

Chapter Thirty-seven

SOME STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

Careful attention required

Effective application of the technique of nonviolent struggle requires great care, much thought, skilled action, and strength. Careful attention is required to the elements discussed in this chapter about the development of wise strategies for effective future nonviolent struggles.

These guidelines and suggestions are based on an understanding of how nonviolent struggle works, on lessons from past applications of this technique, and on basic strategic principles.

Knowledge of nonviolent struggle

Perhaps the most important part of the understanding of nonviolent struggle is the analysis of the sources of political power, as we discussed in Chapter Two. In acute conflicts with repressive regimes, particular strategies can be developed to target, weaken and remove the sources of the opponents' power. This targeting can be a major factor in making nonviolent struggle effective

against highly repressive regimes. This will be discussed more fully below.

The formulation of wise strategies and tactics for nonviolent struggles also requires a thorough understanding of the dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent struggle, such as is presented in summary form in Chapters Twenty-nine to Thirty-four, and more fully in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*.¹ This knowledge makes possible an understanding of several of the other elements in the effective practice of this technique, including the maintenance of nonviolent discipline.

Nonviolent struggle both requires, and tends to produce, a reduction of fear of the opponents and their violent repression. That control of fear, or its abandonment, is a key element in destroying the control by the opponents over the general population and potential resisters.

Another major characteristic of the operation of nonviolent struggle in many conflicts is that the power capacities of the two sides do not remain constant. The absolute and relative power of the resisting population and also of the opponents can vary widely during nonviolent struggles. As compared to variations of strength of the contenders in violent conflicts, these changes in the respective power of the opponents and resisters in nonviolent conflicts, when they occur, are likely to be more extreme, to take place more quickly, and to have more significant consequences.

This is because the wider strategies, tactics, specific methods, and behavior of the two groups are all likely to have effects far beyond the particular time and place in which they occur. Certain types of behavior—such as violence, destruction of property, or unwise provocative nonviolent acts—may have consequences that would not be expected or wanted. The number of resisters and the forms of their resistance can grow or shrink. At times, this happens slowly, but at other times it occurs rapidly and extremely. The opponents' power also may increase or decrease, again slowly or rapidly. The nonviolent group may by its actions and behavior help to control the increase or decrease in the power

¹ Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Boston, Massachusetts: Porter Sargent, 1973. Also issued in three volumes (paperback edition), *Power and Struggle*, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*, and *The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action*.

of the opponent group, and this to a much greater degree than occurs in military conflicts.

In the preparation of strategies, it is necessary to be attentive to the selection of plans and actions that facilitate the operation of the dynamics and mechanisms of the technique. It is also necessary to remember the need to reject proposed actions that, if implemented, would disrupt the very factors that make this technique of struggle effective.

Self-reliance and third party² assistance

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.³

Assuming that a strong nonviolent struggle is planned or already being waged, it is fine to seek limited and nonviolent assistance from others. However, calculations on how to win the struggle must be based only on capabilities and actions of one's own group. Then, if no one else helps, one still has a chance to succeed, assuming that the strategic planning has been sound and the resisters are strong. 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, which is acting as though success or failure will be determined by its efforts alone.

Although it is dangerous to rely on support by third parties—for they have their own interests and objectives—their support can nevertheless be very useful at times. The motives for such external groups to assist may vary, sometimes relating to the resisters' objectives and to the choice of nonviolent struggle. At other

² Third parties are groups that are neither the nonviolent struggle group nor the opponent group. They may be parts of the overall society within which the conflict is occurring or may be groups from outside that society.

³ Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty, *A History of Ireland Under the Union 1880-1922* (London: Methuen Press, 1952), pp. 490-491.

times, third parties may anticipate possible economic or political benefits after the nonviolent resisters have successfully ousted a repressive regime. (Of course, short-term economic benefits also may be a strong motive for third parties to side with the opponents and reject support for the resisters.)

The nonviolent resisters should cultivate third party assistance both in advance of the struggle and also while it is in progress. The kinds of help they may seek may include material resources, safe bases of operation, noninterference, and endorsement of the legitimacy of the objective and means used by the nonviolent resisters. Very supportive third parties may invoke economic sanctions and diplomatic pressures against the opponents, and even attempt to isolate the opponents internationally. However, the caution about depending on third party support remains valid. The resistance movement needs to be able to pursue the struggle effectively if this external assistance never develops or disappears.

