

# **Part Two:**

## **A strategy for change**

# **Chapter Three:**

## **Theory**

## Introduction

This chapter concerns the theoretical foundations of nonviolence and nonviolent strategy that should inform the struggle for self-determination in West Papua. I will argue that a nonviolent strategy will maximise the effectiveness of the nonviolent struggle. I will briefly review the literature related to nonviolent strategy and discuss the conceptions and orientations of nonviolence that guide resistance as well as the dynamics and theory of power nonviolent action is based on. I propose that the nonviolent struggle in West Papua utilise the strategy and strategic framework developed by Robert Burrowes because of the strategic guidance it provides and because of the way it is orientated towards transforming the underlining causes of conflict. As history testifies and the logic of the theory demonstrates, nonviolent action can be effective against an extremely ruthless opponent. This will be discussed with relevance to Indonesia's occupation of West Papua. I will then proceed with a discussion on theoretical basis of strategy. I will conclude with a discussion of the strategic framework, political purpose and strategic aims of the strategy itself. This chapter forms a solid theoretical basis for a discussion on how nonviolent strategy could maximise the effectiveness of the nonviolent struggle in West Papua.

### Maximising effectiveness: the importance of strategy

A strategy, however, is simply a planned and coordinated set of activities designed to achieve a desired outcome, and is as relevant to nonviolent struggle as it is to military campaigns. Tactics refer to specific actions taken within a particular strategy. Despite this, most nonviolent movements have neglected the role of strategy. 'With certain exceptions,' writes Gene Sharp, the main theorist of nonviolent action,

nonviolent movements have been merely reactive, often relying on spontaneous mobilizations and tactical countermoves ... With such neglect to the role of strategy in nonviolent struggle, especially in comparison to military conflicts, it is surprising that so many nonviolent campaigns have indeed succeeded.<sup>1</sup>

Although strategy is by no means a rigid formula for success, and needs to take into account circumstances and context, there is no doubt that careful planning, intensive training, and thorough organisation and coordination dramatically increases the effectiveness of nonviolent action.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Gene Sharp writing in the "Foreword" to Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*, Westport, The United States of America, Praeger, 1994: pp. ix-x.

<sup>2</sup> See also Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, 318; Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Boston, Porter Sargent, 1973: 494; Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, New York, Palgrave, 2000: 502; Anders Boserup and Andrew Mack, *War Without Weapons: Non-Violence in National Defense*, New York, Schocken Books, 1975:148; Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*; Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, Berkley, University of California Press, Revised Edition 1965.

Over the years a number of nonviolent strategic frameworks have been developed and several books written about the importance of strategy for nonviolent action. Joan Bondurant's excellent analysis of key Gandhian campaigns highlighted Gandhi's strategic and tactical insight.<sup>3</sup> In his famous essay, 'Letter from Birmingham Jail', Martin Luther King jr set out his nonviolent strategy and the steps that needed to be undertaken in any nonviolent campaign to combat injustice.<sup>4</sup> Subsequent practitioners such as George Lakey have developed these steps, which have then informed a host of campaigns for ecological sustainability, peace and justice.<sup>5</sup> Gene Sharp in his seminal work *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* has done as much as anyone to promote careful planning, organisation, training and discipline in nonviolent action. There have also been a number of scholarly works, particularly in the field of civilian-based defence.<sup>6</sup> Other books have examined the theory of strategy<sup>7</sup> or enunciated key principles that should guide strategy.<sup>8</sup>

Given the array of works on nonviolent strategy available, why then use the strategic framework developed by Robert Burrowes? The key difference between Robert Burrowes work and other nonviolent strategies or books about strategy, is that Burrowes' strategy provides strategic guidance. Whereas other authors and practitioners have described steps that need to be taken, Burrowes helps identify where to direct campaigns of nonviolent action and gives a comprehensive framework for developing the necessary components of any strategy.

## Conceptions of nonviolence

Once there has been a decision to struggle nonviolently, the question is what kind of conception of nonviolence will guide the struggle? There are many different conceptions of nonviolence<sup>9</sup> and without widespread discussion, debate and understanding about why a particular conception of nonviolence has been chosen, confusion will inevitable arise along with the danger that nonviolence could become reduced to its most ineffectual bottom line: passivity and physically not hurting people.

---

<sup>3</sup> Bondurant, *The Conquest of Violence*.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther King jr, 'Letter from Birmingham Jail', in Angie O'Gorman (ed.), *The Universe Bends Towards Justice: A Reader on Christian Nonviolence in the U.S.*, Philadelphia, New Society publishers, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> George Lakey, *Powerful Peacemaking: A Strategy for a Living Revolution*, Philadelphia, New Society Publishers, 1987.

<sup>6</sup> See for instance King-Hall, *Defence in the Nuclear Age*; Sharp, *Making Europe Unconquerable: the Potential of Civilian-Based Deterrence and Defense*; Roberts, *The Strategy of Civilian Defence: Non-violent Resistance to Aggression*.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Boserup and Mack, *War Without Weapons*.

<sup>8</sup> Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Gene Sharp, 'A Study of Meanings of Nonviolence', in G. Ramachandran and T.K Mahadevan. (eds). *Gandhi: His Relevance for our Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. New Delhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1967: pp. 21-66; Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, pp. 98-101.

The conception of nonviolence is the heart and soul of any nonviolent strategy because different conceptions of nonviolence guide strategy and tactics in different ways.

There are two broad approaches that inform nonviolent action, pragmatic nonviolence and principled nonviolence. Practitioners of pragmatic nonviolence essentially view nonviolence as a technique to bring about desired change, whilst practitioners of principled nonviolence view nonviolence as an underlying ethical principle that determines action. Both aim to be effective and both pragmatic and principled nonviolence can be orientated towards either reform or revolution. Principled nonviolence orientated to fundamental structural change offers the best hope of building peace in deeply divided societies because it addresses both the root causes of conflict, generates the conditions for psycho-social healing through the transformation of human relationships, and is ultimately directed towards human reconciliation.<sup>10</sup>

In relation to strategy, given the range of different conceptions of nonviolence it is important that there is widespread discussion about what conception of nonviolence should guide the struggle and that the conception of nonviolence utilised is made explicit and widely known. This does not mean that all people in West Papua need to adopt a particular conception of nonviolence for all time, but rather that there is an agreement on what constitutes nonviolent behaviour for the purposes of the struggle. In addition, many experienced practitioners of nonviolence argue that there should be a code of discipline or agreement made which engenders disciplined activist behaviour and makes it more difficult for *agents provocateurs* to create disturbances.<sup>11</sup>

## **The consent theory of power**

A theory of power is fundamental to any political movement or strategy for change. A conception of power only in terms of the ability of one party to dominate or control another,<sup>12</sup> however, is by no means the only conception of power used to guide strategies for change.<sup>13</sup> Indeed nonviolent

---

<sup>10</sup> Spence and McLeod, 'Building the Road as We Walk It', in *Social Alternatives* (forthcoming), 2002.

<sup>11</sup> See for example Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, pp. 183-184; Mohandas Gandhi, 'Some Rules of Satyagraha', in *Young India*, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1930, in *Collected Works*, 42:pp. 491-493; Vinoba Bhave, *Shanti Sena*, Trans. Majorie Sykes, Rajghat (Varanasi), Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1963: Appendix viii; Domingus Barbe., 'The Spiritual Basis of Nonviolence', in Phillip McManus and George Schlabach. (eds.), *Relentless Persistence: Nonviolent Action in Latin America*, Philadelphia, New Society Publishers, 1991:280. For the code of discipline used by Angganitha Bin Damai see Kamma, *Koreri*, 159.

