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INSURGENTS WITHIN MALAYA--EFFECTIVENESS
OF POPULACE AND RESOURCES CONTROL OPERATIONS
(RESEARCH).

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview. The origin of the trouble in Malaya was the formation, in the 1920's, of the Malayan Communist Party. This was a Chinese association in spite of its name. Never having applied for registration under Malayan law, it was an illegal organization.

The Chinese made up about half the population of Malaya and were naturally attracted by any form of secret society.

By 1957, the Party was able to organize extensive strikes in the rubber, tin, and other industries of the country. Punishment was minor; however, threatened repatriation to China caused the Party to go underground until the Japanese invasion of Malaya which caused the British and the Communist Party to become allies.

The Chinese were mainly concerned with business and money-making and were involved with every type of business in Malaya.

When the Japanese Army surrendered to the allies after World War II, the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army assumed control of Malaya and held it until the end of September 1945 when the British authority assumed control. In return for their assistance in fighting the Japanese, the Malayan Communist Party was allowed to work as an open, legitimate, political organization and great efforts were made to gain their cooperation and help. The Party only pretended to cooperate.

B. Scope. The period from June 1948 (when violence with the Malayan Communist Party erupted) until late in 1952 (when the real fruits of the control measures applied were realized and victory in Malaya was imminent) is the concern of this monograph.

C. Objectives. I shall examine the control measures applied to the population and resources throughout Malaya in an effort to deny popular support to the Malayan Communist Party. I shall try to determine the effectiveness of these control measures, and also point out some of the shortcomings of these measures.

D. Method of Development. I shall conduct this study around the type of control measures used, and the order in which they were applied.

II. BODY

A. Control Measures.

1. The Briggs Plan, inaugurated in 1948, had three main objectives. The first was to place the populace under effective administration and protection. The second was to

expand the police and local defense forces. Third and last, was to establish a unified civilian, police, and military system of command and control for all antiterrorist operations.

Under the Briggs Plan, the Chinese squatters on whom the Malayan Races Liberation Army used to feed, were resettled in resettlement areas known as "new villages." The British moved 510,000 people into 500 brand new villages in less than two years. Instead of living scattered on the fringes of the jungle where they could not be protected from the ravages of the Malayan Races Liberation Army, they lived in new villages which were compactly planned and surrounded by wire fences for protection. In many of the new villages there were police posts to patrol the wire fences. Most of the new villages had a Home Guard. In some, there were a few Communist supporters or even relatives of Malayan Races Liberation Army members; therefore, the police in the new villages combined the task of preventing Communists from passing food and money out to other Communists with the task of protecting the villagers.

The Malays, meanwhile, still lived in their kampongs or villages dotted about the country. For racial reasons they did not support the Malayan Races Liberation Army much (the latter being largely Chinese), though under duress or for profit they did supply a certain amount of food to the *Malayan* Races Liberation Army. The Indian population, other than those who lived in the towns, were mostly laborers working on the rubber estates, in the tin mines, or for the public services. The Indians, too, were regrouped into more compact settlements where they could be protected by police or Home Guards. A small number of the population supported the Malayan Races Liberation Army willingly, taking great risks to do so. Others helped, under pressure, with food or money. When working alone in the fields, it was not easy to withhold mere vegetables from an armed bandit.

2. Reorganization of the Malay government was effected in order to cope with the vastnesses of the problems, and to facilitate control.

This governmental reorganization involved the administration, the soldiers, and the police. Each state and settlement in the Federation of Malaya had a police contingent, and in support of each police contingent was an infantry brigade. Each police contingent was subdivided again into "circles" and "districts." To one was allotted a battalion of soldiers, to the other a company, depending upon local conditions.

The district was an important unit for in each district was an administrator known as the district officer, a policeman, and a soldier. Together they organized the war against the Communists in their area in all aspects--political, economical, and military. They ordered curfews; they controlled food supplies; they cut back the jungle in terms of seeking out the bandits and separating them from the friendly populace. The war was a political war, too. The populace, particularly the youth, had to be protected from the Communist virus. Some measures which the soldiers

deemed necessary and desirable were ruled out by the administrator as being likely to make more people turn Communist in the process thatⁿ the soldiers would be able to kill or capture. It was decided that a nice balance had to be arrived at through the new organization known as the District War Executive Committee. Striving for harmony was one of the preoccupations of the brigade commander and it was a big day when all the associates were on speaking terms.