A single struggle or several campaigns?

On the basis of the results of the strategic estimate, it is essential to determine whether or not the objective(s) of the conflict can be achieved as the result of a single all-out struggle. If the chances are high that a single struggle could succeed, then a sound strategy needs to be developed that may realistically achieve that objective.

This assessment of the potential for a single campaign to successfully achieve the objectives must be done carefully. It should include attention to both the characteristics and the requirements of nonviolent struggle, and also to an accurate strategic estimate of the capacities of the opponents and of the potential resisters, as we discussed in Chapter Thirty-six.

It must be recognized, however, that only rarely can the full objective(s) of a major conflict waged by nonviolent struggle against powerful opponents be achieved in a single effort.

The following is an incomplete list of the conditions that are likely to be prerequisites of a successful single struggle:

- The opponents have lost legitimacy on a wide scale—whether or not this loss has yet been openly expressed.

- The opponents are highly dependent, politically, economically, or in other ways, on a population that may wield noncooperation.
- The population already has, or is developing, groups and institutions that are outside the control of the opponent group.
- The groups and institutions that serve as “pillars of support” for the opponents, supplying their necessary sources of power, are unstable and lack full commitment to the opponent leadership.
- The current control over the general population by the opponents is less than fully effective.
- The general population—and especially the groups most likely to resist—have previously either had satisfactory experience in the use of nonviolent struggle or have received competent advice to develop resistance actions and an understanding of their roles.
- The issues on which attention is focused in the struggle have wide and deep support.
- A wise grand strategy has been developed for the struggle with supporting recommended specific resistance actions by particular population groups and institutions, including those that have served as pillars of support for the opponents.
- The opponents’ bureaucracy and police and military forces include major portions whose loyalty and assistance to the opponents’ leadership is uncertain at best.

In a large-scale conflict against a government or regime, efforts to remove the opponents’ sources of power so that their regime collapses are unlikely to be within the capacity of the struggle group at the beginning of the conflict. However, if a single campaign is in fact attempted in order to achieve the objectives of a struggle, a contingency plan should be prepared in case such a campaign proves unsuccessful. If a single struggle is attempted and does not succeed, the opponents may not only survive institutionally but may also be relatively strengthened. The resisters will consequently have experienced a serious loss, in terms of both their morale and their resistance capacity.

It may, therefore, generally be wiser to prepare initially for a few campaigns with limited objectives. These will need to be ones

that are compatible with the larger major objective and will help to make its accomplishment possible. This is not a case of being moderate in one's objectives, but instead an instance of concentrating one's strength on the opponents' weaknesses in order to gain objectives that are within the capacity of the resisters to achieve. As limited objectives are gained and efforts are made to strengthen the grievance group and the resisting population, the capacity to wage effective nonviolent struggle will increase.

Determine the objectives

The objectives of the individual campaigns will need to be formulated carefully and must be compatible with the resisters' major objective(s) in the overall conflict. Each campaign for limited objectives will require wise specific strategies and skilled action to ensure that it contributes to achieving the larger major objectives, as we will discuss later.

The objectives of both the overall struggle and its component campaigns need to be formulated in terms that are clear, understandable, and widely accepted. The objectives should not be expressed as vague platitudes, such as "peace," "freedom," or "justice." Rather, they should be concrete and relatively specific, while always related to the general grievance. For example, although in the second quarter of the twentieth century the overall goal in the struggle of Indian nationalists against the British Empire was independence for India, the specific objectives of the 1930-1931 campaign as formulated by M. K. Gandhi were 11 limited and concrete demands that, he believed, if gained would bring India closer to self-governance.

The terminology used in stating objectives should not be subject to wide interpretations. Proper terminology will make it easier to measure whether or not the objective(s) of a particular campaign or the wider struggle have in fact been achieved. Nor should the objectives be excessively detailed: in some struggles a "freely elected parliament" might be a reasonable objective, but stating that the parliament should have 537 members would be too detailed.

For a limited campaign, it is wise to choose an issue that will be a suitable point of attack. The key is to select an issue that symbolizes the general grievance, or is a specific aspect of the

general problem, that is least defensible by the opponents and is almost impossible to justify. The initial objective would then be one for which the nonviolent struggle group could receive maximum support. It should also be an objective that is either within the capacity of the opponents to yield, or within the power of the resisters to take.

