

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# OPERATIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

***A fundamental principle is never to remain completely passive.***

—Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

The various tasks required in the operational planning of a nonviolent struggle at the strategic and tactical levels present multiple challenges for planners. Under the best conditions, there are problems with coordinating loose coalitions whose capabilities are often overestimated and whose expectations are diverse. Consolidating those expectations into common goals becomes a monumental task for the movement's leaders who often have very little experience in strategic analysis and planning. Even communications among these disparate groups is made difficult because many groups have developed their own unique vocabularies for nonviolent struggle or do not understand the concepts underlying the terms normally associated with nonviolent struggle.<sup>13</sup>

Military planning normally occurs within a well-defined hierarchical organizational environment. The organizational environment of a nonviolent movement, however, is normally a coalition of “equals,” with all the “equals” vying for the status of being “first among equals.” Charges will always circulate among the various groups as to which of them have been penetrated by government agents (while the fact is that probably all have been to one degree or another); there may be disagreement on what form of government should replace the one being opposed; some leaders may be considered by others as too authoritarian, and may, in fact, not be amenable to the limits of power imposed upon government by a democratic society (it wouldn't the first time warlords have assisted in overthrowing a fellow warlord); and some may be involved in the nonviolent struggle until the capacity to wage an armed struggle

---

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 1 for a recommended vocabulary of terms for nonviolent struggle prepared by the Albert Einstein Institution.

becomes a realistic option. With such diversity of purpose and mistrust notwithstanding, strategy and supporting plans must still be developed.

### **Security Concerns**

It is prudent to assume that at some point every opposition group waging a struggle against a government will be targeted and penetrated by the regime under attack. While infiltration can be a serious problem, government informants can also be used as a conduit for sending selected information to the government. Information that movement leaders may want conveyed to the regime might include such informant reports that the movement intends to remain nonviolent, that it does not intend to be vindictive, that amnesty for government officials remains an option, that the target of the opposition efforts is the "system" that allows for human rights abuses and corruption and the movement is not against all those who both serve that system and are equally its victims. It might also be useful for the government to "discover" through its own agents that the movement intends to include the personnel in the military, police, and civil service institutions in the new democracy, with the only stipulation being that they acknowledge the authority of the new government and swear allegiance to the new constitution. It may also be useful for the government to "discover" from its own agents that a list of persons who have participated in torture and extra-judicial executions exists. Such agents would be able to report accurately that a dossier existed as to each named individual and that it included specific charges of abuse and other criminal acts, photos of victims that document abuses, and sworn statements of witnesses, including military and police personnel opposed to the government sanctioned oppression and brutality. Too, the government agents working within the opposition movement would be able to convey to their superiors that a duplicate of all such gathered information was safely deposited outside the country for safekeeping.

There are some aspects about a strategic nonviolent struggle that cannot, nor should be, secret. The fact that there is opposition

to tyranny will obviously come as no surprise to a tyrant. Nor would it be surprising to learn that organizations are banding together to resist a tyrant. Most certainly, any authoritarian regime would be aware of the successful nonviolent struggles in recent years and how those struggles were fought.<sup>14</sup> It is also true that operational planning information is time-sensitive, that is, its value is greatly diminished once the operation has been conducted.

Although there are many instances when the government's knowledge of the planning and concept for its struggle can be advantageous to the democratic movement, there are some activities that need to be protected from disclosure to the opponent. In general terms, information to be protected concerns the location or movement of key leaders, those who have detailed knowledge of planned activities involving more than one organization, and others whose lives may be at risk if they are arrested by the government. The Serbian resistance group OTPOR developed a leadership that was unknown to most of its members. The leadership never met as a group but only briefly with one another as was required.

Another approach to distancing the planning element from the movement at large was that used by the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB), an umbrella organization of pro-democracy forces opposed to the military dictatorship in Rangoon. It established a Political Defiance Committee (PDC) to develop the capacity to conduct strategic analysis, prepare plans, and to coordinate nonviolent activities of the member groups. The group reported directly to the NCUB leadership.

