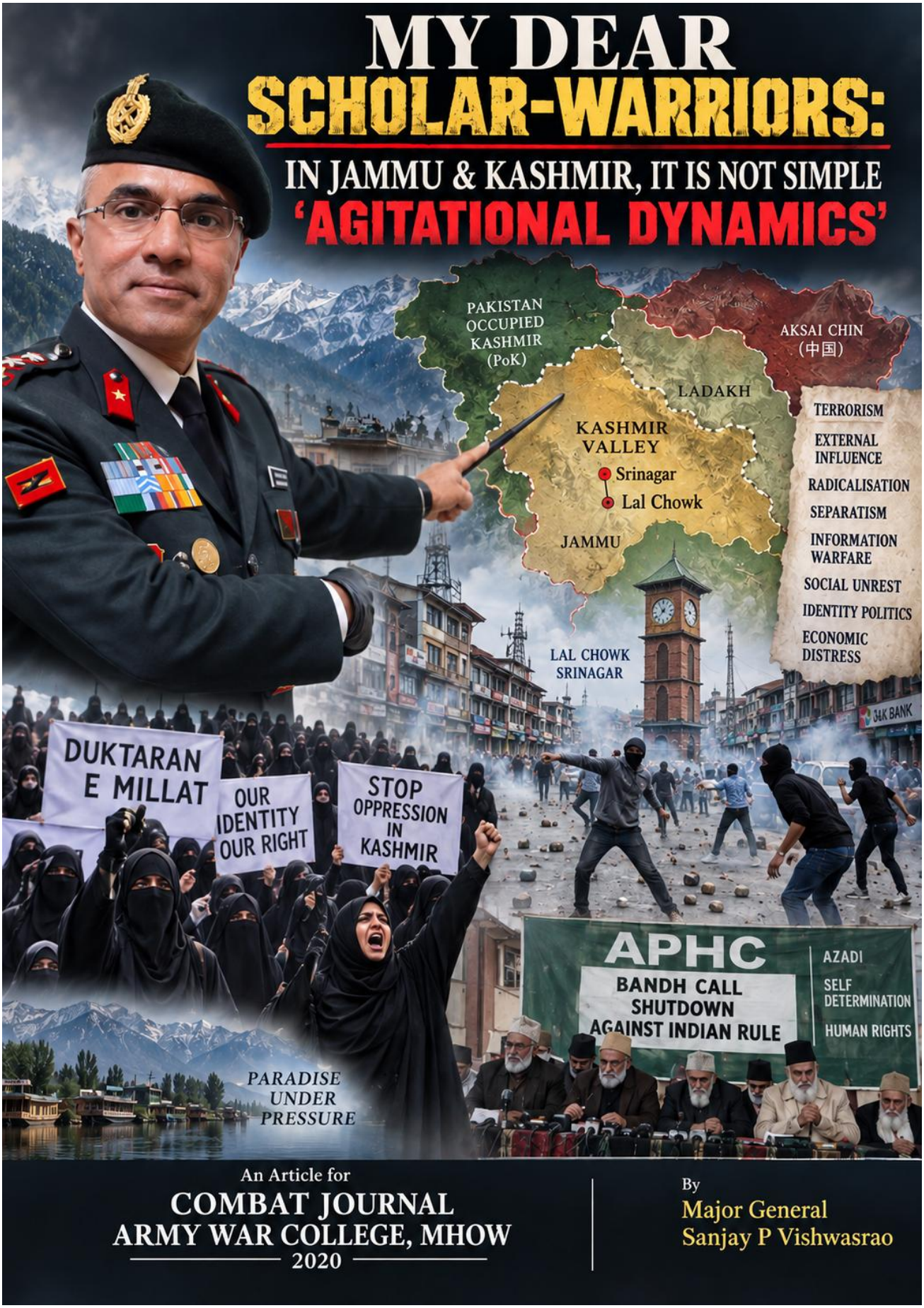

MY DEAR
SCHOLAR-WARRIORS:
IN JAMMU & KASHMIR, IT IS NOT SIMPLE
'AGITATIONAL DYNAMICS'
PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR (PoK)
AKSAI CHIN (中国)
LADAKH
KASHMIR VALLEY
Srinagar
Lal Chowk
JAMMU
TERRORISM
EXTERNAL INFLUENCE
RADICALISATION
SEPARATISM
INFORMATION WARFARE
SOCIAL UNREST
IDENTITY POLITICS
ECONOMIC DISTRESS
LAL CHOWK SRINAGAR
J&K BANK
DUKTARAN E MILLAT
OUR IDENTITY OUR RIGHT
STOP OPPRESSION IN KASHMIR
APHC
BANDH CALL SHUTDOWN AGAINST INDIAN RULE
AZADI
SELF DETERMINATION
HUMAN RIGHTS
PARADISE UNDER PRESSURE
An Article for
COMBAT JOURNAL
ARMY WAR COLLEGE, MHOW
2020
By
Major General
Sanjay P Vishwasrao

It Is Not Simple 'Agitational Dynamics'

Originally written in 2020. Adopted in 2026 for a broader audience.

Reading Pakistan's Use of Strategic Nonviolent Political Defiance in Kashmir — and What Engineered Movements Look Like Anywhere

Sanjay P Vishwasrao, Major General, Retired

Written in 2020 as Brigadier, for the Combat Journal of the Army War College, India — shortly before the author designed and led the 'Tricolour Revolution' counter-strategy in Kashmir as General Officer Commanding, Srinagar Sub Area (2020–2022).



People of Kashmir protest against the killing of innocent unarmed citizens by Pakistani terrorists at Lal Chowk, Srinagar under the Campaign Aakhir Kab Tak, 2021

FROM THEORY TO FIELD-TESTED PRACTICE

This paper was not left on the shelf. Written in 2020 to argue that Pakistan's playbook in Kashmir was strategic nonviolent political defiance dressed up as ordinary unrest, it laid the theoretical groundwork for the 'Tricolour Revolution' counter-strategy