

BASIC ELEMENTS IN NONVIOLENT STRATEGY

The strategy and tactics of war have been carefully developed and studied, and major attempts have been made to develop underlying theory. Maxims, rules and systems for conducting war have been formulated in response to “urgent want.”¹²³ In the field of nonviolent action there has been to date no comparable development. Gandhi made the most important conscious efforts to develop strategy and tactics in this technique of struggle. He was, however, neither an analyst nor a theorist; hence,

despite his contribution in practice and his passing observations, the analysis and formulation of strategy and tactics have been left to others. Only comparatively recently has attention been turned to the examination of the problems and possibilities of strategy and tactics in nonviolent struggle against would-be internal dictators or invaders.¹²⁴ Attention is needed both to the broad field of strategy and tactics and to the specific problems which are likely to arise in facing particular opponents and in achieving particular objectives.

Strategy and tactics are of course present in various forms and degrees in many aspects of social life. They are, however, especially important in military action and nonviolent action, which are both techniques by which social and political conflicts are conducted when they have developed to the point of open struggle and a pitting of strength. There appear to be some points at which insights from military strategy may be carried over into nonviolent strategy; and there are also points at which military insights must not be carried over, because the nature and dynamics of the two techniques of struggle differ radically. This section is therefore not purely descriptive or analytical of existing observations on strategy in nonviolent action; it also involves the incorporation of principles of military strategy where these seem valid for the nonviolent technique, and where the military sources are clearer and more explicit than observations from nonviolent actionists.

Here are some brief definitions of basic strategic terms: grand strategy is the broadest conception which serves to coordinate and direct all the resources of the struggle group toward the attainment of the objectives of the conflict. Strategy, a more narrow term, is the broad plan of action for the overall struggle, including the development of an advantageous situation, the decision of when to fight, and the broad plan for utilizing various specific actions in the general conflict. Tactics refers to plans for more limited conflicts within the selected strategic plan.

A. The importance of strategy and tactics

Strategy is just as important in nonviolent action as it is in military action. While military strategic concepts and principles cannot automatically be carried over into the field of nonviolent action, the basic importance of strategy and tactics is in no way diminished. Attention is therefore needed to the general principles of strategy and tactics appropriate

to this technique (both those peculiar to it and those which may be carried over from military strategy and other types of conflict). These aspects need to be considered, of course, within the context of the unique dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent struggle.

People from a military background may find it strange to discover certain exponents of nonviolent means stressing the importance of strategy and tactics. And people from a background in religious or philosophical nonviolence may also be surprised to find strategy and tactics stressed instead of moral principles and conscience. Therefore, some brief discussion is needed of the function of strategy and tactics in nonviolent action.

In order to influence the outcome of a struggle, it is important to choose the course of action wisely and carry it out carefully and intelligently. It is quite inadequate simply to say that one will be moral and do what is right, for there may be several courses of action which are all morally “right”; what is “right” may involve maintaining or creating maximum opposition to “evil,” and if so the problem is how to do this; in order to meet one’s moral responsibility and maximize the effects of one’s action, those actions must be carefully chosen and carried out at the right time. Specialists in the study and conduct of war have long since learned that the best results were not achieved simply by an uncontrolled outburst of violence and sacrifice. As Liddell Hart has said: “. . . the conduct of war must be controlled by reason if its object is to be fulfilled . . . The better your strategy, the easier you will gain the upper hand, and the less it will cost you.”¹²⁵ As in war, strategy and tactics are used in nonviolent action so that the courage, sacrifice, numbers, and so on of the nonviolent actionists may make the greatest possible impact.

The course of the struggle may take any of a wide variety of forms, depending on the strategies, tactics and methods chosen to meet the particular needs of the situation. The specific acts of protest, noncooperation and intervention in the course of a nonviolent campaign will be most effective if they fit together as parts of a comprehensive whole, so that each specific action contributes in a maximum way to the development and successful conclusion of the struggle. The optimal combination of specific actions is therefore best achieved where leaders with an adequate grasp of the situation and the technique are able to chart the course of the campaigns. “Only the general who conducts a campaign can know the objective of each particular move,” wrote Gandhi.¹²⁶ Gandhi chose the issues, places, times and methods of action with extreme care, so that his movement was placed in the strongest position possible vis-à-vis the British, and so that the actions themselves conveyed the greatest under-

standing to his fellow Indians and aroused the maximum sympathy and support from everyone. Just as strategy is important in labor strikes,¹²⁷ so it is important in more highly developed types of nonviolent struggle— even more so when it is directed against extreme dictatorships.

There is ample historical evidence of the importance of strategy and tactics.¹²⁸ Sometimes this evidence is of a negative type, showing effects of the absence of strategy or of failure to make important decisions on strategic and tactical questions. Sometimes difficult problems which arose in the course of given conflicts could have been avoided or more satisfactorily resolved had there been greater understanding of the role and principles of nonviolent strategy. On other occasions, nonviolent campaigns have been continued after the point when achievement of almost all the objectives and demands was possible—far more than is usually the case in military conflicts; subsequent events then led to the defeat of the movement. Or in other cases the nonviolent movement regarded itself as defeated even though by normal standards it was victorious; as a result, that nonviolent action was eventually replaced by military action which was believed to be more effective. The American colonists' struggles against the British government can without difficulty be interpreted in this way. Considerable light would be shed on the problems and general principles of nonviolent strategy if careful strategic and tactical analyses were undertaken of a series of nonviolent struggles. It is also important to have acceptance by the grievance group of the strategy for the struggle; in the case of Finland in 1901, disagreement on how to deal with the opponent seems to have severely accentuated existing internal conflicts.¹²⁹

Levels of strategy

In developing a strategic plan, one needs to understand that there are four levels of strategy.² Grand strategy and strategy were very briefly introduced earlier. However, it is necessary to explore them in more depth here. At the most fundamental level is *grand strategy*. Then there is *strategy* itself, followed by *tactics* and *methods*.

Grand strategy can be called the master concept for the conduct of the conflict. It is the broadest conception that serves to coordinate and direct all the resources of the struggle group toward the attainment of the objectives of the conflict.

² These definitions were drafted by Robert Helvey, Bruce Jenkins, and Gene Sharp. Unpublished memorandum, Albert Einstein Institution.

Strategy is very similar, but applies to more limited phases of the overall struggle, such as campaigns for specific objectives. Strategy includes the development of an advantageous situation, the decision of when to fight, and the broad schema for utilizing smaller engagements within the adopted strategy.

Tactics refers to plans for conducting still more limited engagements within the selected strategy-limited in scale, number of participants, time, or particular issue. Tactics refer to how a group will apply its chosen methods and act in a specific encounter with the opponents.

Methods In nonviolent action are the many individual forms of action, such as picketing, social boycotts, consumers' boycotts, general strikes, civil disobedience, sit-ins, and parallel government, which were surveyed in Chapter Four. Among the factors to be considered in the selection of the methods are the mechanism by which change is sought (conversion, accommodation, nonviolent coercion, or disintegration), the degree of control by the resisters of the opponents' sources of power, and the status, strengths, weaknesses, and sources of power of the resisters.

If any of the four levels of strategy is inadequately conceived or developed, or even absent, the overall nonviolent struggle will be seriously weakened. Without knowledge of the broad picture, one may neglect to prepare, or be unable to take, effective steps to achieve the objectives.

The choice of the grand strategy, the implementing strategies, the tactics, and the methods to be used should determine the general direction and the conduct of the conflict throughout its course. These four levels of strategy will be discussed much more fully in the following chapter.

In implementing a strategy, careful support activities are needed. These will require planning and preparations. Such activities are tasks for logistical work. *Logistics* include a range of detailed supportive activities for the conduct of a conflict, such as the arrangement of finances, transportation, communications, and supplies.

LEVELS OF STRATEGY

With the knowledge gleaned from the strategic estimate and the objectives of the nonviolent struggle group in mind, what is the broad conception of how the struggle is to be waged and how the objectives are to be achieved? Making this determination requires, among other things, identification of the intended mechanism of change in nonviolent struggle that is to be relied upon and determination of whether more than one campaign will be required. This is the domain of strategic thinking.

A strategy is the conception of how best to act in order to achieve objectives in a conflict. Strategy is concerned with whether, when, or how to fight, and how to achieve maximum effectiveness in order to gain certain ends. Strategy is the plan for the practical distribution, adaptation, and application of the available means to attain the desired objectives.

As was previously discussed, there are four levels of strategy: grand strategy, strategy, tactics, and specific methods.⁴ The most

⁴ These definitions were drafted by Robert Helvey, Bruce Jenkins, and Gene Sharp. Unpublished memorandum, Albert Einstein Institution.

fundamental is grand strategy. Then there is strategy itself for more limited campaigns, followed by tactics and methods that are used to implement the campaign strategies. An understanding of these four elements, and the differences between them, is essential if one is to attempt to develop strategies for a specific conflict.

It should be remembered, of course, that there is no single strategy applicable to the use of nonviolent struggle on all occasions. No single blueprint exists or can be developed to serve all conflicts. Each situation is somewhat different, often radically so. However, general guidelines can be developed for planning strategies, keeping in mind the factors we discussed previously. Planners of a grand strategy for a specific conflict will require a profound understanding, not only of the conflict situation, but also of the technique of nonviolent struggle, and of general strategic principles. Some of these will be discussed in Chapter Thirty-seven.

Grand strategy

Grand strategy is the master concept for the conduct of the conflict. A grand strategy is the conception that serves to coordinate and direct all appropriate and available resources (economic, human, moral, etc.) of the population or group to attain its objectives in a conflict. It is an overall plan for conducting the struggle that makes it possible to anticipate how the struggle as a whole should proceed. How can the struggle be won? How is the desired change to be achieved?

Grand strategy includes consideration of the rightness of the cause of the struggle group, evaluation and utilization of other pressures and influences apart from the technique of struggle, and the decision on the conditions under which resort to open struggle will be had.

Grand strategy very importantly includes the selection of the technique of conflict, or the ultimate sanction, which will be used as reserve leverage in actual or implied threats during negotiations, and later used in an open confrontation of forces if that occurs. In this case, the technique is nonviolent struggle. The selected grand strategy also sets the basic framework for the development of strategies for waging the conflict in more limited campaigns directed toward particular objectives.

Additionally, nonviolent struggle can sometimes be combined in a grand strategy with the use of other means of action that are not violent, and therefore do not threaten the operation of the technique. Fact-finding, publicity, public education, appeals to the opponents, and sometimes negotiations, as well as electoral campaigns in some cases, could in many situations be beneficially used in connection with nonviolent struggle. These means are often used in tandem with economic boycotts and labor strikes, for example. Lawsuits or other legal action have at times also been used to support nonviolent action, as in the case of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott.

Grand strategy also includes consideration of how the struggle itself relates to the achievement of the objectives for which the conflict is waged. The projection of the likely long-term consequences of the conflict also falls within grand strategy.

A grand strategy for a nonviolent struggle should preferably include not only bringing an end to that which is rejected, but also the establishment of something new to replace it. For example, a grand strategy that limits its objective to merely destroying an incumbent dictatorship runs a great risk of producing another dictatorship. A better purpose might be to change the system of domination and to institute a superior political system of greater freedom and democratic controls.

The grand strategy needs to sketch in broad strokes how the nonviolent struggle group should conduct the conflict. This would broadly stretch from the present to a future situation in which its objectives have been achieved. Which general means of pressure and action might be applied in that effort? What is to be the main thrust of the nonviolent struggle against the opponents? Is the pressure to be applied through economic losses? By undermining the opponents' legitimacy? Through political paralysis? What about international pressures? Will other pressures be utilized?

Very importantly, is the nonviolent struggle group able to weaken or remove most or all of the sources of power of the opponent group? These sources include authority (or legitimacy), human resources, skills and knowledge, intangible factors, material resources, and sanctions. Weakening or severing these sources of power by attacking their pillars of support is crucial in struggles against highly repressive regimes, and can cause the power of these regimes to crumble.

If the resisters are strong enough, have sufficient numbers, and focus their noncooperation on these sources, even an extremely ruthless regime can potentially be weakened or disintegrated. The Serbian struggle in October 2000 is an example.

At the beginning of the conflict, however, efforts to fully neutralize or remove the opponents' sources of power are unlikely to be within the capacity of the struggle group. The results of the strategic estimate should help to determine whether the group is capable of applying the required pressures with sufficient force to succeed in a single campaign, or whether it should plan for a series of more limited campaigns. This calculation is a necessary part of the grand strategy, and is discussed more fully in Chapter Thirty-seven.

Strategy

Individual strategies for campaigns with more limited objectives are very important. Strategies for campaigns guide how particular conflicts are to be waged within the scope of the broader struggle and the grand strategy. These limited strategies sketch how specific campaigns shall develop, and how their separate components shall be fitted together so as best to achieve their objectives. Strategy also includes the allocation of tasks to particular conflict. Sound campaign strategies help guide the struggle by taking the skeletal framework of the chosen grand strategy and filling out into a comprehensive conception to direct specific aspects of the struggle.

Although related, development of a grand strategy and formulation of campaign strategies are two separate processes. Only after the grand strategy has been determined can the specific campaign strategies be fully developed. Campaign strategies will need to be designed to achieve and reinforce the grand strategic objectives. Factors in the formulation of campaign strategies include the development of an advantageous situation, the decision of when to wage a campaign, and the broad schema for utilizing more limited engagements within the strategy to bring success.

Often, the targets of campaign strategies should reflect the broad issues or grievances outlined in the grand strategy. If the conflict is largely of an economic nature, and a grand strategy has been adopted that prescribes the predominant use of economic pressures, then the strategies for selective campaigns will most likely focus on specific economic targets and will apply pressures such as labor strikes and economic boycotts. If, however, the grand strategy is focused on gaining political freedom, opposing dictatorial rule, or upholding freedom of expression, then the strategies for individual campaigns may focus on specific expressions of those issues, employing relevant methods such as distribution of prohibited literature, exercise of banned free speech, or other methods that may dramatize the extreme nature of the autocratic rule or the violations of human rights and civil liberties.

This is not to say that only economic pressures can be used in struggles over economic issues, or that only political pressures should be applied in predominantly political struggles. Economic noncooperation can be effective in forcing political policy changes - and even regime change - in some cases. Nevertheless, it is often beneficial when planning campaign strategies to select specific issues and targets that are easily recognizable as representative of the broad grievance identified in the grand strategy.

Tactics

The strategy for a campaign for a limited objective will determine what smaller, "tactical," plans and specific methods of action should be used in pursuit of the main goal. A good strategy remains impotent unless it is put into action with sound tactics. However, skillful selection and implementation of tactics will not make up for a bad overall strategy. The choice of tactics to implement a strategy may involve consideration of different fronts, groups, time periods, and methods.

A tactic is a limited plan of action, based on a conception of how best in a restricted phase of a conflict to utilize the available means of fighting to achieve a limited objective as part of the wider campaign strategy. To be most effective, the tactics and methods must be chosen and applied so that they really assist the application of the strategy and contribute to achieving the requirements for its success.

Tactics prescribe how particular methods of action are applied, or how particular groups of resisters shall act in a specific situation. For example, in a labor struggle in which factory workers are striking for union recognition, increased wages, or improved working conditions, tactics include selection of the timing of the strike, of how workers are persuaded to participate in the strike, of what action is to be taken to discourage strike breakers, of how strikers can be supported economically while not working, of what efforts are to be made to encourage public sympathy and support, and of what contacts are to be made with the factory owners.

Tactics are thus the plans for conducting more limited engagements within the selected strategy-limited in scale, participants, time, or specific issue. They specify how a group will act in a specific encounter with the opponents.

A tactic fits within the campaign strategy, just as campaign strategies fit within the grand strategy. Tactics are always concerned with struggle, although strategy also includes wider considerations, in addition to how to fight. A particular tactic can only be understood in relationship to the methods it employs and as part of the broader strategy of a campaign.

Methods

In order to achieve the best results and the most effective implementation of the developed strategies, the choice of nonviolent "weapons," or specific methods, will need to be made carefully and wisely. Many past conflicts have started with the choice of the specific methods of action to be used, rather than development of long-term plans for conducting the conflict. This is not recommended. Instead, the wiser sequence is the development of the grand strategy first, then development of a strategy for an individual campaign. Only then can the planners select the tactics and specific methods of action that are most appropriate. Available methods were listed in Chapter Four.⁵ There are others.

⁵ For full definitions of the methods with historical examples, see Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* Part Two, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*. There are, of course, many additional methods that exist or can be developed.

The characteristics of the three general classes of methods need to be reviewed.

- **Protest and persuasion:** These methods include vigils, parades, petitions, picketing, and walk-outs. They are largely symbolic in their effect and produce an awareness of the existence of dissent.
- **Noncooperation:** These methods include social boycotts, economic boycotts, labor strikes, and many forms of political noncooperation, including boycotts of government positions, civil disobedience, and mutiny. The methods of noncooperation, widely applied, are likely to cause difficulties in maintaining the normal operation and efficiency of the opponents' political or economic system. In extreme situations, these methods may threaten the existence of a regime.
- **Intervention:** These methods include hunger strikes, sit-ins, nonviolent obstruction, creation or strengthening of alternative institutions, and parallel government. They possess some of the qualities of both previous groups, but may additionally constitute a more direct challenge to the opponents' regime. By disruption of various types, they make possible-but do not guarantee-a greater impact with smaller numbers, provided that courage and discipline are maintained despite repression.

In most serious conflicts, the methods of noncooperation are especially important because they may threaten the capacity of the system to operate. They will require skill in their selection and their application. The advantage of these methods of noncooperation is that, adequately applied for sufficient time, they can be coercive and can even disintegrate the opponents' regime.

The methods of noncooperation often require much time and the participation of many people to achieve their impact. Many of the methods of nonviolent intervention, on the other hand, can be applied

by small numbers of people. However, these methods usually require considerable discipline or preparation in order to be successfully applied, and some can be applied only for limited periods of time. Some of these methods of nonviolent intervention may also be met with especially severe repression. Some methods of nonviolent intervention, such as parallel government, require massive support.

Frequently, methods that apply differing pressures and use different mechanisms may be combined effectively within the same campaign. Fast rules are not possible, but effective combinations of methods require wise strategic planning.

In most struggles, more than one method will be used. In such cases, the order in which the methods are applied, the ways in which they are combined, how they influence the application of other methods, and how they contribute to the struggle as a whole all become very important.

Sometimes, the combination of methods is relatively simple, especially in a local or limited type of action. Economic boycotts have been used, for example, in support of sit-ins against racial discrimination, and picketing is commonly used in support of strikes. When a general strike is used to support or oppose the mutiny of government troops, however, the situation becomes more complicated, with larger numbers of methods likely to be used.

Whoever plans the nonviolent struggle should be familiar with the full range of nonviolent methods of action available for possible application. The impact of the various methods differs considerably, even assuming that they are competently applied. For example, a protest fast by a highly respected person will have a very different effect than would bureaucratic obstruction by civil servants. The effect of a fast or bureaucratic obstruction, in turn, would differ significantly from a widespread general strike or refusal by police to locate and arrest political resisters. Different methods need to be chosen for different situations, objectives, and strategies.

D. Selecting the strategy and tactics

The general strategy, types of tactics, and choice of methods planned by the leaders in advance will usually determine the general direction and conduct of the campaign throughout its course. Their selection is therefore highly important. As in war, a large number of factors must be considered in the selection of strategy and tactics. However, the quite differ-

ent dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent struggle appear to make the interrelationships of these factors more intimate and complex than in military struggle.

Fundamental to this task is careful consideration of the opponent's primary and secondary objectives, and the various objectives of the nonviolent group. It will be highly important to evaluate accurately the opponent's and one's own strengths and weaknesses, and to take these into account in the formulation of strategy and tactics. Failure to do so may lead either to overly ambitious plans which fail because they are not based on a realistic assessment of possibilities, or to excessively timid plans which may fail precisely because they attempt too little. Evaluation of the strengths and nature of the opponent group may assist the nonviolent leadership in formulating a course of action most likely to produce or aggravate weaknesses and internal conflicts within it. Correct assessment of the weaknesses of the nonviolent group itself may be used in the selection of strategy and tactics which are intended to bypass them, and which may possibly also contribute to strengthening them. Estimates as to the length of the forthcoming struggle will be needed and will be important for outlining the course of action. But provision must also be made for an error of judgment in such estimates and for contingency tactics if the struggle turns out to be long instead of brief.

Careful consideration of other factors in the general situation will be necessary to determine whether conditions are suitable for the launching of nonviolent action, and, if so, what the general and specific conditions of the situation mean for the planning of the campaign. Sibley has emphasized that

. . . the effective use of nonviolent resistance depends not only on adequate training and commitment, but also on the "objective" situation: external conditions must be ripe for effective campaigns, and if they are not, it is the part both of wisdom and of morality not to resort to nonviolent resistance.¹⁶⁵

Gandhi insisted that in formulating and carrying out the strategy and tactics of the struggle the leaders need to be responsive to the demonstrated qualities of their movement and to the developing situation:

In a satyagraha campaign the mode of fight and the choice of tactics, e.g. whether to advance or retreat, offer civil resistance or organize nonviolent strength through constructive work and purely selfless humanitarian service, are determined according to the exigencies of the situation.¹⁶⁶

Strategy and tactics are of course interdependent. Precise tactics can only be formulated in the context of the overall strategy, and an intimate understanding of the whole situation and the specific methods of action which are open. Skillful selection and implementation of tactics will not make up for a bad overall strategy, and a good strategy remains impotent unless carried to fulfillment with sound tactics: “. . . only great tactical results can lead to great strategical ones . . .”¹⁶⁷

Liddell Hart has suggested that the particular course of action should have more than one objective.

Take a line of operation which offers alternate objectives. For you will thus put your opponent on the horns of a dilemma, which goes far to assure the chance of gaining one objective at least—whichever he guards least—and may enable you to gain one after the other.

Alternative objectives allow you to keep the opportunity of gaining an objective; whereas a single objective, unless the enemy is helplessly inferior, means the certainty that you will not gain it—once the enemy is no longer uncertain as to your aim. There is no more common mistake than to confuse a single line of operation, which is usually wise, with a single objective, which is usually futile.¹⁶⁸

To a large degree this frequently happens in nonviolent action anyhow without particular planning, since the nonviolent group aims at achieving both particular objectives and more general changes in attitudes and power relationships within each group and between the contending groups. These more general changes are likely to be taking place during the whole course of the conflict, and may be achieved to a considerable degree even in instances where the particular political goal is not won. However, attention is also needed to the possibility of applying Liddell Hart's strategic principle to concrete limited goals, so long as this does not violate the principle of concentration discussed previously.

The progressive development of the movement, partially characterized by the staged introduction of new methods of action (as discussed in the previous section), will also benefit from careful strategic planning. Such development will help to ensure that the alteration of methods and new courses of action will contribute to the maximum utilization of the actionists' forces, facilitate an improvement in their morale, and increase the chances of victory. Without clear strategic insight, changes from one type of action to another may take place without good purpose or effect, and the discouraging results which may follow can lead first to increased uncertainty as to what to do, then to demoralization, and finally to disintegration of the nonviolent movement.

Strategic phasing of nonviolent campaigns is not new of course. However, greater understanding of the nature of the technique and of principles of strategy now make possible a fuller development and more effective utilization of such phasing than has been possible before. Three earlier examples of phasing are offered here. The provincial convention of Virginia, meeting in early August 1774, outlined a phased campaign of economic noncooperation to achieve its objectives. The convention set dates at which new phases of their campaign were to go into effect, subject to alterations agreed to by Virginia delegates in the Continental Congress. Starting at once, no tea was to be imported or used. If Boston were compelled to reimburse the East India Company for losses (as of tea in the Boston Tea Party), the boycott would be extended to all articles sold by the company until the money was returned. On November 1, an absolute boycott was to be imposed on all goods (except medicines) imported directly or indirectly from Britain, including all slaves from wherever they were brought. If colonial grievances were not corrected by August 10, 1775 (a year later), then an absolute program of nonexportation of all articles to Britain was to be imposed. The year interval before nonexportation took effect allowed for payment of debts to British merchants, and for Virginia tobacco growers to shift to crops which could be used at home.¹⁶⁹ This phased campaign drafted by Virginians foreshadowed the program adopted by the First Continental Congress.

A phased campaign of peasant action was issued in Russia by the Second Congress of the Peasants Union, meeting in Moscow in November 1905, during the revolution of that year. The Congress called for the use of methods of peaceful pressure (such as the peasants' collective refusal to buy or rent land from the landlords) to achieve the free transfer of land to the peasants. If these methods did not produce results, then the Union would call for a general agrarian strike to coincide with a general strike in the cities. If the tsarist government harassed the Union, it would call on the peasants to refuse to pay taxes or to serve in the armed forces.¹⁷⁰

The Pan-Africanists in South Africa had planned their campaign of defiance of the Pass Laws in the spring of 1960 as simply the first stage of a three-front long-range struggle: 1) *political*, with the international aim of isolating South Africa (including United Nations condemnation and expulsion from the British Commonwealth) and the domestic aim of ending collaboration and submission by the African people upon which the government depended; 2) *labor*, the withdrawal of cheap African labor would bring an economic collapse, and therefore stay-at-home strikes

were designed to induce industrialists to demand changes in government policies; and 3) *psychological*, the Africans “would discover the power they have even without weapons and they would never be the same again.” Despite clear thought and certain planning for a phased campaign, however, the organization had not anticipated that the government would seize the initiative by declaring a state of emergency.¹⁷¹

While specific tactics for the later stages of the struggle cannot be formulated in advance, it is possible to explore a variety of general approaches for later consideration. Tactics for use in the early (and possibly intermediate) stages may, however, be successfully selected in advance if one has accurately anticipated the situation and form of attack.

A variety of approaches may be used in tactics, involving different fronts, groups, time periods, methods and other factors. For example, the brunt of the responsibility for carrying out the action may, after certain periods of time or certain political events, be shifted from one group to another, or different roles may be assigned to particular groups. The most dangerous tasks (involving, for example, the use of the most daring methods, such as those of nonviolent intervention) could be assigned to groups with especially high discipline, experience, skill, or training, while other important but less dangerous tasks could be undertaken by groups more typical of the general population. At times particular responsibilities would fall upon certain occupational or geographical groups because of the policies and actions of the opponent. Where the initiative lay with the nonviolent actionists, they could deliberately choose to undertake simultaneous actions on more than one front if their strength and the general situation were such as to make this wise. At times tactics could involve geographical fronts as well as political fronts, as in the use of non-violent raids or obstruction; far more often, however, there would be no semblance of a geographical front and the resistance would be more diffuse and general, as in the case of a stay-at-home. The selection of tactics will be influenced significantly by the immediate and long-term political aims of the nonviolent actionists, and by the mechanisms through which change is sought. Various types of tactics will produce different problems for the usurper and have different effects on the nonviolent population.

Variation in tactics may be important in order to add variety and interest (and often newsworthiness) to the campaign. Such changes may serve other purposes, such as to involve new sections of the population, to augment psychological, political and economic pressures on the opponent, expand or contract the front and to test the discipline, morale and

capacity of the nonviolent actionists. Tactical changes may be designed to achieve a variety of effects on the opponent, leadership, bystanders, or police and troops charged with repression. For example, Ebert points to the deliberate use in some cases of small groups of demonstrators (instead of large ones) and time gaps between demonstrations (instead of continuous ones), as means of reducing brutality in the repression by making it easier for the opponent's police and troops to see the actionists as individual human beings, and by allowing them time for reflection and reconsideration between particular demonstrations.¹⁷²

The unrolling of the strategy and implementation of tactics in specific acts takes place in a context of a sensitivity and responsiveness to the developing conflict situation. Very careful and precise plans may have been prepared for commencing the attack. Following the beginning of the struggle, however, room must be allowed for flexibility in the further development, modification and application of the strategy and tactics.¹⁷³ Liddell Hart has emphasized the importance of flexibility in the formulation and implementation of the anticipated course of action:

Ensure that both plan and disposition are flexible—adaptable to circumstances. Your plan should foresee and provide for a next step in case of success or failure, or partial success—which is the most common case in war. Your dispositions (or formation) should be such as to allow this exploitation or adaption in the shortest possible time.¹⁷⁴

The capacity to respond to unforeseen (or unforeseeable) events must be acutely developed. Especially important is the response, morale and behavior of the nonviolent actionists and potential supporters. If they have proved too unprepared and weak to carry out the plans, the plans must be altered, either by taking “some dramatic step which will strike the imagination of the people, and restore confidence in the possibility of full resistance through nonviolence,” or by calling a temporary retreat in order to prepare for a future stronger effort.¹⁷⁵ There is no substitute for, or shortcut to, strength in a movement of nonviolent action. If the necessary strength and ability to persist in face of penalties and suffering do not exist, that fact must be recognized and given an intelligent response. “A wise general does not wait till he is actually routed; he withdraws in time in an orderly manner from a position which he knows he would not be able to hold.”¹⁷⁶ The leadership will, just as in a military conflict, need to recognize frankly the weaknesses in their volunteers and potential supporters and find ways of correcting these.¹⁷⁷

The means for doing this will vary with the conditions of the given situation.

On the other hand, the struggle may reveal significant weaknesses in the opponent which may call for prompt alteration of the tactics and speeding up the tempo of the struggle. At times, too, the struggle may reveal the nonviolent actionists and the general population to be stronger than had been expected, and then it may be possible to make a more rapid advance on a sound basis than originally conceived.

Appendix A

PREPARING A STRATEGIC ESTIMATE FOR NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE*

Before attempting to plan an overall grand strategy for a long-term phased nonviolent struggle, or limited strategies for individual campaigns within that struggle, it is necessary first to gather and analyze much information about the context in which the impending conflict will occur.

It is insufficient simply to be familiar with the technique of nonviolent struggle and understand how it operates, although this is a vital prerequisite. Rather, in order to make the application of nonviolent struggle as effective as possible in a given set of circumstances, strategic planning is also essential.

It is impossible to develop a wise strategy for the conduct of a particular struggle if the planners are not intimately familiar with the "conflict situation," or the context in which the struggle will take place. It is essential to know and compare the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses (actual and potential) of the groups that will be contending in the future conflict, as well as of those groups that will not initially be directly involved. Geographic, social, economic, political, cultural, climatological, and other factors also need to be examined.

The preparation of a strategic estimate can provide this needed knowledge. This, in turn, will increase the ability of strategists of the nonviolent struggle to prepare a wise strategy that will maximize the chances of achieving their objective.

The aim of this essay is to provide guidelines for preparing this strategic estimate. We will first explain what the strategic estimate is. Then, we will survey factors that need to be taken into consideration when gathering relevant information and preparing that analysis. Finally, we will comment on the role of the strategic estimate, its uses and limitations.

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This appendix is based on the work of Robert Helvey, President of the Albert Einstein Institution.

The importance of a strategic estimate

Military planners usually prepare a strategic estimate prior to developing plans for their campaigns. The information produced by this process is extremely useful for nonviolent struggles as well. So far as is known, however, a deliberate and thorough examination of the conflict situation of the type required for preparing a strategic estimate has never been done in preparation for past nonviolent struggles. Instead, past nonviolent struggle leaders have, at best, relied on less rigorous impressions of the impending conflict situation. Past struggle groups have therefore often been less prepared than they could have been for developing a course of action to increase their chances of success. The proper use of a strategic estimate can help to prepare them more adequately, as well as to reduce the likelihood that they will overlook important facts in planning a nonviolent struggle.

At its most basic level, a strategic estimate IS a calculation and comparison of the strengths and the weaknesses of the nonviolent struggle group and of that group's opponents, whom we shall call the "opponent group." In some conflicts, the opponent group may be the government itself or a specific part of the ruling regime. In other cases, the opponent group could be a nongovernmental body, such as an educational institution, an economic organization, a religious body, a transportation system, or some other type of institution. A nongovernmental opponent group may have the backing of the current government, with its means of control and repression, or it may not. The proper identification of such relationships is, in fact, one of the first tasks in preparing a strategic estimate.

Of particular value to those involved in strategy development would be the sections that contain analyses regarding the pillars of support of both the opponent group and the nonviolent struggle group, as well as other political considerations. Also, those responsible for propaganda would find demographic considerations quite useful. Information regarding military units, such as locations and capabilities, would be quite useful to operational planners in anticipating military responses to applications of nonviolent resistance. Other components of the strategic estimate will be relevant to other elements of the chosen strategy.

In order to gain the relevant information for the strategic estimate, however, it will take time and energy. While this information can be very valuable, strategic planners must also remember that the strategic estimate is not the only important factor in developing strategies and supporting plans for a future struggle. Therefore, it needs to be kept in perspective. Strategic planners need to avoid becoming bogged down in the minutiae of the situation and need to keep the strategic estimate within the context of other important elements in the development of strategies and the formulation of plans for their implementation. In this regard, one should be mindful of the advice given by Carl von Clausewitz that "strategy forms the theory of using battle for the purposes of war." In other words, using in part the analysis of information gathered for the strategic estimate, the strategist determines objectives, times and places for campaigns, while those who will wage these battles prepare their own supporting plans.³⁰⁶ They, in turn, may draw upon the strategic estimate to complete their own estimate of the situation. The emphasis placed upon some portions of the strategic estimate provides an indication of the importance to the planners in determining both the strategy and also how this information should influence supporting plans.

The strategic estimate of the conflict situation is perhaps the most fundamental document on which a strategic planner relies. It is the product of intense, structured, and focused intellectual scrutiny that contributes to greater understanding of the situation in which the struggle will be waged, and the selection of the most effective courses of action to achieve the objectives of the conflict. Since the strategic operational plan is based heavily on the strategic estimate, both the quantity of information analyzed and the quality of the analysis itself help to determine the quality of the developed strategy. Ideally, this document should be critically reviewed in draft form, so that others can challenge the accuracy of facts and the quality of analyses.