<sup>12</sup> See for example Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. 2 vols. Ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968: 1:53; Dahl, Robert, 'The Concept of Power' in *Behavioural Science* 2 (July 1957): pp202-3; Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The struggle for power and peace*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Knopf, 1973: 28.

<sup>13</sup> See for example, Johan Galtung, *The True Worlds: A Transnational Perspective*, New York, Free Press, 1980: pp. 62-64; Starhawk, *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority and Mystery*, San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1987: pp. 8-18.

activists maintain that if the dominant conception of power is used to inform action, a new form of domination will merely replace the old. Conceptions of power, grounded in cooperation and inspired by higher moral and political values, challenge the dominant conception of power and inform nonviolent action, which in turn is guided by the consent theory of power.

First articulated by Etienne de La Boetie<sup>14</sup> in the sixteenth century, the consent theory of power holds that power is not concentrated in the hands of a few rulers at the top of a 'pyramid' but is dispersed throughout society. La Boetie argued that elites depend on the passive and active consent and cooperation of ordinary people to maintain their rule. This insight has continued to guide nonviolent struggle. To illustrate this point, Gandhi said that 'the British have not taken India from us, we have given it to them.'<sup>15</sup> Based on this insight he led a successful nonviolent revolution to induce and compel the British to quit India (See diagram 3.1). According to nonviolent activists, therefore, people are the sources of all power. Should they withdraw their consent and cooperation in sufficient numbers and for long enough, then even the most ruthless regime will crumble.<sup>16</sup>

Nonviolence is extremely effective, even against an extremely ruthless opponent. The empirical evidence confirms this. Nonviolent action has been effective in the Middle East (against the Shah),<sup>17</sup> in Asia (against Marcos),<sup>18</sup> in numerous cases in Latin America<sup>19</sup> and Eastern Europe,<sup>20</sup> against the Soviet Union,<sup>21</sup> and even against the Indonesian military.<sup>22</sup> Although nonviolent stories

---

<sup>14</sup> Etienne de La Boetie, *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. Trans. Harry Kurz, 1576. Reprint, Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1939: 35.

<sup>16</sup> For more on the consent theory of power see Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: Part One Power and Struggle*.

<sup>17</sup> See for example, Fereydoun Hoveyda, *The Fall of the Shah*, Trans. Roger Liddell, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980; David H. Albert (ed.), *Tell the American People: Perspectives on the Iranian Revolution*, Philadelphia, Movement for a New Society, 1980.

<sup>18</sup> See for example Jim and Nancy Forest, *Four Days in February: The Story of the Nonviolent Overthrow of the Marcos Regime*, London, Marshall-Pickering, 1988.

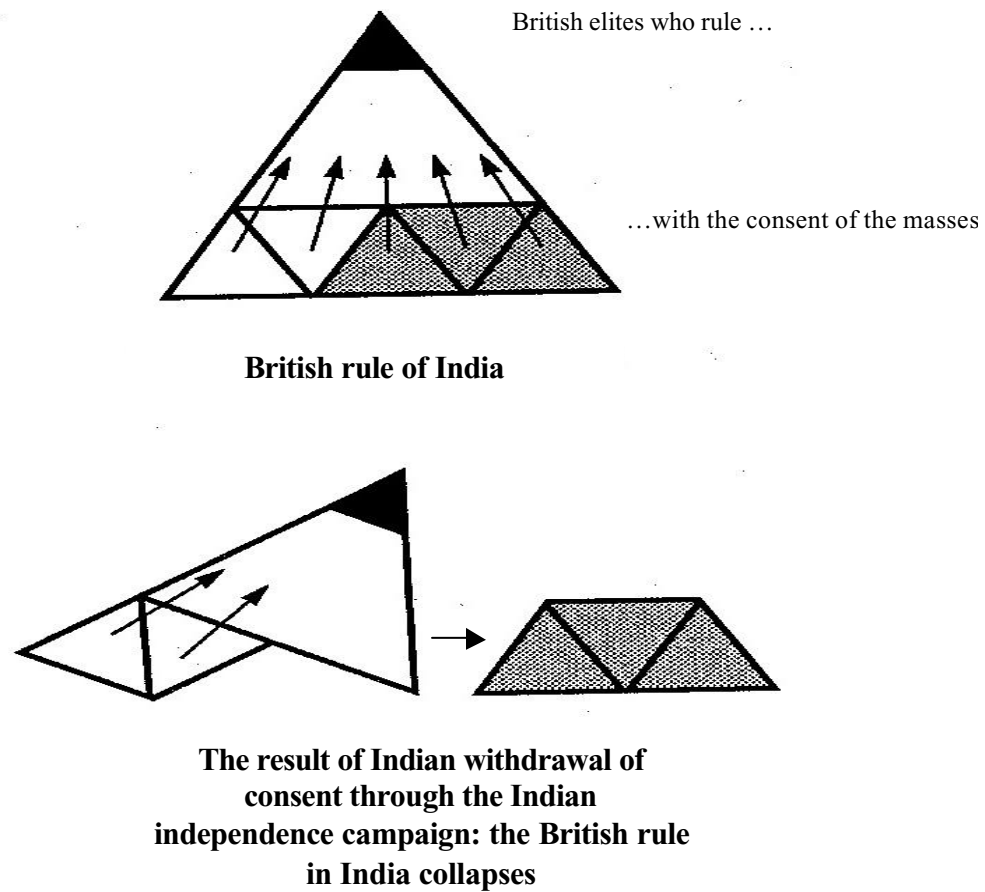
<sup>19</sup> See for example, Patricia Parkman, *Insurrectionary Civic Strikes in Latin America 1931-1961*, Cambridge Mass., Albert Einstein Institution, 1990; See also numerous examples, particularly from Guatemala, Argentina and Uruguay, in Phillip McManus and Gerald Schlabach, *Relentless Persistence: Nonviolent Action in Latin America*, Philadelphia, New Society Publishers, 1991; and examples from El Salvador and Chile in Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, New York, Palgrave, 2000: pp. 241-265, 267-302.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Michael Randle, *People Power: The Building of a New European Home*, Stroud, England, Hawthorn Press, 1991. For examples of nonviolent action against Hitler see Jacques Semelin, *Unarmed Against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe 1939-1943*, Trans. Suzan Huserl-Kapit, London, Praeger, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> See for example, Stephen Foye, 'The Soviet Armed Forces: Things Fall Apart', *RFE-RL Research Report 1(1)*: 15-18, 1992; Victoria E. Bonnell, Ann Cooper and Gregory Freidin, (eds.), *Russia at the Barricades: Eyewitness Accounts of the 1991 Soviet Coup*, New York, Armonk, 1994.

<sup>22</sup> Brian Martin, Wendy Varner and Adrian Vickers., 'Political Jiu-Jitsu against Indonesian Repression: Studying Lower-profile Nonviolent Resistance', *Pacifica Review 13(2)*, 2001, pp. 143-156; and an analysis of the shift from armed struggle to nonviolence in East Timor in Chisako M. Fukuda, 'Peace through Nonviolent Action: The East Timorese Resistance Movement's Strategy for Engagement', *Pacifica Review 12(1)*, 2000, pp. 17-31.