the author then personally designed and led as General Officer Commanding, Srinagar Sub Area (2020–2022) — a campaign later referenced by the Prime Minister and covered in depth by The Caravan magazine. What follows is a rare case of a published analytical framework being field-tested by its own author, at scale, with outcomes on the public record.

Background

A New Kind of War. Twentieth-century conventional war has increasingly given way to political, hybrid and societal war. One well-known model of this is the 'Colour Revolution,' also known as the Arab Spring — the 'Jasmine' movement in Tunisia (2010) and the 'Lotus' movement in Egypt (2011) among its clearest examples.

Pakistan's Alternative Way of War in Jammu & Kashmir. By 2006–07, Pakistan had lost the initiative in the then-state, now Union Territory, of Jammu & Kashmir — guns and open war had failed it. It had been outmanoeuvred by a post-9/11 world with little tolerance for terrorism, and by the successes of the Rashtriya Rifles (1991–2006) and the Anti-Infiltration Obstacle System (from 2004). The resulting normalcy in J&K — elections in 2002 and 2004 — was about to be reinforced further by an assembly election in December 2008. Pakistan needed a paradigm shift in its J&K strategy, and introduced one in July 2008.[1]

[1]Bashir Assad, *K Files: The Conspiracy of Silence* (New Delhi: Vitasta Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2019), p. 29. The author writes: 'He (General Musharraf) suggested that the separatists should recourse to Palestinian-type Intifada. The letter from Musharraf was delivered to the separatists by a Pakistani senator, MP Bhandara.'

