



## SAMPLE ARTICLE

Strikes, boycotts, mass protests ... these are not the typical weapons used against an opponent in today's popular video games. But why not? These tactics have been used throughout recent history by people all over the world to dislodge dictators, counter military occupiers, and fight for civil liberties. Yet no one has ever attempted to use the interactive power of video games to teach these methods of taking power away from corrupt or brutal rulers – until now.

*A Force More Powerful – the Game of Nonviolent Strategy (AFMP)*, released in March 2006, is the first and only interactive teaching tool in the field of nonviolent conflict. Developed by the media firm York Zimmerman Inc. and the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC), the game puts the player in charge of a movement against an adversary in each of 10 scenarios. Inspired by history, the scenarios include a range of struggles from ending authoritarian rule to combating corruption to winning the rights of workers, women and minorities, and more.

“The game demonstrates – in a very hands-on way – the power and potential of nonviolent conflict and the strategic planning necessary to achieve successful outcomes,” said Jack DuVall, President of ICNC. “Building and applying nonviolent force is a way for ordinary people to fight for their rights – by disrupting the status quo. As the cost of maintaining control is driven higher and higher by nonviolent resisters, their opponents grip on power weakens until their ability to govern disappears.”

*AFMP* is a complex game of strategy. The player takes charge of his resources, assesses the strengths and vulnerabilities of the adversary as well as those of his or her own movement, then chooses the goals and tactics, all while factoring in a host of variables such as ethnicity, religion, literary and economic conditions. The adversary's moves are controlled by the game's artificial intelligence. The game also includes a custom scenario feature, which allows players to create entirely new situations beyond those included in the game.

York Zimmerman Inc. and ICNC recognized the demand for an interactive teaching device when they saw the overwhelming response to the television documentaries *A Force More Powerful* and *Bringing Down A Dictator*, films produced by York Zimmerman Inc. that tell stories of historical successes achieved by nonviolent action. Embraced by activists, scholars and individuals throughout the world, the films revealed an unmet need for new educational and field-instruction materials in this subject.

“The films were never intended to be a training device, but we discovered they were being used that way,” said Steve York, the filmmaker who produced the documentaries and oversaw the development of the game. “We decided there must be another tool that would be more effective. The best method is learning by doing – and a video game lets people engage in actual conflict or struggle.”

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The game's producers enlisted the help of veterans of recent nonviolent campaigns, including Ivan Marovic of *Otpor*, the Serbian resistance group that played a critical role in ousting Slobodan Milosevic.

"We wanted to create a game that is not only interesting and fun to play, but one that replicates the real world," said Marovic. "The game emphasizes and rewards planning and calculated decision-making. Ultimately, by teaching strategic skills that are applicable to a variety of scenarios, the game teaches individuals how to think about their own situation."

The game is designed for people who want to use nonviolent action in their own struggles for rights and freedom. The producers believe it will also serve as a useful simulation model in future academic studies of nonviolent resistance, a classroom and laboratory exercise for students at the university and secondary school levels, and a valuable tool for many civil society groups and international organizations that conduct civic and social capacity-building.

York Zimmerman Inc. and ICNC also hope the game will help raise awareness among the general public about the history-making potential of nonviolent, civilian-based resistance.

"People have been struggling against injustice for centuries," said DuVall. "From spontaneous slave uprisings in the ancient world to workers' strikes in the industrial age, people have fought tyranny or tried to win their rights. But in the last century, nonviolent strategies have supplanted violent revolt as the most effective way to liberate people from injustice or repression," DuVall maintained. "And these strategies work. In the words of Desmond Tutu, "When people decide they want to be free, there is nothing that can stop them."

*A Force More Powerful – the Game of Nonviolent Strategy* is available for purchase at [www.afmpgame.com](http://www.afmpgame.com) for \$19.95 plus shipping and handling. For PC Windows platform only.