Inaccurate or unrealistic views of the strengths, the weaknesses, and the capacities of the contending parties will produce unwise strategies and will likely spell defeat. Although it may at times be necessary to make assumptions about

³⁰⁶ Neue Bellona 9 (7805), p. 271. Quoted from Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 190.

the contending parties when facts cannot be obtained, no assumption is as good as a fact. So it is important to make as few assumptions as possible. If assumptions are used, extra care should be taken to ensure their probable validity. Of course, it is far better to use facts wherever possible.

Needed information

There are seven subject areas about which the persons preparing the strategic estimate should seek solid information. These are:

1. The general conflict situation
2. The issues at stake and the objectives of both parties to the conflict
3. The opponent group
4. The nonviolent struggle group (and the wider grievance group)
5. Third parties (friendly, hostile, and neutral or uncommitted)
6. Dependency balances

On the basis of the information and the understanding produced by such an examination, the nonviolent struggle group will be better equipped to prepare wise strategies to guide the conduct of the conflict.

The strategic estimate serves multiple purposes. The strategic estimate process will greatly assist in identifying strategy options. Additionally, it becomes an important reference document for developing supporting plans to implement the chosen strategies. The strategic estimate is also useful when developing policies and responding to crises, and for providing organizations with a source of sound and thoughtful analysis and factual data.

As you review the following information requirements contained in a strategic estimate, it may appear quite daunting-and it is, indeed. But rather than visualizing one person attempting to gather and analyze all this information, you should be thinking, Who knows about this particular topic and can that person or

persons provide information to me? Once information is received from subject experts, that which is directly relevant to the estimating process can be included in the strategic estimate.

1. The general conflict situation

It is useful to list here in some detail some of the many categories of information about the general conflict situation in which the nonviolent struggle will be conducted. These may provide extensive and in-depth knowledge of the conflict situation. It is highly desirable to be familiar with all factors that could have a conceivable impact either on the opponent group or on the nonviolent struggle group. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Terrain and geography**
(including land forms and waterways, and how they may assist or impede one or the other side in the conflict)
- **Transportation**
(including all available means of transportation for either side in the conflict, local and national transportation infrastructure, alternative routes, and how these might impact the capabilities of either side)
- **Communications**
(all types, access, extent of controls, surveillance, Issues of privacy, etc.)
- **Climate and weather**
(including seasonal variations and their possible impact on transportation, communications, food and agriculture, and activities of either side)
- **Political system and governing regime**
(including their characteristics and capacities on various levels, from the top echelons down to small units; any variations in central control or local initiatives; and who controls the State and the roles or functions of the State, political parties, and controlled subordinate organizations)
- **Economic system**
(including both type and condition of the economy, strength and degree of independence of unions and business sectors, and degree of State intervention in the economy)

- **Judicial system**

(especially the degree to that this remains independent of the control of the State or of the opponent group)

- **Demographics**

(information about both the total population and the segment of the population related to the conflict, including statistical breakdowns by age groups, gender, population growth and death rates, population densities in varying locations, and literacy rates)

- **Population strata**

(including socioeconomic classes, ethnicities, religion, language, culture, status of indigenous and immigrant populations, etc.; geographical distribution of such; any variations or differences in these groups in satisfaction, loyalties, or economic interests; and also any conflicts between or among different population groups, whether or not the reasons for such conflicts are related to the nonviolent struggle)

- **Control of economic resources and life support**

(fuel, food, water, etc., and consequences for dependency of one side on the other)

- **Status of civil society**

(extent and condition of nongovernmental organizations and social life, including degree of organization and autonomy from the State; and status of other aspects of social life and organization that lie outside control of the political system and/or the regime)

In addition, it is important to examine the immediate general political situation. Are special controls, such as martial law or other means of serious repression, in effect? What are the current political and economic currents and trends?

2. The issues and objectives of the contending groups

It is very important to identify or develop accurate and clear statements of the issues at stake in the conflict from the perspectives of both the opponent group and the prospective nonviolent struggle group. These statements may often be based on declarations by each group, but sometimes additional information from other sources, independent observers, or other groups may be required.

Also, it is important to identify and recognize the differing objectives of the two groups. To what degree are these objectives compatible or incompatible? The stated objectives are not always the full story. Both groups may have not only short-term objectives but also long-term goals that may not be avowed at the time. Both types are significant in preparing strategies for the nonviolent struggle group.

Clear objectives for the nonviolent struggle group are prerequisites for developing strategies and supporting plans for their implementation. If objectives have not been stated at the time the strategic estimate is being prepared, it would be appropriate to make very careful assessments about the aims of both the opponent group and the struggle group.

The issues and objectives of the two contending groups, and how fundamental each side believes them to be, are likely to have important consequences on the actions of both sides during the conflict. These issues and objectives will likely influence the degree to which the opponent group is determined to resist or repress the resistance. The issues and objectives will also likely influence the tenacity of the nonviolent struggle group to persist in the struggle despite repression. Additionally, the degree to which third parties or the general population are willing to side with the nonviolent struggle group will often also depend partly on how such sectors view the issues at stake in the conflict.

3. The opponent group

Full and detailed knowledge of the opponent group that the nonviolent struggle group will face in the pending conflict is extremely important. Such knowledge should focus on the opponents' capabilities rather than on their statements of intent or on assumptions about their interests or intentions. Detailed responses to the following questions about the opponent group are required:

- What is their political system?
- What is their social and cultural system?
- What is their economic system?

- Are these systems independent of each other, or closely interrelated?
Are they dependent in any way on the political, social, or economic systems of the potential nonviolent struggle group?
- To what degree are these respective systems controlled by the State structure?
- What is the nature and importance of any religious, moral, ideological, or other doctrinal beliefs and commitments of the opponent group?
- What are the demographics of the opponent group? (age, gender, birth and death rates, literacy, educational standards, and geographical distribution, etc.)
- What is the degree of support for the opponent group's system or regime among the general population and institutions?
- What is the ideological situation (the degree of doctrinal support for the opponent group and/or regime, or for the resistance to its policies and controls)?
- To what degree does the opponent group rely on each of its potential sources of power?
 - Authority or legitimacy
 - Human resources
 - Particular skills or knowledge
 - Psychological or ideological factors
 - Material resources
 - Ability to apply sanctions
- What are the pillars of support of the opponent group (people, groups, and institutions) that supply the needed sources of power? Some of these pillars will require detailed examination. The pillars may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Moral and religious leaders and groups
 - Labor groups
 - Business and investment groups
 - Civil servants and bureaucrats
 - Administrators
 - Technicians
 - Police

- Prisons
 - Military forces
 - Intelligence services
 - Media
 - Foreign investors
 - Particular classes or ethnic groups
- To what extent are the pillars of support influenced, or actually or potentially controlled, by the opponent group itself? Are any influenced or controlled by the broad grievance group or the potential nonviolent struggle group? Which pillars are the strongest and most durable? Which pillars are the weakest and most vulnerable?
 - Who are the opponent group's internal (domestic) allies, and what is their extent and reliability?
 - Who are the opponent group's external (foreign) allies and what is their extent and reliability?
 - Can any of these be considered "natural allies" of the opponent group? (If the opponent is a government or a regime, these might include the army, intelligence services, civil servants, the business community, settlers, foreign governments, certain political parties, etc.)
 - Who are the "natural enemies" of the opponent group? (Examples may include repressed minorities, disaffected youth, the unemployed, workers, political parties, the lower, middle, or upper classes, etc.)
 - Is there any potential or actual support or sympathy for the nonviolent struggle group from within sectors of the opponent group itself?
 - What is the organizational structure of the opponent group (administration, organizational branches, complexity, efficiency, reliability, degree of initiative, degree of centralized controls, etc.)?
 - What is the opponent group's military capacity? Necessary information includes the following:
 - Strength, number, size, structure, and types of units
 - Locations of units
 - Opponents' military capabilities to counter resistance, impose repression and restore control, including their capacity and willingness to inflict brutalities

- The speed with which the military forces can arrive at specific locations where quick demonstrations might occur
 - Commanders of the important units and their characteristics
 - Personality profiles of select officials and commanders
 - Efficiency, reliability, and morale among troops
 - General profile of military personnel, including education, class, religion, politics, motivation, ethnic group, age range, and possible reasons for disaffection
 - Logistics of troop movements and operations, location of supply lines, and means of re-supply
- What is the opponent group's police capacity? (The same type of information obtained about military forces-as described above-needs to be obtained for police and other security forces as well.)
 - What intelligence organizations, if any, does the opponent group have at its disposal? What are their characteristics, including their known activities and their resources?
 - What is the level of the opponent group's strategic skill?
 - To what degree does the opponent group have competent leadership?
 - What means of nonmilitary control are wielded by the opponent group?
- Examples may include the following:
- Censorship
 - Ownership of radio, television, and print media
 - Control of education
 - Financial means to influence behavior
 - Control of private industry or State enterprises
 - International recognition
 - Control of communications technology
 - Control of the judiciary
- What are the political fissures, internal conflicts, and other weaknesses in the opponent group, such as within the leadership group and supporting organizations, institutions, or population groups?

- Are there any organizations or institutions that normally support the opponent group but might be targeted for transfer of loyalties or for organizational destruction?
- Is the present leadership of the opponent group disputed or contested from within, through rivalries, power struggles, or other reasons?
- What other vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the opponents can be identified? These may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Vulnerabilities and internal conflicts
 - Incompetent leadership or governing ability
 - Being despised by, or leaving a generally unfavorable impression on, the population
 - Lack of trained strategists
 - Ideological bankruptcy
 - Economic crisis
 - Corruption
 - Lack of ability to withstand foreign diplomatic or economic pressure
 - Overreliance on repression or military means as a means of control

4. The nonviolent struggle group (and the wider grievance group)

Full and detailed knowledge of the nonviolent struggle group and the "grievance group" (defined as the wider population that suffers from policies and actions of the opponent group) and other potential or actual sympathizers is just as important as knowledge about the opponent group. The interests and intentions of the nonviolent struggle group are not very useful for this part of the strategic estimate (though they should be recorded when examining the issues and stake and objectives of the contending sides, as described above). Rather, attention should be focused here only on the group's actual condition and capabilities.

Detailed responses to the following questions about the nonviolent struggle group are therefore required:

- What are the demographics of the nonviolent struggle group and its potential or actual sympathizers, including the general grievance group (age, gender, geographical distribution, literacy rates, and educational levels, etc.)?

- What is their political system?
- What is their social and cultural system?
- What is their economic system?
- Do these systems operate independently of each other, or are they closely interrelated? To what extent are they identical to, integrated with, or independent of, the political, social, or economic systems of the opponent group?
- To what degree are these respective systems controlled by the State structure?
- What is the nature and importance of any religious, moral, ideological, or other doctrinal beliefs or commitments of the grievance group and the nonviolent struggle group?
- What is the broad ideological situation (the degree of doctrinal support for the nonviolent struggle group, and its ideas, positions, or platforms)?
- What is the actual and potential degree of support for the nonviolent struggle group from the general grievance population, specific groups, institutions, and contact networks? Which groups can really help?
- What sectors of the population are most or least likely to provide support or sympathy to the nonviolent struggle group over the course of the conflict?
- What is the actual and potential degree of support for resistance from third parties or previously "neutral" sectors?
- Who are the "natural allies" of the nonviolent struggle group? (e.g., students or youth, political parties and associations, religious, ethnic, or minority groups, etc.)
- Who are the nonviolent struggle group's current and potential internal and external allies?
- What are the internal conflicts, rivalries, or power struggles within both the grievance group and the nonviolent struggle group (e.g., groups with differing ideological positions or long-term objectives)? Are there any rivalries between important sectors of the grievance group and the nonviolent struggle group?

- Is there any potential or actual support or sympathy for the opponent group from within sectors of the general grievance group or the nonviolent struggle group?
- What are the operative or potential sources of power of the nonviolent struggle group? What are the operative or potential sources of power of the general grievance group?
 - Authority or legitimacy
 - Human resources
 - Particular skills or knowledge
 - Psychological or ideological factors
 - Material resources
 - Ability to apply sanctions
- What are the pillars of support (people, groups, and institutions) that serve to supply those sources of power? Some of these pillars will require detailed examination. Examples may include
 - Moral and religious leaders and groups
 - Labor groups
 - Business and investment groups
 - Civil servants and bureaucrats
 - Administrators
 - Technicians
 - Media
 - Dominated classes or ethnic groups
 - Youth and/or student organizations
 - Other societal institutions
- To what extent are such pillars of support for the grievance group or the nonviolent struggle group influenced, or actually or potentially controlled by, the nonviolent struggle group, or by the opponent group? Which pillars are suitable for use in resistance activities? Which ones need to be strengthened? Do any new ones need to be created?
- What other vulnerabilities and weaknesses can be identified? Can any of these be rectified through deliberate efforts?
- Does the nonviolent struggle group currently exist as a coherent movement or organization? If so, what is its organizational structure

(administration, organizational branches, complexity, efficiency, reliability, degree of initiative, degree of centralized controls, etc.)? Does it have capable and competent leadership?

- What is the strategic skill level of the nonviolent struggle group and its leaders?
- Who among the nonviolent struggle group has knowledge of the theory, methods, and practical dynamics of nonviolent struggle?
- Does the grievance group as a whole, parts of that group, or the nonviolent struggle group have prior experience in using nonviolent struggle?
 - Where has it occurred in the past?
 - What population sectors were involved?
 - How competently were such struggles carried out?
 - What were the results?
 - What lessons can those past struggles bring to the present situation?
 - Is the recollection of such struggles remembered reasonably accurately, or has a mythology about them been perpetuated? What are the consequences of this?
- What preparations have already been made for the application of nonviolent struggle in this conflict?
- What means of nonmilitary control, if any, are already wielded by the nonviolent struggle group or its sympathizers? Examples may include the following:
 - Ownership of radio, television, and print media
 - Ownership or control of electronic media sources
 - Control of education (through school administration, teachers, professors, alternate schooling, etc.)
 - Control of private industry
 - International recognition of legitimacy
- What is the information and intelligence capacity of the nonviolent struggle group?
- What economic resources are at the disposal of the nonviolent struggle group?

- What are the communications capacities of the resisters?
 - How are communications transmitted?
 - How secure are these means?

It is necessary, finally, to provide a general assessment of the struggle capacity of both the nonviolent struggle group and the general grievance group, based largely on the above information. Wise strategists will not plan a campaign that requires a struggle capacity beyond the current abilities of the nonviolent struggle group. If an expanded struggle capacity is needed, attention must be devoted to the means required to develop this increased strength.

5. Third parties

It is very important to assess the potential roles of third parties on behalf of either of the two sides over the course of a conflict. "Third parties" are defined here as any group, institution, or sector, internal or external, that is not initially a direct party to the conflict. Third party roles may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assisting public relations (for either side)
- Providing diplomatic assistance or exerting diplomatic pressures (for either side)
- Supplying financial assistance (for either side)
- Providing police and military assistance (for the opponent group); (police or military action intended to assist the nonviolent struggle can instead undermine it)
- Providing educational and technical assistance (for either side)
- Providing safe areas (usually for the resisters but sometimes for the opponent group)
- Applying economic pressures (on either side)
- Providing knowledge about nonviolent struggle (primarily to the resisters)

It is also necessary to assess which third parties could potentially provide such assistance to either side, and also to determine which groups already serve as pillars of support to one side or the other. Strategists will later need to determine which third parties should be courted for possible future assistance and which groups should be undermined.

6. Dependency balances

In the development of strategies for the struggle, it is important to determine which of the two contending sides is dependent on the other, in what ways and to what degree. These calculations should include the following:

- The degree of dependency of the opponent group on the resisting population and on the wider grievance group for meeting identified needs
- The degree of dependency of the resisting population and the grievance group on the opponent group for meeting identified needs
- The degree of actual and potential independence of the opponent group from the resisting population and general grievance group for meeting identified needs
- The degree of actual and potential independence of the resisting population and grievance group from the opponent group for meeting identified needs

Conclusion

After preparing a strategic estimate, it will be necessary to update it as changes occur in the conflict situation. A strategic estimate for a specific conflict that has been well prepared on the basis of accurate and complete information will make it possible to think clearly and make wise decisions about how to act, even in the face of serious pressures and difficult circumstances. This document, with a structured format, allows the reader to find information quickly that is both general and detailed.

This estimate will be of great assistance when choosing specific types of methods for use during the conflict. For example, if the opponent group is heavily dependent on the grievance group for meeting certain needs, methods of noncooperation may prove to be highly effective. However, if there is no such dependence, noncooperation is unlikely to be useful.

If the strategic estimate reveals that the nonviolent struggle group is weaker than required for a major struggle with the prospective opponent group, then the former should not at that time launch a struggle that requires great strength. There is no substitute for, or shortcut to, strength in a movement of nonviolent

struggle. If the group is weaker than needed, the action should initially take only limited forms, perhaps symbolic ones, that can make some impact without great strength. More ambitious action should at the time be postponed until effective means have been taken to strengthen the nonviolent struggle group relative to the opponent group. Clearly, major efforts should in this situation be placed into strengthening the population and the institutions that are primarily affected by the grievances and into developing the group's capacity to wage stronger nonviolent struggle in the future.

Additional factors also require attention before focusing on specific steps that may be helpful in preparing a strategy for the coming struggle. One of the most important factors, of course, is knowledge of the technique of nonviolent action that is to be used. Deliberate steps can be taken to gain and disseminate that knowledge.

Once that knowledge is obtained, however, it is the development and implementation of wise strategies, not simply the use of nonviolent methods, that will allow the nonviolent struggle to become as effective as possible. The ability to develop such strategies rests on an adequate understanding of the whole context within which the struggle is to be conducted. The primary purpose of the strategic estimate is to provide this understanding.

With much detailed information readily at hand, planning can be accomplished quickly to exploit new opportunities that may arise during campaigns.

CHAPTER SIX

STRATEGIC ESTIMATE

And therefore I say: Know your enemy, know yourself; your victory will never be endangered.

—Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (500 BC)¹¹

The strategic estimate is a critical tool for strategic planners. It provides a systematic approach to developing the best course of action to accomplish a mission. It does this by identifying and analyzing important factors such as the environment (physical, military, political), and the capabilities of those expected to be participants (both friendly forces and the opponent) and then compares strengths and vulnerabilities to develop courses of action. Then the best course of action is selected. Since strategic operational plans are based upon information contained in a strategic estimate, the quality of analysis and the quantity of information analyzed significantly influence the chances for success. The strategic estimate process is also useful in developing policies, responding to crises, and providing member organizations of a democratic movement with a source of sound and thoughtful analysis and factual data. Those involved in planning for local campaigns can abbreviate the format and content to meet their own needs in developing courses of action.

The information contained in a strategic estimate should be constantly updated so that planners can more quickly respond to additional missions and adjust operations plans if significant changes in the operational environment or capabilities occur. To ensure that this task is accomplished, someone should be specifically designated to do it, preferably the same “Strategic Estimates” coordinator who supervised the preparation of the estimate. There should be others to assist in gathering, evaluating and submitting information to be included in the estimate and for identifying information that may no longer be relevant or accurate.

¹¹ Quoted in Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 129.

Because of security concerns there may be some portions of the strategic estimate that should be placed in a separate annex. This annex should be available only to those whose “need to know” requires it. For example, information such as organizational personnel strengths, courier routes, or inside contacts could be very sensitive and not relevant to the information needs of most members of opposition groups.

The detailed format of a strategic estimate described in this chapter, derived from the “Military Estimate of the Situation,” may not be the format that is chosen by any particular opposition group. It is important, though, that some sort of systematic approach to gathering, analyzing, and displaying the information relevant to the adopted strategy and supporting objectives should be adopted. A strategic estimate, or similar format, serves as a “checklist” of types of information that may be important but may otherwise be overlooked. [See a suggested format for a strategic estimate in Appendix 4.]

Reasoning and Considerations in Developing a Mission Statement

The mission statement (that is, what the movement leadership has determined to be the objectives of the struggle, the type of struggle selected and, in a general way, how the struggle is expected to be waged) is the starting point for the strategic estimate. Consequently, it is appropriate to review how a mission statement for a strategic nonviolent movement estimate should be developed.

If a movement is created as a result of an oppressive government, its goals and objectives will reflect demands to remove the oppressor from power, but the movement should also identify how the existing government will be removed and what form of government is to replace it. The form of government to be selected by public consensus is based on the characteristics of the society that the citizens want in place at the end of the struggle—in other words, a “vision of tomorrow.” Unless citizens give some thought to what should replace a repressive regime, they may remove one tyranni-

cal government only to bring another, more despotic government into power. Thus, it is necessary that “visions of tomorrow” be translated into objectives that will result in pragmatic changes.

For example, if there is a national police force, which is often the only “face” of government the people see on a daily basis, and over which the local population has no control, the people may wish to place the local police under the supervision of locally elected officials. The people may also want to influence decisions on political and economic priorities at the local level rather than have all these decisions made in the nation’s capital. In short, there may be a consensus for a devolution of power from the center to local government. These issues would suggest that a movement for change include a call for some form of federalism.

The vision of tomorrow should address problems where there have been religious tensions, either due to outright government-supported discrimination or the abuse of one group by another. Mixing religion and politics is always fraught with danger to a democracy, and compromises between the two are always less than satisfactory to those who desire democracy and also to those who want a theocracy disguised as a democracy. But perhaps some basic framework to preclude the government from imposing religious obligations on its citizens can be agreed upon that would not be perceived by most members of religious groups as compromising their personal religious obligations. Such an agreement could be the basis for language to be included in a new constitution.

This consensual vision is then translated into movement goals and political objectives. These, in turn, are translated into more specific strategic objectives. The movement leaders may provide these specific objectives to the planners, or the planners themselves may translate policy objectives and statements into strategic planning objectives. Generalities contained in the “vision” are insufficient statements for planning purposes. For example, while the idea of a “better life for all” is a worthy objective for any opposition movement, it is a goal much too broad to be the appropriate subject for strategic planning. Accordingly, attention should be directed to defining those core issues representing government policy, actions or style of rule

that adversely affect the actual or potential prospect for “a better life” of its citizens. With clearer definitions of the problems to be attacked, resources can be more wisely apportioned.

Identifying the entity that is responsible for the overall planning and coordination and ascertaining those who will publish the planning document are other important elements in a mission statement. A mission statement should begin with the “WHO” that is taking this step in initiating a nation-wide struggle of nonviolent conflict. Nonviolent movements, unlike armed struggle, rarely have a clean hierarchical structure. A common approach to accommodate the disparate interests, capabilities, and personalities of opposition groups is to establish an umbrella organization for the purpose of waging the struggle. By consensus, one member group could be tasked with the responsibility for being the lead organization for planning and coordination. Another option for creating a planning element is that the umbrella organization creates its own “core staff” with representation from all or some members. Initially, it may be best to rally member organizations around issues instead of attempting to unify the organizations themselves. It would be appropriate to consider including the exile community in this umbrella organization so that they too can contribute to the struggle through raising funds, providing special studies or research, lobbying internationally or obtaining media support.

After planners consider all the elements that shape a mission statement for waging a strategic nonviolent conflict, a mission statement is prepared, coordinated, and presented to the members of the umbrella coalition for approval. It may look something like:

The people of (insert Country) under the Alliance for Democracy (or whoever) will conduct a strategic nonviolent offensive to remove the military dictatorship (citing the exact name of the regime) from power; install a democratically elected government; establish a federal form of government and protect that government from a coup d'état.

Strategic estimates may first appear to be specialized documents that can only be constructed by highly trained individuals. Using the suggested format, portions of the strategic estimate can be di-

vided among numerous people for preparation, allowing virtually anyone to participate in its development. As more and more portions are completed, the planners will begin to see the “big picture” emerging from the details contained in the document. The more experienced and trained the analyst, the more quickly and clearer the “big picture” becomes.

An example of a strategic estimate and a look at its architecture shows its value and demonstrates that its construction is within most groups’ capabilities.

The following draft of a working paper using the suggested strategic estimate format (see Appendix 4) was prepared at the Political Defiance Committee (PDC) of Burma in 1992. It was not complete nor was it intended to be used as “the” planning tool for the PDC. Rather, its purpose was to train those designated to prepare the strategic estimate. It may be useful to the reader since it provides explanations on the reasons why many of the categories of information are included in the format and what information may be included within those categories.

ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION

1. MISSION

“The National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) conducts offensive strategic political defiance operations to remove the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) from power; installs a freely elected, democratic, federal government in Rangoon; prevents a coup d’état.”

2. THE SITUATION AND COURSES OF ACTION.

(The second paragraph of the estimate contains all the information about the situation in which the mission will be conducted. In this particular example of a strategic estimate [Burma] not only were terrain, transportation, communications and climate and weather examined but also under close scrutiny were the political and mili-

tary situations of both friendly and enemy forces. It is here that assumptions are identified and examined. It is necessary to know as much as possible about what could have an impact on operations. Only when information cannot be acquired, must assumptions, albeit reluctantly, be made. Recall that assumptions are substitutes for facts—no assumption is ever as good as a fact. Yet another consideration is that an estimate of the situation is prepared at each operational level).

A. Considerations Affecting Possible Courses of Action

(1) Characteristics of the Area of Operations

(a) Military Geography

(COMMENT: Why should the National Council of the Union of Burma be concerned about military geography when it is to conduct political defiance operations? The SLORC will respond with military actions, and military geography will give NCUB some clues about how their opposition may attempt to respond. Military geography will also influence the movement and timing of the NCUB's forces and actions.)

1. Topography. (Contour maps provide sufficient information on topography including terrain, built up areas, road and rail networks.)

2. Hydrography. For the NCUB's purposes, river and stream crossings are a concern. Talking to local villagers can help locate the best places to cross streams and rivers at different times of the year. Locals may also tell about little-known crossing sites.

3. Climate and weather. In this situation, common knowledge about the weather is generally sufficient. For example, the common knowledge is that the southwest monsoon generally occurs between June through September and that April and May are very hot, and the humidity is high. (What value could this information have? Planners can take into account the need for additional drinking water and the need to consider what measures to take to avoid participants from being overcome by heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Massive demonstrations in April and May could

be avoided. If demonstrations must be held in April or May, the selection of a time of day, the length of the demonstration, or the issuance of water bottles to demonstrators could well ameliorate the effects of the weather). Newspapers can provide more information about the weather. *The New Light of Myanmar* (formerly the *Working People's Daily*) has daily information on the amount of rainfall in Rangoon. Discussions with people from various parts of Burma to determine how the monsoon affects their activities are potentially important. Does the monsoon affect scheduling of Burma Airways? (Checking the SLORC homepage on the internet for current schedules may provide many answers to the effects of the monsoon.) Does the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) or the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) have historical data on Burma Army operations by month? What patterns can be detected based upon climate and weather? How does the weather and climate affect courier operations? Is there a particular month when a disease becomes more prevalent? Who would know this? First hand experience can be invaluable.

(b) Transportation. What does information about the transportation sector of Burma have to do with Political Defiance? Couriers travel. Coordinators and actionists travel. The Burma Army travels. People go from city to city or village to village. Supplies move along roads and rivers. How long it takes to get from Point A to Point B could be critically important. What forms of transportation are available to friendly and enemy forces? Bus routes in major cities and to and from cities may be useful. Can bus, rail, taxi and boat workers be organized? How are these forms of transportation affected by climate and weather? Can taxis be hired for inter-city movement? Where can planners get answers to these questions? They can begin by looking at schedules for trains, buses, planes and boats, and they can read newspapers and tourist publications, visit train and bus stations, and talk with tourists.

(c) Telecommunications. What technologies are available to SLORC and to the pro-democracy movement? What communications capabilities could be acquired? (Satellite, rapid burst short-wave, mobile fax machines, etc.). Can strategists afford to purchase secure communications equipment? What about using people with uncommon language skills on major nets? Where is the government vulnerable? (Micro-wave, telephone lines, switches, jamming). Computer terminals with modems for faxing directly to or from Europe and America are available for purchase. Where can information on this subject be found? Some non-governmental organizations are familiar with new technologies. Often disgruntled government communications workers will easily answer questions about their jobs. Catalogues on communications equipment often have articles about new technologies. International magazines sometimes have information. Also available are the internet and search engines.

(d) Politics. In this paragraph strategists want to describe the general political framework in which they must operate. Is martial law in effect? How are political decisions made? Does the “wiring diagram” accurately reflect political power relationships? Politics is the object of the struggle, and planners will be working intimately within the political environment. Therefore, they must know the political currents. Can a description of the SLORC strategy toward the pro-democracy movement be formulated? For example, is the SLORC National Convention a part of its strategy? What about the special economic relationship with Thai Generals? Is there a political “center of gravity”? What is the *quid pro quo* regarding the Burma-ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) relationship? Where can astute observers find answers to these questions? Press releases, news reports, personal interviews, reviews of activities, and political polls are good places to start as well as the political analyses by experienced Burma Watchers.

(2) Relative Combat Power

This paragraph of the strategic estimate should not “jump

ahead” and begin to analyze what the information means. Otherwise, the premature analysis will be comparing “apples and oranges” (military and political defiance are two different “weapons systems”) and the information may get confusing. This paragraph should be limited to containing just the information that is requested.

(a) Opponent Military

1. Strength. (number, size and types of units). SLORC has stated that it intends to increase force levels to 500,000 and will continue to be primarily a light infantry force with limited air and sea capabilities.

2. Order of Battle. (How it is structured, what units belong to which organizations?). This classification may be important in determining what units respond to actions in certain locations. Also by knowing the order of battle, planners will be able to focus on personality profiles of selected commanders. The Political Defiance Committee (PDC) will be primarily concerned with headquarters of Divisions, Regional Commands and higher.

3. Location and disposition. (Where are these units, how are they deployed, and what are they doing?).

4. Reinforcements. (What units are normally designated to reinforce committed forces—Airborne, Commando, Strike Forces, Air Forces? What are normal reinforcement times for operations 10, 30, 50, 100, 200 miles from garrison location? Time-distance factors for deployment delineate how much time is available for PD [political defiance] operations before the risks become unacceptable).

5. Logistics. (How are units re-supplied? How often is re-supply conducted during contact or without contact? How soon before an operation begins are porters conscripted? Are there established holding areas for porters prior to commencing operations? Are re-supply convoys heavily guarded? Where are the major depots?).

6. Combat Efficiency. (Estimate of training, strength, unit history, casualty rates, and morale. This information is important in designing propaganda themes and dissemination

techniques. Different units have different capabilities. Cite the units being described [22d Infantry Division, 121 Regiment, Armor Brigade]. These citations will allow strategists not only to conduct a pattern analysis, but also to be able to “flag” certain units for special consideration. Defector reports prepared by the CNAB [Committee For Nonviolent Action in Burma] in New Delhi indicate low morale in the Burma Army. Are there other defector reports being prepared and available so that conclusions can be drawn about whether low morale is widespread or just in certain units? What caused the low morale in these units?)

7. Profile of Military. In this paragraph is the placement of information concerning the human make-up of the Burma Army as an institution—education, class, religion, motivation, age range, etc. The information about the location of the enemy’s military can be found in newspapers, foreign press and broadcasting, prisoner of war interrogation reports, defectors, escaped porters,¹² the resistance group’s own agents and sympathizers, radio intercepts, battle reports, and interviews with friendly military officers who have fought the enemy on several occasions.

(b) Friendly Military. For successful strategic political defiance operations, military forces may be required to isolate their own battlefields for a period of time or they have to create a diversion to permit retrieval of PD teams. The strategists’ own military can be very useful in supporting psychological operations against the Burma Army. Therefore, planners should gather the same information as above about their own military forces. Where do they obtain information on friendly military forces? They can begin at the headquarters of the military forces. Very likely, the military commanders will be reluctant to provide information on their own

¹² It has been common practice for the Burma Army to round up civilians to serve as porters to transport military supplies for combat units on operations. There have been recurring reports over the years of these porters being forced to walk in front of military columns while operating in insurgent-controlled areas to serve as “human mine sweepers.” Due to the dangers and hard treatment by the soldiers, many attempt to escape.

strengths and vulnerabilities. This information is quite sensitive so it must be protected. Therefore, appropriate personnel should be able to demonstrate their need to know the information and how that information will be protected at the PDC office. **(COMMENT: For a nonviolent movement to have a military component is a major disadvantage. It interferes with the dynamic of nonviolent struggle, makes recruitment into the movement much more difficult, opens the movement to charges of being a terrorist front for armed struggle, makes it difficult to gain the support of the international community, and invites an increased violent reaction by the regime. The reality is, however, that some opposition groups sometimes refuse to “give up” this option even though they know from experience that the costs far outweigh any advantages gained. If these groups cannot be convinced to transition to nonviolent conflict without an armed component, yet the population under their control or influence is considered essential, the armed activities must be distanced from the movement, and the strategy should consider a phasing out of the use of the military component.)**

(c) Opponent Political Defiance. SLORC has an enormous potential for waging nonviolent struggle. At this point, this potential is not being realized, but it is essential to recognize what that capability could be if a determined effort were made to counter our own operations. Important aspects of SLORC capabilities to be considered are:

1. Strengths

- a. Censorship.
- b. Ownership of radio, television, and press.
- c. Control of all education.
- d. Power of purse to influence behavior
- e. International recognition and access to world press and other key communicators.
- f. Well-trained and extensive intelligence net.

- g. World-class communications capability.

2. Weaknesses

- a. Incompetent to govern.
- b. Despised by the people.
- c. No trained strategists.
- d. Sponsored a policy of genocide against minorities.
- e. Other weaknesses or vulnerabilities.

3. Pillars of Support

- a. Burma Army
- b. MIS (Military Intelligence Service)
- c. Media
- d. Foreign Investors
- e. Business Community
- f. Civil Servants
- g. Other (ASEAN, China, etc.)

4. Demographic Considerations

- a. General (used in analysis of both sides)
- b. Population 45,103,809 (1995 estimate)
- c. 0-14 yrs: 36% (female 7,963,544; male 8,285,459)
- d. 15-64 yrs: 60%; 65+ yrs: 4%
- e. Population growth: 1.84%
- f. Birth rate: 28.02 births/1,000 population
- g. Death rate: 9.63 deaths/1,000 population
- h. Population densities occur in Rangoon, Mandalay, and Moulmein.