A poor choice of an objective in a limited campaign shifts attention away from the major objective(s) of the grand strategy. A wise choice attracts support from the general population, third parties, and potentially even some individuals and groups among the opponents.

It is often very helpful if the objectives of such limited campaigns are ones that challenge deplorable specific expressions of the general grievance against which the resisters are fighting. For example, if all racial discrimination cannot be abolished in a single struggle, individual campaigns may be launched—as was done in the southern United States in the 1950s and 1960s—against specific practices of discrimination, such as segregated buses and lunch counter service, employment discrimination, and voting restrictions.

For another example, a single limited campaign in a struggle against a dictatorship could focus on defending an opposition publication that the regime wants to prohibit, defying censorship or violations of religious liberty, defending the independence of social or religious institutions, creating new independent organizations (such as a trade union), or campaigning against election fraud. Selective objectives may also focus on specific vital social, economic, or political issues, chosen because of their key role in keeping the social and political system out of the opponents' control, in blocking achievement of the opponents' objectives, or in undermining their pillars of support.

If the struggle is against a foreign military occupation, comparable strategies of selective resistance with specific objectives can be waged. The campaigns may be focused on rejection of the legitimacy of the occupation regime, or on noncooperation with some specific part of it. Blocking the establishment of effective occupation and control over the society would be a crucial part of such a struggle. Strategies of selective resistance may also be focused on denying to the attackers one or more of their specific objectives. For example, the resistance may be focused on block-

ing a specific type of economic gain to the attackers, or preventing their use of the educational system, newspapers, radio, or television to indoctrinate the population in their ideology.

Having chosen the point(s) for concentrated attack, the resisters must not allow themselves to become sidetracked on a lesser course of action or dead-end issues. Initial success on limited points will increase both the resisters' self-confidence and their ability to move forward effectively toward the fuller realization of their objectives.

The perceived validity of the issues and goals espoused by the nonviolent struggle group, as compared to those of the opponent group, are likely to contribute to the effectiveness of the coming nonviolent struggle. The stated issues and goals will influence the support for the resistance from the affected population, as well as, potentially, some people within the opponent group, and perhaps third parties. Clearly stated goals and identification of grievances should be maintained throughout the ebbs and flows of the struggle so long as the grievances remain intact and the goals are still relevant, justifiable, and attainable.

Strengthen the population and the resisters

Parallel with the weakening of the power of the opponents by noncooperation and disobedience is the mobilization of power capacity by the general population. These people and institutions may have previously been thought to be weak and helpless in the face of the opponents' organizational and repressive capacity. This mobilization of the power potential of the population affected by the grievances into effective power that can be used in struggle is of extreme importance to the outcome of the conflict.

From the resisters' position, both the grand strategy and individual strategies for campaigns should be designed so that the resisters and the general population become stronger during the struggle than they were previously. It is possible to calculate their power by determining if they have independent groups and organizations, if they are able to apply nonviolent struggle despite repression, and if they demonstrate skill in using this technique of conducting a conflict.

There is no substitute for genuine strength in the resisting population. If the participants are weak when they begin the

struggle and remain so during the conflict, they will almost certainly lose. In a large-scale conflict, it is necessary to mobilize sufficient struggle capacity to overwhelm the opponents by massive resistance and by the removal of the opponents' sources of power.

At a minimum, the resisters need to be able to force the opponents into a compromise settlement on nonessential issues. This means that the resisters require the ability to direct and coordinate forces to enable them to press the struggle forward despite difficulties. Major efforts are required to strengthen the resisters and the general population so that the opponents can no longer dominate them.

A phased series of campaigns can be designed to strengthen the aggrieved population, as well as to weaken the opponents' regime. These phased campaigns can give the population experience in applying nonviolent struggle. If planned and conducted skillfully, this option can bring a series of successes to the resisting population. These may increase their skills in conducting this type of struggle, give experience in strategic planning, and increase the self-confidence of the population and the resisters.

Strengthen institutions

Commonly, political oppression occurs where civil society—meaning a society consisting of strong independent institutions—is weak. Oppressive regimes already in existence commonly seek to destroy the independence of social, economic, and political institutions outside the control of the State or party. Weakened or destroyed independent institutions make societal resistance very difficult to conduct. The strength or weakness of such institutions is important in planning strategy for nonviolent struggle. Social groups and institutions can be organizational bases for waging nonviolent struggle. Individuals can witness or participate, but only groups can resist effectively.