Our Strategic Errors

Parliament's Mission to the Armed Forces. The mission Parliament assigned through the Armed Forces (Jammu & Kashmir) Special Powers Act- 1990 {AF(J&K)SPA-1990}, is to undo the 'disturbed' condition threatening India's sovereignty and integrity[2] — in effect, to defeat separatism, radicalism and terrorism in J&K for its permanent, peaceful integration with India. It is worth asking whether the Act's fuller list of tasks was ever fully addressed: undoing the 'secession of a part of the territory of India,' countering the questioning of India's sovereignty and territorial integrity, addressing insults to the National Flag, the Anthem and the Constitution, striking terror in a section of the people, alienating any section of the people, damaging harmony between different sections of the people, and overawing the government. Or did the response, in practice, cover only a third of that assigned mission — the purely 'counter-terrorist' third?

A Scattered Jigsaw. Laid out individually, the following pieces of Pakistan's J&K puzzle look disconnected. Assembled together, they do not:

- The demand for azadi (freedom).
- The rise of Jamaat-e-Islami Kashmir.
- The exodus of Kashmiri Hindus.
- Wahhabi Islam displacing Sufi Islam and Kashmiriat.[3]
- Continued infiltration of terrorists and war matériel.
- A running protest calendar maintained by the All Party Hurriyat Conference.

[2]AFSPA-1958, AF(J&K)SPA-1990 and UAPA (all versions), available at https://mha.gov.in/acts
[3]Sheri Berman, 'Islamism, Revolution and Civil Society,' *American Political Science Association* 1, No. 02 (2003), pp. 257–272.

- Protests, shutdown ('bandh') and 'chalo' calls, and stone-pelting by youth, students and groups such as the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons.
- Azadi graffiti.
- Social media used for propaganda and to coordinate protests.
- The flying of Pakistani or Daesh flags.
- Attacks on local Army and Jammu & Kashmir Police personnel.
- Allegations of 'mass graves' and 'pellet blindings,' paired with calls to revoke the Armed Forces (J&K) Special Powers Act-1990.

The Wrong Name for Pakistan's Strategy. This failure to assemble the jigsaw led directly to labelling Pakistan's 2008 paradigm shift 'agitational dynamics,' or 'agitational terrorism.' Names matter.

Reason for Hope. The failure of several 'Colour Revolutions' — including, in part, in J&K — and of movements such as Black Lives Matter, offers real grounds for hope. Two steps come first: understanding the mission Parliament actually assigned, and understanding both Pakistan's J&K strategy and why it has failed, or only partly succeeded. Only then can an effective Indian counter-strategy be designed.[4]

The History of Ahimsa in Politics — and Its Lessons

Mahatma Gandhi: Swaraj through Satyagraha and Ahimsa. Mahatma Gandhi can fairly be credited with politicising ahimsa (nonviolence). The 1930 Salt Satyagraha grew from an initial band of 78 into a nationwide campaign of civil disobedience, and led, seventeen years later, to India's independence. Gandhi described nonviolence as conscious suffering — not meek submission to a wrongdoer, but the placing of one's whole soul against

[4]Joanne Sheehan, 'Seven Principles of Nonviolence,' in 'Introduction to Nonviolence,' *Handbook of Nonviolent Campaigns* (Wales, UK: War Resisters' International, 2014), p. 11.

a tyrant's will — a stance he believed empowered individuals to defy an unjust empire and lay the foundation for its fall.

Martin Luther King Jr's Nonviolence. A student of ahimsa himself, King set out his philosophy in the 1956 essay 'Nonviolence and Racial Justice' around five pillars: active resistance; redemption and reconciliation as the end state; attacking the evil rather than the evildoer; goodwill as the tool that breaks chains of hatred; and conviction that the wider moral order supports a genuinely good intention.

Mandela's Anti-Apartheid Struggle. Also, a student of ahimsa, Mandela saw the African National Congress begin its anti-apartheid campaign nonviolently in 1950. After a decade of state violence, he turned to armed struggle in 1960 and was jailed for life in 1964; he renounced violence in 1985 and invited the apartheid regime to peaceful talks, a process that culminated in the 1994 elections.