**Figure 3.1 The Indian independence campaign and the consent theory of power**



Adapted from Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 88

have certainly been marginalised, history bears witness to what happens when people undermine the legitimacy of a regime by withdrawing their consent and cooperation.

It is not the purpose of nonviolent action to avoid conflict. Conflict is both a positive and desirable source of personal growth and societal transformation.<sup>23</sup> What is crucial is how the conflict is dealt with. Nonviolent action seeks to intentionally generate conflict so that the underlying injustice and exploitation becomes explicit. Through nonviolent methods, activists then seek to transform the conflict from destructive to creative patterns that lay the foundations for peace, justice and sustainability. In recognition of this insight, nonviolence is not restricted to peaceful dialogue or passive resistance (mostly low-level acts of hidden noncooperation) but encompasses acts of protest and persuasion, noncooperation and nonviolent intervention.<sup>24</sup> In order for change to be created it is imperative that nonviolent activists analyse the sources of support their opponents depend upon to maintain their rule and either withdraw that support themselves or design campaigns to induce or compel others to withdraw their support. In addition, for nonviolent action to be successful not only must consent be withdrawn by a clear refusal to cooperate, there must also be a collective commitment to peaceful and disciplined action in the face of repression and a coherent strategy that guides action.<sup>25</sup>

### **‘The great chain of nonviolence’**

For withdrawal of consent and cooperation by a resisting population to be effective in bringing about change, the regime has to be significantly dependent on the people ruled. However, the reality is that in some situations elites do not sufficiently depend upon the consent and cooperation of the people they dominate.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, Galtung has argued that a dependency relationship can be created through what he calls the ‘great chain of nonviolence’.<sup>27</sup>

Galtung proposes that in cases where no dependency relationship exists, or the social distance between the oppressor and the oppressed is great and the oppressed have been dehumanised by the

---

<sup>23</sup> Burrowes, ‘Nonviolent Struggle – A Strategy for Total Revolution’, pp. 6-7; Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 107.

<sup>24</sup> Gene Sharp, in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: Part Two: The Methods of Nonviolent Action*, has documented 198 methods of nonviolent action from the three classes of nonviolent action, protest and persuasion, noncooperation and nonviolent intervention. Nonviolent intervention also includes initiatives to create community-led processes and institutions as well as disruptive actions designed to interrupt or intervene in injustice. Since writing *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Sharp has said that since *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* was published he has ‘discovered’ at least another 200 methods of nonviolent action (Ralph Summy, ‘Nonviolence and the Extremely Ruthless Opponent’, *Pacifica Review* Vol. 6 No. 1, 1994: pp. 1-29).

<sup>25</sup> Burrowes, *A Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 86; Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, pp 27-28, 47-48.

<sup>26</sup> Lewis Lipsitz and Herbert M. Kritzer, ‘Unconventional Approaches to Conflict Resolution: Erikson and Sharp on Nonviolence.’, *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 19 (December 1975): 727.

<sup>27</sup> Galtung, *Nonviolence and Israel/Palestine*, 26.

oppressor, (as was the case during the civil rights struggle in the U.S and is the case in West Papua) a third party sympathetic to the struggle of the oppressed and who is viewed favourably by the oppressor, could intercede on behalf of the oppressed. This action creates a psychological ‘link’ or ‘communication chain’ between the oppressor and oppressed.<sup>28</sup> Action by a third party who the oppressor elite even partially identifies with can significantly weaken the resolve of the oppressor to continue dominating the oppressed and significantly strengthen the struggle of the oppressed. This was the role sympathetic middle class whites played during the U.S civil rights struggle<sup>29</sup> and the role sympathetic white women (and later sympathetic white churches) played during apartheid in South Africa.<sup>30</sup>

Because West Papuans are viewed as culturally inferior and backward by vast numbers of Indonesians, particularly the Javanese, sympathetic Indonesians could play a significant role in personalising the humanity of West Papuans and communicating the aspirations of the West Papuan people to Indonesians’ hostile to, or unconvinced of, the merits of West Papuan demands. For this reason the West Papuan leadership of the nonviolent struggle should continue to intentionally cultivate solidarity relationships with Indonesians throughout the archipelago in general, and in Java, the engine room of Indonesian politics, in particular.

Of course, given the high levels of accumulated trauma in the individual and collective memory of West Papuans, it may not be possible for all West Papuans to do this. Hate and rage borne of deep suffering is difficult for even the most gracious and forgiving individual to overcome. But it is possible. ‘During the long periods of isolation and deprivation many of us learnt to stop hating the oppressors’, says one West Papuan ex-political prisoner. ‘Hating takes a lot of energy.... In the loneliness of the prison cells we learned about reconciliation and rebuilt our souls and our spirits.’<sup>31</sup> In order to build effective solidarity relationships it may be necessary to create safe spaces to process deep emotional pain caused by living in the shadow of terror and seeing ones family and friends killed. This is vital to develop the capacity to build relationships with Indonesian allies.

In recognition of the importance of building relationships with Indonesians, WESTPANYAT (West Papuan National Youth Awareness Team) has been developing student support groups in Bali, Java and Sulawesi. AMP (*Aliansi Mahasiswa Papua* – the Alliance of Papuan University Students)

---

<sup>28</sup> Martin, Brian and Wendy Varner, ‘Nonviolence and Communication’, forthcoming, 2002: 9.

<sup>29</sup> Galtung, *Nonviolence and Israel/Palestine*, 26.

<sup>30</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, pp 261-262.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with participant 01, January 2001.

leaders are also doing the same.<sup>32</sup> The grassroots in Indonesia are the key says one WESTPANYAT leader: ‘The Indonesian government depends on what the grassroots want. Indonesia will lose power over West Papua when we build understanding between ordinary Indonesians and people in West Papua.’<sup>33</sup> Solidarity activists from outside Indonesia could also play an important role in helping bridge the gap between progressive students in Java, for example, and progressive students in West Papua. Through the medium of media and through personal introductions and coordinating and facilitating solidarity tours third parties could help lessen social distance.<sup>34</sup>

By intentionally developing nonviolent solidarity campaigns inside Indonesia that draw on the insights of Galtung’s ‘great chain of nonviolence’, West Papuans could significantly undermine popular Indonesian support for repression and over time perhaps even Indonesian legitimacy for the occupation itself. Third party support for self-determination in West Papua from Indonesians will be significantly improved by the ability of the West Papuans to continue to maintain nonviolent discipline in the face of repression. This will continue to expose the brutality of the Indonesian military, provoke questions in ordinary Indonesians minds about why there is a conflict, undermine international support for the Indonesian occupation of West Papua and make it increasingly difficult to portray the conflict as a law and order issue or as another example of international terrorism.

## **Towards a new consent theory of power**

Nonviolent solidarity campaigns inside Indonesia are vitally important. Nonetheless because of the symbolic and economic importance of West Papua to Indonesia, campaigns of nonviolent action inside West Papua that utilise the insights of ‘the great chain of nonviolence’ may not, by themselves, be enough to alter Jakarta’s will towards maintaining the occupation. In essence this is because of two major limitations that need to be taken into consideration so that the consent theory of power retains its utility to nonviolent struggle in West Papua. Firstly, the historic, ideological and economic importance of West Papua to Jakarta translate into a strong and unified political will to retain the territory at all costs. Moreover, Indonesia does not sufficiently depend upon the consent and cooperation of West Papuans to maintain the occupation but instead relies on the support of international government and corporate elites (see Figure 3.2). The second fundamental problem is that the consent theory of power (particularly that popularised by Sharp) does not sufficiently address the role of the structures in creating and perpetuating oppression. It is these problems that I will now turn to.