The institutions of civil society are generally composed of organized groups that are neither vertically controlled by, nor integrated into, that part of political society regulated by the State. Examples of civil society groups include sports clubs, gardening associations, certain labor unions and business associations, religious institutions, organized social movements, and all classes of

nongovernmental organizations. They can exist at a local, regional, or national level.

Other important independent institutions may at times include small governmental bodies, including local town governments, schools, and legislative, executive, taxation, and judicial units. This can happen either when these institutions already exist and are controlled by independent forces, or when new such bodies are created to replace those controlled by the opponent group.

Consequently, preserving and strengthening existing independent groups and institutions and creating new ones are important contributions to the capacity to wage effective future resistance. The condition of these bodies must be carefully considered by strategic planners, as they are important in determining the ability of the populace to wage nonviolent struggle successfully.

If such independent social groups and institutions are weak or largely absent, it may be necessary to create new groups or organizations in order to prepare for future strong resistance. Or, it may be possible to turn certain existing groups or institutions that have not been fully independent into ones with more independence of action, groups capable of playing major roles in future struggles. The creation and the strengthening of such institutions can significantly increase the future capacity for nonviolent struggle and can expand its effectiveness.

The role of leadership

Leaders have been defined as those who make the most important decisions for the conduct of the conflict and also those who personally serve as rallying points for supporters in the struggle.

It is important for planners of future resistance to review different models of leadership, from highly centralized and charismatic ones to committee structures with full group participation. The merits and disadvantages of different models in differing circumstances need to be considered. Leaders are always vulnerable to attack, discrediting, seizure, or assassination. Therefore, replacements and lines of succession of leaders need to be prepared.

It should also be noted that in some predominantly nonviolent struggles, such as the Russian 1905 Revolution, it was often difficult or impossible at various stages to identify who the leaders were, if indeed there were any, except locally and temporarily.

Analysis is required of the possibility that wide diffusion of knowledge of nonviolent struggle, including its dynamics and requirements, may greatly reduce the need for identifiable leadership in actual struggles.

Steps will need to be prepared to mitigate damage to the movement that would be caused by removal of resistance leaders by the opponents. Such measures should include spreading widely the plan of operations for the struggle throughout the resisting population well before the conflict begins. At times, setting up a more decentralized structure for the nonviolent struggle (as was done in Serbia in 2000) may also help.

Certain qualities should be taken into account when selecting leaders. Leaders should set the example, know their people and look out for their welfare, be technically and tactically proficient, seek out and accept responsibility, let others get credit for success, observe loyalty to superiors and subordinates, know the opponents, learn from the experience of one's own group and others as well, maximize and challenge the abilities of subordinates, and pick the right people for the right positions.

Very importantly, the leaders should either have significant knowledge of nonviolent struggle and be capable of wise strategic planning or have the judgment and humility to rely on other persons with those qualities for strategic direction.

Ensure access to critical material resources

Various material resources will be needed by the resisters and the population during the struggle. It is important to identify and secure access to them in advance of open conflict. Without material necessities, the conflict cannot be conducted effectively and the population may be unwilling to support the struggle.

There is a need to survey, for example, available supplies of food, clothing, energy, medical supplies, communications, and transportation, and to plan for secure future access to them.

Resistance strategists will need to answer such questions as these: What supplies will be needed? How may such supplies and access to them be affected during the struggle? What can the resisters and third parties do to ensure their availability? How can the resisters neutralize, or compensate for, the opponents' attempts to restrict or sever supplies of the materials the resisters

need? Can supplies be decentralized in advance or during the struggle, therefore making the resisters less vulnerable to severance or seizure of these supplies? Can new ways be developed to produce these supplies and resources so that the opponents cannot easily defeat the resistance by controlling them? Are there other options or countermeasures open to the resistance to ensure access to material necessities?

Undermine the opponents' sources of power

In a serious conflict over important issues it is unrealistic to expect that the hearts and minds of the opponents will be changed because people are protesting and resisting nonviolently even in the face of the opponents' brutal repression. Some elements of conversion because of nonviolent suffering are possible on occasion for some people, as was discussed in Chapter Thirty-three. However, in a large-scale conflict about no-compromise issues and important power relationships, it is naïve to expect that the mechanism of conversion will resolve the conflict. Stronger action is required.