3. A state of emergency was declared by General Templer upon his installation as High Commissioner in January 1952.

Many people thought General Templer should have declared martial law. This would have required many officers being on ^{extra} duty^{ies} and all the officers were needed instead for Army duties. The declaration of martial law would have brought about an increase in support for the bandits because the very nature of military rule would possibly have caused miscarriages of justice. Thus martial law was ruled out. The correct course of action was to declare a state of emergency, bring in new regulations giving summary powers to civil, police, and military authorities. The government was mostly supported by the populace, and the declaration of a state of emergency gave the government all the advantages of martial law without the bother of setting up new structures of government. You get the conception of the police applying the enactments or emergency regulations and the courts dealing with the offenders. In Malaya, however, the disorders had gone too far. The Communist terrorists had gotten too strong for the police, and the Army was called in to help.

4. Six very stiff penalties were enacted for violations of the control measures placed on resources. These six penalties were as follows:

a. Possession of a gun, pistol, hand grenade, or other lethal instrument without a permit carried the death penalty.

b. Demanding, collecting, or receiving supplies for the guerrillas carried the death penalty.

c. A person found "consorting" with one who was in illegal possession of firearms or explosives could have been sentenced to death or to life imprisonment.

d. One who knew that another had committed an offense against the regulations and who failed to report it could have been sentenced to up to ten years imprisonment.

e. Possession of guerrilla literature carried up to ten years imprisonment.

f. Fines could be levied collectively on all or a part of the population, or the shops in the area could be closed or allowed to be open only during specified hours.

5. Centralization of control was effected when General Templer assumed his post as both High Commissioner and Director of Operations. It was noted at that time that there could be but one instrument of policy at national (Federation) level if the government was to be effective. Leaders prior to Templer had grown frustrated because of the many setbacks.

Prior to January 1952, everything that experience, knowledge, or ingenuity suggested as possible or desirable solutions to the problems had been attempted. The regular police, largely Malays, seen in town and villages engaged in normal police duties and were mostly armed with rifles. The Special Constabulary, a group of hastily enrolled, largely untrained, and only partially equipped Malays and a few Chinese and Indians provided guards for planters, tin miners, and so on. The Auxiliary Police were recruited and paid for by commercial companies to protect their properties. The Jungle Company of Policemen consisted largely of "specials" and was to have functioned like an infantry company. Army units were given clearances for operating in assigned areas, and therefore shot anyone moving in the thick jungle assuming they were bandits. Employing the latter type of tactic required very strict control over the populace's movements. In that type vegetation one had no time to wait and verify a target for the one firing first survived.

Frequent visits by the new High Commissioner, beginning in February 1952, to assure the populace of the government's intentions in the conduct of the emergency, gained the much needed support of the people.

Under the new commissioner the Chinese were encouraged to assume Federal citizenship, and an appeal for two thousand Chinese youths to join the police was made from the King's House. Templer was the first commissioner to take action against villagers who failed to respond to bandit actions.

On March 25th, 1952, the pipeline that brought water to the village of Tanjong Malim was cut and the district officer and a Public Works Department engineer, along with ten others, were killed and eight more were wounded when they made a trip to see what could be done to restore the water supply.

For the first time since the violence erupted, the people were confronted by the High Commissioner only two days after the pipeline incident. He told the populace of the village they must have been supporting the bandits who committed the acts, because no one could live there unless they got food from the village itself. Large numbers of the Malay populace approved of the drastic measures thereby ordered by General Templer.

Under Templer's guidance, military units began to mix with the people, got to know the people, and started to help the people. By so doing the Army promoted good will and gained support of the populace which was always a good source of information concerning bandit movements. It is

from these operations it was learned that in this type war the governments involved in fighting the guerrillas must win the "hearts and minds" of the populace.

In fighting the bandits in Malaya a new concept prevailed, unlike that of conventional warfare where the soldier has little contact with the politician except at the highest level. In a conventional environment commanders further down the scale are concerned with military affairs only. In fighting the bandits the wide aim (goal) is a political one, even today--to convince the populace that it is bad to yield to Communism, that Communism will swallow them up if they do not resist it, and the populace must not help the bandits with food or money. If a platoon commander was to shoot a single civilian, even though it was an accident, it would do irreparable harm, creating Communist sympathizers rather than government allies.

There are many weapons besides the conventional ones that the soldier, the policeman, and the administrator can use in guerrilla-type warfare and they were used expertly and intelligently in Malaya.