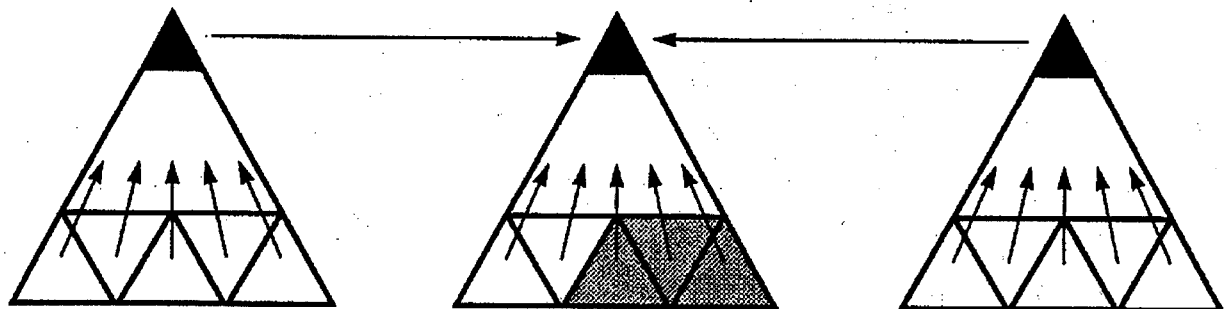
---

<sup>32</sup> Personal communication with a confidential source.

<sup>33</sup> Interview 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Thanks to Sam da Silva and an AMP activist for this insight.

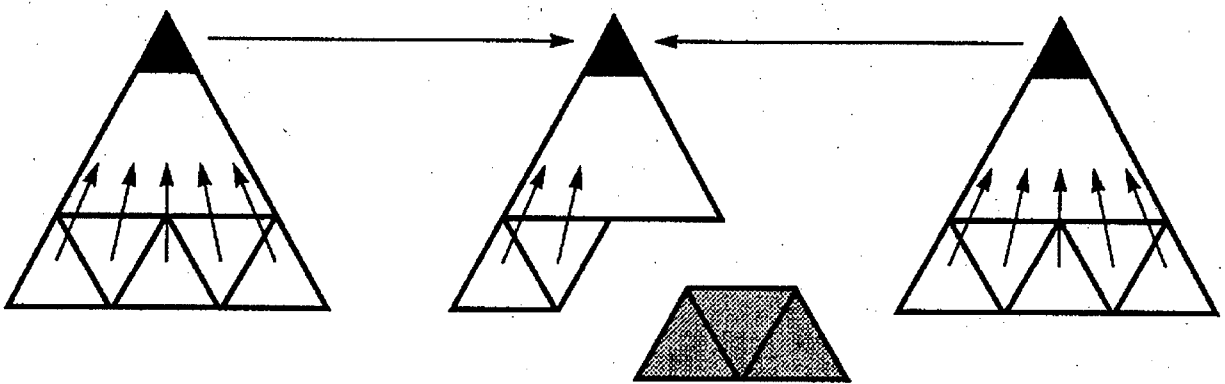
**Figure 3.2 Support for Jakarta's continued rule in West Papua**



**Support for the occupation inside Indonesia**

**Jakarta's occupation of West Papua**

**International support for the occupation**



**Result of a withdrawal of consent and cooperation from West Papuans inside West Papua only: the regime remains**

*First criticism of the consent theory of power: The opponent may not be sufficiently dependent on the people they dominate.* Increasingly, elites do not depend on the consent and cooperation of the people they dominate but on the political, economic and military support of other elites.<sup>35</sup> Even if all West Papuans nonviolently withdrew their cooperation from the regime more Indonesians could be brought in to take over the day to day affairs of administering and exploiting the territory. To a large extent it does not appear that Indonesia wants the people, they are only interested in the land, or more to the point the resources. Amungme tribal leader, Thom Beanal agrees. ‘Could it be that the Indonesian government is drawn to Irian Jaya not by its people but by its natural resources?’ he rhetorically asks.<sup>36</sup> *However, although an invader may not be dependent on the people they dominate, they are always dependent on external sources of power.*

Jakarta is heavily dependent on the diplomatic, economic and military support of other elites. These international and national elite allies operate in ways that mutually reinforce one another’s actions (See diagram one). Diplomatically, Indonesia relies on member states of the United Nations to continue to recognise territorial integrity of Indonesia and the incorporation of West Papua into Indonesia through the 1969 Act of Free Choice. Economically, Indonesia depends on the continued investment of multinational corporations as well as the continued economic support of the IMF and World Bank through the Consultative Group on Indonesia. Militarily, Indonesia depends upon countries like the United States to arm and train the TNI and legitimise the role of the TNI in securing the territorial integrity of Indonesia. In turn, Indonesia’s elite allies depend on the active and passive consent of local constituencies such as voters, bureaucrats, workers, intellectuals, soldiers and unions, to maintain support for Indonesia’s occupation of West Papua. Indirect dependency on key social groups inside the societies of Indonesia’s elite allies is the Achilles’ heel of Indonesia’s occupation in West Papua.

Burrowes’ argument is that the consent theory of power that informs nonviolent action should be modified so that activists look beyond Galtung’s ‘great chain of nonviolence’. This involves developing a strategy in which solidarity groups in the society of the opponent elite and opponent elite allies, in cooperation with the resisting population, conduct campaigns of nonviolent action designed to induce or compel those constituencies which the opponent elite depends on, to withdraw their support for the occupation (see Figure 3.3).<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 266.

<sup>36</sup> Abrash and Kennedy, ‘Repressive mining in West Papua’, 71.

<sup>37</sup> Looking at Australia as a case study, this will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Four.

(insert Figure 3.3 ‘Solidarity action is essential’)

*The second criticism of the consent theory of power: the lack of a structural analysis of power.* Although La Boetie identified the importance of social structures,<sup>38</sup> Sharp has paid insufficient attention to them. According to Brian Martin, Sharp's theory of consent is 'individualistic and voluntaristic in orientation, as shown by his attention to psychological reasons for obedience.'<sup>39</sup> In theory if people no longer agree to be ruled and collectively persist in withdrawing their cooperation from a regime, the regime will collapse. In reality, however, there is not a simple relationship between the ruled and the ruler. Instead the situation is much more complex. Power, argue the structuralists, is deeply rooted in social relationships and patterns of social behaviour that become instituted and replicated over time. The consent theory of power ignores people's dependency on social structures, the coercive nature of those structures and the way power relationships shape the actors within the structures and underpin conflict.<sup>40</sup> The relationship between the ruled and the ruler, conceptualised by Sharp, is of limited value when trying to understand the dynamics of nonviolent struggle in and around social structures such as capitalism, the state and patriarchy. The challenge for activists, asserts Brian Martin, is to combine the consent theory of power with a structural analysis of local systems of power.<sup>41</sup> A strategy of nonviolent action can then provide strategic coordination and guidance for local campaigns.

## **Nonviolence against an extremely ruthless opponent**

One of the persistent criticisms levelled at proponents of nonviolent action is the assumption that nonviolence is ineffective against an extremely ruthless opponent such as the Indonesian government and military.<sup>42</sup> Ignoring the fact that the same could be said about violence or armed struggle, it is important that West Papuan and solidarity activists address this question and prepare for repression. The logic of the theory and the empirical evidence demonstrate that nonviolence can be effective against an extremely ruthless opponent. But is nonviolent action tactically effective against an extremely ruthless opponent?