What Gandhi, King and Mandela Have in Common. Certain personal qualities helped each of them succeed:[5] strong personal character; visionary ideas paired with genuine commitment to truth and justice; charisma alongside a clear-eyed understanding of human frailty; collaborative ideas aimed at uplifting society; and a selfless dedication to the national cause. Certain strategic and tactical skills mattered just as much:[6] an ultimate aim fixed on changing society itself; genuine belief in ahimsa's power to bring that change; treating satyagraha and ahimsa as both a moral compass and a practical tactic; the patience to train people in nonviolence; strong strategic and tactical communication skills; and decisiveness paired with patience in executing the strategy over time.

[5]Sanjay Chaturvedi, 'Gandhi and King – A Comparison of Leadership,' LinkedIn, 2 October 2017. Available at https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/gandhi-king-comparison-leadership-sanjay-chaturvedi
[6]Joseph Kaifala, 'Gandhi, Mandela and King: The Trinity of Nonviolent Civil Resistance,' The New Jurist, 11 June 2016. Available at http://newjurist.com/the-trinity-of-nonviolent-civil-resistance.html

Not Just Nonviolence or Terrorism — A Smart, Hybrid Mix

Gene Sharp's 'From Dictatorship to Democracy.' Gene Sharp studied Gandhi, King and Mandela closely and concluded that disintegrating a dictatorship meant reversing the dictator's own weakening of the social, political and economic institutions used to atomise a population — restoring, in effect, the strength a population needs to resist. He further concluded that nonviolent resistance outmanoeuvres a dictator's monopoly on violence, whereas insurgency and terrorism simply invite repression. Sharp effectively renamed 'swaraj through satyagraha and ahimsa' as 'strategic nonviolent political defiance.'

Sharp's Five-Stage Grand Strategy. Sharp proposed a five-stage approach to applying it:

- **Stage 1 — Spreading the idea.** Enough people must refuse to cooperate with the regime for long enough, despite repression; leaders and structures need to be prepared, guidelines issued, and people trained in nonviolent discipline and in facing brutality.
- **Stage 2 — Selective resistance.** Popular anti-regime grievances — social, political and economic — are used to run simultaneous campaigns, chosen deliberately either to keep parts of society (such as youth) outside the regime's control, to win back parts already under its control (such as government employees), or to deny the regime a specific objective, such as unchecked human-rights violations.
- **Stage 3 — Symbolic challenge.** Early actions by the original resisters are symbolic and non-cooperative, designed to draw national and international attention — highlighting human-rights violations or a disproportionate use of force.
- **Stage 4 — Spreading responsibility.** Other social, political and economic groups outside the dictatorship's direct control — teachers,

students, lawyers — are gradually drawn in; weakening the dictator's ideological hold helps widen participation, and each new campaign, by a new group over a new issue, adds to moral disapproval of the regime and the gradual withdrawal of public cooperation.[7] Throughout, the autonomy of resistance groups has to be protected, so that the society's 'democratic space' grows as the dictator's own space shrinks.

- **Stage 5 — Targeting the dictator's sources of power.** Participation and momentum are steadily increased to produce mounting political paralysis, with protestors taking on greater personal risk; fence-sitters, bureaucrats, police and the military become direct targets for undermining morale and shifting loyalty. As protest campaigns run longer, the regime's own sources of power are steadily starved — a form of political starvation that leads to paralysis and, eventually, collapse. If the regime intervenes to halt this 'escalating freedom,' nonviolent discipline is used to defend the space already won, opening a new front the regime must also contend with — ultimately hastening its disintegration.

CORPORATE PARALLEL — THE SAME FIVE STAGES RUN ANY ORGANISED CAMPAIGN

Strip away the word 'dictatorship' and Sharp's five stages describe almost any sustained activist, shareholder-activist, boycott or ESG campaign aimed at a company or an institution: build a base of quiet non-cooperation, pick symbolic early fights that draw outside attention, recruit adjacent stakeholder groups, and finally target the institution's own decision-makers and their sources of support. A communications, legal or risk team that can place an unfolding campaign on this five-stage map can usually tell, well in advance, roughly how much further it has to run.