Nonviolent struggle is most effective when it is able to undermine or dislocate the opponents. This must be kept in mind in the planning of every strategic move. The strategy needs to be designed to concentrate the resisters' strengths against weak links in the opponents' policies or system of control.

The most efficient way to undermine the opponents' policy or system is to weaken or remove their sources of power. In relatively small campaigns over limited issues, this approach will be only partially required. For example, in a labor strike or a major economic boycott, the withdrawal of labor or halt to purchasing is designed to restrict the opponents' economic resources. In these conflicts, it normally is not necessary for the resisters to undermine other sources of the opponents' power.

However, in larger political struggles—such as attempts to repel a foreign occupation or dissolve a dictatorship—strategists of nonviolent struggle would be wise to attempt to weaken and remove as many of these sources of power as possible. This requires that the weapons of nonviolent struggle be applied against crucial targets, primarily the “pillars of support” of the opponents that are determined to be most vulnerable.

Resisters facing acute conflicts about no-compromise issues and serious power relationships will have a strategic option to attempt to restrict or sever the supply of the sources of power of their opponents through symbolic protests, forms of noncooperation, or disruptive intervention. Such action becomes especially powerful when it involves defiance and noncooperation by organizations and institutions. The impact of their resistance will vary with the degree of the opponents' dependence on them.

Often it will be wise to target specific sources of the opponents' power in a sequence of priorities. This sequence may be selected on the basis of certain criteria, including at times both their vulnerability and their importance to the opponents.

One of the most important sources of power, as we discussed in Chapter Two, is authority, or legitimacy. The undermining of this source of power was exceptionally important in Serbia in October 2000. Without authority, the provision of the other sources of power is unstable. Loss of authority can set in motion the disintegration of a regime's power.⁴ As we noted earlier, all governments depend upon the cooperation and assistance of their subjects, of the groups and organizations of the society, and of the branches of the government. When these bodies do not sufficiently supply the several needed sources of power, or when they carry out the regime's wishes and orders slowly or inefficiently—or even flatly refuse to assist and obey—the power of the regime is weakened.

Governments may attempt to restore obedience and cooperation by imposing sanctions, or punishments. However, even sanctions will be inadequate to enforce obedience and cooperation as long as acceptance of the regime's authority is limited. If popular disobedience and noncooperation continue—or even grow—despite such sanctions, the power of the opponents will shrink or dissolve. This effect is heightened when police and soldiers refuse to obey orders. Another key source of power—sanctions—will then have been removed.

In some conflicts, specific actions can be undertaken with a view of undermining the morale and the reliability of the opponents' military forces and functionaries. Sometimes, such efforts

⁴ For this analysis, we have assumed that the opponents either are the established regime or have the backing of the established regime.

may have little or no impact. Troops facing nonviolent resisters have sometimes perpetrated brutalities, as in China in 1989 and Burma in 1988. At other times, efforts to undermine troops have been extremely influential, as in Russia in 1991 and the Philippines in 1986. The general situation of a population resisting nonviolently, so as not to threaten the lives of members of the military forces, will sometimes suffice to create serious morale problems among soldiers and police. This can lead to laxity in repression, and occasionally, although rarely, to disobedience of orders and mutiny. While it is wise not to depend on such military disobedience, special efforts to influence troops, police, and functionaries can prove to be important.

If the acceptance of the regime, cooperation with it, and obedience to it are ended, the regime must weaken and collapse. This explains the phenomenon of "people power," and the collapse of dictatorships when confronted by the strong use of this technique.

Concentrate strength against weakness

To be most effective, nonviolent action needs to be concentrated against crucial targets. These targets need to be selected after careful consideration of one's own strengths, overall objectives, and campaign objectives; the objectives and position of the opponents, including their weaknesses; and the importance of the issues at stake themselves. Napoleon's maxim that it is impossible to be too strong at the decisive point applies here as well.

Campaign strategies need to be designed to utilize the strengths of the resisters to expose and attack the opponents' vulnerabilities and weaknesses, while avoiding engagement of the opponents at their strongest and most defensible points. This applies to both the selection of campaign objectives and the choice of tactical targets for attack within those campaigns.

