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When scholars or public officials assess the effectiveness of various non-military measures in controlling insurgencies, they often turn to the dramatic cases in which insurgents have overthrown established governments or regimes. However, it is equally if not more important to study instances where the rebellion has been successfully controlled or liquidated. It is also valuable to adopt a comparative approach, analyzing several case histories to distinguish similarities and differences, and to estimate the contributions of such factors as land, social, or economic reform; nationalism; and the degree of control over the population toward success in confining or terminating rebellions.

This paper is intended as a preliminary look at non-military measures taken in countering insurgencies in the Philippines, Malaya and South Vietnam.

During the Huk insurgency in the Philippines, according to Alvin H. Scaff,

> The Philippine Army estimated that at the height of their power the Huks had 100,000 members with as many as 12,000 armed, active soldiers in the field. In numbers, organization, and small arms the Huk fighting units were comparable to the government forces.

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> In terms of morale and civilian support in the area of their operations they had a decided advantage.[1]

He quotes an army major who wrote in the Philippine Free Press on September 23, 1950:

> The increase in the numbers of dissident elements and their sympathizers in Central Luzon during the past few years may largely be attributed to the misconduct of officers and men who have been entrusted with the enforcement of law and order.[2]

At that time, in September 1950, Raymon Magsaysay was appointed Secretary of the Department of Defense. His first move was to reorganize the armed forces, integrating the constabulary with the army and creating a unified command under the Chief of Staff, General Duque. From then on, abuse of civilians was severely punished. Magsaysay said in a radio address:

> I felt that before we could meet the peace and order problem in earnest, it was necessary first to restore the confidence of our people in their armed forces.[3]

Magsaysay became convinced that the strong popular support of the Huks among the peasants of Central Luzon was rooted in very real agrarian problems. An earlier army plan for homestead settlement of retired army men was revived as a project for landless Huks. A small percentage of ex-army men was to be included to act as a stabilizer

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[1] Alvin H. Scaff, The Philippine Answer to Communism, Stanford University Press, 1955, p. 28.

[2] Ibid., p. 35.

[3] Ibid., p. 37.

group. Funds were made available under the Army Appropriations Act of 1951. The Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) was established as part of the army. EDCOR engineers began clearing land and building roads in Mindanao in February 1951 and three months later the first group of twenty-six settler families arrived.

The settlers were recruited chiefly from among the ex-Huks and suspects in the army stockades. Anyone without criminal charges against him was eligible to apply for a place in EDCOR and all settlers were volunteers.

Scaff notes that only in 29 per cent of the 95 ex-Huks interviewed by him on EDCOR settlements were agrarian complaints a major factor in making them join the Huks. For many more the agrarian problem was important primarily "to give the revolutionary conspiracy a righteous and high-sounding tone."[4] In the same group of ex-Huks "force had been used as a recruiting procedure in more instances than the appeal of agrarian reform."[5] In the same group 19 per cent had joined the Huks "to avoid further persecution or terrorism by the government forces."[6]

Among the Huks interviewed by Scaff, 60 had surrendered to government forces. Of these, 61 per cent cited hardship in the mountains as the chief factor in their decision to give up. The next most important factor, cited by 45 per cent of those who surrendered, was loss of morale. Only 23 per cent in the sample said they gave

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

up because they were attracted to the government's side by various promises and opportunities. Among these promises free land seems to have been the most important, but almost equally so was the promise that prisoners would not be tortured.[7] Only 27 of the 60 surrendered Huks known to Scaff had heard of EDCOR before they made their decision to give themselves up.

EDCOR was given much publicity with the double purpose of inducing larger numbers of Huks to surrender and to increase confidence in democracy among the wider public.[8]

After Magsaysay became President in January 1954, military action against the Huks was intensified. Scaff writes:

> The friendly and considerate treatment of the civilians by the army won their cooperation and greatly improved the army intelligence network.[9]

But

> ...the patrols were firing at the Huks only as a last resort.... The avoidance of useless bloodshed increased the popularity of the army throughout the area.[10]

Scaff, who wrote in early 1955, gives no figures for the total size of the resettlement projects. The first, at Kapatangan, Mindanao, seems to have had approximately 100 families; the second, at Baldon, Mindanao, initiated

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[7] _Ibid._, p. 123.

[8] _Ibid._, p. 128.

[9] _Ibid._, p. 131.

[10] _Ibid._, p. 135.

in 1952, less than 250 families. The third in Isabela Province, Central Luzon, was started in 1953. Central Luzon is heavily populated but it is reasonable to assume in the absence of any figures in Scaff's book, that it involved relatively few families. If one therefore assumes that before Magsaysay became President in 1954 some 400 Huk families were resettled, this would only represent 3-4 per cent of the Huk fighters, leaving aside their supporters.