6. Curfews became the way to control the populace. Though the jungle was neutral, the Chinese villages frequently were not. Their influence was often on the side of the guerrillas. If it had not been for the Chinese, the guerrillas would have been liquidated much sooner.

The Chinese formed a secret society known as the Min Yuen and had a membership of over 100,000 people. This society was the Chinese procurement, intelligence, and propaganda branch. Min Yuen sent out word to the bandits of every traveler, of every troop movement. Some villages and cities were so cooperative that they offered the bandits what amounted to almost a refuge and an arsenal. The curfews in Malaya were instrumental in the curtailment of assistance given the bandits.

In the Chinese towns on which General Templer put a curfew for two weeks in the spring of 1952, no one could move out of their houses for 22 hours a day. The order was strictly enforced by armed patrols. Templer placed the curfew on the villages not as punishment, but in an effort to instill into the all-Chinese communities some sense of civic responsibility. After the cutting of the water pipeline and the subsequent murders at Tanjong Malim, Templer had gone there to address the townsfolk, trying to get information. None of the 20,000 townspeople would talk. Twenty thousand people only sat and looked at Templer. No leaders, no committee of citizens stepped forward to clean up the mess and restore law and order. Templer lifted the curfew from the town only after the townsfolk had returned questionnaires with information leading to the arrest of 28 men and women. Thus, the control measure (curfew) placed upon the village proved very successful and beneficial to the government.

The government curfews were mainly enforced by the use of double barbed-wire stockades placed around the settlements and sentries placed in high towers to watch over the people. The gates were closed at 6 p.m. and did not open again until 6 a.m. each day.

7. Industrial resources control measures on the part of the government were slight. These measures consisted of mere escorts for the most part. Permanent guards were employed by individual planters and miners. These guards too, often times, were ill-equipped. It was, however, realized that the bandit leaders were politically oriented and therefore quite intelligent. The guerrillas destroyed property as they destroyed people--on a selective basis, never destroying anyone or anything that would serve their purposes. They seldom damaged a dredge in a tin mine, even though its replacement would have cost well over a million dollars. They seldom interfered with a power plant or a substation. They frequently cut power lines or chopped down the poles, but they left the businesses themselves intact. They figured, for example, if a tin mine was destroyed it would be out of operation for months and the mine employees would then blame the guerrillas for their unemployment as opposed to the fact that if the employees were kept on the job, they would have funds against which the guerrillas could levy tribute.

The guerrillas engaged in big business. They brought untold millions into the Communist treasury each year. In 1952, the guerrillas received about ten percent of the crude rubber produced in Malaya. They got millions of dollars of protective money from the rubber, tin, fishing, and lumber industries. For a payment of so much money a month, one's operations would be immune to guerrilla-inflicted damage. Hundreds of tin miners, thousands of rubber planters, and many fishermen paid the guerrillas this tribute. The wealth the guerrillas did not get went into the British Common Market.

8. Food control measures were many. Many people believed food controls would be the key to eliminating the Malayan Races Liberation Army. Others felt it to be only a deterrent. It was reported that the Malayan Races Liberation Army was so small, in proportion to the population, that even the most exact system of food control could never starve it; particularly when only very few people were prepared to help them. Further, most country people could grow rice and tapioca. The Malayan Races Liberation Army, itself, did farm to some extent in the jungle; however, aerial photography made it rather futile for them to do so.

The day to day control of operations was vested in the District War Executive Committee as previously mentioned. They organized the food checks, the food lifts, the information services, and the tasks for the soldiers. On occasion, the controller of supplies and his assistants would go out at dawn in a surprise check of the area. All surplus rice found on these forays was bought from the farmer at an equitable rate. This ensured that no one had more than the regulation ration to live on. No serious hardships were imposed on the people; and this strengthened their hand in refusing rice to the bandits. They simply told the bandits they had none. Most surplus rice was on hand because of poor accounting rather than a desire to assist the bandits. The Prime Minister passed suitable

legislation prohibiting the transport of food by road, except with a permit, and several other measures. These measures were inevitably complicated and required discrimination in their application. The resources of both federal and state government, and civilian officers from all branches of the administration, volunteered to do tours of duty at roadblocks. The administration carefully noted that if food controls were unreasonable, the hearts of the people would turn toward the Communists. If the controls were reasonable and the food controlled wisely, the bandit helper usually found it difficult to get food for his Communist friends in the jungle. The controls also strengthened the hand of the man who was pressed against his will to help the bandits. He could truthfully tell the bandits the food was strictly controlled and he could not help.