There is certainly no doubt that Indonesia, or to be more specific, the Indonesian military, constitutes an extremely ruthless opponent.<sup>43</sup> The case of nonviolent resistance against the Indonesian

---

<sup>38</sup> La Boetie, *The Politics of Obedience*, 77-78.

<sup>39</sup> Martin, 'Gene Sharp's Theory of Power', 216.

<sup>40</sup> Koen Koch in Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 90.

<sup>41</sup> Martin, *Nonviolence Versus Capitalism*, 39.

<sup>42</sup> Summy, 'Nonviolence and the Case of the Extremely Ruthless Opponent', pp. 159 and 161.

<sup>43</sup> In 1966 the Indonesian military orchestrated anti-communist pogroms throughout the archipelago that resulted in the murder of up to a million people. In East Timor between 1975 and 1999 the Indonesian military killed up to two-thirds of the population and in the horrified gaze of the international community unleashed an orgy of post-referendum violence in

military in West Papua may constitute what could be considered a worst case scenario: a largely isolated rural opposition against a genocidal opponent. So what tactical choices help make nonviolent action less vulnerable to ruthless repression?

Burrowes suggests seven ways nonviolent activists may help reduce repression when taking part in nonviolent action.<sup>44</sup> They include: emphasising dispersion rather than concentration; organising tactics in a novel way or invest them with new meaning; creating opportunities for advance personal contact with the military; preparing a contingency plan; developing high levels of courage and discipline; withstanding greater forms of suffering; and using the media to make the nonviolent resistance and opponents repression visible to an internationally sympathetic audience.<sup>45</sup> In addition, it may be possible to utilise or develop international non-partisan protective accompaniment, like that provided by *Peace Brigades International* in Colombia, Chiapas and Aceh. Non-partisan and international protective accompaniment can dramatically ‘expand the space for peace’ for local activists working to bring about change in an extremely repressive environment.<sup>46</sup>

In summary, the tactical effectiveness of nonviolence against an extremely ruthless opponent will be dramatically increased by developing a clear plan of action (including contingencies) for responding to repression and implementing this plan in an organised and disciplined manner.

## Defining key concepts

There are three key concepts underpinning the nonviolent strategy advocated here that need to be elaborated on. These concepts draw on the thought of military strategist Carl von Clausewitz and include: ‘the centre of gravity’, ‘the superiority of the defence over the offence’ and ‘power and will’.<sup>47</sup> I will examine each of these concepts in turn.

---

September 1999. They have waged war in Aceh and continue to persist in carrying out repressive military operations in that troubled province. In West Papua there were massive military operations leading up to the Act of Free Choice and numerous military sweeps such as ‘Operation Annihilate’ in the 1970’s and ‘Operation Military’ following the Lorenz hostage crisis of 1996. Military sweeps such as ‘Operation Comb and Destroy’ in Waisor, Manokwari 2001, continue to this day. Recent examples of massacres include the Biak Massacre, when several hundred people were killed on Biak Island in 1998 following a flag-raising (Human Rights Watch, Indonesia Human Rights and Pro-Independence Actions in Irian Jaya, *Human Rights Watch Report 1998*; Rutherford, ‘Waiting for the End in Biak’).

<sup>44</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, pp. 238-245.

<sup>45</sup> See also Martin *et al.*, ‘Political Jiu-Jitsu against Indonesian Repression’; Martin, *Technology for Nonviolent Struggle*.

<sup>46</sup> See for example Liam Mahoney and Luis Enrique Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights*, West Hartford, Conn., The United States of America, Kumarian Press, 1997; Peace Brigades International website: [www.peacebrigades.org](http://www.peacebrigades.org).

<sup>47</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 26.

***Centre of gravity.*** Theorists have differed about the precise nature of what constitutes the centre of gravity. Boserup and Mack argue that it is the unity of the resistance,<sup>48</sup> Gene Keyes, the morale.<sup>49</sup> Burrowes, however, prefers the utility and comprehensiveness of Clausewitz's definition. Clausewitz argues that 'the centre of gravity is the centre of power' on which the entire strategy depends. According to Burrowes, this constitutes 'the finite pool of social resources that support the strategy'.<sup>50</sup> This definition includes both power, the capability to conduct or resist the aggression, and will, the inclination to resist or persist. This definition also encompasses the importance of unity and morale.

Much military thinking is based on the incorrect assumption that violence must be counted in kind. Strategically, however, weapons and tactics, 'have no intrinsic value whatsoever', except in so far as they weaken the opponent's centre of gravity and/or strengthen one's own centre of gravity.<sup>51</sup> If a weapon like a gun, for example, cannot do this, 'it is just a piece of iron.'<sup>52</sup> Properly chosen then, the mode of defence is an 'immense and decisive advantage'.<sup>53</sup> This is because of the inter-relationship between the mode of defence and the centre of gravity. It is the mode of defence that in fact determines the centre of gravity and therefore what 'weapons' will be successful and what 'weapons' will be useless.<sup>54</sup>

***The superiority of the defence over the offence.*** While the aggressor decides what the object of their aggression will be, the superiority of the defence stems from the fact that the defence's choice about how to respond to an act of aggression defines its centre of gravity. In other words the defence's response determines its centre of gravity: what supports the resistance and what the resistance depends upon to continue its resistance. A centre of gravity could be 'the defence's armed forces, ... the armed forces of a stronger ally, the community of interest among allies, the personalities of leaders and public opinion, or the economic capacity to sustain the war.'<sup>55</sup> Whatever 'choice' the resistance makes about how to defend itself from an act of aggression determines the 'finite pool of social resources that support the struggle' including the will to resist and the power to do so.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Boserup and Mack, *War Without Weapons*, pp. 163-168.

<sup>49</sup> Keyes, 'Strategic Non-violent Defense', 133.

<sup>50</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 169.

<sup>51</sup> Boserup and Mack, *War Without Weapons*, 164.

<sup>52</sup> Boserup and Mack, *War Without Weapons*, 164.

<sup>53</sup> Boserup and Mack, *War Without Weapons*, 157.

<sup>54</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 170.

<sup>55</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 17.

<sup>56</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, pp. 16-17, 125-134, 166-172.

If the defending population views its military capability as being decisive for victory then the defeat of its military forces will be a decisive victory for the opponent, irrespective of how strong the society may be. If however, the defending population locates the resistance in social acts of resistance and an attitude of defiance by a strong social order then it is in the social order that the centre of gravity will be, regardless of the society's military capability. In the case of West Papua, the centre of gravity has shifted from the armed struggle to the will of the population to resist.

The 'choice' of how to resist made by the defence will determine where any strategically thinking aggressor should attack, what they should attack and what 'weapons' the defence should be attacked with.<sup>57</sup> The reverse is also true for the resistance. Nonviolent action to assist the struggle for self-determination in West Papua should be deployed against Jakarta's centre of gravity and be designed to alter the will and undermine the power of Jakarta to perpetuate the occupation. A careful analysis of Jakarta's centre of gravity should help determine what tactics will help alter Jakarta's will (or whatever social group nonviolent action intends to influence) and undermine its power.