On the basis of this, it may be concluded that the psychological warfare value of EDCOR was much greater than its negligible contribution to the solution of structural social problems in the Philippines. The promise of land combined with lenient treatment of ex-Huks and drastic steps to curb army brutalities seem to have been the major non-military measures used in the Philippines in 1950-54. After he became President, Magsaysay attempted a broader program of land reform. But the achievements of his administration were quite modest by the time of his death in an air crash in March 1957.

According to an unpublished report of the Philippines Bureau of Census, dated March 1958, 49.2 per cent of farms were operated at that time by full or part owners, 44.8 per cent on a cash, cash-share, and crop-share basis, 2.0 per cent by other types of tenancy and 0.2 per cent under hired managers. A total of 69.9 per cent of farm households still borrowed money from private lenders and 75 per cent did not receive agricultural information from any government officials. In short, the agrarian problem was still far from solved one year after Magsaysay's death. The containment of the Huks cannot be attributed to a successful

economic reform program, thus enhancing the comparative importance of the political and military measures taken by Magsaysay to build up the image of a benevolent government. It should be added that nationalism could not have been a major issue in the Philippines, since full independence had been achieved on July 4, 1946, and the United States was regarded as a friend, not as an enemy.

Malaya, on the other hand, had not yet achieved independence at the time that the Emergency occurred. The British administration was able to prevent nationalism from becoming a major issue by adopting policies which gave the people confidence that the British were genuinely leading the country towards self-government.

In writing about the Emergency in Malaya, J. B. Perry Robinson says:

> If the Emergency had never happened, the Malayan Government would sooner or later have had to undertake the resettlement of half a million Chinese living outside the normal scope of administration. The "squatter problem" was not created by the Emergency, but the Emergency made its solution extremely urgent. The solution -- the resettlement of the "squatters" in about 500 "new villages" strung along the main roads of the Federation -- is the biggest single visible effect of the Emergency on Malaya and probably, in its direct and indirect results, the most important item in the transformation of Malaya.[11]

The squatters were Chinese immigrants who had settled on state land, well off the main road, cultivating vegetable

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[11] J. B. Perry Robinson, Transformation in Malaya, London: Secker and Warburg, 1956, p. 71.

patches and having practically no contact with the government. These communities were joined during the Japanese occupation by unemployed tin miners and rubber-estate workers as the mines and plantations went out of production. They took land on the fringes of plantations, near the idle tin mines or on the edges of towns which provided a market for vegetable farmers. In 1940 there had been perhaps 150,000 Chinese living in such communities. In 1945 there were probably 400,000.[12]

Although rubber-tappers and mine-workers provided the guerrillas some support and the jungle itself offered them cover, the "squatters" settled on the fringes of the jungle or on the edge of towns made it most difficult for Army and Police to identify the bandits. The problem was recognized as early as September 1948 and a "Squatter Committee" was established, but no action was taken until General Sir Harold Briggs became the first Director of Operations in May 1950. The reason for this was that the Malay state governments were understandably reluctant to provide the "alien" Chinese with services and amenities which they did not provide to the Malay rural population. Especially awkward was the problem of resettlement which involved granting to the Chinese title to public lands of the Malay Reservation.[13]

Under Briggs, vigorous action was taken. In the first year of the operation, in the state of Johore alone, 90,000 squatters were resettled into 65 "new villages." In another bad bandit area, Perak, 160,000 squatters were

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[12] Ibid., p. 76.

[13] Ibid., p. 81.

resettled in 42 new townships during the same period. Eventually 500 new villages were formed, involving half a million people.[14]

The new settlements were planned so as to permit the displaced persons to continue to make a living on the same plantation, in the same mine or cultivating vegetables for the same market. They received one-sixth of an acre for their new house and, if they were agriculturists, three acres for cultivation.[15] Strong police posts, perimeter wire and a dusk-to-dawn curfew protected the new villages against terrorism.

Robinson points out that the new villages could have easily remained "unassimilated concentration camps of displaced persons," which is what many of them looked like at first. The Malayan government, aided by the Malayan Chinese Association, made efforts to provide the amenities and the encouragement which would help them become real communities.[16]

Finally, an armed Home Guard was developed during 1951 which was successful enough to permit the following year the formation of Home Guard operational squads, trained with the Army and Police in jungle work. By 1953 Templer decreed that when a village Home Guard force had reached a certain standard of proficiency and experience, the entire defense of the village was to be entrusted to it. It proved possible to do this in one quarter of the 500 new villages.