5. Opponent Political Considerations

- a. "Natural allies"
 - 1. Burma Army
 - 2. MIS

3. Civil Servants
4. Business Community
5. China, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand
6. Other?

b. Organizations

(COMMENT: Recall that organizations are the basis for “loci of power” i.e., sources of societal power. They can be important in the process of decentralizing power as well as being used by PD strategists to identify pillars of support for neutralization or transfer.)

1. Union Solidarity Development Association
2. Sangha (Buddhist Religious Leadership)
3. Artists and Writers Association
4. Teachers’ Organizations
5. Veterans’ Organizations
6. Sporting Clubs
7. Others

c. Political fissures

1. Army Commanders and MIS
2. “Moderates and Hard-liners” within SLORC
3. SLORC and Farmers
4. Junior and Senior officers
5. Privates and Non-commissioned officers
6. Others

(d) Friendly Political Defiance Capability. Much of the information about the PD capability can be obtained from those who have been active in the Political Defiance movement and those who are members of the Political Defiance Committee. Information

on organizations, order of battle, locations and disposition of PD coordinators and actionists, recent activities, and numbers is available from PDC members.

1. Pillars of Support

(COMMENT: The Pillars of Support are the focus of our efforts. The opponent pillars of support are the objectives of our attack; friendly pillars of support are our greatest operational resource.)

- a. National League for Democracy
- b. National Council of the Union of Burma
- c. Burmese Young Monks Association
- d. Political Defiance Committees
 - 1. Ethnic minority organizations
 - 2. International Community organizations (Open Society Institute, etc.)
 - 3. United Nations

2. Demographic Considerations (Same as for opponent above)

a. Distribution of College graduates
(College graduates provide the skills and leadership for political defiance organizations; they will receive different types of information from propagandists. Intellectuals have traditionally been considered a serious threat to tyrants, and rightly so.)

b. Literacy rate by region

c. Ethnic and religious densities. (This information will assist in the selection of actionists and coordinators and provide propagandists appropriate data for designing literature for different groups.)

d. Standards of Living by Region. (If a village has little food, no running water, no electricity, no access to medical care, no cash crops, and no young people remaining, perhaps we should not expect that village to contribute much toward our efforts. We should give them something. Not only something

tangible, but also a vision of what could result when a democratic federal government is established.)

3. Political Considerations

a. “Natural allies”

(COMMENT: Whose interests are being served by served by the NCUB?)

1. Business groups along the Burma borders
2. Students
3. Religious groups
4. Most ethnic nationality groups
5. NLD
6. Environmental groups
7. Human Rights Organizations
8. Others

b. Organizations

(COMMENT: Recall that organizations are the basis for “loci of power”. The creators of the strategic estimate must be very objective in assessing the capabilities of its own organizations. They might also include international organizations involved, or that have interests, in Burma.)

1. NLD (National League for Democracy)
2. Pan-Kachin Development Society
3. NCUB member organizations
4. Democratic Voice of Burma
5. FTUB (Free Trade Unions of Burma)
6. RSO (Rohinga Solidarity Organization)
7. UN
8. National Endowment for Democracy

9. International Republican Institute

10. Open Society Institute

11. Other?

c. Political Fissures

(COMMENT: Political fragmentation is widespread within the pro-democracy movement. The most serious disagreements should be identified.)

1. National Coalition Government of Union Burma and DAB

2. NCUB and Rohingya over exclusion

3. NCUB and FTUB over coordination

4. NCGUB and NLD-LA over leadership of border

5. Others

4. Security Considerations

a. Effectiveness of Counter-Intelligence. (Is it uniformly effective or are there opportunities for early implementation of PD operations?)

b. Individuals vulnerable for recruitment.

c. Organizational vetting procedures.

(What is being done to reduce the opportunity for penetration by intelligence operatives? Pinpointing disinformation, surveillance, and second tier references are examples of some ways to check out recruits.)

d. Communications. (How are messages transmitted? How secure is the system? Couriers, radio, dead drops, receive-only, pre-arranged codes, PGP and other forms of computer communications are examples for evaluation.)

e. Information and document security.

One must never underestimate the ability of a regime to penetrate opposition groups. Therefore, a “chain of custody” of all sensitive materials should be established. That is, the movement should keep

a record of everyone who has read these documents and retains a copy of them. There should be continual emphasis on the need to limit sensitive information to only those who “need to know”. (In a nonviolent movement there is little information to be considered “secret” and that is information that places people at great risk.)

(3) Assumptions

Looking at the mission and the information that has been obtained, the strategists may have to fill in the blanks with assumptions. They may have to add assumptions as they examine possible courses of action. Effective strategies cannot be based on assumptions. Getting the facts whenever possible is the foundation of a successful nonviolent movement. If assumptions must be made, personnel must make every effort to make sure they are valid. For example:

(a) There will be no military assistance provided to the NCUB by foreign governments.

(b) Influenced by multi-national corporations, western democracies will not take any strong actions against SLORC, but will limit themselves to empty verbal exchanges.

(c) The money from Indonesian and Thai interests to the National Democratic Party headquarters influenced US policy regarding Burma.

(d) Foreign investment is critical for sustained economic growth and political stability in Burma.

(e) Others

At this point in the strategic estimate, strategic developers start using the obtained information and the assumptions that have been made. The next step is the determination of enemy capabilities that could affect the political defiance courses of actions. This intellectual exercise begins in paragraph 2B of the strategic estimate.

B. Opponent Capabilities

By reviewing and analyzing information about the Burma Army, the nonviolent movement can identify its enemy’s capabilities that

could affect its own possible courses of action. Conclusions about the capabilities of the Burma Army are that it could:

- (1) Re-arrest, murder, or exile Aung San Suu Kyi
- (2) Violently suppress major civil unrest in three major population centers without degrading its capabilities to conduct military operations in the liberated areas.
- (3) Obtain the cooperation of Chinese, Indian and Thai military and intelligence organizations to isolate and limit the effectiveness of Burmese pro-democracy groups along the borders.
- (4) Jam foreign broadcasts
- (5) Attack and seize NCUB/KNU Headquarters

C. Own Courses of Action (CA)

After reviewing the movement's mission one more time and analyzing its own capabilities, those preparing the strategic estimate can develop courses of action that would accomplish its mission. Recall that an effective strategy will distract and dislocate the enemy; that an indirect approach to the objective (with intermediate objectives) is generally most desirable; that nonviolent movements capitalize upon their own greatest strengths to attack the enemy's weakest points; and that at the strategic level, developers engage all of their capabilities.

CA 1. A strategy that would establish PD strong points throughout Burma whose objectives are to:

- a. Conduct PD operations to reflect nationwide political instability.
- b. Recruit members for pro-democracy groups.
- c. Make preparations for a general strike.
- d. Present SLORC with multiple, dispersed targets.

CA 2. Other

3. ANALYSIS OF OPPOSING COURSES OF ACTION

In this paragraph is the determination that the effect of each enemy capability has on each of the movement's own courses of action. From the capability used in the example above, the democracy forces would have a problem if a course of action being considered called for a major uprising in Rangoon, Mandalay and Moulmein only without first undermining Burma's Army's obedience to orders.

4. COMPARISON OF OWN COURSES OF ACTION

In this paragraph, the advantages and disadvantages of each course of action (with respect to what is considered to be governing factors) are weighed. For example, a governing factor might be a desire to keep civilian casualties to a minimum.

5. DECISION

The course of action decided upon is translated into a completed operational mission statement.

Summary

This chapter reviews the contents and processes involved in developing a strategic estimate. The strategic estimate is a critical document for a strategic war planner. It is a document that is not quickly prepared, but its development is well within the capability of political opposition groups. A well-prepared estimate reduces the chance of failure by identifying the best course of action to accomplish a mission. The strategic estimate can be a "living" document if it is constantly updated. As in the staff study, format and intense concentration are necessary. A format permits clear thinking—even under pressure.

APPENDIX FOUR
SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR
PREPARING A STRATEGIC ESTIMATE

ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION

1. MISSION

2. THE SITUATION AND COURSES OF ACTION

**A. CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING POSSIBLE COURSES
OF ACTION**

(1) Characteristics of the area of operations.

(a) Military geography.

- 1. Topography**
- 2. Hydrography**
- 3. Climate and weather**

(b) Transportation

(c) Telecommunications

(d) Politics

(2) Relative combat power

(a) Opponent military

- 1. Strength**
- 2. Order of battle**
- 3. Location and disposition**
- 4. Reinforcements**
- 5. Logistics**
- 6. Combat efficiency**
- 7. Profile of military**

(b) Friendly military (same as above)

(c) Opponent Political Defiance

- 1. Strengths**
- 2. Weaknesses**
- 3. Pillars of support**

- 4. Demographic considerations
 - a. Population density
 - b. Distribution of college graduates
 - c. Literacy rates among supporters
 - d. Ethnic and religious densities
 - e. Standards of living (supporters)
- 5. Political Considerations
 - a. "Natural allies"
 - b. Organizations
 - c. Political fissures
- 6. Security considerations
 - a. Effectiveness of counter-intelligence
 - b. Vulnerability for recruitment
 - c. Organizational vetting procedures
 - d. Communications
 - e. Information and document security
- (d) Friendly Political Defiance (as above)
- (3) Assumptions
- B. OPPONENT CAPABILITIES
- C. OWN COURSES OF ACTION
- 3. Analysis of opposing courses of action
- 4. Comparison of own courses of action
- 5. Decision

Facing Dictatorships With Confidence

The seriousness of the problem of dictatorships, the dangers they pose, and the need for effective means to deal with them have all increased since the First World War. Ordinary dictatorships - brutal though they have been for thousands of years - were superseded by the Hitler and Stalin regimes. With these developments totalitarianism became a far more formidable opponent. These totalitarian rulers attempted to engulf and control the whole life of each subject and every aspect of the society. The degree of control over individuals, transportation, communications, weapons, and entire social, economic, and political systems, increased dramatically over traditional dictatorships. Power became concentrated. Adolph Hitler

and Josef Stalin are now dead, the Nazi system is only a relic for historians, and the Soviet system is evolving. Nevertheless, the problem which dictatorships pose to people who believe in human dignity and freedom continues to grow.

The willingness of governments and political groups aiming to seize the State to deal ruthlessly with opposition and innocent people has not diminished. It may in fact have increased. Too often it is assumed that genocide was safely buried in 1945 under the rubble of Berlin. Various doctrines and ideologies, and fear of others, have provided political groups and regimes with a rationale and "justification" for policies and actions which otherwise would be seen as naked brutality. Recent technological advances in communication, transportation, data storage and retrieval, political organization, electronic surveillance, subliminal controls of populations, and the capacity to kill, have increased the capability of modern governments to establish and maintain effective dictatorships.

DANGERS OF NEW DICTATORSHIPS

Present liberal constitutional democracies are all imperfect, but remain clearly preferable to dictatorial regimes which are expanding in number. Yet severe problems within such democracies cast doubt on their durability. Internal imperfections, highly centralized controls, and decision-making "by small elites often raise doubts about the vitality and effectiveness of democratic processes. This is true even in the countries which pride themselves in their democratic traditions and institutions. Many people feel powerless and unable to control their own lives and influence major political decisions. Direct attacks in a variety of forms continue to be made on democratic structures. The United States is not exempt; "Watergate" was an attempt to subvert the American constitutional processes of free elections. In various countries internal coups d'etat by political and military groups, activities of police and foreign agents, political terrorism, and minority guerrilla wars continue to assault democratic systems, with the intent of replacing them with dictatorships. The groups using these means espouse diverse doctrines and wave various political flags. The growth in various countries and systems of powerful intelligence organizations, institutions of foreign agents, and central

government police bodies creates the potential of those bodies, or some section of them, to defy and to attack the legal government, instead of serving its will.* Military forces have done this repeatedly in dozens of countries as they have launched coups d'etat.

The underlying social conditions on which democratic structures rest have also changed. Social, economic, and political systems of all types have altered drastically since the advent of constitutional democracy in every country in which it has had a long history. The "grass roots" institutions of society, and even local and state or provincial governments, are increasingly subordinated to centralized administration. Powerful multinational corporations are taking control of the national economies outside of the countries themselves, and are using that control to manipulate governments in order to serve their own financial interests. All these conditions are inimical to freedom.

In the future, the tyrant will be able to use more subtle, yet no less diabolical, means of control through such methods as conditioning, psychological manipulation, and drugs provided by modern science to keep the subjects submissive and "happy." Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* may not be far away; dictatorships using such psychological means may supersede totalitarianism. Other signs of future dangers also exist. The expanding breakdown and even active destruction of traditional societies and indigenous cultures in those parts of the world emerging from European colonialism are creating the condition of *anomie*, psychological, ethical, and personal confusion, and social disintegration. This condition, especially when combined with deep genuine grievances, nurtures various kinds of mass movements - social, religious, and political. They can presage a new political messiah or doctrine of salvation which leads directly to political enslavement.

If effective means are not soon found to destroy dictatorships, and to alter the conditions which make them possible, the task of preventing and resisting them will rapidly become yet more difficult. The future may thus be one in which the word "freedom" will have no meaning, or will be only the remnant of a forgotten dream.

Many cultures and countries have their own traditions of love of freedom and opposition to all tyranny, even though the practice does

* On the capacity of such bodies to be shifted to different purposes, see Chapter Eleven, "The Societal Imperative,"

not always live up to the ideal. Opposition to political dictatorship was a basic American principle well before the adoption of the Constitution. The creation of new political structures on this continent, the colonial struggles against perceived tyranny, and the drafting of the basic frameworks for new governments were all motivated by belief in human freedom, whatever additional motives may have been present. The colonial fathers believed in a moral and political imperative to oppose existing dictatorships and to prevent the establishment of new tyrannies. (they were simultaneously, of course, often blind to their own imposition of tyrannical conditions on the Native Americans from whom they seized the land, and the Africans whom they enslaved, as well as the oppression of their own women.)

Since the time that the European settlers gained independence, American government policies and foreign alliances have not always followed that commitment to freedom and opposition to tyranny. However, the belief has remained fundamental for many Americans. The compromises that were made in practical policies were often perceived as necessary in face of a larger dictatorial threat. The First World War was fought, it was said, "to make the world safe for democracy." The Second World War was waged, most people were convinced, to defeat three dictatorial expansionist regimes, liberate conquered peoples, and, specifically, defeat the Nazi system - one of the most extreme forms of dictatorship yet known. The Cold War has been officially aimed at halting the expansion of Communist forms of dictatorship. Even the most interventionist United States activities in recent decades have been excused by their advocates as required to combat still more serious dictatorial threats. Although critics may at times, with justification, point to other motives, we still must confront the real dangers to freedom posed by all types of dictatorships.

INADEQUACIES OF THE TRADITIONAL ANSWERS

No easy answer to the problem of dictatorship exists. There are no effortless, safe ways by which people living under dictatorships can liberate themselves, or by which other people can defend themselves from future dangers. Nor do we have a simple way by which we can prevent the development of new tyrannies. Passivity in the face of such threats is clearly no guarantee of safety. In fact it is often

the opposite. In any case, passivity is neither an effective nor a democratic response to this challenge. Every possible course of action in support of liberation and in defense of freedom will involve risks, and potential suffering, and take time to operate. Nor can any means of action ensure success in every situation.

How, then, are we to deal with dictatorships? The spontaneous answer most people who believe in freedom give is that you must fight and destroy them. If your country is the victim of a dictatorial regime, native or foreign, you fight against it. If your country is attacked by a dictatorial State, you resist that attack. If the subjects of a tyrant are in rebellion, you provide help. If a chance exists that your country might be attacked by a dictatorship, you prepare in advance to repel it, hoping that if you become strong enough you will deter attack. These are the common answers of most people who believe in freedom and oppose tyranny throughout the world. While these broad answers may in principle still be as valid as ever, the changes in military technology and political organization now make it necessary - whatever was true before - to implement them in quite different ways than were usual in previous times.

To enable us to confront the dangers of dictatorships, we have created massive military systems with hitherto unthinkable destructive capacities. We have organized ourselves to conduct many of the same antidemocratic activities against dictatorial forces as they themselves have done. We have supported one dictatorial group against another. And we have lamented the erosions of freedoms and democratic processes in other countries and in our own.

Despite these measures, few signs exist that the antidemocratic trends of this century are being slowed, let alone being contained or reversed. In fact, our policies may even have facilitated consolidation of old dictatorships and the emergence of new ones. The problem is not how to achieve "peaceful coexistence" with extreme dictatorships. The problem is how to reassert popular control over them, even over totalitarian systems: how to defeat and disintegrate them.

Ironically, at the very moment in history when the greatest need exists for effective means of struggle against tyranny, the traditional means of last resort in international conflicts - war - has, because of modern technology, become a highly dangerous option. Yet, if effective alternative ways are not found to replace war in such conflicts, people will persist in threatening and using war despite its

dangers.* Similarly, very serious internal dangers also exist in attempts to revolt against domestic dictatorships. These are related to the concentration and destructiveness of military weaponry, the extreme costliness of civil wars generally, and guerrilla wars particularly, in casualties and social destruction, and the structural consequences of such violence.[†] Past means have often been inadequate even when they destroyed a specific dictatorship, for they allowed others to continue, facilitated their growth, or contributed to the development of new ones. The inadequacies of present means for dealing with dictatorships are so serious that we ought to consider how to develop alternative means. We require new policies, courses of action and conceptions of liberation and defense in order to face the dangers of modern dictatorships and to deal with them. The view that one must choose between massively destructive war and passive submission to tyranny is false.

Our past understanding of the nature of the problem of modern dictatorships, totalitarian movements, genocide, and political usurpation has been inadequate. Similarly, our understanding of the possible means of struggle against them, and of preventing their development has been incomplete. With inadequate understanding as the foundation of our policies, it is no wonder that they have proven ineffective.

Other options must, of course, be evaluated fairly. For example, in weighing alternative policies it is important to compare the worst possible results of each, as well as the best, and not (as happens) simply the best of one with the worst of the other. Also, one must consider not only the odds for or against certain results of optional policies occurring; attention is also required to the nature of those results, including possible corrective and remedial measures to counteract them. Inadequacies in present policies and in proposed new policies will need full examination, as will claims of strengths and effectiveness of each. By using such means of comparison, a fair evaluation becomes possible.

* See Chapter Ten, "Seeking a Solution to the Problem of War."

[†] See Chapter Twelve, "Popular Empowerment," subchapter: Sanctions and Society.

LESS THAN OMNIPOTENT

Our capacity to discover and to develop new ways of preventing dictatorships in the first place, and of destroying them once they exist, may be increased if we can locate characteristics of such systems which already constitute problems for the dictators, hindering their efforts to hold their systems together, or hindering implementation of their will. Remarkably, while great attention has been given to the means of police repression and to the military capacities of dictatorships, almost no attention has been given to their weaknesses. Indeed, we have constantly given dictatorial regimes credit for being far more efficient, effective, powerful, and durable than in fact they are. All dictatorships, including totalitarian ones, contain inherent weaknesses which, over time, even without deliberate efforts to aggravate them, tend to make the system less effective and less dictatorial. In some cases these weaknesses could cause the dictatorship to disintegrate.

Dictatorships, even totalitarian systems, are not fully monolithic, and certainly not omnipotent or eternal. It is really nothing completely new to say that dictatorships do not always accomplish their objectives. David Riesman and Karl W. Deutsch both pointed to this fact in the 1950s.

In 1952 David Riesman wrote that we often overestimate the capacity of totalitarians "to restructure human personality."! While people under pressures may play certain roles and often conform outwardly, they also may be apathetic and even indifferent to ideological appeals and indoctrination. They may reject the dictator's "ethics" which all are supposed to accept. People may retreat from politics - the process of "privatization." Instead of being determined by the doctrines and programs of the system, people's behavior may be motivated by their greed. Corruption and even crime may become widespread. People may deliberately behave with excessive enthusiasm to support edicts of the system in order to disrupt it, as by accusing everyone in the Party of deviationism. Power conflicts may emerge within the regime or Party.² Such responses involve, Riesman wrote, "sheer unheroic cussed resistance to totalitarian efforts" to remake human beings into the new image.³ Not even the terror can completely "destroy all bonds of organization among its victims."⁴ These limitations on the effectiveness of controls affect those systems

detrimentally, he wrote. However, our own absence of realism in understanding those limitations affects us also, for it leads us to "be unduly cowed or unduly aggressive"⁵ Instead, we ought to "seek ways to bring those regimes down without war"⁶

We have assumed in the past that dictatorships, especially in their extreme forms, differ from other systems of government more than they actually do. Contrary to popular opinion, a totalitarian ruler is, in common with all rulers, dependent on his subjects. All rulers depend upon the cooperation, submission, and obedience of the subjects for their positions and power. Their power is drawn from sources in society, such as economic resources, military capacity, knowledge, skills, administration, and authority. These in turn are each closely related to, or directly dependent upon, the degree of cooperation, submission, obedience, and assistance which the would-be ruler is able to obtain from his subjects - both from the general corps of full-time agents and aides and from the population as a whole. This submission may be induced by the use of terror, but the underlying dependence of the ruler on the subjects is nevertheless present. If the help and submission of either or both of these groups is withdrawn, the ruler's power is seriously weakened. If the withdrawal can be maintained in face of various sanctions, an end to the regime is in sight.⁷ This principle applies even to totalitarian rulers. This dependency may have considerable significance in the eventual solution of our problem.

Most people assume that this view is nonsense. They believe that with sufficient threats, intimidation, punishment, brutality, killings, and terror, the dictator can enforce his will upon any population without their having any choice or chance to change the situation. That view of enforced obedience and cooperation induced by repressive measures is very incomplete. It implies that this is always a one-way relationship. While on the surface that appears at times to be the case, the reality is fundamentally different. In special situations the regime in fact becomes incapable of enforcing its will. This may occur because too many people are defying it simultaneously, because its administrators are refusing to help, or because its agents of repression are not obeying orders to inflict the punishments. In some cases, these may all happen simultaneously.

In 1953 Karl W. Deutsch applied this view of the interdependency of enforcement and obedience to totalitarian systems. The passage is highly important:

The ... enforcement of decisions [by totalitarian government] depends to a large extent on the compliance habits of the population. Compliance and enforcement are interdependent; they reinforce each other, and the varying proportions in which they do so, form as it were a continuous spectrum. At one end of this spectrum, we could imagine a situation where everybody obeys habitually all commands or decisions of the totalitarian regime, and no enforcement is necessary; at the other end of this spectrum, we could imagine a situation where nobody obeys voluntarily any decision of the totalitarian system, and everybody has to be compelled to obey at pistol point, or under conditions of literally ever-present threat and ever-present supervision.

In the first of these cases, enforcement would be extremely cheap and, in fact, unnecessary; in the second, it would be prohibitively expensive, and in fact no government could be carried on, on such a basis Somewhere in the middle between these extremes of universal compliance and ubiquitous enforcement is the range of effective government. There a majority of individuals in a majority of situations obeys the decisions of the government more or less from habit without any need for immediate supervision.⁸

These considerations apply to totalitarianism as they apply to all types of government, but in their application to totalitarianism they again suggest a paradox. Totalitarian power is strong only if it does not have to be used too often. If totalitarian power must be used at all times against the entire population, it is unlikely to remain powerful for long. Since totalitarian regimes require more power for dealing with their subjects than do other types of government, such regimes stand in greater need of widespread and dependable compliance habits among their people; more than that they need to be able to count on the active support of at least significant parts of the population in case of need.⁹

Severe problems exist in transforming this general insight into deliberate concrete resistance actions to undermine and destroy the totalitarian system. It is not easy, for example, to maintain the withdrawal of support in the face of severe repression from still faithful police and troops. As present policies for dealing with dictatorships also have their own problems, the existence of difficulties in possible options is no reason to halt exploration of their potential for dealing with modern dictatorships.

WEAKNESSES IN EXTREME DICTATORSHIPS

On the basis of what we know of the Nazi and Communist systems, and certain lesser dictatorships, it is possible to indicate various specific weaknesses in them. These are factors which will in time, even without deliberate efforts to aggravate them, produce changes which in differing degrees will modify the capacities and characteristics of the dictatorship. For example, these weaknesses may produce the following results:

- restrict the freedom of action of the regime;
- induce the regime to be more considerate of the needs and wishes of the population;
- reduce the brutality and repression;
- contribute to the regime's becoming less doctrinal in its own actions;
- reduce the degree to which the regime is in effective control of the society;
- destroy the myth of the regime's omniscience;
- at the mildest, cause the system to become somewhat "liberalized" or even democratized; and
- at the extremity, cause the system to disintegrate.

The following are some of the weaknesses of extreme dictatorships, including totalitarian systems:

1. The cooperation of a multitude of different people and groups which is needed to operate the system may be restricted or withdrawn.
2. The regime's freedom of action may be limited by past policies, the requirements and effects of which still continue.
3. The system may become routine in its operation, therefore more moderate and less able to shift its activities drastically at the service of doctrinal imperatives and sudden policy shifts.
4. The allocation of personnel and resources for existing tasks will limit their availability for new ones.
5. The central command may receive from the lower echelons inaccurate or incomplete information on which to make decisions, for subordinates may be fearful of inducing displeasure from higher echelons.
6. The ideology may erode, and the myths and symbols of the system become unstable.

7. Firm adherence to the ideology may lead to decisions injurious to the system because insufficient attention is given to actual conditions and needs.
8. The system may be inefficient due to deteriorating competency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy, or to excessive controls and red tape; consequently, the system's policies and normal operations may become ineffective.
9. The system's internal conflicts of various types may detrimentally affect and even disrupt its operation.
10. Intellectuals and students may become restless in response to conditions, restrictions, doctrinalism, and repression.
11. The general public may over time become apathetic or skeptical.
12. Regional, class, cultural, or national differences may become acute.
13. The power hierarchy will always be to some degree unstable, at times highly so.
14. Sections of the political police or the military forces may possess sufficient power to exert pressures to achieve their own ends, or even to act against the established rulers.
15. In the case of a new dictatorship, time is required for it to become firmly established, which allows an especially vulnerable period.
16. The extreme concentration of decision-making and command means that too many decisions will be made by too few people to avoid errors.
17. If the regime, in order to avoid some of these problems, decides to diffuse decision-making and administration, this will lead to further erosion of central controls, and often to the creation of dispersed new power centers which may seek to expand their power at the cost of the center.

Such weaknesses of extreme dictatorships do not, of course, mean that disintegration occurs quickly, or even at all, regardless of other factors at play in the situation. Dictatorial systems are often aware of at least some of their weaknesses, and take measures to counteract them. Also, under appropriate circumstances even very inefficient and incompetent regimes often manage to survive for remarkably long periods of time, and people may, as Riesman said, "mistake blundering compulsions or even accidents of 'the system' for conspiratorial genius."¹⁰

It should be possible, however, to learn much more than we now know about dictatorships and about alternative forms of opposition and resistance to them. With this knowledge, people living under

dictatorships might be able to aggravate deliberately such inherent weaknesses in order to alter the system drastically or to disintegrate it. In such efforts, the interdependence of enforcement and patterns of obedience is especially important. Nonviolent forms of struggle are premised on the capacity of the populace to withhold its obedience and cooperation. This withholding makes it possible for the required sources of power of the dictatorship to be restricted or severed.

UNPREPARED RESISTANCE TO TYRANNY

Severe problems would be involved in such disobedience and noncooperation struggles against extreme dictatorships. We must remember that we do not have available an option without difficulties and dangers. The problems of this type of struggle need to be viewed in the perspective of the present limitations of the various types of political violence for resisting and destroying dictatorships. Serious exploration of the future potential of disobedience and noncooperation for aggravating weaknesses of dictatorships in order to control and destroy them needs to begin on the basis of an understanding of dictatorships, of the nature of nonviolent struggle, and of the history of the previous nonviolent struggles against dictatorships. Though still insufficient, all of these are necessary for a beginning. Instances of nonviolent action against lesser oppression are therefore relevant: one cannot understand how a major nonviolent struggle operating against a totalitarian system could be conducted, or what would be all of its problems, weaknesses, and strengths, without first studying its application against lesser obstacles. The general history of this technique is therefore relevant. Considerable understanding of the range of particular methods, strategic principles, basic requirements for effectiveness, and the dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent action is necessary background for this exploration.* Without this, it is impossible to appreciate adequately

* See the introductory discussions of some of these aspects in Chapter Nine, •• "The Political Equivalent of War" - Civilian-based Defense," subchapter: Control of Political Power and Conduct of Open Struggle, and Chapter Ten, "Seeking a Solution to the Problem of War." However, more in depth understanding is required. For this, see Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1973).

the general characteristics and capacities of this technique. These include:

- how nonviolent action wields power and counteracts the power of the opponent;
- how use of this technique breaks the spell of conformity and fear;
- the roles of symbolic and psychological resistance;
- the many ways in which economic and political noncooperation wield and affect power;
- the necessity of maintaining nonviolent discipline in order to apply political jiu-jitsu to counter violent repression and to use it to aid the resisters;
- the constantly changing strengths of the contending parties during a nonviolent struggle;
- the ways in which the struggle can continue after any recognizable leadership has been seized;
- the processes by which additional support can be aroused during the conflict from members of the general populace, the opponent's own camp, and third parties; and
- the mechanisms of change which may bring success (the operative mechanism is rarely conversion, more often accommodation, sometimes nonviolent coercion, and even disintegration of the opponent's regime).

In a number of important cases, nonviolent struggle has been applied against totalitarian systems, either alone or in combination with political violence. While no totalitarian system has been permanently overthrown by nonviolent struggle, more such resistance has occurred than is generally recognized. These cases establish that nonviolent struggle against extreme dictatorships including totalitarian systems is possible. The degree of success and failure of these cases has varied, depending in part on one's criteria. In several instances this type of struggle presented formidable problems for the regime. Sometimes it forced concessions and won at least partial victories.

The following cases are among the more significant ones:

- the civil disobedience, political noncooperation, and rescue of Jews by the Norwegian Resistance during the Nazi occupation 1940-45;

- the political noncooperation, labor strikes, psychological resistance, rescue of Jews, and the Copenhagen general strike, 1944, by the Danish Resistance, 1940-45;
- the political noncooperation, mass circulation of underground newspapers, massive adoption of new identities, religious opposition, and major strikes of 1941, 1943, and 1944 by the Dutch Resistance, 1940-45;
- the protest marches, strikes, and sit-downs before tanks during the East German Revolt, June 1953;
- the strikes in the political prisoners' camps (especially at Vorkuta) in the Soviet Union in 1953;
- the street demonstrations, general strikes, political defiance, formation of workers' councils, and establishment of a federated council substitute national government during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956-57;¹¹
- the popular pressure and street demonstrations for political liberalization and on economic grievances in Poland in 1956 and 1970-71;
- the leafleting, public demonstrations, and sit-ins by Soviet civil rights activists and by Soviet Jews seeking permission to emigrate in the Soviet Union during the 1960s and 1970s;
- the refusal of collaboration, street demonstrations, resistance radio and television broadcasts, Government and Party defiance, student protests, and efforts to undermine the morale of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia in 1968-69 against the Soviet invasion and measures to reimpose a rigid Communist dictatorship.*

All of these cases occurred without advance preparations. They were waged by people who had little or no real understanding of the nonviolent technique, its dynamics and requirements, except perhaps that gained by extremely limited experience or hearsay. It is, therefore, reasonable to explore whether by using increased knowledge of this technique with (where possible) advance training and other preparations based upon deep knowledge of extreme dictatorships and their weaknesses, we might be able to aggravate those weaknesses seriously and increase the effectiveness of nonviolent struggle against totalitarian systems.

* For a brief survey, with references, of the Czech and Slovak resistance, see Chapter Nine, "The Political Equivalent of War" - Civilian-based Defense."

PROBLEMS OF RESISTANCE UNDER TOTALITARIANISM

A host of difficult problems arises as soon as one begins to think seriously about waging nonviolent struggle in a liberation movement against a totalitarian system. Since variations in circumstances will influence to a high degree the course of a struggle against the system, we will need to know the particular situation as well as possible in order to deal with those problems. These variations will be revealed by the answers to such questions as the following:

Is the totalitarian system newly formed or long established? Have the subjects ever had any type of experience or previous practice which would constitute advance training, or preparation for nonviolent struggle? Has informative, analytical, and instructional literature on nonviolent struggle been circulated and read, as by *zamizdat*?* To what degree have any independent groups and institutions not under State or Party control (loci of power) survived the system or been newly created? Is the totalitarian system of domestic or foreign origin, or in what combination? Was the regime originally established with foreign assistance, or is it now foreign supported? How did the system originally develop: was it initiated by a coup d'etat, guerrilla war, foreign invasion, gradual evolution, or in another way? To what degree are the present administrators bureaucrats, civil servants, police, and troops loyal to the system and satisfied in their present positions? Do any significant groups or institutions exist, such as labor, religious, cultural, and the like, which are presently or potentially opposed to the system? What are the attitudes of the general public to the system as a whole, to any specific grievances or positive points of support, and how do they see the future?