***Power and will.*** According to Burrowes, 'in the narrow strategic sense, power is the capacity to conduct, or to resist, aggression',<sup>58</sup> and will is the 'inclination to resist (in response to the drive to satisfy human needs)'.<sup>59</sup> Will and power are both important. For example, if the will to conduct or sustain aggression is altered by satisfying the opponent's needs then the power to conduct it is irrelevant. Conversely, if the power to conduct the aggression is withdrawn, then the will to conduct it is immaterial. Of course, to address the cause of a particular conflict, any unmet needs driving 'will' deserve considerable attention if the conflict is not to re-emerge.

## **The Strategic Framework**

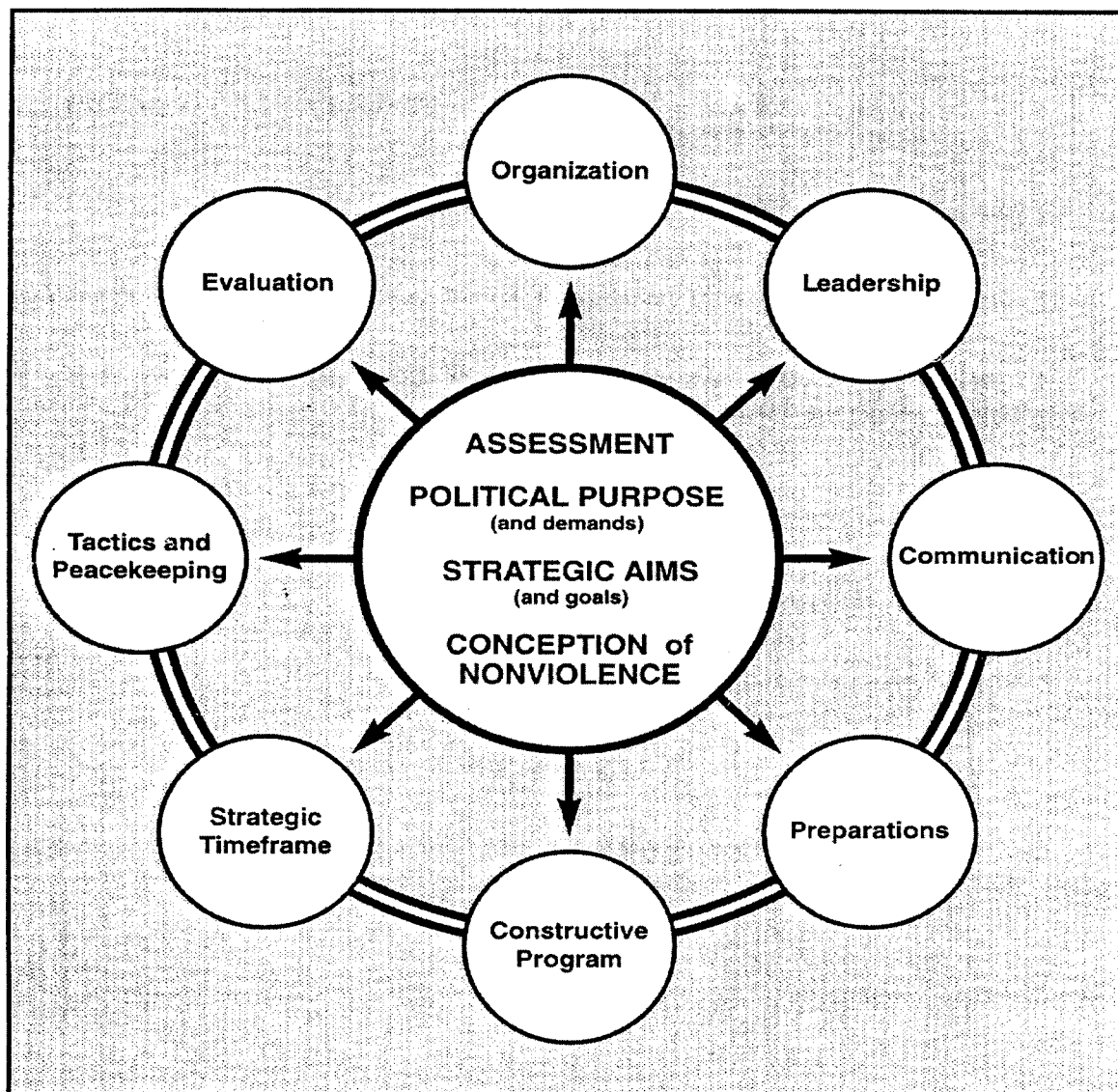
The strategy is represented visually by the strategy wheel (figure 3.4). The strategic framework has twelve components: four core components that direct and guide the overall strategy and eight 'outer' components essential for strategic planning. Nonviolent strategy is guided by a thorough political and strategic assessment of the conflict, including its structural dimension. Each strategy then has a political purpose and political demands (sometimes expressed by way of a political program). The political purpose is guided by the two strategic aims. The entire strategy is based on a particular conception of nonviolence. For reasons outlined previously, this

---

<sup>57</sup> Boserup and Mack, *War Without Weapons*, 157.

<sup>58</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 167.

<sup>59</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 130.



**Figure 3.4 The Strategic Framework.**

From Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 133.

strategy is based on a conception of nonviolence that is principled in practise and revolutionary in orientation. These four elements form the core of the strategic framework (represented at the centre of the strategy wheel). The surrounding eight elements of the strategy wheel give particular attention to specific aspects of nonviolent action and are used to guide the planning, coordination and implementation of the two strategic aims (represented visually by figure four). The eight 'outer' components are: organisation, leadership, communication, preparations, constructive program, strategic timeframe, tactics and peacekeeping and evaluation.

## Political Purpose

The political purpose is to 'create the policy, process, structural and systemic conditions that will satisfy human needs'.<sup>60</sup> The political purpose refers to 'what you want' and is usually expressed as a political program or list of demands. Political demands are vitally important and should be compiled with five criteria in mind. The political demands should be concrete, easily understood and within the power of the opponent elite to yield; they should accurately reflect the needs of the people in order to gain widespread support for the struggle; include an explicit commitment to the needs of the opponent; may expose the moral weak points of the opponent; and make up the substance of the political purpose.<sup>61</sup>

In West Papua the purpose of the nonviolent struggle is regularly stated as 'full independence', or complete independence from Indonesia. This is often contrasted to special autonomy.<sup>62</sup> Moderate West Papuans are more inclined to emphasis a process (peaceful dialogue and perhaps even a period of special autonomy as a bridge to a 'New Papua') rather than an outcome (independence), and couch the purpose of the struggle as a desire to end human rights violations and create the conditions for genuine self-determination by West Papuans.<sup>63</sup> Moderates (West Papuan elites in NGOs, Provincial Parliament, UNCEN and the PDP) tend to favour dialogue<sup>64</sup> while radicals (predominately students, members of the political wing of the OPM and members of the *Dewan Papua*) tend to favour nonviolent action that encompasses the full spectrum of nonviolence.<sup>65</sup> The central demand has been for either an internationally acceptable act of self-determination, in essence a referendum, or an *open-*

---

<sup>60</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 209.

<sup>61</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 130. For a list of five criteria that can help develop a list of demands see pp. 208, 210.

<sup>62</sup> Interviews with participant 01, July 2001 and with participant 04, December 2001.

<sup>63</sup> *West Papua Project*, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Of course there are notable exceptions to this description and at times, fluidity.

<sup>65</sup> This encompasses acts of protest and persuasion, noncooperation and the two classes of nonviolent intervention: the creative and the disruptive. See Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. See also Table 2.1.