However, it should also be recognized that some struggles may be launched against policies or governments that have wide popular support. In such cases, the struggles will often be about non-compromise issues, and both the struggle and the campaign objectives may not initially find wide acceptance among the population as a whole. If so, campaigns and actions should be designed to strengthen the resisters and chip away at the support for the opponents or their policies. These struggles will usually take sig-

nificantly longer to win, and the external conditions will be unfavorable for the resisters.

Generally, however, when choosing points of attack for particular actions within the campaign strategy, it is wise for the nonviolent struggle strategists to target weak or particularly vulnerable supports of the opponents, their policies, or both. We have already noted the need to focus the resisters' capabilities against vital "pillars of support," defined as the groups or institutions that support and provide the opponents' various sources of power. However, it would be unwise initially to target those pillars of support that are the strongest and most defensible by the opponents. For example, if internal solidarity, morale, and cohesion of the military forces are among the opponents' greatest strengths, then at the beginning of the struggle it would probably not be wise to attempt to induce disaffection among rank-and-file soldiers as a primary campaign tactic.

In contrast, if the opponents are heavily dependent on the sale of mineral resources produced at mines that have been unionized by supporters or members of the nonviolent struggle group, then a key weakness of the opponents—and an important strength of the resisters—has been revealed. A wise campaign might then include application of economic pressures against the opponents through strikes, slowdowns, or other such measures at these facilities. The key, again, is to target the vulnerable sources of power of the opponents by concentrating strength against their weakest pillars of support.

Concentration of strength is vital. Activities and pressures should be selected that allow the nonviolent struggle group to apply its strengths, not expose its weaknesses. Without support of labor unions (as well as internal discipline within those unions), it is unlikely that many forms of economic pressure, including those in the example just given, will have much effect. On the other hand, if labor union support and solidarity with the nonviolent struggle group is one of the resisters' great strengths, then such strikes might prove effective if targeted against a key pillar of support of the opponent group. As another example, if the resisters enjoy the full backing of popular religious institutions, it would be wise to employ them in the struggle. If the religious institutions support the opponents, however, it would be unwise to

plan activities that require their participation in resistance against the opponents.

This same principle holds for selection of methods. Methods of nonviolent action that require certain preparation or capabilities on the part of the resisters should be selected only if those capabilities exist. Demonstrations should not be called unless organizers are confident that turnout will be sufficient to achieve the identified purposes of such actions within the campaign. A hunger strike should not be launched if the resisters who volunteer to apply the method are not willing to continue it for the full declared duration. Consumers boycotts should not be launched without the capacity to apply them.

However, the above methods become viable if (a) the resisters have the strength to carry them out and to maintain them despite the opponents' countermeasures; and (b) the methods fit within a selected campaign strategy to target vulnerable pillars of support of the opponents. In all cases, the selected methods should be part of a strategic plan that will apply the strengths of the resisters against the weaknesses of the opponents, concentrating heavily on vulnerable pillars of support. To do otherwise is to ignore opportunities to advance in the struggle, while exposing potentially vital weaknesses of one's own side that the opponents will eagerly exploit.

Keep the opponents off balance

The resistance movement needs to keep the opponents off balance, and it must strike where the opponents are unprepared to deal with the attack. Timing and speed can be important here. Unlike what is sometimes true in military struggles, however, nonviolent resisters generally do *not* have to rely on surprise attacks in order to be effective.

The timing of implementation of the resisters' tactics can be very important. It is essential for the resistance strategists and leaders to be able to judge when people are willing to resist. Sometimes action may be timed to coincide with a significant day or special occasion. Where a combination of actions involving several groups is planned, the precise time at which each group is to act will be important. Timing of resistance actions is also important at the various stages of a struggle. It is important to de-

terminate the right time to shift from symbolic actions to massive noncooperation, for example, or to begin a new campaign within the overall grand strategy.

Prompt defensive actions may be required in response to an aggressive attack by the opponents. For example, if the opponents are attempting to seize control of the whole country, as by an invasion or a coup d'état, resistance should be initiated before the attackers have established effective control of the State. Similarly, resistance is important at the point when an oppressive regime is attempting to control or abolish the independent groups and institutions of the society in order to expand its control of the governmental apparatus and society. Defense of these groups and institutions is necessary in order to maintain both their freedom of action and their future ability to resist.