### **Value of Organizing Information**

Experience has shown that certain categories of information are always needed to assist military commanders in making sound decisions. It is the responsibility of the military staff to make sure that this information is readily available. Rather than waiting to be tasked

---

<sup>14</sup> See Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, (New York: Palgrave, 2000).

for these categories of information before gathering them, the staff is always looking for needed information for sound decision-making, analyzing it, and filing categories of information in specific locations within specific documents. Thus, when a general walks into his command headquarters and asks, "What is the enemy doing?" a staff officer can respond with timely information. Thus informed, the general can determine the impact of the opponent's actions on his own plans to achieve his objectives as well as to identify opportunities to initiate further offensive actions.

Planners for nonviolent operations should not overlook the centuries of experience of military forces in planning and executing operations. A major feature of military planning is its systematic approach: developing a strategic estimate of the situation, selecting courses of action, developing clear mission statements, and preparing operational plans. In addition, when formats and standard procedures are followed, the information will be located in the same order within each planning document.

A military operation plan format contains important information about what the opponent and other friendly forces are doing in the area targeted for the operation, the objectives of the plan, and the resources that will be made available. An examination of a military operation plan format provides an example of how information is organized to best meet the needs of those who will be responsible for its implementation. As the outline below demonstrates, it is adaptable for nonviolent planning at every level as well.

### **A Format for an Operation Plan**

**1. Situation.** The sub-paragraphs below provide a brief description of the operational environment of the target area.

a. Friendly Situation. In this sub-paragraph, information on the activities of friendly elements in the vicinity of the target area is provided. The information is limited to that which should be considered when detailed plans are prepared for the designated tasks for the assigned missions.

b. Enemy Situation. This paragraph provides a description

of the activities that are currently underway by opponent forces in the vicinity of the target area.

**2. Mission.** This is a statement that clearly identifies the Who, What, Where, When and Why for the operation. There should be no question about who will be responsible for carrying out the mission, the specific objective(s) to be achieved, when the operation is to commence, and why the mission is necessary.

### **3. Execution**

a. Concept of Operation. This sub-paragraph describes how the planner envisions the operation unfolding from start to finish. The reader “sees the thinking” behind the mission. It may include “phasing” which further clarifies expectations:

(1) Phase I. Preparation. This describes those actions to be taken to get the organization(s) that are assigned to the mission fully capable.

(2) Phase II. This describes what will happen from the time the action begins until the objective is achieved.

(3) Phase III. If appropriate, this sub-paragraph and others may be used to identify immediate actions to be taken to consolidate the objective or to describe what follow-on missions may be assigned so that the organization can be thinking ahead about the next mission.

b. Tasks. This subparagraph identifies the specific tasks assigned to participating organizations.

**4. Administration and Logistics.** This paragraph identifies the administrative and logistic coordination arrangements for obtaining the support available for the operation.

**5. Command and Signal.** If there are special communications and reporting requirements for this operation, that information would appear in this paragraph. Otherwise, it would contain the very brief “per SOP” (standing operating procedures). For nonviolent operations, this paragraph might better be called “Coordination and Com-

munications” to reflect the need to recognize that there must be communications between those participating in the actions and those responsible for coordinating all the elements involved.

In this format, a paragraph about assumptions is not included. Assumptions made in a plan are deleted when the document becomes an “order” (that is, when the decision is made to implement the order and distribution is made). Reference to annexes to the plan (such as a propaganda support annex) is noted at the end of the document. Distribution of plans and orders involves risks of compromise. Assumptions being made by the nonviolent movement planners would be a significant piece of intelligence for an opposing regime. Merely stating an assumption reveals what is not known, and importantly, what is considered to be important. Assumptions also reveal the quality of analysis available to the plan writer. Annexes will contain detailed information on the movement’s capabilities and intentions (such as would be contained in a Propaganda or a Communications Annex) that the opponent could use to pre-empt or neutralize events before the plan or order for them could be implemented.

This particular military-based format is not the only format that can be used for planning. It could be tailored to accommodate almost any organization, or a new one could be developed. However, a format that includes all essential information should be adopted by any organization engaged in struggle for political change. The use of such a format not only guides the development of a complete plan but may also prevent the omission of important information. Moreover, once accustomed to the format, the readers will know where to look in the plan for specific types of information.