PROBLEMS OF STRUGGLE REQUIRING RESEARCH

In addition to the background understanding of the particular situation revealed by the above questions, we also need greater knowledge about the problems of nonviolent struggle against extreme

* The Russian term for illegally reproduced and circulated manuscripts and publications.

dictatorships and the options available to the resisters. Here, advance research, analysis, and strategic planning can provide helpful insights for later use in actual struggles. These are the kinds of questions we can research to aid advance planning:

1. In face of the system's control over communications and publication and dissemination of literature, how can one spread information and understanding about nonviolent struggle? What role may exist for illegal literature, foreign-based radio broadcasts, and "teaching by example" through small planned actions or by spontaneous ones?
2. In face of effective political police, how can one solve the problem of leadership for nonviolent struggle? What role is there for an underground movement, for individuals and small groups setting examples, for spontaneous "leaderless" actions, or for "anonymous" or radioed instructions?
3. In face of the political police, censorship, and other controls, how can one plan action and resistance, and spread knowledge of such plans and instructions among the people who are expected to carry them out? What role is there for "underground" communications, spontaneous actions, and consensus on the types of issues to be resisted?
4. How are the particular problems related to the dynamics of nonviolent action operating under extreme dictatorships to be solved? These problems may be associated, for example, with the absence of civil liberties, and lack of access to public means of communication. Other problems may be linked to the strong ideological basis for the systems; this suggests a lesser role for attempts to "convert" the leaders and believers, and a greater role for actions which mobilize increased support for resistance, or which restrict or sever the ruler's sources of power.
5. How can one destroy confidence in the Leader and the Party, and achieve widespread and deep dissatisfaction? How can one at appropriate stages turn such dissatisfaction into withdrawal of cooperation and defiance of the regime?
6. How can one best approach the problem of the totalitarian ideology? Is it most effective to question it, reinterpret it, criticize it, or repudiate it? To what extent does the official ideology give meaning and direction to the lives of individuals? Is it better to offer a clear rival ideology with a different outlook on life, or to refuse to do that, encouraging people to develop a variety of outlooks and philosophies as they find most desirable?

7. How, under those political circumstances, can opposition and resistance be most effectively organized and conducted: with considerable openness, as in Russian Jewish and civil rights cases in the 1960s and 1970s, or with secrecy, as in many cases of resistance to the Nazis? What are the real implications and consequences of both positions? This is more complex than it might first appear.
8. How can one determine the optimal strategy for resistance during a crisis and in advance of one? Are there advantages to a prior determination of the points and conditions at which resistance will be offered without specific instructions? Under what conditions should a strategy of total noncooperation be practiced? When should selective noncooperation at particularly important points and issues be applied instead?
9. In the early stages of extreme dictatorships moving toward totalitarianism, how can one prevent the "atomization" of the population and the destruction of the society's loci of power? In advanced stages of a totalitarian system when the destruction of independent institutions has gone very far, how can new groups and institutions outside of the system's control be created and strengthened?
10. How can one resolve the problems imposed on a resistance movement by the atmosphere of fear in a totalitarian society? Based on past experience and on analysis, under what conditions can subjects cast off such fear or act defiantly despite it? In a political atmosphere of extreme fear, what impact do acts of brazen defiance conducted apparently fearlessly have? How and why?
11. How can resisters withstand severe repression while continuing their defiance? Repression may include imprisonment, internment in concentration camps, execution, reprisals on nonparticipants, treatment with drugs, detention as mental cases, control of food, water, and fuel supplies, agents provocateurs, and selective and massive deportations. What different problems for the resisters may be produced by other responses by the system to the nonviolent challenges? These may include: (a) milder control measures applied to avoid creating martyrs or attributing exaggerated strength to the opposition, or (b) extremely severe repression and terror applied to force restoration of cooperation, obedience, and

* See the discussion on loci of power in Chapter Two, "Social Power and Political Freedom,"

- submission, their withdrawal being perceived as the most severe threat possible to the system. How can these problems be solved? Can some kind of balance be achieved between the need for action to win immediate objectives and the capacity of the subjects to defy and to withstand the resulting sanctions?
12. Ought external assistance to the struggle movement - such as radio broadcasts, smuggled literature, headquarters for exiled leaders, and international economic and political noncooperation with the dictatorial regime - be accepted? Can it benefit the struggle movement? Or, would external aid discredit the movement by allowing the resisters to be labeled "foreign agents"? Could such aid contribute either to dependence on, or to control by, foreign political groups or regimes? How could a resistance movement against an extreme dictatorship be completely independent of all foreign help in the internal struggle itself, while accepting external aid by embargoes and diplomatic sanctions, for example? What problems would this position present and how might they be resolved?
 13. Does the extreme conformity and interdependence within a totalitarian system increase disproportionately the impact of acts of defiance and resistance, making very limited acts become very significant? Or, does the extreme conformity instead make it possible to dismiss the resisters as mentally ill, antisocial persons, or foreign agents, and easily to quarantine the acts themselves?
 14. What are the implications for opposition strategy and tactics, and for the general course of the movement, of the fact that the nonviolent defiance may produce differing reactions among various sections of the population and types of personnel and officials in the system? For example, responses may vary among fully committed Party members, "soft" Party members, idealistic followers of the Party who lack real understanding, differing social classes, various religious, national, or cultural sections of the population, members of different branches and levels of the military forces, members of the political police, and the top hierarchy.
 15. How can one maintain the necessities of life, such as food, water, fuel, against State restriction of them, and of employment and money, as repression to control resisters?
 16. How can resistance strategy be deliberately aimed at aggravating identified inherent weaknesses in the system, thereby damaging the

system fundamentally in ways which will be difficult to counteract?

17. Can resistance be designed to create conflicts, or aggravate existing ones, within the ruling echelons of the system? Could such internal conflicts help the resistance movement even though the resisters would rarely if ever know about them at the time unless they produced major changes in personnel, policies, or structures?
18. How can one encourage deliberate inefficiency, laxity in carrying out duties, and perhaps eventual mutiny among the system's officials, bureaucrats, administrators, police, and soldiers? What different effects on these possibilities tend to be produced by passivity, violent action, and nonviolent action? How might such failures and refusals to supply information to the center, to relay orders to lower personnel, to carry out policies and instructions, and even to carry out repression, be developed on a sufficient scale to be catastrophic to the dictatorship?

These eighteen questions illustrate the many practical problems which require investigation if we wish to learn how to destroy extreme dictatorships, including totalitarian systems. This effort to find solutions to extreme dictatorships and to explore the potential of nonviolent struggle against them must be based upon full appreciation of the diverse and serious problems involved. If the required research and analysis are carried out on a sufficient scale and are of the needed quality, however, we can obtain the knowledge required to enable people to formulate effective nonviolent struggle strategies to resist and destroy extreme dictatorships.

USING KNOWLEDGE FOR FREEDOM

The continuation and revitalization of political democracy require that we take deliberate measures to enrich it and to counter those developments and forces which restrict and endanger it. These measures include both the conscious cultivation of necessary underlying social and political conditions, and the improvement of democratic institutions, constitutional processes, and laws. Examination is urgently needed of democratic means of correcting social and economic injustices. This is because justice ought to be closely associated with freedom and democracy, and because many of the attacks on democratic government are launched in the name of

justice. The development of new measures for emergency action against internal and external dictatorial threats to practicing democracies is also required.

The development of such means requires major research on the nature of dictatorships. This research should include both their means of control and their weaknesses, so that opposition might be concentrated on vulnerable points. The research should also focus on political violence in its various forms and its impacts on political systems, on possible alternatives to violence in serious domestic and international struggles against dictatorships, and on genocide. We need to know much more about the conditions under which genocide can occur and about past efforts to undermine and to defeat it. More knowledge is required on the viability of political freedom and optional forms of vitalized democratic structures and processes, and on underlying conditions which may be requirements for a practicing political democracy. Capacity to resist dictatorial attacks may be enhanced by greater knowledge of the modes of attack and requirements for success of the various forms of usurpation.

We also need to give attention to the ways to structure and prepare our society so that in the future we will be more able to avoid the development of dictatorships and more able to deal with them when we encounter them. These are some of the important long-term policy questions which we should examine:

1. How we should structure our social, economic, and political institutions to facilitate a free and democratic system, and to make most difficult or impossible any internal or external imposition of a dictatorship.
2. How we should organize people's resistance capacities to enable them to defeat attempts at internal usurpation and foreign rule which might occur.
3. How we should - without dangerous internal political violence or international war - assist people in other parts of the world to defend their independence and their abilities to maintain or to achieve democratic political systems and social justice without our doing it for them, and without dominating or manipulating them.
4. How people should act internally to undermine effectively a dictatorship which is already established - as by concentrating resistance on its inherent weaknesses, aggravating its internal

problems, or creating dissension within the regime, rather than by using means which unify the regime and arouse the population to support it.

5. How we can develop alternatives to modern military struggle to provide effective self-reliant defense, even for smaller countries.
6. How we can develop ways to improve societies, increase justice, and distribute power more equitably among the population without dictatorial means.

Such research and policy studies may reveal some blind alleys which could be by-passed in the future. However, this work is very likely to provide fundamentally significant new political options which can contribute to the revitalization of political democracy, the development of programs of dictatorship prevention, and the introduction of new, more effective policies for constitutional and national defense.

We need not only to rededicate ourselves to basic political principles of freedom and justice; we need also to discover and develop policies and means of action which in the face of the dangers of modern dictatorships will enable those principles to survive, to be implemented, and to become revitalized both in theory and in practice. This will enable us to face both the internal and foreign threats of dictatorships with the confidence that we can withstand their assaults and triumph over them.

NOTES

1. David Riesman, "Some Observations on the Limits of Totalitarian Power" in David Riesman, *Abundance for What? And Other Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), pp. 81 and 89.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
6. *Ibid.*
7. For a fuller presentation of this power theory, see Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1973), Chapter One, "The Nature and Control of Political Power."
8. Karl W. Deutsch, "Cracks in the Monolith," in Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 313-314.

9. Ibid., pp. 314-315.

10. Riesman, "Some Observations on the Limits of Totalitarian Power," p. 81.

11. For references to various of the above cases, see Sharp, **The Politics of Nonviolent Action**.

THERE ARE REALISTIC ALTERNATIVES

Gene Sharp

The Albert Einstein Institution

The Albert Einstein Institution Mission Statement

The mission of the Albert Einstein Institution is to advance the world-wide study and strategic use of nonviolent action in conflict.

The Institution is committed to:

- defending democratic freedoms and institutions;
- opposing oppression, dictatorship, and genocide; and
- reducing the reliance on violence as an instrument of policy.

This mission is pursued in three ways, by:

- encouraging research and policy studies on the methods of non-violent action and their past use in diverse conflicts;
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CHAPTER ONE

DEVELOPING A REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE TO WAR AND OTHER VIOLENCE

Violence in society and politics, whether in the form of war, terrorism, dictatorship, oppression, usurpation, or genocide, is widely recognized as a grave problem.

All the proposals to solve the problem of violence, or particular expressions of it, have been unsuccessful. It is probable that the problem remains unsolved because such proposals have been based on inadequate understandings of its nature. Without understanding a problem, it is difficult, if not impossible, to solve it.

The objective of this essay is to explore a different perspective on the nature of the problem of widespread violence in society and politics that suggests what will be required for its resolution.¹

We need to analyze the conditions under which it will be possible to reduce drastically the reliance on military and other violent means of conflict. We need to examine why violence is so widely regarded as necessary for good causes as well as for bad ones, and how fundamental change away from that syndrome might be achieved.

The perspective in this essay is simple, but perhaps fundamental to solving the problem of violence in political and international conflicts.

It is important to recognize that conflict in society and politics is inevitable and, in many cases, desirable. Some conflicts can be resolved by mild methods, such as negotiation, dialogue, and conciliation—methods that involve compromise. These are feasible when the issues at stake are not fundamental. Even then, the resolution of a conflict by negotiation is more often influenced by the relative power capacities of the contenders than by reasoned joint assessment of where justice lies.

¹“Violence” is used here with the restricted meaning of physical violence against persons to inflict injury or death, or action dependent on the threat of such results, not as a term of moral or political opinion.

However, in many conflicts fundamental issues are, or are believed to be, at stake. These are “acute conflicts.” They are not deemed suitable for any resolution that involves compromise.

In acute conflicts at least one side regards it as necessary and good to wage the conflict against hostile opponents. Acute conflicts are often believed to be waged to advance freedom, justice, religion, or one’s civilization, or to resist and defeat hostile violence. Hostile violence may be applied to impose oppression, injustice, or dictatorship. Hostile violence also may be applied to attack one’s moral or religious principles or human dignity, or even to threaten the survival of one’s people.

In acute conflicts at least one side regards submission, capitulation, or defeat as disastrous for its principles, convictions, whole society, and at times even to life itself. In such situations, people believe it is necessary to wage the conflict as strongly as possible.

The need for a means of waging conflicts

War and other violence have been applied for diverse purposes, but in acute conflicts political and international violence has served as a means of waging the conflict to protect and advance causes believed to be good and noble. Violence has been believed to be the necessary alternative to passive submission to great evil.

In most political systems, war and other violence serve as an “ultimate sanction.” That is, forms of violence are believed to be the means of last resort, the most powerful activity that can be applied, the final means of applying pressure, punishment, or power when all presumably milder means are seen to have failed, or to be destined to fail. Violence is used then, it is believed, to advance and defend all that is held to be good and worthwhile.

Unless this role of violence is understood, there is no possibility of a major reduction of reliance on war and other violence in acute conflicts.

In conflicts with basic issues at stake it is naïve to think and act as though the offer of negotiation or dialogue is an adequate response. Hostile opponents are most unlikely to abandon their goals

or means without a struggle. It is unreasonable to aim for a “win-win” resolution. Brutal dictators and perpetrators of genocide do not deserve to win anything.

We have many decades of evidence that violence in the conduct of conflicts is not eliminated by protests against such violence. In acute conflicts, the majority of people will not reject war and other violence because they believe, or are told, that such violence violates ethical or religious principles. Adherence to expectations to the contrary is unrealistic.

It has been nearly forty years since psychiatrist Jerome D. Frank reminded us that for most people peace is not the highest value.²

People, groups, and governments will not renounce violence when that is seen to mean becoming powerless and helpless in a conflict in which their basic beliefs and the nature of their society are, or are believed to be, under attack.

In acute conflicts in order for war and other violence not to be used as the final means of action to advance or defend one’s principles, ideals, society, or existence, some other means of strong action need to be available. There has to be a substitute means of conducting the conflict powerfully with the chance of success equivalent to or greater than the violent option.

Of necessity, such a functional alternative must be able to deal satisfactorily with the “hard cases” for which violence has in the past been believed to be required. These “hard cases” include conflicts against dictatorships, foreign invasions and occupations, internal usurpations, oppression, attempted genocide, and mass expulsions and killings.

A very important clue that such an alternative is possible lies in the fact that the strength of even dictatorships is dependent on sources of power in the society, which in turn depend on the cooperation of a multitude of institutions and people—cooperation which may or may not continue, as we shall see later in more detail.

²Jerome D. Frank, “Psychological Problems in the Elimination of War” in *Preventing World War III: Some Proposals*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962.

There is another technique of struggle

Such a substitute for violent conflict is a realistic option. It is often forgot that war and other violence have not been universal in the conduct of acute conflicts. In a great variety of situations, across centuries and cultural barriers, another technique of struggle has at times been applied. This other technique has not been based on turning the other cheek, but on the ability to be stubborn and to resist powerful opponents powerfully.

Throughout human history, in a multitude of conflicts one side has fought—not by violence, but—by psychological, social, economic, or political methods, or a combination of these. This type of conflict has been waged not only when the issues were relatively limited and the opponents relatively decent. Many times this alternative form of struggle has been applied when fundamental issues have been at stake and when ruthless opponents have been willing and able to apply extreme repression. That repression has included executions, beatings, arrests, imprisonments, and mass slaughters. Despite such repression, when the resisters have persisted in fighting with only their chosen nonviolent weapons, they have sometimes triumphed.

This technique is called nonviolent action or nonviolent struggle. This is “the other ultimate sanction.” In acute conflicts it potentially can serve as an alternative to war and other violence.

Cases of nonviolent struggle

Nonviolent struggle has occurred in widely differing cultures, periods of history, and political conditions. It has occurred in “the West” and in “the East.” Nonviolent action has occurred in industrialized and nonindustrialized countries. It has been practiced under constitutional democracies and against empires, foreign occupations, and dictatorial systems. Nonviolent struggle has been waged on behalf of a myriad of causes and groups, and even for objectives that many people reject. It has also been used to prevent, as well as to promote, change. Its use has sometimes been mixed with limited violence.

The issues at stake have been diverse. They have included social, economic, ethnic, religious, national, humanitarian, and political matters, and have ranged from the trivial to the fundamental.

Although historians have generally neglected this type of struggle, it is clearly a very old phenomenon. Most of the history of this technique has doubtless been lost, and most of what has survived has been largely ignored.

Many cases of the use of nonviolent action have had little or nothing to do with governments. Cases include labor-management conflicts and efforts to impose or resist pressures for social conformity. Nonviolent action has also been used in ethnic and religious conflicts and many other situations, such as disputes between students and university administrations. Important conflicts between the civilian population and governments where one side has employed nonviolent action have also occurred very widely. The following examples are often of this type.

From the late eighteenth century through the twentieth century, the technique of nonviolent action was widely used in highly diverse conflicts: colonial rebellions, international political and economic conflicts, religious conflicts, and anti-slavery resistance. This technique has been aimed to secure workers' right to organize, women's rights, universal manhood suffrage, and woman suffrage. This type of struggle has been used to gain national independence, to generate economic gains, to resist genocide, to undermine dictatorships, to gain civil rights, to end segregation, and to resist foreign occupations and coups d'état.

Cases of the use of this technique early in the twentieth century included major elements of the Russian 1905 Revolution. In various countries the growing trade unions widely used the strike and the economic boycott. Chinese boycotts of Japanese products occurred in 1908, 1915, and 1919. Germans used nonviolent action against the Kapp Putsch in 1920 and against the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in 1923. In the 1920s and 1930s, Indian nationalists used nonviolent action in their struggles against British rule, under the leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi.

From 1940 to 1945 in various European countries people, especially in Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, used nonviolent struggle to resist Nazi occupation and rule. Nonviolent action was used to save Jews from the Holocaust in Berlin, Bulgaria, Denmark, and elsewhere. The military dictators of El Salvador and Guatemala were ousted in brief nonviolent struggles in the spring of 1944. The American civil rights nonviolent struggles against racial segregation, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, changed laws and long-established policies in the US South. In April 1961 noncooperation by French conscript soldiers in the French colony of Algeria combined with popular demonstrations in France and defiance by the Debré-de Gaulle government defeated the coup d'état in Algiers before a related coup in Paris could be launched.

In 1968 and 1969, following the Warsaw Pact invasion, Czechs and Slovaks held off full Soviet control for eight months with improvised nonviolent struggle and refusal of collaboration. From 1953 to 1990 dissidents in Communist-ruled countries in Eastern Europe, especially in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic States, repeatedly used nonviolent struggles for increased freedom. The sophisticated Solidarity struggle in Poland began in 1980 with strikes to support the demand of a legal free trade union, and concluded in 1989 with the end of the Polish Communist regime. Nonviolent struggle also brought about the end of Communist dictatorships in Czechoslovakia in 1989 and in East Germany, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1991.

The attempted "hard-line" coup d'état in Moscow in 1991 was defeated by noncooperation and defiance. Nonviolent protests and mass resistance were highly important in undermining the *Apartheid* policies and European domination in South Africa, especially between 1950 and 1990. The Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines was destroyed by a nonviolent uprising in 1986.

In July and August 1988 Burmese democrats protested against the military dictatorship with marches and defiance, brought down three governments, and finally that struggle succumbed to a new military coup d'état and mass slaughter. In 1989 Chinese students and others in over three hundred cities (including in Tiananmen

Square, Beijing) conducted symbolic protests against government corruption and oppression, but the protests finally ended following massive killings by the military.

In Kosovo the Albanian population between 1990 and 1999 conducted a noncooperation campaign against repressive Serbian rule. When the de facto Kosovo government lacked a nonviolent strategy for gaining de jure independence, a guerrilla Kosovo Liberation Army initiated violence. This was followed by extreme Serbian repression and massive slaughters by so-called “ethnic cleansing,” which led to NATO bombing and intervention.

Starting in November 1996 Serbs conducted daily parades and protests in Belgrade and other cities against the autocratic governance of President Milosovic and secured correction of electoral fraud in mid-January 1997. At that time, however, Serb democrats lacked a strategy to press on the struggle and failed to launch a campaign to bring down the Milosovic dictatorship. In early October 2000, the Otpor (Resistance) movement and other democrats rose up again against Milosovic in a carefully planned nonviolent struggle and the dictatorship collapsed.

In early 2001 President Estrada, who had been accused of corruption, was ousted by Filipinos in a “People Power Two” campaign.

In order to understand better those conflicts and their outcomes it is important to understand the nature of this technique.

Characteristics and methods of nonviolent struggle

In this type of struggle, instead of using violence people have practiced three general types of behavior. First, they have engaged in symbolic protests, such as marches, vigils, distributing leaflets, or wearing of specific colors to communicate their support for, or opposition to, some objective.

Second, the resisters have refused to continue existing cooperation, or to begin new cooperation, with the opponents or with certain practices. They have practiced noncooperation. This has taken social, economic, and political forms.

For example, the resisters have practiced social boycotts of opponents or have refused to participate in observances or celebrations, or to attend meetings or schools that they believe support their opponents.

The resisters have at times discontinued economic cooperation by refusing to supply or transport goods and services or by refusing to buy or sell materials or products. Sometimes economic relations with an opponent country have been halted by government initiative. These all have been forms of economic boycott.

Labor strikes have taken various forms, such as a short symbolic work stoppage, a single factory strike, a massive general strike, or an economic shut-down of a city or a country.

Political noncooperation has included boycotts of rigged elections, rejection of the legitimacy of a regime, nonobedience without direct supervision, noncooperation by government employees, and civil disobedience of “immoral” laws.

Third, active intervention and disruption of the normal operation of the system has been applied in various psychological, social, economic, physical, and political forms. The many methods of nonviolent intervention include occupation of offices, sit-downs on the streets, hunger strikes, establishment of new economic institutions, nonviolent invasions, overloading of administrative facilities, seeking imprisonment, and parallel government.

The methods of nonviolent action are identified and categorized by the type of action applied, not by the motives or beliefs of the people applying it. Very importantly, this technique has been applied by people of diverse beliefs and clearly does not require a belief in ethical or religious nonviolence, which is a very different phenomenon. Most often, the participants and the leaders (if identifiable) have refrained from violence because it was understood to be both unnecessary and counterproductive. The 198 classified methods of nonviolent action are listed in Appendix Two, and presented in full with historical examples in Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*. (See Appendix Three: For Further Reading).

Misconceptions

A widespread series of false conceptions and misperceptions have plagued the understanding of nonviolent struggle. The following are some corrections:

- It is widely believed that violence always works quickly, and nonviolent struggle always takes very long. Both of these beliefs are false.
- Nonviolent struggle is often believed to be weak, but in fact it can be very powerful. It can paralyze and even disintegrate a repressive regime.
- Nonviolent struggle does not need a charismatic leader.
- Nonviolent struggle is a cross-cultural phenomenon.
- Nonviolent struggle does not require any religious beliefs (certainly no specific religious beliefs), although at times it has been practiced with religious motives.
- Nonviolent struggle is not the same as religious or ethical principled nonviolence, but a very different phenomenon. This distinction must be made clear and not downplayed.
- Although it is still widely believed that this technique can succeed only against humanitarian and democratic opponents, it has at times been successful against brutal regimes and dictatorships, including Nazi and Communist ones.
- It is said by some persons and groups that nonviolent struggle only succeeds by melting the hearts of the oppressors. However, it has been coercive and even destroyed extreme dictatorships.

Requirements for success

The choice to use this type of struggle is not a guarantee of success, just as the use of violence is not a guarantee of success. There are requirements for achieving success with this technique, just as there are with violence. Simply refraining from violence and speaking the word “nonviolent” does not produce the desired results.

Some of the past instances of nonviolent action failed to accomplish their objectives. Some won only limited victories. Sometimes a victory was short-lived because people did not then use it to consolidate and perhaps institutionalize their gains, nor did they effectively resist new threats to their liberty. In other instances, victory in a single campaign won concessions, but new struggles were required to achieve the full objectives.

In some cases, however, major victories were achieved that would have been impossible by resistance with violence. In order to better understand these outcomes, it is necessary to understand the nature of this technique.

Although the ways nonviolent struggle “works” differ widely from case to case, it is important to identify two crucial special processes that may be present in certain nonviolent conflicts, but not in every one. These are: (1) an ability to defy and at times to reverse the effects of repression, and (2) an ability to undermine and sever the sources of power of the opponents.

Repression and political jiu-jitsu

Naturally, dictators are sensitive to actions and ideas that threaten their power to do as they like. Oppressors are therefore likely to threaten and punish those who disobey, strike, or refuse to cooperate. However, repression and even brutalities do not always produce a resumption of the necessary degree of submission and cooperation to enable the regime to function.

Under some circumstances, but not in every case, severe repression may initiate a special process called “political jiu-jitsu.”

The opponents’ difficulties in dealing with nonviolent action are primarily associated with the special dynamics and processes of this technique. It is designed to operate against opponents able and willing to use violent sanctions. However, political struggle by means of nonviolent action against violent repression creates a special, asymmetrical, conflict situation. The nonviolent resisters can use the asymmetry of nonviolent means versus violent action in order

to apply to their opponents a political operation analogous to the Japanese martial art of jiu-jitsu. The contrast in types of action throws the opponents off balance politically, causing their repression to rebound against their position and weaken their power. By remaining nonviolent while continuing the struggle, the resisters will improve their own power position. This process is called political jiu-jitsu.

Political jiu-jitsu causes increased alienation from the opponents by any or all of three possible groups: members of the opponent group itself, members of the population affected by the issues, and third parties not directly involved in the conflict. That alienation can result in the growth of internal opposition in the opponents' camp. It can also increase the numbers of resisters and the extent of resistance. It also often turns third parties against the opponents and in favor of the resisters.

Undermining the opponents' power

Political jiu-jitsu does not operate in all situations or in every case of nonviolent action. The other major way nonviolent struggle operates is through undermining the sources of power required by the opponents, even dictatorships. This process operates primarily in struggles when the objective is to pressure or coerce a government to do or not to do something, or when the objective is to disintegrate the regime.

The principle is simple. Dictators require the assistance of the people they rule, without which they cannot secure and maintain the sources of political power they require. These sources of political power include:

- **Authority**, or legitimacy;
- **Human resources**, the persons and groups that obey, cooperate with, or assist the rulers;
- **Skills and knowledge**, needed by the regime and supplied by the cooperating persons and groups;

- **Intangible factors**, psychological and ideological factors which may induce people to obey and assist the rulers;
- **Material resources**, control of or access to property, natural resources, financial resources, the economic system, and means of communication and transportation; and
- **Sanctions**, punishments, threatened or applied, to ensure the submission and cooperation that are needed for the regime to carry out its policies and to exist.

All these sources, however, depend on acceptance of the regime, on the submission and obedience of the population, and on the cooperation of many people and institutions of the society.

Political power, therefore, is always dependent for its strength and existence upon a replenishment of its sources by the cooperation of a multitude of institutions and people—cooperation that may or may not continue. Political power is therefore always potentially fragile and is always dependent on the society over which it is applied.

This necessary submission and cooperation are not guaranteed, and each source of power is vulnerable to restrictions or losses. Nonviolent action can be directly targeted to strike at the availability of each of these sources. Depending on several factors, the supply of all these sources of power potentially can be weakened and even severed.

Noncooperation and defiance subvert the needed obedience and cooperation that supply the necessary sources of power. For example, rejection of the rulers' legitimacy reduces a crucial reason for obedience by both aides and the general populace. Extensive popular disobedience and defiance creates immense enforcement problems. Massive strikes can paralyze the economy. Widespread administrative noncooperation of the bureaucracy can thwart governmental operations. Mutinies of the opponents' police and troops can dissolve the opponents' capacity to repress nonviolent resisters and to maintain their regime.

Without availability of those sources of power, the opponents' power weakens and finally dissolves. The regime dies from political starvation.

Contrary to popular opinion, even totalitarian dictatorships are dependent on the support of the population and the societies they rule, as the political scientist Karl. W. Deutsch noted in 1953.³

Four ways to success

Successful nonviolent struggles have “worked” in four basic ways. These differing ways of operation depend to a high degree on the specific conflict situation, the issues at stake, the social structure of the resisting population, the nature of the opponents, the chosen grand strategy (if any), the preferred mechanism of change, the specific methods used, and the skill, discipline, and tenacity of the resisters. The pressures exerted may be psychological, social, economic, and political, each in varying degrees.

Additionally, the nonviolent struggle may affect the stability of the social or political system or may change its operation. The struggle also may affect the opponents' ability to continue specific policies. In certain conflicts nonviolent noncooperation and defiance may undermine the opponents' capacity to continue to govern, or may even disintegrate their regime.

There are major differences in how nonviolent struggle operates in different conflicts. For example, the dynamics in a local labor strike for increased wages will differ from those in a conflict conducted by a minority group for greater rights, or those of a struggle to destroy a dictatorship.

In cases of success, the change may come as a result of one of four mechanisms. Rarely, as a result of nonviolent struggle, changes of attitude have led the opponents to make concessions voluntarily because it is right to do so—*conversion*. Far more often, the withdrawal of economic or political cooperation has forced the opponents

³Karl W. Deutsch, “Cracks in the Monolith: Possibilities and Patterns of Disintegration in Totalitarian Systems,” in Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism*, pp. 308-333. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954.

to agree to a compromise—*accommodation*. At times the defiance and noncooperation have been so strong and so skillfully targeted, and the sources of the opponents' power have been sufficiently weakened that the opponents have been left with no option but to capitulate—*nonviolent coercion*. In some rare instances, the defiance and noncooperation have been so massive, and the severance of the sources of the opponents' power has been so complete, that the regime has simply fallen apart—*disintegration*.

Uses of a refined technique

Whether or not this technique of nonviolent struggle is, or can be made to be, a major contribution to the resolution of the problem of violence in society and politics hinges to a high degree on if it can help to reduce reliance on violence in acute conflicts. Can it be made sufficiently effective so as to be used in acute conflicts in place of violence? In some cases the answer offered by some persons may be a clear "yes," but in other cases the answer may be "perhaps," "doubtful," or "no." Those answers will likely depend upon the degree of understanding those persons have of this technique and the degree to which nonviolent struggle is judged capable of providing an effective substitute for violence in acute conflicts.

It is possible to learn how to make this type of struggle more effective than it has been in its past improvised applications. This can be done by increasing our knowledge of the requirements of this technique, spreading widely this knowledge and understanding, and increasing general and specific planning and strategy for the use of this technique in future acute conflicts.

The development of a satisfactory solution to the problem of violence, and the examination of the future political development of nonviolent struggle, require that we give attention to the present and potential future role of this technique. This is especially important in those acute conflicts in which many people and governments believe that military means and other violence are required. The questions are: to what extent we can understand and refine this technique, and how far can it be effectively substituted for violence?

The future political development of nonviolent struggle needs to include nonviolent alternatives to violence in the following types of conflicts:

- Dismantling dictatorships;
- Blocking new coups d'état and preventing new dictatorships;
- Defending against foreign aggression and occupation;
- Preserving the existence and ways of life of indigenous peoples;
- Lifting social and economic injustices;
- Developing, preserving and extending democratic practices and human rights; and
- Incorporating in additional ways nonviolent means into democratic societies.

Reducing reliance on war and other violence

For these and other general purposes, and for specific conflicts, practical strategic plans need to be developed to enable the nonviolent option to be effectively applied. As this is done incrementally, it will be possible in instance after instance to substitute refined nonviolent struggle for the use of violence in acute conflicts.

In order to meet this challenge—to explore and develop the potential of nonviolent action to address acute conflicts—a great deal more research, analysis, strategic studies, policy development, planning, and courageous action is required.

The tools of historians, social psychologists, sociologists, social and political theorists, political scientists, strategists, and others are needed. It is important not only to study nonviolent struggle, but also to examine other topics, including the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of dictatorships and other systems of oppression.

It is also important to learn how to develop and spread the capacity to think strategically and to plan strategies for future nonviolent struggles.

The application of these efforts will require going beyond, and often against, important established trends of modern society and

powerful national and international forces. The centralization of power, the militarization of inter-state politics, the hegemony of traditional methods of problem solving, these and other factors work against reasoned consideration of the potential relevance of nonviolent struggle.

However, there are grounds to suggest that whether a society chooses to rely ultimately on violent or nonviolent struggle in certain acute conflicts has highly important consequences for the social and political structure. It strongly appears that violent conflict tends to produce a more centralized and potentially repressive political system, whereas nonviolent conflict tends to produce a more decentralized and popularly controlled political system. Military capacity can be used internally to repress the population, while nonviolent struggle can be used by the population to achieve and defend freedoms and to resist centralized repression.

Careful informed consideration of the potential relevance and viability of means of applying nonviolent pressures and power is likely to reveal realistic options that have hitherto been inadequately explored. This approach has the potential for making fundamental changes in modern politics and international relations through reducing reliance upon violence.

How much we will succeed in replacing violent with nonviolent forms of conflict, thereby reducing drastically the reliance on military and other violent means, will to a very high degree be determined by the extent to which we can develop and apply effective nonviolent alternatives of conflict.

The unavoidable question is whether we are now going to attempt to refine this technique and adapt and adopt it for use in conflicts to challenge, replace, and remove extreme expressions of violence by effective and powerful action.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE

The use of strategy is best known in military conflict. For centuries military officers have engaged in strategic planning for military campaigns, and important thinkers such as Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Liddell Hart have analyzed and refined military strategy. In conventional military warfare and in guerrilla warfare, the use of sophisticated strategy is a basic requirement for effectiveness.

Just as effective military struggle requires wise strategies, planning, and implementation, nonviolent action will be most effective when it also operates on the basis of sound strategic planning. The formulation and adoption of wise strategies can greatly increase the power of nonviolent struggle.

The importance of strategy

If one wishes to accomplish something, the chances of achieving that goal will be greatest if one uses one's available resources and leverage to maximum effectiveness. That means having a strategic plan that is designed to move from the present (in which the goal is not achieved) to the future (in which it is achieved). Strategy pertains to charting the course of action that makes it most likely to get from the present to a desired situation in the future.