[7]Gene Sharp lists 198 methods of nonviolent protest. Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (East Boston, USA: Albert Einstein Institution, 2002), pp. 17–24.

Lessons from Real-World Nonviolent Political Defiance

Serbia, Tunisia, Egypt and the Occupy Movement. This strategy has not reached its intended end state everywhere — it fell short in Egypt and Syria among others, with Tunisia the only case to complete a full transition from authoritarian rule.[8] The lessons below avoid repeating points already made.

Serbia (1998–2000).[9]

- Branding, 'laughtivism,' and carefully chosen battles won popular support while deepening the regime's own problems.
- A leaderless structure made the movement both safer and more efficient.
- Turning the regime's own repression against it — a form of political jiu-jitsu, including the deliberate use of women in front-line roles — helped outmanoeuvre the state.
- Training people to expect jail, unifying support for those detained, and even 'selling' the experience of arrest helped dissolve the fear of imprisonment.
- Protests followed a set calendar.
- Enforced unity across political parties and social groups (ethnic, religious) helped both during the campaign and after the regime fell.
- Sustained pressure even after the dictator's removal helped build the new democratic system that followed.

Tunisia (2010).[10]

- A flat, interconnected world, with social media as a force multiplier, sped the revolution along and helped it spread to Egypt and beyond.

[8]Stéphane Lacroix and Jean-Pierre Filiu, *Revisiting the Arab Spring* (London: Hurst & Company, 2018), pp. 2–3.
[9]Srđa Popović, *Blueprint for Revolution* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015).
[10]Sari Hanafi, 'Lessons of the Jasmine Revolution,' Al Jazeera, 23 January 2011; and Ossama E. Harb, 'Tunisia's Lessons in Revolution,' Egypt Independent, 18 January 2011.

- Every individual contributed something, with unions and NGOs playing a key role in empowering ordinary people.
- Repression ultimately pushed the police and military to abandon the dictator.[11]

Egypt (2011).[12]

- A narrow focus on removing the dictator led, instead, to a takeover by the military (which had sided with the protestors) and the Muslim Brotherhood.
- Young, educated Arabs and Muslims drove a genuinely nonviolent revolt.[13]
- Islamist movements were pushed away from the framing that 'Islam is the solution,' with jihadist groups increasingly sidelined as a result.
- Issue-based social networks, rather than individual leaders, helped subvert state security, build cohesion and coordinate action.[14]
- Offline and online campaigns worked in close synergy.

Syria (2011).[15]

- A lack of overall strategy left a divided, rural, oppressed population converging on Damascus without a real plan, and the effort failed.
- Armed rebellion, in response, allowed the regime to hold power through outright violence.

[11]Larbi Sadiki, 'Egypt and Tunisia: Regime Failure and the "Gymnasiums" of Civic Empowerment,' *Middle East Institute Viewpoints: Revolution and Political Transformation in the Middle East* (September 2011), pp. 19–22.
[12]Jean-Pierre Filiu, *The Arab Revolution – Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 5–148.
[13]Stephen Zunes, 'The Power of Strategic Nonviolent Action in Arab Revolutions,' *Middle East Institute Viewpoints: Revolution and Political Transformation in the Middle East* (August 2011), p. 11.
[14]Basem Fathy, 'A "Cute" Facebook Revolution?,' *Middle East Institute Viewpoints: Revolution and Political Transformation in the Middle East* (August 2011), pp. 39–42.
[15]Sam Hamad, 'Where did the Syrian revolution go wrong?,' TRT World, 16 March 2018. Available at https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/where-did-the-syrian-revolution-go-wrong--15973

Libya (2011).[16]

- The absence of a grand strategy or organised political parties, combined with a military too weak to mutiny against the dictator, produced chaos instead of transition.
- The dictator exploited tribal rifts and violence to cling to control.[17]

Yemen (2011).[18] A lack of grand strategy and popular support, combined with tribal fissures, rebel violence and external interference, led to outright failure.