## **Control Measures**

To assist in coordinating the activities of several groups during a campaign there are options available to a planner to serve as control measures such as:

- 1. Time.** When a specific event is to occur as a part of a larger opera-

tion, resources that are to be used for other scheduled actions may have to be borrowed from another organization. Thus, it may be appropriate to designate a “not sooner than” or a “not later than” time frame for the event. If the event were to be part of an operation that seeks to reflect a mass action, it would be important to designate an “H-hour” so that every activity occurs simultaneously. Where actions must occur in spite of brutal and heavy police and military presence, “lightning” (hit and run) demonstrations may be planned based upon expected police and military reaction times. In these situations, a demonstration could be planned to accomplish its objectives within a few minutes.

**2. Boundaries.** A strategy may call for campaigns in different areas, where separation of activities is appropriate. For example, if analysis of information suggests that a particular pillar of support in a province may be more effectively attacked by promoting accommodation rather than coercion, restrictions on certain actions may be imposed in order that very focused activities against that pillar can be pursued.

**3. Coordination Points.** When more than one organization is present in the same vicinity for a joint effort, there should be a specific place designated for establishing contact for coordination and exchanges of information.

**4. Others.** Other control measures could be considered such as assembly areas (immediately prior to an event), or rallying points (when a sudden departure from a demonstration site is required). In any case, the idea of using one or more control measures is to reduce the possibility of losing the ability to influence the outcome of the planned event. When control is lost, objectives may not be achieved, chances of casualties increase, and confusion among the participants ensues.



### **Pull—Don't Push—Pillars of Support**

Strategic planning should include efforts to recruit into the democratic opposition friends and relatives of key officials of the tyrant's pillars of support. In this regard, it is important to place emphasis on drawing members of key pillars of support toward the opposition rather than adopting approaches that push them deeper into the center of the regime's power structure. [See Figure 4, Pulling vs. Pushing Pillars of Support]. A tyrant should be faced with a question of the continued loyalty of those who are expected to arrest, intimidate and abuse members of their own families. It is understandably difficult for a commander of a riot control force to unleash the batons, bayonets and vomiting gas when the front ranks of the demonstration contain his son or daughter. Logically, that commander would have to be replaced with a less experienced commander. Logically too, that replaced commander would become a recruitment target for the democratic opposition. The difficulties for the regime are endless as its pillars of support are inexorably eroded.

### **Capabilities versus Intentions**

Another strategic planning consideration is that of capabilities versus intentions. What an opponent is capable of doing does not change suddenly. On the other hand, intentions can change quickly. Plans that take into account capabilities, therefore, can accommodate changes in intention. If focus is given to capabilities, we may be somewhat surprised by a change in employment and deployment of opposing forces, but those changes will not result in paralyzing shock. The strategic estimate provides the strategic planner with a listing of capabilities available to the opponent.

### **Creating Dilemmas for the Opponent**

A carefully thought out strategy will seek to create opportunities for recruitment regardless of how the regime reacts to the democracy



movement initiatives. If the regime cracks down on protesters, it will further alienate the public, increasing prospects for recruiting. If it accedes to any demand or request by the movement, for any reason, the movement declares the conciliation a “victory” based on the movement’s growing power to force the regime into compliance with the will of the people, providing another opportunity for recruiting. Planners should always look for opportunities to place the regime in a political dilemma where the only outcomes are unfavorable. Planners should identify strongly held beliefs of the people and provoke the opponent to take actions contrary to those beliefs. Curfews and restrictions against large gatherings, for example, could well interfere with religious and traditional festivals and ceremonies.