For example, if one wants to travel from one place to another, one needs to plan in advance how to do so. Will one walk? Take a train? Drive a car? Fly? Even then the plan is far from complete. Does one have the money to pay for the cost of the trip and other expenses? If the trip is a long one, where will one sleep and eat? Are travel documents, passports, or visas required, and if so how will one obtain them? Are there matters to be arranged to cover one's absence during the trip?

This type of thinking and planning which some individuals undertake for ordinary purposes in daily life, should be undertaken

by leaders of social and political movements. Unfortunately, however, strategic planning is rarely given the attention it deserves with such movements.

Some people naively think that if they simply assert their goal strongly and firmly enough, long enough, it will somehow come to pass. Others assume that if they remain true to their principles and ideals and witness to them in the face of adversity, then they are doing all they can to help to achieve them. Assertion of desirable goals and remaining loyal to ideals are admirable, but are in themselves grossly inadequate to change the status quo and bring into being designated goals.

Of course seeking to change a society, or to prevent changes in a society, or to remove a foreign occupation, or to defend a society from attack, are all far more complicated tasks than planning a trip. Yet only rarely do people seeking such objectives fully recognize the extreme importance of preparing a comprehensive strategic plan before they act.

Very often in social and political movements, the individuals and groups involved recognize that they need to plan how they are to act, but do so only on a very limited, short-term, or tactical, basis. They do not attempt to formulate a broader, longer-term, or strategic plan of action. They may not see it to be necessary. They may at the time be unable to think and analyze in those terms. Or, they may allow themselves to be repeatedly distracted from their larger goal by focusing continually on small issues, repeatedly responding to the opponents' initiatives, and acting feverishly on short-term activities. They may not allocate time and energy to planning a strategy, or exploring several alternative strategies, which could guide their overall efforts toward achieving their goal.

Sometimes, too, it must be admitted, people do not attempt to chart a strategy to achieve their goal, because deep down they do not really believe that achieving their goal is possible. They see themselves as weak, as helpless victims of overpowering forces, so the best they can do, they believe, is to assert and witness, or even die, in the faith that they are right. Consequently, they do not attempt to think and plan strategically to accomplish their objective.

The result of such failures to plan strategically is that the chances of success are drastically reduced, and at times eliminated. One's strength is dissipated. One's actions are ineffective. Sacrifices are wasted and one's cause is not well served. The failure to plan strategically is likely to result in the failure to achieve one's objectives.

Without the formulation of a careful strategic plan of action:

- one's energy can be deflected to minor issues and applied ineffectively;
- opportunities for advancing one's cause will go unutilized;
- the opponents' initiatives will determine the course of events;
- the weaknesses of one's own side will grow and have detrimental effects on the attempt to achieve the goal; and
- the efforts to reach the goal will have very little chance of being successful.

On the contrary, the formulation and adoption of brilliant strategies increase the chances of success. Directed action in accordance with a strategic plan enables one to concentrate one's strengths and actions to move in a determined direction toward the desired goal. They can be focused to serve the main objectives and to aggravate the opponents' weaknesses. Casualties and other costs may be reduced and sacrifices may serve the main goal more effectively. The chances of the nonviolent campaign succeeding are increased.

Formulating wise strategies

The selection, or formulation, of a wise strategy requires:

- an accurate sense of the whole context in which the struggle is to be waged;
- identification of the nature of the difference between where one is and where one wants to be;
- assessment of the impediments to achieving the goal and the factors that may facilitate the task;
- assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of one's oppo-

nents, of one's own group, and of third parties which may assist or hinder the campaign;

- evaluation of the merits and limitations of several potential courses of action one might follow;
- selection of a viable course among existing options or the charting of a completely new one; and
- identification of an overall plan of action which determines what smaller (tactical) plans and specific methods of action should be used in pursuit of the main goal (i.e., what specific localized or shorter-term activities or steps should be taken to implement the overall strategic plan).

Levels of planning and action

In developing a strategic plan one needs to understand that there are different levels of planning and action. At the highest level is grand strategy. Then there is strategy itself, followed by tactics and methods.

Grand strategy is the overall conception which serves to coordinate and direct all appropriate and available resources (economic, human, moral, political, organizational, etc.) of the nation or other group to attain its objectives in a conflict.

Grand strategy includes consideration of the rightness of the cause, assessment of other influences in the situation, and selection of the technique of action to be used (for example, nonviolent struggle, conventional politics, guerrilla warfare, or conventional warfare), how the objective will be achieved, and the long-term consequences.

Grand strategy sets the basic framework for the selection of more limited strategies for waging the struggle. This level of planning also includes the allocation of general tasks to particular groups and the distribution of resources to them for use in the struggle. Furthermore, it includes consideration of how the struggle itself relates to the achievement of the objectives for which the conflict is waged.

Strategy is the conception of how best to achieve objectives in a conflict (violent or nonviolent). Strategy is concerned with whether, when, or how to fight, and how to achieve maximum effectiveness in order to gain certain ends. Strategy is the plan for the practical distribution, adaptation, and application of the available means to attain desired objectives.

Strategy may also include efforts to develop a strategic situation so advantageous that it may bring success without open struggle. Applied to the struggle itself, strategy is the basic idea of how the campaign shall develop, and how its separate components shall be fitted together most advantageously to achieve its objectives.

Strategy involves consideration of the results likely to follow from particular actions; the development of a broad plan of actions; the skillful determination of the deployment of conflict groups in smaller actions; consideration of the requirements for success in the operation of the chosen technique; and making good use of success.

Strategy operates within the scope of grand strategy. Tactics and methods of action are used to implement the strategy. To be most effective, the tactics and methods must be chosen and applied so that they really assist the application of the strategy and contribute to achieving the requirements for success.

In formulating strategy in nonviolent struggle, the following aspects are to be taken into account: one's own objectives, resources and strength; the opponents' objectives, resources, and strength; the actual and possible roles of third parties; the opponents' various possible courses and means of action; one's own various possible courses and means of action (both offensive and defensive); the requirements for success with this technique, its dynamics of action, and its mechanisms of change.

A *tactic* is a limited plan of action, based on a conception of how best to utilize the available means of fighting to achieve a restricted objective as part of the wider strategy. A tactic is concerned with a limited course of action which fits within the broad strategy, just as a strategy fits within the grand strategy. A particular tactic can only be understood as part of the overall strategy of a battle or a campaign.

Tactics deal with how particular methods of action are applied, or how particular groups of combatants shall act in a specific situation. Tactics are applied for shorter periods of time than strategies, or in smaller areas (geographical, institutional, etc.), or by a more limited number of people, or for more limited objectives, or in some combination of these.

Method refers to the specific means of action within the technique of nonviolent struggle. These include dozens of particular forms of action, such as the many kinds of strikes, boycotts, political noncooperation and the like. (For a listing of 198 methods of nonviolent action that have been used in historical instances, see Appendix Two.)

The development of a responsible and effective strategic plan for a nonviolent struggle depends upon the careful formulation and selection of grand strategy, strategies, tactics, and methods.

Some key elements of nonviolent strategy

There is no single strategy for the use of nonviolent struggle that is appropriate for all occasions. Indeed, the technique of nonviolent action makes possible the development of a variety of strategies for meeting various types of conflict situations. Additionally, nonviolent struggle may often need to be combined in a grand strategy with the use of other means of action.

This does not mean that nonviolent struggle is compatible with all other techniques of action. For example, the use of violence along with nonviolent struggle destroys various processes by which nonviolent struggle operates, and thereby contributes to its ineffectiveness at best and its collapse or defeat at worst.

However, it is fairly obvious that such means as fact-finding, publicity, public education, appeals to the opponents, negotiations, and the like could beneficially in many situations be used in connection with the use of nonviolent struggle. These means are often used in connection with economic boycotts and labor strikes, for example.

Essential to the planning of nonviolent struggle campaigns is a basic principle: Plan your struggle so that the success of the conflict

becomes possible by reliance on yourselves alone. This was Charles Stewart Parnell's message to Irish peasants during a rent strike of 1879-1880: "rely on yourselves," and not on anyone else.

Assuming that a strong nonviolent struggle is planned and being waged, it is fine to seek limited and nonviolent assistance from others, but winning the struggle must depend on one's own group. Then, if no one else provides help, assuming that the strategic planning has been sound, one still has a chance to succeed. However, if the responsibility for success and failure has been given to others, when they do not come forward the struggle will fail. In any case, responsible external support is more likely to be forthcoming when a strong nonviolent struggle is being conducted by the aggrieved population, acting correctly as though success or failure will be determined by its efforts only.

The formulation of wise strategies and tactics for nonviolent struggles requires a thorough understanding of the dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent struggle, such as is presented in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. (See Appendix Three: For Further Reading). It is necessary to be attentive to the development of those plans and actions that facilitate their operation and to reject those that, if implemented, would disrupt the very factors that can contribute to effectiveness.

Attention will also be needed to such additional factors as psychological elements and morale, geographical and physical elements, timing, numbers and strength, the relation between the issue and the concentration of strength, maintenance of the initiative, and the choice of specific methods of action that can contribute to achieving the objectives of the strategy and tactics.

The importance of strategic planning for nonviolent struggle cannot be overemphasized. It is the key to making social and political movements more effective. It may not guarantee that a movement will achieve its objectives, but it will certainly make the possibility of success more likely.⁴

⁴For guidance on how to plan strategies for future nonviolent struggles, see Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: Twentieth Century Practice and Twenty-First Century Potential*. Forthcoming.

CHAPTER THREE

STEPS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR NONVIOLENT STRUGGLES AGAINST REPRESSIVE REGIMES

Nonviolent struggle is a technique for conducting conflicts by social, psychological, economic, and political methods of protest, non-cooperation, and disruptive intervention.

It is a technique built on the social, economic, and political application of basic human stubbornness—the determination and ability to dissent, to refuse to cooperate, to defy, and to disrupt. In other words, people may refuse to do things they are asked to do, and may do what they are forbidden to do.

All governments rely on cooperation and obedience for their very existence. When people choose to withhold or withdraw that cooperation, governments are left without any pillars to support their weight.

Nonviolent struggle has been applied in various types of conflicts throughout human history to resist oppression, undermine dictatorships, oppose foreign occupations, defend detested minorities, and to expand freedom.

Such struggles in the past have largely been the result of intuition, chance events, improvisation, and people acting without clearly identifying their objectives, or without understanding what was really required to achieve them.

Some of these struggles displayed a degree of tactical (or short-term) planning, but very few operated under grand strategic plans for the development and conduct of the overall struggle.

Now, groups engaged in nonviolent struggle no longer need to re-invent the wheel. Through deeper understanding of this technique, the sharing of this knowledge, and the use of strategic, or long-term, planning, nonviolent struggle is becoming more effective.

Elements of strategic planning

The following are some of the key elements requiring attention when planning a nonviolent struggle:

Phase I: Initial assessment and analysis

- Examine the issues at stake as seen by both sides.
- Prepare an analysis of the cultural, political, and socio-economic systems present in the society or country, as well as the population distribution.
- Prepare a strategic estimate⁵, meaning: identify the strengths and weaknesses of both sides to the conflict. This includes identification of the sources of power for the contending sides and the institutions that serve as their pillars of support, an analysis of resources available to or controlled by each side, an examination of the degrees of dependency each side has on the other for meeting particular needs, and the relative struggle power of the two sides.
- Identify which of the opponents' sources of power can be best targeted to be weakened or removed.
- Identify and examine the potential roles and attitudes of third parties to the conflict, including the "non-committed" population-at-large.
- Identify other external factors affecting possible courses of action: geography, weather, climate, infrastructure, etc.
- Identify what other kinds of pressures may lead to gaining the resisters' objectives.
- Examine the above factors to identify whether existing conditions are favorable or unfavorable to conducting a nonviolent struggle within a particular timeframe. Which of those conditions are "fixed," which are variable, and which can be directly influenced by the actions of the resisters or their adversaries?

⁵This term and concept was introduced to the field of strategic nonviolent action by Robert Helvey.

Phase II: Strategy development

- Develop a grand strategy for the overall conflict. Identify the objective of the struggle in clear, specific terms. Calculate in general terms how the nonviolent struggle should operate in order to achieve that objective. This is the broad, long-term, master concept for the conduct of the struggle, coordinating and directing all appropriate and available resources of the struggle group.
- Can the primary objective of the conflict be achieved in a single all-out campaign? If so, plan how to do that. If not, the struggle will need to be deliberately phased to include more limited campaigns for secondary but important objectives.
- Develop strategies for individual campaigns for more limited objectives to be obtained during the course of struggle. This is where the broad framework of the grand strategy becomes more detailed, to answer the who, what, where, when, and how in the planning of a particular campaign in the conflict.
- Select specific short-term tactics and individual methods of action that will implement the chosen strategy. It is very important to select tactics and methods carefully within the framework of a particular strategic campaign, and only after one has developed a grand strategy. Nonviolent methods that can be selected include those of protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and intervention. Some will work better than others in different situations, depending largely on the grand strategy and overall objective, the strategic estimate, and the objective of the individual campaign. Some methods will be more capable than others of restricting and severing the regime's sources of power.
- Ensure that the adopted strategic plan is harmonious in its objective, types of pressures to be applied, and selected tactics and methods.

Phase III: Capacity building

- Ensure that the selected strategies for the struggle are within the capacity of the population to implement. If they are not, deliberate efforts will be needed to strengthen the population's capacity. Or, the strategies will need to be modified.
- Strengthen organizations and institutions that are outside the opponents' control, especially if the grand strategy calls for using these independent bodies during the struggle for applying noncooperation and defiance.
- Plan for third-party assistance, but do not rely on it.

Phase IV: Open struggle

- Concentrate the resisters' strengths against the opponents' weaknesses to gain selected objectives according to the grand strategy, strategy, and selected methods, especially in restricting and severing the opponents' sources of power.
- Ensure that the strategic plan is applied in a disciplined way without violence that will weaken the resistance.
- Ensure that the struggle activities help to empower the resisters.
- Ensure the resisters' access to critical resources.
- Keep the opponents off-balance.
- Defy the opponents' repression but stick to one's own forms of struggle.
- Act, rather than react. Maintain the initiative and momentum. The struggle should be conducted on the terms of the resistance group, not the opponents.
- Continuously re-assess and evaluate the conduct of the struggle according to the strategic plan.

Phase V: Conclusion of the conflict

- Success, failure, or mixed results?
- Conduct a post-conflict assessment and plan for the future.

These are only elementary notes for the application of strategic non-violent struggle.⁶

⁶For more detailed recommendations for strategic planning, see Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: Twentieth Century Practice and Twenty-First Century Potential*. Forthcoming.

APPENDIX ONE

GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS IN NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE

Accommodation: A mechanism of change in nonviolent action in which the opponents resolve, while they still have a choice, to agree to a compromise and grant certain demands of the nonviolent resisters. Accommodation occurs when the opponents have neither changed their views nor been nonviolently coerced, but have concluded that a compromise settlement is desirable.

The accommodation may result from influences that, if continued, might have led to the conversion, nonviolent coercion, or disintegration of the opponents' system or regime.

Authority: The quality that leads the judgments, decisions, recommendations, and orders of certain individuals and institutions to be accepted voluntarily as right and therefore to be implemented by others through obedience or cooperation. Authority is a main source of political power, but is not identical with it.

Boycott: Noncooperation, either socially, economically, or politically.

Civic abstention: A synonym for acts of political noncooperation.

Civic action: A synonym for nonviolent action conducted for political purposes.

Civic defiance: Assertive acts of nonviolent protest, resistance or intervention conducted for political purposes.

Civic resistance: A synonym for nonviolent resistance with a political objective.

Civic strike: An economic shut-down conducted for political reasons. Not only workers may go on strike, but importantly students,

professionals, shopkeepers, white-collar workers (including government employees), and members of upper classes may participate.

Civil disobedience: A deliberate peaceful violation of particular laws, decrees, regulations, ordinances, military or police orders, and the like.

These are usually laws that are regarded as inherently immoral, unjust, or tyrannical. Sometimes, however, laws of a largely regulatory or morally neutral character may be disobeyed as a symbol of opposition to wider policies of the government.

Conversion: A change of viewpoint by the opponents against whom nonviolent action has been waged, such that they come to believe it is right to accept the objectives of the nonviolent group. This is one of four mechanisms of change in nonviolent action.

Disintegration: The fourth mechanism of change in nonviolent action, in which the opponents are not simply coerced, but their system or government is disintegrated and falls apart as a result of massive noncooperation and defiance. The sources of power are restricted or severed by the noncooperation to such an extreme degree that the opponents' system or government simply dissolves.

Economic shut-down: A suspension of the economic activities of a city, area, or country on a sufficient scale to produce economic paralysis. The motives are usually political.

This may be achieved with a general strike by workers while management, business, commercial institutions, and small shopkeepers close their establishments and halt their economic activities.

Freedom (political): A political condition that permits freedom of choice and action for individuals and also for individuals and groups to participate in the decisions and operation of the society and the political system.

Grand strategy: The broadest conception of how an objective is to be attained in a conflict by a chosen course of action. The grand strategy serves to coordinate and direct all appropriate and available resources (human, political, economic, moral, etc.) of the group to attain its objectives in a conflict.

Several more limited strategies may be applied within a grand strategy to achieve particular objectives in subordinate phases of the overall struggle.

Grievance group: The general population group whose grievances are issues in the conflict, and are being championed by the nonviolent resisters.

Human resources: A term that is used here to indicate the number of persons and groups who obey "the ruler" (meaning the ruling group in command of the state), cooperate with, or assist the ruling group in implementing their will. This includes the proportion of such persons and groups in the general population, and the extent, forms, and independence of their organizations.

A ruler's power is affected by the availability of these human resources, which constitute one of the sources of political power.

Material resources: This is another source of political power. The term refers to property, natural resources, financial resources, the economic system, means of communication, and modes of transportation. The degree to which the ruler controls, or does not control, these helps to determine the extent or limits of the ruler's power.

Mechanisms of change: The processes by which change is achieved in successful cases of nonviolent struggle. The four mechanisms are conversion, accommodation, nonviolent coercion, and disintegration.

Methods: The specific means of action within the technique of nonviolent action. Nearly two hundred specific methods have thus far

been identified. They are classed under three main classes: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation (social, economic, and political), and nonviolent intervention.

Noncooperation: A large class of methods of nonviolent action that involve deliberate restriction, discontinuance, or withholding of social, economic, or political cooperation (or a combination of these) with a disapproved person, activity, institution, or regime.

The methods of noncooperation are classified in the subcategories of social noncooperation, economic noncooperation (economic boycotts and labor strikes), and political noncooperation.

Nonviolence (religious or ethical): Beliefs and behavior of several types in which violent acts are prohibited on religious or ethical grounds. In some belief systems, not only physical violence is barred but also hostile thoughts and words. Certain belief systems additionally enjoin positive attitudes and behavior toward opponents, or even a rejection of the concept of opponents.

Such believers often may participate in nonviolent struggles with people practicing nonviolent struggle for pragmatic reasons, or may choose not to do so.

Nonviolent action: A general technique of conducting protest, resistance, and intervention without physical violence.

Such action may be conducted by (a) acts of omission—that is, the participants refuse to perform acts that they usually perform, are expected by custom to perform, or are required by law or regulation to perform; or (b) acts of commission—that is, the participants perform acts that they usually do not perform, are not expected by custom to perform, or are forbidden by law or regulation from performing; or (c) a combination of both.

The technique includes a multitude of specific methods that are grouped into three main classes: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention.

Nonviolent coercion: A mechanism of change in nonviolent action in which demands are achieved against the will of the opponents because effective control of the situation has been taken away from them by widespread noncooperation and defiance. However, the opponents still remain in their official positions and the system has not yet disintegrated.

Nonviolent insurrection: A popular political uprising against an established regime regarded as oppressive by use of massive noncooperation and defiance.

Nonviolent intervention: A large class of methods of nonviolent action that in a conflict situation directly interfere by nonviolent means with the opponents' activities and operation of their system. These methods are distinguished from both symbolic protests and noncooperation. The disruptive intervention is most often physical (as in a sit-in) but may be psychological, social, economic, or political.

Nonviolent protest and persuasion: A large class of methods of nonviolent action that are symbolic acts expressing opposition opinions or attempting persuasion (as vigils, marches or picketing). These acts extend beyond verbal expressions of opinion but stop short of noncooperation (as a strike) and nonviolent intervention (as a sit-in).

Nonviolent struggle: The waging of determined conflict by strong forms of nonviolent action, especially against determined and resourceful opponents who may respond with repression.

Nonviolent weapons: The specific methods of nonviolent action.

Pillars of support: The institutions and sections of the society that supply the existing regime with the needed sources of power to maintain and expand its power capacity.

Examples are the police, prisons, and military forces supplying sanctions, moral and religious leaders supplying authority (legitimacy), labor groups and business and investment groups supplying economic resources, and similarly with the other identified sources of political power.

Political defiance: The strategic application of nonviolent struggle in order to disintegrate a dictatorship and to replace it with a democratic system.

This resistance by noncooperation and defiance mobilizes the power of the oppressed population in order to restrict and cut off the sources of the dictatorship's power. Those sources are provided by groups and institutions called "pillars of support."

When political defiance is used successfully, it can make a nation ungovernable by the current or any future dictatorship and therefore able to preserve a democratic system against possible new threats.

Political jiu-jitsu: A special process that may operate during a nonviolent struggle to change power relationships. In political jiu-jitsu negative reactions to the opponents' violent repression against nonviolent resisters is turned to operate politically against the opponents, weakening their power position and strengthening that of the nonviolent resisters. This can operate only when violent repression is met with continued nonviolent defiance, not violence or surrender. The opponents' repression is then seen in the worst possible light.

Resulting shifts of opinion are likely to occur among third parties, the general grievance group, and even the opponents' usual supporters. Those shifts may produce both withdrawal of support for the opponents and increased support for the nonviolent resisters. The result may be widespread condemnation of the opponents, internal opposition among the opponents, and increased resistance. These changes can at times produce major shifts in power relationships in favor of the nonviolent struggle group.

Political jiu-jitsu does not operate in all cases of nonviolent

struggle. When it is absent the shift of power relationships depends highly on the extent of noncooperation.

Political power: The totality of influences and pressures available for use to determine and implement official policies for a society. Political power may be wielded by the institutions of government, or in opposition to the government by dissident groups and organizations. Political power may be directly applied in a conflict, or it may be held as a reserve capacity for possible later use.

Sanctions: Punishments or reprisals, violent or nonviolent, imposed either because people have failed to act in the expected or desired manner or because people have acted in an unexpected or prohibited manner.

Nonviolent sanctions are less likely than violent ones to be simple reprisals for disobedience and are more likely to be intended to achieve a given objective. Sanctions are a source of political power.

Self-reliance: The capacity to manage one's own affairs, make one's own judgments, and provide for oneself, one's group or organization, independence, self-determination, and self-sufficiency.

Skills and knowledge: A source of political power. The ruler's power is supported by the skills, knowledge and abilities that are provided by persons and groups in the society (human resources) and the relation of those available skills, knowledge and abilities to the ruler's needs for them.

Sources of power: These are origins of political power. They include: authority, human resources, skills and knowledge, intangible factors, material resources and sanctions. These derive from the society. Each of these sources is closely associated with and dependent upon the acceptance, cooperation, and obedience of the population and the society's institutions. With a strong supply of these sources the ruler will be powerful. As the supply is weakened or severed, the ruler's power will weaken or collapse.

Strategic nonviolent struggle: Nonviolent struggle that is applied according to a strategic plan that has been prepared on the basis of analysis of the conflict situation, the strengths and weaknesses of the contending groups, the nature, capacities, and requirements of the technique of nonviolent action, and especially strategic principles of that type of struggle. See also: grand strategy, strategy, tactics, and methods.

Strategy: A plan for the conduct of a major phase, or campaign, within a grand strategy for the overall conflict. A strategy is the basic idea of how the struggle of a specific campaign shall develop, and how its separate components shall be fitted together to contribute most advantageously to achieve its objectives.

Strategy operates within the scope of the grand strategy. Tactics and specific methods of action are used in smaller scale operations to implement the strategy for a specific campaign.

Strike: A deliberate restriction or suspension of work, usually temporarily, to put pressure on employers to achieve an economic objective or sometimes on the government in order to win a political objective.

Tactic: A limited plan of action based on a conception of how, in a restricted phase of a conflict, to use effectively the available means of action to achieve a specific limited objective. Tactics are intended for use in implementing a wider strategy in a phase of the overall conflict.

Violence: Physical violence against other human beings that inflicts injury or death, or threatens to inflict such violence, or any act dependent on such infliction or threat.

Some types of religious or ethical nonviolence conceive of violence much more broadly. This narrower definition permits adherents to those beliefs to cooperate with persons and groups that are prepared on pragmatic grounds to practice nonviolent struggle.

APPENDIX TWO

198 METHODS OF NONVIOLENT ACTION

The Methods of Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion

The following 198 methods of nonviolent action have all been used in historical instances of nonviolent struggle. Definitions of these methods and examples are provided in Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*.⁷

Formal Statements

1. Public speeches
2. Letters of opposition or support
3. Declarations by organizations and institutions
4. Signed public statements
5. Declarations of indictment and intention
6. Group or mass petitions

Communications with a Wider Audience

7. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
8. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
9. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
10. Newspapers and journals
11. Records, radio, and television
12. Skywriting and earthwriting

Group Representations

13. Deputations
14. Mock awards
15. Group lobbying
16. Picketing
17. Mock elections

⁷Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973 and later editions.

Symbolic Public Acts

18. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
19. Wearing of symbols
20. Prayer and worship
21. Delivering symbolic objects
22. Protest disrobings
23. Destruction of own property
24. Symbolic lights
25. Displays of portraits
26. Paint as protest
27. New signs and names
28. Symbolic sounds
29. Symbolic reclamations
30. Rude gestures

Pressures on Individuals

31. "Haunting" officials
32. Taunting officials
33. Fraternization
34. Vigils

Drama and Music

35. Humorous skits and pranks
36. Performances of plays and music
37. Singing

Processions

38. Marches
39. Parades
40. Religious processions
41. Pilgrimages
42. Motorcades

Honoring the Dead

- 43. Political mourning
- 44. Mock funerals
- 45. Demonstrative funerals
- 46. Homage at burial places

Public Assemblies

- 47. Assemblies of protest or support
- 48. Protest meetings
- 49. Camouflaged meetings of protest
- 50. Teach-ins

Withdrawal and Renunciation

- 51. Walk-outs
- 52. Silence
- 53. Renouncing honors
- 54. Turning one's back

The Methods of Noncooperation

Social Noncooperation

Ostracism of Persons

- 55. Social boycott
- 56. Selective social boycott
- 57. Lysistratic nonaction
- 58. Excommunication
- 59. Interdict

Noncooperation with Social Events, Customs, and Institutions

- 60. Suspension of social and sports activities
- 61. Boycott of social affairs
- 62. Student strike
- 63. Social disobedience
- 64. Withdrawal from social institutions

Withdrawal from the Social System

- 65. Stay-at-home
- 66. Total personal noncooperation
- 67. "Flight" of workers
- 68. Sanctuary
- 69. Collective disappearance
- 70. Protest emigration (*hijrat*)

Economic Noncooperation: Economic Boycotts

Actions by Consumers

- 71. Consumers' boycott
- 72. Nonconsumption of boycotted goods
- 73. Policy of austerity
- 74. Rent withholding
- 75. Refusal to rent
- 76. National consumers' boycott
- 77. International consumers' boycott

Action by Workers and Producers

- 78. Workmen's boycott
- 79. Producers' boycott

Action by Middlemen

- 80. Suppliers' and handlers' boycott

Action by Owners and Management

- 81. Traders' boycott
- 82. Refusal to let or sell property
- 83. Lockout
- 84. Refusal of industrial assistance
- 85. Merchants' "general strike"

Action by Holders of Financial Resources

- 86. Withdrawal of bank deposits
- 87. Refusal to pay fees, dues, and assessments
- 88. Refusal to pay debts or interest
- 89. Severance of funds and credit
- 90. Revenue refusal
- 91. Refusal of a government's money

Action by Governments

- 92. Domestic embargo
- 93. Blacklisting of traders
- 94. International sellers' embargo
- 95. International buyers' embargo
- 96. International trade embargo

Economic Noncooperation: The Strike

Symbolic Strikes

- 97. Protest strike
- 98. Quickie walkout (lightning strike)

Agricultural Strikes

- 99. Peasant strike
- 100. Farm Workers' strike

Strikes by Special Groups

- 101. Refusal of impressed labor
- 102. Prisoners' strike
- 103. Craft strike
- 104. Professional strike

Ordinary Industrial Strikes

- 105. Establishment strike
- 106. Industry strike
- 107. Sympathetic strike

Restricted Strikes

- 108. Detailed strike
- 109. Bumper strike
- 110. Slowdown strike
- 111. Working-to-rule strike
- 112. Reporting "sick" (sick-in)
- 113. Strike by resignation
- 114. Limited strike
- 115. Selective strike

Multi-Industry Strikes

- 116. Generalized strike
- 117. General strike

Combination of Strikes and Economic Closures

- 118. Hartal
- 119. Economic shutdown

Political Noncooperation

Rejection of Authority

- 120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance

Citizens' Noncooperation with Government

- 123. Boycott of legislative bodies
- 124. Boycott of elections
- 125. Boycott of government employment and positions
- 126. Boycott of government depts., agencies, and other bodies
- 127. Withdrawal from government educational institutions
- 128. Boycott of government-supported organizations
- 129. Refusal of assistance to enforcement agents
- 130. Removal of own signs and placemarks
- 131. Refusal to accept appointed officials
- 132. Refusal to dissolve existing institutions

Citizens' Alternatives to Obedience

- 133. Reluctant and slow compliance
- 134. Nonobedience in absence of direct supervision
- 135. Popular nonobedience
- 136. Disguised disobedience
- 137. Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to disperse

- 138. Sit-down
- 139. Noncooperation with conscription and deportation
- 140. Hiding, escape, and false identities
- 141. Civil disobedience of “illegitimate” laws

Action by Government Personnel

- 142. Selective refusal of assistance by government aides
- 143. Blocking of lines of command and information
- 144. Stalling and obstruction
- 145. General administrative noncooperation
- 146. Judicial noncooperation
- 147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation
by enforcement agents
- 148. Mutiny

Domestic Governmental Action

- 149. Quasi-legal evasions and delays
- 150. Noncooperation by constituent governmental units

International Governmental Action

- 151. Changes in diplomatic and other representations
- 152. Delay and cancellation of diplomatic events
- 153. Withholding of diplomatic recognition
- 154. Severance of diplomatic relations
- 155. Withdrawal from international organizations
- 156. Refusal of membership in international bodies
- 157. Expulsion from international organizations

The Methods of Nonviolent Intervention

Psychological Intervention

- 158. Self-exposure to the elements
- 159. The fast
 - a) Fast of moral pressure
 - b) Hunger strike
 - c) Satyagrahic fast
- 160. Reverse trial
- 161. Nonviolent harassment

Physical Intervention

- 162. Sit-in
- 163. Stand-in
- 164. Ride-in
- 165. Wade-in
- 166. Mill-in
- 167. Pray-in
- 168. Nonviolent raids
- 169. Nonviolent air raids
- 170. Nonviolent invasion
- 171. Nonviolent interjection
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Social Intervention

- 174. Establishing new social patterns
- 175. Overloading of facilities
- 176. Stall-in
- 177. Speak-in
- 178. Guerrilla theater
- 179. Alternative social institutions
- 180. Alternative communication system

Economic Intervention

181. Reverse strike
182. Stay-in strike
183. Nonviolent land seizure
184. Defiance of blockades
185. Politically motivated counterfeiting
186. Preclusive purchasing
187. Seizure of assets
188. Dumping
189. Selective patronage
190. Alternative markets
191. Alternative transportation systems
192. Alternative economic institutions

Political Intervention

193. Overloading of administrative systems
194. Disclosing identities of secret agents
195. Seeking imprisonment
196. Civil disobedience of “neutral” laws
197. Work-on without collaboration
198. Dual sovereignty and parallel government

Without doubt, a large number of additional methods have already been used but have not been classified, and a multitude of additional methods will be invented in the future that have the characteristics of the three classes of methods: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention.

It must be clearly understood that the greatest effectiveness is possible when individual methods to be used are selected to implement the previously adopted strategy. It is necessary to know what kind of pressures are to be used before one chooses the precise forms of action that will best apply those pressures.

FROM
DICTATORSHIP
TO
DEMOCRACY

A Conceptual Framework for Liberation

Fourth U.S. Edition

Gene Sharp

The Albert Einstein Institution

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PREFACE

One of my major concerns for many years has been how people could prevent and destroy dictatorships. This has been nurtured in part because of a belief that human beings should not be dominated and destroyed by such regimes. That belief has been strengthened by readings on the importance of human freedom, on the nature of dictatorships (from Aristotle to analysts of totalitarianism), and histories of dictatorships (especially the Nazi and Stalinist systems).

Over the years I have had occasion to get to know people who lived and suffered under Nazi rule, including some who survived concentration camps. In Norway I met people who had resisted fascist rule and survived, and heard of those who perished. I talked with Jews who had escaped the Nazi clutches and with persons who had helped to save them.

Knowledge of the terror of Communist rule in various countries has been learned more from books than personal contacts. The terror of these systems appeared to me to be especially poignant for these dictatorships were imposed in the name of liberation from oppression and exploitation.

In more recent decades through visits of persons from dictatorially ruled countries, such as Panama, Poland, Chile, Tibet, and Burma, the realities of today's dictatorships became more real. From Tibetans who had fought against Chinese Communist aggression, Russians who had defeated the August 1991 hard-line coup, and Thais who had nonviolently blocked a return to military rule, I have gained often troubling perspectives on the insidious nature of dictatorships.

The sense of pathos and outrage against the brutalities, along with admiration of the calm heroism of unbelievably brave men and women, were sometimes strengthened by visits to places where the dangers were still great, and yet defiance by brave people continued. These included Panama under Noriega; Vilnius, Lithuania, under continued Soviet repression; Tiananmen Square, Beijing, during both the festive demonstration of freedom and while the

first armored personnel carriers entered that fateful night; and the jungle headquarters of the democratic opposition at Manerplaw in “liberated Burma.”