To enhance the effectiveness of resources control the military used such measures as "deception plans" and "the parallel theory." The deception plan was used when it was felt the bandits had received information on intended military operations in a given area, causing them to depart the area. Information concerning an operation realistically planned for another area was often widely disseminated, causing the bandits to feel safe in the actual area of intended operation and oftentimes they were caught with their pants down (sleeping). This type of operation is known today as a ruse. The parallel theory was where all known food suppliers in one area were removed and others in another area were allowed to remain. This restricted the operations of the bandits to the area where the suppliers were allowed to remain, thereby reducing the size of the area to be patrolled while establishing a killing ground. Both plans were good in theory; however, if the bandits wanted food from point A, they simply devised a plan to get it. They did not go to point B just because it was easier. The bandits also had numerous food stores in the jungle. They would never go near them as long as their food sources in the villages were open. To balance circumstances, every known food supplier was arrested in each village. This inconvenienced the bandits and at least got intelligence information from the informers. Legislation existed making it an offense to take food out of the towns, but supervision to enforce the law was lacking. A food checkpoint was established at every bridge over every river with a civilian officer to supervise and help. Still, supervision throughout the country was lacking. There were many loopholes in food control plans. Dealers were allowed a percentage in excess of their allotment to allow for wastage. Rice was growing in many parts of the districts and by offering good prices, the bandits always found some sellers. The bandits had access to all of the outlying gardens so the gardens had to be destroyed. A pilot was sent aloft to plot all the gardens in a selected area. A company base was established near one of the gardens and patrols were sent out from there to uproot and burn the garden. Using these techniques, the government destroyed many gardens.

In late 1952, reports from the underground advised that the resettlement of the Chinese in the new villages had made it increasingly difficult for the guerrillas to get food, medical supplies, and funds. They were living, at that time, mostly on tapioca and wild bananas.

Wei Keiong, a member of the Communist high command who surrendered late in 1952, reported that this shortage of food had a profound effect on the morale of the Communists. The rule of insisting that all cans be pierced by their purchasers before leaving a shop had prevented them from continuing to stockpile stores in the jungle.

III. ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

A. Government Derelictions.

1. Although basic population and resources control measures existed prior to Templer's command, the government of Malaya was in such a state of confusion that these measures could not be enforced properly. Without the government acting properly these measures meant nothing; for populace and resources control means action by the government to control those items and deny access to those resources that further hostile aims against that government. The government concerned must take steps to establish a state of law and order and to sever populace support. The established government in Malaya was not prepared to do so.

2. Numerous setbacks to the government's plans were inevitable due to the British unpreparedness and the enemy's initiative. While the officials at the higher levels were gradually becoming exhausted physically and mentally by their toil, they were being discredited professionally by the successive failures they suffered. Their forward march was obscured by defeat. This was the state into which the government of Malaya had fallen in January 1952. There was a feeling of frustration and bewilderment on the lower levels, and exhaustion at the summit. The leaders gradually became exhausted and began to have doubts. Critics accused them of being out of date and working along the wrong lines. Gradually a feeling grew that the high command was a failure. It had lost the confidence of the rank and file. Morale sank to rock bottom and the machine (government) ceased to spark.

It was determined that the conduct of government and the conduct of war were high expressions of man in his dealings with mankind. This meant the answer to the problem was one of leadership. In late January 1952, General Templer became the man to give this much needed commodity.

3. The police contingent in Malaya was a vast rambling structure, hastily expanded to meet the emergency and with a very low proportion of officers to rank and file. The jungle company of the police contingent had no wireless communications between company headquarters and its platoons, and the commander came directly under the chief police officer who was too busy to give him the supervision and help he needed. The entire police force had been expanded to eight times its designed size and was short of equipment. It was short of training, many men having never fired their weapons. Many junior leaders were highly unsatisfactory. The newest additions to the force were the European police lieutenants. Many were excellent and others quite deficient

They were often entrusted with far more responsibility than they were capable of handling and therefore failed. Many police officers had foreseen the trouble coming and had given warnings that went unheeded.

4. Proper supervisory personnel were lacking and laws went unheeded much too long, allowing problems to mount rapidly.

5. The overage in rice production was enough to feed the Communists for a lifetime.

6. Inadequate security was provided by the government to rubber, tin, fishing, and lumber industries although these industries provided capital for ~~anti~~bandit war efforts. The government left these industries to their own fates.