The most famous “dilemma action” was the Salt March led by Mohandas Gandhi in 1930 during the Indian movement for self-rule. Gandhi identified an issue that would appeal to every class and caste in India and one that would compel the British colonial government to either arrest him, an act which would “set fire to the whole of India,” or not arrest him which would “allow him [Gandhi] to set the prairie on fire.”<sup>15</sup>

For over one hundred years, the British imposed a state monopoly on the manufacture of salt. Since it was a dietary necessity, everyone had to buy government-produced salt. Its manufacture required no skill (gather sea water, let it evaporate, and then scrape up the salt), and it was a monopoly easily broken if the people just started making salt for themselves. The government was well aware of the consequences should Gandhi’s announced intention of making salt be unopposed. When the government failed to act (it arrested him several weeks after the successful march that destroyed the monopoly), civil disobedience was validated as an effective non-violent weapon to undermine a government’s sources of power.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed examination of Gandhi’s approach to strategy, see Gene Sharp, *Gandhi as a Political Strategist*, (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1979).

## **Summary**

Strategic planning begins with a clear objective derived from policy goals. Its effectiveness, in large measure, is dependent upon creating plans that are clear in their intent, keeping missions consistent with capabilities, providing attention to detail, and anticipating responses by the opponent. These plans are best achieved through the use of a systematic approach that includes formats for organizing information.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

***The pen is mightier than the sword.***

—Edward George Earl Lytton Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873)

Psychological operations (PSYOPS) is the centerpiece of a well-planned strategic nonviolent struggle.<sup>17</sup> Its purpose is to influence attitudes and behaviors of target audiences, mainly through the use of propaganda. PSYOPS has proven its effectiveness time and time again, both in military campaigns and in nonviolent struggles, as a potent weapon to weaken, divide, neutralize and disintegrate an opponent's pillars of support. It is also used to assist in recruitment efforts for opposition groups. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an approach to examining the components and uses of propaganda.<sup>18</sup>

The term “propaganda” has become objectionable to many in recent years, possibly due to its successful use by authoritarian regimes. In the West, it is now called a variety of euphemistic names such as “Information and Education,” “media relations,” “spin doctoring” and “marketing.” No matter the Orwellian label attached, when efforts are made to influence attitudes and behaviors, they are

---

<sup>17</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) defines Psychological Operations as “planned psychological activities in peace and war directed to enemy, friendly, and neutral audiences in order to influence attitudes and behavior affecting the achievement of political and military objectives. They include strategic psychological activities, consolidation psychological operations and battlefield psychological activities.” The US Department of Defense limits its definition to “foreign audiences.” (JCS Pub 1. 1987).

<sup>18</sup> Useful sources for a more detailed examination of propaganda include: Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965); Department of the Army Field Manual 33-5, *Psychological Operations*, 1962; Frederick Irion, *Public Opinion and Propaganda*, (New York: Thomas Crowell Company, 1950); Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*, (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2001); Noam Chomsky and David Barsamian, *Propaganda and the Public Mind*, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2001).

propaganda.<sup>19</sup> By itself, propaganda for political purposes is not immoral or “evil,” any more than advertising for tobacco or soap is evil. Propaganda is the stock and trade of professional lobbyists who hawk their clients’ interests to decision-makers in every legislative and executive branch in the world.

Meeting the broad definition of propaganda (influencing attitudes and behaviors) are religious texts such as the *Bible*, *Torah*, and *Koran*; essays and articles about how government should be structured as in the *The Federalist Papers*; or more sinister documents such as *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, and the cigarette ads featuring “Joe Camel” that many believed targeted pre-pubescent children. All of these are examples of propaganda that have directly affected, in positive and negative ways, the lives of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world. So, using communication techniques with the intent of changing how we think and act has a long and rich history.

Contrary to the popular saying that “the facts speak for themselves,” the truth is that facts only have meaning when they are placed into context. To a condemned prisoner, the striking of a certain hour may mean he has only five hours to live. To the office worker, the striking of the same hour may herald the end of another workday. A factual report that a country has a forty percent unemployment rate may be viewed with much alarm by the already unemployed and cause worry among those still employed. To the leaders of an opposition movement, it may be viewed from the context of new opportunities to cast the government as incompetent, uncaring and corrupt, and to strengthen its membership base from the increasingly disaffected masses. Editorialists, whether writing for a free or controlled press, routinely place “facts” into their editorial