Sometimes I visited the sites of the fallen, as the television tower and the cemetery in Vilnius, the public park in Riga where people had been gunned down, the center of Ferrara in northern Italy where the fascists lined up and shot resisters, and a simple cemetery in Manerplaw filled with bodies of men who had died much too young. It is a sad realization that every dictatorship leaves such death and destruction in its wake.

Out of these concerns and experiences grew a determined hope that prevention of tyranny might be possible, that successful struggles against dictatorships could be waged without mass mutual slaughters, that dictatorships could be destroyed and new ones prevented from rising out of the ashes.

I have tried to think carefully about the most effective ways in which dictatorships could be successfully disintegrated with the least possible cost in suffering and lives. In this I have drawn on my studies over many years of dictatorships, resistance movements, revolutions, political thought, governmental systems, and especially realistic nonviolent struggle.

This publication is the result. I am certain it is far from perfect. But, perhaps, it offers some guidelines to assist thought and planning to produce movements of liberation that are more powerful and effective than might otherwise be the case.

Of necessity, and of deliberate choice, the focus of this essay is on the generic problem of how to destroy a dictatorship and to prevent the rise of a new one. I am not competent to produce a detailed analysis and prescription for a particular country. However, it is my hope that this generic analysis may be useful to people in, unfortunately, too many countries who now face the realities of dictatorial rule. They will need to examine the validity of this analysis for their situations and the extent to which its major recommendations are, or can be made to be, applicable for their liberation struggles.

Nowhere in this analysis do I assume that defying dictators will be an easy or cost-free endeavor. All forms of struggle have complica-

tions and costs. Fighting dictators will, of course, bring casualties. It is my hope, however, that this analysis will spur resistance leaders to consider strategies that may increase their effective power while reducing the relative level of casualties.

Nor should this analysis be interpreted to mean that when a specific dictatorship is ended, all other problems will also disappear. The fall of one regime does not bring in a utopia. Rather, it opens the way for hard work and long efforts to build more just social, economic, and political relationships and the eradication of other forms of injustices and oppression. It is my hope that this brief examination of how a dictatorship can be disintegrated may be found useful wherever people live under domination and desire to be free.

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6 October 1993
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Boston, Massachusetts

ONE

FACING DICTATORSHIPS REALISTICALLY

In recent years various dictatorships — of both internal and external origin — have collapsed or stumbled when confronted by defiant, mobilized people. Often seen as firmly entrenched and impregnable, some of these dictatorships proved unable to withstand the concerted political, economic, and social defiance of the people.

Since 1980 dictatorships have collapsed before the predominantly nonviolent defiance of people in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Slovenia, Madagascar, Mali, Bolivia, and the Philippines. Nonviolent resistance has furthered the movement toward democratization in Nepal, Zambia, South Korea, Chile, Argentina, Haiti, Brazil, Uruguay, Malawi, Thailand, Bulgaria, Hungary, Nigeria, and various parts of the former Soviet Union (playing a significant role in the defeat of the August 1991 attempted hard-line coup d'état).

In addition, mass political defiance¹ has occurred in China, Burma, and Tibet in recent years. Although those struggles have not brought an end to the ruling dictatorships or occupations, they have exposed the brutal nature of those repressive regimes to the world community and have provided the populations with valuable experience with this form of struggle.

¹ The term used in this context was introduced by Robert Helvey. "Political defiance" is nonviolent struggle (protest, noncooperation, and intervention) applied defiantly and actively for political purposes. The term originated in response to the confusion and distortion created by equating nonviolent struggle with pacifism and moral or religious "nonviolence." "Defiance" denotes a deliberate challenge to authority by disobedience, allowing no room for submission. "Political defiance" describes the environment in which the action is employed (political) as well as the objective (political power). The term is used principally to describe action by populations to regain from dictatorships control over governmental institutions by relentlessly attacking their sources of power and deliberately using strategic planning and operations to do so. In this paper, political defiance, nonviolent resistance, and nonviolent struggle will be used interchangeably, although the latter two terms generally refer to struggles with a broader range of objectives (social, economic, psychological, etc.).

The collapse of dictatorships in the above named countries certainly has not erased all other problems in those societies: poverty, crime, bureaucratic inefficiency, and environmental destruction are often the legacy of brutal regimes. However, the downfall of these dictatorships has minimally lifted much of the suffering of the victims of oppression, and has opened the way for the rebuilding of these societies with greater political democracy, personal liberties, and social justice.

A continuing problem

There has indeed been a trend towards greater democratization and freedom in the world in the past decades. According to Freedom House, which compiles a yearly international survey of the status of political rights and civil liberties, the number of countries around the world classified as “Free” has grown significantly in recent years:²

	Free	Partly Free	Not Free
1983	54	47	64
1993	75	73	38
2003	89	55	48
2009	89	62	42

However, this positive trend is tempered by the large numbers of people still living under conditions of tyranny. As of 2008, 34% of the world’s 6.68 billion population lived in countries designated as “Not Free,”³ that is, areas with extremely restricted political rights and civil liberties. The 42 countries in the “Not Free” category are ruled by a range of military dictatorships (as in Burma), traditional repressive monarchies (as in Saudi Arabia and Bhutan), dominant political parties (as in China and North Korea), foreign occupiers (as in Tibet and Western Sahara), or are in a state of transition.

² Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org>.

³ *Ibid.*

Many countries today are in a state of rapid economic, political, and social change. Although the number of “Free” countries has increased in recent years, there is a great risk that many nations, in the face of such rapid fundamental changes, will move in the opposite direction and experience new forms of dictatorship. Military cliques, ambitious individuals, elected officials, and doctrinal political parties will repeatedly seek to impose their will. Coups d’état are and will remain a common occurrence. Basic human and political rights will continue to be denied to vast numbers of peoples.

Unfortunately, the past is still with us. The problem of dictatorships is deep. People in many countries have experienced decades or even centuries of oppression, whether of domestic or foreign origin. Frequently, unquestioning submission to authority figures and rulers has been long inculcated. In extreme cases, the social, political, economic, and even religious institutions of the society — outside of state control — have been deliberately weakened, subordinated, or even replaced by new regimented institutions used by the state or ruling party to control the society. The population has often been atomized (turned into a mass of isolated individuals) unable to work together to achieve freedom, to confide in each other, or even to do much of anything at their own initiative.

The result is predictable: the population becomes weak, lacks self-confidence, and is incapable of resistance. People are often too frightened to share their hatred of the dictatorship and their hunger for freedom even with family and friends. People are often too terrified to think seriously of public resistance. In any case, what would be the use? Instead, they face suffering without purpose and a future without hope.

Current conditions in today’s dictatorships may be much worse than earlier. In the past, some people may have attempted resistance. Short-lived mass protests and demonstrations may have occurred. Perhaps spirits soared temporarily. At other times, individuals and small groups may have conducted brave but impotent gestures, asserting some principle or simply their defiance. However noble the motives, such past acts of resistance have often been insufficient to overcome the people’s fear and habit of obedience, a necessary

prerequisite to destroy the dictatorship. Sadly, those acts may have brought instead only increased suffering and death, not victories or even hope.

Freedom through violence?

What is to be done in such circumstances? The obvious possibilities seem useless. Constitutional and legal barriers, judicial decisions, and public opinion are normally ignored by dictators. Understandably, reacting to the brutalities, torture, disappearances, and killings, people often have concluded that only violence can end a dictatorship. Angry victims have sometimes organized to fight the brutal dictators with whatever violent and military capacity they could muster, despite the odds being against them. These people have often fought bravely, at great cost in suffering and lives. Their accomplishments have sometimes been remarkable, but they rarely have won freedom. Violent rebellions can trigger brutal repression that frequently leaves the populace more helpless than before.

Whatever the merits of the violent option, however, one point is clear. *By placing confidence in violent means, one has chosen the very type of struggle with which the oppressors nearly always have superiority.* The dictators are equipped to apply violence overwhelmingly. However long or briefly these democrats can continue, eventually the harsh military realities usually become inescapable. The dictators almost always have superiority in military hardware, ammunition, transportation, and the size of military forces. Despite bravery, the democrats are (almost always) no match.

When conventional military rebellion is recognized as unrealistic, some dissidents then favor guerrilla warfare. However, guerrilla warfare rarely, if ever, benefits the oppressed population or ushers in a democracy. Guerrilla warfare is no obvious solution, particularly given the very strong tendency toward immense casualties among one's own people. The technique is no guarantor against failure, despite supporting theory and strategic analyses, and sometimes international backing. Guerrilla struggles often last a very long time. Civilian populations are often displaced by the ruling gov-

ernment, with immense human suffering and social dislocation.

Even when successful, guerrilla struggles often have significant long-term negative structural consequences. Immediately, the attacked regime becomes more dictatorial as a result of its countermeasures. If the guerrillas should finally succeed, the resulting new regime is often more dictatorial than its predecessor due to the centralizing impact of the expanded military forces and the weakening or destruction of the society's independent groups and institutions during the struggle — bodies that are vital in establishing and maintaining a democratic society. Persons hostile to dictatorships should look for another option.

Coups, elections, foreign saviors?

A military coup d'état against a dictatorship might appear to be relatively one of the easiest and quickest ways to remove a particularly repugnant regime. However, there are very serious problems with that technique. Most importantly, it leaves in place the existing maldistribution of power between the population and the elite in control of the government and its military forces. The removal of particular persons and cliques from the governing positions most likely will merely make it possible for another group to take their place. Theoretically, this group might be milder in its behavior and be open in limited ways to democratic reforms. However, the opposite is as likely to be the case.

After consolidating its position, the new clique may turn out to be more ruthless and more ambitious than the old one. Consequently, the new clique — in which hopes may have been placed — will be able to do whatever it wants without concern for democracy or human rights. That is not an acceptable answer to the problem of dictatorship.

Elections are not available under dictatorships as an instrument of significant political change. Some dictatorial regimes, such as those of the former Soviet-dominated Eastern bloc, went through the motions in order to appear democratic. Those elections, however, were merely rigidly controlled plebiscites to get public

endorsement of candidates already hand picked by the dictators. Dictators under pressure may at times agree to new elections, but then rig them to place civilian puppets in government offices. If opposition candidates have been allowed to run and were actually elected, as occurred in Burma in 1990 and Nigeria in 1993, results may simply be ignored and the “victors” subjected to intimidation, arrest, or even execution. Dictators are not in the business of allowing elections that could remove them from their thrones.

Many people now suffering under a brutal dictatorship, or who have gone into exile to escape its immediate grasp, do not believe that the oppressed can liberate themselves. They expect that their people can only be saved by the actions of others. These people place their confidence in external forces. They believe that only international help can be strong enough to bring down the dictators.

The view that the oppressed are unable to act effectively is sometimes accurate for a certain time period. As noted, often oppressed people are unwilling and temporarily unable to struggle because they have no confidence in their ability to face the ruthless dictatorship, and no known way to save themselves. It is therefore understandable that many people place their hope for liberation in others. This outside force may be “public opinion,” the United Nations, a particular country, or international economic and political sanctions.

Such a scenario may sound comforting, but there are grave problems with this reliance on an outside savior. Such confidence may be totally misplaced. Usually no foreign saviors are coming, and if a foreign state does intervene, it probably should not be trusted.

A few harsh realities concerning reliance on foreign intervention need to be emphasized here:

- Frequently foreign states will tolerate, or even positively assist, a dictatorship in order to advance their own economic or political interests.
- Foreign states also may be willing to sell out an oppressed people instead of keeping pledges to assist their liberation at the cost of another objective.

- Some foreign states will act against a dictatorship only to gain their own economic, political, or military control over the country.
- The foreign states may become actively involved for positive purposes only if and when the internal resistance movement has already begun shaking the dictatorship, having thereby focused international attention on the brutal nature of the regime.

Dictatorships usually exist primarily because of the internal power distribution in the home country. The population and society are too weak to cause the dictatorship serious problems, wealth and power are concentrated in too few hands. Although dictatorships may benefit from or be somewhat weakened by international actions, their continuation is dependent primarily on internal factors.

International pressures can be very useful, however, when they are supporting a powerful internal resistance movement. Then, for example, international economic boycotts, embargoes, the breaking of diplomatic relations, expulsion from international organizations, condemnation by United Nations bodies, and the like can assist greatly. However, in the absence of a strong internal resistance movement such actions by others are unlikely to happen.

Facing the hard truth

The conclusion is a hard one. When one wants to bring down a dictatorship most effectively and with the least cost then one has four immediate tasks:

- One must strengthen the oppressed population themselves in their determination, self-confidence, and resistance skills;
- One must strengthen the independent social groups and institutions of the oppressed people;
- One must create a powerful internal resistance force; and

- One must develop a wise grand strategic plan for liberation and implement it skillfully.

A liberation struggle is a time for self-reliance and internal strengthening of the struggle group. As Charles Stewart Parnell called out during the Irish rent strike campaign in 1879 and 1880:

It is no use relying on the Government You must only rely upon your own determination [H]elp yourselves by standing together . . . strengthen those amongst yourselves who are weak . . . , band yourselves together, organize yourselves . . . and you must win . . .

When you have made this question ripe for settlement, then and not till then will it be settled.⁴

Against a strong self-reliant force, given wise strategy, disciplined and courageous action, and genuine strength, the dictatorship will eventually crumble. Minimally, however, the above four requirements must be fulfilled.

As the above discussion indicates, liberation from dictatorships ultimately depends on the people's ability to liberate themselves. The cases of successful political defiance — or nonviolent struggle for political ends — cited above indicate that the means do exist for populations to free themselves, but that option has remained undeveloped. We will examine this option in detail in the following chapters. However, we should first look at the issue of negotiations as a means of dismantling dictatorships.

⁴Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty, *A History of Ireland Under the Union, 1880-1922* (London: Methuen, 1952), pp. 490-491.

TWO

THE DANGERS OF NEGOTIATIONS

When faced with the severe problems of confronting a dictatorship (as surveyed in Chapter One), some people may lapse back into passive submission. Others, seeing no prospect of achieving democracy, may conclude they must come to terms with the apparently permanent dictatorship, hoping that through “conciliation,” “compromise,” and “negotiations” they might be able to salvage some positive elements and to end the brutalities. On the surface, lacking realistic options, there is appeal in that line of thinking.

Serious struggle against brutal dictatorships is not a pleasant prospect. Why is it necessary to go that route? Can’t everyone just be reasonable and find ways to talk, to negotiate the way to a gradual end to the dictatorship? Can’t the democrats appeal to the dictators’ sense of common humanity and convince them to reduce their domination bit by bit, and perhaps finally to give way completely to the establishment of a democracy?

It is sometimes argued that the truth is not all on one side. Perhaps the democrats have misunderstood the dictators, who may have acted from good motives in difficult circumstances? Or perhaps some may think, the dictators would gladly remove themselves from the difficult situation facing the country if only given some encouragement and enticements. It may be argued that the dictators could be offered a “win-win” solution, in which everyone gains something. The risks and pain of further struggle could be unnecessary, it may be argued, if the democratic opposition is only willing to settle the conflict peacefully by negotiations (which may even perhaps be assisted by some skilled individuals or even another government). Would that not be preferable to a difficult struggle, even if it is one conducted by nonviolent struggle rather than by military war?

Merits and limitations of negotiations

Negotiations are a very useful tool in resolving certain types of issues in conflicts and should not be neglected or rejected when they are appropriate.

In some situations where no fundamental issues are at stake, and therefore a compromise is acceptable, negotiations can be an important means to settle a conflict. A labor strike for higher wages is a good example of the appropriate role of negotiations in a conflict: a negotiated settlement may provide an increase somewhere between the sums originally proposed by each of the contending sides. Labor conflicts with legal trade unions are, however, quite different than the conflicts in which the continued existence of a cruel dictatorship or the establishment of political freedom are at stake.

When the issues at stake are fundamental, affecting religious principles, issues of human freedom, or the whole future development of the society, negotiations do not provide a way of reaching a mutually satisfactory solution. On some basic issues there should be no compromise. Only a shift in power relations in favor of the democrats can adequately safeguard the basic issues at stake. Such a shift will occur through struggle, not negotiations. This is not to say that negotiations ought never to be used. The point here is that negotiations are not a realistic way to remove a strong dictatorship in the absence of a powerful democratic opposition.

Negotiations, of course, may not be an option at all. Firmly entrenched dictators who feel secure in their position may refuse to negotiate with their democratic opponents. Or, when negotiations have been initiated, the democratic negotiators may disappear and never be heard from again.

Negotiated surrender?

Individuals and groups who oppose dictatorship and favor negotiations will often have good motives. Especially when a military struggle has continued for years against a brutal dictatorship without final victory, it is understandable that all the people of whatever

political persuasion would want peace. Negotiations are especially likely to become an issue among democrats where the dictators have clear military superiority and the destruction and casualties among one's own people are no longer bearable. There will then be a strong temptation to explore any other route that might salvage some of the democrats' objectives while bringing an end to the cycle of violence and counter-violence.

The offer by a dictatorship of "peace" through negotiations with the democratic opposition is, of course, rather disingenuous. The violence could be ended immediately by the dictators themselves, if only they would stop waging war on their own people. They could at their own initiative without any bargaining restore respect for human dignity and rights, free political prisoners, end torture, halt military operations, withdraw from the government, and apologize to the people.

When the dictatorship is strong but an irritating resistance exists, the dictators may wish to negotiate the opposition into surrender under the guise of making "peace." The call to negotiate can sound appealing, but grave dangers can be lurking within the negotiating room.

On the other hand, when the opposition is exceptionally strong and the dictatorship is genuinely threatened, the dictators may seek negotiations in order to salvage as much of their control or wealth as possible. In neither case should the democrats help the dictators achieve their goals.

Democrats should be wary of the traps that may be deliberately built into a negotiation process by the dictators. The call for negotiations when basic issues of political liberties are involved may be an effort by the dictators to induce the democrats to surrender peacefully while the violence of the dictatorship continues. In those types of conflicts the only proper role of negotiations may occur at the end of a decisive struggle in which the power of the dictators has been effectively destroyed and they seek personal safe passage to an international airport.

Power and justice in negotiations

If this judgment sounds too harsh a commentary on negotiations, perhaps some of the romanticism associated with them needs to be moderated. Clear thinking is required as to how negotiations operate.

“Negotiation” does not mean that the two sides sit down together on a basis of equality and talk through and resolve the differences that produced the conflict between them. Two facts must be remembered. First, in negotiations it is not the relative justice of the conflicting views and objectives that determines the content of a negotiated agreement. Second, the content of a negotiated agreement is largely determined by the power capacity of each side.

Several difficult questions must be considered. What can each side do at a later date to gain its objectives if the other side fails to come to an agreement at the negotiating table? What can each side do after an agreement is reached if the other side breaks its word and uses its available forces to seize its objectives despite the agreement?

A settlement is not reached in negotiations through an assessment of the rights and wrongs of the issues at stake. While those may be much discussed, the real results in negotiations come from an assessment of the absolute and relative power situations of the contending groups. What can the democrats do to ensure that their minimum claims cannot be denied? What can the dictators do to stay in control and neutralize the democrats? In other words, if an agreement comes, it is more likely the result of each side estimating how the power capacities of the two sides compare, and then calculating how an open struggle might end.

Attention must also be given to what each side is willing to give up in order to reach agreement. In successful negotiations there is compromise, a splitting of differences. Each side gets part of what it wants and gives up part of its objectives.

In the case of extreme dictatorships what are the pro-democracy forces to give up to the dictators? What objectives of the dictators are the pro-democracy forces to accept? Are the

democrats to give to the dictators (whether a political party or a military cabal) a constitutionally-established permanent role in the future government? Where is the democracy in that?

Even assuming that all goes well in negotiations, it is necessary to ask: What kind of peace will be the result? Will life then be better or worse than it would be if the democrats began or continued to struggle?

“Agreeable” dictators

Dictators may have a variety of motives and objectives underlying their domination: power, position, wealth, reshaping the society, and the like. One should remember that none of these will be served if they abandon their control positions. In the event of negotiations dictators will try to preserve their goals.

Whatever promises offered by dictators in any negotiated settlement, no one should ever forget that the dictators may promise anything to secure submission from their democratic opponents, and then brazenly violate those same agreements.

If the democrats agree to halt resistance in order to gain a reprieve from repression, they may be very disappointed. A halt to resistance rarely brings reduced repression. Once the restraining force of internal and international opposition has been removed, dictators may even make their oppression and violence more brutal than before. The collapse of popular resistance often removes the countervailing force that has limited the control and brutality of the dictatorship. The tyrants can then move ahead against whomever they wish. “For the tyrant has the power to inflict only that which we lack the strength to resist,” wrote Krishnalal Shridharani.⁵

Resistance, not negotiations, is essential for change in conflicts where fundamental issues are at stake. In nearly all cases, resistance must continue to drive dictators out of power. Success is most often

⁵ Krishnalal Shridharani, *War Without Violence: A Study of Gandhi's Method and Its Accomplishments* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1939, and reprint New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1972), p. 260.

determined not by negotiating a settlement but through the wise use of the most appropriate and powerful means of resistance available. It is our contention, to be explored later in more detail, that political defiance, or nonviolent struggle, is the most powerful means available to those struggling for freedom.

What kind of peace?

If dictators and democrats are to talk about peace at all, extremely clear thinking is needed because of the dangers involved. Not everyone who uses the word “peace” wants peace with freedom and justice. Submission to cruel oppression and passive acquiescence to ruthless dictators who have perpetrated atrocities on hundreds of thousands of people is no real peace. Hitler often called for peace, by which he meant submission to his will. A dictators’ peace is often no more than the peace of the prison or of the grave.

There are other dangers. Well-intended negotiators sometimes confuse the objectives of the negotiations and the negotiation process itself. Further, democratic negotiators, or foreign negotiation specialists accepted to assist in the negotiations, may in a single stroke provide the dictators with the domestic and international legitimacy that they had been previously denied because of their seizure of the state, human rights violations, and brutalities. Without that desperately needed legitimacy, the dictators cannot continue to rule indefinitely. Exponents of peace should not provide them legitimacy.

Reasons for hope

As stated earlier, opposition leaders may feel forced to pursue negotiations out of a sense of hopelessness of the democratic struggle. However, that sense of powerlessness can be changed. Dictatorships are not permanent. People living under dictatorships need not remain weak, and dictators need not be allowed to remain powerful indefinitely. Aristotle noted long ago, “. . . [O]ligarchy and tyranny are shorter-lived than any other constitution. . . . [A]ll round, tyrann-

nies have not lasted long.”⁶ Modern dictatorships are also vulnerable. Their weaknesses can be aggravated and the dictators’ power can be disintegrated. (In Chapter Four we will examine these weaknesses in more detail.)

Recent history shows the vulnerability of dictatorships, and reveals that they can crumble in a relatively short time span: whereas ten years — 1980-1990 — were required to bring down the Communist dictatorship in Poland, in East Germany and Czechoslovakia in 1989 it occurred within weeks. In El Salvador and Guatemala in 1944 the struggles against the entrenched brutal military dictators required approximately two weeks each. The militarily powerful regime of the Shah in Iran was undermined in a few months. The Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines fell before people power within weeks in 1986: the United States government quickly abandoned President Marcos when the strength of the opposition became apparent. The attempted hard-line coup in the Soviet Union in August 1991 was blocked in days by political defiance. Thereafter, many of its long dominated constituent nations in only days, weeks, and months regained their independence.

The old preconception that violent means always work quickly and nonviolent means always require vast time is clearly not valid. Although much time may be required for changes in the underlying situation and society, the actual fight against a dictatorship sometimes occurs relatively quickly by nonviolent struggle.

Negotiations are not the only alternative to a continuing war of annihilation on the one hand and capitulation on the other. The examples just cited, as well as those listed in Chapter One, illustrate that another option exists for those who want both peace *and* freedom: political defiance.

⁶ Aristotle, *The Politics*, transl. by T. A. Sinclair (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England and Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books 1976 [1962]), Book V, Chapter 12, pp. 231 and 232.

THREE

WHENCE COMES THE POWER?

Achieving a society with both freedom and peace is of course no simple task. It will require great strategic skill, organization, and planning. Above all, it will require power. Democrats cannot hope to bring down a dictatorship and establish political freedom without the ability to apply their own power effectively.

But how is this possible? What kind of power can the democratic opposition mobilize that will be sufficient to destroy the dictatorship and its vast military and police networks? The answers lie in an oft ignored understanding of political power. Learning this insight is not really so difficult a task. Some basic truths are quite simple.

The “Monkey Master” fable

A Fourteenth Century Chinese parable by Liu-Ji, for example, outlines this neglected understanding of political power quite well:⁷

In the feudal state of Chu an old man survived by keeping monkeys in his service. The people of Chu called him “ju gong” (monkey master).

Each morning, the old man would assemble the monkeys in his courtyard, and order the eldest one to lead the others to the mountains to gather fruits from bushes and trees. It was the rule that each monkey had to give one-tenth of his collection to the old man. Those who failed to do so would be ruthlessly flogged. All the monkeys suffered bitterly, but dared not complain.

⁷ This story, originally titled “Rule by Tricks” is from *Yu-li-zi* by Liu Ji (1311-1375) and has been translated by Sidney Tai, all rights reserved. *Yu-li-zi* is also the pseudonym of Liu Ji. The translation was originally published in *Nonviolent Sanctions: News from the Albert Einstein Institution* (Cambridge, Mass.), Vol. IV, No. 3 (Winter 1992-1993), p. 3.

One day, a small monkey asked the other monkeys: "Did the old man plant all the fruit trees and bushes?" The others said: "No, they grew naturally." The small monkey further asked: "Can't we take the fruits without the old man's permission?" The others replied: "Yes, we all can." The small monkey continued: "Then, why should we depend on the old man; why must we all serve him?"

Before the small monkey was able to finish his statement, all the monkeys suddenly became enlightened and awakened.

On the same night, watching that the old man had fallen asleep, the monkeys tore down all the barricades of the stockade in which they were confined, and destroyed the stockade entirely. They also took the fruits the old man had in storage, brought all with them to the woods, and never returned. The old man finally died of starvation.

Yu-li-zi says, "Some men in the world rule their people by tricks and not by righteous principles. Aren't they just like the monkey master? They are not aware of their muddle-headedness. As soon as their people become enlightened, their tricks no longer work."

Necessary sources of political power

The principle is simple. Dictators require the assistance of the people they rule, without which they cannot secure and maintain the sources of political power. These sources of political power include:

- *Authority*, the belief among the people that the regime is legitimate, and that they have a moral duty to obey it;
- *Human resources*, the number and importance of the persons and groups which are obeying, cooperating, or providing assistance to the rulers;

- *Skills and knowledge*, needed by the regime to perform specific actions and supplied by the cooperating persons and groups;
- *Intangible factors*, psychological and ideological factors that may induce people to obey and assist the rulers;
- *Material resources*, the degree to which the rulers control or have access to property, natural resources, financial resources, the economic system, and means of communication and transportation; and
- *Sanctions*, punishments, threatened or applied, against the disobedient and noncooperative to ensure the submission and cooperation that are needed for the regime to exist and carry out its policies.

All of these sources, however, depend on acceptance of the regime, on the submission and obedience of the population, and on the cooperation of innumerable people and the many institutions of the society. These are not guaranteed.

Full cooperation, obedience, and support will increase the availability of the needed sources of power and, consequently, expand the power capacity of any government.

On the other hand, withdrawal of popular and institutional cooperation with aggressors and dictators diminishes, and may sever, the availability of the sources of power on which all rulers depend. Without availability of those sources, the rulers' power weakens and finally dissolves.

Naturally, dictators are sensitive to actions and ideas that threaten their capacity to do as they like. Dictators are therefore likely to threaten and punish those who disobey, strike, or fail to cooperate. However, that is not the end of the story. Repression, even brutalities, do not always produce a resumption of the necessary degree of submission and cooperation for the regime to function.

If, despite repression, the sources of power can be restricted or severed for enough time, the initial results may be uncertainty and confusion within the dictatorship. That is likely to be followed by a clear weakening of the power of the dictatorship. Over time, the withholding of the sources of power can produce the paralysis and impotence of the regime, and in severe cases, its disintegration. The dictators' power will die, slowly or rapidly, from political starvation.

The degree of liberty or tyranny in any government is, it follows, in large degree a reflection of the relative determination of the subjects to be free and their willingness and ability to resist efforts to enslave them.

Contrary to popular opinion, even totalitarian dictatorships are dependent on the population and the societies they rule. As the political scientist Karl W. Deutsch noted in 1953:

Totalitarian power is strong only if it does not have to be used too often. If totalitarian power must be used at all times against the entire population, it is unlikely to remain powerful for long. Since totalitarian regimes require more power for dealing with their subjects than do other types of government, such regimes stand in greater need of widespread and dependable compliance habits among their people; more than that they have to be able to count on the active support of at least significant parts of the population in case of need.⁸

The English Nineteenth Century legal theorist John Austin described the situation of a dictatorship confronting a disaffected people. Austin argued that if most of the population were determined to destroy the government and were willing to endure repression to do so, then the might of the government, including those who supported it, could not preserve the hated government, even if

⁸ Karl W. Deutsch, "Cracks in the Monolith," in Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 313-314.

it received foreign assistance. The defiant people could not be forced back into permanent obedience and subjection, Austin concluded.⁹

Niccolo Machiavelli had much earlier argued that the prince “. . . who has the public as a whole for his enemy can never make himself secure; and the greater his cruelty, the weaker does his regime become.”¹⁰

The practical political application of these insights was demonstrated by the heroic Norwegian resisters against the Nazi occupation, and as cited in Chapter One, by the brave Poles, Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, and many others who resisted Communist aggression and dictatorship, and finally helped produce the collapse of Communist rule in Europe. This, of course, is no new phenomenon: cases of nonviolent resistance go back at least to 494 B.C. when plebeians withdrew cooperation from their Roman patrician masters.¹¹ Nonviolent struggle has been employed at various times by peoples throughout Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australasia, and the Pacific islands, as well as Europe.

Three of the most important factors in determining to what degree a government's power will be controlled or uncontrolled therefore are: (1) the relative *desire* of the populace to impose limits on the government's power; (2) the relative *strength* of the subjects' independent organizations and institutions to withdraw collectively the sources of power; and (3) the population's relative *ability* to withhold their consent and assistance.

Centers of democratic power

One characteristic of a democratic society is that there exist independent of the state a multitude of nongovernmental groups and

⁹ John Austin, *Lectures on Jurisprudence or the Philosophy of Positive Law* (Fifth edition, revised and edited by Robert Campbell, 2 vol., London: John Murray, 1911 [1861]), Vol. I, p. 296.

¹⁰ Niccolo Machiavelli, "The Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy," in *The Discourses of Niccolo Machiavelli* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), Vol. I, p. 254.

¹¹ See Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973), p. 75 and passim for other historical examples.

institutions. These include, for example, families, religious organizations, cultural associations, sports clubs, economic institutions, trade unions, student associations, political parties, villages, neighborhood associations, gardening clubs, human rights organizations, musical groups, literary societies, and others. These bodies are important in serving their own objectives and also in helping to meet social needs.

Additionally, these bodies have great political significance. They provide group and institutional bases by which people can exert influence over the direction of their society and resist other groups or the government when they are seen to impinge unjustly on their interests, activities, or purposes. Isolated individuals, not members of such groups, usually are unable to make a significant impact on the rest of the society, much less a government, and certainly not a dictatorship.

Consequently, if the autonomy and freedom of such bodies can be taken away by the dictators, the population will be relatively helpless. Also, if these institutions can themselves be dictatorially controlled by the central regime or replaced by new controlled ones, they can be used to dominate both the individual members and also those areas of the society.

However, if the autonomy and freedom of these independent civil institutions (outside of government control) can be maintained or regained they are highly important for the application of political defiance. The common feature of the cited examples in which dictatorships have been disintegrated or weakened has been the courageous *mass* application of political defiance by the population and its institutions.

As stated, these centers of power provide the institutional bases from which the population can exert pressure or can resist dictatorial controls. In the future, they will be part of the indispensable structural base for a free society. Their continued independence and growth therefore is often a prerequisite for the success of the liberation struggle.

If the dictatorship has been largely successful in destroying or controlling the society's independent bodies, it will be important for

the resisters to create new independent social groups and institutions, or to reassert democratic control over surviving or partially controlled bodies. During the Hungarian Revolution of 1956-1957 a multitude of direct democracy councils emerged, even joining together to establish for some weeks a whole federated system of institutions and governance. In Poland during the late 1980s workers maintained illegal Solidarity unions and, in some cases, took over control of the official, Communist-dominated, trade unions. Such institutional developments can have very important political consequences.

Of course, none of this means that weakening and destroying dictatorships is easy, nor that every attempt will succeed. It certainly does not mean that the struggle will be free of casualties, for those still serving the dictators are likely to fight back in an effort to force the populace to resume cooperation and obedience.

The above insight into power does mean, however, that the deliberate disintegration of dictatorships is possible. Dictatorships in particular have specific characteristics that render them highly vulnerable to skillfully implemented political defiance. Let us examine these characteristics in more detail.

FOUR

DICTATORSHIPS HAVE WEAKNESSES

Dictatorships often appear invulnerable. Intelligence agencies, police, military forces, prisons, concentration camps, and execution squads are controlled by a powerful few. A country's finances, natural resources, and production capacities are often arbitrarily plundered by dictators and used to support the dictators' will.

In comparison, democratic opposition forces often appear extremely weak, ineffective, and powerless. That perception of invulnerability against powerlessness makes effective opposition unlikely.

That is not the whole story, however.