Block control by the opponents

In all large-scale conflicts, the resisters need to make efforts to block the establishment or maintenance of control by the opponents. Resistance should continue as long as required to achieve the goal, or as long as the nonviolent struggle group is willing to withstand the expected repression and to continue other aspects of the struggle. This is done principally in three ways:

(1) The resisters and the general population they represent should (a) disobey defiantly and withhold cooperation from the opponents, thereby denying the opponents control over them and also weakening the opponents' power, and (b) disperse resistance widely throughout the population and society. At times, this dispersal of resistance can include applying relatively mild delaying tactics and feigning incompetence among certain sectors of the populace. At other times, it may require applying stronger methods of defiance and noncooperation. Geographic dispersal of resistance is often necessary as well, although there will likely be physical focal points (such as important cities or industrial zones) where concentrated resistance may at times produce a stronger impact.

(2) Specifically, in cases of reaction to invasion or coup d'état, the resisters need to prevent, undermine, and make ineffective any collaboration with the opponents. Denying the attackers a group

of collaborators is an important specific application of the general policy of disobeying and noncooperating with opponents.

(3) The resisters should make efforts to undermine the effectiveness of the troops, police, and functionaries of the opponents. This is done by alienating their loyalty to their leaders and attempting, when feasible, to induce disaffection, mutiny, or desertion.

Defy the opponents' violent repression

Nonviolent struggle can pose grave problems for many opponents. Naturally, opponents whose power, privilege, and control are threatened will be disturbed. When this occurs, powerful opponents are likely to resort to violent repression. Resisters may be beaten, imprisoned, attacked, kidnapped, wounded, tortured, or killed.

Such repression is not a sign that the nonviolent struggle has failed. Indeed, this repression is a tribute to the degree to which nonviolent struggle has upset the oppressors. Casualties are not a sign of defeat in nonviolent struggle, any more than they are in military conflicts. Casualties are the expected human cost of waging an acute conflict with opponents willing and able to wound and kill in order to establish or maintain their control.

The degree to which the opponents' reactions will be crude and brutal, or refined and sophisticated with very little violence, will vary. However, strong responses from the opponents need to be anticipated. The opponents' reactions should be no surprise and the resisters should be prepared for them.

Some resisters in past movements assumed that they were defeated when their opponents applied strong repression against them. If resisters believe they have been defeated, then they have been. However, defeat is not a necessary consequence of repression. Grave repression may instead lead to increased resistance, increased third party support, and on occasion even sympathy and support from members of the opponent group.

If repression is not understood, and if wise responses to it are not applied, the opponents' violence can produce destruction, induce terror, and demoralize a population. People may become less willing to risk these consequences as the price of resistance. Some persons, angry at the brutality of the repression and at the

suffering and death of friends and family, may wish to strike out in retaliation with their own acts of violence. This counter-violence, however, will not strengthen the resistance. It does not serve a strategic purpose, and it will almost certainly be counter-productive, helping to undermine the effectiveness of the nonviolent struggle, as we discussed in Chapter Thirty-one.

In the long run, the most effective response to violent repression is to demonstrate that it does not produce submission, but instead increases resistance. Continued nonviolent resistance in the face of severe repression may at times also produce both unrest among the opponents' own population and opposition to the opponents among third parties. For this to occur, however, there will likely be a time of suffering until the opponents' leadership recognizes that brutalities are counterproductive, or until the opponents' regime weakens and falls apart through political starvation due to the severance of its sources of power.

Resisters can take steps to weaken the impact of repression on the resisters and the population. Less provocative methods of resistance may at times be chosen. For example, people may be urged to stay off the streets where they can easily be shot and to remain in their homes where they are less obvious targets. Sometimes, "lightning" actions may be taken, with participants rapidly assembling for an event and then dispersing extremely quickly before police or troops have time to respond.

A shift of strategy and tactics, such as to use less risky methods that are still defiant, may be appropriate to reduce the impact of repression. At times, a temporary retreat may be wise, with the resistance taking a different turn. Intensified efforts may be launched to subvert the opponents' police and troops, and the population. Wherever possible, it is important to provide support for the victims of the repression and their families, through such means as medical assistance, psychological support, financial assistance, and similar measures. Fundamentally, the resisters need to maintain their solidarity and determination to resist through nonviolent struggle.

Harsh repression can also be countered by increasing the cost to the opponents for its use. If extremely violent repression is inevitable, then some strategists have advised that one should attempt to ensure that the brutalities are committed in the open where they can be seen by the public, observers, and journalists.