---

<sup>19</sup> In his preface to *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, Jacques Ellul reviews the various definitions of propaganda and finds them all either incomplete or so all encompassing that they do not accurately reflect what he calls a sociological phenomenon. I have used the broader definition cited by Ellul, as adopted by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis: “Propaganda is the expression of opinions or actions carried out by individuals or groups with a view to influencing the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends and through psychological manipulations.”

board's own preferred context for their readers. In a strategic non-violent struggle, efforts should be made to blame the opponent for all "facts" that adversely affect the population and to identify what must be done to alleviate the problem (and, not surprisingly, always that relief will be political change).

### **Components of Propaganda**

**The Target.** In general, the whole population can become the target for propaganda. To be most effective, however, the target audience should be broken down into segments in order to tailor the message for each group. Experience and research strongly indicates that effective propaganda is that which is tailored to more limited target audiences. Thus, the desired message to a farmer may be packaged differently from the same message to the student. The major propaganda targets of the nonviolent opposition will be the ruler's pillars of support, with each targeted group and sub-group analyzed as to educational levels, religious beliefs, ethnicity, aspirations, and access to propaganda messages.

**The Message.** If the objective is to change an attitude or behavior of a population or a group within that population, it is important that the objective be clear about what attitude or behavior is being sought. For example, if a population has accepted as its fate or karma to live under a repressive government, it will be necessary to implant the idea that perhaps it is not "God's Will" that has caused their enslavement. Moreover, the idea that it is within people's power to liberate themselves from tyranny needs to be cultivated. Citizens must also be made aware that there are organized opposition groups that will welcome their support and involvement. Ideally, the message should have a "return address," that is, the public should know what group is sending the message. However, the dissemination of this information may not always be possible.

**The Messenger.** How the message is to be communicated involves the selection of the vehicle to carry it. The vehicle could be a leaflet,

a radio broadcast, an email, a movie, a speech, a printed book or article, or signs and posters. Rumors can also be effective transmitters of messages. Not to be overlooked is the use of “key communicators” such as religious leaders, opposition political leaders, teachers, barbers and hairdressers, traditional and spiritual leaders, journalists, union spokesmen, business groups, and others who are respected in their own communities.

**Feedback.** Commercial advertising is probably the biggest user of propaganda. It is used to convince us to purchase tobacco products that insure that we suffer a wide variety of health problems, to eat artery-clogging hamburgers and fries, or lately, to encourage us to beg our family doctor to prescribe specific drugs for our use. Whether or not these advertisements are successful is easy to measure—sales. For political propagandists, the feedback on the message is more often difficult to measure in the short-term. Polling, if expertly carried out by trustworthy groups and accomplished at intervals of time and events can be useful. Other times, we must wait until the target demonstrates an attitudinal change in expressing a view on the message or acting in a manner consistent with the message. Even these measurements can be deceptive since other factors may have influenced the changed attitude or action.

Another way to obtain data for measuring effectiveness is to elicit opinions. Eliciting is quite different from soliciting a response. Eliciting involves getting the response with the respondent’s not realizing he is providing information that answers a specific question. Soliciting involves asking the respondent a specific question that requires a specific answer. For example, to solicit attitudes toward the government, surveys could be taken based on a list of questions such as “Do you support the political opposition calls for a regime change? If so, why?” In some societies, the public may be fearful of truthfully answering such direct questions. To elicit that information, one might begin with questions and comments about the current economic situation and how it impacts on the respondent and his family and then “walking around” the target questions by relating them to the subject the interviewee has already discussed. In

other words, elicitation takes the “indirect approach” and avoids questions that require only “yes and no” answers.

### **Classification of Propaganda**

Depending upon the intended targets, messages, and the operational environments in which they are to be sent and received, choices must be made about who should be identified as the source of the information.<sup>20</sup>

**White propaganda** accurately identifies its source. Press releases, speeches, reports and news often are truthful in source identification, permitting verification by the target. For example, “The Honorable John Smith, MP from Southmore, in a speech presented to the Association of University Professors, said today that....” Since the remarks made can be verified and analyzed, care should be taken to anticipate how those comments are likely to be received and evaluated. Sometimes a selected quote can be embarrassing to the source who can explain that it was taken out of context. If, however, the source must use this “out of context” explanation for several quotes, credibility becomes a more damaging issue than the quote. On the other hand, identifying the source can strengthen the image of a person or organization by demonstrating both a consistency of views and an appreciation of the public’s concerns.