The Occupy Movement, USA (2011–12).[19]

- Skipping straight to symbolic resistance, without a grand strategy behind it, failed to build lasting participation or momentum — there is no such thing as a nonviolent blitzkrieg.
- Relying on a single protest model (occupying public space) alongside underlying social division (rich versus poor) contributed directly to its collapse.

RELEVANCE FOR GOVERNMENT AND THINK-TANK RISK ASSESSMENT

Read side by side, these seven cases form a working checklist for assessing the durability of any protest movement or regime-stability risk: is there a genuine grand strategy behind it, or only a sequence of symbolic actions; is the structure leaderless or personality-dependent; are security-force defections plausible; and is there a coherent plan for the period immediately after any success? Applying this checklist consistently is precisely the kind of comparative, structured judgement a government or think-tank risk desk should be able to produce on demand.

[16]Frederic Wehrey, 'Why Libya's transition to democracy failed,' Washington Post, 17 February 2016.
[17]Barak Barfi, 'Ties that Bind: The Social Pillars of Arab Authoritarian Regimes,' *Middle East Institute Viewpoints: Revolution and Political Transformation in the Middle East*, September 2011, pp. 15–17.
[18]Adam Bensaid, 'How Yemen's 'Arab Spring' turned into a proxy war,' TRT World, 11 December 2018. Available at https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/how-yemen-s-arab-spring-turned-into-a-proxy-war-22361
[19]Andy Ostroy, 'The Failure of Occupy Wall Street,' HuffPost, 31 May 2012. Available at https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-failure-of-occupy-wal_b_1558787

What 'Why Civil Resistance Works' Found. Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth studied 323 violent and nonviolent campaigns between 1900 and 2006, reaching several striking conclusions.[20] On which approach is more effective: a government crackdown increases a nonviolent campaign's chances of success roughly sixfold; defections from security forces are four times more likely in nonviolent campaigns; and when those defections do occur, they make success roughly forty-eight times more likely. On the advantages of nonviolent campaigns more broadly: repression tends to backfire into greater mass mobilisation and international condemnation, and international support is both easier to obtain and more effective once given.

RELEVANCE FOR CORPORATE REPUTATION AND CRISIS TEAMS

The Stephan–Chenoweth findings are, in effect, a warning against over-reacting to an organised nonviolent campaign — whether it targets a government or a company. A heavy-handed response tends to increase sympathy and defections toward the campaign, not away from it. Any crisis or reputation team facing a sustained activist or boycott campaign should treat 'how hard we push back' as a variable that can make the campaign considerably more effective, not less.

Pakistan's Plan for Kashmiri Azadi

Fixing Pakistan's Paradigm J&K Strategy. With Pakistan's political goals for India and for J&K reasonably clear, the next task is fixing the contours of its actual J&K strategy by identifying the key indicators on the ground.

Indicators Drawn from the Philosophy of Nonviolence.

- A shift in focus toward secessionism and radicalism, rather than terrorism as such.

[20]Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, 'Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,' *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Summer 2008), pp. 7–44.

- Protests and shutdowns designed to outmanoeuvre security forces.

Indicators Drawn from 'From Dictatorship to Democracy.'

- An expanding range of grievances — from the 2008 land transfer to the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board, to a 2009 case of alleged rape, to the 2019–20 abrogation of Article 370.
- Escalating risk-taking during stone-pelting, to raise the perceived momentum of protest.
- Deliberately making the government's own use of pellet guns backfire publicly.
- Targeting the pillars of government directly — subverting the J&K Police, and levelling false allegations at the Army to build pressure for revoking the AF(J&K)SPA-1990.

Indicators Drawn from the Arab Revolutions.

- Using women deliberately to outmanoeuvre security forces.
- Coordinating offline and online protest planning.
- Building issue-based social-media networks — through Jamaat-e-Islami and platforms such as WhatsApp — to subvert government cohesion.

The Right Name for Pakistan's War in J&K. The situation in Jammu & Kashmir was therefore never a simple law-and-order problem. It has been a deliberately hybrid mix of jihad, terrorism, and strategic nonviolent political defiance.

