



Frequently Asked Questions About A Force More Powerful: The Game of Nonviolent Strategy

Q. Who are the game's producers?

A. York Zimmerman Inc., an independent film and video production company located in Washington, D.C. that produces documentaries about people and ideas that change the world, and the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC), which encourages the use of civilian-based, non-military strategies to establish and defend democracy, justice and human rights worldwide.

Q. Who consulted on the game's development?

A. Veterans of recent nonviolent campaigns consulted on the development of the game, including Ivan Marovic of *Otpor*, the Serbian resistance movement that played a critical role in ousting Slobodan Milosevic. Political scientists, sociologists, and economists who advise ICNC also provided assistance.

Q. Who is the game for?

A. *A Force More Powerful – the Game of Nonviolent Strategy (AFMP)* is designed for people who want to use nonviolent action in their own struggles for rights and freedom. The game will also serve as a valuable simulation model in academic studies of nonviolent resistance, as well as an educational and training tool for many civil society groups and international organizations – and anyone who wants to learn more about nonviolent conflict. While it was created for adults, it is appropriate for players age 14 and up.

Q. Is the game designed for activists in specific countries or regions?

A. The game has not been designed for nor is it targeted at any particular countries or area. Since the game will be sold on-line, distribution will be worldwide, based on demand. Anyone who is interested in learning about nonviolent conflict will be able to get it.

Q. Why is the game called A Force More Powerful?

A. When he was once asked if nonviolent resistance was a form of “direct action,” Gandhi replied: “It is not one form, it is the only form.” He called it the “greatest... force in the world” and said that it was “a force which is more positive than electricity, and more powerful than even ether.” He had that confidence in its power because he knew that civilian-based campaign or movement could engage the energies and apply the ingenuity of an entire population to resist oppression and fight for the people’s rights.

afmpgame.com

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Q. What can a player expect from the game?

A. *AFMP* is a single-player, turn based game in which the player takes on the role of chief strategist in a nonviolent movement or campaign against the opponent in one of 10 pre-packaged scenarios. As the player takes charge of the movement's material and human resources and recruits new members and builds alliances, the player also learns the value of strategic planning and the careful formulation of goals and tactics. The adversary is controlled by the game's artificial intelligence.

Complex models of social interaction make up the game engine, incorporating political and economic factors, ethnicity, religion, media and communications and resource availability, among others. A special game feature allows users to independently create custom scenarios, using the specific details of their own situations.

Q. Is this a game about overthrowing dictators?

A. *AFMP* is a game about the strategic use of nonviolent conflict, potentially against many forms of oppression. The 10 pre-packaged scenarios include a wide range of struggles from ending dictatorial rule to preserving democracy to combating corruption to winning the rights of workers, woman and minorities. Using the custom scenario feature, players can create entirely new situations, for example, campaigns for human rights, independent media, land reform or environmental protection.

Q. Was the creation of the game motivated by a specific political agenda?

A. The International Center on Nonviolent Conflict which commissioned the game has an educational agenda – not a political one – which is to develop and transfer knowledge about civilian-based, nonmilitary strategies for winning rights and freedom to people who are seeking this knowledge. ICNC does not coordinate its action, in respect to this game or any other activity, with any government, domestic or foreign, nor does it accept funding of any kind from any government.

Q. What are the game's technical requirements?

A. The PC-based game is designed for those with no previous gaming experience and only basic computer skills and is compatible with most hardware commonly available in the developing world.

Q. How will the game be distributed?

A. The game will be distributed to anyone who is interested in learning about nonviolent conflict. *AFMP* is available for purchase at www.afmpgame.com. Individuals active internationally in campaigns to win rights and freedom who wish to obtain copies can direct requests to game@nonviolent-conflict.org.

Q. How can I find out more about the game?

A. More information about *A Force More Powerful – the Game of Nonviolent Strategy* is available at www.afmpgame.com.

Q. What is nonviolent conflict?

A. Nonviolent conflict is a way for ordinary people to mobilize and fight for their rights using disruptive actions such as strikes, boycotts and mass protests. Through these actions, a broad-based civic movement can drive up the cost of repression and reduce the economic and political support that an oppressor needs to keep control. Once the system's own defenders begin to doubt whether it can survive, the balance of power shifts to those using civilian-based resistance. And it works: in the last 33 years, nonviolent civic action has played a role in 50 of 67 transitions from authoritarianism.

- Q. What kinds of goals can nonviolent conflict be used to achieve?
- A. Nonviolent Conflict can be used to achieve a wide variety of goals, including, but not limited to winning civil rights (the US civil rights movement); dismantling dictatorships (Philippines 1986); holding free and fair elections (Ukraine 2004); blocking coups d'état (Russia 1991); defending against foreign occupation (East Timor 2002); challenging economic or business practices (labor movements); and resisting genocide (Norway and Denmark 1940s).
- Q. What is the role of strategy in nonviolent conflict?
- A. Historically, nonviolent conflict has often occurred spontaneously, or in an improvised manner. Although these nonviolent movements sometimes succeeded, the effectiveness of this technique can be improved dramatically through strategic planning. To this end, the game aims to build strategic thinking and planning skills.
- Q. How often has nonviolent conflict occurred in history?
- A. Nonviolent action has literally occurred for centuries. From the earliest workers' strikes, to rallies and protests, to acts of civil disobedience (such as the Boston Tea Party), this technique of struggle has been used by people throughout history to assert their will and/or to resist what they view as unjust. In the 20th century, movement leaders such as Gandhi began to diversify tactics and develop national strategies in order to achieve larger political goals through the use of nonviolent action.
- Q. How is nonviolent action different from "nonviolence" or passive resistance?
- A. Nonviolent action is a way to wage conflict. Unlike nonviolence, it does not necessarily have any moral, religious, or ethical connotations, although it can be used by believers of religious nonviolence or pacifism. Unlike "passive resistance," it is not necessarily passive. In fact, it can be aggressively promoted to coercive effect.
- Q. Does nonviolent conflict work only when the adversary is not cruel or repressive?
- A. Adversaries more often than not use harsh tactics against nonviolent movements. In fact, they often respond with violence or other repression because nonviolent mass action presents a real threat to their power. Nevertheless, nonviolent conflict has succeeded against some of the 20th century's harshest oppressors. Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet commonly tortured and killed dissidents. South Africa's apartheid regime used tanks and live ammunition against black civilians and even assassinated nonviolent organizers. The nonviolent *Solidarity* movement opened up political space in Poland, at a time when one million Soviet troops occupied the region.
- Q. Must the leaders of nonviolent movements be charismatic, such as Gandhi or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?
- A. Waging successful nonviolent conflict does not depend on having a charismatic leader. Sometimes nonviolent conflict is waged with centralized movement with an identifiable leader (e.g. the Indian struggle for independence from Britain). At other times nonviolent conflict is waged by a highly decentralized movement with no discernible leader or clear command structure (i.e. the Serbian *Otpor* movement's struggle that toppled Slobodan Milosevic in 2000).