**Grey propaganda** does not specifically identify its source. Rather than identifying the source, one might see: “It was reported yesterday that ...” or “reliable sources report that...” or “eye-witnesses said they saw....” It attempts to appear authoritative and to avoid appearing as partisan propaganda.

---

<sup>20</sup>The US military uses a more restrictive definition of white, grey and black propaganda with respect to applications. See *US Army Field Manual 33-5 Psychological Operations*, 1962. 31-33. Jacques Ellul in *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes* describes two categories, white and black, and notes they are used in combination. He describes how the white propaganda, whose source is open and above board, is used to divert public attention while black propaganda, which “tends to hide its aims, identity, significance, and source,” seeks to influence the public covertly. 15.



**Black propaganda** is propaganda information that purposefully misidentifies its source, usually the opponent, who is falsely credited for the information. “On Tuesday evening, Army Commander Wilford Ego, the President’s most trusted advisor, when asked about the President’s apparently erratic behavior at a recent press conference, confirmed that....” It can be used to generate distrust and confusion within an opponent’s forces, lower morale, and divert attention from one’s own vulnerabilities or intentions. Black propaganda requires great skill and access to a great deal of information about the opponent. In general, it should be used only at the strategic level to avoid exposure of the propagandists and to maintain a separation between white and black propaganda campaigns.

### **Communication Techniques**

**The Symbol.** Symbols can be powerful devices for communicating the ideology and objectives of a movement. An effective symbol is simple, suggestive, recognizable and easily understood. The Nazi Swastika, the Christian Cross, and the closed fist of the Serbian resistance movement are examples of symbols. Symbols may also be sounds such as drums, and recently, the clanking of pots and pans. Other combined symbols could include some action, such as a special handshake, or gesture. In selecting a symbol for a movement, care must be taken to avoid offending cultural sensitivities.

**The Slogan.** The slogan should be a short phrase that expresses emotions such as anger, hate, defiance or courage. “Remember the Alamo” stirred Americans to war with Mexico; “Remember the Maine” provided a simplistic justification to the American public to support initiating the Spanish-American War; “He is Finished” was used against the Milosevic regime in Serbia in 2000. In Zimbabwe, the Movement for Democratic Change adopted the slogan “ENOUGH” that was used to mobilize opposition to the brutal regime of Robert Mugabe.

**Music.** Music, as propaganda, can be used to garner emotional images of a brighter future, bring back the pain and memories of past sufferings, and help solidify general defiance against present tyranny. When people join together in singing songs designed with propaganda overtones, they tend to reinforce one another into the acceptance of the intended propaganda message.

**Print Media.** Print media includes books, newspapers, pamphlets, leaflets, signs and posters, providing the propagandist a menu of options to communicate the selected messages to a variety of audiences. Both government and opposition “controlled” newspapers constitute a readily available platform for delivery of offensive and defensive propaganda efforts. Care must be taken, however, to avoid falling into the trap of spending too much effort on being on the defense.<sup>21</sup> The real advantage of these forms of printed materials is that it permits careful reading and study, as well as discussion about a source document of the movement. Signs and posters using pictures, symbols, slogans, and colors are used to send encapsulated messages. The audiences can save print media, which means that messages should be consistent with respect to propaganda objectives because comparisons will surely occur. Therefore, the propagandist must rely on authoritative policy objectives that have been thoughtfully selected. It should not be the responsibility of the propagandist to decide questions of policy.