Identifying the Achilles' heel

A myth from Classical Greece illustrates well the vulnerability of the supposedly invulnerable. Against the warrior Achilles, no blow would injure and no sword would penetrate his skin. When still a baby, Achilles' mother had supposedly dipped him into the waters of the magical river Styx, resulting in the protection of his body from all dangers. There was, however, a problem. Since the baby was held by his heel so that he would not be washed away, the magical water had not covered that small part of his body. When Achilles was a grown man he appeared to all to be invulnerable to the enemies' weapons. However, in the battle against Troy, instructed by one who knew the weakness, an enemy soldier aimed his arrow at Achilles' unprotected heel, the one spot where he could be injured. The strike proved fatal. Still today, the phrase "Achilles' heel" refers to the vulnerable part of a person, a plan, or an institution at which if attacked there is no protection.

The same principle applies to ruthless dictatorships. They, too, can be conquered, but most quickly and with least cost if their weaknesses can be identified and the attack concentrated on them.

Weaknesses of dictatorships

Among the weaknesses of dictatorships are the following:

1. The cooperation of a multitude of people, groups, and institutions needed to operate the system may be restricted or withdrawn.
2. The requirements and effects of the regime's past policies will somewhat limit its present ability to adopt and implement conflicting policies.
3. The system may become routine in its operation, less able to adjust quickly to new situations.
4. Personnel and resources already allocated for existing tasks will not be easily available for new needs.
5. Subordinates fearful of displeasing their superiors may not report accurate or complete information needed by the dictators to make decisions.
6. The ideology may erode, and myths and symbols of the system may become unstable.
7. If a strong ideology is present that influences one's view of reality, firm adherence to it may cause inattention to actual conditions and needs.
8. Deteriorating efficiency and competency of the bureaucracy, or excessive controls and regulations, may make the system's policies and operation ineffective.
9. Internal institutional conflicts and personal rivalries and hostilities may harm, and even disrupt, the operation of the dictatorship.

10. Intellectuals and students may become restless in response to conditions, restrictions, doctrinalism, and repression.
11. The general public may over time become apathetic, skeptical, and even hostile to the regime.
12. Regional, class, cultural, or national differences may become acute.
13. The power hierarchy of the dictatorship is always unstable to some degree, and at times extremely so. Individuals do not only remain in the same position in the ranking, but may rise or fall to other ranks or be removed entirely and replaced by new persons.
14. Sections of the police or military forces may act to achieve their own objectives, even against the will of established dictators, including by coup d'état.
15. If the dictatorship is new, time is required for it to become well established.
16. With so many decisions made by so few people in the dictatorship, mistakes of judgment, policy, and action are likely to occur.
17. If the regime seeks to avoid these dangers and decentralizes controls and decision making, its control over the central levers of power may be further eroded.

Attacking weaknesses of dictatorships

With knowledge of such inherent weaknesses, the democratic opposition can seek to aggravate these “Achilles’ heels” deliberately in order to alter the system drastically or to disintegrate it.

The conclusion is then clear: despite the appearances of strength,

all dictatorships have weaknesses, internal inefficiencies, personal rivalries, institutional inefficiencies, and conflicts between organizations and departments. These weaknesses, over time, tend to make the regime less effective and more vulnerable to changing conditions and deliberate resistance. Not everything the regime sets out to accomplish will get completed. At times, for example, even Hitler's direct orders were never implemented because those beneath him in the hierarchy refused to carry them out. The dictatorial regime may at times even fall apart quickly, as we have already observed.

This does not mean dictatorships can be destroyed without risks and casualties. Every possible course of action for liberation will involve risks and potential suffering, and will take time to operate. And, of course, no means of action can ensure rapid success in every situation. However, types of struggle that target the dictatorship's identifiable weaknesses have greater chance of success than those that seek to fight the dictatorship where it is clearly strongest. The question is *how* this struggle is to be waged.

FIVE

EXERCISING POWER

In Chapter One we noted that military resistance against dictatorships does not strike them where they are weakest, but rather where they are strongest. By choosing to compete in the areas of military forces, supplies of ammunition, weapons technology, and the like, resistance movements tend to put themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Dictatorships will almost always be able to muster superior resources in these areas. The dangers of relying on foreign powers for salvation were also outlined. In Chapter Two we examined the problems of relying on negotiations as a means to remove dictatorships.

What means are then available that will offer the democratic resistance distinct advantages and will tend to aggravate the identified weaknesses of dictatorships? What technique of action will capitalize on the theory of political power discussed in Chapter Three? The alternative of choice is political defiance.

Political defiance has the following characteristics:

- It does not accept that the outcome will be decided by the means of fighting chosen by the dictatorship.
- It is difficult for the regime to combat.
- It can uniquely aggravate weaknesses of the dictatorship and can sever its sources of power.
- It can in action be widely dispersed but can also be concentrated on a specific objective.
- It leads to errors of judgment and action by the dictators.

- It can effectively utilize the population as a whole and the society's groups and institutions in the struggle to end the brutal domination of the few.
- It helps to spread the distribution of effective power in the society, making the establishment and maintenance of a democratic society more possible.

The workings of nonviolent struggle

Like military capabilities, political defiance can be employed for a variety of purposes, ranging from efforts to influence the opponents to take different actions, to create conditions for a peaceful resolution of conflict, or to disintegrate the opponents' regime. However, political defiance operates in quite different ways from violence. Although both techniques are means to wage struggle, they do so with very different means and with different consequences. The ways and results of violent conflict are well known. Physical weapons are used to intimidate, injure, kill, and destroy.

Nonviolent struggle is a much more complex and varied means of struggle than is violence. Instead, the struggle is fought by psychological, social, economic, and political weapons applied by the population and the institutions of the society. These have been known under various names of protests, strikes, noncooperation, boycotts, disaffection, and people power. As noted earlier, all governments can rule only as long as they receive replenishment of the needed sources of their power from the cooperation, submission, and obedience of the population and the institutions of the society. Political defiance, unlike violence, is uniquely suited to severing those sources of power.

Nonviolent weapons and discipline

The common error of past improvised political defiance campaigns is the reliance on only one or two methods, such as strikes and mass demonstrations. In fact, a multitude of methods exist that allow

resistance strategists to concentrate and disperse resistance as required.

About two hundred specific methods of nonviolent action have been identified, and there are certainly scores more. These methods are classified under three broad categories: protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and intervention. Methods of nonviolent protest and persuasion are largely symbolic demonstrations, including parades, marches, and vigils (54 methods). Noncooperation is divided into three sub-categories: (a) social noncooperation (16 methods), (b) economic noncooperation, including boycotts (26 methods) and strikes (23 methods), and (c) political noncooperation (38 methods). Nonviolent intervention, by psychological, physical, social, economic, or political means, such as the fast, nonviolent occupation, and parallel government (41 methods), is the final group. A list of 198 of these methods is included as the Appendix to this publication.

The use of a considerable number of these methods — carefully chosen, applied persistently and on a large scale, wielded in the context of a wise strategy and appropriate tactics, by trained civilians — is likely to cause any illegitimate regime severe problems. This applies to all dictatorships.

In contrast to military means, the methods of nonviolent struggle can be focused directly on the issues at stake. For example, since the issue of dictatorship is primarily political, then political forms of nonviolent struggle would be crucial. These would include denial of legitimacy to the dictators and noncooperation with their regime. Noncooperation would also be applied against specific policies. At times stalling and procrastination may be quietly and even secretly practiced, while at other times open disobedience and defiant public demonstrations and strikes may be visible to all.

On the other hand, if the dictatorship is vulnerable to economic pressures or if many of the popular grievances against it are economic, then economic action, such as boycotts or strikes, may be appropriate resistance methods. The dictators' efforts to exploit the economic system might be met with limited general strikes, slowdowns, and refusal of assistance by (or disappearance of) indispens-

able experts. Selective use of various types of strikes may be conducted at key points in manufacturing, in transport, in the supply of raw materials, and in the distribution of products.

Some methods of nonviolent struggle require people to perform acts unrelated to their normal lives, such as distributing leaflets, operating an underground press, going on hunger strike, or sitting down in the streets. These methods may be difficult for some people to undertake except in very extreme situations.

Other methods of nonviolent struggle instead require people to continue approximately their normal lives, though in somewhat different ways. For example, people may report for work, instead of striking, but then deliberately work more slowly or inefficiently than usual. "Mistakes" may be consciously made more frequently. One may become "sick" and "unable" to work at certain times. Or, one may simply refuse to work. One might go to religious services when the act expresses not only religious but also political convictions. One may act to protect children from the attackers' propaganda by education at home or in illegal classes. One might refuse to join certain "recommended" or required organizations that one would not have joined freely in earlier times. The similarity of such types of action to people's usual activities and the limited degree of departure from their normal lives may make participation in the national liberation struggle much easier for many people.

Since nonviolent struggle and violence operate in fundamentally different ways, even limited resistance violence during a political defiance campaign will be counterproductive, for it will shift the struggle to one in which the dictators have an overwhelming advantage (military warfare). Nonviolent discipline is a key to success and must be maintained despite provocations and brutalities by the dictators and their agents.

The maintenance of nonviolent discipline against violent opponents facilitates the workings of the four mechanisms of change in nonviolent struggle (discussed below). Nonviolent discipline is also extremely important in the process of political jiu-jitsu. In this process the stark brutality of the regime against the clearly nonviolent actionists politically rebounds against the dictators' position,

causing dissension in their own ranks as well as fomenting support for the resisters among the general population, the regime's usual supporters, and third parties.

In some cases, however, limited violence against the dictatorship may be inevitable. Frustration and hatred of the regime may explode into violence. Or, certain groups may be unwilling to abandon violent means even though they recognize the important role of nonviolent struggle. In these cases, political defiance does not need to be abandoned. However, it will be necessary to separate the violent action as far as possible from the nonviolent action. This should be done in terms of geography, population groups, timing, and issues. Otherwise the violence could have a disastrous effect on the potentially much more powerful and successful use of political defiance.

The historical record indicates that while casualties in dead and wounded must be expected in political defiance, they will be far fewer than the casualties in military warfare. Furthermore, this type of struggle does not contribute to the endless cycle of killing and brutality.

Nonviolent struggle both requires and tends to produce a loss (or greater control) of fear of the government and its violent repression. That abandonment or control of fear is a key element in destroying the power of the dictators over the general population.

Openness, secrecy, and high standards

Secrecy, deception, and underground conspiracy pose very difficult problems for a movement using nonviolent action. It is often impossible to keep the political police and intelligence agents from learning about intentions and plans. From the perspective of the movement, secrecy is not only rooted in fear but contributes to fear, which dampens the spirit of resistance and reduces the number of people who can participate in a given action. It also can contribute to suspicions and accusations, often unjustified, within the movement, concerning who is an informer or agent for the opponents. Secrecy may also affect the ability of a movement to remain nonvio-

lent. In contrast, openness regarding intentions and plans will not only have the opposite effects, but will contribute to an image that the resistance movement is in fact extremely powerful. The problem is of course more complex than this suggests, and there are significant aspects of resistance activities that may require secrecy. A well-informed assessment will be required by those knowledgeable about both the dynamics of nonviolent struggle and also the dictatorship's means of surveillance in the specific situation.

The editing, printing, and distribution of underground publications, the use of illegal radio broadcasts from within the country, and the gathering of intelligence about the operations of the dictatorship are among the special limited types of activities where a high degree of secrecy will be required.

The maintenance of high standards of behavior in nonviolent action is necessary at all stages of the conflict. Such factors as fearlessness and maintaining nonviolent discipline are always required. It is important to remember that large numbers of people may frequently be necessary to effect particular changes. However, such numbers can be obtained as reliable participants only by maintaining the high standards of the movement.

Shifting power relationships

Strategists need to remember that the conflict in which political defiance is applied is a constantly changing field of struggle with continuing interplay of moves and countermoves. Nothing is static. Power relationships, both absolute and relative, are subject to constant and rapid changes. This is made possible by the resisters continuing their nonviolent persistence despite repression.

The variations in the respective power of the contending sides in this type of conflict situation are likely to be more extreme than in violent conflicts, to take place more quickly, and to have more diverse and politically significant consequences. Due to these variations, specific actions by the resisters are likely to have consequences far beyond the particular time and place in which they occur. These effects will rebound to strengthen or weaken one group or another.

In addition, the nonviolent group may, by its actions exert influence over the increase or decrease in the relative strength of *the opponent group* to a great extent. For example, disciplined courageous nonviolent resistance in face of the dictators' brutalities may induce unease, disaffection, unreliability, and in extreme situations even mutiny among the dictators' own soldiers and population. This resistance may also result in increased international condemnation of the dictatorship. In addition, skillful, disciplined, and persistent use of political defiance may result in more and more participation in the resistance by people who normally would give their tacit support to the dictators or generally remain neutral in the conflict.

Four mechanisms of change

Nonviolent struggle produces change in four ways. The first mechanism is the least likely, though it has occurred. When members of the opponent group are emotionally moved by the suffering of repression imposed on courageous nonviolent resisters or are rationally persuaded that the resisters' cause is just, they may come to accept the resisters' aims. This mechanism is called conversion. Though cases of *conversion* in nonviolent action do sometimes happen, they are rare, and in most conflicts this does not occur at all or at least not on a significant scale.

Far more often, nonviolent struggle operates by changing the conflict situation and the society so that the opponents simply cannot do as they like. It is this change that produces the other three mechanisms: accommodation, nonviolent coercion, and disintegration. Which of these occurs depends on the degree to which the relative and absolute power relations are shifted in favor of the democrats.

If the issues are not fundamental ones, the demands of the opposition in a limited campaign are not considered threatening, and the contest of forces has altered the power relationships to some degree, the immediate conflict may be ended by reaching an agreement, a splitting of differences or compromise. This mechanism is

called *accommodation*. Many strikes are settled in this manner, for example, with both sides attaining some of their objectives but neither achieving all it wanted. A government may perceive such a settlement to have some positive benefits, such as defusing tension, creating an impression of "fairness," or polishing the international image of the regime. It is important, therefore, that great care be exercised in selecting the issues on which a settlement by accommodation is acceptable. A struggle to bring down a dictatorship is not one of these.

Nonviolent struggle can be much more powerful than indicated by the mechanisms of conversion or accommodation. Mass noncooperation and defiance can so change social and political situations, especially power relationships, that the dictators' ability to control the economic, social, and political processes of government and the society is in fact taken away. The opponents' military forces may become so unreliable that they no longer simply obey orders to repress resisters. Although the opponents' leaders remain in their positions, and adhere to their original goals, their ability to act effectively has been taken away from them. That is called *nonviolent coercion*.

In some extreme situations, the conditions producing nonviolent coercion are carried still further. The opponents' leadership in fact loses all ability to act and their own structure of power collapses. The resisters' self-direction, noncooperation, and defiance become so complete that the opponents now lack even a semblance of control over them. The opponents' bureaucracy refuses to obey its own leadership. The opponents' troops and police mutiny. The opponents' usual supporters or population repudiate their former leadership, denying that they have any right to rule at all. Hence, their former assistance and obedience falls away. The fourth mechanism of change, *disintegration* of the opponents' system, is so complete that they do not even have sufficient power to surrender. The regime simply falls to pieces.

In planning liberation strategies, these four mechanisms should be kept in mind. They sometimes operate essentially by chance. However, the selection of one or more of these as the intended mecha-

nism of change in a conflict will make it possible to formulate specific and mutually reinforcing strategies. Which mechanism (or mechanisms) to select will depend on numerous factors, including the absolute and relative power of the contending groups and the attitudes and objectives of the nonviolent struggle group.

Democratizing effects of political defiance

In contrast to the centralizing effects of violent sanctions, use of the technique of nonviolent struggle contributes to democratizing the political society in several ways.

One part of the democratizing effect is negative. That is, in contrast to military means, this technique does not provide a means of repression under command of a ruling elite which can be turned against the population to establish or maintain a dictatorship. Leaders of a political defiance movement can exert influence and apply pressures on their followers, but they cannot imprison or execute them when they dissent or choose other leaders.

Another part of the democratizing effect is positive. That is, nonviolent struggle provides the population with means of resistance that can be used to achieve and defend their liberties against existing or would-be dictators. Below are several of the positive democratizing effects nonviolent struggle may have:

- Experience in applying nonviolent struggle may result in the population being more self-confident in challenging the regime's threats and capacity for violent repression.
- Nonviolent struggle provides the means of noncooperation and defiance by which the population can resist undemocratic controls over them by any dictatorial group.
- Nonviolent struggle can be used to assert the practice of democratic freedoms, such as free speech, free press, independent organizations, and free assembly, in face of repressive controls.

- Nonviolent struggle contributes strongly to the survival, rebirth, and strengthening of the independent groups and institutions of the society, as previously discussed. These are important for democracy because of their capacity to mobilize the power capacity of the population and to impose limits on the effective power of any would-be dictators.
- Nonviolent struggle provides means by which the population can wield power against repressive police and military action by a dictatorial government.
- Nonviolent struggle provides methods by which the population and the independent institutions can in the interests of democracy restrict or sever the sources of power for the ruling elite, thereby threatening its capacity to continue its domination.

Complexity of nonviolent struggle

As we have seen from this discussion, nonviolent struggle is a complex technique of social action, involving a multitude of methods, a range of mechanisms of change, and specific behavioral requirements. To be effective, especially against a dictatorship, political defiance requires careful planning and preparation. Prospective participants will need to understand what is required of them. Resources will need to have been made available. And strategists will need to have analyzed how nonviolent struggle can be most effectively applied. We now turn our attention to this latter crucial element: the need for strategic planning.

SIX

THE NEED FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

Political defiance campaigns against dictatorships may begin in a variety of ways. In the past these struggles have almost always been unplanned and essentially accidental. Specific grievances that have triggered past initial actions have varied widely, but often included new brutalities, the arrest or killing of a highly regarded person, a new repressive policy or order, food shortages, disrespect toward religious beliefs, or an anniversary of an important related event. Sometimes, a particular act by the dictatorship has so enraged the populace that they have launched into action without having any idea how the rising might end. At other times a courageous individual or a small group may have taken action which aroused support. A specific grievance may be recognized by others as similar to wrongs they had experienced and they, too, may thus join the struggle. Sometimes, a specific call for resistance from a small group or individual may meet an unexpectedly large response.

While spontaneity has some positive qualities, it has often had disadvantages. Frequently, the democratic resisters have not anticipated the brutalities of the dictatorship, so that they suffered gravely and the resistance has collapsed. At times the lack of planning by democrats has left crucial decisions to chance, with disastrous results. Even when the oppressive system was brought down, lack of planning on how to handle the transition to a democratic system has contributed to the emergence of a new dictatorship.

Realistic planning

In the future, unplanned popular action will undoubtedly play significant roles in risings against dictatorships. However, it is now possible to calculate the most effective ways to bring down a dictatorship, to assess when the political situation and popular mood are ripe, and to choose how to initiate a campaign. Very careful thought *based on a realistic assessment* of the situation and the capabilities of

the populace is required in order to select effective ways to achieve freedom under such circumstances.

If one wishes to accomplish something, it is wise to plan how to do it. The more important the goal, or the graver the consequences of failure, the more important planning becomes. Strategic planning increases the likelihood that all available resources will be mobilized and employed most effectively. This is especially true for a democratic movement – which has limited material resources and whose supporters will be in danger – that is trying to bring down a powerful dictatorship. In contrast, the dictatorship usually will have access to vast material resources, organizational strength, and ability to perpetrate brutalities.

“To plan a strategy” here means to calculate a course of action that will make it more likely to get from the present to the desired future situation. In terms of this discussion, it means from a dictatorship to a future democratic system. A plan to achieve that objective will usually consist of a phased series of campaigns and other organized activities designed to strengthen the oppressed population and society and to weaken the dictatorship. Note here that the objective is not simply to destroy the current dictatorship but to emplace a democratic system. A grand strategy that limits its objective to merely destroying the incumbent dictatorship runs a great risk of producing another tyrant.

Hurdles to planning

Some exponents of freedom in various parts of the world do not bring their full capacities to bear on the problem of how to achieve liberation. Only rarely do these advocates fully recognize the extreme importance of careful strategic planning before they act. Consequently, this is almost never done.

Why is it that the people who have the vision of bringing political freedom to their people should so rarely prepare a comprehensive strategic plan to achieve that goal? Unfortunately, often most people in democratic opposition groups do not understand the need for strategic planning or are not accustomed or trained to

think strategically. This is a difficult task. Constantly harassed by the dictatorship, and overwhelmed by immediate responsibilities, resistance leaders often do not have the safety or time to develop strategic thinking skills.

Instead, it is a common pattern simply to react to the initiatives of the dictatorship. The opposition is then always on the defensive, seeking to maintain limited liberties or bastions of freedom, at best slowing the advance of the dictatorial controls or causing certain problems for the regime's new policies.

Some individuals and groups, of course, may not see the need for broad long-term planning of a liberation movement. Instead, they may naïvely think that if they simply espouse their goal strongly, firmly, and long enough, it will somehow come to pass. Others assume that if they simply live and witness according to their principles and ideals in face of difficulties, they are doing all they can to implement them. The espousal of humane goals and loyalty to ideals are admirable, but are grossly inadequate to end a dictatorship and to achieve freedom.

Other opponents of dictatorship may naïvely think that if only they use enough violence, freedom will come. But, as noted earlier, violence is no guarantor of success. Instead of liberation, it can lead to defeat, massive tragedy, or both. In most situations the dictatorship is best equipped for violent struggle and the military realities rarely, if ever, favor the democrats.

There are also activists who base their actions on what they "feel" they should do. These approaches are, however, not only egocentric but they offer no guidance for developing a grand strategy of liberation.

Action based on a "bright idea" that someone has had is also limited. What is needed instead is action based on careful calculation of the "next steps" required to topple the dictatorship. Without strategic analysis, resistance leaders will often not know what that "next step" should be, for they have not thought carefully about the successive specific steps required to achieve victory. Creativity and bright ideas are very important, but they need to be utilized in order to advance the strategic situation of the democratic forces.

Acutely aware of the multitude of actions that could be taken against the dictatorship and unable to determine where to begin, some people counsel "Do everything simultaneously." That might be helpful but, of course, is impossible, especially for relatively weak movements. Furthermore, such an approach provides no guidance on where to begin, on where to concentrate efforts, and how to use often limited resources.

Other persons and groups may see the need for some planning, but are only able to think about it on a short-term or tactical basis. They may not see that longer-term planning is necessary or possible. They may at times be unable to think and analyze in strategic terms, allowing themselves to be repeatedly distracted by relatively small issues, often responding to the opponents' actions rather than seizing the initiative for the democratic resistance. Devoting so much energy to short-term activities, these leaders often fail to explore several alternative courses of action which could guide the overall efforts so that the goal is constantly approached.

It is also just possible that some democratic movements do not plan a comprehensive strategy to bring down the dictatorship, concentrating instead only on immediate issues, for another reason. Inside themselves, they do not really believe that the dictatorship can be ended by their own efforts. Therefore, planning how to do so is considered to be a romantic waste of time or an exercise in futility. People struggling for freedom against established brutal dictatorships are often confronted by such immense military and police power that it appears the dictators can accomplish whatever they will. Lacking real hope, these people will, nevertheless, defy the dictatorship for reasons of integrity and perhaps history. Though they will never admit it, perhaps never consciously recognize it, their actions appear to themselves as hopeless. Hence, for them, long-term comprehensive strategic planning has no merit.

The result of such failures to plan strategically is often drastic: one's strength is dissipated, one's actions are ineffective, energy is wasted on minor issues, advantages are not utilized, and sacrifices are for naught. If democrats do not plan strategically they are likely to fail to achieve their objectives. A poorly planned, odd mixture of

activities will not move a major resistance effort forward. Instead, it will more likely allow the dictatorship to increase its controls and power.

Unfortunately, because comprehensive strategic plans for liberation are rarely, if ever, developed, dictatorships appear much more durable than they in fact are. They survive for years or decades longer than need be the case.

Four important terms in strategic planning

In order to help us to think strategically, clarity about the meanings of four basic terms is important.

Grand strategy is the conception that serves to coordinate and direct the use of all appropriate and available resources (economic, human, moral, political, organizational, etc.) of a group seeking to attain its objectives in a conflict.

Grand strategy, by focusing primary attention on the group's objectives and resources in the conflict, determines the most appropriate technique of action (such as conventional military warfare or nonviolent struggle) to be employed in the conflict. In planning a grand strategy resistance leaders must evaluate and plan which pressures and influences are to be brought to bear upon the opponents. Further, grand strategy will include decisions on the appropriate conditions and timing under which initial and subsequent resistance campaigns will be launched.

Grand strategy sets the basic framework for the selection of more limited strategies for waging the struggle. Grand strategy also determines the allocation of general tasks to particular groups and the distribution of resources to them for use in the struggle.

Strategy is the conception of how best to achieve particular objectives in a conflict, operating within the scope of the chosen grand strategy. Strategy is concerned with whether, when, and how to fight, as well as how to achieve maximum effectiveness in struggling for certain ends. A strategy has been compared to the artist's concept, while a strategic plan is the architect's blueprint.¹²

¹² Robert Helvey, personal communication, 15 August 1993.

Strategy may also include efforts to develop a strategic situation that is so advantageous that the opponents are able to foresee that open conflict is likely to bring their certain defeat, and therefore capitulate without an open struggle. Or, if not, the improved strategic situation will make success of the challengers certain in struggle. Strategy also involves how to act to make good use of successes when gained.

Applied to the course of the struggle itself, the strategic plan is the basic idea of how a campaign shall develop, and how its separate components shall be fitted together to contribute most advantageously to achieve its objectives. It involves the skillful deployment of particular action groups in smaller operations. Planning for a wise strategy must take into consideration the requirements for success in the operation of the chosen technique of struggle. Different techniques will have different requirements. Of course, just fulfilling "requirements" is not sufficient to ensure success. Additional factors may also be needed.

In devising strategies, the democrats must clearly define their objectives and determine how to measure the effectiveness of efforts to achieve them. This definition and analysis permits the strategist to identify the precise requirements for securing each selected objective. This need for clarity and definition applies equally to tactical planning.

Tactics and methods of action are used to implement the strategy. *Tactics* relate to the skillful use of one's forces to the best advantage in a limited situation. A tactic is a limited action, employed to achieve a restricted objective. The choice of tactics is governed by the conception of how best in a restricted phase of a conflict to utilize the available means of fighting to implement the strategy. To be most effective, tactics and methods must be chosen and applied with constant attention to the achievement of strategic objectives. Tactical gains that do not reinforce the attainment of strategic objectives may in the end turn out to be wasted energy.

A tactic is thus concerned with a limited course of action that fits within the broad strategy, just as a strategy fits within the grand strategy. Tactics are always concerned with fighting, whereas strat-

egy includes wider considerations. A particular tactic can only be understood as part of the overall strategy of a battle or a campaign. Tactics are applied for shorter periods of time than strategies, or in smaller areas (geographical, institutional, etc.), or by a more limited number of people, or for more limited objectives. In nonviolent action the distinction between a tactical objective and a strategic objective may be partly indicated by whether the chosen objective of the action is minor or major.

Offensive tactical engagements are selected to support attainment of strategic objectives. Tactical engagements are the tools of the strategist in creating conditions favorable for delivering decisive attacks against an opponent. It is most important, therefore, that those given responsibility for planning and executing tactical operations be skilled in assessing the situation, and selecting the most appropriate methods for it. Those expected to participate must be trained in the use of the chosen technique and the specific methods.

Method refers to the specific weapons or means of action. Within the technique of nonviolent struggle, these include the dozens of particular forms of action (such as the many kinds of strikes, boycotts, political noncooperation, and the like) cited in Chapter Five. (See also Appendix.)

The development of a responsible and effective strategic plan for a nonviolent struggle depends upon the careful formulation and selection of the grand strategy, strategies, tactics, and methods.

The main lesson of this discussion is that a calculated use of one's intellect is required in careful strategic planning for liberation from a dictatorship. Failure to plan intelligently can contribute to disasters, while the effective use of one's intellectual capacities can chart a strategic course that will judiciously utilize one's available resources to move the society toward the goal of liberty and democracy.

SEVEN

PLANNING STRATEGY

In order to increase the chances for success, resistance leaders will need to formulate a comprehensive plan of action capable of strengthening the suffering people, weakening and then destroying the dictatorship, and building a durable democracy. To achieve such a plan of action, a careful assessment of the situation and of the options for effective action is needed. Out of such a careful analysis both a grand strategy and the specific campaign strategies for achieving freedom can be developed. Though related, the development of grand strategy and campaign strategies are two separate processes. Only after the grand strategy has been developed can the specific campaign strategies be fully developed. Campaign strategies will need to be designed to achieve and reinforce the grand strategic objectives.

The development of resistance strategy requires attention to many questions and tasks. Here we shall identify some of the important factors that need to be considered, both at the grand strategic level and the level of campaign strategy. All strategic planning, however, requires that the resistance planners have a profound understanding of the entire conflict situation, including attention to physical, historical, governmental, military, cultural, social, political, psychological, economic, and international factors. Strategies can only be developed in the context of the particular struggle and its background.

Of primary importance, democratic leaders and strategic planners will want to assess the objectives and importance of the cause. Are the objectives worth a major struggle, and why? It is critical to determine the real objective of the struggle. We have argued here that overthrow of the dictatorship or removal of the present dictators is *not* enough. The objective in these conflicts needs to be the establishment of a free society with a democratic system of government. Clarity on this point will influence the development of a grand strategy and of the ensuing specific strategies.

Particularly, strategists will need to answer many fundamental questions, such as these:

- What are the main obstacles to achieving freedom?
- What factors will facilitate achieving freedom?
- What are the main strengths of the dictatorship?
- What are the various weaknesses of the dictatorship?
- To what degree are the sources of power for the dictatorship vulnerable?
- What are the strengths of the democratic forces and the general population?
- What are the weaknesses of the democratic forces and how can they be corrected?
- What is the status of third parties, not immediately involved in the conflict, who already assist or might assist, either the dictatorship or the democratic movement, and if so in what ways?

Choice of means

At the grand strategic level, planners will need to choose the main means of struggle to be employed in the coming conflict. The merits and limitations of several alternative techniques of struggle will need to be evaluated, such as conventional military warfare, guerrilla warfare, political defiance, and others.

In making this choice the strategists will need to consider such questions as the following: Is the chosen type of struggle within the capacities of the democrats? Does the chosen technique utilize strengths of the dominated population? Does this technique target

the weaknesses of the dictatorship, or does it strike at its strongest points? Do the means help the democrats become more self-reliant, or do they require dependency on third parties or external suppliers? What is the record of the use of the chosen means in bringing down dictatorships? Do they increase or limit the casualties and destruction that may be incurred in the coming conflict? Assuming success in ending the dictatorship, what effect would the selected means have on the type of government that would arise from the struggle? The types of action determined to be counterproductive will need to be excluded in the developed grand strategy.

In previous chapters we have argued that political defiance offers significant comparative advantages to other techniques of struggle. Strategists will need to examine their particular conflict situation and determine whether political defiance provides affirmative answers to the above questions.

Planning for democracy

It should be remembered that against a dictatorship the objective of the grand strategy is not simply to bring down the dictators but to install a democratic system and make the rise of a new dictatorship impossible. To accomplish these objectives, the chosen means of struggle will need to contribute to a change in the distribution of effective power in the society. Under the dictatorship the population and civil institutions of the society have been too weak, and the government too strong. Without a change in this imbalance, a new set of rulers can, if they wish, be just as dictatorial as the old ones. A "palace revolution" or a coup d'état therefore is not welcome.

Political defiance contributes to a more equitable distribution of effective power through the mobilization of the society against the dictatorship, as was discussed in Chapter Five. This process occurs in several ways. The development of a nonviolent struggle capacity means that the dictatorship's capacity for violent repression no longer as easily produces intimidation and submission among the population. The population will have at its disposal powerful means to counter and at times block the exertion of the dicta-

tors' power. Further, the mobilization of popular power through political defiance will strengthen the independent institutions of the society. The experience of once exercising effective power is not quickly forgot. The knowledge and skill gained in struggle will make the population less likely to be easily dominated by would-be dictators. This shift in power relationships would ultimately make establishment of a durable democratic society much more likely.

External assistance

As part of the preparation of a grand strategy it is necessary to assess what will be the relative roles of internal resistance and external pressures for disintegrating the dictatorship. In this analysis we have argued that the main force of the struggle must be borne from inside the country itself. To the degree that international assistance comes at all, it will be stimulated by the internal struggle.

As a modest supplement, efforts can be made to mobilize world public opinion against the dictatorship, on humanitarian, moral, and religious grounds. Efforts can be taken to obtain diplomatic, political, and economic sanctions by governments and international organizations against the dictatorship. These may take the forms of economic and military weapons embargoes, reduction in levels of diplomatic recognition or the breaking of diplomatic ties, banning of economic assistance and prohibition of investments in the dictatorial country, expulsion of the dictatorial government from various international organizations and from United Nations bodies. Further, international assistance, such as the provision of financial and communications support, can also be provided directly to the democratic forces.

Formulating a grand strategy

Following an assessment of the situation, the choice of means, and a determination of the role of external assistance, planners of the grand strategy will need to sketch in broad strokes how the conflict might best be conducted. This broad plan would stretch from the present to the future liberation and the institution of a democratic system.

In formulating a grand strategy these planners will need to ask themselves a variety of questions. The following questions pose (in a more specific way than earlier) the types of considerations required in devising a grand strategy for a political defiance struggle:

How might the long-term struggle best begin? How can the oppressed population muster sufficient self-confidence and strength to act to challenge the dictatorship, even initially in a limited way? How could the population's capacity to apply noncooperation and defiance be increased with time and experience? What might be the objectives of a series of limited campaigns to regain democratic control over the society and limit the dictatorship?

Are there independent institutions that have survived the dictatorship which might be used in the struggle to establish freedom? What institutions of the society can be regained from the dictators' control, or what institutions need to be newly created by the democrats to meet their needs and establish spheres of democracy even while the dictatorship continues?

How can organizational strength in the resistance be developed? How can participants be trained? What resources (finances, equipment, etc.) will be required throughout the struggle? What types of symbolism can be most effective in mobilizing the population?