B. British Control of Policies and Industrial Resources.

1. Malayan tin producers operated in an open market as contrasted with the Bolivian tin mining procedure. Bolivian tin producers had a liberal long-term contract with the United States. Malayan rubber producers likewise had an enormous insecurity to contend with owing to our increase in synthetic rubber production. A fair price for a reasonably long term would have eliminated the uncertainties at every level of Malayan economic and political life. Malaya's economic stability depended in a large measure upon the United States. We, therefore, had some responsibility for the crises in that nation. We should have used our purchasing power rationally to lessen the risks which the Communist threat had placed on Malaya.

2. The British and Malays shared some of the blame for the rebellion in the Malaya Chinese community. The Chinese had long been aliens in that land. They had been a political minority with few civil rights. Large ownership of land had not been available to the Chinese. Very few political offices had been given to the Chinese. They had not qualified for the civil service. Voting rights had largely been withheld from all the people; most Chinese had no vote, for only a small fraction of them were admitted to citizenship.

3. Political discrimination against the Chinese was one reason why that community sat glowering at the government of Malaya. The Chinese community owned a large part of the country, but was not welcomed in its councils. That was why the Chinese community lent an attentive ear to the Communist underground whose constant propaganda was racial equality and the elimination of any discrimination against any group on account of its nationality. General Templer took important steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Had this been done sooner, many of the problems he inherited would not have existed.

4. Malaya made the largest dollar contribution of any of Britain's colonies to the sterling pool--an amount that had been running close to \$500,000,000 a year.

In other words, Malaya, although it acquired dollars with its rubber and tin, was not allowed to spend these dollars for steel, cement, and other needed materials. Five out of every six dollars went into the sterling pool.

C. Templer's Action on Control Measures.

General Templer enacted no new laws for populace or resources control, he merely refined and enforced the existing ones. He was a prudent man and he ensured that any control measures applied were not unrealistic. His actions were always aimed at protecting the populace and stabilizing the situation through the hearts and minds of the people. The people on whom Templer applied control measures had no criticism to voice; therefore, I have none to voice, only to say that had his predecessors applied the control measures as vigorously as did he, his job would not have been so monumental.

IV. EFFECTS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I believe that General Templer was the man of the hour in Malaya. He provided the spark to get the government machinery in Malaya operating. He also provided the leadership needed to ensure proper prosecution of all war efforts. General Templer was not afraid to act and was willing to face the populace, apply control measures, explain why, and accept full responsibility for his actions and the actions of his subordinates.

Because of the change in the image of the Malay government, under Templer, by late 1952 the control measures showed tremendous results as verified by numerous underground reports and information from captured or surrendered bandits.

The populace and resources control measures existed from the beginning of the war for the Briggs plan was introduced during the early stages of the war. However, the Malay government failed to see that without the support of the populace, the controls worked at a disadvantage. Once the "hearts and minds" program was introduced, statistics show the battalion that eliminated the most Communist terrorists on operations had more influence for good on the local population than the battalion that had a series of failures. Unrealistic populace control measures would have caused reverse end results.

In Malaya, the resettlement of large numbers of Chinese into protected villages had a two-fold effect. First, it made the bandits come to well-defined areas to collect food and supplies, thereby exposing them to security force ambushes. Secondly, it raised the morale of the "new villagers" by giving them better living conditions than they had previously enjoyed. Showing the Chinese the tangible evidence of what Democracy had to offer was also instrumental in the progress of the intelligence machine. The government came to realize that contented citizens are more likely to cooperate with the forces of law and order than discontented citizens.

The most visible effects of the control measures applied in Malaya were as follows:

1. They were the single most effective means of denying the enemy resources and populace support. Failure to take these steps would have placed the populace in a compromising position with the guerrillas, necessitating possible mass jailing of the people for violating existing regulations. Harsh, unrealistic military operations would have further alienated the populace.

2. The control measures used in Malaya have provided the basic concepts for similar operations against guerrilla forces today. Many countries are applying the principles of populace and resources control introduced in Malaya. However, all control measures that were effective in Malaya twenty years ago are not necessarily effective today. Basic techniques have necessarily been changed to cope with different environments, but essentially the basic principles have not been changed. Today the American armed forces apply those principles against guerrilla forces in Southeast Asia.

3. The application of populace and resources control measures in Malaya have provided a sounding board for the theories of the conduct of stability operations. Many tacticians had felt this was the key to winning a war of this nature. The result was the hypothesis that while a war would not be won by applying these controls, it would also not be won unless these controls were applied.



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