**Audio/Visual.** The key to the effective use of the radio for delivery of propaganda is to select the audience to be targeted and to craft the message for that audience, at the same time providing inducements to listen to the message. Popular music, news, weather reports, sports, health, and especially information about nonviolent actions occurring abroad as well as in the target country—all of these

---

<sup>21</sup> Carefully prepared propaganda reduces the amount of effort expended in responding to counter-propaganda. Loss of the propaganda initiative may result if the likely response of the opponent is not considered in the preparation of the message.

may be topics of interest to the target group. Television, videotapes and CDs add pictures to reinforce the spoken word. If a leader is making a speech, consideration should be given to what objects and symbols are also visible. A national flag may lend an aura of authority. A photograph of a revered historic figure helps to connect the speaker to a legitimate relationship with a nation's history. It may be appropriate to consider in detail what clothing and accessories are to be worn. Hitler, when he wished to portray himself as a father figure for the German people, wore a suit or other civilian clothing and often had children in the photo. When he portrayed himself as the nation's military leader who would lead the Germans to victory, he appeared in a uniform.

**Rumors.** Where there is a lack of credible information, such as happens under a corrupt, authoritarian regime where censorship is imposed, rumors provide an important segment of information—even though their source is unknown and the information cannot be verified. If rumors are a part of an overall propaganda effort, it is important that the rumor be based upon at least a slim, factual basis, or at least could be perceived as being based upon known or suspected facts. The subject of rumor should be of importance to the target, and it should be interesting so that others will repeat it. Rumors can be used to raise or lower the morale of the target audience, or engender emotions such as hate, disgust or admiration.

### **Warning!**

In strategic nonviolent struggle, propaganda is used to mobilize the public to defy the government that oppresses them. By changing public attitudes toward obedience, civil disobedience may become widespread. Authority or legitimacy is removed from the regime. The public is provoked to ignore unjust laws. To reverse the atomization of society brought about by government oppression, new organizations are created to replace ones destroyed by the government, and those organizations seek to destroy or neutralize the institutions and organizations on which the government depends (pil-

lars of support). In short, the regime loses its ability to govern.

With such a powerful weapon as propaganda, there is always a danger that, if it is not skillfully employed, the collateral damage can be enormous. If a movement is successful in changing the obedience patterns to disobey, defy and ignore government laws and regulations, it may find itself facing anarchy. If the institutions of society have been destroyed, the maintenance of social services, law and order, and civility may not be possible without reverting to the very same authoritarian rule that was the basis for the democratic struggle in the first place.

Jacques Ellul, in his book *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Minds*, addresses this important issue facing the propagandist. He divides propaganda into two categories. The first is "propaganda of agitation" which is used to motivate the public to action and disobedience. The second is "propaganda of integration." This is propaganda to instill conformity in society to gain acceptance of the authority and values of the new rulers. It seeks to demonstrate that the public is benefiting from the changes that are occurring.<sup>22</sup>

The conclusions to be drawn from Ellul's insights include the requirement that a code of conduct or guidelines be developed and enforced for participants in the struggle. Rather than calling for general disobedience, disobedience to specific unjust laws and regulations would be more appropriate. Additionally, propaganda should strongly and frequently remind the public that obedience is being withdrawn from the government and transferred to the democracy movement. It is necessary that alternative or parallel institutions be in existence to accept the transfer of public loyalty. It may be possible to transfer the loyalty of entire organizations *en bloc*.

Hate and prejudice are two of the strongest emotions and are the easiest to ignite. In some societies, these emotions are always waiting to surface. Any short-term gains resulting from igniting these passions against groups of people are minuscule compared to the long-term damage to developing and sustaining a stable, civil society in which democratic institutions can function. It is better for

---

<sup>22</sup> Ellul, *Propaganda*. 71-79.

democratic movements that these emotions not be ignited at all. But if they surface, they should be directed against the “system” that permits tyranny rather than those groups who benefit from it. And, by limiting the term “enemy” to that one person or group at the pinnacle of power, destructive passions will likely accompany the leader to his death, exile or imprisonment.

### **Summary**

The use of propaganda to influence attitudes and behaviors of people can, and has been, used by both authoritarian and democratic forces in the struggle for political power. Propaganda, itself, is neither good nor evil. It is how this tool is used and for what objectives that moral judgments can and should be directed.