News of the brutalities should be publicized so that they may alienate members and allies of the opponents' group, including decision makers, agents, the general population, and, also, members of third parties. The opponents' collaborators who become alienated by the violence of the repression may as a result even switch sides at times. In some cases, extreme repression can result in international economic sanctions and diplomatic pressures against the regime that inflicted the brutalities.

Maintain persistent nonviolent discipline

Nonviolent struggle can be waged effectively against opponents with massive capacity for military and police action precisely because it does not attempt to confront that type of power directly. Instead, the struggle is pursued by nonviolent means, which is more difficult for the opponents to control. Even limited violence by resisters, or on their behalf, including in response to brutalities, can be counterproductive. Resistance violence in the midst of a nonviolent struggle reinforces the opponents' ability to use repression effectively against nonviolent resisters.

In contrast, the maintenance of nonviolent discipline against violent opponents facilitates the workings of the mechanisms of nonviolent struggle, including the occasionally applicable process of political ju-jitsu, which was discussed in Chapter Thirty-two. This is a process in some nonviolent struggles in which the contrast between the opponents' brutal violence and the resisters' persistent nonviolent resistance tends to increase support for, and participation in, the nonviolent struggle, and to reduce support for the opponents.

It is important to note that such reactions in support of the resistance are by no means guaranteed and often do not occur. However, this process is greatly facilitated by the maintenance of nonviolent discipline on the part of the resisters.

Nonviolent discipline consists of two components: (1) adhering to the strategic plans for the struggle and (2) refraining from violence. Failure of the resisters to adhere to the strategic plan can produce confusion and can deflect strength away from the points at which it needs to be concentrated. The breakdown of nonviolent discipline and the outbreak of violence can have disastrous effects on a nonviolent struggle and can assist the opponents.

If the resisters become overly enthusiastic about participation and take action that is not a part of the original strategic plan, or decide not to carry out the actions prescribed in that plan, this often can be very harmful to the effectiveness of the struggle. Although there may be times at which innovation can be helpful, it can also be dangerous. Resisters need to discipline themselves to implement carefully developed plans designed to bring them success.

The general population and all resisters must understand the need for commitment to participate in the current campaign. Methods for dealing with fear should also be developed. Knowledge of disciplined responses to serious repression, and the rationale for maintaining nonviolent resistance despite provocations and repression, need to be understood and accepted.

The grand strategy for the overall conflict needs to provide for means to carry the struggle to successful completion by nonviolent forms of action. It must exclude the possible introduction of violence at a later stage, when resistance violence would be of great assistance to the opponents. Resistance violence would allow them to justify even harsher repression against the resistance group and to assist efforts to discredit the resisters as really terrorists in attempted disguise. Allowance for possible later use of violence can cause abandonment of the development of forms of action that are needed in critical stages of the conflict to achieve success. Resistance violence can also strengthen the opponents' internal support from their population, police, and troops. A struggle that is almost successful should continue to rely on the strengths that have brought the conflict that far. Otherwise, the course of the conflict may be reversed and the opponents may prevail after all.

The negative consequences of resisters turning to violence may include reduced participation in resistance, increased repression, higher casualties, increased solidarity within the opponent group, enhanced morale among the opponents' troops and police while conducting repression, loss by the resisters of the "moral high ground," and reduced or lost international sympathy and support.

Means of promoting nonviolent discipline may include spoken and written instructions and appeals; pledges and oaths; use of "marshals" to assist order during demonstrations; the design of

challenging nonviolent activities to keep the initiative; avoidance of activities that are especially likely to turn violent; exertion of pressures on participants who have earlier pledged to remain nonviolent; holding "socio-drama" sessions to act out in advance anticipated actions and repression in serious conflict situations; and various efforts to raise morale for participation in the non-violent activities. Participants in demonstrations may be barred from bringing such items as weapons, alcohol, and drugs to demonstrations.

From guidelines to action

The above guidelines are extremely important in making non-violent struggle effective. However, to have an impact on the outcome, plans based on them must, if possible, be prepared in advance of the struggle and then be applied during the conflict.

The course of a strategically planned and well-prepared non-violent struggle will be a dynamic one. It will require wise responses and skilled action in the face of the many changes and problems that will be encountered, in order to bring the conflict to a successful conclusion.