Strategising to Win Peace in Jammu & Kashmir

The End State — the Death of Azadi. Pascal Nazareth observed that, in asymmetric warfare, 'the Gandhian path of attacking the root cause of conflicts is the safest for leaders and nations to follow.'[21] Applying

[21]Pascal Alan Nazareth, *Gandhi the Soul Force Warrior* (New Delhi: Wisdom Tree, 2019), p. 81.

Clausewitz's own definition of a centre of gravity as the 'hub of all power,' the real centre of gravity of the Pakistan-led nexus in J&K is not 'the people' — a label that has long derailed attempts at winning peace — but the idea of azadi itself.

Undoing 'Disturbed.' If the nexus's true centre of gravity is the idea of azadi, then routine counter-terrorist operations and civic-action work, together with a Pakistan strategy built solely around 'No Terror & Talks,' will not be enough to destroy it.[22] Genuine change in J&K's society requires replacing the idea of azadi with the idea of India — precisely the mission the AF(J&K)SPA-1990 originally assigned.

A Four-Pronged J&K Strategy for India. A strategy built on the analysis above needs four prongs: attacking the nexus's centre of gravity; defending India's own centre of gravity, the idea of India itself; defending against the nexus's strategic nonviolent political defiance with an equally smart, nonviolent counter; and engineering a smarter, nonviolent 'Tricolour Revolution' of its own.

Information Warfare for Engineering a Tricolour Revolution. Malcolm Gladwell's 'The Tipping Point' offers a useful way to think about engineering exactly this kind of epidemic. A Tricolour Revolution in J&K first requires a network of mavens, connectors and 'salespeople' present across every social space — social media, madrassas, offices, playgrounds. But ideas do not go viral, or become genuinely sticky, until the surrounding environment is made receptive: messengers have to be seen as friendly, and the message itself has to be catchy. Everyone involved, in effect, has to become a Pied Piper.

Political Defiance Against Azadi. Gladwell's related idea of fixing 'broken windows' — small, incremental corrective actions that produce a much larger

[22]Linda Robinson, Todd C. Helmus, Raphael S. Cohen, Alireza Nader, Andrew Radin, Madeline Magnuson and Katya Migacheva, *Modern Political Warfare: Current Practices and Possible Responses* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), pp. 236–239. Available at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1772.html

second- and third-order effect — applies directly here. The task is to identify J&K's own 'broken windows' at the tactical, operational, strategic and political levels, and to repair each one using Sharp's own five-stage strategy, turned to India's advantage. Every such operation needs to be woven into a single campaign against secessionism, radicalism and terrorism, run — like Pakistan's own Hurriyat calendar — to a deliberate schedule of its own.

Conclusion

Pakistan's likely mid-term objective is influencing India's 2024 general election. Its internal and geostrategic position suggests a strategic pause in J&K from 2020 to 2022, echoing the pause of 2011–2015; its mobilisation for a renewed strategic nonviolent political defiance campaign aimed at the 2024 election could plausibly begin as early as the summer of 2023 — much as its previous cycle began in July 2008. The 2020–2022 window is therefore an opportune moment to set a Tricolour Revolution of India's own in motion.

RELEVANCE FOR GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, THINK TANKS, CORPORATES AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

This paper reads as a piece of comparative political science as much as a military assessment — Gandhi, King, Mandela, Gene Sharp, the Arab Spring, and the Chenoweth–Stephan civil-resistance data, all brought to bear on a single, live case. Its distinguishing feature is that the author did not stop at analysis: the 'Tricolour Revolution' strategy this paper anticipated was subsequently designed and led by the same author in the field, with results referenced by India's Prime Minister and documented by independent media. That combination — rigorous comparative framework plus a personally executed, externally verified outcome — is what the author brings to advisory work on regime and protest-movement risk, corporate reputation and activism strategy, and speaking engagements on how organised nonviolent movements actually succeed or fail.