*ended third-party mediated dialogue* with Indonesia. Any dialogue would need to discuss the people's concerns and their aspirations, particularly human rights violations and self-determination. This would include opening up discussion about the events of 1961 and the legal basis for the delivery of West Papua to Indonesia through the 1962 New York Agreement and the 1969 Act of Free Choice. The political purpose needs to be expressed in specific and concrete demands that reflect the day to day needs of ordinary people. Whilst the political purpose is important, 'it does not provide strategic guidance; that is the function of the two strategic aims.'<sup>66</sup>

## **The Strategic aims**

The strategic aims relate to 'how you get what you want'.<sup>67</sup> There are two strategic aims (see figure 3.5).

***Strategic aim one: Building a movement: Developing a network of groups that assist the struggle.***<sup>68</sup> The first strategic aim is to strengthen the centre of gravity of the defence. In other words, to increase support for the struggle by intentionally developing a network of groups that will support and participate in the struggle. It is useful to not only work with those groups who actively support the struggle but also to identify other key groups whose support would help build the movement and at the same time possibly withdraw key support from the opponent.<sup>69</sup>

***Strategic aim two: Engaging the opponent: Altering the will and undermining the sources of the opponent's power.*** The second strategic aim, the strategic counter-offensive, is to weaken the opponent's centre of gravity. In other words, to engage the opponent by developing a series of campaigns of nonviolent action designed to 'alter the will of the opponent elite to conduct the aggression – in favour of their participation in a problem-solving process that will create the conditions necessary to satisfy human needs – and undermine their power to do so.'<sup>70</sup> The opponent's will may be

---

<sup>66</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 210.

<sup>67</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 130.

<sup>68</sup> I am indebted to Mark Planigale for his renaming of strategic aims one and two.

<sup>69</sup> See for example Richard Taylor, *Blockade: A Guide to Non-violent Intervention*, New York, Orbis Books, 1977. In order to halt arms sales to Pakistan nonviolent activists in the U.S built relationship with members of the Longshoremen Union whose support was necessary for the U.S government to continue sending arms to East Pakistan. This is also what Jacob Rumbiak and Louise Byrne have been doing in relation to Australian Unions, Religious institutions and educational institutions. For example a Memorandum of Understanding between Jacob Rumbiak, as a representative of the West Papuan community and eleven Australian Trade Unions was signed on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2000. Memorandum of Understanding between West Papua and Eleven Australian Trade Unions, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

<sup>70</sup> Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, pp. 130-131.

altered by ‘offering a set of satisfiers that meet their needs’ within the context of participating in a problem-solving process that also allows participants to ‘save face’.<sup>71</sup>

Sometimes, however, despite clear and concerted efforts to persuade the opponent to engage in a problem-solving process, this effort may not be successful. This is certainly the case in regards to West Papua. In these circumstances it is necessary to nonviolently induce or compel the opponent to re-engage with a political dialogue focused on solving the problem. This can be achieved through designing a series of campaigns of nonviolent action that undermine the ability of the opponent to perpetuate the problem. The focus of campaigns of nonviolent action are determined by identifying the key social groups that support the opponent practically and politically, including international elite allies and the key social groups that support them. Campaigns should be designed to compel or induce those key social groups who support the problem to withdraw their support.

It is still vitally important to analyse what needs the opponent is trying to achieve through violence and consider how these might be met. Of course, an activist’s perception of their opponent’s needs may differ from the opponent’s perceptions of their needs. Consequently, it is useful to check any assumptions with allies from the society and culture of the opponent elite. At a fundamental level nonviolent activists can make it clear that they will not seek to harm the opponent elite or members of the opponent elite’s ‘identity group’ and endeavour to treat the opponent with respect at all times. The trust generated through such continual actions will help create the conditions necessary to transform the conflict.

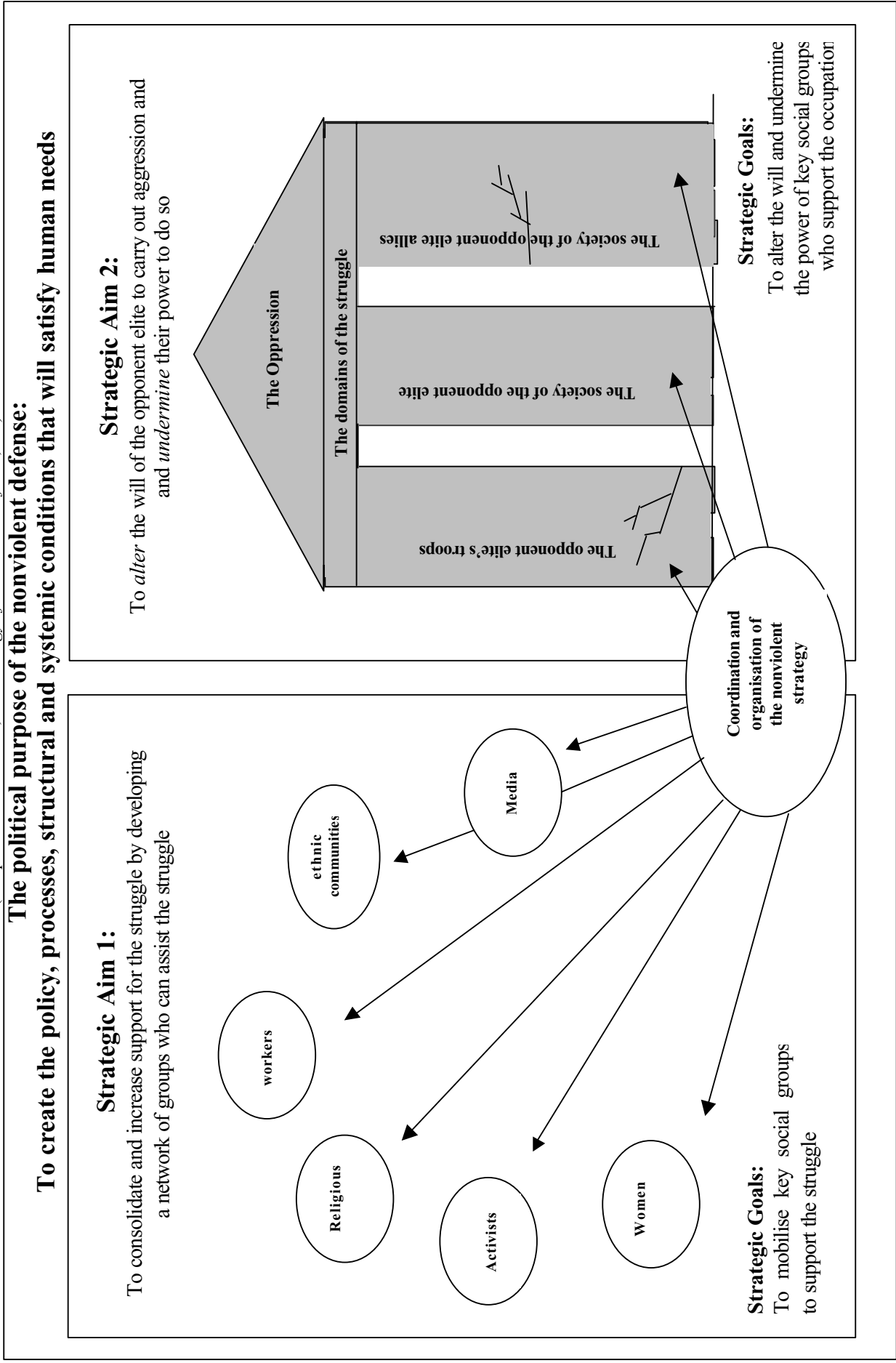
See Figure 3.5 for a visual representation of the political purpose and strategic aims. These are informed by an ongoing political and strategic assessment of the conflict (Figure 3.4 two of the components in the centre of the circle) and the conception of nonviolence. See Figure 3.6 to see how this framework might be applied to West Papua.