By what kinds of action and in what stages could the sources of power of the dictators be incrementally weakened and severed? How can the resisting population simultaneously persist in its defiance and also maintain the necessary nonviolent discipline? How can the society continue to meet its basic needs during the course of the struggle? How can social order be maintained in the midst of the conflict? As victory approaches, how can the democratic resistance continue to build the institutional base of the post-dictatorship society to make the transition as smooth as possible?

It must be remembered that no single blueprint exists or can be created to plan strategy for every liberation movement against dictatorships. Each struggle to bring down a dictatorship and establish a democratic system will be somewhat different. No two situations will be exactly alike, each dictatorship will have some individual characteristics, and the capacities of the freedom-seeking population

will vary. Planners of grand strategy for a political defiance struggle will require a profound understanding not only of their specific conflict situation, but of their chosen means of struggle as well.¹³

When the grand strategy of the struggle has been carefully planned there are sound reasons for making it widely known. The large numbers of people required to participate may be more willing and able to act if they understand the general conception, as well as specific instructions. This knowledge could potentially have a very positive effect on their morale, their willingness to participate, and to act appropriately. The general outlines of the grand strategy would become known to the dictators in any case and knowledge of its features potentially could lead them to be less brutal in their repression, knowing that it could rebound politically against themselves. Awareness of the special characteristics of the grand strategy could potentially also contribute to dissension and defections from the dictators' own camp.

Once a grand strategic plan for bringing down the dictatorship and establishing a democratic system has been adopted, it is important for the pro-democracy groups to persist in applying it. Only in very rare circumstances should the struggle depart from the initial grand strategy. When there is abundant evidence that the chosen grand strategy was misconceived, or that the circumstances of the struggle have fundamentally changed, planners may need to alter the grand strategy. Even then, this should be done only after a basic reassessment has been made and a new more adequate grand strategic plan has been developed and adopted.

¹³ Recommended full length studies are Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action of Nonviolent Action*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Porter Sargent, 1973) and Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994). Also see Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Stuggle: Twentieth Century Practice and Twenty-First Century Potential*. Boston: Porter Sargent, 2005.

Planning campaign strategies

However wise and promising the developed grand strategy to end the dictatorship and to institute democracy may be, a grand strategy does not implement itself. Particular strategies will need to be developed to guide the major campaigns aimed at undermining the dictators' power. These strategies, in turn, will incorporate and guide a range of tactical engagements that will aim to strike decisive blows against the dictators' regime. The tactics and the specific methods of action must be chosen carefully so that they contribute to achieving the goals of each particular strategy. The discussion here focuses exclusively on the level of strategy.

Strategists planning the major campaigns will, like those who planned the grand strategy, require a thorough understanding of the nature and modes of operation of their chosen technique of struggle. Just as military officers must understand force structures, tactics, logistics, munitions, the effects of geography, and the like in order to plot military strategy, political defiance planners must understand the nature and strategic principles of nonviolent struggle. Even then, however, knowledge of nonviolent struggle, attention to recommendations in this essay, and answers to the questions posed here will not themselves produce strategies. The formulation of strategies for the struggle still requires an informed creativity.

In planning the strategies for the specific selective resistance campaigns and for the longer term development of the liberation struggle, the political defiance strategists will need to consider various issues and problems. The following are among these:

- Determination of the specific objectives of the campaign and their contributions to implementing the grand strategy.
- Consideration of the specific methods, or political weapons, that can best be used to implement the chosen strategies. Within each overall plan for a particular strategic campaign it will be necessary to determine what smaller, tactical plans and which specific methods of action should be used to im-

pose pressures and restrictions against the dictatorship's sources of power. It should be remembered that the achievement of major objectives will come as a result of carefully chosen and implemented specific smaller steps.

- Determination whether, or how, economic issues should be related to the overall essentially political struggle. If economic issues are to be prominent in the struggle, care will be needed that the economic grievances can actually be remedied after the dictatorship is ended. Otherwise, disillusionment and disaffection may set in if quick solutions are not provided during the transition period to a democratic society. Such disillusionment could facilitate the rise of dictatorial forces promising an end to economic woes.
- Determination in advance of what kind of leadership structure and communications system will work best for initiating the resistance struggle. What means of decision-making and communication will be possible during the course of the struggle to give continuing guidance to the resisters and the general population?
- Communication of the resistance news to the general population, to the dictators' forces, and the international press. Claims and reporting should always be strictly factual. Exaggerations and unfounded claims will undermine the credibility of the resistance.
- Plans for self-reliant constructive social, educational, economic, and political activities to meet the needs of one's own people during the coming conflict. Such projects can be conducted by persons not directly involved in the resistance activities.
- Determination of what kind of external assistance is desirable in support of the specific campaign or the general liberation struggle. How can external help be best mobilized

and used without making the internal struggle dependent on uncertain external factors? Attention will need to be given to which external groups are most likely, and most appropriate, to assist, such as non-governmental organizations (social movements, religious or political groups, labor unions, etc.), governments, and/or the United Nations and its various bodies.

Furthermore, the resistance planners will need to take measures to preserve order and to meet social needs by one's own forces during mass resistance against dictatorial controls. This will not only create alternative independent democratic structures and meet genuine needs, but also will reduce credibility for any claims that ruthless repression is required to halt disorder and lawlessness.

Spreading the idea of noncooperation

For successful political defiance against a dictatorship, it is essential that the population grasp the idea of noncooperation. As illustrated by the "Monkey Master" story (see Chapter Three), the basic idea is simple: if enough of the subordinates refuse to continue their cooperation long enough despite repression, the oppressive system will be weakened and finally collapse.

People living under the dictatorship may be already familiar with this concept from a variety of sources. Even so, the democratic forces should deliberately spread and popularize the idea of noncooperation. The "Monkey Master" story, or a similar one, could be disseminated throughout the society. Such a story could be easily understood. Once the general concept of noncooperation is grasped, people will be able to understand the relevance of future calls to practice noncooperation with the dictatorship. They will also be able on their own to improvise a myriad of specific forms of noncooperation in new situations.

Despite the difficulties and dangers in attempts to communicate ideas, news, and resistance instructions while living under dictatorships, democrats have frequently proved this to be possible.

Even under Nazi and Communist rule it was possible for resisters to communicate not only with other individuals but even with large public audiences through the production of illegal newspapers, leaflets, books, and in later years with audio and video cassettes.

With the advantage of prior strategic planning, general guidelines for resistance can be prepared and disseminated. These can indicate the issues and circumstances under which the population should protest and withhold cooperation, and how this might be done. Then, even if communications from the democratic leadership are severed, and specific instructions have not been issued or received, the population will know how to act on certain important issues. Such guidelines would also provide a test to identify counterfeit "resistance instructions" issued by the political police designed to provoke discrediting action.

Repression and countermeasures

Strategic planners will need to assess the likely responses and repression, especially the threshold of violence, of the dictatorship to the actions of the democratic resistance. It will be necessary to determine how to withstand, counteract, or avoid this possible increased repression without submission. Tactically, for specific occasions, appropriate warnings to the population and the resisters about expected repression would be in order, so that they will know the risks of participation. If repression may be serious, preparations for medical assistance for wounded resisters should be made.

Anticipating repression, the strategists will do well to consider in advance the use of tactics and methods that will contribute to achieving the specific goal of a campaign, or liberation, but that will make brutal repression less likely or less possible. For example, street demonstrations and parades against extreme dictatorships may be dramatic, but they may also risk thousands of dead demonstrators. The high cost to the demonstrators may not, however, actually apply more pressure on the dictatorship than would occur through everyone staying home, a strike, or massive acts of noncooperation from the civil servants.

If it has been proposed that provocative resistance action risking high casualties will be required for a strategic purpose, then one should very carefully consider the proposal's costs and possible gains. Will the population and the resisters be likely to behave in a disciplined and nonviolent manner during the course of the struggle? Can they resist provocations to violence? Planners must consider what measures may be taken to keep nonviolent discipline and maintain the resistance despite brutalities. Will such measures as pledges, policy statements, discipline leaflets, marshals for demonstrations, and boycotts of pro-violence persons and groups be possible and effective? Leaders should always be alert for the presence of *agents provocateurs* whose mission will be to incite the demonstrators to violence.

Adhering to the strategic plan

Once a sound strategic plan is in place, the democratic forces should not be distracted by minor moves of the dictators that may tempt them to depart from the grand strategy and the strategy for a particular campaign, causing them to focus major activities on unimportant issues. Nor should the emotions of the moment — perhaps in response to new brutalities by the dictatorship — be allowed to divert the democratic resistance from its grand strategy or the campaign strategy. The brutalities may have been perpetrated precisely in order to provoke the democratic forces to abandon their well-laid plan and even to commit violent acts in order that the dictators could more easily defeat them.

As long as the basic analysis is judged to be sound, the task of the pro-democracy forces is to press forward stage by stage. Of course, changes in tactics and intermediate objectives will occur and good leaders will always be ready to exploit opportunities. These adjustments should not be confused with objectives of the grand strategy or the objectives of the specific campaign. Careful implementation of the chosen grand strategy and of strategies for particular campaigns will greatly contribute to success.

EIGHT

APPLYING POLITICAL DEFIANCE

In situations in which the population feels powerless and frightened, it is important that initial tasks for the public be low-risk, confidence-building actions. These types of actions — such as wearing one's clothes in an unusual way — may publicly register a dissenting opinion and provide an opportunity for the public to participate significantly in acts of dissent. In other cases a relatively minor (on the surface) nonpolitical issue (such as securing a safe water supply) might be made the focus for group action. Strategists should choose an issue the merits of which will be widely recognized and difficult to reject. Success in such limited campaigns could not only correct specific grievances but also convince the population that it indeed has power potential.

Most of the strategies of campaigns in the long-term struggle should *not* aim for the immediate complete downfall of the dictatorship, but instead for gaining limited objectives. Nor does every campaign require the participation of all sections of the population.

In contemplating a series of specific campaigns to implement the grand strategy, the defiance strategists need to consider how the campaigns at the beginning, the middle, and near the conclusion of the long-term struggle will differ from each other.

Selective resistance

In the initial stages of the struggle, separate campaigns with different specific objectives can be very useful. Such selective campaigns may follow one after the other. Occasionally, two or three might overlap in time.

In planning a strategy for “selective resistance” it is necessary to identify specific limited issues or grievances that symbolize the general oppression of the dictatorship. Such issues may be the appropriate targets for conducting campaigns to gain intermediary strategic objectives within the overall grand strategy.

These intermediary strategic objectives need to be attainable by the current or projected power capacity of the democratic forces. This helps to ensure a series of victories, which are good for morale, and also contribute to advantageous incremental shifts in power relations for the long-term struggle.

Selective resistance strategies should concentrate primarily on specific social, economic, or political issues. These may be chosen in order to keep some part of the social and political system out of the dictators' control, to regain control of some part currently controlled by the dictators, or to deny the dictators a particular objective. If possible, the campaign of selective resistance should also strike at one weakness or more of the dictatorship, as already discussed. Thereby, democrats can make the greatest possible impact with their available power capacity.

Very early the strategists need to plan at least the strategy for the first campaign. What are to be its limited objectives? How will it help fulfill the chosen grand strategy? If possible, it is wise to formulate at least the general outlines of strategies for a second and possibly a third campaign. All such strategies will need to implement the chosen grand strategy and operate within its general guidelines.

Symbolic challenge

At the beginning of a new campaign to undermine the dictatorship, the first more specifically political actions may be limited in scope. They should be designed in part to test and influence the mood of the population, and to prepare them for continuing struggle through noncooperation and political defiance.

The initial action is likely to take the form of symbolic protest or may be a symbolic act of limited or temporary noncooperation. If the number of persons willing to act is small, then the initial act might, for example, involve placing flowers at a place of symbolic importance. On the other hand, if the number of persons willing to act is very large, then a five minute halt to all activities or several minutes of silence might be used. In other situations, a few indi-

viduals might undertake a hunger strike, a vigil at a place of symbolic importance, a brief student boycott of classes, or a temporary sit-in at an important office. Under a dictatorship these more aggressive actions would most likely be met with harsh repression.

Certain symbolic acts, such as a physical occupation in front of the dictator's palace or political police headquarters may involve high risk and are therefore not advisable for initiating a campaign.

Initial symbolic protest actions have at times aroused major national and international attention — as the mass street demonstrations in Burma in 1988 or the student occupation and hunger strike in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989. The high casualties of demonstrators in both of these cases points to the great care strategists must exercise in planning campaigns. Although having a tremendous moral and psychological impact, such actions by themselves are unlikely to bring down a dictatorship, for they remain largely symbolic and do not alter the power position of the dictatorship.

It usually is not possible to sever the availability of the sources of power to the dictators completely and rapidly at the beginning of a struggle. That would require virtually the whole population and almost all the institutions of the society — which had previously been largely submissive — to reject absolutely the regime and suddenly defy it by massive and strong noncooperation. That has not yet occurred and would be most difficult to achieve. In most cases, therefore, a quick campaign of full noncooperation and defiance is an unrealistic strategy for an early campaign against the dictatorship.

Spreading responsibility

During a selective resistance campaign the brunt of the struggle is for a time usually borne by one section or more of the population. In a later campaign with a different objective, the burden of the struggle would be shifted to other population groups. For example, students might conduct strikes on an educational issue, religious leaders and believers might concentrate on a freedom of religion issue, rail workers might meticulously obey safety regulations so as to slow down the rail transport system, journalists might challenge

censorship by publishing papers with blank spaces in which prohibited articles would have appeared, or police might repeatedly fail to locate and arrest wanted members of the democratic opposition. Phasing resistance campaigns by issue and population group will allow certain segments of the population to rest while resistance continues.

Selective resistance is especially important *to defend* the existence and autonomy of independent social, economic, and political groups and institutions outside the control of the dictatorship, which were briefly discussed earlier. These centers of power provide the institutional bases from which the population can exert pressure or can resist dictatorial controls. In the struggle, they are likely to be among the first targets of the dictatorship.

Aiming at the dictators' power

As the long-term struggle develops beyond the initial strategies into more ambitious and advanced phases, the strategists will need to calculate how the dictators' sources of power can be further restricted. The aim would be to use popular noncooperation to create a new more advantageous strategic situation for the democratic forces.

As the democratic resistance forces gained strength, strategists would plot more ambitious noncooperation and defiance to sever the dictatorships' sources of power, with the goal of producing increasing political paralysis, and in the end the disintegration of the dictatorship itself.

It will be necessary to plan carefully how the democratic forces can weaken the support that people and groups have previously offered to the dictatorship. Will their support be weakened by revelations of the brutalities perpetrated by the regime, by exposure of the disastrous economic consequences of the dictators' policies, or by a new understanding that the dictatorship can be ended? The dictators' supporters should at least be induced to become "neutral" in their activities ("fence sitters") or preferably to become active supporters of the movement for democracy.

During the planning and implementation of political defiance

and noncooperation, it is highly important to pay close attention to all of the dictators' main supporters and aides, including their inner clique, political party, police, and bureaucrats, but especially their army.

The degree of loyalty of the military forces, both soldiers and officers, to the dictatorship needs to be carefully assessed and a determination should be made as to whether the military is open to influence by the democratic forces. Might many of the ordinary soldiers be unhappy and frightened conscripts? Might many of the soldiers and officers be alienated from the regime for personal, family, or political reasons? What other factors might make soldiers and officers vulnerable to democratic subversion?

Early in the liberation struggle a special strategy should be developed to communicate with the dictators' troops and functionaries. By words, symbols, and actions, the democratic forces can inform the troops that the liberation struggle will be vigorous, determined, and persistent. Troops should learn that the struggle will be of a special character, designed to undermine the dictatorship but not to threaten their lives. Such efforts would aim ultimately to undermine the morale of the dictators' troops and finally to subvert their loyalty and obedience in favor of the democratic movement. Similar strategies could be aimed at the police and civil servants.

The attempt to garner sympathy from and, eventually, induce disobedience among the dictators' forces ought not to be interpreted, however, to mean encouragement of the military forces to make a quick end to the current dictatorship through military action. Such a scenario is not likely to install a working democracy, for (as we have discussed) a coup d'état does little to redress the imbalance of power relations between the populace and the rulers. Therefore, it will be necessary to plan how sympathetic military officers can be brought to understand that neither a military coup nor a civil war against the dictatorship is required or desirable.

Sympathetic officers can play vital roles in the democratic struggle, such as spreading disaffection and noncooperation in the military forces, encouraging deliberate inefficiencies and the quiet ignoring of orders, and supporting the refusal to carry out repres-

sion. Military personnel may also offer various modes of positive nonviolent assistance to the democracy movement, including safe passage, information, food, medical supplies, and the like.

The army is one of the most important sources of the power of dictators because it can use its disciplined military units and weaponry directly to attack and to punish the disobedient population. *Defiance strategists should remember that it will be exceptionally difficult, or impossible, to disintegrate the dictatorship if the police, bureaucrats, and military forces remain fully supportive of the dictatorship and obedient in carrying out its commands.* Strategies aimed at subverting the loyalty of the dictators' forces should therefore be given a high priority by democratic strategists.

The democratic forces should remember that disaffection and disobedience among the military forces and police can be highly dangerous for the members of those groups. Soldiers and police could expect severe penalties for any act of disobedience and execution for acts of mutiny. The democratic forces should not ask the soldiers and officers that they immediately mutiny. Instead, where communication is possible, it should be made clear that there are a multitude of relatively safe forms of "disguised disobedience" that they can take initially. For example, police and troops can carry out instructions for repression inefficiently, fail to locate wanted persons, warn resisters of impending repression, arrests, or deportations, and fail to report important information to their superior officers. Disaffected officers in turn can neglect to relay commands for repression down the chain of command. Soldiers may shoot over the heads of demonstrators. Similarly, for their part, civil servants can lose files and instructions, work inefficiently, and become "ill" so that they need to stay home until they "recover."

Shifts in strategy

The political defiance strategists will need constantly to assess how the grand strategy and the specific campaign strategies are being implemented. It is possible, for example, that the struggle may not go as well as expected. In that case it will be necessary to calculate

what shifts in strategy might be required. What can be done to increase the movement's strength and regain the initiative? In such a situation, it will be necessary to identify the problem, make a strategic reassessment, possibly shift struggle responsibilities to a different population group, mobilize additional sources of power, and develop alternative courses of action. When that is done, the new plan should be implemented immediately.

Conversely, if the struggle has gone much better than expected and the dictatorship is collapsing earlier than previously calculated, how can the democratic forces capitalize on unexpected gains and move toward paralyzing the dictatorship? We will explore this question in the following chapter.

NINE

DISINTEGRATING THE DICTATORSHIP

The cumulative effect of well-conducted and successful political defiance campaigns is to strengthen the resistance and to establish and expand areas of the society where the dictatorship faces limits on its effective control. These campaigns also provide important experience in how to refuse cooperation and how to offer political defiance. That experience will be of great assistance when the time comes for noncooperation and defiance on a mass scale.

As was discussed in Chapter Three, obedience, cooperation, and submission are essential if dictators are to be powerful. Without access to the sources of political power, the dictators' power weakens and finally dissolves. Withdrawal of support is therefore the major required action to disintegrate a dictatorship. It may be useful to review how the sources of power can be affected by political defiance.

Acts of symbolic repudiation and defiance are among the available means to undermine the regime's moral and political *authority* — its legitimacy. The greater the regime's authority, the greater and more reliable is the obedience and cooperation which it will receive. Moral disapproval needs to be expressed in action in order to seriously threaten the existence of the dictatorship. Withdrawal of cooperation and obedience are needed to sever the availability of other sources of the regime's power.

A second important such source of power is *human resources*, the number and importance of the persons and groups that obey, cooperate with, or assist the rulers. If noncooperation is practiced by large parts of the population, the regime will be in serious trouble. For example, if the civil servants no longer function with their normal efficiency or even stay at home, the administrative apparatus will be gravely affected.

Similarly, if the noncooperating persons and groups include those that have previously supplied specialized *skills and knowledge*, then the dictators will see their capacity to implement their

will gravely weakened. Even their ability to make well-informed decisions and develop effective policies may be seriously reduced.

If psychological and ideological influences — called *intangible factors* — that usually induce people to obey and assist the rulers are weakened or reversed, the population will be more inclined to disobey and to noncooperate.

The dictators' access to *material resources* also directly affects their power. With control of financial resources, the economic system, property, natural resources, transportation, and means of communication in the hands of actual or potential opponents of the regime, another major source of their power is vulnerable or removed. Strikes, boycotts, and increasing autonomy in the economy, communications, and transportation will weaken the regime.

As previously discussed, the dictators' ability to threaten or apply *sanctions* — punishments against the restive, disobedient, and noncooperative sections of the population — is a central source of the power of dictators. This source of power can be weakened in two ways. First, if the population is prepared, as in a war, to risk serious consequences as the price of defiance, the effectiveness of the available sanctions will be drastically reduced (that is, the dictators' repression will not secure the desired submission). Second, if the police and the military forces themselves become disaffected, they may on an individual or mass basis evade or outright defy orders to arrest, beat, or shoot resisters. If the dictators can no longer rely on the police and military forces to carry out repression, the dictatorship is gravely threatened.

In summary, success against an entrenched dictatorship requires that noncooperation and defiance reduce and remove the sources of the regime's power. Without constant replenishment of the necessary sources of power the dictatorship will weaken and finally disintegrate. Competent strategic planning of political defiance against dictatorships therefore needs to target the dictators' most important sources of power.

Escalating freedom

Combined with political defiance during the phase of selective resistance, the growth of autonomous social, economic, cultural, and political institutions progressively expands the “democratic space” of the society and shrinks the control of the dictatorship. As the civil institutions of the society become stronger vis-à-vis the dictatorship, then, whatever the dictators may wish, the population is incrementally building an independent society outside of their control. If and when the dictatorship intervenes to halt this “escalating freedom,” nonviolent struggle can be applied in defense of this newly won space and the dictatorship will be faced with yet another “front” in the struggle.

In time, this combination of resistance and institution building can lead to *de facto* freedom, making the collapse of the dictatorship and the formal installation of a democratic system undeniable because the power relationships within the society have been fundamentally altered.

Poland in the 1970s and 1980s provides a clear example of the progressive reclaiming of a society’s functions and institutions by the resistance. The Catholic church had been persecuted but never brought under full Communist control. In 1976 certain intellectuals and workers formed small groups such as K.O.R. (Workers Defense Committee) to advance their political ideas. The organization of the Solidarity trade union with its power to wield effective strikes forced its own legalization in 1980. Peasants, students, and many other groups also formed their own independent organizations. When the Communists realized that these groups had changed the power realities, Solidarity was again banned and the Communists resorted to military rule.

Even under martial law, with many imprisonments and harsh persecution, the new independent institutions of the society continued to function. For example, dozens of illegal newspapers and magazines continued to be published. Illegal publishing houses annually issued hundreds of books, while well-known writers boycotted Communist publications and government publishing houses.

Similar activities continued in other parts of the society.

Under the Jaruselski military regime, the military-Communist government was at one point described as bouncing around on the top of the society. The officials still occupied government offices and buildings. The regime could still strike down into the society, with punishments, arrests, imprisonment, seizure of printing presses, and the like. The dictatorship, however, could not control the society. From that point, it was only a matter of time until the society was able to bring down the regime completely.

Even while a dictatorship still occupies government positions it is sometimes possible to organize a democratic "parallel government." This would increasingly operate as a rival government to which loyalty, compliance, and cooperation are given by the population and the society's institutions. The dictatorship would then consequently, on an increasing basis, be deprived of these characteristics of government. Eventually, the democratic parallel government may fully replace the dictatorial regime as part of the transition to a democratic system. In due course then a constitution would be adopted and elections held as part of the transition.

Disintegrating the dictatorship

While the institutional transformation of the society is taking place, the defiance and noncooperation movement may escalate. Strategists of the democratic forces should contemplate early that there will come a time when the democratic forces can move beyond selective resistance and launch mass defiance. In most cases, time will be required for creating, building, or expanding resistance capacities, and the development of mass defiance may occur only after several years. During this interim period campaigns of selective resistance should be launched with increasingly important political objectives. Larger parts of the population at all levels of the society should become involved. Given determined and disciplined political defiance during this escalation of activities, the internal weaknesses of the dictatorship are likely to become increasingly obvious.

The combination of strong political defiance and the building of independent institutions is likely in time to produce widespread international attention favorable to the democratic forces. It may also produce international diplomatic condemnations, boycotts, and embargoes in support of the democratic forces (as it did for Poland).

Strategists should be aware that in some situations the collapse of the dictatorship may occur extremely rapidly, as in East Germany in 1989. This can happen when the sources of power are massively severed as a result of the whole population's revulsion against the dictatorship. This pattern is not usual, however, and it is better to plan for a long-term struggle (but to be prepared for a short one).

During the course of the liberation struggle, victories, even on limited issues, should be celebrated. Those who have earned the victory should be recognized. Celebrations with vigilance should also help to keep up the morale needed for future stages of the struggle.

Handling success responsibly

Planners of the grand strategy should calculate in advance the possible and preferred ways in which a successful struggle might best be concluded in order to prevent the rise of a new dictatorship and to ensure the gradual establishment of a durable democratic system.

The democrats should calculate how the transition from the dictatorship to the interim government shall be handled at the end of the struggle. It is desirable at that time to establish quickly a new functioning government. However, it must not be merely the old one with new personnel. It is necessary to calculate what sections of the old governmental structure (as the political police) are to be completely abolished because of their inherent anti-democratic character and which sections retained to be subjected to later democratization efforts. A complete governmental void could open the way to chaos or a new dictatorship.

Thought should be given in advance to determine what is to be the policy toward high officials of the dictatorship when its power

disintegrates. For example, are the dictators to be brought to trial in a court? Are they to be permitted to leave the country permanently? What other options may there be that are consistent with political defiance, the need for reconstructing the country, and building a democracy following the victory? A blood bath must be avoided which could have drastic consequences on the possibility of a future democratic system.

Specific plans for the transition to democracy should be ready for application when the dictatorship is weakening or collapses. Such plans will help to prevent another group from seizing state power through a coup d'état. Plans for the institution of democratic constitutional government with full political and personal liberties will also be required. The changes won at a great price should not be lost through lack of planning.

When confronted with the increasingly empowered population and the growth of independent democratic groups and institutions — both of which the dictatorship is unable to control — the dictators will find that their whole venture is unravelling. Massive shut-downs of the society, general strikes, mass stay-at-homes, defiant marches, or other activities will increasingly undermine the dictators' own organization and related institutions. As a consequence of such defiance and noncooperation, executed wisely and with mass participation over time, the dictators would become powerless and the democratic defenders would, without violence, triumph. The dictatorship would disintegrate before the defiant population.

Not every such effort will succeed, especially not easily, and rarely quickly. It should be remembered that as many military wars are lost as are won. However, political defiance offers a real possibility of victory. As stated earlier, that possibility can be greatly increased through the development of a wise grand strategy, careful strategic planning, hard work, and disciplined courageous struggle.

TEN

GROUNDWORK FOR DURABLE DEMOCRACY

The disintegration of the dictatorship is of course a cause for major celebration. People who have suffered for so long and struggled at great price merit a time of joy, relaxation, and recognition. They should feel proud of themselves and of all who struggled with them to win political freedom. Not all will have lived to see this day. The living and the dead will be remembered as heroes who helped to shape the history of freedom in their country.

Unfortunately, this is not a time for a reduction in vigilance. Even in the event of a successful disintegration of the dictatorship by political defiance, careful precautions must be taken to prevent the rise of a new oppressive regime out of the confusion following the collapse of the old one. The leaders of the pro-democracy forces should have prepared in advance for an orderly transition to a democracy. The dictatorial structures will need to be dismantled. The constitutional and legal bases and standards of behavior of a durable democracy will need to be built.

No one should believe that with the downfall of the dictatorship an ideal society will immediately appear. The disintegration of the dictatorship simply provides the beginning point, under conditions of enhanced freedom, for long-term efforts to improve the society and meet human needs more adequately. Serious political, economic, and social problems will continue for years, requiring the cooperation of many people and groups in seeking their resolution. The new political system should provide the opportunities for people with varying outlooks and favored measures to continue constructive work and policy development to deal with problems in the future.

Threats of a new dictatorship

Aristotle warned long ago that “. . . tyranny can also change into tyranny. . .”¹⁴ There is ample historical evidence from France (the

¹⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book V, Chapter 12, p. 233.

Jacobins and Napoleon), Russia (the Bolsheviks), Iran (the Ayatollah), Burma (SLORC), and elsewhere that the collapse of an oppressive regime will be seen by some persons and groups as merely the opportunity for them to step in as the new masters. Their motives may vary, but the results are often approximately the same. The new dictatorship may even be more cruel and total in its control than the old one.

Even before the collapse of the dictatorship, members of the old regime may attempt to cut short the defiance struggle for democracy by staging a coup d'état designed to preempt victory by the popular resistance. It may claim to oust the dictatorship, but in fact seek only to impose a new refurbished model of the old one.

Blocking coups

There are ways in which coups against newly liberated societies can be defeated. Advance knowledge of that defense capacity may at times be sufficient to deter the attempt. Preparation can produce prevention.

Immediately after a coup is started, the putschists require legitimacy, that is, acceptance of their moral and political right to rule. The first basic principle of anti-coup defense is therefore to deny legitimacy to the putschists.

The putschists also require that the civilian leaders and population be supportive, confused, or just passive. The putschists require the cooperation of specialists and advisors, bureaucrats and civil servants, administrators and judges in order to consolidate their control over the affected society. The putschists also require that the multitude of people who operate the political system, the society's institutions, the economy, the police, and the military forces will passively submit and carry out their usual functions as modified by the putschists' orders and policies.

The second basic principle of anti-coup defense is to resist the putschists with noncooperation and defiance. The needed cooperation and assistance must be denied. Essentially the same means of struggle that was used against the dictatorship can be used against

the new threat, but applied immediately. If both legitimacy and cooperation are denied, the coup may die of political starvation and the chance to build a democratic society restored.

Constitution drafting

The new democratic system will require a constitution that establishes the desired framework of the democratic government. The constitution should set the purposes of government, limits on governmental powers, the means and timing of elections by which governmental officials and legislators will be chosen, the inherent rights of the people, and the relation of the national government to other lower levels of government.

Within the central government, if it is to remain democratic, a clear division of authority should be established between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Strong restrictions should be included on activities of the police, intelligence services, and military forces to prohibit any legal political interference.

In the interests of preserving the democratic system and impeding dictatorial trends and measures, the constitution should preferably be one that establishes a federal system with significant prerogatives reserved for the regional, state, and local levels of government. In some situations the Swiss system of cantons might be considered in which relatively small areas retain major prerogatives, while remaining a part of the whole country.

If a constitution with many of these features existed earlier in the newly liberated country's history, it may be wise simply to restore it to operation, amending it as deemed necessary and desirable. If a suitable older constitution is not present, it may be necessary to operate with an interim constitution. Otherwise, a new constitution will need to be prepared. Preparing a new constitution will take considerable time and thought. Popular participation in this process is desirable and required for ratification of a new text or amendments. One should be very cautious about including in the constitution promises that later might prove impossible to imple-

ment or provisions that would require a highly centralized government, for both can facilitate a new dictatorship.

The wording of the constitution should be easily understood by the majority of the population. A constitution should not be so complex or ambiguous that only lawyers or other elites can claim to understand it.

A democratic defense policy

The liberated country may also face foreign threats for which a defense capacity would be required. The country might also be threatened by foreign attempts to establish economic, political, or military domination.

In the interests of maintaining internal democracy, serious consideration should be given to applying the basic principles of political defiance to the needs of national defense.¹⁵ By placing resistance capacity directly in the hands of the citizenry, newly liberated countries could avoid the need to establish a strong military capacity which could itself threaten democracy or require vast economic resources much needed for other purposes.

It must be remembered that some groups will ignore any constitutional provision in their aim to establish themselves as new dictators. Therefore, a permanent role will exist for the population to apply political defiance and noncooperation against would-be dictators and to preserve democratic structures, rights, and procedures.

A meritorious responsibility

The effect of nonviolent struggle is not only to weaken and remove the dictators but also to empower the oppressed. This technique enables people who formerly felt themselves to be only pawns or victims to wield power directly in order to gain by their own efforts greater freedom and justice. This experience of struggle has impor-

¹⁵ See Gene Sharp, *Civilian-Based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990).

tant psychological consequences, contributing to increased self-esteem and self-confidence among the formerly powerless.

One important long-term beneficial consequence of the use of nonviolent struggle for establishing democratic government is that the society will be more capable of dealing with continuing and future problems. These might include future governmental abuse and corruption, maltreatment of any group, economic injustices, and limitations on the democratic qualities of the political system. The population experienced in the use of political defiance is less likely to be vulnerable to future dictatorships.

After liberation, familiarity with nonviolent struggle will provide ways to defend democracy, civil liberties, minority rights, and prerogatives of regional, state, and local governments and nongovernmental institutions. Such means also provide ways by which people and groups can express extreme dissent peacefully on issues seen as so important that opposition groups have sometimes resorted to terrorism or guerrilla warfare.

The thoughts in this examination of political defiance or nonviolent struggle are intended to be helpful to all persons and groups who seek to lift dictatorial oppression from their people and to establish a durable democratic system that respects human freedoms and popular action to improve the society.

There are three major conclusions to the ideas sketched here:

- Liberation from dictatorships is possible;
- Very careful thought and strategic planning will be required to achieve it; and
- Vigilance, hard work, and disciplined struggle, often at great cost, will be needed.

The oft quoted phrase “Freedom is not free” is true. No outside force is coming to give oppressed people the freedom they so much want. People will have to learn how to take that freedom themselves. Easy it cannot be.

If people can grasp what is required for their own liberation, they can chart courses of action which, through much travail, can eventually bring them their freedom. Then, with diligence they can construct a new democratic order and prepare for its defense. Freedom won by struggle of this type can be durable. It can be maintained by a tenacious people committed to its preservation and enrichment.