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[14] _Ibid._, pp. 86-87, 108-110.

[15] _Ibid._, p. 88.

[16] _Ibid._, p. 93-94.

Robinson notes that this was "a gamble which many people thought insane."[17]

Besides resettling half a million "squatters," the British regrouped the Indian and Chinese estate and mine labor. In all 650,000 persons were affected, namely 40,000 tin mine workers, 280,000 rubber tappers and their families. They were assembled in wired-in compounds where they could be defended and their movements controlled. The companies carried the burden of this operation.[18]

Robinson, whose judgment seems trustworthy since he wrote on the Emergency as a special correspondent for The Times and spoke about it on the B.B.C.'s Third Program, concludes that

> 1950 and 1951 were the crucial period of the Emergency. That was the time of real crisis -- not only of battle crisis when there was the gravest operational threat, but also of sociological crisis when the sympathies of a large proportion of the people might have swung against us....
>
> The crisis of 1950 was largely a crisis of confidence, and it was checked in the first instance by General Briggs when he became the first Director of Operations. He saw that what was wanted to deal with the peculiar nature of the Malayan Emergency was a new alignment, a new integration of the Army and the Police with the civil administration ....Like many other good ideas instituted by General Briggs, this integration was re-cast and made to work really properly by General Templer....

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[17] Ibid., p. 97.

[18] Ibid., pp. 112-114.

> I have seen the records of the Emergency since its beginning and I believe that the areas in which there has been the greatest degree of success against the bandits are those in which this three-fold association (of Police, Army and civil administration) has been closest. By this I mean the places where the District Officer -- that is, the representative of the civil administration -- was brought right into the heart of the matter from the start.
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> To my mind, the integration of these three services -- an experiment in which Malaya has been a pioneer -- has a significance which goes far beyond the Malayan Emergency in which it has proved its success. I think it contains the secret, not only of the successful conduct of this sort of semi-civil war, but also the secret of the defence of communities -- especially of underdeveloped communities -- against penetration, against subversion.[19]

Finally, it should be added that the directive given General Templer in February 1952 stated:

> The policy of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom is that Malaya should in due course become a fully self-governing nation.... It will be your duty to...promote such political progress of the country as will, without prejudicing the campaign against the terrorists, further our democratic aims in Malaya.[20]

I will not attempt here to discuss the difficulties currently faced in South Vietnam, as these are much more present in our minds. But a review of successful non-military measures in the Philippines and in Malaya suggests a few useful points.

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[19] Ibid., p. 116-117.

[20] Ibid., p. 182.

In the Philippines nationalism was not an issue as independence had been achieved in 1946. In Malaya the British were able to steal the Communists' thunder by convincing the national leaders of the three communities (Malay, Chinese, and Indian), living in the country, that independence was attainable by peaceful negotiations. In South Vietnam the situation is different as a result of the long years of struggle against French colonialism.

In successful counter-insurgency, control of the population is a most important factor. In the Philippines the Huks do not seem to have been "like fish in water" in the midst of the population. From the insufficient evidence available (Scaff is of little help on this point) it would seem that they were terrorized at first both by the Huks and by the Constabulary and developed a "plague on both your houses" attitude. Thus it seems that neither side had control of the population until Magsaysay took drastic steps to stop the security forces from alienating the population which then increasingly leaned toward the government. Is the crucial variable here the political fact that the Philippines had achieved independence and that, by and large, the people accepted the notion that this was their elected government?

In Malaya, control of the population (excluding the Malays who were hostile to the insurgents both because they were Communists and because they were Chinese) involved extensive resettlement measures. The campaign to resettle the squatters combined with strict surveillance and control over the "new villages" enabled the government to regain control of the people. But unlike the Vietnamese peasantry

the "squatters" of Malaya were not real peasants, living in organic communities with roots in the soil. Vietnamese reluctance to accept resettlement programs is therefore likely to be stronger than that of the "squatters" in Malaya.

Both in the Philippines and in Malaya, large-scale, structural social reform seems to have been less important in bringing insurgency under control than is often assumed. Magsaysay did not carry out a social revolution. The agrarian problem was not solved at the time of his death. In Malaya the British won in alliance with the conservative forces in the local communities, the tin and rubber barons and the Malay feudal aristocrats. But what was successfully accomplished in both countries and contributed perhaps more to the control of insurgency was the reestablishment of the authority of the government. This was achieved by implementing firm policies and also by reawakening the people's confidence and hope through convincing evidence that the government did care about their welfare. In one case this was done by the national government through Magsaysay; in the other case, by the colonial government through Briggs and Templer.