---

<sup>71</sup> See for instance Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 78.

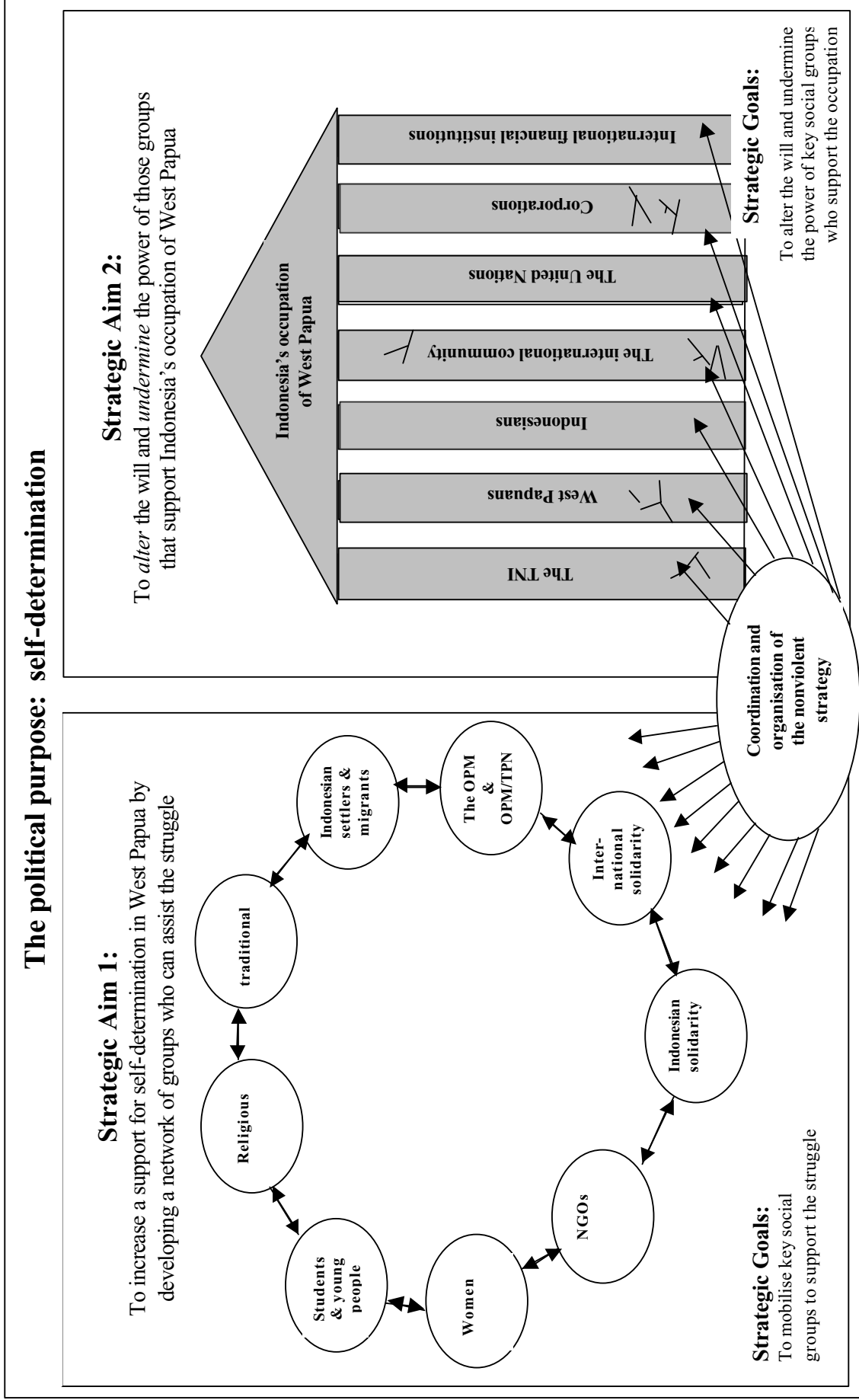
**Figure 3.5 The political purpose and strategic aims**

(Adapted from Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 209)



**Figure 3.6 The political purpose and strategic aims applied to a nonviolent strategy for self-determination in West Papua**

(Adapted from Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense*, 209)



## **Intermediate strategic goals**

Most conflict formations are complex. This is certainly true of West Papua. Therefore, both strategic aims need to be broken down into achievable intermediate strategic aims within the context of protracted struggle. This makes it possible to systematically progress towards the political purpose within an achievable timeframe. Each intermediate strategic goal should be clear, specific and measurable. In planning any strategy activists should consider which tactics or combination of tactics (protest and persuasion, noncooperation and nonviolent intervention)<sup>72</sup> are most likely to help achieve the strategic goal of the campaign.

When planning nonviolent actions it is important to consider exactly 'who you want to influence' and 'what you want to them to do'. Nonviolent action should then be designed to achieve these strategic objectives. Strategically speaking, it is immaterial if an action fails to achieve its tactical objective, as long as it achieves its strategic objective. A tactical objective could be to blockade a bulldozer, for instance. The strategic objective, however, could be to mobilise people to speak out against the activities of a particular logging company, to support the activists and to encourage consumers to refuse to buy rainforest timber. Although a campaign may have only one tactical objective it should have multiple strategic objectives. These objectives should not be dependent on achieving the tactical objective but on the qualities and integrity of the action and participating activists. Nonviolent actions, therefore, should always be planned and implemented with the strategic objectives in mind.<sup>73</sup>

The intermediate strategic goals should also identify whether they increase the sources of power available to the resistance, by mobilising social groups to support the struggle, or whether they reduce the power of the opponent, by altering their will in favour of re-engaging in dialogue or undermining their power to perpetuate the problem, in this case the occupation. Each strategic intermediate goal may need its own well-focused campaign with its own strategic plan.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical and strategic foundations of nonviolent action. The importance of clearly identifying and making explicit the conception of nonviolence that informs the struggle, as well as the benefits of adopting a conception of nonviolence that is both principled in practice and revolutionary in orientation, has been discussed along with a detailed examination of the

---

<sup>72</sup> Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Burrowes., 'The Political Objective and Strategic Goal of Nonviolent Objectives', *Nonviolence Today* No.48, January/February 1996: pp. 6-7.

theory of power that is the basis of nonviolent action. I have argued that nonviolent action can be strategically effective against an extremely ruthless opponent. To maximise the power of nonviolence, however, it is necessary to develop a strategy. Because of the complexity of the conflict formation in West Papua such a strategy needs to be comprehensive. Because the strategy developed by Robert Burrowes provides strategic guidance and synthesises the insights from the best of conflict theory, nonviolence and military strategist Clausewitz, I have presented his strategic framework and theory as a possible basis for a nonviolent strategy for self-determination in West Papua. Chapter four will focus on the key domains where the strategy could be applied, and look at Australia as an example of how strategic campaigns of nonviolent action in the domains of Indonesia's elite allies could assist the struggle.